Summer 2013

The State of Representation and Segregation Among African American Women at the U.S. Department of Commerce: An Examination of the Intersection of Strategic Planning With Race and Gender

Sesha Joi Moon

Old Dominion University

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of Old Dominion University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND URBAN POLICY
OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY
Summer 2013

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ABSTRACT


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The intent of this dissertation is to examine the state of representation and segregation among African American women across the workforce at the United States Department of Commerce. This study employs a triangulated research design to examine the relationship between elements of strategic planning and the employment patterns of African American women. This study's qualitative analysis includes a content analysis of 13 agency-specific strategic documents published between FY 1994 through FY 2010. This data is supplemented with a longitudinal trend analysis of personnel data for fulltime, permanent employees retrieved from the National Finance Center for the same time period. The theory of Black feminist thought serves as the theoretical framework. Black feminist thought seeks to examine how the intersection of race and gender contributes to systematic inequities against African American women. The purpose of this study is to determine if the agency made a stated goal to sustain a representative workforce, and if so, if it was fulfilled through direct, concerted action. This research contributes to the field of public administration by empirically investigating the role of strategic planning in driving workforce diversity, particularly among minority women in the federal government.
DEDICATION

"We owe it to our ancestors and to the sacrifices they made, to continue to achieve higher goals, while maintaining our identity."

– Author Unknown

I dedicate my dissertation to those who came before me, as they faced formidable challenges to make this accomplishment possible. My commitment to this process was in remembrance of the Staples, Price, Gundy, Randolph, Jaudon, Johnson, and Moon families. It is my utmost hope that I have made you proud.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“You have to fight through some bad days, to earn the best days of your life.”

– Author Unknown

First and foremost, I would like to thank God for blessing me with the opportunity to earn one of the best days of my life. Thank you for being good to me beyond measure. To my chair, Dr. Berhanu Mengistu, thank you for being my champion over the past five years. Thank you for your undying advocacy and patience. To my committee, Dr. David Chapman and Dr. Katrina Miller-Stevens from Old Dominion University, as well as Dr. Blue Wooldridge from Virginia Commonwealth University, I appreciate your continued commitment to my success during the dissertation process. Thank you for your insight and expertise.

To my parents, I am eternally grateful for your unwavering support of my life pursuits over the years. Thank you for your sacrifices to ensure my success. This doctorate truly is for you. To my sister, great things await us as sisters – but more importantly as friends. I look forward to us both shining bright. To my nephew, thank you for giving me a reason to never give up. I hope that auntie’s accomplishment convinces you that anything is possible. To the Parsons-Pollard family, I would like to thank you for always being there with an encouraging word. To my extended family – aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, and cousins – your collective support is immeasurable. To my friends, I appreciate your ability to keep me focused on my goals. Lastly and definitely not least, Jammin, words cannot express how much I appreciate your commitment to me and us during this process. Thank you for being my biggest supporter, my best friend, my confidant, and most of all – my partner. There are so many people to name, so if I forgot to acknowledge you please charge it to my head and not my heart.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

"I find I am constantly being encouraged to pluck out some one aspect of myself and present this as the meaningful whole, eclipsing or denying the other parts of self."

– Audre Lorde

Statement of the Problem

African Americans comprise the largest minority group within the federal government (Mitchell, 2011). Yet, they have been underrepresented in upper-management positions (Mitchell, 2011). The federal government has historically demonstrated an omni-relevant inseparability of race and gender, which has negatively influenced the career advancement of African American women (Duke, 1992; Shields & Shields, 1993; Yoder & Aniakudo, 1997). While the federal government has made progress towards integrating African Americans into its workforce, they remain underrepresented in higher-echelon positions (Mitchell, 2011). African American representation progressively decreases at mid-management and upper-management ranks within the federal workforce. While federal agencies recruit African American women, research suggests they remain in the lower reaches of the management structure (Baxter & Wright, 2000). Scholars suggest that this due to their obstruction from access to real power and higher levels of authority (Baxter & Wright, 2000).

Stalcup (2008) argues that despite a growing awareness of the need to remove barriers that impede opportunities for career mobility among women and minorities, they are consistently the most underrepresented groups in upper-management positions. Extant literature suggests that African American women have accounted for the lowest amount of professional advancement trends across the federal workforce within the last 10 years (OPM, 2011d). They are not represented proportionately in upper-management positions that have a greater likelihood of
leading to top-graded positions with greater leadership responsibilities and higher compensation. This disproportionate concentration in lower-echelon jobs with minimal authoritative responsibility reaffirms the sociocultural stereotypes that are commonly associated with African American women (Alkadry & Tower, 2006).

The remaining sections of this chapter present the purpose of the study and background, followed by the research questions. Next, the conceptual model and research method are provided. The limitations of the study conclude this chapter.

Purpose of the Study

In 2003, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) urged the federal government to diversify its workforce. It acknowledged the criticality of race and gender diversity in the effective management of government programs (GAO, 2003). Witherspoon (2009) found that the paucity of recent research on the impact of race and gender across the federal government hampers efforts to gauge the progress of women and minorities. This supports the need for additional research to understand their distinct experiences and perceptions (Witherspoon, 2009). In 2008, the GAO continued its call for further research, as it identified the underrepresentation of women and minorities as a critical challenge to management across the federal government. Past studies on women within the public sector are limited. This leaves a particular gap with respect to literature about African American women (Wilkerson, 2008). According to Hunt (2011):

The literature has generally failed to fully consider the historical and current social and cultural influences on the career development of African American women... most research lumps all women together, without regard for their racial and cultural background. The result of this assumed homogeneity provides a distorted view of the differential impediments encountered by subgroups. While a substantial body of literature examines the advancement of women in management, less attention has been
given to the advancement of specific subgroups of women who are racial and ethnic minorities (p. 13).

Cox and Nkomo (2006) echoed this finding by suggesting that the amount of total published research on African American women is small relative to the importance of the topic.

Holvino (2008) found that the field of organizational change demonstrated a particular void in research on the intersection of race, gender, and class – even within the discourse of managing diversity. Powell and Butterfield (1994) support this claim suggesting that while attention has been paid to the recruitment of minority women, far less empirical research has addressed their treatment as employees, career development, and promotion to upper-management positions. Past studies on employment segregation in the public sector lack comprehensiveness (Sneed, 2005). This is due to a focus on limited time periods, specific occupations and departments, and either race or gender inequity – not both (Sneed, 2005). Anker (1998) specifically called for continued research on the role of segregation on employment trends among women and minorities. “Occupational segregation in government employment is an important issue in public administration because occupation determines pay and benefits, and when women and minorities have greater access to quality jobs, especially in the public sector, it can promote their economic, social, and political advancement” (Sneed, 2004, p. 275). Moreover, the equitable representation of women and minorities in the federal workforce helps generate social change, dismantle stereotypic roles, enlarge closed sociocultural space, improve work/life balance, and reduce inequity in human capital and human resources (HR) practices (Addi-Raccah & Avalon, 2002; Bell et al., 2002). Dolan (2001) calls for new research that examines the salience of race because past studies provided minimal insight on the career patterns of minority women in the executive branch. In response to this call, this dissertation examines the role of elements of strategic planning as drivers of representation and segregation
among African American female professionals at the U.S. Department of Commerce (Commerce).

Rationale of the Study

Scholars have urged federal agencies to analyze their employment patterns to determine if agency-wide personnel practices result in a disparate impact on women and minorities (Sneed, 2005). This dissertation selected Commerce as a case study because of its demographic and organizational characteristics, large population, and history of equal employment opportunity (EEO) challenges (Sneed, 2005). This research will determine whether, and to what extent, Commerce is defined by an organizational culture that fosters a permanent underclass of African American women who occupy lower-echelon positions (House, 2003). This study examines the role of elements of strategic planning in helping the agency make progress towards diversity enlargement by driving shifts in the demographic composition of the workforce (Barrett, 2012). This is determined by the agency's strategy to achieve organizational outcomes through policies and practices that drive workforce diversity.

Since the mid-1990s, Commerce has led several diversity campaigns to increase the representation of women and minorities in leadership roles. Yet, in 2008, Commerce recognized its continued challenge to increase the representation of women and minorities in GS-13 through GS-15 and Senior Executive Service (SES) positions (Commerce, 2008b). This dissertation's measurement of Commerce's demographic composition will indicate the extent to which race and gender serve as a means to differentiate its workforce in recent years (Kmec, 2003). It is important to study Commerce as a case study because of its role in financial agenda setting, policy outcomes, and decision-making across the national economic landscape. "The economic
imperatives of a challenging future require us to overcome the ‘glass ceiling’ that mars the architecture of our economy today” (GCC, 1995, p. v). Considering the Commerce mission and its influence on current and future economic trends, it is vital that it sustains a representative corps to promote trade, industry, and economic opportunities through a broad demographic and socioeconomic lens. McWilliams and Patel (2009) argue that workforce diversity is critical during an economic downturn in order to minimize risk exposure during organizational restructuring. Considering, it is a fitting time to study the underrepresentation of women and minorities in upper-management positions, as approximately 51 percent of the federal workforce is eligible for retirement (OPM, 2011b). The federal government has an opportunity to capitalize on projected attrition by making new appointments that enhance diversity across senior executive ranks (GAO, 2003; Witherspoon, 2009).

This dissertation recognizes the importance in examining diversity based on the intersectional lens of African American female professionals. The intent of this study is to impart knowledge that may be used to increase the depth and breadth of information on the state of African American female professionals in the federal government (Shipley, 1997). This topic is important because it will determine if the agency has adequately tapped its human capital to ensure a quality, diverse workforce (Commerce, 2010a). It is critical to examine the distribution of women and minorities because it will reveal if the agency is perpetuating a culture of segregation across its workforce. The topic of segregation is important because it impacts the potential for interaction across social groups, which determines the distribution of and accessibility to social resources (Oakes & Kaufman, 2006). “The measurement of diversity between and within organizations is important to determine the extent to which women and minority group members are incorporated and promoted within their workforces” (Guajardo,
According to Cox (2001), organizations are able to successfully implement diversity strategies when they are well-informed by relevant data that is systematically measured at pertinent intervals. Unfortunately, there remains a lack of empirical research assessing if diversity strategies produce desired and/or optimum results.

This dissertation is unique because it concentrates on African American women as a distinct social group. Moreover, it is unique because it measures the alignment between Commerce’s strategic planning efforts to remedy underrepresentation against its actual progress towards this goal. There is a lack of empirical research testing the effectiveness of strategic plans on improving organizational diversity (Kalev et al., 2006, Verbeek, 2012). Tomaskovic-Devey et al. (2006) mentioned an explicit need for longitudinal studies that examine diversity at the organizational level. Verbeek (2012) also called for continued research that examines the effectiveness of diversity policies in decreasing the underrepresentation of women and minorities across organizations. In an effort to forge the path for future research, this study will test the state of representative equity at the federal level. It will help confront institutional practices that impede the career mobility of women and minorities, particularly African American women (Bello-Haas & Vanina, 2002).

This dissertation contributes to the field of public administration by recognizing the scarcity of women and minorities in the federal government as a viable topic for consideration in both theory and praxis. In particular, this study expands HR literature by exploring the circumstance of African American female professionals. It will illuminate effective strategies that support their career advancement in the federal workforce. According to Barak (2011), workforce diversity, organizational outcomes, and HR management practices are inextricably linked. The effective management of HR, particularly diversity management, is integral to
service delivery in the public sector (Tshikwatamba, 2003). The workforce serves as agents in public administration (UN, 2004). The competencies, values, and attitudes of public servants are critical in driving performance and service delivery (UN, 2004). This study will also integrate other social science disciplines across the field of public administration. For instance, it will expand the study of organizational behavior, as "diversity management is not the sole domain of the human resource function in the organization. It is a systematic organization-wide effort based on the premise that for organizations to survive and thrive there is an inherent value in diversity" (Barak, 2011, p. 237).

Background

The federal government is the largest employer of women and minorities (Lewis, 1998). The most recent Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP) report found that women account for approximately 43.6 percent of the permanent federal workforce (OPM, 2011c). The report also found that minorities account for 34.1 percent, with African Americans representing 17.8 percent and African American women representing 10.6 percent (OPM, 2011c). While the representation of women in executive-level positions has increased by approximately 8 percent and minorities by 9 percent in recent years, they both remain disproportionately concentrated in lower-echelon jobs across the federal government (OPM, 2011c). While attention has focused on strategies to ensure that EEO efforts reach upper-management ranks in federal government, there is considerable variation across agencies in the overall percentage of jobs and rate of growth among women and minorities (Cornwell & Kellough, 1994). Sneed (2005) called for additional research in this area, suggesting that federal agencies need to analyze employment patterns to determine if organizational practices have a
disparate impact on women and minorities. In response, this dissertation selected Commerce as the subject for analysis because of past issues with race and gender representation. This study explores if, and to what extent, differences in employment shares among African American women are related to elements of the strategic planning process (Cornwell & Kellough, 1994).

U. S. Department of Commerce

In 1903, Commerce was established through Congressional Act 32 (Stat. 826, 5 U. S. C. 591), as the Department of Commerce and Labor. Commerce consists of 14 component bureaus and organizational units [See Appendix A: U. S. Department of Commerce Organizational Listing]. The Commerce mission is to advance economic growth, job creation, and fiscal opportunities for the American people through trade, technology, entrepreneurship, economic development, environmental stewardship, and statistical research and analysis. This mission remains its primary focus today, which is fulfilled through a workforce consisting of approximately 42,000 employees (Commerce, 2007b).

In 1994, former Commerce Secretary Ronald Brown¹ (Brown) stated, “It is clear that there are difficulties with the EEO process and insufficient opportunities for upward mobility. My goal is to make Commerce a working example of diversity and a showcase for all to emulate” (Jones, 1994, para. 2). During that time, African American men and women accounted for approximately 18 percent of the agency’s workforce, but represented less than 7 percent of its professional staff. In that same year, Commerce ranked 39th out of 58 federal agencies in the percentage of African Americans represented across its workforce (Jones, 1994, para. 3). In 1995, contention came to a head when approximately 200 employees protested outside the

¹ Ronald Brown (1941 – 1996) was the 30th U. S. Secretary of Commerce, serving in the administration of President William Clinton from 1993 to 1996.
agency demanding the establishment of upward mobility structures for women and minorities.

In response, Secretary Brown established the Commerce Committee for African American Concerns (CCAAC). The purpose of the committee was to address issues related to the lack of African Americans in mid-level and senior-level positions and employee perceptions of a "plantation mentality" (Jones, 1994).

A decade later, Commerce continued to struggle with developing and implementing policies and programs that support the recruitment and retention of a quality, diverse pool of talent. In 2004, 13 plaintiffs filed a class action lawsuit against former Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez\(^2\) on claims that African American employees were systematically denied equal pay, benefits, and opportunities for promotion. The complaint alleged that Commerce maintained a system of discriminatory and subjective employment practices in regards to promotions, awards, performance ratings, developmental assignments, and training (DCDC, 2004). The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) certified the class action lawsuit, as it found substantial evidence that a significant number of African American employees had been denied advancement to GS-9 through GS-15 positions.

In 2005, Commerce conducted a trend analysis of demographic personnel data. The analysis found that the agency made minimal progress towards the equitable representation of women and minorities across its workforce. To address these challenges, Commerce stated a human capital goal to establish itself as the "employer of choice" by recruiting, developing, and retaining a cadre of world-class leaders who provoke a quality, diverse workforce with the critical skills necessary for mission accomplishment (Commerce, 2010a). In support of this goal, Commerce developed a strategic human capital management approach to address challenges to

\(^2\) Carlos Gutierrez (1953 – ) was the 35\(^{th}\) U. S. Secretary of Commerce, serving in the administration of President George W. Bush from 2005 to 2009.
recruitment and diversity. The approach consisted of five strategic human capital systems based on the Office of Personnel Management’s (OPM) Human Capital Assessment and Accountability Framework (HCAAF) as shown in Table 1. The approach included short-term and long-term human capital strategies to promote diversity and establish clear upward mobility paths (Commerce, 2001). The intent of the strategies was to increase career opportunities at multiple career levels for women and minorities (Commerce, 2001). Commerce stated that mid-level outreach and mid-career recruitment strategies were the most critical factors to the upward progression of women and minorities to upper-management positions (Commerce, 2005). Commerce committed to providing career paths that would allow employees to realize their full potential, as well as attract the broadest possible pool of diverse talent (Commerce, 2008a).

The OPM identified key indicators of human capital success. The indicators of human capital success are considered areas in which federal agencies should focus to operate efficiently, effectively, and compliant with merit system principles (MSP). Commerce has met the human capital standard to reduce the underrepresentation of women and minorities and establish processes to sustain diversity in accordance with the President’s Management Agenda (PMA) in recent years. Yet, the U. S. Bureau of the Census (Census Bureau) faced a class action lawsuit in 2010 after more than 100,000 minorities were allegedly denied temporary work during the 2010 Census (Davidson, 2010). The complaint cited that the Census Bureau failed to recognize a pointed warning by the EEOC that its screening process for hiring temporary employees could

<table>
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<tr>
<th>TABLE 1. HUMAN CAPITAL ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK</th>
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<td>3 The Human Capital Assessment and Accountability Framework is a robust framework of human capital policies, programs, and practices designed to ensure the alignment of an agency's vision with its strategic plan. The framework defines expectation levels to serve as a guide in the assessment of human capital programs, mission accomplishment, and workforce development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 The President's Management Agenda was developed by President George W. Bush to address the most pressing performance discrepancies in the federal government.</td>
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<td>5 Commerce (2010a)</td>
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<td>Strategic Alignment</td>
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result in massive racial discrimination (Davidson, 2010).

These recent issues illustrate Commerce’s struggle to sustain diversity and reduce the underrepresentation of women and minorities across its workforce. Although Commerce achieved green on its human capital scorecard, it acknowledged a continued need to increase diversity across the workforce. Commerce identified plans to maintain a bench strength that is 4 percent or greater than the attrition rate of leadership positions. While attrition has stalled as a result of the economic downturn, an exodus of senior leadership is an emerging workforce challenge across the federal government (Commerce, 2010b). Currently, Commerce maintains approximately 4,300 managers and executives across its workforce. However, it anticipates an impending surge in retirements over the next five years, particularly in the SES, as over 50 percent of its workforce is eligible for retirement (Commerce, 2010b). The impending surge in retirements provides the agency with an opportunity to change the diversity of its workforce through the recruitment and promotion of women and minorities.

**Research Questions**
Past studies demonstrate that women and minority professionals encounter multiple configurations and degrees of discrimination in the workplace (Reynolds & Pope, 1991; Ritzer, 2007). This limits their access to the services, rewards, benefits, and privileges of society (Reynolds & Pope, 1991; Ritzer, 2007). According to Collins (2000), cultural patterns of discrimination are not only interrelated but are bound together and influenced by the intersectional systems of society. These intersectional systems are demonstrated through race, ethnicity, gender, and class (Collins, 2000). This dissertation investigates the role of elements of strategic planning as drivers of employment patterns among African American women. This study considers the following three research questions: 1.) Has the U. S. Department of Commerce established strategic documents that mention explicit strategies to drive its goal to sustain a diverse workforce? If so, to what degree?; 2.) What is the relative state of representation and segregation among African American women and other women identity groups at the U. S. Department of Commerce?; and 3.) Is the level of representation among African American women higher in years following the development of strategic documents that establish workforce diversity goals? These research questions are answered by testing the following three sets of hypotheses: 1.) strategic planning hypotheses; 2.) employment trend hypotheses; and 3.) triangulated hypotheses. The hypotheses are more explicitly addressed in Chapter 3.

**Conceptual Model**

The criticality of workforce representation is one of the earliest and most thoroughly documented relationships in race and gender stratification literature (Cotter, 2003). Several theoretical explanations have emerged to explain impediments to career advancement into
higher-echelon positions across both race and gender groups. "Researchers agree that no single theory can fully explain [occupational] segregation and that a combination of factors emphasized by several of [the] theories is responsible" (Sneed, 2004, p. 32). Early race and gender stratification theory focused on explaining the implications of race and gender. In particular, early theory explored discrimination, hierarchy structures, and sociocultural space (Witherspoon, 2009). In recent years, race and gender stratification theory experienced a shift towards a focus on dismantling both apparent and subtle inequities afflicted upon women and minorities. These theoretical contributions help advance understanding of challenges faced by women and minorities in workplace environments.

Appendix C provides a historical recount of theoretical developments in race and gender stratification literature. This recount is based on following three categories: 1.) biological theories; 2.) organizational discrimination theories; and 3.) systematic barrier theories (Kelly, 2001). Biological theories capture employment differentials between men and women, which are inherited and explained by physical characteristics and phenotypic traits (e.g., eye color; hair color). Organizational discrimination theories capture the responsibility of institutional leadership to address employment inequities among women and minorities by dismantling institutionalized barriers (e.g., personnel practices; job descriptions; mobility ladders; job assignments). Systematic barrier theories capture structural patterns that create a dual labor market for women and minorities (e.g., primary sectors; secondary sectors).

This dissertation utilizes a theoretical framework that explicitly addresses social and institutional inequities among minority women, particularly African American women. This study sought to employ a theoretical perspective that could capture discrimination – not just oppression. According to (Hooks, 1984), being oppressed refers to the absence of choices,
whereas discrimination captures the exploitation of a race and gender group. A theoretical framework that captures the intersection of both race and gender guides this dissertation. More specifically, this study sought to advance the discrete experience of African American women. According to Brantley (2012), “Black feminist thought depicts African American women as distinctive women that exist in a place located within social interactions where gender, race, and class operate on the same axes simultaneously to shape African American women's individual and collective consciousness, and actions” (p. 4). However, Black feminist thought is conceptually linked to several extant theoretical frameworks (Galloway, 2012). “Although Black feminist thought is a theory constructed by and for African American women, other theories preceded Black feminist thought that shaped the theoretical tenets of the theory” (Galloway, 2012, p. 26). This dissertation sought a theoretical explanation that better clarifies the experience of African American women to ensure their edification as a distinct population of minority women. The theory of Black feminist thought serves as this study’s overarching theoretical guide to capture whether, and to what extent, the relationship between race and gender intersects to create dually dominate and discriminatory conditions for African American women (Grodsky & Pager, 2001). This study’s conceptual framework is based on Smith (1987) and Collins’ (1990) multidimensional approaches. The framework illustrates the basic concept and theoretical orientation of Black feminist thought as shown in Figure 1. The figure displays the role of critical theory in stimulating thought and raising consciousness among a subordinated group to overthrow a given social order or hierarchical power condition (Parker, 2008). While extant critical theories attempt to address such issues, their “catchall” approach is limiting (e.g., feminist theory; theory of intersectionality). Black feminist thought was developed as a critical
theory based in the voice and interests of African American women (Hylton, 2012). As a critical theory, Black feminist thought aims to advance the epistemology of African American women. Moreover, it intends to empower them within the context of social justice, which is sustained through intersecting forms of exclusion (Collins, 2000).

This dissertation selected Black feminist thought because it appropriately examines how the construction of power is contingent on the amalgamation of race and gender (Collins, 1990; Crenshaw, 1989; Ritzer, 2007). The theoretical tenets of Black feminism extend beyond the phenomenological experience of African American women, which dominates the literature (Aisuan, 2011; Blum et al., 1994; Brinson, 2006; Byrd, 2008; Callaway, 2006; Cox & Nkomo, 1991; Doss, 2011; Hunt, 2011; Lewis, 2006; Powell & Butterfield, 1994; Scales, 2006; Tamry, 2012; Williams, 2005; Witherspoon, 2009). Research has paid far more attention to women and minority groups’ access to jobs, with far less empirical research addressing their treatment as employees, career development, and promotion patterns (Powell & Butterfield, 1997). Black feminist thought provides an in-depth understanding of the difficulties and complexities that are experienced by African American female professionals. It provides a theoretical explanation of African American women’s access to leadership within both a historical and contemporary context (Dujon, 2010). “Patricia Hill Collins informs us that historically, Black women, were forced to serve as economically exploited, politically powerless
The concept map displays relations of ruling to capture objectified consciousness within organizations. The purpose of the map is to explain the layered spheres by which organizations participate in ruling. The bidirectional continuums are reflective of the objective (rational) position and subjective (non-rational) position within social hierarchy (collective) and unique to the biological (individual) situation of African American women. Rationalism reflects the emphasis on practical action and everyday practices. Non-rationalism reflects the emphasis on taken-for-granted experiences. (Collins, 1990; Smith, 1987)
units of labor” (Dujon, 2010, p. 12). Collins (1989) constructed Black feminist epistemology as a framework that could intellectualize the experience of African American women. Collins (1989) also posited that it could create opportunities for them to engage in the knowledge production and validation process. Black feminist epistemology introduces knowledge claims that consider the historical and continued challenges among African American women (Dujon, 2010). This study uses Black feminist thought to capture critical insights into the prevalence of inequitable conditions against African American women as job incumbents in the federal government.

The purpose of Black feminist thought is to authenticate the social reality of African American women by explaining the intersection of race and gender (Galloway, 2012). The construction of Black feminist thought emerged from the need to investigate the social locations occupied by groups with unequal power (Collins, 1989). “Examining these dichotomous social locations demonstrates how internal struggles become anchored in the social construction of identity” (Galloway, 2012, p. 8). This study’s linkage between elements of strategic planning and the state of employment among African American female professionals insinuates that they occupy complicated and unchartered shared locations in the federal workforce (Galloway, 2012). This study will advance Black feminist intellectualism by uncovering systematic conditions of discrimination among African American women in order to change the social world (Collins, 1990). This study’s use of Black feminist thought will illuminate the differentiated experience of African American female professionals who are both a part of and separate from the institutional power structures inherent in bureaucratic institutions (Galloway, 2012). As a result, this study will empower African American female professionals to confront institutional injustices that are perpetuated through intersecting forms of domination within the federal government (Galloway,
This study’s use of Black feminist thought as its theoretical framework is more explicitly addressed in Chapter 2.

**Research Method**

Past studies have captured the phenomenological and ethnographical experience of women and minorities (Curry, 2006). However, the problem that needs to be addressed involves more than reciting experiences and arguments about race and gender (Curry, 2006). There is a significant need to empirically investigate if African American women experience a degree of inequity in regards to their distribution across the federal workforce. There is also a need to study their distribution compared to their non-African American and non-female counterparts. Brief et al. (1997) suggest the path towards understanding requires rigorous research with sophisticated methodological designs, theoretical frameworks, sample compositions, and statistical analyses. In support of this call, this dissertation conducts a triangulated examination to further understanding of the role of elements of strategic planning as drivers of employment patterns among African American women in the federal government. This study employs a mixed method design because a triangulated approach accommodates the descriptive and contextual analysis of the complex, multilayered issues of race and gender.

To answer the first research question, this study conducts a qualitative content analysis of strategic documents. The first research question intends to determine if the agency has not only developed strategic documents that mention its workforce diversity goals, but if it provides actual "strategies" to fulfill such goals. Put simply – a goal is useless without a supporting strategy and explicit plan of action. The data source is 13 agency-specific strategic documents, which were developed with the intent to further workforce diversity goals – including plans,
policy statements, white papers, and business cases published between FY 1994 through FY 2010. This time period was selected due to proliferating claims of discrimination against women and minorities across the agency’s workforce. By reviewing strategic documents, this study can draw inferences regarding the messenger, the message, and the audience (De Sola Pool, 1959).

This dissertation uses Ryan and Bernard’s (2003) free-flowing text approach to analyze the text. The content analysis process consists of the following four steps: 1.) discovering emergent themes and subthemes; 2.) selecting and ordering themes; 3.) coding and analyzing themes; and 4.) linking themes to theoretical models (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). The literature review will be used to inform development of a predetermined word list, which identifies key terms in each strategic document. A set of techniques will be used to identify themes based on the word list, including cutting and sorting, key word in context, and word co-occurrence. Next, themes will be selected and hierarchically ordered. Then, themes will be coded into emergent categories. Then, each strategic document will be repeatedly reread to identify additional themes. Finally, each theme will be linked to a theoretical model. A cognitive map will used to demonstrate relationships between each strategic document and the state of African American women across the Commerce workforce.

This study supplements the qualitative data with the examination of personnel data to answer the second research question. The second research question intends to determine the state of representation and segregation among African American women and other women identity groups across the Commerce workforce. The data source is personnel records for

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7 The release of all data was approved by the U. S. Department of Commerce’s Office of Privacy and Open Government (OPOG) and Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) through a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. All personally identifiable information (PII) has been removed in accordance with the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA).
fulltime, permanent Commerce employees, which was retrieved from the National Finance Center (NFC) for FY 1994 through FY 2010. All Schedule C political appointees and career-conditional employees were omitted from the sample because they reside in occupations with explicit limitations on career mobility ladders. The second phase of analysis is based on an adaptation of the methodological design used in Sneed’s (2004) study, *Glass Ceilings and Glass Walls: Racial and Gender Occupational Segregation in State Bureaucracy*, as well as Sneed’s (2007) article, *Glass Walls in State Bureaucracies: Examining the Difference Departmental Function Can Make*.

This study uses Duncan and Duncan’s (1955) Index of Dissimilarity (DIndex) to measure segregation levels. The “DIndex” is defined as the percentage of individuals who would have to be reallocated among units to equalize the proportions among units in order to achieve total integration, which is divided by the percentage that would have to be reallocated if the system started in a state of total segregation. The DIndex is used to capture the percentage of African American women who would have to be reallocated in order to equalize proportions across the Commerce workforce to achieve total integration. The DIndex will measure the level of segregation among African American women across the dimension of evenness.

This study will also employ several statistical tests to measure the level of representation among African American women. A combination of race-gender categories will be analyzed to identify differentials for African American women compared to other race-gender groups. A one-way analysis of variance will compare the level of segregation among race-gender groups to determine if a significant differential exists for minority women groups. A time-series regression analysis will calculate the statistical relationship between African American women and levels of segregation over time. A time-series regression analysis also will calculate the statistical
relationship between African American women and White women based on levels of representation across grade categories over time – both at the department and bureau level.

This study triangulates the qualitative and quantitative data to answer the third research question. The third research question intends to determine if the level of representation among African American women is higher in years following the development of strategic documents that establish workforce diversity goals. The data source is strategic documents and personnel records from FY 2002 through FY 2005. A paired sample difference of means test will compare the level of representation among African American women to determine differentials after the implementation of strategic documents.

This study will use descriptive and inferential statistics to explain patterns in distribution among African American women across grade levels, as well as assess the substantive importance of these observed trends. The results from this study’s qualitative and quantitative analyses will be triangulated during data interpretation. The triangulation will be used to identify and measure indicators that best explain the role of elements of strategic planning as drivers of employment trends among African American women across the Commerce workforce (George & Bennett, 2005).

Limitations

This dissertation acknowledges the following six limitations: 1.) generalizability and single case study; 2.) sampling bias and non-random sampling; 3.) experimenter effects and reflectivity bias; 4.) shortcomings of the DIndex; 5.) aggregation bias; and 6.) coding bias. The first limitation is use of a single organization as the subject. The use of a single subject will limit the generalizability of findings. This study recognizes that a common criticism of case study
methodology is its dependency on a single case, which makes it difficult to draw a generalizable conclusion (Zainal, 2007). Yin (2003) suggests that case study findings are not generalizable to broader populations; however, they expand theoretical propositions. This study sought to examine a single organization because “each federal agency embodies separate missions and programmatic mandates, which impact the organizational structure and culture and assignment of work performed. Consequently, the structure and deployment of the workforce differs from agency to agency” (Hunt, 2011, p. 31). Albeit a limitation, this study’s evaluation of Commerce’s progress towards achieving workforce diversity can contribute to the field of public administration by serving as a benchmark on lessons learned and best practices. This will add to existing knowledge on theoretical and practical approaches to HR management. This study’s findings can serve as a measure of success by determining if the agency’s diversification efforts are effective and replicable (Shipley, 1997). This research can serve as a baseline of key data points and markers for improvement in future research and strategic planning efforts (Dalrymple, 2007).

The second limitation is sampling bias. This dissertation uses a nonrandom, purposive sample consisting of fulltime, permanent employees from a single agency, which limits its scope by race, gender, grade, and organization (Babbi, 1999). This study acknowledges that there is minimal variance to capture the influence of other variables, such as human capital factors (Lowi, 1985; Newman, 1994). However, Fox-Cardamone (2010) found that several studies demonstrate that “time and again”, even when controlling for human capital factors, sizable and statistically significant unexplained employment gaps remain.

The third limitation is experimenter effects. The researcher’s philosophical paradigm is paramount to deriving meaning from the observed data and interpreting the data within a larger
sociocultural context (Cook & Class, 2008). According to Yin (1984), “Too many times, the study investigator has been sloppy, and has allowed equivocal evidence or biased views to influence the direction of the findings and conclusions” (p. 21). Social science researchers are not expected to abandon scientific rigor or method; however, they must possess the ability to contextually analyze data within a sociohistorical context that transcends the observed data (Cook & Glass, 2008). Additionally, reflectivity bias is acknowledged as a limitation. There is a possible influence of personal values and connectivity to the subject. As an African American female researcher, who previously worked at Commerce, it is imperative to recognize the potential for inherent biases during data analysis and interpretation.

The fourth limitation is the well-documented shortcomings and methodological concerns regarding the utilization of the DIndex in segregation research. James and Taeuber (1985) caution that failure to establish a methodological standard for defining and measuring segregation allows the definition of segregation to flow from one researcher’s choice of a measure, rather than the reverse. Nonetheless, Wong (1999) encourages continued use of the DIndex, especially at the organizational level, because it most appropriately measures the dimension of evenness.

The fifth limitation is aggregation bias, which is the result of this dissertation’s use of an aggregated data set of personnel records. The data source was limited by the decentralized organizational infrastructure of the case study subject. This disallowed the analysis of individual-level and bureau-level data. The use of aggregate-level data can result in an error when data at different levels are treated as if they occur within the same levels – even though they have different meanings and effects (Choi, 2012). However, this study’s use of Black feminist thought as its theoretical framework directly supports the examination of African
American women as an aggregate group. Black feminist thought posits that they share a collective group-based experience and reality, which ultimately furthers group consciousness (Ausmer, 2009; Collins, 2000). Black feminist thought operates under the assumption that being African American and female results in a common experience, which causes African American women to reside within their own ontological truth (Collins, 2000).

The sixth limitation is coding bias. This study’s use of a single coder can present a challenge because the development of codes is solely based on one coder’s perspective and worldview (Abras, 2010). This study recognizes the opportunity for bias in single coding. However, it is addressed by acknowledging the researcher’s conscious awareness of self (Vignovic & Thompson, 2010). The researcher’s conscious awareness can be used to limit issues of single coder bias by influencing the coder’s determination of cognitive representations from which to build inferences (Vignovic & Thompson, 2010). While this study acknowledges the limitations associated with individual coding, the theoretical tenets of Black feminist thought supports the use of an individual coder that is African American and female. The critically theoretical core of Black feminist epistemology suggests that an individual’s knowledge is determined by their position in society. The use of an African American female coder will help produce specialized knowledge, which is created by and for African American women to clarify their self-defined standpoint.

Summary

This chapter introduced the overall intent of this dissertation, which is to determine the role of elements of strategic planning as drivers of employment trends among African American women across the Commerce workforce. This overview included the statement of the problem,
purpose of the study, background, research questions, conceptual model, research method, and limitations. Chapter 2 will review past literature and discuss Black feminist thought as the theoretical framework used to guide this study. Chapter 3 will discuss the methodological design for this study, including a discussion of data analysis techniques, hypotheses, triangulation, and threats to validity and reliability. Chapter 4 will examine the preliminary findings of this study. Chapter 5 will conclude this study with a summary of major findings, limitations, policy implications, and calls for future research. The final chapter concludes with a set of recommendations to disable organizational structures and practices that perpetuate workforce segregation to the detriment of minority women across the federal government.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Employment segregation, the glass ceiling phenomenon, and wage inequity have dominated the literature in regards to the integration of women and minorities into the workforce (Tower & Alkadry, 2008). These issues continue to be key concerns in the struggle of women and minorities to achieve equal access, opportunity, and compensation (Tower & Alkadry, 2008). For example, the GAO has released 19 reports within the past twenty (20) years on the diversification of leadership ranks across the federal government. The intent of the reports was to advance policy recommendations that would ensure the balanced representation of women and minorities (Henry-Brown, 1995). The remaining sections of this chapter will provide a summative overview of existing literature on race and gender, antidiscrimination policy, diversity management, women and minorities in the workforce, employment discrimination, career advancement, glass ceiling, women and leadership style, African Americans and leadership style, organizational culture, occupational segregation, wage inequity, private sector, and strategic planning. A discussion of the theoretical framework used to guide this study will conclude this chapter.

Title Searches and Research Gap

Research exploring the experience of women and minorities could fill gaps in knowledge and begin to address the needs of twenty-first century organizations. This study used title searches as a contextual frame to identify scholarly research and data germane to the dissertation topic as provided in Table 2. The scope of the literature review includes a combination of the following key terms: affirmative action; African American; bias; Black; career advancement;
TABLE 2. TITLE SEARCHES

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comparable worth; discrimination; diversity; diversity plan; equal employment opportunity; federal government; female; gender; glass ceiling; leadership; management; minorities; occupational segregation; public sector; race; senior executive service; strategic plan; stereotypes; underrepresentation; women; and workforce. A complete list of definition of terms is provided in Appendix B: Definition of Terms. The title search recovered approximately 43 dissertations that were published in the last 20 years that examined the impact of race and gender on labor force dynamics across private, public, and/or nonprofit industries [See Appendix D: Past Dissertations]. While past dissertations captured the phenomenological experience of African American female professionals, they failed to examine their employment trends in the federal government through an empirical lens. According to Powell and Butterfield (1994), "Much of what has been published on why women 'still don't hit the top' has been based on anecdotal data from individual managers or on assessments of influences on women’s career and advancement experiences in general" (p. 69).

A literature review on the glass ceiling phenomenon demonstrates a knowledge gap on the experience of minority women and men. There is an obvious gap in scholarly research
regarding the underrepresentation of African American women in the federal workforce (Henry-Brown, 1995). There is also a gap in literature on specific barriers they endure and attempt to overcome in order to reach higher-echelon positions (Henry-Brown, 1995). "Of particular note was the absence of recent research studies that build on the germinal work of scholars like Bell and Nkomo (1994) and Nkomo and Cox (1990) who addressed issues of race as a variable in organizational behavior research. A gap in the literature revealed a need to explore and expand knowledge on women and minority leaders' perspectives and experiences with the glass ceiling phenomenon, particularly within the federal government sector" (Shipley, 1997, p. 64).

While research on the glass ceiling considers gender, the issue of race is generally addressed in isolation or as a topic for future research. Stimpson (1971) suggests that the women's liberation movement would gain momentum and legitimacy if it stopped comparing White women to African American women so freely. "It perpetuates the depressing habit White people have of first defining the Black experience and then making it their own" (Stimpson, 1971, p. 650). Accordingly, the experiences of professionals who are both women and minorities have lost focus in past research. Cox and Nkomo (1991) conducted a robust review of race-based literature over a 25 year period to determine if past literature had in fact lost its focus. The examination recovered a total of 201 articles that focused on race groups. The study concluded that there was a relatively minimal amount of published research focused on minority groups. This was attributed to the following five factors: 1.) few researchers are working in the area; 2.) research in the area has been of poor quality; 3.) journals do not consider the topic important; 4.) researchers interested in this area are disproportionately located at institutions that offer a low-level of research support; and 5.) doctoral students may not be encouraged to explore race as a relevant topic. In 1991, Cox and Nkomo identified an explicit need to advance
scholarly knowledge on the impact of race and gender on workforce health across the federal government. Two decades later, this lack of scholarly knowledge on the impact of race and gender on the professional vitality of women and minorities continues.

Shipley (1997) recognized a gap in research on career mobility issues experienced by minority women in the federal government. Brief et al. (1997) insist on the development of new theoretical and practical approaches in public organizations to adequately address diversity in work settings. According to Wilburn (1999), “Diversity is perceived to be a new issue in the research arena and with that comes the thought that there is little, if any, available knowledge relevant to its development as a research topic” (p. 9). Further examination of employment trends across the federal government will fill a gap in knowledge because limited research has focused on systematic barriers that impact the representation of women and minorities. Even less literature has focused on the experience of minority women, particularly African American women (Witherspoon, 2009). Also, the literature review revealed a significant gap in evaluation research to measure the effectiveness of strategic plans. While the development of strategic plans is commonplace, the evaluation of their effectiveness is far less common (Dalrymple, 2007). This lack of evaluations derails organizations’ capacity for mission accomplishment.

Race and Gender

Race and gender paradigms vary in their emphasis on biological reduction in contrast to social constructions (Bell et al., 2002a). As different conceptions of race and gender are defined, contrasting social realities are created through which race and gender categorizations are achieved. Race and gender categories support subjective attributes, self-identities, and social institutions that limit the accessibility, credibility, and visibility of women and minorities within
organizations, such as the federal government (Thomas, 2009). However, African American female professionals in the federal workforce are never just African American nor just women—they are both (Calvert, 2006). African American women have a distinct experience because their race and gender intersect to create doubly discriminatory conditions. This is due to their occupation of the most marginal position in society as women and minorities, also known as a "double whammy" (Powell & Butterfield, 1997).

Beale (1970) discussed this dichotomy with the term "double jeopardy", which is defined as a disadvantage that accrues against people with multiple subordinate-group identities, specifically those with multiple devalued identities (as cited in Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). African American women are faced with the challenge of transforming their stereotypical images, while simultaneously creating new organizational roles (Bell, 1990). Thomas (2009) introduced the concepts of "double outsider" and "double marginalization." The concepts suggest that African American women have neither gender nor race in common with colleagues across the organization — unlike White women or African American men. "It is fitting to describe how the intersection of race and gender influence the experiences of Black women. Understanding why the experiences of African American women are different from those of other women and those of African American men is steeped in the historical progression and ideology of Black people in the United States" (Hylton, 2012, p. 56). Weiss (1999) argues that women who are members of minority groups often encounter barricades based on both race and gender. According to Hooks (1981), when African Americans are discussed, sexism militates against the interest of African American women; when women are talked about, racism militates against recognition of African American women’s interest. This dichotomous relationship
causes African American women to negotiate the putative notion that all African Americans are men and all women are White (Jackson, 2009).

This tension between race and gender for African American women is rooted in the women’s suffragist movement from the mid-nineteenth century. In 1851, Sojourner Truth was shunned during the National Women’s Rights Convention (NWRC) in Akron, Ohio because several White, female suffragists were fearful of being embarrassed by Truth’s speech as an African American woman (Curry, 2006). Nonetheless, Truth delivered a speech, *Ain’t I A Woman?*, which became an anthem for the women’s suffragist movement [See Appendix E: Ain’t I A Woman? by Sojournor Truth]. The phrase “ain’t I a woman” is an idiomatic expression of the Black feminist’s critique and emblematically identifies the challenge of race and gender for African American women (Gressgard, 2008). In 1903, Bell Kearney delivered a speech, *The South and Women Suffrage*, at the National American Women’s Suffrage Association (NAWSA) arguing that Anglo-Saxon women were “the medium through which to retain the supremacy of the White race over the African” (Stanton et al., 1881, p. 83). Curry (2006) argues that this statement confirms that White women placed race over their gender, as White women and men were both permitted to engage in discrimination against African Americans.

During that time, African American women understood their distinctive stereotype as a separate, inferior population. They also recognized that conflicting perspectives about race and gender prevented their effective coalition with White women. While past studies have attempted to redress the underrepresentation of women and minorities across the labor force, they have amalgamated the experience of female professionals as a collective group. In contrast, this dissertation also considers their racial backgrounds. Such assumed homogeneity provides a
distorted view of different impediments encountered across minority groups and limits consideration of group-specific influences on the careers of all women (Hunt, 2011). The U. S. Glass Ceiling Commission (GCC) suggests the term “women” has generally been accepted to mean White women. The tendency of researchers to lump women and minorities together implies that African American women face the same impediments as White women (GCC, 1994). However, African American women undergo different experiences within social organizations in comparison to their White, female counterparts (Collins, 2004). This relationship continues to operate on a continuum by which the integration of race and gender informs expected norms of the dominant group. This phenomenon is perpetuated through the presumption of “Whiteness” and “woman” as White women (Curry, 2006; Essed, 1991). Hooks (1981) suggests that this practice perpetuates racism and sexism because it denies the existence of non-White women in America. In 1895, the General Federation of Women’s Club (GFWC) was established and limited membership to White women. In response, the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) was established, which adopted the following philosophy to address their alienation:

Our women’s movement is a woman’s movement in that it is lead and directed by women for the good of women and men, for the benefit of all humanity, which is more than any one branch or section of it. We want, we ask the active interest of our men, and too, we are not drawing the color line; we are women, American women, as intensely interested in all that pertains to us such as all other American women; we are not alienating or withdrawing, we are only coming to the front, willing to join any others in the same work and cordially inviting and welcoming any others to join us (np).

In the 1960s, the field saw growth in research on the issue of race and gender within organizations (Cox & Nkomo, 2006). According to Nkomo and Cox (1989), the goal of early research was to document differential treatment based on race and gender – often narrowly focusing on the comparison of Blacks and Whites. It is important to study African American
women as a distinct population because they embody a dual identity based on race and gender (Eberheart & Fiske, 1994). This is in stark contrast to White men who are seen as race-free and gender-free (Eberheart & Fiske, 1994). Harris (2004) conducted a phenomenological study investigating models of both race and gender identity to capture the lived experience of African American women. The study concluded that the relational concept of gender identity should be incorporated into Black identity models, while rejecting normative group stereotypes. This study employs Black feminist thought to address these stereotypes that reinforce notions of White privilege, which further marginalize women and minorities by inhibiting their accessibility to executive-level positions. For example, common stereotypes suggest that minorities are lazy, undisciplined, poorly organized, incompetent, outspoken, and rebellious, possess bad attitudes, and tend to blame White employees for their failures (Calvert, 2006). These stereotypes are compounded for African American female professionals because their race, as well as gender, serves as stumbling blocks (Calvert, 2006). These stumbling blocks force them to labor under the dual burden of racism and sexism (Calvert, 2006).

**Antidiscrimination Policy**

The federal government strives to serve as stewards of antidiscrimination practices (GAO, 2001). These practices intend to circumvent the burden of racism and sexism against women and minority professionals (GAO, 2001). Antidiscrimination law symbolizes the nation’s commitment to end discrimination against women and minorities, as it prohibits discriminatory hiring practices based on race and gender. This ensures that women and minority

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8 In W. E. B. DuBois’ (1935) *Black Reconstruction*, he discussed the psychological cost for Whites in low socioeconomic standing, while recognizing the economic benefits they still receive due to their race, as they are enfranchised and not segregated from other Whites. McIntosh (2003) furthered this notion through the concept of “White privilege”, capturing the systematic over-empowerment of Whites, which confers socioeconomic and psychological dominance due to their race.
groups are represented in the public workforce in proportion to their overall population. "If discrimination cannot be eliminated and the full participation of women and minorities achieved in the public service, it is unlikely to be achieved elsewhere" (Kellough, 1992, p. 119). African American women do not advance to senior executive positions due to the federal government’s failure to enforce laws prohibiting both race and gender discrimination (Duke, 1992). Hunt (2011) urges for the continued exploration of success routes to top-level positions in the federal government; claiming that while antidiscrimination policy has opened doors for women and minorities, less visible barriers remain. These barriers must be identified and dismantled to expand the representation and influence of women and minorities, particularly African American women, as leaders in the federal government (Hunt, 2011). The remainder of this section provides a historical recount of antidiscrimination policy development at the federal level.

The Pendleton Act of 1883 established the civil service merit system to ensure a personnel management infrastructure across the federal government (Kim, 2001). The system was based on values of professionalism, competence, and political neutrality (Kim, 2001). In 1940, the Ramspect Act was enacted as the first public policy prohibiting the assignment of federal employment opportunities based on race, creed, color, or ethnicity. This resulted in a spike in the "active recruitment of minorities and women, and training and upward mobility programs for lower-level employees" (Kellough, 1992, p. 118). The Ramspect Act also prohibited discriminatory practices related to salary, grade, and promotion allocations. However, the distribution of women and minorities across the federal landscape remained skewed in lower-echelon positions. In response, workforce planning initiatives were developed to address the underrepresentation of women and minorities across identified occupational series. In that same
year, President Franklin Roosevelt\(^9\) (Roosevelt) signed Executive Order (EO) 8587 prohibiting discrimination based on race in the federal government (Kellough, 1992).

In 1941, President Roosevelt signed EO 8802, which established a government-wide Equal Employment Opportunity Program (EEOP) and the Fair Employment Practice Committee (FEPC). The FEPC was charged with investigating discrimination complaints and providing recommendations to resolve such claims. However, the FEPC was not delegated authority to enforce antidiscrimination policy (Kellough, 1992). In 1948, President Harry Truman\(^10\) signed EO 9980, establishing the Fair Employment Board (FEB) within the Civil Service Commission (CSC). The commission was charged with investigating discrimination complaints through agency-level hearings and required hiring officials to demonstrate that selections were based solely on merit. The FEB was also granted constructive action authority to conduct minority outreach, minority recruitment efforts, professional development and training programs for lower-level employees, and trend analyses of minority distribution across the federal workforce (Kellough, 1992). The CSC established the Federal Women’s Program (FWP), which was tasked with monitoring the implementation of upward mobility plans and implementing directives. This included policy on identifying talent and barriers to mobility, establishing bridge positions, and providing on-the-job training to improve qualifications among low-ranking staff.

In 1955, President Dwight Eisenhower\(^11\) signed EO 10590, which advanced antidiscrimination policy, endorsed recruitment of minorities, and established the Committee on Government Employment Policy (CGEP). The CGEP was charged with oversight of federal EEO initiatives.

In 1961, President John Kennedy\(^12\) signed EO 10925 requiring the federal government to

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\(^9\) Franklin Roosevelt (1882 – 1945) was the 32\(^{nd}\) President of the United States, serving from 1933 to 1945.

\(^10\) Harry Truman (1884 – 1972) was the 33\(^{rd}\) President of the United States, serving from 1945 to 1953.

\(^11\) Dwight Eisenhower (1890 – 1969) was the 34\(^{th}\) President of the United States, serving from 1953 to 1961.

\(^12\) John Kennedy (1917 – 1963) was the 35\(^{th}\) President of the United States, serving from 1961 to 1963.
implement affirmative action measures to ensure equal opportunity in employment regardless of race, creed, color, or national origin (Kellough, 1992).

In 1963, African Americans accounted for approximately 13 percent of federal jobs. However, they disproportionately occupied low-grade positions. In response, President Lyndon Johnson\textsuperscript{13} signed EO 11246, which transferred EEO responsibilities to the CSC (Kellough, 1992). The CSC was authorized to investigate discrimination complaints regarding federal employment practices and issue corresponding directives across the federal government. The CSC was also tasked with enforcement of EO 11375, which prohibited employment discrimination based on gender. In support, the nonprofit organization Federally Employed Women (FEW) was developed to improve the experience and status of federally-employed women in regards to training opportunities, career development programs, upward mobility ladders, and formal mentoring (FEW, 2012). In 1964, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (CRA) was established to prohibit employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin (Kellough, 1992). In 1965, the EEOC was established to monitor agency compliance with federal EEO law. In 1972, the Equal Employment Opportunity Act (EEOA), an amendment to the CRA of 1964, expanded restrictions on discrimination across both public and private sectors.

Konrad and Linehan (1995) examined the impact of EEO law on federal agency goals, as it relates to the relationship between HR structures and protected groups. The study found that organizations with a demonstrated commitment to EEO had higher employment rates of women and minorities. The study concluded that identity conscious structures remedy discrimination, readdress past injustices, and ensure the equitable representation of women and minorities in

\textsuperscript{13} Lyndon Johnson (1908 – 1973) was the 36\textsuperscript{th} President of the United States, serving from 1961 to 1963.
upper-management positions. In 1978, President James Carter\textsuperscript{14} transferred oversight of the EEOP to the EEOC, established a recruitment program, and introduced achievement of affirmative action goals as a performance indicator for the SES (Kellough, 1992). In accordance, numerical goals and timetables were included in affirmative action plans across the federal government. In that same year, the Civil Service Reform Act (CSRA) of 1978 was passed “to provide a federal workforce reflective of the nation’s diversity” (EEOC, 1978, para. 1). To meet this requirement, the OPM developed the FEORP report to increase minority recruitment and implement diversity policies and programs (Wilkerson, 2008). In 1979, the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) was established to monitor equal accessibility to job opportunities in the federal government in accordance with MSPs. The MSPB examined the federal civil service’s progress towards successfully implementing EEO practices. The study found that gender parity perpetuated discriminatory practices against protected groups across the federal workforce. The study concluded that little progress had been made towards the occupational integration of women and minorities (MSPB, 1996). Until 1987, federal agencies were required to establish directives to address the underrepresentation of women and minorities in upper-management positions. In 1991, the Glass Ceiling Act (GCA) established a commission to advance recommendations to dismantle the glass ceiling, also known as the GCC.

The most familiar and controversial antidiscrimination policy has been affirmative action. The philosophical basis of affirmative action is to ensure that populations historically barred from professional and academic opportunities due to race, gender, or religion are no longer denied accessibility because of their demographic traits (Libertella et al., 2007). Affirmative action provides practical steps to dismantle discrimination and place capable individuals into positions where women and minorities have never served – grooming the best qualified for

\textsuperscript{14}James Carter (1924 – ) was the 39\textsuperscript{th} President of the United States, serving from 1977 to 1981.
bigger roles (Bergmann, 1999). Affirmative action is a departure from EEO policy, as it philosophically considers the righting of perceived historical wrongs against people of a specific race, gender, or religion (Libertella et al., 2007). According to Krislov (1967), "We cannot with justice say to a man compelled to carry a burden on his back for a long way in a race, and therefore miles behind, 'you may drop the pack, the race is now equal.' Amends must be made" (p. 77). As such, affirmative action sought to redress innate disadvantages in order to level the playing field (Libertella et al., 2007). The intent of affirmative action policy is to promote equal opportunity in employment through goals and timetables – not quotas. Affirmative action provides a benchmark for diversity to guide decision-makers and determine if impediments to equal opportunities have been adequately addressed (Braun, 2001).

In 1978, the Supreme Court imposed limitations on affirmative action to prohibit reverse discrimination. The intent of the limitations was to prevent opportunities to a select population at the expense of denying rights to the majority (Libertella et al., 2007). For example, the Supreme Court ruled in the City of Richmond v. J. A. Croson Co. (488 U. S. 469) that public entities must identify the need for remedial action – if other nondiscriminatory remedies are insufficient. The court stated:

We, therefore, hold that the city has failed to demonstrate a compelling interest in apportioning public contracting opportunities on the basis of race. To accept Richmond's claim that past societal discrimination alone can serve as the basis for rigid racial preferences would be to open the door to competing claims for 'remedial relief' for every disadvantaged group. The dream of a nation of equal citizens in a society where race is irrelevant to personal opportunity and achievement would be lost in a mosaic of shifting preferences based on inherently un-measurable claims of past wrongs. Courts would be asked to evaluate the extent of the prejudice and consequent harm suffered by various minority groups. Those whose societal injury is thought to exceed some arbitrary level of tolerability then would be entitled to preferential classification. We think such a result would be contrary to both the letter and the spirit of a constitutional provision whose central command is equality (Richmond v. J. A. Croson, 1989, para. 62).
The pervasiveness of EEO policy slowed during the administration of President Ronald Reagan\textsuperscript{15}. As a result, proactive policies and practices that might level the playing field became less prevalent (Mani, 1997). Despite a generation of affirmative action and EEO policy, “African American women still consistently discover that regardless of performance or seniority, an unseen impediment hinders them from advancing” (Calvert, 2006, p. 26). Since the 1990s, the volume of EEO complaints has increased by approximately 40 percent to 24,524 in 2000 (Kellough, 1992). Kellough (1992) suggests that affirmative action and EEO policy has had no significant impact on the employment of minorities. Moreover, it has only had a moderate impact on the employment of women in mid-management and upper-management positions across the federal government. Research suggests that African American women have only experienced a 4 percent increase in representation across executive grades since the passage of the EEOA (CSC, 1970a; CSC, 1970b; OPM, 1990a; OPM, 1990b; OPM, 2011b). Riccucci and Saidel (1997) agree, suggesting that antidiscrimination policy has had a minimal impact on the promotion and retention of women and minorities to upper-management positions – despite its positive influence on recruitment.

In 1991, George H. W. Bush\textsuperscript{16} signed the CRA of 1991 in strong opposition to affirmative action programs. Eberheart and Fiske (1994) argue that affirmative action policy extends opportunities to target groups with limited regard to merit, which can lead to the disenfranchisement of others. Proponents of affirmative action argue that a commitment to antidiscrimination policy ensures intolerance of discrimination based on race and gender. Nonetheless, support for affirmative action has waned as the gap between employment and compensation levels for Whites and minorities has narrowed over recent years. Regardless of its

\textsuperscript{15} Ronald Reagan (1911 - 2004) was the 40\textsuperscript{th} President of the United States, serving from 1967 to 1975.

\textsuperscript{16} George H. W. Bush (1924 – ) was the 41\textsuperscript{st} President of the United States, serving from 1989 to 1993.
impact, the federal government’s longstanding commitment to increasing workforce diversity among women and minorities through antidiscrimination policy is recognized (OPM, 2011d). This commitment remains today as President Barack Obama17 recently issued a government-wide Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan (OPM, 2011a). The plan outlines the implementation of EO 13583 on “Establishing a Coordinated Government-Wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce.” The plan identified the following three key goals to ensure organizational change in support of diversification: 1.) sustainability; 2.) workplace inclusion; and 3.) workforce diversity.

*Diversity Management*

Amid charges of reverse discrimination, antidiscrimination policy redefined its intent to support the management of workforce diversity (Ricucci & Saidel, 1997). Diversity management is an organizational response to challenges and opportunities of workforce diversity. “Diversity management initiatives typically address the concerns of historically underrepresented groups, such as people of color and women, but many also focus on other dimensions of diversity that influence work-related outcomes” (Pitts et al., 2010, p. 868). “Diversity management” was coined as an umbrella term for the valuation and utilization of the collective talents of all individuals regardless of observed differences (Wooten, 2008). Public policy researchers determined that diversity constitutes an organizational strength that contributes to the achievement of agency results across the federal government (Wilkerson, 2008). According to Thomas et al. (2003), the impact of workforce diversity is contingent on the organization’s HR practices, strategies, and culture. As such, federal agencies shifted to a focus on diversity through HR management. However, changes have not resulted in an inclusive

17 Barack Obama (1961 – ) is the 44th President of the United States, serving since 2005.
organizational culture that eliminates negative stereotypes, preconceived notions, and barriers related to the management styles and capabilities of women and minorities (Wilkerson, 2008).

According to Barrett (2012), the implementation of workforce diversity efforts is difficult because of the following two reasons: 1.) human beings prefer to work with homogenous groups; and 2.) human beings and organizations resist change. Moreover, workforce diversity efforts can result in an adverse impact on women and minorities. For instance, scholars have found that African American female professionals have been coerced into assimilating into the dominant organizational culture at the expense of their own identity (Alfred, 2001). Alfred (2001) introduced the concept of “bicultural life structure.” The concept suggests that women and minorities evoke power from their bicultural stance to contest the terrain of differences that support their marginalization in predominately White, male-dominated organizations. “The life structure promotes the notion of agency and individual power in the midst of cultural group values and philosophical differences. Through the life structure, people of color develop the ability to navigate environments of cultural dominance and build successful careers” (Alfred, 2001, p. 123).

The Hudson Institute released two studies, Workforce 2000 and Workforce 2020. The studies predicted the emergence of sociocultural and organizational challenges related to the inclusion of women and minorities in the national labor force (Johnston & Packer, 1987; Judy & D’Amico, 1997). These reports found that a glass ceiling exists, which prevents women and minorities from career advancement due to a lack of diversity management programs. Both reports are heralded as pioneers of the diversity management movement because they filled a gap in knowledge by providing a pointed paradigm for managing diversity (Barrett, 2012; Johnston & Packer, 1987). These reports concluded that diversity management will be one of the most
significant organizational issues in coming decades due to projected shifts in organizational demographics and employees' growing concern with workforce motivation and levels of performance (Soni, 2000). The effective management of workforce diversity hinges on the notion that employers must move beyond tolerance, to viewing a diverse workforce as a valuable opportunity for innovation, networking, and marketing savvy (Carr-Ruffino, 2002). Effective diversity management recognizes that people are different and diversity is an asset, if appropriately valued and nurtured. In 2000, the OPM developed a guide for federal agencies, *Building and Maintaining a Diverse, High-Quality Workforce*. The intent of the guide was to help “increase agencies understanding of how a diverse perspective can improve organizational performance, help prevent unlawful discrimination or harassment incidents, improve workplace relations, build more effective work teams, improve organizational problem-solving, and improve customer service” (OPM, 2000, p. 2).

The federal government must stand up diversity management programs to prevent the risk of diminished legitimacy in the eyes of the constituents it is trying to serve by failing to effectively manage diversity (Soni, 2000). The federal government has long been regarded as the "vanguard of equal opportunity” due to its highly-rationalized system of recruitment and remuneration, which is thought to shield against forms of discrimination (Grodsky & Pager, 2001). Yet, while the CRA of 1964 was passed into law over 40 years ago, women and minorities are still underrepresented in upper-management positions across the federal government (Williams, 2005). Past studies have determined that organizations struggle to make progress towards maintaining an effective diversity management system because of a glass ceiling for women and minorities, lack of EEOPs, and underrepresentation of qualified women and minorities in the SES (Johnston & Packer, 1987). Thwarting such obstacles is critical for the
federal government, as a diverse workforce legitimizes bureaucracy through democratic
decision-making, effective service delivery, and better policy outputs (Kim, 2001).

*Women and Minorities in the Workforce*

During World War II, organizations began to exhibit workforce diversity. During this
period, women and minorities were relegated to low-paying, low-status, service-oriented
occupations and only represented approximately 10 percent of managerial and administrative
of the first management jobs predisposed inertia within organizations to staff managerial jobs
through gender-based ascription. In the 1960s, women and minorities experienced gains across
the federal workforce (Reskin & McBrier, 2000). They accounted for approximately 21 percent
of management positions (Reskin & McBrier, 2000). “This influx is one of the significant
changes in Black employment patterns during the 1960s” (Collins, 1983, p. 374). By the 1970s,
the representation of African American managers increased by approximately 67 percent
compared to 15 percent by Whites (Reskin & McBrier, 2000). Women also experienced
significant gains across the federal workforce. (Reskin & McBrier, 2000) They accounted for
one in seven managers, which continued through the 1990s (Reskin & McBrier, 2000).

From 1990 through 2000, the overall representation of women and minorities in the
federal workforce remained steady at approximately 45 percent (Reskin & McBrier, 2000).
Although statistics show that women and minorities comprise almost half of the federal
workforce, they are underrepresented in senior leadership roles (Williams, 2005). This disparity
is heightened for African American men and women. They have only accounted for
approximately 5 to 7 percent of management positions in the federal government over the past 10
years (Johnson, 2005). More specifically, African American women demonstrated an empirical lag and declination in senior executive positions with policy-making authority compared to the civilian labor force – despite their relative presence at both the entry and mid-level of the federal government [See Appendix F: African American Employment by Federal and Civilian Workforce] (Bullard & Wright, 1993). Since the 2000s, African American women have made the least progress into upper-management positions across the federal government (Hunt, 2011; Riccucci & Saidel, 1997). The top-level positions across the federal government are consistently drawn from the most socioeconomically advantaged portions of the population (Hunt, 2011; Riccucci & Saidel, 1997). African American women are disproportionately underrepresented in higher-level positions that have a greater likelihood of leading to higher-graded positions with increased authority and higher compensation (Hunt, 2011).

Currently, the federal workforce is comprised of approximately 340,000 employees, of which 44 percent are women and 17 percent are African Americans (OPM, 2011b). In 2010, minorities represented approximately 647,588 employees in the federal workforce, of which 4,059 were senior-level positions (OPM, 2011b). “While changes in the demographic make-up of the workforce are striking, the acceptance of women as equals in managerial positions has not kept pace. Research indicates that women are extremely underrepresented in executive and middle-management ranks in virtually all public sector organizations” (Henry-Brown, 1995, p. 2-3). The MSPB (2011) examined progress made by women in the federal government since 1992. The analysis used GS-based promotion data to draw conclusions regarding the prevalence of stereotypic attitudes and subtle discrimination. The study found that the federal government must reinforce merit-based HR practices in support of a quality, diverse workforce to ensure representative bureaucracy across genders.
Representative bureaucracy is captured through the following two approaches: 1.) passive representation; and 2.) active representation (Mosher, 1982). Passive representation suggests that bureaucratic demography should be the same as the population it serves. Active representation postulates that policy outputs of bureaucrats benefit the demographic groups in which they belong. Riccucci and Saidel (1997) suggest that passive representation facilitates active representation. This results in a bureaucracy that more accurately represents its constituents and is more likely to respond to the needs of the people. Dolan (2000) studied the impact of women on public policy in the SES. The study hypothesized that women’s lived experiences and interactions with other women would result in their advocacy and support of women’s interests. The study found that women in executive positions were more likely to advocate women’s interests in organizations dedicated to women’s issues. Saidel and Loscocco (2005) studied the intersection of gender, institutions, and representative bureaucracy to determine the impact of gender on the policy priorities of agency leaders. The study found that approximately 50 percent of female agency leaders supported policy priorities that advance the public interest of women, as a result of their own personal values and experiences. These studies support the theoretical posture that policy priorities derive from values related to race and gender.

The presence of women and minorities in the federal workforce can be gauged by their position in the government's hierarchy. While African American women are represented in the federal workforce, this study contributes to the examination of whether their representation is disproportionate. This is determined by their occupation of lower ranks within the federal government hierarchy (Ungar, 1991). Kalleberg et al. (1991) conducted the National Organizations Survey (NOS) to examine national trends in the occupational distribution of
women and minorities. The study found that women were more evenly distributed across organizations than minorities, as they accounted for approximately half of fulltime employees. The study concluded that the nation’s organizations are homogeneous, as it relates to race and gender composition. This causes minorities to remain disproportionately represented in operative occupations (Sneed, 2004). The MSPB agreed, suggesting that women and minorities have made considerable gains in the federal workforce within the past 15 years. However, they disproportionately reside in professional and administrative occupations (MSPB, 2011). “The federal government has been successful in recruiting and retaining minorities, particularly minority women, but they occupy a high percentage of clerical and technical jobs” (Hunt, 2011, p. 12). Unfortunately, minorities constitute less than 3 percent of senior-pay levels across the federal workforce (OPM, 2011d). Glazer-Rayno (1999) discussed the concept of “pink collar jobs” to capture the prevalence of occupational stereotyping. This concept suggests that women have a tendency to be more prominent across service-oriented fields in contrast to male-dominated fields, such as business, engineering, medicine, and law. In 2010, approximately 40 percent of professional women were employed in stereotypic female occupations compared to less than 5 percent of men (OPM, 2011c).

Cornwell and Kellough (1994) conducted a study to determine if interagency differences in the employment of women and minorities were systematically related to the distribution of occupations within an agency. The study observed employment shares for women, African Americans, and Hispanics across 30 agencies for years 1982, 1984, 1986, and 1988. The study found that agency size, rate of recruitment, and union strength did not have a statistically significant impact on the representation of women and minorities throughout the federal government. The study concluded that the federal government has integrated women and
minorities across its federal workforce. However, the study also concluded that African American women were more represented in agencies with higher proportions of clerical and blue-collar jobs. “African American women are not represented proportionately in professional and higher-level administrative jobs that have a greater likelihood of leading to higher-graded positions with greater leadership responsibilities and higher pay” (Hunt, 2011, p. 12). For instance, African Americans accounted for approximately 129,835 of administrative occupations, 80,509 of technical occupations, 49,734 of professional occupations, and 34,877 of clerical occupations in 2010 (OPM, 2011b).

The relegation of women and minorities to both clerical and blue-collar jobs in the federal workforce can no longer be explained by their lack of preparedness for technical and professional positions. Taylor (2004) postulates that equitable academic achievement does not guarantee fair treatment. Research suggests that regardless of credentials and preparedness, the return on investment is unequal (Taylor, 2004). Human capital indicators fail to fully explain significant differences in career outcomes across both race and gender groups (Collins, 2000). When controlling for education, experience, and other factors related to career advancement, White men continue to occupy higher average grade levels (Blackstone, 2011; Carli & Eagly, 2001; Cohen & Huffman, 2003; Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1989; Hunt, 2011; Kalev et al., 2006; Lewis, 1996; McCall, 2005; MSPB, 1995; OPM, 2011c; Sneed, 2004). “Although the number of women obtaining advanced degrees has significantly increased, little progress has been made in women attaining positions of executive leadership” (Witherspoon, 2009, p. 57). Recent data suggests that women account for the majority of degrees conferred each year, with African American women accounting for the greatest increase in the number of awarded degrees (MSPB, 2011). African American women outnumber their male counterparts at all three degree levels
(Sneed, 2004). Yet, even though African American women have earned advanced degrees and in some cases are overly qualified, they are provided limited opportunities to demonstrate their capabilities (Wesley, 2009). The representation of African American women in positions with education requirements hasn’t narrowed, as White women have been the primary beneficiaries of expanded management ranks (Collins, 2004; Combs, 2003; GAO, 2008; GCC, 1994). Darity (1998) agrees, suggesting that African American women with baccalaureate degrees do not experience the same professional gains as their White, female counterparts, as they are left behind in clerical occupations.

The growth in academic attainment among African American women discredits “blame-the-victim” arguments. These arguments attempt to explain barriers to career advancement through human capital factors, career choices, and unpreparedness for leadership roles. Some scholars suggest women and minorities have lower levels of human capital and job market experience due to individual choices rather than directional causation (Sneed, 2004). For instance, Dyke and Murphy (2006) argue that women face a glass ceiling because of personal inadequacy rather than an embedded organizational culture. However, several studies indicate that self-efficacy factors are not valid explanations for the slow career advancement of women, as well as minorities (Carli & Eagly, 2001; GAO, 2003). Over the last three decades, more women have received degrees and approximately 45 percent of those awarded have been advanced degrees (Wesley, 2009). Although minority women have earned advanced educational degrees, and in some cases are overly qualified, they are provided limited opportunities to demonstrate their capabilities (Wesley, 2009). For instance, the total number of master degrees earned by African Americans more than doubled from approximately 25,000 to 53,000 between
1995 and 2005 (ACE, 2008). Additionally, African American doctoral degree recipients increased from approximately 1,600 to 2,900.

Past studies suggest that personnel systems and organizational policies and practices explain women and minorities’ encounter with a glass ceiling, as they fail to support their recruitment, retention, and promotion (Hultin & Szulkin, 1999). Lewis (1996) found that even when controlling for individual characteristics and type of work, male-dominated fields still receive better benefits and higher compensation. While entry into management-level positions is obtainable, the glass ceiling remains a formidable deterrent to the executive suite. Roos and Gatta (2001) examined the distributive patterns of women across authoritative positions in the national labor force. The study found that women accounted for approximately 50 percent of the national labor force. However, they occupied 30 percent of salaried management positions, 20 percent of mid-management positions, and 5 percent of executive positions. The study concluded that women primarily concentrate in support positions characterized by low compensation, low status, and short career ladders. According to Roscigno (2007), the placement of women and minorities into particular occupational categories is due to social status groups that want to keep their position. As such, they relegate minority groups to low-status, low-paying positions. For instance, Johnson-Drake (2010) found:

While some of these barriers like education, have been minimized by the rise in the number of women obtaining advanced degrees, the problems do not cease once the women get their degrees and occupy positions at higher managerial levels...Research suggests that within a few years of women entering the workforce at the mid-management levels, their progress tends to stagnate. While entry into the management level seems obtainable, the glass ceiling and concrete ceiling still remains a formidable deterrent to the executive suite. Women, and to a greater degree, African American women, have experienced inequity in salaries, promotion, appointments of power, and other compensation as it relates to maintaining the highest levels of their professional and personal lives (p. 40).
Scholars agree that race and gender are perhaps the best and single most important demographic indicators of representative equity in the United States (Reskin & Roos, 1987). Naff (2001) argues that organizational barriers hinder the recruitment and advancement of women and minorities. The pressure of women and minorities, particularly African American women, to demonstrate over-competence to overcome preconceptions and stereotypes creates additional burdens that need to be recognized by senior leadership. These burdens should be considered when crafting strategies to address human capital issues in the federal government.

This dissertation hinges on the notion that senior leadership within the federal government must recognize that significant disparities in earning, status, and authority among African American women can no longer be explained by human capital differentials. This leaves much to be explained by employment discrimination (Bell et al., 2002b).

*Employment Discrimination*

Women and minorities have experienced discrimination in compensation, promotions, and appointments of power (Fagenson & Jackson, 1993). Braun (2001) suggests that White mid-management perpetuates false myths to obscure the organizational vision. This limits the full utilization of the talents of women and minorities. "The problem we face now – the problem of persistent bias – is different than the blatant, officially sponsored discrimination faced in the 1950s and 1960s, but it is no less real" (Braun, 2001, p. 12). Such problems lead to obstacles in the upward mobility of women and minorities into management hierarchies through direct discrimination (Baxter & Wright, 2000; Bell et al., 2002b). Calvert (2006) postulates that social difference codes explain distinctions used to structure society and institutions and perpetuate inequality based on race and gender. Social difference codes provide cultural schemas for
enacting social relations by indicating the behavioral attributes by which individuals may be
categorized (Calvert, 2006). These categorizations perpetuate overt discrimination in the
workplace by using race and gender as criterion in HR decision-making (Bell et al., 2002b).
Riccucci and Saidel (1997) discuss the phrase “last hired, first fired” to describe the phenomenon
in which women and minorities are systematically discriminated as the last demographic groups
to enter the workforce and usually first-line causalities in the reduction of force. For example,
reductions in force (RIF) across the federal government have been borne disproportionately by
women and minority groups (Shafritz & Hyde, 1987).

The philosophical premise of representative equity is to reduce both overt and subtle
discrimination among women and minorities through the elimination of privilege and advantage
(Bello-Haas & Vanina, 2002). “Overt discrimination includes, but is not limited to, such
behaviors as refusing to hire women, paying them inequitably, or steering them to ‘women’s’
jobs” (Bell et al., 2002b, p. 66). Overt discrimination has been replaced by “everyday racism.”
Everyday racism explains how racist beliefs permeate daily experiences and become imbedded
in human systems that reproduce themselves in practices that activate underlying power
structures (Essed, 1991). Brief et al. (1997) suggest that overt discrimination has been replaced
with a more subtle form of racism. This form of racism allows employers to create conditions
conducive to contemporary racist attitudes. This dissertation intends to drive understanding
about the nature of everyday racism so that organizations can avoid unintentional discrimination
against women and minorities (Brief et al., 1997).

Everyday racism is achieved against women and minorities through the following two
mechanisms: 1.) marginalization; and 2.) problematization. “Marginalization” refers to practices
that prevent groups from joining the mainstream organizational culture necessary to obtain
equity, power, and/or prestige. "Problematization" refers to stereotypes of groups as inferior and incompetent, which is used to justify exclusion and prejudice (Essed, 1991). In 2002, the John J. Heldrich Center for Workplace Development conducted a study to examine the workplace experience of African Americans (Van Horn & Dautrich, 2002). The study found that African Americans were more likely to perceive themselves as receiving unfair treatment in regards to promotional and professional development opportunities. The study concluded that African Americans were significantly disengaged from information networks and targets of workplace discrimination.

The MSPB suggests that approximately 50 percent of minority civilian servants reported unfair treatment in promotion practices (MSPB, 1996). "Researchers may have only begun to explore nuances of the glass ceiling phenomenon. Subtle racism could be hidden deeply below the surface of the glass ceiling and could have a powerful effect on the career advancement of minority men and women, creating a burden of leadership" (Witherspoon, 2009, p. 17). Subtle racism can be disguised through a number of organizational behaviors that perpetuate both race and gender discrimination, such as treatment discrimination and institutional discrimination. "Treatment discrimination" refers to the denial of legitimately deserved rewards, resources, and/or opportunities due to out-group membership (Levitin et al., 1971). "Institutional discrimination" refers to the systematic mistreatment of women and minorities. Institutional discrimination is perpetuated by the organization’s infrastructure, including policies, programs, goals, and objectives (Kramer & Lambert, 2001). This dissertation examines the role of institutional discrimination in contributing to an inequitable organizational infrastructure that disproportionately impacts the state of representation and segregation among African American women in the federal workforce.
Career Advancement

The advancement of women and minorities through career ladders is often used to address the impact of employment discrimination, also known as "upward mobility." Upward mobility helps to progress women and minorities into upper-level and higher paying occupations. However, women and minorities remain concentrated in lower-echelon positions due to sociocultural and organizational impediments (Alkadry & Tower, 2006). The term "sticky floor" captures the prevalence of women and minorities in dead-end, low-level, low-status, and low-mobility positions with no explicit career path to advancement into leadership roles (Yap & Konrad, 2009). The MSPB (1995) conducted a study, *A Question of Equity: Women and the Glass Ceiling in the Federal Government.* The intent of the study was to examine both tangible and intangible impediments constraining career advancement among women. The study advanced the following seven challenges to career mobility: 1.) women were promoted less often over the course of their government careers than men, regardless of comparable education, experience, and skills; 2.) women confront inequitable barriers to advancement in their federal careers in the form of subtle assumptions, attitudes, and stereotypes, which affect how managers view women's potential for advancement; 3.) women face obstacles to advancement at lower levels in the pipeline; 4.) women remain significantly underrepresented at the senior level, occupying less than one-third of executive positions; 5.) women do not receive performance appraisals equivalent to their male counterparts; 6.) women are perceived as less committed to their jobs than men; and 7.) women of color face a double disadvantage.

Research suggests that women and minorities, particularly African American women, face barriers to career advancement (Alkadry & Tower, 2006). Moreover, when they do advance, they generally proceed at a slower pace than their White, male counterparts (Alkadry & Tower,
The GCC (1994) examined organizational barriers to career advancement for African American women. The study conducted life-history interviews with 120 participants, which were supplemented by 725 survey results. The study found that individual success factors, such as perseverance and determination, contributed to their career mobility. Goodly (2007) studied the impact of agency structure on the advancement of African Americans up the career ladder. The study consisted of open-ended and follow-up interviews with African Americans across various careers over a 15 month period. The study used grounded theory to guide the research and code career success factors. The study found that the following 10 career success factors contributed to their upward mobility: 1.) perseverance; 2.) bravery; 3.) adaptability; 4.) ambition; 5.) strategic planning; 6.) continuous learning; 7.) gratitude; 8.) self-awareness; 9.) meaningfulness; and 10.) self-efficacy. Organizational barriers to these factors include exclusive mentoring and networks, biased and discriminatory practices, uneven distribution of work assignments and performance evaluations, stereotyping, lack of career planning, and counterproductive behavior among male colleagues (Cook & Glass, 2008).

The GCC (1994) analyzed barriers to professional advancement among African Americans. The intergroup and intragroup approach was used to analyze barriers to advancement. The study found that African American professionals continue to encounter interrelated barriers that operate at the individual, group, and organizational level. Ridgeway (2001) posits that lower-status groups are subjected to different career success factors, which is greater than that of the higher-status groups. A significant portion of women and minorities reside in lower-compensated, lower-echelon, and lifeless positions that are not directly aligned to career ladders (Harlan & Bertheide, 1994). Consequently, women and minorities have minimal opportunities to gain experience in organizations and fewer opportunities for career mobility.
“Pipelines” refer to the strategic placement of employees on career mobility tracks to ensure their receipt of sufficient training and education to progress towards upper-management positions. However, the concept of a “leaky pipe” captures the failure of women and minorities to progress to these positions due to leaks and blockages in the pipe (Bell et al., 2002a). The “pipeline problem” posits that women and minorities do not hold the appropriate education and background necessary for career mobility (Wesley, 2009).

Promotions not only provide increased responsibility, job status, and compensation, but also serve as a HR staffing tool to identify leadership pipelines for effective succession planning (Johnsrud, 1991). “Caucasian men have more extensive social networks, resulting in their securing better jobs than women and minorities. Furthermore, Caucasian men receive more on-the-job training and more favorable job evaluations, and are more likely to have mentors. These factors figure fundamentally into the perpetuation of the fact that Caucasian men have better promotional prospects than women and minority groups” (Calvert, 2006, p. 3). Past studies show that women and minorities are disadvantaged in the promotion process (Johnsrud & Heck, 1994). Bell and Nkomo (2001a) studied career pattern differentials among women. The study examined 120 White women and African American women throughout various leadership levels. The study found that African American women experienced more lateral movement across the organization. DiPrete and Soule (1986) conducted a study to determine if women experience a disadvantage in the promotion process across the federal government. The study found a disparity in promotions based on gender, as women were significantly less likely to be promoted to upper-management positions. The study concluded that promotion outcomes differ based on gender.
Reskin and McBrier (2000) argue that when the best choice for promotion is unclear, decision-makers minimize the risk by opting for individuals who resemble themselves. Alderfer et al. (1980) suggest that promotion opportunities for African Americans are sabotaged by the recommendation of weaker candidates to compete against qualified, White candidates. When African American women are promoted, employers often reclassify them as managers without actually elevating their status within the organization, also known as the “glorified secretary hypothesis” (Miller, 2008). According to Cotter et al. (2001), the increasing presence of women in management ranks reflects the inflation of occupational titles and reclassification of previously non-managerial employees as managers with minimal gains in compensation and/or authority. Moreover, when African American women experience upward mobility, they tend to reside in managerial ghettos. These positions are already losing power and prestige and only managerial in title, also known as the “resegregation hypothesis” (Miller, 2008).

Greaux (2010) posits that African Americans women experience increased pressure to continually outperform their White colleagues to ensure career mobility. For instance, past studies suggest that mentor relationships best benefit White men, as they disproportionately receive upper-management positions. In contrast, women and minorities continue to work less desirable and poorly paid jobs (Kivel, 1997). African American employees are more likely to be assigned to an African American supervisor. However, alliance to African American leaders does not necessarily ensure advancement. Research suggests that African American mentors and supervisors are less likely than their White counterparts to advocate for the professional mobility of their subordinates and protégés (James, 2000). African American professionals rarely realize the benefits of social ties as their “hard work, will lead only to a dream deferred – the reason, career plateau” (Thomas, 2009, p. 1).
The propensity for African American women to be relegated to lower-echelon jobs is manifested throughout the definition of jobs, devaluation of work, and segregation of race and gender groups into different occupations across labor markets (Reskin & McBrier, 2000). Hymowitz and Schellhardt (1986) posit that the most significant barrier for advancement into upper-echelon jobs is the discomfort of their White, male counterparts. The GCC (1994) suggests that White mid-management assists with the career advancement of those they feel more comfortable. These are often other White, male counterparts. As Whites dominate organizations in the most powerful management ranks, also known as the “in-group”; African American women find membership in lower-ranking hierarchical groups, also known as the “out-group” (GCC, 1994). The out-group status of African American women perpetuates barriers that impede their upward mobility to senior leadership positions (Bell et al., 2002a).

Glass Ceiling

The lack of upward mobility among women and minorities is best explained through barriers to promotion. These barriers have an adverse impact on their professional careers, also known as a “glass ceiling.” A glass ceiling is an invisible barrier that reflects attitudinal and organizational biases that prevent qualified persons from career advancement into upper-management positions. Hymowitz and Schellhardt (1986) introduced the term in a Wall Street Journal article discussing the state of women in corporate organizations. The GCC (1994) suggests that glass is dangerous, as it can injure those who break it, but nonetheless, it can be broken. Also, glass is clear allowing others to learn through observation, which is critical in breaking through its barriers. A glass ceiling exists within policies and practices that stagger the progression of women and minorities to top-level positions (GCC, 1995). In 1995, the U. S.
Department of Labor (DOL) examined the glass ceiling phenomenon to gain an understanding of the barriers to career advancement faced by women in the workplace. The DOL issued its fact-finding report, *Glass Ceiling Report*, to identify invisible, yet real, barriers that confront women and minorities as they participate in the civilian labor force (Braun, 2001). The report found evidence that artificial barriers impede the advancement of women and minorities to executive-level positions. “Not only is a glass ceiling evident, but the plateaus or highest levels achieved by women and minorities is much lower than expected” (Jackson, 2009, p. 24). The MSPB (1995) found evidence of the existence of the glass ceiling in the federal government, which is demonstrated through the following: 1.) inadequate representation of women in supervisory and executive-level positions; 2.) lower promotion rates for women from GS-9 and GS-11 positions; and 3.) differentials in grade level and pay that are not explained by differences in experience and education.

In 1995, the GCC conducted a follow-up study to determine if women and minorities receive equal consideration for promotions to senior-level positions. The triangulated analysis examined corporate data, employer and employee testimony, research papers, surveys, and focus groups. The study further confirmed the prevalence of a glass ceiling and its contribution to career plateaus for women and minorities. Career tracks toward executive positions for women and minorities are lacking, as they disproportionately occupy staff-level positions with minimal likelihood for advancement to the executive suite (Jackson, 2009). The GCC (1995) concluded that authoritative workplace hierarchies do not yet look anything like America. “As we have learned through the work of the Glass Ceiling Commission, shattering the glass ceiling both serves our national values and makes our businesses stronger. America – which has always been a nation containing wide diversity and profound differences – has been bound together by the
shared promise of expanding opportunity. We cannot allow ourselves to be detoured from the next stage of our national journey” (GCC, 1995, p. v).

A glass ceiling fosters an organizational culture that reinforces barriers that prevent the professional advancement of women and minorities. Ryan and Haslam (2007) discussed the “glass cliff” to capture the propensity of women and minorities to be appointed to top-management positions in poorly-performing organizations. Sneed (2004) discussed “glass walls” as invisible barriers that hinder access to particular industries or positions for women and minorities. This phenomenon is reflected across the federal government through distinct patterns of occupational segregation across agencies and occupational categories (Sneed, 2004). In recent years, additional conceptualizations have emerged to capture barriers to career advancement among African American women. Hatchett et al. (1995) introduced the terms “barbed wire” and “booby trap” to address roadblocks experienced by African American women in their quest for career advancement. Harper (1975) coined the term “Black tax”, which explains how African American senior executives encounter a set of strains and stresses due to their "Blackness" in predominately White workplace environments. Catalyst (2008) defines the “concrete ceiling” as formidable barriers that prevent women and minorities from achieving upper-management positions — regardless of experience, education, or performance. Bell and Nkomo (2001b) define the “concrete wall” as more persistent and pernicious barriers to career progression than the glass ceiling. According to Calvert (2006), African American women encounter more than a glass ceiling as they navigate up the corporate ladder — they face a concrete wall. “For Black women, it is even worse. We have a nonexistence. We don’t even have a wall – no ceiling, no glass to look through. There is nothing. It’s not a glass ceiling, it’s a brick wall” (GCC, 1995, p. 69). Concrete walls relegate African American women to a denser, closed, and isolated space.
(Farrow, 2008). This space makes them essentially invisible to decision-makers in the organization and prevents them from accessibility to leadership positions (Farrow, 2008).

**Women and Leadership Style**

While women and minorities demonstrate gains in initial employment, they encounter a career plateau just below mid-management and upper-management levels (Cox, 1993). This plateau is due to stereotyping and organizational infrastructure (Cox, 1993). The literature posits that White men conceptualized the industrial paradigm to inform leadership theory development (Jogulu & Wood, 2006). This paradigm has been used to justify the discriminatory allocation of leadership roles (Jogulu & Wood, 2006). Men tend to be highly concentrated in top-management ranks, whereas women tend to be overrepresented in low-ranking, low-paying positions across the workforce (Bell et al., 2002a). This tendency results in classifying occupations by “sex type” as either male or female jobs (Bell et al., 2002a). Gender labels and power dynamics predispose organizations to gender-based ascription when allocating status, position, and opportunities. This is perpetuated through the institutionalization of privileges. “Male gender roles are assumed in how work is organized and remunerated, thereby advantaging men” (Tower & Alkadry, 2008, p. 144). Women must forfeit their feminist gender roles for stereotypic characteristics of male leadership in order to progress to senior executive levels (Stivers, 1993). Kanter (1977) introduced the term “queen bees” to describe token females who are rewarded for demonstrating aggressive behavior and shedding their feminine identity to assume more masculine characteristics.

Gender types suggest that women take care and men take charge (Catalyst, 2008). Patriarchal norms emphasize gender differentials, which allow men to maintain dominance and
hegemony in the workplace by awarding their male counterparts with “first dibs” on leadership
positions (Reskin & McBrier, 2000). “Men often hold more centralized critical positions in
organizations, where they have access to valuable information concerning job openings, pending
projects, and managerial decisions often shared through the ‘old boys’ network’” (Elacqua et al.,
2009, p. 286). The “old boys’ network” is defined as a small and insulated group of White men
that traditionally occupy positions of authority and access (Elacqua et al., 2009). A power
differential exists within organizations between the people who hold higher-status jobs and those
in lower-status positions (Sneed, 2004). Catalyst (2008) conducted a qualitative study to
examine the impact of the old boys’ network on the experience of female professionals. The
study found that minority women had more in common with minority men than White women,
as it relates to workplace experiences. However, women across all race groups shared similar
perceptions of social isolation, as it relates to the old boys’ network. “Men endeavor to preserve
their privileged status by restricting women’s opportunities to attain senior positions, and thus
avoiding the necessity of having to work with them as equal partners. Hence, women enter roles
that are considered suitable to their ‘feminine’ characteristics, such as concern for others,
devotion, caring, support, and emphasis on human interaction, while men are concentrated in
roles that involve power, competition, rational judgment, and authority” (Addi-Raccah &

Gender roles are social constructs that dictate the arrangement and remuneration of
workplace structures (Tower & Alkadry, 2008). While the national labor force has become
increasingly diverse, the predominant paradigm for managing employees remains rooted in an
Anglo-Saxon, male perspective. Schein (2001) suggests that “think-manager, think-male” and
“think-male, think-leader” paradigms remain in workplace environments. “Even management
development strategies designed to focus on women have suffered from the tendency to encourage women to ‘think male’” (Calvert, 2006, p. 21). Feminist leadership styles are deemed as invalid because masculine traits and values have been institutionalized as behavioral norms (Sinclair, 2005). Masculine ideals are regarded as behavioral norms and set the standard against which female performance is measured (Dempsey & Diamond, 2006). Dempsey and Diamond (2006) found that women who adopt feminine behaviors in the workplace are viewed as less effective. However, when they adopt masculine behaviors, they are criticized for not being feminine. Jogulu and Wood (2006) postulate that no single best leadership style exists. As such, effective leadership adopts a style to fit the requirements of organizational norms. These organizational norms reinforce that women are expected to demonstrate higher productivity in the household, while men demonstrate added value in the workforce (Lazear & Rosen, 1990). Women are more likely to assume primary responsibility as caregiver and take career breaks to support their household, which stymies promotions (Mertz & Moss, 2008). Women have to forfeit their matriarchal role and act like men by adopting organizational norms to progress to executive levels (Giscombe & Mattis, 2002; Mani, 1997; Stivers, 1993).

This model of career success emerged in the 1950s. It was based on gender types in which women were homemakers and men were breadwinners. This division of labor allowed men to devote more energy to their careers, while women took care of the household. These gender types are no longer compatible with modern conceptualizations of the typical employee. These gender types are inaccurate and oversimplified generalizations (James, 2000). Gender types influence the type of occupations and agencies occupied by women and minorities (Alkadry & Tower, 2006). Agency type not only dictates public policy outputs, but also drives political structures, processes, and group relations. Lowi (1985) advanced the following four
types of policy organizations: 1.) regulatory; 2.) distributive; 3.) redistributive; and 4.) constituent. A regulatory agency formulates policy, which requires specific constituencies to refrain from or take specific actions. A distributive agency administers programs that deliver public goods and/or services to specific constituencies. A redistributive agency administers programs that impose costs on some classes of citizens, in order to deliver private goods and/or services to other classes. A constituent agency produces legislative outputs.

Newman (1994) developed a theoretical framework based on this typology to capture the impact of departmental function on the career progression of women. Newman (1994) examined the relationship between an agency’s policy mission to its level of occupational segregation. "The general hypothesis is that women will be underrepresented in the regulatory and distributive agencies, especially at the higher levels, and overrepresented in the redistributive agencies" (Sneed, 2004, p. 41). Kelly and Newman (2001) examined the implementation of EEO policies across federal bureaucracies based on agency function. The study found that affirmative action and EEO policy was applied differently and had unequal outcomes based on agency type. The study concluded that gender groups are fairly proportionate in regulatory agencies, more men are employed in distributive agencies, and more women are employed in redistributive agencies. Kelly and Newman (2001) suggest that gender conditions influence bureaucratic power. These conditions subsequently affect employment status and access to power among women within the federal government (Kelly & Newman, 2001). If women continue to disproportionately occupy token positions, with little opportunity to shape decision-making in the federal government, they will have fewer opportunities to exercise bureaucratic authority through policy decisions (Dolan, 2004).
While female leaders encounter barriers to "real power", African American women encounter increased barriers to upper-management positions with such power (Bell & Nkomo, 2001a). This is because they are doubly burdened by race and gender, which is demonstrated by their 3 percent chance of obtaining supervisory positions compared to White women's access rate of approximately 9 percent (Bell & Nkomo, 2001a). African American women must adopt tools and techniques to negotiate the impact of race and gender and its associated bicultural stress, also known as "shifting" (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2004). Most African American professionals reside in workplace environments embedded with Anglo-Saxon traditions, norms, culture, values, and ethnics (GCC, 1994). Bell (1990) defines "bicultural stress" as a psychological barrier that forces the minority group to suppress one aspect of their identity, in order to exist and advance in other cultural contexts. African American professionals are forced to manage dual cultural contexts – European American and African American (GCC, 1994). The challenge is negotiating the tension between differing ontological realities within each context (GCC, 1994). Minorities channel this bicultural stress through self-limiting behaviors (Murrell, 1993). This results in unintended consequences that inhibit career advancement due to limited opportunities to demonstrate leadership skills and competence (Murrell, 1993).

Kern-Foxworth (2000) examined the status of minority women in professional organizations in regards to the linkage between cultural traditions and workplace performance. The study found that African American women experienced feelings of discrimination, exclusion, low self-esteem, and otherness in the workforce. Jones (1986) eloquently captured this duality by suggesting that African American professionals must satisfy the values and expectations of the White, male-dominated hierarchy. This requires them to run a gauntlet of
contradictory pressures (Jones, 1986). The phrase "run a gauntlet" refers to smarting from the pain of prejudice "even as White colleagues deny that your reality of race has any impact. It means maintaining excellent performance even when recognition is withheld. It means being smart but not too smart. Being the butt of prejudice and not being unpleasant or abrasive. It means seeking the trust and respect of fellow Blacks and acceptance by Whites. Speaking out on issues affecting Blacks but not being perceived as a self-appointed missionary or a unifaceted manager expert only on Black subjects. Being courageous but not too courageous in areas threatening to Whites" (Hancock, 2004, p. 31).

Racial identity is a ubiquitous component of the workplace experience because it defines a person’s relationship with colleagues and fit within the organization as a whole (Bell & Nkomo, 2001b). Bell and Nkomo (2001b) found that once African American women achieve leadership positions, they experience barriers to organizational fit. "When women do advance to managerial and higher-level positions, they often find themselves in stereotypically feminine areas and in less-powerful positions than their male colleagues, leaving them with fewer opportunities to shape government decisions" (Dolan, 2004, p. 300). Ridgeway et al. (1995) suggest that women who attempt to assert authority over men encounter resistance, which reduces their level of influence. When African American women exercise authority, they are regarded as demonstrating aggressive behaviors. Traditional leadership competencies, such as assertiveness and decisiveness, are valued as managerial traits. However, when African American women display such leadership styles, they are often perceived as threatening, demanding, and speaking out of place (GCC 1994). African American female professionals must exhibit a communication style that fits within organizational norms to avoid the reinforcement of stereotypic assumptions. According to Taylor (2004), the direct and assertive
leadership style of African American women is misinterpreted as confrontational. Additionally, they are viewed as incompetent, assigned tasks as “tests”, not afforded forgiveness for failure, and receive little organizational support (Taylor, 2004). This lack of support includes work/life benefits (Naff, 2001).

African American female professionals are still more likely to assume the primary responsibility as caregiver (Mertz & Moss, 2008). This results in both personal and professional implications (Mertz & Moss, 2008). “The social cost of career progression is fourfold. First, women may marry later, or not at all, as they become overwhelmed with the burden of overcoming the masculine images of leadership at work. Second, they may have more housework responsibilities at home than their male counterparts. Third, they may experience divorce at a higher rate than their male coworkers. Fourth, they may have fewer children, or no children, than their male counterparts” (Tower & Alkadry, 2008, p. 151). This tension requires women to choose between being an organizational woman with less family or a mother with less devotion to career (Tower & Alkadry, 2008). African American women suffer an added disadvantage because of their higher levels of single parenthood. This results in increases their time investment in the household. The prevalence of single motherhood requires African American female professionals to pursue the “mommy track” and negotiate work/life responsibilities, which is necessary to successfully maneuver through the organizational landscape to upper-management positions (Tower & Alkadry, 2008).

Organizational Culture

Concerns among African American female professionals regarding work/life balance validate the assertion that workplace environments are designed for men but inhabited by women
These issues are embedded in the organizational structure and reinforced through personnel practices, position descriptions, mobility ladders, and job assignments. This structure is embedded in "remnants of administrative rules and procedures that were based on prejudice even if they were not overtly discriminatory. Unless these rules and practices are altered, they will continue to have a disparate impact on women and minorities" (Sneed, 2004, p. 29-30). The federal government structure is based on a classic bureaucratic ideal and is faced with challenges of adaptability and change (Alkadry & Tower, 2006; Williams, 2005). Classic bureaucratic systems are defined by various levels of well-defined differences in authority, seniority, and compensation and are markedly gendered (Connell, 2006). In this structure, men occupy top levels and women account for relatively powerless and subordinate positions (Connell, 2006).

Administrative discretion is the responsibility of federal bureaucrats charged with implementing public policy and allocating public goods and/or services. According to Kim (2001), administrative decisions are inherently political decisions, as the center of policy-making occurs in bureaucracy. As such, the equitable representation of women and minorities in senior executive roles will ensure a diverse lens on decision-making and policy-making across the federal government. Mitchell (2011) suggests that within the context of representative bureaucracy, higher concentrations of group membership at higher levels in the federal government is positively associated with increased support for policies impacting that social group.

Kim (2001) suggests that organizational characteristics are directly linked to the demographic composition of federal bureaucracy. An organization's demographic composition is important to its structure because it indicates the extent to which race and gender serve as a means to differentiate the workforce (Kmec, 2003). Blumer (1958) introduced the concept of
“group position” suggesting that ethnic concentration tends to block avenues to authority. Women and minorities migrate to “identity groups”, which are defined as populations that are interconnected through race, gender, and socioeconomic status (GCC, 1994). “It is all too easy to translate stereotypical differences between Blacks and Whites into the modern language of person-organization fit. If this obfuscatory language is not enough protection for those subscribing to the new, negative racial attitudes, they may avail themselves of a legacy of managerial teachings that explicitly support the notion that factors, such as race are legitimate and useful criteria on which to base hiring and promotion decisions” (Brief et al., 1997, p. 62).

The GCC (1994) posits that negative race and gender attitudes are reinforced through embedded cultural norms. These norms provide minimal organizational and collegial support to address institutional practices that adversely impact women and minorities. Alderfer et al. (1980) examined race relations in organizational systems. The study collected data on HR decisions across management groups. The study found that race relations were positively associated with a set of systemic conditions. “With the changing demographics of the workforce, a new era of race and gender relations has begun. It is no longer a matter of organizations putting up barriers that keep women and minorities out of these organizations; it is one of removing blockades so that women and minorities not only enter the organization, but land on tracks carrying those with talent up through the organization” (Calvert, 2006, p. 31). The removal of such barriers is critical in dismantling an organizational culture that perpetuates the segregation of women and minorities in the federal workforce.
Occupational Segregation

Occupational segregation distorts the effectiveness of organizational structures, as it promotes discriminatory practices. This prevents the progression of women and minorities to certain positions (James, 2000). The notion of organizational discrimination contends that personnel practices, job descriptions, and mobility ladders prevent the occupational advancement of particular groups by segregating them to lower-echelon ranks (Sneed, 2005). According to the OPM (2011a), approximately 27.5% of African Americans reside in clerical occupations and 18.2% in administrative occupations. However, only 10.4% of African Americans reside in professional occupations across the federal workforce. Reskin and Roos (1987) suggest that occupational segregation is best understood within the broader context of status hierarchies.

The GCC (1994) examined intergroup dynamics and intragroup dynamics, as it relates to occupational segregation. “Intragroup dynamics” refer to behaviors and interactions employed in the same environment between members of the same group in which both explicit and implicit rules govern group behavior and conditions for membership. These rules include norms, traditions, language, communication patterns, and formal interactions and informal interactions. “Intergroup dynamics” refer to interactions between two different groups. The study found that the historical context of both groups greatly influenced their current relationships. These relationships often revolved around the availability of resources, power, and hierarchical status. As such, the subordinate group struggles for accessibility to the same privileges and rewards easily available to members within the dominant group. Women and minorities, particularly African American women, are regarded as the subordinate group across the federal government. This is the result of their lower earnings, job status, and authority levels (Bell et al., 2002a; Sneed, 2004).
According to Duke (1992), occupational segregation is the result of the federal government’s failure to enforce affirmative action and EEO laws. This prohibits discrimination against protected groups, such as African American women (Duke, 1992). “Occupational segregation becomes a matter for public policy. Governmental intervention may be required to alter the incentives that employers face in their decisions to hire, fire, and promote employees. Laws and regulations may be needed to address problems of discrimination in employment practices and public education may be necessary to amend cultural stereotypes” (Sneed, 2004, p. 31). Occupational segregation is a public policy concern, as occupational type impacts representative bureaucracy and policy outcomes. This is demonstrated by senior leadership’s influence in the policy-making process (Sneed, 2004). Occupation type is also critical for accessibility to high-quality, high-compensatory jobs that foster political, social, and economic advancement (Sneed, 2004).

Wage Inequity

Occupational segregation results in the disproportionate representation of women and minorities in low-compensatory occupations (Grodsky & Pager, 2001; Olfert, 2006). Occupational segregation results in pay inequity. This is evidenced by the overrepresentation of White men in higher-paying positions (Cohen & Huffman, 2003). Several issues related to compensatory inequity remain today. The current weekly median income for fulltime, female professionals is approximately 71 percent of their male counterparts (Bell et al., 2002b). Gender segregation accounts for approximately one-third of the earnings gap between men and women (Kramer & Lambert, 2001). The concept of “gender devaluation” suggests that work performed by women is less-rewarded, whereas work performed by their male counterparts is awarded more
worth and prestige. Arulampalam et al. (2007) define the “sticky floor” as a situation in which the compensation gap across gender groups widens at the bottom of the wage distribution because a population is stuck to the lower levels of the organization. According to Guy (2003), women are generally segregated to low-earning, administrative positions and plagued by domestic constraints, as a result of cultural constructs.


In 1963, the Equal Pay Act was passed as a component of the New Frontier Program (NFP) within an amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) of 1938. The legislation was designed to resolve gender-based wage disparity (Kellough, 1992). During that time, female employees earned approximately 59 percent as much as their male counterparts (EEOC, 1963). “As women entered men’s careers like management, women still earned less than men, even when controlling for factors like experience, education, and hours worked” (Schneer & Reitmen, 2002, p. 26). Alkadry and Tower (2006) conclude that achieving comparable worth at the
federal level is unlikely because federal courts have ruled that existing antidiscrimination laws do not require comparable worth.

**Private Sector**

Issues of comparable worth and the underrepresentation of women and minorities are not relegated to the federal government. For instance, Tomaskovic-Davey et al. (2006) examined segregation trends based on race and gender in the private sector. The study estimated regression-based decompositions in segregation trends and desegregation trends. The study used the DIndex to measure segregation using EEO-1 reports from 1966 to 2003. The study found that in addition to desegregation caused by changes in the composition of the population across private sector firms, there was legitimate institution-level desegregation since 1964. Past studies have focused on pay distributions among women and minorities in corporate America. However, few studies focused on the phenomenon in the federal government (Witherspoon, 2009). Past studies demonstrate that pay differentials in the private sector are highly segregated by gender, as comparable employees in male-dominated occupational categories earn a higher wage than those in female-dominated occupations. More scholarly research is necessary to help the federal government compete with private sector organizations amid the aging federal workforce.

While women account for approximately 50 percent of the corporate workforce, they only constitute 11 percent of senior management positions and 2 percent of corporate board seats in Fortune 500 companies. African American women only account for approximately 5 percent of management positions in corporate organizations, with less than 1 percent accounting for corporate executive positions (Catalyst, 2008). Women hold approximately 15 executive officer
positions in Fortune 500 companies, of which only one is an African American woman (Greaux, 2010). This occupational differential between women and minorities is attributed to lagging promotion rates. Kalev et al. (2006) employed a longitudinal quantitative methodology to examine the effectiveness of diversity management practices across the private sector. The study analyzed workforce data for 708 private organizations from 1971 to 2002 and conducted 833 surveys, 41 in-person interviews, and 20 telephone interviews with HR managers. Kalev et al. (2006) concluded that diversity outcomes are associated with a robust strategic planning process.

**Strategic Planning**

The strategic planning process is commonly used to reaffirm the organization’s commitment to growing and sustaining a diverse working environment. In the 1950s, the RAND Corporation\(^\text{18}\) introduced strategic planning. Strategic planning was designed as a science to direct large-scale military operations by maneuvering forces into the most advantageous position prior to actual engagement with the enemy. "Strategic planning" is defined as a disciplined process to identify and address internal strengths and weaknesses, evaluate the external environment and position the organization accordingly, produce decisions and actions, and help the organization capitalize upon opportunities (Dalrymple, 2007). A strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis is commonly used to inform development of strategic plans. This analysis identifies internal strengths and weaknesses through the assessment of the organizational mission and vision, as well as associated roles, values, and cultures.

\(^{18}\) The Rand Corporation is a nonprofit, international think tank that helps improve policy and decision-making through research and analysis.
The purpose of a strategic plan is to align the organization with its environment and develop a course of action that provides a roadmap to success (Dalrymple, 2007). It helps facilitate communication and participation, while accommodating divergent values, fostering analytic decision-making, and promoting successful implementation (Nunez, 2003). Strategic plans serve as an instrument to establish priorities, design action items, assess progress towards organizational goals, and achieve organizational success through a vision that aligns to the mission, target audience, and outcome. According to Ghoneim (2012), strategic planning is important for organizations to assess the degree to which their mission has been achieved.

Strategic planning is commonly described by the following four characteristics: 1.) long-term planning; 2.) organizational stability during climate change; 3.) focus on organizational mission; and 4.) identification of priorities for change and collectivity in the distribution of roles and responsibilities (Feddema, 1992). Since the 1970s, the process of strategic planning has evolved into a tool to define the purpose and policies of an organization and its business (Rue & Fulmer, 1973). Strategic planning is most effective when implemented as an integral part of organizational decision-making – not as a separate process (Dalrymple, 2007).

While various models of strategic planning have emerged, the most common strategic planning process includes the following five components: 1.) mission; 2.) vision; 3.) goals; 4.) objectives; and 5.) measurements (Dalrymple, 2007). The mission statement is a concise statement that explicitly captures the organization’s purpose and character by defining its future strategic direction (Schmidtlein, 1990). The vision statement is a clear and persuasive statement of the organization’s future aspirations. The goals are characteristics that are necessary for mission and vision accomplishment. The objectives are detailed, action-oriented strategies. The measurement of data is used to evaluate the organization’s performance. In support of the vision
and mission, measurable goals and objectives must be defined to provide an overarching aim of what the institution wants to accomplish (Dalrymple, 2007). The strategic planning process includes assessments, which are used to measure the organization’s progress towards achieving its stated goals and objectives. Dalrymple (2007) argues that the assessment phase receives inadequate attention in the strategic planning process. The evaluation of strategic plans is not often undertaken, and when it is, it fails to capture actual evidence of improved outcomes (Mintzberg, 1994).

Kriemadis and Theakou (2007) issued a call for further research on the impact of strategic planning on operational outcomes within organizations. Ghoneim (2012) posits that the relationship between strategic planning and organizational performance has been scarcely examined in the federal government. In response to this apparent lack in evaluation of strategic plans, this dissertation will assess strategic documents to determine if Commerce made a stated goal to improve the underrepresentation of women and minorities across its workforce, and if so, if it made progress towards this goal.

**U. S. Department of Commerce Strategic Planning**

Past studies suggest that when organizations alter their policies and programs, they experience greater levels of race and gender balance. This is demonstrated through an increase in minority employment shares in subsequent years (Sneed, 2005). Strategic planning directly supports Commerce’s goal to establish itself as “a model ‘employer of choice’ by building and retaining a workforce that reflects the diversity found throughout America” (Commerce, 2008b, p. 1). The agency established policies and programs to drive its stated commitment to workforce diversity, based on a standard for success (Commerce, 2010a). This standard has been used to
inform development of several agency-specific strategic documents, which hereinafter are referenced based on the designated naming convention as shown in Table 3. According to Wheeler (1998), workforce diversity is a legitimate business issue, which needs to be assessed through metrics. The measurement of diversity is more than the bottom line; it is about assessing and driving organizational change and associated outcomes. Wheeler (1998) posits that analytic tools must be used to ensure the creation, management, valuation, and leveraging of a diverse workforce in support of organizational effectiveness and sustained competitiveness. The effective management of diversity is necessary for competitive advantage. According to Barrett (2012), workforce diversity drives competition by increasing information sharing, enhancing problem-solving capacities, and driving higher-quality decision-making. Kreitz (2007) posits that organizations need to use the competitive advantage of workforce diversity to survive in the twenty-first century. “The benefit of diversity management is the enhancement of the organization’s ability to compete more effectively, foster better organizational structures and policies, improve recruitment, development, and retention efforts, improve responsiveness to social and demographic changes, reduce litigation, create a climate of equity and equality, and promote appreciation of differences among cultures” (Wilburn, 1999, p. 38).

Thomas and Ely (1996) posit that workforce diversity and increasing representation among women and minorities is a critical strategic HR management issue. Diversity management can be leveraged as a HR strategy to effectively manage a diverse workforce. This can help create a competitive advantage and attract the best talent (Barrett, 2012). According to Tshikwatamba (2003):
<p>| Document A | U. S. Department of Commerce Business Case for Diversity (2007a) details results from a benchmark analysis of high-performing agencies in the attraction and retention of the best talent. This document will help analyze the role of recruitment strategies in driving workforce diversity. |
| Document B | U. S. Department of Commerce Office of Human Resources Management Strategic Plan (2008a) maps the role of human resources management in the sustainment of a high-caliber workforce, which is directly aligned to the Human Capital Assessment and Accountability Framework. This document will help analyze the role of human resources management in driving and sustaining a quality, diverse workforce. |
| Document C | U. S. Department of Commerce Strategic Diversity Management Plan (2008b) details the agency’s management approach in the implementation of diversity initiatives. This document will help analyze the role of workforce diversity in actualizing the agency’s human capital vision. |
| Document D | U. S. Department of Commerce Strategic Management of Human Capital Recruitment and Diversity: Challenges and Plans (2005) details the agency’s outreach and recruitment approach to ensure the achievement and maintenance of a highly-skilled, diverse workforce. This document will help analyze the agency’s approach to workforce diversity through recruitment, retention, development, and promotions. |
| Document E | U. S. Department of Commerce Succession Management Plan (2010b) details the agency’s effort to ensure a continuous pipeline of leadership growth to address key human capital challenges. This document will help analyze the role of succession planning and management in addressing human resources demands, such as workforce diversity. |
| Document F | U. S. Department of Commerce Strategic Plan (2007b) details the agency’s alignment of its mission and vision with organizational goals and objectives in support of optimal performance. This document will help analyze how the department-wide mission and vision supports the agency’s management integration goal to sustain a quality, diverse workforce. |
| Document G | U. S. Department of Commerce White Paper on Minority Underrepresentation (2003) details the agency’s effort to exceed its standard to reduce underrepresentation among minorities across its workforce. This document will help analyze how the agency established a process to sustain diversity across its workforce, particularly in mission-critical occupations and leadership ranks. |
| Document H | U. S. Department of Commerce Workforce Restructuring Plan (2004b) details the agency’s effort to predict, analyze, and forecast workforce requirements. This document will help analyze the agency’s workforce restructuring process, as well as how it drives workforce diversity through alignment of its human capital system to a set of priorities based on mission themes, strategic goals, and performance measures. |</p>
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<th>Document</th>
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<td>I</td>
<td><em>U. S. Department of Commerce Diversity Plan</em> (1994b) details the agency’s revitalized approach to diversity. This document will help analyze the agency’s effort to educate stakeholders on the benefits of diversity, implement diversity initiatives, and increase diversity across the workforce.</td>
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<td>J</td>
<td><em>U. S. Department of Commerce Diversity Policy Statement</em> (1994a) details the agency’s effort to launch a comprehensive commitment to diversity. This document will help analyze the agency’s basic policy tenets, including inclusion, opportunity, comprehensiveness, accessibility, training, management, and evaluation and communication.</td>
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<td>K</td>
<td><em>U. S. Department of Commerce Strategic Plan</em> (1997) details the agency’s alignment of its mission and vision with organizational goals and objectives in support of optimal performance. This document will help analyze how the department-wide mission and vision supports the agency’s management integration goal to sustain a quality, diverse workforce.</td>
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<td>L</td>
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<td>M</td>
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Human resource management is geared towards redressing and rebalancing the imbalances towards reaping the fruits of effectively managed diversity. Managing the people side of the organization creates value for any establishment as well as the workforce itself and ultimately value for the society...Managing diversity is a systematic and comprehensive managerial process for developing an organizational environment in which all employees, with their similarities and differences, can contribute to the strategic and competitive advantage of the organization, and where no one is excluded on the basis of factors unrelated to productivity (p. 4).

McMillan-Capehart and Simerly (2008) suggest that the impetus to focus on diversity management from a HR standpoint developed from the literature review. The literature review found an insufficient correlation on the impact of HR practices on workforce diversity (McMillan-Capehart & Simerly, 2008). “The effective use of HR practices should have a greater impact on [firm] performance beyond the simple existence of HR practices” (Richard & Johnson, 2001, p. 299). It is the role of HR management to identify strategies and establish implementation parameters to sustain workforce diversity. This must be reinforced through organizational policies and processes that define how employees operate (Kreitz, 2007).

According to Richard and Johnson (2001), “The interest of strategic management in examining the role of human resources as value-added has evolved to broaden the focus...to a macro (e.g., organizational effectiveness focus) or strategic approach” (p. 299).

Ghoneim (2012) posits that organizational success is dependent on the organization’s ability to build and sustain diversity through commitment, strategy, communication, and concrete changes in organizational structures and processes. A key ingredient to organizational success is an organization’s ability to strategically utilize its workforce and leverage it as a competitive advantage (Hubbard, 2006; Young, 2007). Pfeffer (1994) posits that sustained competitive advantage emanates from effective workforce management. This should enhance the organization’s competitive position by developing a human capital infrastructure that contributes to economic value – regardless of race and/or gender. Wilburn (1999) suggests that workplace
discrimination and demographic trends contribute to marginalization. This results in diversity issues in organizations. However, more progressive organizations value diversity as a strategic tool that can be leveraged to ensure a competitive advantage (Wilburn, 1999). Cox and Blake (1991) argue that diversity is important to HR management in the contemporary global economy, as businesses struggle to maintain a competitive advantage in the marketplace. Moreover, Bullock-Strickling (2001) suggests that a significant barrier to career advancement among African American women is HR policies and practices that systematically restrict opportunities for upward mobility. Perry (2009) called for more research comparing the efficacy of HR policies and practices across contexts using both quantitative and qualitative methods. This study's triangulated analysis will help assess Commerce's ability to explicitly articulate and fulfill its strategic commitment to workforce diversity by increasing the underrepresentation of African American women.

Strategic Alignment

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the HCAAF is a robust framework of human capital policies, programs, and practices designed to ensure alignment of an agency's vision with its strategic plan. According to the OPM (2012b), organizational effectiveness is achieved when the agency's strategic plan establishes an agency-wide vision that guides planning and investments to impact mission accomplishment. "Strategic alignment" is defined as a system of human capital management strategies aligned to the agency mission, vision, goals, and objectives through the analysis, planning, investment, measurement, and management of human capital programs (OPM, 2012b). The HCAAF describes the strategic alignment system as the identification and management of both human and material resources that are critical to the
success of the agency’s strategic goals. The strategic alignment system supports the collection and review of strategic documents and workforce data to serve as a critical success factor of human capital success (OPM, 2012b). Richard and Johnson (2001) found a gap in research measuring the effectiveness of human capital and HR management as drivers of organizational performance. This dissertation is yet another endeavor to measure Commerce’s strategic alignment system through documented evidence of planning and performance (OPM, 2012b).

In recent years, the agency made noteworthy strides to develop and track performance measures. For instance, it established a balanced scorecard to measure its quarterly performance by aligning agency-wide themes, goals, and objectives to bureau-level goals and measures. These are tracked against outcome and activity-related targets, actuals, plans of action, and milestones. The “balanced scorecard” is a strategic planning and management system that helps align business activities to the vision and strategy of the organization, improve internal communications and external communications, and monitor organizational performance against strategic goals (BSI, 2012). The overall intent of the balanced scorecard is to ensure mission accomplishment by aligning the organizational strategy to core business processes, customer processes, financial processes, and employee development (Ghoneim, 2012).

The balanced scorecard aligns to the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993. This legislation requires the federal government to report on program results. The GPRA identifies human capital as a critical component in meeting agency-wide performance goals. According to Ghoneim (2012), “the payoffs of managing human capital strategically have to be measured in terms of employees’ continuous learning and growth potential which is one of the key performance measurement indicators presented by the balanced scorecard” (p. 5). Ghoneim (2012) supports the assessment of organizational effectiveness using a
multidimensional approach to performance measurement based on the balanced scorecard methodology. The agency has utilized the balanced scorecard to support its goal to recruit, retain, and develop a high-performing, diverse workforce with the critical skills necessary for mission success (Commerce, 2010a).

While the balanced scorecard helped the agency make progress towards tracking its outcomes, this dissertation will provide a more robust evaluation of its ability to strategically align documented evidence of planning and performance. Locke and Latham (2005) introduced goal setting theory, which posits that there is a positive, linear relationship between “hard” goals and performance. The effectiveness of goal setting is highly relevant across HR management and organizational behavior literature (Locke & Latham, 2005). The literature has found an inseparable link between setting “hard” goals and workplace performance (Locke & Latham, 2005). According to Locke and Latham (2005), vague goals that are expressed as a general instruction have less motivational value to drive improved organizational performance. Meyer (2003) described these goals as specific, measurable, attainable, realistic/relevant, and timely/time-bound, also known as S. M. A. R. T. goals. “Specific” refers to goals that are clear and unambiguous. “Measurable” refers to goals that measure progress towards attaining an intended outcome. “Attainable” refers to goals that are in reach and aligned to standard performance. “Realistic and/or relevant” refers to goals that are aligned to other goals. “Timely and/or time-bound” refers to goals that establish a sense of urgency. While the agency developed workforce diversity goals, the development of such goals does not indicate if they are “hard” and effective in nature. This dissertation will adapt Meyer’s (2003) diagnostic questions to measure the specificity, measurability, and timeliness of goals within each strategic document.
This study will not capture the attainability and realism/relevance of each strategic document due to the high level of subjectivity associated with each category.

**Theoretical Framework**

*Critical Theory*

The Frankfurt School\(^{19}\) introduced critical theory as a school of thought. Critical theory critiques society and culture through the application of knowledge in social science and humanities. Habermas (1989) furthered critical theory as a matrix between enlightenment and social theory. Habermas' (1989) intellectual contributions are oriented in the theoretical traditions of Max Weber\(^{20}\), Karl Marx\(^{21}\), and Georg Hegel\(^{22}\). They center on promoting the importance of knowledge and thought in the development of history and social culture through dialectical philosophies. Habermas (1989) introduced the following three domains of knowledge: 1.) technical; 2.) practical; and 3.) emancipatory. These domains explain how critical theory furthers the dialectical concept of knowledge. It suggests that knowledge is acquired through a continuous historical process of ontological and epistemological reciprocity (Finlayson, 2005). The technical domain refers to strategies used to control and manipulate an environment, also known as instrumental action. The practical domain refers to human social interaction, based on consensual norms and reciprocal behavior among individuals, also known as communicative action. The emancipatory domain refers to the process of developing self-awareness, self-knowledge, self-reflection, and self-emancipation to inform transformed consciousness, also known as reification. Critical theory is embedded in the domain of

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\(^{19}\) Frankfurt School is a school of neo-Marxist interdisciplinary social theory.  
\(^{20}\) Max Weber (1864 – 1920) was a German philosopher credited with development of social theory and social research.  
\(^{21}\) Karl Marx (1818 – 1883) was a German philosopher credited with development of social sciences.  
\(^{22}\) Georg Hegel (1770 – 1831) was a German philosopher credited with development of absolute idealism.
emancipation, as it posits that ideology results in the distortion of reality to perpetuate false consciousness and reifies the power of domination (Habermas, 1985).

Critical theory is considered “critical” because of its intent to liberate human beings through knowledge (Horkeimer, 1982). According to Braaten (1991), critical theory seeks “to end coercion and the attainment of autonomy through reason, the end of alienation through a consensual harmony of interests, and the end of injustice and poverty through the rational administration of justice” (p. 111). The effectiveness of critical theory hinges on its ability to correctly understand and improve sociopolitical conditions (Finlayson, 2005). As such, critical theory must have pragmatic use – not just theoretical.

Critical theory recognizes that the circumstance of power and development of knowledge are indissolubly intertwined (Habermas, 1985). Critical theory provides the descriptive and normative basis for social inquiry. It aims to decrease domination by increasing freedom in all forms (Bohman, 2005). Habermas (1985) sought to identify the social and institutional conditions that foster autonomy in democratic institutions. Habermas (1985) urged for the dismantling of discriminatory social conditions in the public sphere because of its role in democratic polity. The public sphere is a space in which individuals should be able to participate as equals in pursuit of the truth and common good (Habermas, 1985). Habermas (1985) understood that epistemic liberation in the public sphere is critical in maintaining a democracy committed to liberty, rationality, truth, and equality – regardless of standing, status, class, race, and gender.

_Feminist Theory_
In 1893, the women's suffragist movement began in New Zealand. It gained momentum in the United States approximately 20 years later with the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment\(^2\). The movement sought to redress disenfranchisement based on gender. The byproduct of the women's suffragist movement was feminist theory. Feminist theory emerged as an ideological movement for sociopolitical change among women (Offen, 1988). Feminist theory is embedded in the philosophical tenets of standpoint theory (Smith, 1987). A standpoint epistemology suggests that knowledge is distinctly subjective depending on the social conditions under which it is produced (Mann & Kelley, 1997). Standpoint theory posits that an individual's knowledge is determined by their position in society (Smith, 1987). Smith (1987) argues that no one should take their standpoint for granted, no one is capable of complete, objective knowledge, and no two people have exactly the same standpoint. According to Applerouth and Edles (2010), "Smith links a neo-Marxist concern about structures of domination with a phenomenological emphasis on consciousness and the active construction of the taken-for-granted world" (p. 320).

Feminist standpoint theory provides the epistemological tools necessary to apply sociocultural perspectives on race, gender, and discourse. However, an inherent problem with feminist standpoint research is its over-concern with issues of White, middle-class women (Collins, 2000; Witherspoon, 2009). According to Applerouth and Edles (2010):

Collins was particularly influenced by Dorothy Smith, as is evident in her concept of standpoint epistemology, which she defines as the philosophic viewpoint that what one knows is affected by the standpoint one has in society. Collins extends the critical, phenomenological, feminist ideas of Dorothy Smith by illuminating the particular epistemological standpoint of Black women. Yet, Collins does not merely add the empirical dimension of 'race' to Smith's feminist, critical, phenomenological framework. Rather, take a post-structural, postmodern turn, Collins emphasizes the 'interlocking' nature of the wide variety of status – for example, race, class, gender, nationality, sexual orientation – that make up our standpoint (p. 320).

\(^2\) The Nineteenth Amendment declared that the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on the account of sex.
The twentieth century saw an epistemological evolution in the feminist movement (Applerouth & Edles, 2010). In 1949, De Beauvoir authored the classic manifesto, *The Second Sex*. The manifesto posits that women are defined and differentiated with reference to men because she is incidental and nonessential. De Beauvoir’s (1949) argument is that man is the absolute subject, whereas the woman is deemed as “other.” Another seminal text is Friedan’s (1963) *The Feminist Mystique*. The text rests on the philosophical thesis that women operate under a pervasive system of delusion and false values, which inextricably binds them to the role of “wife” and “mother.” Feminist theory does not intend to vacate these patriarchal roles. It seeks to expand understanding of the women’s capacity for political and intellectual discourse (Offen, 1988). Considering, feminist theory aims to advance consciousness on institutionalized inequities against women through advocacy and eliminate injustice. This is achieved by challenging prevailing institutions that perpetuate coercive power.

*Critical Race Theory*

Similar to feminist theory, critical race theory emerged as an ideological advocate for human autonomy and freedom. It confronted the historic inequities in political and socioeconomic power among certain race and gender groups (Offen, 1988). Critical race theory draws from the philosophical tenets of critical theory, as it emphasizes the culture of action (Solorzano, 1997; Stickle, 2001). According to Delgado and Stefancic (2006), critical race theory builds on feminist theory, as it seeks to explain the relationship between power and domination and the construction of social roles. Critical race theory emerged in the wake of the Civil Rights Movement24 to address subtle forms of racism and the pragmatic consequences of

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24 Civil Rights Movement (1955 – 1968) was a sociopolitical movement for equality aimed at prohibiting racial discrimination against African Americans.
legal studies, radical feminism, and social theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2006). In the 1980s, a group of progressive legal scholars developed critical race theory as a theoretical framework to eliminate racism through social justice (Gomez, 2005). “Critical race theory” is defined as the examination of transformational relationships between race, racism, and power based on the foundations of enlightenment and rationalism, legal reasoning and constitutional law, and equality and equity (Delgado & Stefancic, 2006). The distinction between equality and equity confounds the issue of addressing disparities between race and gender groups. Equality encourages equal outcomes for all individuals regardless of differences. Equity supports different outcomes for different individuals. According to Hunt (2011), the inequalities imposed by sociocultural perceptions do not act independent of one another, but instead are interrelated and result in discrimination against minorities.

Critical race theory is best described as a framework of perspectives, research methodologies, and pedagogical philosophies. It seeks to identify, analyze, and transform structures that perpetuate marginalization. It rejects the Anglo-Saxon experience as the normative standard, suggesting that the social context of racial discrimination is critical to understanding race-related dynamics. Critical race theory suggests that the phenomenon of “race” and “racism” is endemic, permanent, and central to critical race analysis (Solarzano, 1997). Considering the endemic nature of race and racism, critical race theory rejects the claim that systemic rationality, objectivity, meritocracy, color-blindness, neutrality, and equal opportunity takes precedence over self-interest, power, and privilege (Stickle, 2001). It seeks to not only explain the context within which race and racism operate, but also attempts to redress social inequities – which makes it “critical” (Collins, 2000). Critical race theory recognizes that marginalization does not operate in a vacuum. It considers interdisciplinary perspectives to
capture both the historical and contemporary context of race and racism. It understands that the experience of all marginalized groups are legitimate, appropriate, and a critical frame of reference (Solorzano, 1997).

Theory of Intersectionality

Crenshaw (1989) introduced the theory of intersectionality to address the phenomenological experience of African American women because it was not adequately captured in extant critical discourse. Intersectionality serves as a novel link between critical methodology and feminist theory (Davis, 2008). The paradigm of intersectionality was a normal progression of critical race theory, as both are interdisciplinary with applicability across multiple audiences. Collins (2000) suggests that race and racism operate through gender, class, and sexual orientation, as systems of power. This causes contemporary critical race theory to rely upon and/or investigate these intersections. Regardless of its stated ambiguity, intersectionality is regarded as cutting edge in feminist theory. It is also regarded as the most critical contribution to women’s studies because of its theoretical and normative concern for differences among women (Davis, 2008; McCall, 2005). The theory of intersectionality helps explain the multidimensional modality of race, gender, class, and sexual orientation, which underlines social relationships and subject formations (McCall, 2005).

Intersectionality posits that traditional conceptualizations of discrimination interact and inform systematic social inequities. It addresses the manner in which racism, patriarchy, class, and other discriminatory systems create inequities that structure the relative position of women and minorities. Knapp (2005) characterizes intersectionality as a trilogy of discrimination based on race, gender, and class. According to Yuval-Davis (2006), intersectionality analyzes the
production of power and processes between race and gender groups by examining social
hierarchies and cultural hierarchies within different discourses. An intersectional approach to
analyzing the disempowerment of marginalized groups captures the consequences of the
interaction between two or more social identities (Hunt, 2000). Intersectionality identifies
marginalization not only as an issue of race, gender, and class inequalities, but also a location
where there are often simultaneous and compounding relationships (Riley, 2004). Although race
and gender exist within separate spheres, they converge to create sociocultural limitations that
constrain the federal bureaucratic structure (Hunt, 2011). The context in which these limitations
exist are interlocking and often less visible in the workplace (Hunt, 2011). However, its
theoretical tenants have been challenged because of its use of multidimensional
conceptualizations to explain how social constructions interact and create sociocultural
hierarchies (Browne & Misra, 2003).

Intersectionality is a dominant paradigm in sociocultural studies. However, its full
capacity has not yet been realized (Bell et al., 2002a). Intersectionality provides a conceptual
framework to examine the social location of individuals and groups within interlocking
structures of discrimination (Cook & Glass, 2008; Riley, 2004). Considering, it is impossible to
avoid the additive assumption implicit in the measurement and analysis of intersectionality
(Cook & Class, 2008). A general issue that afflicts intersectionality is the epistemic status of
difference and its failure to provide a coherent conceptual framework and methodology to
capture multidimensional realities (Butler, 1999; Knapp, 2005; Gressgård, 2008; McCall, 2005).
Cook and Glass (2008) suggest that while the interdependent, multidimensional, and mutually
constitutive relationships that serve as the paradigmatic core of intersectionality contradict
positivist assumptions, there remains a need to consider alternative theoretical approaches.
Black Feminist Thought

This dissertation acknowledges the criticality in considering an alternative theoretical approach that represents a post-positivist ontological stance. It also acknowledges the need to use an approach that is equipped to provide theoretical explanations on the multilayered and complex issues of race and gender. A critical theory must demonstrate evidence of false consciousness, which has led to a social crisis that requires reeducation to ensure transformative action (Parker, 2008). As mentioned in Chapter 1, the intent of critical theory development is to stimulate thought and raise consciousness among a subordinated group to overthrow a given social order or condition. It must, in short, empower them as its goal (Parker, 2008). While extant critical theory attempts to redress past issues of exclusion, its “catchall” approach to ensure universal applicability is limiting. Black feminist thought was developed as a critical theory based in the voice of African American women (Hylton, 2012). “While some traditional theories provide frameworks that are adaptable enough to conform to any group’s development, Black feminist thought is more specific in its integration, validation, and centering of Black women’s unique realities, perceptions, and experiences” (Easley, 2011, p. 51). As a critical theory, Black feminist thought aims to empower African American women within the context of social justice (Collins, 2000).

Black feminist thought operates within the context of critical theory because it “encompasses bodies of knowledge and sets of institutional practices that actively grapple with the central questions facing U. S. Black women as a collectivity” (Collins, 1990, p. 9). As it relates to this study, Black feminist thought helps address these central questions. This study employs Black feminist thought as its theoretical lens because it offers a framework to address
the research questions by capturing the distinct experience of African American female professionals. Hylton (2012) posits that Black feminist thought provides a theoretical explanation of "what is going on" among African American women. Collins (2009) posits that Black feminist thought expands the focus of analysis from describing similarities and differences among systems of domination by placing a greater focus on how they interconnect. However, Black feminist thought not only seeks to explain the *how* and *why* of unjust situations experienced by African American women. It also seeks to rectify systems that contribute to their marginalization as a social group (Haywood, 2009). Applerouth and Edles (2011) suggest that Black feminist thought equips African American women with the conceptual tools necessary to resist domination at individual, community, and institutional levels.

According to Witherspoon (2009), the intersectional experience of African American women is more powerful than the sum of race and gender as independent variables. While it can be argued that race and gender are not the most fundamental systems of domination, they have historically demonstrated the most profound impact on African American women (Collins, 2009). "Black feminist epistemology is therefore grounded in intellectual traditions, experiences, and identities of Black women whose intersections of race and gender are key factors" (Choates, 2012, p. 36). Any observation that does not consider this intersection cannot accurately address the manner by which African American women are subordinated as members of both women groups and minority groups (Crenshaw, 1989). It is appropriate for this study to employ Black feminist thought as its theoretical framework because it acknowledges the "both/and" conceptual stance of race and gender. This dichotomy directly influences the experience of African American women. Black feminist thought suggests that the efficacy of
African American women is contingent on the premise of the “both/and” ideology, as they exist as both African Americans and women (Choates, 2012).

Hunt (2011) posits that the concept of Black feminist thought assumes that while an African American woman’s epistemology exists, its contours may not be clear to African American women themselves. According to Applerouth and Edles (2011):

Black feminist thought can create collective identity among African American women about the dimensions of a Black women’s standpoint. Through the process of rearticulation, Black feminist thought can offer African American women a different view of ourselves and our worlds. By taking the core themes of a Black women’s standpoint and infusing them with new meaning. Black feminist thought can stimulate a new consciousness that utilizes Black women’s everyday, taken-for-granted knowledge. Rather than raising consciousness, Black feminist thought affirms, rearticulates, and provides a vehicle for expressing in public a consciousness that quite often already exists. More important, this rearticulated consciousness aims to empower African American women and stimulate resistance (p. 343-344).

This notion contradicts prevailing additive models that consider an “either/or” dichotomy and primarily capture Anglo-Saxon, masculinist experiences (Collins, 2009). “Embracing a both/and conceptual stance moves us from additive, separate systems approaches to oppression and toward what I now see as the more fundamental issue of the social relations of domination” (Collins, 2009, p. 4). Collins (1990) argues that Black feminism is important as an epistemology because African American women constitute a subordinated group. Considering, so long as African American women continue to encounter marginalization due to the intersection of race and gender, Black feminism will remain as a theoretical need (Galloway, 2012).

Black feminist thought is considered a critical theory because its theoretical premise is the post-positivist examination of social phenomenon to ensure reification. Curry (2006) issued a call to Black feminist intellectuals to advance facts and theories to clarify the experience of African American women and ensure their edification (Hunt, 2011). Hooks (1984) urged scholars to recognize the distinct vantage point of African American women because
conventional social sciences had analyzed discrete cultural categories without regard for populations experiencing multiple forms of discrimination (Harris, 2004). W. E. B. DuBois’ (1903) seminal work, *The Souls of Black Folk*, first introduced the psychosocial dilemma of African Americans with the concept “double consciousness.” DuBois (1903) likened the state of double consciousness to an impossible dilemma of “two souls, two thoughts, two unrecognized strivings, two warring ideals in one dark body” (p. 299). Since DuBois (1903) articulated the tensions inherent in the process of identity development for African Americans, several scholars have introduced a multitude of theories. These theories have further described the processes by which descendants of enslaved Africans in a race-based American society develop and come to consciousness about their racial identity (Parker, 2008).

Spelman (1982) suggests that it is quite misleading to imply that African American women and White women are equally subordinated as women because she shares the latter, but not the former. Darity (1998) argues that African American women face the dual burden of both institutionalized race and gender discrimination in the workplace. Stewart (1831) argued, “How long shall the fair daughters of Africa be compelled to bury their minds and talents beneath a load of pots and kettles” (p. 22). Stewart (1831) urged women to reject sources of discrimination through self-definition, self-reliance, self-awareness, and self-dependence (Collins, 1990; Hunt, 2011; Ritzer, 2007). Collins (1990) suggests that a stable sense of self-value and self-definition are necessary to combat discriminatory societal methods of domination. This is embodied in Sojourner Truth’s (1851) rallying cry for Black feminine identity with the statement “ain’t I a woman” (Jackson, 2009). Truth’s (1851) speech interrogated the intersection between her experiences as a woman who had born 13 children against her Black identity (Cook & Glass, 2008; Truth, 1851). Truth (1851) argued that “Black” did not mean “male” and that treatment of
African American women as such is a form of racial discrimination. Truth (1851) also warned of the danger in developing both race and gender identity models based on White, male ideals. Harper (1892) also recognized the distinction in Black identity models, suggesting that "out of the race must come its own thinkers and writers. Authors belonging to the White race have written good books, for which I am deeply grateful, but it seems to be almost impossible for a White man to put himself completely in our place. No man can feel the iron which enters another man's soul" (np). According to Hooks (1984), race and gender paradigms exist under an Anglo-Saxon, hegemonic patriarchy. This has resulted in the development of theoretical ideologies that ignore the circumstance of African American women – in favor of White women who seek parity with White men (Hooks, 1984). Witherspoon (2009) agreed, suggesting that the experience of African American women fell between the cracks. This is the result of researcher's generalization of the perceptions, problems, and issues of White women across the entire population of women.

In 1974, the Combahee River Collective (CRC) advanced the concept of "simultaneity." The concept articulates an awareness that the lived experience of African American women was shaped by the simultaneous influence of race, gender, class, and sexuality. The CRC was a minority, feminist, lesbian organization, which is heralded as the founder of Black feminism. The CRC challenged use of the term "women" as the sole determinant of female constructions (Hunt, 2011). This led to a profound revolution in feminist thought by disrupting traditional hegemonic feminist theories (Hunt, 2011). Hunt (2011) urged African American women to give voice to their own messages without a filter or interpretation by others. This was prompted by White feminist’s failure to examine whether their perspective on women’s reality is true to the lived experience of all women. "The feminist movement is not big enough, not inclusive enough
for women of color. Women of color occupy positions both physically and culturally marginalized within dominant society, and so methods must be targeted directly to them in order to reach them” (Lanehart, 2009, p. 5). Black feminist thought emerged due to a lack of consideration for race and/or other dimensions of structural discrimination in the theoretical contributions of White feminists (Hunt, 2011).

Collins (1989) introduced Black feminist thought as a specialized theory based on the core themes and common ethnographic experience of African American women (Harris, 2004). Collins (1989) constructed Black feminist thought as a philosophical explanation by and for African American women. Black feminist thought recognizes that the experience of African American women has been routinely distorted and/or excluded from traditional academic discourse (Collins, 1990). Black feminist thought is an epistemological alternative consisting of specialized knowledge. It was created by and for African American women and intends to clarify the experience of African American women (Collins, 1989). Black feminist thought is appropriate for this study because the researcher is an African American woman and the subject is African American female professionals. Both aspects align to the basic tenets of the theory, as it posits that the construction of Black feminist knowledge must be by and for African American women. “Collins’ conceptualization of Black feminist thought, like all specialized thought, reflects the interests and standpoint of its creators” (Applerouth & Edles, 2010, p. 321). However, Black feminist thought is a departure from traditional feminist theory and standpoint theory.

Black feminist thought supports the deconstruction of postmodern perspectives. It provides an ideological framework to analyze the interconnection of discrimination and domination in race, gender, and class systems (Harris, 2004). It helps explain how these social
systems foster a sustained status of marginalization for African American women (Byrd, 2008). Collins (1989) coined the term “matrix of domination”, which posits that society focuses on dichotomous differentials in the establishment of discriminatory hierarchical relationships.

“Stated more concretely, African American women, along with their multiple identities, dwell within matrices of domination that perpetuate subjugation. Thus, recognizing the particular experiences and histories of African American women calls for unconventional philosophies that link the contestation of power and oppression with broader social problems with the intention of social change” (Galloway, 2012, p. 1). The matrix emphasizes connections and interdependencies rather than single structures of inequality by examining the interlocking of discriminatory variables and the economic, political, and ideological conditions that support them (Collins, 1990). The utility of Black feminist thought rests on its ability to stimulate Afrocentric, feminist scholarship and create knowledge that empowers African American women in order to resist sites of domination. This is accomplished by introducing the African American women’s experience to a larger epistemological dialogue, particularly as it relates to the impact of the interdependency of race and gender (Collins, 2009).

Several adages have emerged to describe the perceived advantage afforded to African American women in the workplace. These include “half the price but twice as nice”, “two for the price of one”, and “bonus standing” (Cox & Nkomo, 1991). These concepts support the perception that African American women are afforded opportunities under the category of “African American” and/or “woman”. These concepts assume that they are more marketable and successful in the workforce than other disadvantaged groups, such as African American men and White women (Calvert, 2006). Black feminist thought considers race and gender as fluid descriptors that cannot be dismissed nor interchanged (Johnson, 2006). It posits that African
American women are denied the privilege of being African American or female – they are always both (Johnson, 2006). As such, race and gender are inextricably linked and heighten marginalization among African American women (Johnson, 2006). Black feminist thought assumes that African American women are twice as bad off than African American men and White women due to sexism and racism. It posits that they sit at a focal point where multiple exceptionally powerful and prevalent systems of discrimination intersect (Collins, 2000; Prins, 2006). Collins (1989) suggests that on certain dimensions African American women more closely resemble African American men; while on others, White women and others, they may stand apart from both groups. Black feminist thought shifts the focus of analysis from describing similarities and differences across systems of discrimination to attention on how they interconnect (Collins, 1986; Grodsky & Pager, 2001).

Russell et al. (1993) introduced the term “color complex” to capture intergroup differentials across minority groups. The color complex explains social stratification and stereotypic attitudes toward minorities based upon the “lightness” or “darkness” of their skin tone. Tamkin (2009) discussed “skin tone bias” and “colorism” to explain the preferential treatment of African Americans with lighter skin tones. Frazier (1957) discussed the relationship between skin tone and the Black bourgeoisie, suggesting that mulattoes lead a more privileged existence compared to their “pure Black” counterparts. Cole and Omari (2003) define “mulatto” as a segment of the African American population who by virtue of their lighter skin and blood relation to White slave owners receive preferential treatment. According to Tamkin (2009):

Lighter skinned slaves brought higher prices on the slave markets and were more likely than their darker skinned counterparts to be selected as a mistress for the White slave owner. The offspring of their often forced sexual union produced a child that was assigned to work in the house, in more socially desirable service positions. Lighter skinned slaves often had better clothing, speech, and mannerisms than dark skinned slaves. Lighter skinned slaves were believed to be more esthetically appealing to the
eyes of the White slave owner, and darker skinned slaves were seen as unfavorable. Darker skinned slaves were resigned to the more strenuously demanding, menial labor on the plantations. Further, the darker skinned slaves, who were disproportionately of African ancestry, remained largely unskilled throughout their enslavement and had less contact with the customs, language, and way of life in the larger White society. They generally experienced the harshest aspects of slavery (p. 11).

This relationship dates back to pre-colonial slavery as greater economic value was given to slaves with lighter skin (Keith & Herring, 1991). Light and dark skin slaves both recognized this color stratification. This often resulted in lighter skin slaves internalizing their prestige and appeal; while darker skin slaves internationalized inferiority and undesirability (Keith & Herring, 1991). According to Tamkin (2009), differential treatment based on skin tone continued after the Civil War, as lighter skin African Americans received better jobs and education. These differentials influenced the development of the following three stereotypic assumptions regarding African American women: 1.) mammy; 2.) jezebel; and 3.) sapphire. “Black women have been stereotyped as the ‘mammy’, the ‘matriarch’, the ‘welfare queen’, and the ‘jezebel.’ The common thread among these stereotypes is motherhood and work” (Steinbugler et al., 2006, p. 808). “Mammy” refers to African American women who are deferential to White power structures and perpetuate racial discrimination (Collins, 1989). The mammy is embedded in images of “matriarch” and “single mother”. This concept suggests that African American women either abandon their caregiver responsibilities or are inherently docile. African American women must negotiate the negative assumptions associated with single motherhood, such as welfare and sexual promiscuity (Calvert, 2006). “Jezebel” refers to African American women who reject the mammified image and are perceived as deviant, sexual beings. Contrary to the patriarchal image of White women as weak, dependent, passive, and monogamous; African American women are thought of as strong, dominant, and sexually promiscuous

25 Civil War (1861 – 1865) was a war between the North, also known as the “Union”, and the South, also known as the “Confederacy.”
(Calvert, 2006). According to Collins (1990), the jezebel image was used to relegate African American women to a sexually aggressive category, which provided rationale for sexual assaults by White men. "Sapphire" refers to African American women with feisty attitudes who exhibit dominating and emasculating behavior (Collins, 1990). These stereotypic images illustrate systematic attempts to control perceptions of African American women. These are divergent from what it is actually like to be an African American woman. Black feminist thought will help reveal how African American women cope and resist discrimination and work to confront such practices (Harris, 2004).

While research on women in management has emerged within the last 20 years, little attention has been given to minority women (Nkomo & Cox, 1989). Past studies show that when research does consider the experience of minority women, it primarily focuses on differentials between African Americans and Whites (Nkomo & Cox, 1989). According to Nkomo and Cox (1989):

Only fleeting reference is made to the case of Black women managers and the gender issue is typically subordinated to the race issue. As a result of these approaches, the study of Black women managers has fallen between the boundaries of these two research tracks. Black women managers are subsumed alternately under the category 'women or Blacks' while the combined category of Black women is often ignored. It is therefore important that researchers give attention to women from various racial and ethnic minority groups in order to provide a more complete picture of the experience of women in management (p. 825).

Cseh (2003) also found a significant absence in literature regarding the experience of women and minorities, power structures, racism and sexism, and social justice and change. "The works of these researchers do not speak specifically of the workplace difficulties of African American women...In addition, the data from several studies reveal the dissimilarity of the status of and advancement of African American women in comparison to White women. That is, the organizational experience for African American women operates differently than that of majority
women. However, few studies have explored the intricacies of the combined impact of race and gender on the organizational life of African American women as opposed to White women” (Combs, 2003, p. 386-387). Hooks (1984) posits that Black feminist thought has been marginalized in the literature. In particular, research on African American women receives inadequate attention in the field of public administration (Hooks, 1984). This dissertation employs Black feminist thought to capture whether, and to what extent, race and gender intersect to create dually discriminatory conditions for African American women in federal bureaucracy (Collins, 1990; Crenshaw, 1989; Ritzer, 2007). While Black feminist thought has been replaced by broader theoretical perspectives with general applicability across all women and minority groups, this study will employ Black feminist thought because it assumes that African American women possess a unique epistemology (Hunt, 2011).

This study responds to Grodsky and Pager’s (2001) insistence for focused analysis of African American women to recover fresh insights on prevailing concepts, paradigms, and epistemologies. Collins (1989) developed Black feminist thought under the notion that the experience of African American women should serve as the foundation of thought. This requires their ideas and experiences to be placed at the center of analysis. “Black feminist thought makes the intersection of race and gender for African American women the center of analysis in order to illuminate new possibilities for understanding other contentious social spaces” (Galloway, 2012, p. 2). Reimers (2006) insists that researchers reconsider independent and unilateral perspectives and seek multiple and diverse truths represented in African American women. Unfortunately, researchers often limit their focus to either race or gender differentials – not both. By neglecting the intersection of race and gender for African American women, scholars avoid the realities of both race and gender differences in power and privilege (Reimers, 2006). Black
feminist thought seeks to liberate African American women from structures of domination through an emphasis on the importance of power. This study embodies this theoretical perspective by suggesting that career mobility structures are evidenced through levels of segregation and representation, driven by elements of strategic planning, and critical to African American female professional’s accessibility to actual power and authority.

It is appropriate for this dissertation to select Black feminist thought as the overarching theoretical framework because an African American female researcher serves as the primary instrument. According to Applerouth and Edles (2010), “Black women are more likely to choose an alternative epistemology for assessing knowledge claims, one using different standards that are consistent with Black women’s criteria for substantiated knowledge and with criteria for methodology adequacy” (p. 334). This study’s use of Black feminist epistemology will help create knowledge that fosters an ideological truth to empower African American female professionals (Bell et al., 2002a; Collins, 1990). Collins (1990) posits that Black feminist thought can help resist institutionalized racism and sexism by dismantling discriminatory practices that interfere with equitable treatment towards African American female professionals within the federal government. This study directly aligns to Black feminist thought as it suggests that elements of strategic planning should contribute to correcting instances of inequitable treatment against African American women. This should be evidenced through positive trends in their employment within the federal workforce.

Summary
The literature review captured existing knowledge in areas germane to the impact of race, gender, and elements of strategic planning on job status among African American women across the federal workforce. The included topics were race and gender, antidiscrimination policy, diversity management, women and minorities in the workforce, employment discrimination, career advancement, glass ceiling, women and leadership style, African Americans and leadership style, organizational culture, occupational segregation, wage inequity, private sector, and strategic planning. This chapter also discussed the development of critical theory, including feminist theory, critical race theory, intersectionality, and Black feminist theory.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

It is important to research the career advancement of African American women in order for the federal government to realize the fullest potential of its workforce. Past studies confirm that a race and gender differential exists in the labor market (Powell & Butterfield, 1994; Wilkerson, 2008). The measurement of diversity will help determine the extent to which women and minorities are incorporated into the federal workforce (Guajardo, 1999). When data is available on demographic employment shares, researchers can assess whether race and gender groups are underrepresented, overrepresented, or proportionally represented in organizations (Collins, 1983). This study measures the employment shares of African American women to foster better understanding of whether strategic diversification efforts advance or inhibit their equitable representation across the federal workforce.

The intent of this dissertation is to determine if Commerce made a stated commitment to workforce diversity as evidenced through strategic documents, and if it fulfilled this commitment, with a particular impact on African American women. As stated in Chapter 1, this study attempts to answer the following three research questions: 1.) *Has the U. S. Department of Commerce established strategic documents that mention explicit strategies to drive its goal to sustain a diverse workforce?* If so, to what degree; 2.) *What is the relative state of representation and segregation among African American women and other women identity groups at the U. S. Department of Commerce?*; and 3.) *Is the level of representation among African American women higher in years following the development of strategic documents that establish workforce diversity goals?*
In order to analyze the job status of African American women, this mixed method study conducts a longitudinal trend analysis of segregation and representation levels over a 15 year period. This study also conducts a content analysis to further explore strategic and operational linkages traced over the time. According to England (1999), demographic composition is more pronounced at the organizational level. As such, this study uses Commerce as its subject. The remaining sections of this chapter advance components of the overall research design.

Case Study

A case study is commonly used to explore a program, event, process, or individual that is bound by time and/or activity (Yin, 2003). Case study research is used to answer explanatory inquiries (Yin, 2003). It is also used to explore and trace operational linkages over a time period (Yin, 2003). Yin (1984) defines case study research “as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (p. 23). A case study enables a close examination of data within a specific context (Zainal, 2007). This is generally a subject with a limited population (Zainal, 2007). The following five types of research are most common in case study research: 1.) exploratory; 2.) explanatory; 3.) interpretative; 4.) evaluative; and 5.) descriptive (McDonough & McDonough, 1997; Yin, 1984). Exploratory case studies explore phenomena through data, which serves as a point of interest to the researcher. Explanatory case studies examine data at both the macro and micro level in order to explain phenomena within the data. Interpretive case studies interpret data through conceptual categories, which support and/or challenge existing assumptions. Evaluative case studies consider the researcher’s judgment regarding phenomena observed within the data. Descriptive
case studies describe natural phenomena, which directly occur and are observed within the data. This study conducts a descriptive case study analysis to observe the role of elements of strategic planning as drivers of employment trends among African American women across the Commerce workforce. There are several advantages and disadvantages in using case study research (Zainal, 2007). Yin (1984) advanced the following three advantages of case study research: 1.) observation of phenomena within its contextual environment; 2.) use of both quantitative and qualitative analyses of data; and 3.) use of qualitative methods to explain complex phenomena not captured through experimental research. Despite these advantages, Yin (1984) also introduced the following three criticisms of case study research: 1.) lack of rigor; 2.) extensive time and resource requirements; and 3.) lack of scientific generalization. Nonetheless, the in-depth examination of a single case will reveal if the agency maintains an organizational culture that fosters the underrepresentation of women and minorities across its workforce.

Qualitative Analysis

Overview of Qualitative Analysis

The intent of this dissertation’s qualitative analysis is to measure the establishment of agency-wide strategies to drive workforce diversity within strategic documents. This study’s qualitative analysis will determine the plan of action within each strategic document. This is corroborated by quantitative findings to measure the agency’s success in achieving workforce diversity – specifically among African American women. This study’s qualitative analysis tests the following research question: Has the U. S. Department of Commerce established strategic documents that mention explicit strategies to drive its goal to sustain a diverse workforce? If so, to what degree? [See Appendix G: Overview of Analyses]. This research question examines if
strategic documents have included pragmatic strategies that are aligned to the agency’s goal to effectively drive workforce diversity. This research question assumes that while the agency may have established workforce diversity goals, it does not imply if these goals were considered as a key factor in strategic planning exercises. This research question is answered through the following set of strategic planning hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 1:** Strategic documents mention an explicit commitment to workforce diversity.

**Hypothesis 2:** Strategic documents establish workforce diversity goals that are specific, measurable, and timely/time-bound.

The strategic planning hypotheses are examined through a content analysis of strategic documents.

**Content Analysis**

Habermas (1985) introduced the theory of communication to serve as a dialectic model in understanding the continuity between modernity and human language. The communication theory posits that language is the vehicle for the most fundamental form of social action (Powell & Moody, 2003). According to Cox’s (2001) Model for Cultural Change, organizational change is contingent on cooperation and communication. Both components are necessary to ensure that the organizational mission is effectively articulated to stakeholders and included in strategic planning efforts. “Content analysis” is defined as the reduction of relevant and manageable data to identify patterns in communications (e.g., words; concepts; themes; phrases; characters) (Berelson, 1952). A content analysis will provide an objective, systematic, and quantitative description of textual material within communications. De Sola Pool (1959) first introduced
content analysis as an inherently quantitative technique to be used as the statistical semantic of political discourse. Content analysis is a preferred analytic technique because of its ability to define casual descriptions within content, demonstrate stimuli applied to the audience, maintain rigor, prevision, and exactitude in definitions and measurements, replicate procedures and findings, and test hypotheses drawn from broader theoretical frameworks (Franzosi, 2007).

Content analysis can be captured through both quantitative and qualitative methods (Shipley, 1997). A qualitative content analysis reviews material to inform hypothesis development, discover correlations, and observe characteristics. A quantitative content analysis measures the frequency of word occurrences. This dissertation selected a quantitative content analysis to capture and explain central aspects of social interaction (Busha & Harter, 1980). A content analysis is a descriptive and contextual approach that can appropriately capture the multilayered and complex issues of race and gender. This study conducts a content analysis in lieu of more commonly used qualitative, self-reporting methods, such as surveys, interviews, and focus groups. These methods lack the capacity to capture data in a non-obtrusive and non-reactive format (Grise-Owens, 2000).

Weber (1990) posits that there is no singular correct way to conduct a content analysis. The mode of analysis is an art form, which allows for a flexible and fluid exploration of text (Weber, 1990). This dissertation's content analysis process consists of the following four steps: 1.) discovering emergent themes and subthemes; 2.) selecting and hierarchically ordering themes; 3.) coding and analyzing themes; and 4.) linking themes to theoretical models (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). A limitation of content analysis is its inherent reduction to form inferential conclusions, which are drawn from the researcher's own interpretation of the text. Reasonable conclusions can be drawn from the data – but the question of proof remains (Busha & Harter,
Considering, the generalizability of conclusions from this study’s content analysis is dependent on how the researcher determines concepts (Busha & Harter, 1980). This study will conduct a content analysis to assess the agency’s ability to explicitly execute its commitment to workforce diversity. This will be operationalized during the quantitative analysis in order to examine the relationship of strategic documents with trends in representation and segregation among African American women.

Strategic Planning Hypotheses

To test the strategic planning hypotheses, this dissertation uses Ryan and Bernard’s (2003) free-flowing text approach. This approach is used to analyze each strategic document and segment the text into its most basic component—words. This approach is a purely descriptive method to conducting a word frequency analysis (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Word frequencies help discover patterns of ideas in the text, also known as themes. The frequency of codes is the simplest and most efficient way to analyze data in a content analysis, draw inferences, and interpret results (Holland, 1999). This study uses a word frequency analysis to reveal grammatical distillations. These help to identify important constructs and provide data for systematic comparisons across strategic documents.

This study uses a purposive sampling strategy to identify a corpus of strategic documents germane to the topic. “Purposive sampling” is defined as a form of non-probability sampling in which decisions regarding the sample is determined by the researcher (Oliver & Jupp, 2006). These decisions are based on a variety of criteria that is informed by the specialist knowledge of the researcher and/or the purpose of the study (Oliver & Jupp, 2006). The researcher will establish the sampling criteria for this study. The sampling criteria called for agency-specific
strategic documents that were published between FY 1994 through FY 2010. "Strategic
documents" are defined as, but not limited to, strategic plans, succession plans, human capital
plans, diversity plans, workforce plans, business cases, white papers, and/or technical reports.
The strategic documents had to make reference to the term "workforce diversity". The term
"workforce diversity" was selected because it best encapsulates the range of topics germane to
this study. The strategic documents also had to establish a strategic direction by providing an
understanding of the agency's strategic planning approach.

A total of 16 strategic documents met the sampling criteria. However, three documents
were omitted from the data source. The *Best Practices in Achieving Workforce Diversity
(2010), and *Workforce Diversity Report* (2007) were omitted because they were retrospective in
nature, which was not appropriate for this study. The agency only provided agency-wide
strategic documents and denied the request for bureau-level strategic documents. According to
the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), federal agencies are not required to create records to
comply with a request when it creates an undue burden on the agency. The data source does not
include bureau-level strategic documents because the agency indicated that in order to conduct a
search of all relevant files and records, which contains information responsive to the data request
and duplication of that information, would require individual data requests to each HR entity
across each bureau. This is due to the decentralized infrastructure of the organization. The
agency stated that it would cost approximately $8,000 to comply with my request for bureau-
level strategic documents. The agency also indicated that while more strategic documents may
have been developed that addressed workforce diversity in the 1990s, they failed to retain some
of those documents because they were developed prior to the advent of an electronic data management system.

The final sample consists of 13 agency-specific and agency-wide strategic documents (e.g., plans; policy statements; white papers; business cases) published between FY 1994 through FY 2010. The strategic documents include a mixture of one-time, action-oriented documents, which were developed on an as-needed basis (e.g., policy statements; white papers; business cases). The strategic documents also include regularly published documents, which were developed every five years (e.g., strategic plans; succession plans). The strategic documents consist of a total of 713 pages of text. While dimensions of workforce diversity include race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, and veterans, this dissertation primarily focuses on race and gender (Barrett, 2012). The unit of analysis is grammatical segments (e.g., words; phrases; sentences), which will identify repetitions of key terms within each strategic document (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). The literature review was used to inform development of a predetermined word list composed of key terms commonly associated with race, gender, strategic planning, and job status as shown in Table 4. The word list is used to identify key terms in each strategic document. The identification of key terms from the word list is used to measure the degree to which the agency provided explicit strategies to drive workforce diversity. This study assumes that the most frequently stated terms reflect the agency’s greatest concerns (Weber, 1990). The researcher also accepts derivations of each key term (e.g., “diverse”; “diversity”; “diversification”).

The software WordStat serves as the instrument. WordStat is a content analysis and text-mining program that provides keyword retrieval and coding capabilities. The researcher will conduct a line-by-line reading of each strategic document to identify processes, actions, and
TABLE 4. WORD LIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>• Affirmative Action</th>
<th>• Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• African American</td>
<td>• Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Alaska Native</td>
<td>• Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• American Indian</td>
<td>• Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Asian</td>
<td>• Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Black</td>
<td>• Minority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Caucasian</td>
<td>• Native Hawaiian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Demography</td>
<td>• Other Pacific Islander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discrimination</td>
<td>• Race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Diverse</td>
<td>• Representation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ethnicity</td>
<td>• Segregation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Equal</td>
<td>• Two or More Races</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Equity</td>
<td>• White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fair</td>
<td>• Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

consequences. The researcher will serve as the human coder to read and hand code the text. The researcher will use hand coding to identify emergent themes within each strategic document (Benoit, 2011). It is important for the researcher to manually code the text. According to Black feminist thought, the African American female experience must be theoretically explained by and for African American women. This study also uses Meyer’s (2003) diagnostic questions to measure the specificity, measurability, and timeliness of each strategic document. The researcher will develop an analysis worksheet to record answers in Microsoft Excel.

The remainder of this section provides a description of how emergent themes will be identified, coded, and conceptually displayed. First, each strategic document will be reviewed to identify emergent themes and subthemes. This analysis uses emergent themes and subthemes to identify patterns, relationships, commonalities, and differences across strategic documents. A series of scrutiny-based techniques will help discover emergent themes and subthemes, including cutting and sorting, key word in context, and word co-occurrence (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). “Cutting and sorting” refers to the identification and arrangement of substantive quotes through a
constant process of piling and sorting (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). "Key word in context", also
known as KWIC, refers to the systematic search and identification of key words and phrases.
Weber (1990) posits that higher counts in key terms that are coded into categories reflect a
higher concern with the category. "Word co-occurrence" refers to the process of connecting
words to conceptual meanings.

Next, emergent themes and subthemes are selected, ordered, and coded into categories
using pattern coding. These codes are used to inform inferences regarding the meaning and
messaging within the document, author, audience, and culture. "Pattern coding" is defined as the
identification of explanatory or inferential codes that identify a theme, pattern, or explanation to
demonstrate relationships (Miles & Huberman, 1984). This study uses coding as an inductive
approach to identifying emergent themes and subthemes most relevant to the research objective
(Miles & Huberman, 1984). Pattern coding was selected because the intent of this research is to
elicit dominant themes in the strategic documents. This dissertation identifies codes by selecting
specific text segments and labeling them to create code categories (Creswell, 2002). During this
process, each theme is assigned a color code and as each strategic document is reread, each
incidence of the emergent theme and subtheme is highlighted with the appropriate color. The
researcher will provide a description of each code and paraphrased exemplars of real text for
each theme. This will help identify the intentions of the document's owners (Berelson, 1952;

Next, each strategic document is repeatedly reread to identify additional emergent themes
and subthemes. Then, each theme is linked through a theoretical model (Ryan & Bernard, 2003).
According to Miles and Huberman (1984), pattern coding reduces large amounts of data into
small analytic units. These units are used to inform development of a cognitive map. Cognitive
maps reduce the text within each document to the fundamental meanings of specific words. The cognitive map will help identify common themes and draw comparisons across strategic documents (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Cognitive maps are useful as they display and build matrices aligned to theoretical frameworks (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). This study will use a cognitive map to identify relationships between emergent themes and subthemes with theory. The cognitive map will demonstrate Commerce’s ability to effectively manage workforce diversity by effectively including it as part of its strategic planning process.

Quantitative Analysis

Overview of Quantitative Analysis

The intent of this dissertation’s quantitative analysis is to measure the employment patterns of African American women across the Commerce workforce. This study’s quantitative analysis will assess if the agency fulfilled its commitment to workforce diversity. This will be evidenced by shifts in the job status of African American female professionals. This study’s quantitative analysis is based on an adaptation of the methodological design used in Sneed’s (2004) study, *Glass Ceilings and Glass Walls: Racial and Gender Occupational Segregation in State Bureaucracy*, as well as Sneed’s (2007) article, *Glass Walls in State Bureaucracies: Examining the Difference Departmental Function Can Make*. This study’s quantitative analysis tests the following research question: *What is the relative state of representation and segregation among African American women and other women identity groups at the U. S. Department of Commerce?* [See Appendix G: Overview of Analyses]. This research question is answered through the following set of employment trend hypotheses:
Hypothesis 3: The level of segregation among African American women has not decreased less than other race-gender groups consisting of both women and minorities.

Hypothesis 4: The level of segregation among African American women across grades have decreased over time.

Hypothesis 5: The level of representation among White women in GS-13 through GS-15 and SES positions has increased to a greater extent than African American women over time.

This study’s quantitative analysis also tests the following research question: *Is the level of representation among African American women higher in years following the development of strategic documents that establish workforce diversity goals?* [See Appendix G: Overview of Analyses]. This research question is answered through the following triangulated hypothesis:

Hypothesis 6: The level of representation among African American women is higher in the year immediately following development of a strategic document that establishes workforce diversity goals.

The employment trend and triangulated hypotheses are examined through the Index of Dissimilarity (most commonly known as the “DIndex” as mentioned in Chapter 1) and/or several statistical tests.

**Measuring Segregation**

In the 1940s, literature emerged on the quantitative measurement of segregation, which has resulted in the development of several segregation indices. In the 1960s, research

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26 Since the 1940s, several segregation indices have emerged, such as the Atkinson Income Equality Index, Cogwill Index, Entropy Index of Segregation, Gini Index, Index of Heterogeneity, L-Index of Segregation, Non-White Ghetto Index, Non-White Section Index, Propensity Score Technique, Reproducibility Index, Variance Ratio Index, and Williams’ Model of the Segregation Curve (Blau, 1977; Cogwill & Cogwill, 1951; DiNardo et al., 1996;
expanded on the measurement and consequences of employment segregation in the labor market (Gabriel & Schmitz, 2007). While the labor force demonstrated a move towards both race and gender integration in the 1970s and 1980s, progress began to stall in the mid-1990s (Hegewisch et al., 2010). Today, the DIndex remains the most well-recognized analytic tool in the measurement of segregation (Duncan & Duncan, 1955; Gradin, 2010). Other segregation indices have been criticized for their failure to mathematically display interrelationships. They have also been criticized for using mathematical properties that cause errors in interpretation (Duncan & Duncan, 1955). The DIndex limits these challenges, particularly as it relates to issues of inconsistency, redundancy, and ambiguity (Duncan & Duncan, 1955). The DIndex can be applied to categorical, ordinal, and continuous variables, as well as multivariate distributions (Rickles, 2010). The DIndex is commonly used to measure residential segregation, educational segregation, and occupational segregation (Estis, 2002; King, 1992; Lewis, 1994; Lewis, 1996; Massey & Denton, 1986b; Reardon et al., 2000; Reskin & Hartmann, 1986; Reskin & Roos, 1987; Watts, 1995).

According to Massey and Denton (1986a), segregation measurement occurs across the following five dimensions: 1.) exposure; 2.) clustering; 3.) concentration; 4.) centralization; and 5.) evenness. These dimensions help determine if the minority group is isolated from opportunities and resources that impact their socioeconomic status (Kramer, 2009). “Exposure” is defined as the degree to which the minority group is exposed to the majority group. Exposure is commonly measured through the Interaction Index and/or Isolation Index. The Interaction Index calculates the probability that interaction occurs between the minority group and majority group. The Isolation Index calculates the probability that interaction only occurs within the

Duncan & Duncan, 1955; Jahn et al., 1947; Massey & Denton, 1986a; Oakes & Kaufman, 2006; Spriggs & Williams, 1996; Theil, 1972; Williams, 1948).
minority group. "Clustering" is defined as the extent to which the minority group occupies one large continuous space. Clustering is commonly measured through the Index of Spatial Proximity. The Index of Spatial Proximity calculates the average proximity between members of the same group with that of members of a different group. “Concentration” is defined as the average amount of physical space occupied by the minority group compared to the majority group, which is compared to the ratio that would be achieved if the minority group was maximally concentrated and the majority group was maximally dispersed. Concentration is commonly measured through the Duncan Delta Index, Absolute Concentration Index, and/or Relative Concentration Index. All of these indices capture if groups of the same relative size occupying less space are concentrated and more segregated (French, 2008). “Centralization” is defined as the degree to which the minority group is settled in and around the center of a given space. Centralization is commonly measured by the same set of indices as the concentration dimension (French, 2008). “Evenness” is defined as the degree to which the percentage of a minority group within a given area equals the overall percentage of minorities. Evenness is commonly measured through the DIndex.

This dissertation will use the DIndex to measure segregation levels across the dimension of evenness to capture the percentage of African American women who would have to be reallocated in order to equalize proportions across the Commerce workforce. All observed shifts in the DIndex are attributed to composition effects and mix effects. “Composition effects” are defined as the balance within a given category. “Mix effects” are defined as the impact of different growth rates for different categories (Hegewisch et al., 2010). Despite the popularity of the DIndex in segregation studies, researchers have raised methodological concerns regarding its analytic capacity (Cortese et al., 1976; James & Taeuber, 1976; Van Valey & Roof, 1976; White,
1983). These concerns center on the field's failure to develop a theoretical and methodological standard for defining and measuring segregation (Massey & Denton, 1986a). Nonetheless, the DIndex remains the most commonly accepted segregation measure to calculate the spatial segregation of social groups. This study limits issues associated with collinearity\textsuperscript{27}, as it consistently considers the same level of representation and segregation – race and gender groups.

*Employment Trend Hypotheses*

To test the employment trend hypotheses, this dissertation uses the DIndex and several statistical tests. These tests are used to analyze the job status of African American women based on a longitudinal trend analysis of levels of representation and segregation over a 15 year period. The DIndex is used to measure segregation levels by capturing the percentage of African American women who would have to be reallocated in order to equalize proportions across the Commerce workforce to achieve total integration (Duncan & Duncan, 1955). Hegewisch et al. (2010) recommend use of the DIndex to assess workforce segregation trends at the organizational level. The DIndex is defined as:

\[
D I = \frac{\sum \left| \frac{t_{mi}}{P_m} - \frac{t_{oi}}{P_o} \right|}{2} \cdot 100
\]

DI = Index of dissimilarity for two groups being compared within a given category

\( t_{mi} \) = Number of employees in a category

\( P_m \) = Total number of employees in all categories

\( t_{oi} \) = Number of race-gender groups in a category

\textsuperscript{27} Collinearity is a statistical bias that results from the correlation of multiple independent variables that influence a dependent variable – making it difficult to identify which independent variable causes a change in the dependent variable.
### TABLE 5. SAMPLE INDEX OF DISSIMILARITY CALCULATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>American Indian or Alaska Native</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Black or African American</th>
<th>Hispanic or Latino</th>
<th>White or Caucasian</th>
<th>Sum</th>
<th>Total AAW</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
<th>Proportion AAW</th>
<th>Absolute Difference</th>
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<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<td>125</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>52</td>
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<tr>
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<td>53</td>
<td>674</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>1336</td>
<td>3698</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>10457</td>
<td>6498</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DI = 39.3%

---

28 Duncan and Duncan (1955); Sneed (2004); All decimal values have rounded up and/or down to the thousandths degree.

29 The acronym “AAW” represents African American women.
TABLE 6. RACE-GENDER GROUPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>American Indian or Alaska Native</th>
<th>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>White or Caucasian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$P_o = \text{Total number of race-gender groups in all categories}$

The DIndex measures segregation by first calculating the proportion of race-gender groups that work in each given category as shown above in Table 5. Next, the absolute value of the difference between race-gender groups is calculated, followed by summing these absolute values across categories. Finally, the value is divided by two in order to avoid double-counting. The calculation concludes by multiplying the value by 100 to express the index as a percentage. The resulting percentage indicates how many African American women would have to be reallocated to another category to ensure the even distribution of race and gender groups. The dimension of evenness is continuous and varies between zero and one. Previous research on race and gender equity recognized a 30 percent threshold to determine segregation levels. This serves as this study's benchmark because it signifies a critical mass of African American women (Kerr et al., 2002; Miller et al., 1999; Sneed, 2004; Tomaskovic-Devey et al., 2006). This study will consider an index value between 0 to 30 as low segregation, 31 to 60 as moderate segregation, and 61 to 100 as high segregation (Massey & Denton, 1986a).

This study’s quantitative analysis will also use several statistical tests to examine a combination of race-gender groups. These tests will identify differentials for African American women compared to other race-gender groups as shown above in Table 6. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Two or More Races, and Unspecified are omitted from analysis due to their significantly low populations. The unit of analysis is aggregate-level race-gender groups.

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30 OPM (2011b)
This analysis defines grade scales based on the following three categories: 1.) GS-1 through GS-12; 2.) GS-13 through GS-15; and 3.) SES. This study defines grade categories based on authority levels. GS-1 through GS-12 represents non-managerial and non-supervisory positions, GS-13 through GS-15 represents managerial and supervisory positions, and SES represents executive positions. The data source is personnel records for fulltime, permanent Commerce employees, which was retrieved from the NFC for FY 1994 through FY 2010. The software R serves as the instrument. R is equipped with the statistical analysis and computing capabilities necessary to provide descriptive and inferential statistics. These statistics will demonstrate patterns in distribution and assess the substantive importance of observed trends in job status among African American women. If the p-value is less than or equal to alpha (α ≤ .050), then we reject the null hypothesis — suggesting the result is statistically significant. If the p-value is greater than alpha (α > .050), then we fail to reject the null hypothesis — suggesting the result is not statistically significant. A 95 percent confidence level is assumed to measure the reliability and consistency of the data. The researcher will generate tables and graphs in Microsoft Excel and Microsoft PowerPoint to present the results. The remainder of this section provides a description of the statistical methods employed to test each hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3 is tested using a one-way analysis of variance, also known as an ANOVA. A one-way ANOVA compares three or more sets of measurements to assess whether their population means differ. The one-way ANOVA produces mean differentials between groups to test the null hypothesis (H₀: μ₁ = μ₂ = μ₃ = μ₄) against the alternative hypothesis (Hₐ: μ₁ ≠ μ₂ ≠ μ₃ ≠ μ₄). A one-way ANOVA will resolve a type I error, which could result from performing multiple t-tests. Hypothesis 3 uses a one-way ANOVA to compare the level of segregation among race-gender groups. This will determine if a significant differential exists among
minority women between FY 1994 through FY 2005. The hypothesis is tested by comparing differentials in the mean of index values among African American women, American Indian or Alaska Native women, Asian women, and Hispanic or Latino women based on fiscal year. The independent variables are race and gender. The dependent variable is the DIndex.

Hypothesis 4 is tested using a time-series regression analysis. A regression analysis estimates the relationship among variables through a focus on the relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables. The regression analysis tests the null hypothesis ($H_0: \beta_1 = 0$) against the alternative hypothesis ($H_a: \beta_1 \neq 0$). A regression analysis is used to calculate the percentage of distribution among African American women based on levels of segregation. The regression model is used as a time-series analysis, as change over time is the independent variable. A time-series analysis observes data points taken over time to identify internal structures, such as trends. A time-series analysis integrates moving averages and smooths the data to eliminate noise and more precisely forecast the relationship between variables. A time-series analysis is used to identify employment trends among African American women by calculating repeated measurements across fiscal years. Hypothesis 4 uses a time-series regression analysis to determine the correlation between race and gender with segregation among African American women from FY 1994 through FY 2005. The dependent variable is the DIndex, which is calculated for each race-gender group for each fiscal year [See Appendix H: Index of Dissimilarity FY 1994 through FY 2005]. For Hypothesis 4, the time-series regression analysis is defined by the following formula:

$$Y_{D\text{Index}} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 t_i$$

$Y_{D\text{Index}} = \text{Level of Segregation}$

$\beta_0 = \text{Intercept}$
$\beta_1 = \text{Slope}$

$t_i = \text{Time}$

Hypothesis 5 is also tested using a time-series regression analysis. A time-series regression analysis is used to determine the correlation between race and gender with department-level representation across grade categories among African American women and White women from FY 1994 through FY 2010. A time-series regression analysis is also used to determine the correlation between race and gender with bureau-level representation across grade categories among African American women and White women from FY 2006 to FY 2010. The analysis of levels of representation at the bureau level is limited by a minimal number of data points. While the statistical standard is 30 data points, this analysis only examines five data points from FY 2006 through FY 2010. This is due to the lack of bureau-level demographic data available from FY 1994 through FY 2005. The independent variable is change over time. The dependent variable is grade representation.

**Triangulated Hypotheses**

As mentioned, this study’s quantitative analysis will use statistical tests to identify differentials for African American women. The unit of analysis is aggregate-level race-gender groups. The data source is personnel records for fulltime, permanent Commerce employees for FY 2002 through FY 2005. The software R serves as the instrument. Hypothesis 6 is tested using a paired sample difference of means test, also known as a t-test. A t-test determines differentials between two groups. Hypothesis 6 uses a t-test to compare the level of representation among African American women to determine differentials after the implementation of strategic documents. The t-test will determine differentials between FY 2002
and FY 2003, FY 2004, and FY 2005. The independent variable is fiscal year. The dependent variable is grade representation.

**Triangulation**

This dissertation will triangulate results from both the qualitative and quantitative analyses. The triangulation will provide a textured understanding of the role of elements of strategic planning as drivers of employment trends among African American women in across the Commerce workforce. "Triangulation" is defined as protocols used to provide accurate examinations and alternative explanations for data and/or phenomena (Stake, 1995). Miles and Huberman (1984) and Regmi et al. (2009) urge researchers to acknowledge that numbers and words are both needed to understand the world. While numerical data can describe events and processes, qualitative data is necessary to understand why and how they occur. Case study research satisfies the following three basic tenets of empirical research: 1.) describing; 2.) understanding; and 3.) explaining (Tellis, 1997). A case study analysis helps capture in-depth explanations of how and why, rather than just solely examining frequencies or incidences over time (Yin, 2003). It will ensure that the analysis, observation, and reconstruction of data provide better understanding of complex social phenomena, such as race and gender (Tellis, 1997). Data analysis consists of the examination, categorization, tabulation, and recombination of both quantitative and qualitative data to address the propositions of this study (Yin, 1994).

The results from both the qualitative and quantitative analyses will be triangulated during data interpretation to identify and measure indicators that best deduce constructed meanings (George & Bennett, 2005). Caracelli and Green (1997) suggest that progressive reinterpretations of the findings will occur with increased insight as a result of various methods of data collection.
This study's dependency on a mixed method design provides a high level of conceptual validity. This is due to its measurement of indicators that best represent the relationship between race, gender, strategic planning, and job status (George & Bennett, 2005). The triangulation of data sources redresses the limitation of trustworthiness, as it relates to transferability, credibility, dependability, and confirmability (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Guba & Lincoln, 1985).

Validity and Reliability

Lorde's (1984) description of constantly being encouraged to "pluck out" aspects of herself as an African American and woman captures the complexities of Black feminist identity. For researchers, the notion that social identities are interdependent and mutually constitutive rather than independent and unidimensional, poses a variety of pointed methodological challenges (Bowleg, 2008). According to Bowleg (2008), these challenges shape key aspects of the research process, including data measurement, data analysis, and data interpretation. Cook and Glass (2008) forewarned researchers on threats to validity and reliability when observing the interaction of race and gender on social phenomena. Critics of the additive approach deride the notion that intersecting social identities and inequalities can be measured separately and independently. Bowleg (2008) also cautioned against the challenges in quantitatively analyzing the intersection of race and gender, stating:

The issue is more or less one of statistical power and the extent to which the researcher can be confident that mean differences are reliable. In a given analysis, main effects such as racism, sexism, or heterosexism may swamp the effects of interactions between them. Thus, a finding of significant main effects for all variables would signal a lower probability of finding a significant higher order interaction. The phenomenon of interactions thus poses a significant challenge to intersectionality researchers who conduct quantitative studies (p. 319).
This dissertation controls such threats to validity and reliability by triangulating strategic documents with personnel data. The need for triangulation arose from the ethical need to ensure validity and reliability of the research process through the use of multiple sources of data (Tellis, 1997; Yin, 1984; Zainal, 2007). According to Tellis (1997), the rationale for using multiple data sources is the triangulation of evidence. This increases the validity and reliability of data through data gathering and data collection. The triangulation of data strengthens a study by converging and/or corroborating the findings from two or more methods to assess a given phenomenon during data analysis and data interpretation (Jonsen & Jehn, 2009). This is achieved through the elimination and/or reduction of biases by cross-checking the methods, data sets, and explanations for the findings (Jonsen & Jehn, 2009).

This triangulation is captured by examining the effectiveness of workforce diversity goals within strategic documents, as well as trends in the level of representation and representation among African American women. This dissertation’s use of a triangulated approach will improve the level of confidence in the findings. This is achieved by enhancing the richness and comprehensiveness of the study, reducing the impact of the study’s limitations, and expanding understanding of the phenomenon in question (Jonsen & Jehn, 2009). This study triangulates both quantitative and qualitative data to better understand the process and outcomes of using elements of strategic planning to drive employment trends among African American women across the Commerce workforce.
Summary

This chapter offered a comprehensive discussion of the mixed methodological design. This included a discussion of the case study approach, qualitative analysis, quantitative analysis, triangulation, and threats to validity and reliability.
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

Introduction

This dissertation conducted a triangulated examination, which included a qualitative content analysis of strategic documents. This was supplemented with a longitudinal trend analysis of personnel data. The intent of the triangulated examination was to further understanding of the role of elements of strategic planning as drivers of employment patterns among African American women in the federal government. A mixed method design was employed to capture documented evidence of planning and performance. This study was guided by three research questions. These research questions were answered by a set of strategic planning, employment trend, and triangulated hypotheses.

To test the first research question, this study conducted a content analysis of 13 agency-specific strategic documents. This analysis was used to draw inferences on the agency’s workforce diversity goals. The qualitative data was supplemented with the examination of personnel data to answer the second and third research questions. The data source was personnel records for fulltime, permanent Commerce employees. The DIndex and several statistical tests were used to measure both representation and segregation levels among African American women. The remainder of this chapter provides results for each hypothesis.

Qualitative Analysis Results

Results for Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 stated that strategic documents mention an explicit commitment to workforce diversity. The first hypothesis was tested using a content analysis. This study's findings support the hypothesis that each strategic document mentioned a stated commitment to
reduce underrepresentation and increase workforce diversity. This analysis revealed that each strategic document made at least one reference to the vast majority of key terms from the word list as shown in Table 7. The most commonly used term was “diverse”, which was mentioned in each strategic document for a total of 271 occurrences. For example, Document C stated:

A diverse workforce means a highly-talented and competent workforce that can effectively deliver products and services to its diverse customer base, employees represent the diversity of the labor force and society, and continuous diversity education, recruitment and outreach, and cultural awareness efforts support and foster a high-performing workforce and work environment (Commerce, 2008b, p. 2).

The second most commonly used term was “minority”, which was mentioned in each strategic document for a total of 203 occurrences. For example, Document H stated:

Minorities, women, and people with targeted disabilities have been recruited and employed by the U. S. Department of Commerce. However, a closer look at the workforce composition, recruitment and retention trends, and feedback from the affinity groups identified areas for improvement in terms of Commerce’s overall strategy for recruiting, orienting and positioning, and retaining diverse employees (Commerce, 2004b, p. 7).

The third most commonly used term was “Hispanic”, which was mentioned in the majority of the strategic documents, for a total of 53 occurrences. For example, Document G stated:

The ongoing partnership with the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities enables Commerce to conduct outreach to Hispanic Serving Institutions as one of several strategies employed to reduce Hispanic underrepresentation (Commerce, 2003, p. 2).
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<tr>
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The least commonly used terms were "Caucasian", "segregation", and "two or more races."
None of these terms were mentioned in any strategic document. The second least commonly
used terms were "affirmative action" and "discrimination." Each of these terms were mentioned
a total of 4 occurrences in the strategic documents. The third least commonly used term was
"ethnicity", which was mentioned a total of 11 occurrences in the strategic documents.

Overall, the word frequency analysis revealed that Commerce identified a stated concern
to increase workforce diversity among minorities. However, this concern generally applied to all
minority groups based on race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, and veteran status –
with the exception of Hispanics. The term "African American" was mentioned a total of 28
occurrences, "Black" a total of 29 occurrences, "female" a total of 35 occurrences, and "women"
a total of 37 occurrences. For example, Document C stated:

Short-term initiatives include developing recruitment plans that effectively target hiring
strategies to increase the representation of individuals with disabilities, Asians, Blacks or
African Americans, and Hispanics or Latinos (Commerce, 2008b, p. 7).

However, while Document C had a total of 2 occurrences directly referencing "Blacks" and
"African Americans", the overall results demonstrate that African American women were not
recognized as an isolated, target population for workforce diversification efforts.

Results for Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 stated that overall strategic documents establish workforce diversity goals
that are specific, measureable, and timely/time-bound. The second hypothesis was tested using a
set of diagnostic questions to assess the specificity, measurability, and timeliness of each
strategic document. This study’s findings support the hypothesis that the strategic documents
were specific, measurable, and timely/time-bound as shown in Table 8. As it relates to specificity, this analysis revealed that Commerce established strategic documents that were specific. Each strategic document explicitly stated the strategies that would be employed to drive workforce diversity goals. The strategic documents used action verbs to describe objectives. While a total of 219 action verbs were used, the most commonly used verb was “establish” as shown in Table 9. For example, Document C stated:

Commerce will establish a decentralized diversity management program to increase the workforce representation of women, individuals with disabilities, and Hispanics or Latinos (Commerce, 2008b, p. 1).

Also, the strategic documents explicitly stated anticipated outcomes. For example, Document D stated:

Commerce will use the strategic management of human capital to increase leadership, increase representation, expand college-level recruitment, improve professional and mid-level recruitment, improve corporate recruitment, improve communication, and establish accountability mechanisms (Commerce, 2005, p. 11).

In an effort to link planning and performance, Commerce identified a host of stakeholders charged with driving workforce diversity as shown in Table 10. The most commonly mentioned stakeholders were “agency leadership” and “bureau leadership.”

As it relates to measurability, this analysis revealed that Commerce established strategic documents that were measurable. The majority of strategic documents stated how to measure goal accomplishment. While strategic documents referenced how the agency will know when its
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31 Meyer (2003)
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• Bureau Leadership  
• External Partners  
• Hiring Managers  
• Human Resources Specialists |
| **Human Capital and Human Resources Management** | • Agency Leadership  
• Bureau Leadership  
• Bureau Principal Human Resources Managers  
• Employees  
• Federal Government  
• Human Capital Management and Accountability  
  Functional Partnership Group  
• Management Officials  
• Office of Human Resources Management  
• Operating Units |
| **Diversity Management**                  | • Affirmative Employment Coordinators  
• Agency Leadership  
• Bureau Leadership  
• Diversity Council  
• Diversity Managers  
• Employees  
• Hiring Officials  
• Office of Corporate Human Capital Strategy and Workforce Initiatives  
  Office of Executive Resources  
• Office of Human Resources Management  
• Office of Management and Budget  
• Office of Personnel Management  
• Office of Policy and Programs  
• Office of Training and Development  
• Principal Human Resources Managers Group |
| **Succession Management**                 | • Agency Leadership  
• Bureau Leadership  
• Department of Commerce Human Resources Operations Center  
• Diversity Managers  
• Human Capital Management and Accountability Council  
• Office of Corporate Human Capital Strategy and Workforce Initiatives  
• Office of Executive Resources  
• Office of Human Resources Management  
• Office of Policy and Programs  
• Office of Training and Development  
• Principal Human Resources Managers Group |
| **Management Integration and Organizational Modeling** | • Agency Leadership  
• Bureau Leadership  
• Diversity Council  
• Diversity Managers  
• External Partners  
• Federal Agencies  
• International Partners  
• Private Industry |
| **Minority Underrepresentation**          | • Agency Leadership  
• Diversity Managers  
• Bureau Leadership  |
| **Workforce Restructuring**               | • Bureau Leadership  
• Human Capital Bureau Representatives  
• Office of Management and Budget  
• Office of Personnel Management |
workforce diversity goals were accomplished, only half of the strategic documents provided metrics to measure goal accomplishment. The strategic documents mentioned key plans of action and milestones. However, some failed to provide metrics that capture actual outcomes—not just outputs. Document B provided the most comprehensive measurement system. This document included performance objectives, plans of action, anticipated outcomes, and outcome metrics for each HCAAF system. For example, Document B stated:

Commerce will use a human capital planning model, which will serve as its framework to manage strategic human capital through a set of metrics that provide an accurate baseline against which agency progress can be assessed. These metrics include the number of filled mission-critical occupations with high-caliber candidates, index rating on job satisfaction among employees as measured by the Annual Employee Survey, time interval between the close of job announcements to applicant notification, attrition rates, and positive feedback from annual accountability and delegated examining unit audits (Commerce, 2008a, p. 17).

As it relates to timeliness, this analysis revealed that Commerce established strategic documents that were timely, as 7 out of 8 strategic documents stated time-bound activities to ensure goal accomplishment. For example, as it relates to status updates, Document B stated:

Commerce will track its progress towards shaping an environment that supports, nurtures, and sustains a high-caliber workforce through annual delegated examining unit audits, as well as quarterly and annual reports to the Office of Human Resources Management and Office of Personnel Management (Commerce, 2008a, p. 24).

However, only 5 out of 8 strategic documents provided deadlines for goal accomplishment.
Emergent Themes

The word frequency analysis and diagnostic analysis identified several themes and subthemes. These themes elicit meaning from the text within the strategic documents. The total number of occurrences and pages that made specific reference to each theme were tabulated and ranked to demonstrate the prevalence of the themes. Each theme was assigned a color code. This analysis recovered seven emergent themes, which were supported by 29 subthemes as shown in Table 11. These emergent themes and subthemes were linked to six drivers of workforce diversity. They were also linked to six theoretical models as displayed through a cognitive map as shown in Figure 2. The emergent themes are displayed in boxes with bold text, the subthemes are displayed in boxes with rounded corners, the drivers are displayed in ovals, and the theoretical frameworks are displayed in boxes with italicized text.

The most prevalent theme was workforce diversity. Commerce recognized the need to increase employment among underrepresented groups based on the nation’s diversity and the civilian labor force. The strategic documents made an explicit commitment to acquire and maintain a highly-qualified, diverse workforce by reducing underrepresentation – particularly in leadership ranks. Commerce defined a “diverse workforce” as a highly-talented and competent workforce that can effectively deliver products and services to its diverse customer base, in which employees represent the diversity of the labor force and society and receive continuous
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<td>1</td>
<td>Workforce Diversity</td>
<td>■ Minority Representation&lt;br&gt;■ Representative Bureaucracy&lt;br&gt;■ Diversity Management&lt;br&gt;■ Strategic Partnerships&lt;br&gt;■ Diversity and Inclusion</td>
<td>Representative workforce that reflects the diversity found throughout America.</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Strategic Planning</td>
<td>■ Diversity Planning&lt;br&gt;■ Workforce Planning&lt;br&gt;■ Human Capital Planning&lt;br&gt;■ Succession Planning&lt;br&gt;■ Action Planning</td>
<td>Strategies to drive workforce diversity in support of the human capital goal to establish the agency as the employer of choice.</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Orange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Accountability Systems</td>
<td>■ Leadership and Knowledge Management&lt;br&gt;■ Leadership Commitment&lt;br&gt;■ Accountability Mechanisms&lt;br&gt;■ Evaluation&lt;br&gt;■ Communication Strategy</td>
<td>Accountability mechanisms to assess the diversity profile and effectiveness of diversity programs.</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Attrition</td>
<td>■ Recruitment, Retention, and Development&lt;br&gt;■ Training and Development&lt;br&gt;■ Career Opportunities&lt;br&gt;■ Work/Life Programming</td>
<td>Recruitment, retention, and promotion of employees committed to the agency mission.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Human Capital and Human Resources Management Systems</td>
<td>■ Strategic Human Capital Management&lt;br&gt;■ Human Resources Management</td>
<td>Human capital and human resources management system to ensure the right employees do the right jobs at the right time.</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Pink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Diversity Programs</td>
<td>■ Employee Development&lt;br&gt;■ Diversity Training&lt;br&gt;■ Mentor Programs&lt;br&gt;■ Diversity Forums&lt;br&gt;■ Advocacy</td>
<td>Programs used to drive cultural awareness and education among employees.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Grey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Fair Practices</td>
<td>■ Fair Selection&lt;br&gt;■ Equal Employment Opportunities&lt;br&gt;■ Diversity Policy</td>
<td>Enforcement of policies to ensure fair selection and equal employment opportunities.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIGURE 2. COGNITIVE MAP

- Succession Management
- Recruitment and Retention
- Workforce Restructuring
- Management Integration
  - Communication Strategy
  - Leadership and Knowledge Management
  - Evaluation
  - Leadership Commitment
- Attrition
- Training and Development
  - Work/Life
  - Career Opportunities
- Human Capital and Human Resources Management
- Accountability Mechanisms
  - Workforce Diversity
    - Diversity Programs
      - Diversity Training
      - Diversity Forums
    - Advocacy
      - Employee Development
      - Mentor Programs
    - Strategic Planning
      - Diversity Planning
      - Workforce Planning
      - Diversity and Inclusion
      - Action Planning
    - Fair Practices
      - Succession Planning
      - Human Capital Planning
      - Fair Selection
      - S.M.A.R.T. Goals
      - Equal Employment Opportunities
      - Strategic Partnerships
      - Fair Policy
  - Representative Bureaucracy Theory
  - Goal Setting Theory
  - Social Equity Theory
- New Public Administration
- Institutional Theory
- Black Feminist Thought
- Minority Under-Representation
- Diversity Management
- S.M.A.R.T. Goals
diversity education, recruitment and outreach, and cultural awareness. This theme was supported by the following five subthemes: 1.) minority representation; 2.) representative bureaucracy; 3.) diversity management; 4.) strategic partnerships; and 5.) diversity and inclusion. As it relates to minority representation, Document D stated:

Commerce must become the employer of choice for all talented candidates and hire its fair share of the nation’s talent among diverse populations. These populations include women, minorities, persons with disabilities, and veterans (Commerce, 2005, p. 9).

As it relates to representative bureaucracy, Document C stated:

Commerce will ensure competent and talented employees fill its positions and represent the diversity of our workforce and society (Commerce, 2008b, p. 8).

As it relates to diversity management, Document C stated:

Commerce’s commitment to establishing a diverse workforce is fully supported by senior leadership, as well as line managers and supervisors. To further demonstrate leadership’s commitment, Commerce has opted to establish a decentralized diversity management program. The diversity management program is housed throughout bureaus, thereby holding managers and supervisors accountable for achieving results (Commerce, 2008b, p. 1).

As it relates to strategic partnerships, Document A stated:

Commerce will establish effective, long-term relationships with diverse professional associations, groups, and organizations. Commerce will expand and improve outreach efforts to colleges and universities with diverse populations (Commerce, 2007a, p. 5).

As it relates to diversity and inclusion, Document I stated:
Commerce will create an organizational culture of pluralism that incorporates mutual respect, acceptance, and inclusion of all employees (Commerce, 1994b, p. 1).

The second emergent theme was strategic planning. Commerce recognized the need to communicate, market, and implement strategies in support of workforce diversity. The strategic documents made a stated commitment to support strong leadership, planning, and policies to enhance the agency's ability to acquire and retain a highly-skilled, diverse workforce. Commerce used strategic planning to address human capital challenges, such as diversity, leadership capacity, and retention. This theme was supported by the following five subthemes: 1.) diversity planning; 2.) workforce planning; 3.) human capital planning; 4.) succession planning; and 5.) action planning. As it relates to diversity planning, Document C stated:

Commerce will increase employee involvement in diversity planning by creating more employee workgroups that include representatives from all categories and tasking work groups with short-term projects to identify and/or recommend ways to effectively address diversity and workplace needs, concerns, and issues (Commerce, 2008b, p. 10).

As it relates to workforce planning, Document D stated:

In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget standard for success for the human capital initiative, Commerce will establish a recruitment and diversity plan in support of workforce planning, workforce analysis, diversity, and competing for talent (Commerce, 2005, p. 3).

As it relates to human capital planning, Document H stated:

Commerce will implement human capital strategies to address workforce diversity, implement programs that are designed to recruit a diverse applicant pool and use the
talents of the agency’s workforce, and establish a process to sustain workforce diversity (Commerce, 2004b, p. 6).

As it relates to succession planning, Document C stated:

Succession planning and management promotes the organization’s efforts to enhance the diversity of the workforce and leadership. Commerce works collaboratively with the Office of Civil Rights and the Office of the General Counsel to ensure diversity programs are managed efficiently and effectively and are conducted in compliance with federal regulations and requirements, the law, and merit system principles (Commerce, 2008b, p. 2).

Also, as it relates to succession planning, Document E stated:

Commerce recognizes that effective succession planning and management strategies are necessary to maintain an appropriate staffing level that is equipped with the expertise to meet the agency’s organizational mission and strategic priorities (Commerce, 2010b, p. 4).

As it relates to action planning, Document J stated:

Commerce will propose an action plan that will be distributed to senior leadership to drive the diversification of current program initiatives (Commerce, 1994a, p. 4).

The third emergent theme was accountability systems. Commerce stated that it would use its human capital accountability system to establish a more robust, systematic evaluation of its human capital management. The strategic documents mentioned that the agency would continuously assess its diversity profile and the effectiveness of its diversity program through accountability reviews. This theme was supported by the following five subthemes: 1.) leadership and knowledge management; 2.) leadership commitment; 3.) accountability
mechanisms; 4.) evaluation; and 5.) communication strategy. As it relates to leadership and knowledge management, Document B stated:

Commerce will enhance leadership and knowledge management to ensure succession planning meets the agency's needs to ensure superior leadership and retain historical knowledge. Commerce will create policies that support the fostering of effective leadership bench strength and knowledge management, perform workforce analysis to inform and shape the business strategy of bureaus, and design and manage comprehensive leadership development programs (Commerce, 2008a, p. 18).

As it relates to leadership commitment, Document H stated:

Commerce will increase and sustain diversity, which can be attributed to senior management's commitment to building and maintaining a diverse, high-quality workforce (Commerce, 2004b, p. 6).

As it relates to accountability mechanisms, Document C stated:

Accountability cascades down from the Secretary of Commerce to the senior leadership team and then to all employees. All leaders have the performance element to leverage diversity in their performance plans and are held accountable for conducting activities and taking actions that promote and sustain a diverse workforce (Commerce, 2008b, p. 10).

Also, as it relates to accountability mechanisms, Document M stated:

Commerce will ensure accountability at the highest levels of the organization by integrating analyses, presentations, and the execution of budget and performance efforts across the department (Commerce, 2004a, p. 13).

As it relates to evaluation, Document J stated:
Commerce will establish a Diversity Council, which will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of diversity policies and programs, evaluating their effectiveness, and facilitating communication about diversity initiatives (Commerce, 1994a, p. 3).

Also, as it relates to evaluation, Document K stated:

Commerce will include plans for future evaluations in annual performance plans and budgets (Commerce, 1997, p. 4).

As it relates to communication strategy, Document I stated:

Commerce will establish appropriate channels of communication among diversity network members to ensure they are equipped with the tools and information necessary to be successful in integrating and managing diversity interventions (Commerce, 1994b, p. 2).

The fourth emergent theme was attrition. Commerce recognized the need to attract and hire, but more importantly retain employees to increase its level of diversity. The agency understood the need to develop and disseminate awareness materials to demonstrate how diversity can improve organizational performance. This theme was supported by the following four subthemes: 1.) recruitment, retention, and development; 2.) training and development; 3.) career opportunities; and 4.) work/life programming. As it relates to recruitment, retention, and development, Document H stated:

It is critical for Commerce, as a premier agency, to strive for excellence by recruiting, training, and retaining employees from all backgrounds who are committed to reaching the agency's goals (Commerce, 2004b, p. 6).

Also, as it relates to recruitment, retention, and development, Document L stated:
Commerce will effectively and efficiently use fiscal resources to recruit talent, develop, and retain diverse and skilled leaders and professional staff within the department (Commerce, 2000, p. 76).

As it relates to training and development, Document I stated:

Commerce will identify strategic areas and specialized functions requiring improved employee skills (Commerce, 1994b, p. 1).

As it relates to career opportunities, Document I stated:

Commerce will reduce and/or eliminate superficial barriers that separate employees from job opportunities, which will be accomplished by modifying current systems to stimulate employee creativity and providing an environment where all employees can fully contribute to the organization (Commerce, 1994b, p. 3).

As it relates to work/life programming, Document I stated:

Commerce will institutionalize a family friendly program to enhance the quality of work/life for all employees, including an alternative work schedule and telework option (Commerce, 1994b, p. 4).

The fifth emergent theme was human capital and HR management systems. Commerce understood the role of human capital and HR management in its ability to recruit and retain a diverse workforce. The strategic documents referenced a stated goal to strategically manage human capital in order to create an environment in which all employees were valued for their diverse mix of talents and skills. This goal is advanced through the integration of strategic diversity efforts with human capital and HR management programs to ensure the effective hiring and retention of a diverse workforce. This is also advanced through the promotion of outreach initiatives and recruitment initiatives. The strategic documents stated that the role of the Office
of Human Resources Management (OHRM) was to develop and manage value-added HR policies and programs. The OHRM was also charged with providing expert consultation, services, and solutions in an efficient and customer-focused manner. In support, the OHRM was tasked with providing employees with the tools necessary to address customer's needs through fair selection and development of a diverse workforce. This theme was supported by the following two subthemes: 1.) strategic human capital management; and 2.) HR management. As it relates to strategic human capital management, Document B stated:

Commerce realizes the need for effective and efficient management of human capital. This will require strong leadership, plans, and policies that enhance our ability to acquire and retain a diverse, highly-skilled workforce, as well as results-focused initiatives. These elements will propel the department towards organizational excellence (Commerce, 2008a, p. 22).

Also, as it relates to strategic human capital management, Document M stated:

Commerce will strategically manage its human capital by creating an environment in which all employees are valued for the diverse mix of talents, skills, and experiences they bring to the workplace (Commerce, 2004a, p. 76).

As it relates to HR management, Document H stated:

Commerce recognizes formidable challenges; however, these challenges represent an opportunity to improve the overall quality, diversity, and productivity for a growing workforce. To respond to these issues, we will employ concrete strategies to shift from human resources maintenance activities, such as filling vacancies and orienting new employees, to a more proactive workforce replenishment effort through which we are building competencies, redesigning organizations and jobs, creating career pipelines,
providing training to retool the workforce when needed, and creating and maintaining a
diverse workforce by identifying new pools of candidates for entry and mid-level
positions. In short, we are searching for, identifying, and implementing new tools with
which to manage our human capital (Commerce, 2004b, p. 2).

Also, as it relates to HR management, Document K stated:

Commerce will enhance human resources, leverage information technology, employ
better processes, and effectively manage resources in support of the operational plan

The sixth emergent theme was diversity programs. Commerce recognized the need to
ensure awareness by communicating the agency’s workforce diversity initiatives. The agency
used diversity programs to promote cultural awareness and education. The strategic documents
made a stated commitment to provide effective diversity training to drive shifts in cultural
misconceptions, stereotypes, and awareness. This theme was supported by the following five
subthemes: 1.) employee development; 2.) diversity training; 3.) mentor programs; 4.) diversity
forums; and 5.) advocacy. As it relates to employee development, Document H stated:

Commerce will establish an annual Senior Executive Service Candidate Development
Program. This program will be used to develop a diverse pool of candidates throughout
the department with the leadership skills needed to assume senior management positions
(Commerce, 2004b, p. 2).

As it relates to diversity training, Document C stated:

Commerce will build a diversity resource center and library, continue to provide cultural
diversity training to employees, and conduct a cultural survey (Commerce, 2008b, p. 10).

As it relates to mentor programs, Document C stated:
Commerce will provide diversity mentoring to enhance organizational performance and business plans (Commerce, 2008b, p. 8).

As it relates to diversity forums, Document H stated:

- Commerce will sponsor leadership and diversity forums department-wide (Commerce, 2004b, p. 7).

As it relates to advocacy, Document I stated:

- Commerce will provide a framework of responsibility and resources that will help to sustain and support ongoing efforts to create a cadre of well trained and developed employees (Commerce, 1994b, p. 1).

The seventh emergent theme was fair practices. The strategic documents mentioned that the operating principle of the OHRM is integrity. This requires the agency to act in a professional and ethical manner. Commerce recognized that fair selection and equal employment opportunities were critical in communicating and accomplishing workforce diversity goals. In support, the agency made a stated commitment to provide a fair and just landscape to increase minority employment in areas of deficit. In particular, the agency committed to providing employment opportunities to qualified candidates. This commitment paid specific attention to the overall employment of minorities and women, particularly in leadership ranks. This theme was supported by the following three subthemes: 1.) fair selection; 2.) equal employment opportunities; and 3.) diversity policy. As it relates to fair selection, Document B stated:

Commerce is committed to the fair selection and development of a diverse workforce (Commerce, 2008a, p. 9).

As it relates to equal employment opportunities, Document C stated:
Commerce will communicate and support diversity goals and initiatives by continuing to disseminate the *Affirmative Employment Plan, Federal Employment Opportunity Recruitment Plan*, and equal employment opportunity policies to all employees (Commerce, 2008b, p. 9).

As it relates to diversity policy, Document J stated:

Commerce will develop a policy that will drive real change through increased opportunities and actual diversity across the department (Commerce, 1994a, p. 4).

The abovementioned themes, subthemes, and drivers captured the linkage between the content within the strategic documents and extant theoretical models. More specifically, the strategic documents demonstrated a linkage to the following six theoretical models: 1.) new public administration; 2.) institutional theory; 3.) representative bureaucracy theory; 4.) goal setting theory; 5.) social equity theory; and 6.) Black feminist thought. As it relates to new public administration, the strategic documents mentioned the role of HR in the effective and efficient general management of the agency. As it relates to institutional theory, the strategic documents provided workforce diversity strategies designed to dismantle policies and programs that contribute to the mistreatment of women and minorities. As it relates to representative bureaucracy theory, the strategic documents provided strategies designed to ensure that its workforce mirrors the demographic composition of the national population. As it relates to goal setting theory, the strategic documents mentioned the establishment of accountability mechanisms throughout all levels of the organization designed to monitor the execution of budget and performance efforts across the department. As it relates to social equity theory, the strategic documents mentioned the development of a human capital and HR management infrastructure designed to support the fair, just, and equitable selection, development, and
management of a diverse workforce. Most importantly, as it relates to this study and its theoretical framework, the strategic documents demonstrated a linkage to Black feminist thought. The strategic documents mentioned the agency’s intent to eliminate an environment of disparity as perpetuated by the denial of career mobility opportunities for women and minorities – including African American women.

Additionally, the content analysis revealed that the following four content areas remained the same over time across the strategic documents: 1.) strategic themes and/or goals; 2.) objectives, strategies, activities, and performance indicators; 3.) strategic alignment to the PMA and/or GPRA; and 4.) program evaluations. As it relates to strategic themes and/or goals, all of the strategic documents identified a set of themes and/or goals that would serve as drivers of the Commerce mission and/or vision. As it relates to objectives, strategies, activities, and performance indicators, all of the strategic documents identified a set of supporting objectives, strategies, activities, performance goals, performance outcomes, and performance measures to support each strategic theme and/or goal. As it relates to strategic alignment to the PMA and GPRA, all of the strategic documents addressed how the strategic themes and/or goals aligned to the PMA and GPRA process. As it relates to program evaluations, all of the strategic documents provided a methodological system to be used during program evaluations – at both the department and bureau level.

The content analysis also revealed that the following four content areas demonstrated shifts over time across the strategic documents: 1.) mission statement; 2.) vision statement; 3.) management integration goal; and 4.) workforce diversity goals. As it relates to changes in the mission statement, in FY 1997 the Commerce mission was to:

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32 This finding only applies to results from a comparative analysis across strategic documents that were explicitly identified as “strategic plans”. This finding is limited to Documents F, K, L, and M.
Promote job creation, economic growth, sustainable development, and improve living standards for all Americans, by working in partnership with businesses, universities, communities and workers (Commerce, 1997, p. 33).

In FY 2000, the Commerce mission changed to:

Promote job creation and improve living standards for all Americans by creating an infrastructure that promotes economic growth, technological competitiveness, and sustainable development (Commerce, 2000, p. 2).

In FY 2004 and FY 2007, the Commerce mission changed to:

Create the conditions for economic growth and opportunity by promoting innovation, entrepreneurship, competitiveness, and stewardship (Commerce, 2004a, p. 3; Commerce, Commerce, 2007b, p. 2).

As it relates to changes in the vision statement, in FY 1997 and FY 2000 the Commerce vision was not explicitly stated in the strategic documents. In FY 2004, the Commerce vision was stated, which was to:

Ensure that the United States continues to play a lead role in the world economy (Commerce, 2004a, p. 3).

As it relates to the management integration goal, in FY 1997 the goal was not explicitly stated in the strategic document. In FY 2000, the goal was established to:

Strengthen management at all levels (Commerce, 2000, p. 4).

In FY 2004 and FY 2007, the goal changed to:

Achieve organizational and management excellence (Commerce, 2004a, p. 5; Commerce, 2007b, p. 4).
As it relates to the agency’s goal to become an example of workforce diversity, in FY 1997 workforce diversity goals were not explicitly stated in the strategic document. In FY 2000, FY 2004, and FY 2007 workforce diversity goals were established to:

Ensure the acquisition, management, and development of a diverse, skilled, and flexible staff (Commerce, 2000, p. 76; Commerce, 2004a, p. 11; Commerce, 2007b, p. 65).

Quantitative Analysis Results

Results for Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 stated that the level of segregation among African American women has not decreased less than other race-gender groups consisting of both women and minorities. The third hypothesis was tested using a one-way ANOVA. This study’s findings do not support the hypothesis that the level of segregation across minority women groups was not equal as shown in Table 12. The one-way ANOVA equation indicates that the mean difference in index values between minority women groups is not statistically significant \( p = 0.669 \). This analysis fails to reject the null hypothesis, as the group means are not equal as shown in Figure 3.

Results for Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 stated that the level of segregation among African American women across grades had decreased over time. The fourth hypothesis was tested using a time-series regression analysis. This study’s findings support the hypothesis that African American women demonstrated a decrease in index values over time as shown in Figure 4. The regression equation was statistically significant and explained 87 percent of variability in index values. There was a statistically significant relationship between index values and time \( p < 0.000 \). In
the regression, for every 1 unit increase in fiscal year, the index value decreased by 1.266 percent as shown in Table 13. This analysis rejects the null hypothesis.

These results suggest that the level of segregation among African American women experienced a steady decrease in recent years. The agency demonstrated its highest levels of segregation among African American women during the mid-1990s as shown in Figure 5. In FY 1996, African American women had the highest level of segregation as approximately 43

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33 The results for “within groups” represent the following race-gender groups: 1.) African American women; 2.) American Indian or Alaska Native women; 3.) Asian women; and 4.) Hispanic or Latino women.
percent of African American female professionals required reallocation to equalize proportions across the workforce. In that year, African American women accounted for approximately 3,462 of 23,114 positions; however 3,199 were in GS-1 through GS-12 positions. While the agency maintained approximately 388 senior executive positions, African American women only accounted for 7 appointments. Nonetheless, the agency made steady progress towards its goal to reduce underrepresentation and increase workforce diversity as stated in strategic documents.
The level of segregation among African American women declined to approximately 27.2 percent in FY 2005. However, in that year, African American women remained concentrated in lower-level ranks, as approximately 3,104 of 3,817 were in GS-1 through GS-12 positions. Moreover, the number of appointments to executive-level positions among African American women only increased by approximately 1 appointment, as they accounted for 8 of 326 appointments.

**Results for Hypothesis 5**

Hypothesis 5 stated that the level of representation among White women in GS-13 through GS-15 and SES positions had increased to a greater extent than African American women over time. The fifth hypothesis was tested using a time-series regression analysis. This study’s findings support the hypothesis that White women demonstrated greater increases in their
level of representation in GS-13 through GS-15 and SES positions over time compared to African American women at the department level as shown in Table 14. Moreover, White women demonstrated minimal increases in their level of representation in GS-13 through GS-15 and SES positions over time at the bureau level as shown in Table 15. This analysis rejects the null hypothesis.

As it relates to department-level representation, the regression equation for African American women in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at the department level was statistically significant \((p < 0.000)\) and explained 98 percent of variability in representation, as 1 unit increase in fiscal year equaled an increase in upper-level ranks by 57 positions. The regression equation for White women in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at the department level was statistically significant \((p < 0.000)\) and explained 94 percent of variability in representation, as 1 unit increase in fiscal year equaled an increase in upper-level ranks by 173 positions. The regression equation for African American women in SES positions at the department level was statistically significant \((p = 0.024)\) and explained 30 percent of variability in representation, as 1 unit increase in fiscal year equaled an increase in executive-level ranks by a little less than 1 position. The regression equation for White women in SES positions at the department level was statistically significant \((p < 0.000)\) and explained 58 percent of variability in representation, as 1 unit increase in fiscal year equaled an increase in upper-level ranks by 3 positions.

These results suggest that the level of representation among White women in both GS-13 through GS-15 and SES positions increased to a greater extent than African American women over time at the department level as shown in Figure 6 and Figure 7. White women were the primary beneficiary of agency-wide efforts to reduce underrepresentation and increase workforce
### TABLE 14. TIME-SERIES REGRESSION ANALYSIS AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN AND WHITE WOMEN DEPARTMENT-WIDE GS-13 THROUGH GS-15 AND SES FY 1994 THROUGH FY 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Standardized Coefficient</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Adjusted R²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>African American Women</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS-13 through GS-15</td>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>90.551</td>
<td>20.066</td>
<td>4.513</td>
<td>854.200</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>57.233</td>
<td>1.958</td>
<td>29.227</td>
<td>240.300</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White Women</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS-13 through GS-15</td>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>565.360</td>
<td>114.100</td>
<td>4.955</td>
<td>240.300</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>172.600</td>
<td>11.130</td>
<td>15.501</td>
<td>240.300</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>African American Women</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>5.904</td>
<td>1.594</td>
<td>3.703</td>
<td>6.274</td>
<td>0.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>0.390</td>
<td>0.156</td>
<td>2.505</td>
<td>26.900</td>
<td>0.000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>White Women</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>39.684</td>
<td>6.962</td>
<td>5.730</td>
<td>26.900</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>3.101</td>
<td>0.676</td>
<td>4.587</td>
<td>26.900</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### FIGURE 6. TRENDS IN LEVEL OF REPRESENTATION AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN AND WHITE WOMEN GS-13 THROUGH GS-15 DEPARTMENT-WIDE FY 1994 THROUGH FY 2010

- **African American Women**
- **White Women**
diversity as stated in the strategic documents. They consistently ranked as the second largest represented race-gender group – second to White men. In FY 1994, White women accounted for approximately 6,498 of 23,928 positions across the department-wide workforce, with 87 percent of those positions in lower-level ranks. In that same year, White women accounted for approximately 802 of 4,697 GS-13 through GS-15 positions and 52 of 413 SES positions. In the mid-2000s, White women demonstrated a stark increase in representation across all grades at the department level. The level of representation among White women increased to approximately 12,222 of 42,410 positions in FY 2010. In that year, White women demonstrated an increase in representation in upper-level ranks across the department, as they accounted for approximately 3,415 of 16,584 GS-13 through GS-15 positions and 84 of 364 SES positions.

As it relates to bureau-level representation, the regression equation for African American
women in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at BEA was not statistically significant ($p = 0.128$). The regression equation for White women in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at BEA was not statistically significant ($p = 0.531$). The regression equation for White women in SES positions at BEA was not statistically significant ($p = 1.000$).

The regression equation for African American women in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at BIS was not statistically significant ($p = 0.638$). The regression equation for White women in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at BIS was not statistically significant ($p = 0.051$). The regression equation for White women in SES positions at BIS was statistically significant ($p = 0.013$) and explained 87 percent of variability in representation; however, there was not an observed increase in executive-level positions.

The regression equation for African American women in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at Census was statistically significant ($p = 0.003$) and explained 95 percent of variability in representation, as 1 unit increase in fiscal year equaled an increase in upper-level ranks by 18 positions. The regression equation for White women in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at Census was statistically significant ($p = 0.011$) and explained 89 percent of variability in representation, as 1 unit increase in fiscal year equaled an increase in upper-level ranks by 29 positions. The regression equation for African American women in SES positions at Census was not statistically significant ($p = 1.000$). The regression equation for White women in SES positions at Census was not statistically significant ($p = 0.135$).

The regression equation for African American women in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at EDA was statistically significant ($p = 0.023$) and explained 81 percent of variability in representation, as 1 unit increase in fiscal year equaled an increase in upper-level ranks by 1 position. The regression equation for White women in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at EDA
was not statistically significant \((p = 0.450)\). The regression equation for White women in SES positions at EDA was not statistically significant \((p = 0.559)\).

The regression equation for African American women in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at ESA was not statistically significant \((p = 0.058)\). The regression equation for White women in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at ESA was not statistically significant \((p = 0.560)\). The regression equation for White women in SES positions at ESA was not statistically significant \((p = 1.000)\).

The regression equation for African American women in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at ITA was not statistically significant \((p = 0.089)\). The regression equation for White women in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at ITA was not statistically significant \((p = 0.800)\). The regression equation for African American women in SES positions at ITA was not statistically significant \((p = 0.182)\). The regression equation for White women in SES positions at ITA was statistically significant \((p = 0.037)\) and explained 75 percent of variability in representation, as 1 unit increase in fiscal year equaled an increase in executive-level ranks by less than 1 position.

The regression equation for African American women in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at MBDA was not statistically significant \((p = 0.194)\). The regression equation for White women in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at MBDA was not statistically significant \((p = 0.162)\). The regression equation for African American women in SES positions at MBDA was not statistically significant \((p = 1.000)\).

The regression equation for African American women in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at NIST was not statistically significant \((p = 0.090)\). The regression equation for White women in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at NIST was statistically significant \((p = 0.008)\) and explained 91 percent of variability in representation, as 1 unit increase in fiscal year equaled an increase in
upper-level ranks by 9 positions. The regression equation for White women in SES positions at NIST was not statistically significant \( (p = 0.308) \).

The regression equation for African American women in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at NOAA was not statistically significant \( (p = 0.446) \). The regression equation for White women in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at NOAA was statistically significant \( (p = 0.021) \) and explained 83 percent of variability in representation, as 1 unit increase in fiscal year equaled an increase in upper-level ranks by 34 positions. The regression equation for African American women in SES positions at NOAA was not statistically significant \( (p = 1.000) \). The regression equation for White women in SES positions at NOAA was statistically significant \( (p = 0.016) \) and explained 85 percent of variability in representation, as 1 unit increase in fiscal year equaled an increase in executive-level ranks by less than 1 position.

The regression equation for African American women in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at NTIA was not statistically significant \( (p = 0.354) \). The regression equation for White women in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at NTIA was not statistically significant \( (p = 0.073) \). The regression equation for White women in SES positions at NTIA was not statistically significant \( (p = 0.058) \).

The regression equation for African American women in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at NTIS was not statistically significant \( (p = 0.638) \). The regression equation for White women in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at NTIS was not statistically significant \( (p = 0.319) \). The regression equation for White women in SES positions at NTIS was not statistically significant \( (p = 1.000) \).

The regression equation for African American women in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at OIG was not statistically significant \( (p = 0.269) \). The regression equation for White women in
GS-13 through GS-15 positions at OIG was not statistically significant \( (p = 0.308) \). The regression equation for White women in SES positions at OIG was statistically significant \( (p = 0.042) \) and explained 73 percent of variability of representation; however, there was not an observed increase in executive-level positions.

The regression equation for African American women in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at OS was not statistically significant \( (p = 0.178) \). The regression equation for White women in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at OS was not statistically significant \( (p = 0.098) \). The regression equation for African American women in SES positions at OS was statistically significant \( (p = 0.015) \) and explained 86 percent of variability of representation, as 1 unit increase in fiscal year equaled an increase in executive-level ranks by less than 1 position. The regression equation for White women in SES positions at OS was not statistically significant \( (p = 0.275) \).

The regression equation for African American women in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at USPTO was not statistically significant \( (p = 0.826) \). The regression equation for White women in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at USPTO was not statistically significant \( (p = 0.156) \). The regression equation for African American women in SES positions at USPTO was not statistically significant \( (p = 0.182) \). The regression equation for White women in SES positions at USPTO was not statistically significant \( (p = 0.210) \).

The results suggest that the level of representation among White women in both GS-13 through GS-15 and SES positions increased to a greater extent than African America women over time at the bureau level as shown in Figure 8 through Figure 17. For example, White women demonstrated minimal increases in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at Census, NIST, and NOAA. However, African American women only demonstrated increases in their level of
representation in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at Census and EDA. In FY 2006, White women demonstrated the highest level of representation in GS-13 through GS-15 position at NOAA, as they accounted for approximately 967 of 5,580 positions, which increased to 1,097 of 5,777 positions by FY 2010. In FY 2006, African American women demonstrated the highest level of representation in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at USPTO, as they accounted for approximately 309 of 4,058 positions, which increased to 335 of 5,078 positions by FY 2010. In FY 2006, African American women demonstrated the lowest level of representation in GS-13 through GS-15 positions at ESA, as they only accounted for approximately 3 of 35 positions, which increased to 4 of 28 positions by FY 2010.

White women demonstrated minimal increases in SES positions at BIS, ITA, NOAA, and OIG. However, African American women only demonstrated an increase in their level of representation in SES positions at OS. In FY 2006, White women demonstrated the highest level of representation in SES positions at NOAA, as they accounted for approximately 20 of 114 positions, which increased to 23 of 117 positions in FY 2010. In FY 2006, African American women demonstrated the highest level of representation in SES positions at ITA, as they accounted for approximately 3 of 25 positions, which decreased to only 1 position by FY 2010. In FY 2006, African American women demonstrated the lowest level of representation in SES positions at BEA, BIS, EDA, ESA, NIST, NTIA, NTIS, and OIG, as they failed to account for any executive-level positions, which remained the same through FY 2010.

Nonetheless, the analysis revealed that African American women made overall gains in their level of representation in recent years. African American women were consistently the
third largest represented race-gender group. In FY 1994, African American women accounted for approximately 3,698 of 23,928 positions across the department-wide workforce, which increased to 4,506 of 42,410 positions in FY 2010. This trend is corroborated by the decline in the level of segregation among African American women from 39.3% in FY 1994 to 27.2% in FY 2005 as shown above in Figure 5. African American women demonstrated gains in upper-level ranks across the department. They accounted for approximately 184 of 4,697 GS-13 through GS-15 positions in FY 1994, which increased to 1,012 of 16,584 positions in FY 2010. Nonetheless, African American women demonstrated disproportionate concentration in lower-level ranks across the department. GS-1 through GS-12 positions accounted for approximately 78 percent of their representation. African American women experienced a slight increase in executive-level ranks across the department in recent years. They accounted for approximately 3 of 413 SES positions in FY 1994, which only increased to 11 of 364 positions in FY 2010.

Results for Hypothesis 6

Hypothesis 6 stated that the level of representation among African American women was higher in the year immediately following development of a strategic document that established workforce diversity goals. The sixth hypothesis was tested using a t-test. This study’s findings do not support the hypothesis that the level of representation among African American women did not increase in the year immediately following development of strategic documents with stated workforce diversity goals as shown in Table 16. There was not a statistically significant relationship between levels of representation and development of strategic documents between FY 2002 and FY 2003 (p = 0.432), FY 2003 and FY 2004 (p = 0.447), and FY 2004 and FY 2005 (p = 0.625). This analysis fails to reject the null hypothesis.
**TABLE 15. TIME-SERIES REGRESSION ANALYSIS AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN AND WHITE WOMEN**

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34 Grey boxes indicate that the race-gender group was not represented in the grade category.
35 The negative Adjusted R-Squared values could be explained by the small ratio of parameters to the case, which could be due to the lack of bureau-level data.
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FIGURE 10. TRENDS IN LEVEL OF REPRESENTATION AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN AND WHITE WOMEN GS-13 THROUGH GS-15 BUREAU-WIDE FY 2008

FIGURE 11. TRENDS IN LEVEL OF REPRESENTATION AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN AND WHITE WOMEN GS-13 THROUGH GS-15 BUREAU-WIDE FY 2009
FIGURE 12. TRENDS IN LEVEL OF REPRESENTATION AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN AND WHITE WOMEN GS-13 THROUGH GS-15 BUREAU-WIDE FY 2010

FIGURE 13. TRENDS IN LEVEL OF REPRESENTATION AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN AND WHITE WOMEN SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE BUREAU-WIDE FY 2006
FIGURE 16. TRENDS IN LEVEL OF REPRESENTATION AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN AND WHITE WOMEN SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE BUREAU-WIDE FY 2009

FIGURE 17. TRENDS IN LEVEL OF REPRESENTATION AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN AND WHITE WOMEN SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE BUREAU-WIDE FY 2010
TABLE 16. PAIRED SAMPLE DIFFERENCE OF MEANS TEST
FY 2002 THROUGH FY 2005

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These results suggest that the level of representation among African American women has not experienced a significant shift in recent years, despite development of strategic documents that establish workforce diversity goals\(^{36}\). In FY 2002, African American women accounted for approximately 3,819 of 27,752 positions across the workforce. However, approximately 3,189 of those positions were in GS-1 through GS-12 positions. In FY 2005, African American women experienced a minimal decrease in representation. They accounted for approximately 3,817 of 29,808 positions across the workforce. The overall trends in employment shares demonstrated that African American women were concentrated in GS-7 positions and appeared to encounter a glass ceiling at the GS-12 level as shown above in Figure 4.

**Triangulation of the Results**

This dissertation conducted a content analysis of strategic documents to determine if Commerce established strategic documents mentioned explicit strategies that support its goal to

\(^{36}\) It is important to note that the findings for Hypothesis 6 could be explained by the time lag between the development and implementation of the strategic documents – which was not examined in this study. This dissertation acknowledges that the immediate execution of strategic documents is limited by human resources processes and implementation timelines.
sustain a diverse workforce. This study’s qualitative analysis found that Commerce established strategic documents that explicitly support its goal to reduce underrepresentation and sustain a diverse workforce through stated plans of action. Moreover, the strategic documents demonstrated a high level of specificity, measurability, and timeliness. This study’s qualitative analysis revealed several emergent themes that captured the agency’s stated commitment to reduce underrepresentation and increase workforce diversity. These emergent themes included workforce diversity, strategic planning, accountability systems, attrition, human capital and HR management systems, diversity programs, and fair practices. The analysis also revealed that the strategic documents experienced a shift in content over time in areas of organizational mission and vision, management integration, and diversity management.

This study triangulated the qualitative findings with a quantitative analysis of employment trends. The intent of the triangulated analysis was to assess strategic alignment between documented evidence of planning and performance. The quantitative data was essential because initial results from the qualitative analysis did not ascertain if the agency’s workforce diversity goals had been successfully fulfilled. This study’s qualitative analysis validated that Commerce made a stated commitment to reduce underrepresentation and increase workforce diversity. This commitment dates back to FY 1994 when the agency established a goal to become an example of diversity. The strategic documents mentioned strategies to increase the representation of women and minority groups.

The qualitative analysis suggests that the agency should have experienced positive trends in job status among African American women across the Commerce workforce over time. The agency’s level of commitment to workforce diversity goals should have been evidenced by an increase in women and minority employment – particularly in leadership ranks. Since African
American women represent both groups, the quantitative analysis should have demonstrated an increase in their employment levels.

The findings from qualitative analysis were triangulated with the quantitative analysis to identify employment patterns, which were used as further evidence in thoroughly answering the research questions. This study's quantitative analysis revealed that Commerce made progress towards its goal to reduce underrepresentation and increase workforce diversity as stated across strategic documents. The analysis revealed that the level of segregation varied across minority women groups. The level of segregation among African American female professionals decreased from moderate to low levels of segregation in recent years. African American women demonstrated a decrease in index values over time, as they demonstrated a relatively low level of segregation at 27.2% in this study's final year of analysis. The analysis also revealed that White women demonstrated greater increases in their level of representation in GS-13 through GS-15 and SES positions compared to African American women – both at the department and bureau level. These results suggest that White women were the primary beneficiary of agency-wide efforts to reduce underrepresentation and increase workforce diversity. They were consistently ranked as the second largest represented race-gender group. Nonetheless, African American women represented the third largest race-gender group. The quantitative analysis also revealed that African American women did not demonstrate increases in their level of representation in the year immediately following the establishment of strategic documents with workforce diversity goals. The overall trends in employment shares demonstrated that African American women were concentrated in GS-7 positions and appeared to encounter a glass ceiling at the GS-12 level. They were disproportionately concentrated in lower-level ranks.
The triangulation of the results suggests that Commerce established strategic documents that mentioned a stated commitment to workforce diversity. In support of this goal, the agency developed strategies to drive reductions in underrepresentation and increases in workforce diversity – particularly in leadership ranks. The agency made notable progress towards increasing the employment shares among African American women. This was evidenced by a reduction in their overall level of segregation and an increase in their overall level of representation. However, African American women had a propensity to remain relegated to low-authority, low-earning, and low-mobility positions. This suggests an inability of the strategic documents to drive workforce diversity in leadership ranks among African American women.

Summary

This chapter provided a discussion of results from the qualitative analysis and quantitative analysis for strategic planning, employment trend, and triangulated hypotheses. This included a discussion of the triangulated results. The preliminary results suggest that Commerce established strategic documents that mentioned a stated commitment to workforce diversity. In support of this goal, the agency provided explicit strategies to drive workforce diversity. As a result, the agency made progress towards improving the job status of African American women. However, African American women had a propensity to remain relegated to lower-level ranks. These results are more explicitly addressed in Chapter 5.
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION

Introduction

The intent of this dissertation was to investigate the role of elements of strategic planning as drivers of employment trends among African American women across the Commerce workforce. This study echoes Hunt’s (2011) work to not simply address sources of discrimination, but to also create a better understanding within African American women of who they are and what their existence means. This study is yet another contribution to understanding the experience of African American women as they struggle to find representational equity across the federal workforce. This dissertation lends to the growing chorus of researchers who wish to better understand what it is to be an African American female professional (Hunt, 2011).

The following section provides a summative overview of the findings. Next, limitations of this dissertation are discussed. Afterwards, a call for future research is advanced, as well as a short discussion of this study’s contribution to the field of public administration. Then policy implications of this study are examined and recommendations conclude this chapter.

Summary of the Findings

Scholars have called for additional research on African American women to test the claim that African American female professionals are more subordinated than their counterparts (Curry, 2006). This dissertation responded to this call by conducting a triangulated analysis of Commerce to examine the alignment between documented evidence of planning and performance. The remainder of this section provides a summative description of the findings for
the research questions based on the strategic planning, employment trend, and triangulated hypotheses as also shown in Appendix I.

**Findings for Research Question 1**

The results from the qualitative analysis suggest that Commerce established strategic documents that mentioned explicit strategies that support its goal to sustain a diverse workforce.

**Findings for Hypothesis 1:** Commerce established strategic documents that mentioned an explicit commitment to workforce diversity. The most prevalent theme across the strategic documents was workforce diversity. Commerce recognized the need to increase employment among underrepresented groups based on the nation’s diversity. The strategic documents mentioned the agency’s goal to become an example of diversity by providing a fair and just employment landscape. In support of this goal, the agency made a stated commitment to reduce underrepresentation and increase workforce diversity based on race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, and veteran status. The strategic documents established short and long-term workforce diversity initiatives. These initiatives included targeted hiring and promotion strategies to increase the representation of women, minorities, veterans, and individuals with disabilities. While African American women were not mentioned as an isolated population, Hispanic and/or Latino men and women were identified as a target population for recruitment, retention, and development across the strategic documents. The findings for this hypothesis are consistent with past research, which posits that contemporary organizations must promote an environment of access and legitimacy to ensure utilization of the diversity of its staff as a competitive advantage (Kreitz, 2007; Thomas & Ely, 1996). Past studies have found
that the effective management of diversity drives organizational effectiveness and sustained competition (Wheeler, 1998). This study speculates that Commerce established strategic documents with workforce diversity goals in an effort to leverage the competitive advantage of a diverse workforce in order to survive in the twenty-first century.

Findings for Hypothesis 2: Commerce established workforce diversity goals that were specific, measurable, and timely/time-bound. As it relates to specificity, the strategic documents explicitly stated workforce diversity strategies, used action verbs to describe objectives, provided anticipated outcomes, and identified stakeholders responsible for driving workforce diversity. Each strategic document provided strategies to drive the establishment of Commerce as the “employer of choice” by recruiting, retaining, and developing a cadre of world-class leaders who provoke a quality, diverse workforce. As it relates to measurability, the strategic documents explicitly stated how to measure goal accomplishment. The agency made a stated commitment to leverage diversity in an equitable manner by leading and managing an inclusive workplace that maximizes diverse talents by respecting, understanding, valuing, and seeking individual differences. This commitment included development and usage of measures as accountability mechanisms. However, the findings suggest that Commerce needs to develop a more comprehensive performance management and accountability system. In particular, it needs to identify numerical targets and performance metrics. As it relates to timeliness, the strategic documents explicitly stated time-bound activities to ensure goal accomplishment. However, the findings suggest that Commerce needs to more explicitly identify a timeline for status reporting and project deadlines. The findings for this
hypothesis are consistent with past research, which posits that organizations are more likely to fulfill their strategic goals when they are aligned to the organizational mission, vision, and objectives (Ghoneim, 2012). Past studies have found that this requires a level of specificity, measurability, and timeliness when establishing strategic goals (Locke & Latham, 2005; Meyer, 2003). This study speculates that Commerce established workforce diversity goals that were specific, measurable, and timely because it recognized the need to develop a robust system to strategically manage its human capital in order to drive workforce diversity.

Findings for Research Question 2

The results from the qualitative analysis suggest that the state of representation and segregation among women identity groups has improved in recent years across the Commerce workforce. The emphasis on women and minorities as a targeted population to drive workforce diversity across the strategic documents corroborates the relationship between race, gender, strategic planning, and job status.

Findings for Hypothesis 3: Commerce did not decrease the level of segregation among African American women to the same extent as other minority women groups. The agency made strides in decreasing the level of segregation among African American women and other women minority groups. The level of segregation among African American female professionals decreased from moderate to low levels of segregation in recent years. This study's final year of analysis found that approximately 27.2% of African American women would have to be reallocated to other grades to equalize their proportions across the Commerce workforce to achieve total integration. However, it is
worth noting that American Indian or Alaska Native women have experienced a significant spike in index values in recent years. The findings of this hypothesis are consistent with past research, which posits that African American women have a distinct experience, as their race and gender intersect to create doubly discriminatory conditions, which cause them to encounter dual barriers as they navigate the upward mobility ladder (Powell & Butterfield, 1994; Wesley, 2009). Past studies have found that while African American female professionals may share demographic indicators with other race-gender groups, they have neither race nor gender in common with their colleagues across the organization (Ridgeway, 2001). This study speculates that Commerce did not decrease the level of segregation among African American women to the same extent as other minority women groups because it neglected to develop customized strategies that addressed the historic particularities and consequences associated with being both African American and female.

Findings for Hypothesis 4: Commerce decreased the level of segregation among African American women across grades over time. As abovementioned, the level of segregation among African American female professionals decreased from moderate to low levels of segregation in recent years. This study's final year of analysis found that approximately 27.2% of African American women would have to be reallocated to other grades to equalize their proportions across the Commerce workforce to achieve total integration. The findings of this hypothesis are consistent with past research, which posits that the enactment of antidiscrimination policies has been a direct driver of representative equity, as it helps eliminate barriers to career advancement (Sneed, 2005). Past studies have found that it is the role of the federal government to serve as stewards of representative
equity by dismantling overt and/or subtle discriminatory practices that contribute to the segregation of women and minorities to lower-echelon positions (Bello-Hass & Vanina, 2002). This study speculates that Commerce decreased the level of segregation among African American women because it developed strategic documents that established workforce diversity goals. These goals were supported by career mobility paths that allowed women and minorities to maneuver across the workforce and helped them begin to realize their fullest potential as federal employees.

Findings for Hypothesis 5: Commerce increased the level of representation among White women in GS-13 through GS-15 and SES positions to a greater extent than African American women over time—both at the department and bureau level. White women experienced the highest level of representation in recent years—second to White men. At the bureau level, White women held executive-level positions in all but one bureau. African American women only held executive-level positions in 6 of 14 bureaus. The analysis revealed that Census, NIST, NOAA, and USPTO demonstrated the most significant increases in the level of representation among women and minorities. Census and USPTO demonstrated the most notable gains among African American women. The bureau with the highest level of representation in SES positions among African American women was MBDA, which coincidentally has a minority-focused mission. It is worth noting that the same bureaus that were committed to mitigating risks to workforce diversity in FY 2006, continued to demonstrate this commitment through FY 2010.

Overall, African American women made gains in their level of representation in recent years. They were consistently ranked as the third largest represented race-gender group across the Commerce workforce. The findings for this hypothesis are consistent with
past research, which posits that African American female professionals encounter a
different experience in comparison to their White, female counterparts (Collins, 2004;
Tamry, 2010). Past studies have found that researchers have a tendency to consider
women and minorities as a single group. This falsely implies that African American
women and White women face the same impediments in the labor force (GCC, 1994).
Past studies suggest that African American women have to mitigate the effects of racism,
more so than sexism, in their vertical advancement to upper-management ranks (Brinson,
2006; Duke, 1992). This study speculates that Commerce increased the level of
representation among White women in GS-13 through GS-15 and SES positions to a
greater extent than African American women because it developed strategic documents
that established workforce diversity goals that neglected to recognize the impact of the
intersection of race and gender for minority women. This resulted in White women being
the primary beneficiary of career mobility opportunities.

Findings for Research Question 3

The results from the qualitative analysis also suggest that the level of representation
among African American women is not higher in years following the development of strategic
documents that establish workforce diversity goals.

Findings for Hypothesis 6: Commerce did not increase the level of representation among
African American women in the year immediately following development of strategic
documents that established workforce diversity goals. While the agency made strides in
increasing the level of representation among African American women over time, these
changes were in subsequent years – not in the year immediately following development
of the strategic documents. The majority of African American women occupied GS-1 through GS-12 ranks with a significant level of representation in GS-7 positions. The employment trends among African American women suggest that they encounter a glass ceiling at the GS-12 level. The glass ceiling prevents the upward mobility of African American women to GS-13 and GS-15 positions, which constitutes the candidate pool for senior leadership pipelines. The findings for this hypothesis are consistent with past research, which posits that a glass ceiling phenomenon exists within the federal government (Witherspoon, 2009). Past studies have found that women and minorities encounter invisible and artificial barriers that prevent their upward mobility to upper-management ranks (Calvert, 2006; GCC, 1995; Parham, 2002). Past studies suggest that African American women experience added barriers that have prevented their career advancement into upper-management ranks regardless of their qualifications (Catalyst, 2008). The findings are also consistent with past research, which posits that the establishment of workforce diversity policies and programs should result in a greater race and gender balance. This should be evidenced by an increase in employment shares among women and minorities (Sneed, 2005). Past studies have found that development of workforce diversity plans do not necessarily result in the immediate elimination of barriers to career advancement to upper-management positions among African American women (Osuoha, 2000). This study speculates that Commerce increased the level of representation among African American women in years following development of strategic documents that established workforce diversity goals because they identified strategies to help attract women and minorities to the workforce. However, while these strategies helped drive recruitment and retention, this study does not assume that they had
a significant impact on the development of women and minorities. This is evidenced by their lack of representation in upper-level and executive-level positions.

**Overall Findings**

The overall finding of this dissertation is that Commerce established strategic documents that mentioned a stated commitment to workforce diversity. In support of this goal, the agency developed strategies to drive reductions in underrepresentation and increases in workforce diversity – particularly in leadership ranks. The agency made notable progress towards increasing the employment shares among African American women. This was evidenced by an increase in their level of representation and a decrease in their level of segregation. This finding suggests that strategic planning is effective in driving overall workforce diversity. The strategic documents mentioned explicit strategies that helped improve the overall state of representation and segregation among women and minorities.

African American women were not identified as a targeted identity group and had a propensity to remain relegated to low-authority, low-earning, and low-mobility positions. This suggests an inability of the strategic documents to drive workforce diversity, particularly in leadership ranks, among non-targeted identity groups. The failure of the strategic documents to mention explicit strategies that were targeted towards African American women negatively impacted their upward mobility across the Commerce workforce. Overall, the progress made in the state of representation and segregation among African American women is reflective of the degree to which they were mentioned as a targeted identity group within the strategic documents.

This study, and the evidence it provides, suggests that Commerce can improve its ability to ensure strategic alignment between planning and performance to drive workforce diversity.
among specific minority women groups, particularly African American women in leadership ranks.

*Rationale of the Findings and Black Feminist Thought*

This study’s examination of the role of elements of strategic planning as drivers of employment trends among African American women embodies the theoretical tenets of Black feminist thought. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Black feminist thought intends to theoretically explain how knowledge can foster empowerment among African American women. It focuses on their experience at the center of analysis (Collins, 1990). This study placed African American women at the center of analysis to capture Commerce’s intention to drive shifts in the objectification of women and minorities through workforce diversity goals. Moreover, it intended to capture the agency’s capacity to act on these goals. An intrinsic value of Black feminist thought is the relationship between thought and action with the change (Collins, 1990). Black feminist thought demonstrates an ability to move the experience of African American women from theory to activism (Galloway, 2012). “One distinguishing feature of Black feminist thought is its insistence that both the changed consciousness of individuals and the social transformation of political and economic institutions constitute essential ingredients for social change” (Collins, 2009, p. 1).

Collins (2000) argues that Black feminist thought is an ideological necessity for African American in their process for self-definition and self-valuation. According to Applerouth and Edles (2011), a collective self-definition for Black feminism occurs through an ongoing dialogue whereby thought and action inform one another. Black feminist ideology rests on the assertion that self-definition is essential to facilitate growth and development among African American
women (Collins, 2000). Black feminist thought provides an important element in understanding the collective struggles and needs of African American women (Howard-Hamilton, 2003). Black feminist thought assumes that African American women share a common experience and worldview that contributes to their collective wisdom (Byrd, 2008). Black feminist thought introduces knowledge claims that consider the historical and continued challenges of African American women (Dujon, 2010). “Dealing with the historical oppression and marginalization of Black women demands an emancipatory theoretical orientation – one which recognizes that Black women have shared experiences navigating the world, from slavery to present” (Ricks, 2011, p. 60). This study assumed that African American women would share a common experience as federal employees. This study intended to capture this experience by identifying common threads among African American female professionals as an aggregate population (Collins, 1990; Easley, 2011). This study’s findings can serve as a starting point in empowering African American female professionals to define their position as federal employees (Winant, 1987).

This study’s use of Black feminist thought contributes to knowledge acquisition, which is central in shifting unjust systems of power (Collins, 1990). “Black feminist thought interrogates and teases out ‘systems’ or ‘organized bodies’ of oppression, and, creates a space where Black women can ‘make sense’ of their individual and collective struggles” (Haywood, 2009, p. 63). African American women operate within several sites of domination across these systems. These systems are based on Anglo-Saxon, masculinist ideologies (Easley, 2011). The utility of Black feminist thought rests in its ability to stimulate Afrocentric, feminist scholarship and create knowledge that empowers African American women in order to resist sites of domination. This
study’s findings support the recent resurgence of Black feminist thought as a theoretical explanation for sites of domination in bureaucratic systems, such as the federal government.

This study demonstrated a failure of African American women to significantly increase their level of representation in upper-management ranks (Dujon, 2010). This could be the result of Black feminist thought’s assertion that African American women demonstrate a legacy of struggle in the labor force (Bragg, 2011). Based on this study’s findings, one could posit that Commerce maintains sites of domination. This is evidenced by its development of strategic documents that established workforce diversity goals that failed to drive significant increases among African American women into upper-level and executive-level positions. Moving forward, scholars should explore strategies of survival and empowerment for African American female professionals through the lens of Black feminist thought (Edgerton-Webster, 2007). Future research could utilize Black feminist thought to further understanding of how African American female professionals manage to persevere across the federal workforce. This would further alignment between theory and practice within the discipline of public administration (Choates, 2012).

**Future Research**

While this study’s findings further understanding of the circumstance of African American female professionals across the Commerce workforce – it is not enough (Ricks, 2011). The field of public administration is in need of continued research in this area because “knowledge for knowledge’s sake is not enough – Black feminist thought must both be tied to Black women’s lived experiences and aim to better those experiences” (Applerouth & Edles, 2011, p. 343). This case study of Commerce only represents 1 of 26 agencies across the federal
government. This study's findings should serve as a starting point for future empirical research on African American women in the federal workforce.

There is a deficiency in empirical research on the impact of race and gender on the experience of African American female professionals, particularly in leadership ranks (Combs, 2003; Parker, 2008). Scholars have called for further research with a focus on the intersection of divergent aspects of identity. This could provide a more robust understanding of leadership and organizational diversity (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). Further research can help the federal government address an impending exodus of senior leadership by repurposing itself to sustain a quality, diverse workforce (Commerce, 2010a). While diversity research has progressed over the past 40 years, past studies have focused on a single dimension of diversity. This leaves a noteworthy gap that needs to be filled (Shore et al., 2009). The nascent research fails to capture the distinct experience of African American women, often ignoring the organizational practices that specifically support the career progression of women and minorities (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Cox, 1993; Fitt & Newton, 1981; Greaux, 2010; Ibarra, 1993; Ragins, 1989). This dissertation demonstrates a need to further investigate the following two key research areas: 1.) employment among Hispanics or Latinos, American Indians or Alaska Natives, and minority women groups; and 2.) public and private organizations.

The first area of future research could focus on the representation of Hispanics or Latinos, American Indians or Alaska Natives, and minority women professionals across the federal workforce. Hispanics lag in representation in upper-management ranks (OPM, 2010). In 2010, Hispanics only accounted for approximately 4 percent of executive-level positions in the federal workforce. However, they represented 8 percent of federal employees and 14 percent of the national labor force (OPM, 2010). "Only Hispanics are employed in the federal government
at a rate significantly below their level of participation in the U. S. civilian labor force” (MSPB, 1996, p. ii). This study found that Hispanics demonstrated low levels of representation compared to other race-gender groups across the Commerce workforce. Moreover, this study found that Hispanic women experienced a steady incline in levels of segregation in recent years. Commerce recognized this trend, as the strategic documents made a stated commitment to reduce Hispanic underrepresentation. Future research could address the utility of special hiring authorities and strategic partnerships as approaches to ensuring the recruitment, development, retention, and promotion of Hispanics, persons with Spanish language proficiency, and/or persons with knowledge of Hispanic culture (DOL, 2012). Future research could also investigate the recent spike in the level of segregation among American Indian or Alaska Native female professionals across the Commerce workforce. Moreover, future research could address the relationship between strategic planning with increasing the state of representation among all women minority groups. This research could utilize the goal setting theory to analyze the relationship between the specificity, measurability, and timeliness of workforce diversity goals with the enlargement of representation among targeted identity groups.

The second area of future research could be a comparative analysis of African American women across similarly-sized public and private sector organizations. This study only examined a single public organization. Future research could benchmark other government entities and private sector organizations to capture best practices and lessons learned. This research could drive system-level improvements to human capital and HR management across the federal government. While previous research has examined the uneven distribution of women and minorities across both the public and private sector, future research could more adequately address the underrepresentation of African American women. In particular, future research
could examine career success factors and pay inequity (Alkadry et al., 2002; Alkadry & Tower, 2006; GAO, 2003; Jackson, 2009).

**Contribution to Public Administration**

This study's analysis of a single bureaucratic organization contributes to the field of public administration in the following three key areas: 1.) reintroduces the theoretical utility of Black feminist thought; 2.) fills the gap in research examining the impact of strategic planning on organizational outcomes; and 3.) furthers HR literature on women and minorities. First, this research contributes to the field of public administration by reintroducing the theoretical utility of Black feminist thought. This study posits that it is an appropriate paradigmatic concept to address the role of intersecting identities in the career experience of African American women (Byrd, 2008). Cook and Glass (2008) argue that research rooted in positivist paradigms fail to reflect the complexities inherent in the intersection of race and gender. “In short, we need new analytical tools and strategies to assist us in understanding the complexities of intersectionality” (Cook & Class, 2008, p. 320). In support of this call, this study considered Black feminist thought as a paradigmatic departure. It recognized that the intersection of race and gender contributes to a multidimensional structure of discrimination and domination. “The struggle for a self-defined Black feminism occurs through an ongoing dialogue whereby action and thought inform one another” (Collins, 2000, p. 30).

This dissertation contends that the field of public administration should embrace Black feminist thought as a critical theory. It can empower African American female professionals by transforming public institutions through the reversal of discriminatory and dominating
organizational structures. Fell (2004) suggests that African American women can self-actualize through theory itself. "Exploring theory, therefore, is not merely a pastime for Black women, but rather it is a necessary tool in their battle for equality" (Fell, 2004, p. 2). This study supports the fundamental relationship between theory and praxis. It considered the paradigmatic tenets of Black feminist thought to advance pragmatic solutions in sustaining a quality, diversity workforce across the federal government. Until the federal government takes this relationship into consideration, it will remain ill-equipped to develop and execute appropriate diversification strategies that benefit African American women (Greaux, 2010).

Second, this research contributes to the field of public administration as minimal research has sought to understand the impact of strategic planning on sustaining a quality, diverse workforce as an organizational outcome (Pitts, 2005). Past studies demonstrate a notable gap in research on the strategic planning process in public organizations (Shahin, 2011). According to Shahin (2011), "A number of gaps were noted in public administration literature, such as the relationship between the formality of the strategic planning formation process and planning in public organizations; the extent to which a formal planning process is practiced at a departmental level; and the influence of organizational characteristics on the strategic plan document quality" (p. 3).

The purpose of a strategic plan in public management is to enable public organizations to manage internal factors for the purpose of promoting public value (Shahin, 2011). The federal government’s obligation to promote the public value is a distinguishing dimension across the field of public administration. This requires it to consider the public interest as a guide for its actions (Rosenbloom, 1998; Shahin, 2011). Strategic planning can be leveraged to strengthen an organization’s capacity to both think and act strategically, particularly as it relates to adaptation
to change (Bryson, 2004; Shahin, 2011). Organizational change requires the strategic reconciliation of tactic, skill, and knowledge to build consensus and achieve diversity. This study provides better understanding of the role of strategic planning as a driver of workforce diversity to better public service delivery in public administration (Perry, 2005).

Third, this research contributes to the gap in HR literature on the distinct experience of women and minorities (Martin-Alcazar et al., 2013). The capacity to manage growth in workforce diversity and increase representation among women and minorities is deemed as a critical HR management issue in twenty-first century organizations (Kossek et al., 2002). This study demonstrated the criticality of HR management in the equitable representation of employees. This is necessary for the sustainment of a quality, diverse workforce. Unfortunately, minimal research has focused on the impact of HR policies and practices on driving workforce diversity. Bierema (2002) posits that the HR discipline has failed to vigorously examine diversity, equality, power, heterosexism, discrimination, sexism, and racism in organizations. In addition to this disparity, the field boasts a small number of minority scholars. As a result, the experience of minority women has been excluded in social science research – even by female researchers (Bierema, 2002; Cox & Nkomo, 1990). “Despite its strategic importance, the majority of models in this field implicitly consider the workforce as a generic and homogenous category, and do not take into account culture differences among employees” (Martin-Alcazar, 2013, para 3).

Cox and Nkomo (1990) argue that notwithstanding its importance as a factor in workplace environments, the issue of race receives inadequate attention from organizational behaviorists and HR theorists. This study supports the theoretical tenants of new public administration, as it relates to improving public management through HR management (Ocampo,
Past studies demonstrate the role of HR in the general management of public administration and government (Ocampo, 1998). According to Pourezzat et al. (2011), new public administration suggests that agents of administration must demonstrate a commitment to social equality as a public value. It is critical that the field of public administration recognizes workforce diversity as a public value and strategic imperative across public organizations. It is important to further knowledge on the relationship between HR management and workforce diversity within the field of public administration, as diversity is a people-related business issue (Jackson, 1992). This continued research could help women and minorities maneuver organizational barriers to vertical mobility. Moving forward, HR research could be leveraged to inform organizational agenda-setting and activate change (Jackson, 1992).

Limitations

This dissertation acknowledges the following four limitations: 1.) generalizability; 2.) sampling bias; 3.) experimenter effects; and 4.) lack of granularity and human capital variables. The first limitation of this study is its failure to generalize findings to other audiences. Yin (2003) suggests that case study findings are not generalizable to broader populations. However, they expand theoretical propositions. This study examined Commerce as a single organization because it embodies a distinct mission to spur new economic opportunities for the American people. This study sought to examine a single organization because “each federal agency embodies separate missions and programmatic mandates, which impact the organizational structure and culture and assignment of work performed. Consequently, the structure and deployment of the workforce differs from agency to agency” (Hunt, 2011, p. 31). Albeit a limitation, this dissertation’s evaluation of Commerce’s progress towards achieving its
workforce diversity goals contributes to the field of public administration by serving as a benchmark on lessons learned and best practices. This study adds to existing knowledge on both theoretical and practical approaches to driving workforce diversity through human capital and HR management. Also, this study can serve as a baseline of key data points and markers for improvement for future research and strategic planning efforts (Dalrymple, 2007).

The second limitation of this study is sampling bias. It used a purposive sampling strategy to select a corpus of strategic documents germane to the topic of workforce diversity. Also, this study only considered fulltime, permanent employees from a single agency. This dissertation acknowledges that both samples limit the scope of this study by race, gender, grade, and organization (Babbi, 1999).

The third limitation of this study is my paradigm as the researcher and its subsequent influence during data analysis and data interpretation (Cook & Class, 2008). As an African American female researcher, there was potential for inherent standpoint bias to penetrate this study. As more African-American women earn advanced degrees, the range of Black feminist scholarship is expanding. An increasing number of African-American women scholars are explicitly choosing to ground their work in Black women's experiences. By doing so, they implicitly adhere to an Afrocentric, feminist epistemology (Collins, 2009). Rather than being restrained by their "both/and" status of marginality, these women make creative use of their outsider-within status and produce innovative Afrocentric, feminist thought (Collins, 2009). According to Hylton (2012), at the core of Black feminist thought is the concept of standpoint. This concept suggests that African American women share the common struggle of racism and sexism. As an African American female scholar in pursuit of expanding Afrocentric, feminist ways of knowing, it is important to acknowledge the potential impact of standpoint bias. This
suggests that the location from which a person views the world determines his or her’s focus and what is obscured (Hunt, 2011). As a Black feminist researcher, I intend for this study to advance a broader dialogue in order to resolve the epistemological debate regarding the “truth” for African American female professionals (Grodsky & Pager, 2001).

The fourth limitation of this study is its lack of granularity in the data set and failure to consider the impact of human capital variables on employment trends among African American women. The quantitative analysis used an aggregated data set of personnel records based on combined race and gender indicators. The data set lacks granularity because it failed to examine the personnel records at their lowest level. This lack of granularity presented limitations when extracting details from the data analysis, particularly as it relates to making the most accurate determinations about relationships. As such, this study recognizes that the role of elements of strategic planning as drivers of employment trends among African American women could be explained by factors other than race and gender. This study acknowledges that glass ceiling effects could be explained by other driving factors not examined during this study. These factors could include human capital variables (e.g., education; training; experience/tenure; age; work/life preferences).

**Policy Implications**

This dissertation’s call for future research on African American women encapsulates Truth’s (1851) earlier call for theoretical advancements on the intersection between race and gender (McCall, 2005). “Inherent in Truth’s wisdom is a call for researchers to approach intersectionality from the perspectives of ordinary people who live at the crux of structural inequality based on intersections of race, class, sex, gender, sexual orientation, and disability.
Indeed the novel perspectives gained from intersectionality research can advance knowledge, inform interventions, and shape public policy in ways that benefit Black women” (Cook & Class, 2008, p. 323). This study reaffirms the theoretical capabilities of Black feminist thought. In particular, its ability to create emergent knowledge claims regarding African American female professionals. The applicability of Black feminist thought lies in its ability to articulate the impact of the intersection of race and gender on the circumstance of African American women in more accessible terms (Collins, 2009). New knowledge on the experience of African American female professionals will empower them with a new set of self-definitions that surpass their stereotypic roles (Roscigno, 2007). Collins (1990) suggests that a self-defined epistemology for African American women calls into question that which passes as “truth.” However, revealing new ways of knowing, which allow subordinate groups to define their own reality, has far greater implications. This includes policy implications (Grodsy & Pager, 2001).

This study recognizes that workforce diversity is a public policy concern. The federal workforce exercises a great level of influence on both policy formulation and execution (Sneed, 2004). The equitable representation of women and minorities in upper-management positions is critical considering the role of senior executives in fostering political, social, and economic advancement through policy (Sneed, 2004). “A series of Government Accountability Office reports assert that diversity…is viewed as an organizational strength that contributes to achieving results by providing a wide variety of perspectives on public policy formulation and implementation, strategic planning, problem-solving, and decision-making” (Clark, 2009, p. 70). This study found that Commerce established strategic documents that mentioned strategies to drive workforce diversity. These strategies generally applied to women, minorities, individuals with disabilities, and veterans. The agency failed to provide strategies that explicitly identified
African American women as a targeted identity group. This could explain their still relatively high and disproportionate concentration in lower-echelon positions. The agency demonstrated a particular lack of diversity in leadership ranks. The findings suggest that both White men and women occupied the majority of GS-13 through GS-15 and SES positions. This lack of diversity in upper-level and executive-level ranks prevents other women and minorities from engaging in policy-making and decision-making.

Lowi (1985) suggests that policy is associated with distinct organizational structures. These structures impact personnel practices throughout government bureaucracies. This dissertation's examination of macro-level workforce trends aligns to existing literature. Extant literature suggests that human capital and HR change strategies occur at the organizational level (Kossek et al., 2002). This dissertation responds to the call for more theory-based research to holistically assess the impact of human capital and HR practices on diversity at the organizational level (Perry, 2009). This study assumes that stronger organizational structures that prioritize and sustain a quality, diverse workforce will drive improvements in the development and effectiveness of policy. Commerce needs to address the haphazard concentration of women and minorities in lower-echelon positions. This concentration impedes their accessibility to policy and planning-oriented, decision-making positions (Kim, 2000).

The equitable representation of African American women in upper-management ranks positions is critical, as senior leaders exercise a high level of influence on federal operations. The equitable representation of African American women in upper-management ranks could further the promotion of trade, industry, and economic opportunities through a broad demographic and socioeconomic lens. The lack of representation of African American women in these positions precludes them from opportunities to formulate policy by engaging in top-level
decision-making (Gunn, 1999). This study assumes that the increased representation of African American women in executive-level positions will positively influence the enlargement of African American women in upper-management ranks. This will place them on a career trajectory for vertical advancement to leadership positions with real power and authority (Mitchell, 2011). Moreover, this will ensure the agency’s senior leadership considers a broad set of value systems in decision-making, which is likely to impact policy outputs (Soni, 2000).

**Recommendations**

The federal government made a stated commitment to implement strategic diversity programs and policies in order to attract a quality, diverse pool of talent (OPM, 2010). Although the federal government is the largest single employer in the nation, recent hiring patterns do not reflect the recruitment, retention, and development of women and minorities across all organizational levels (Wilkerson, 2008). This lack of workforce diversity is a pressing human capital and HR management issue and is becoming a growing concern across the federal government. The federal workforce constitutes the majority of operating costs. Yet, employees have not been valued as an asset – even though they largely determine the federal government’s capacity to perform and fulfill its mission (GAO, 2001). Moving forward, the federal government’s most critical asset in mission accomplishment will be a quality, diverse workforce that maintains a high standard of excellence. According to Ghoneim (2012), the federal government must recognize that organizational effectiveness is dependent on the competencies implicitly held by its workforce. This requires continuous employee development and knowledge sharing in support of an organizational climate that is conducive to driving performance (Ghoneim, 2012). A quality, diverse workforce drives performance through
improved decision-making, problem-solving, creativity and innovation, and product
development, as well as heightened competition in global markets (Jackson, 2009).

The federal government has made a concerted effort to enlarge the representation of
women and minorities. However, this study's findings suggest that there is an opportunity to
strengthen the role of elements of strategic planning as a driver of employment trends among
African American women. It is critical that the federal government fills the gap in this
relationship in order to help African American women realize their fullest potential as federal
employees. Moving forward, the federal government must develop strategic documents that
provide explicit strategies that focus on targeted identity groups. These strategies will help to
drive the recruitment, retention, and development of specific target populations, particularly in
leadership ranks. This can be accomplished through the establishment of a more robust human
capital and HR management system. “A widespread lack of attention to strategic human capital
management and human resources management in general has created a fundamental weakness
in the federal government, putting at substantial risk our nation’s ability to efficiently,
economically, and effectively deliver products and services to taxpayers in the future. The crisis
in human capital threatens the senior ranks especially. The human capital crisis also puts
diversity at considerable risk” (Taylor, 2004, p. 3).

This dissertation, and the evidence it provides, concludes that Commerce should continue
its effort to establish an organizational structure that supports the effective management of
workforce diversity through strategic planning (Commerce, 2001; Commerce, 2003; Commerce,
2004; Commerce, 2005; Commerce, 2007a; Commerce, 2007b; Commerce, 2008a; Commerce,
2008b; Commerce, 2010a; Commerce, 2010b). This study concludes with four recommendation
areas in support of this continued effort as shown in Table 17.
### TABLE 17. RECOMMENDATIONS\(^{37}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1              | Address organizational norms that impede diversity across the workforce – particularly among African American women in upper-management ranks. | - Continue to examine trends and identify factors that contribute to an organizational culture that inhibits the vertical mobility of African American women to GS-13 through SES positions (Shipley, 1997).  
- Use nontraditional recruitment strategies to increase the level of representation among African American women, such as special hiring authorities and recruitment fairs at minority-serving institutions (Commerce, 2010a).  
- Reinstitute the defunct Diversity Council and Commerce Committee for African American Concerns.  
- Develop targeted strategies and numerical targets to reallocate African American women across grades to further decrease their relatively low level of segregation. |
| 2              | Develop a more robust leadership and knowledge management system to help develop senior executive competencies in African American women. | - Improve the representation of African American women in leadership pipelines, particularly GS-14 and GS-15, to ensure their consideration in succession strategies designed to grow the next generation of leaders (Commerce, 2010b).  
- Develop executive competencies among African American women to ensure the continuity of leadership and knowledge sharing (OPM, 2012b).  
- Develop targeted leadership development programs and mentorship programs to drive the establishment of formal and informal networks between African American women and senior leadership (Commerce, 2010b). |
| 3              | Improve human capital and HR management systems to support agency-wide practices and policies that drive the sustainment of a continuous pool of quality, diverse candidates (Wilburn, 1999). | - Use new appointments to enhance the representation of African American women in executive-level ranks (GAO, 2003).  
- Develop targeted strategies to address recruitment, retention, and development as separate human capital and HR capabilities.  
- Develop targeted strategies that not only consider workforce diversity categories (e.g., women; minorities; individuals with disabilities; veterans), but also specific identity groups (e.g., African American women). |
| 4              | Develop a more robust strategic planning process that includes performance metrics | - Establish a multidimensional strategic model that displays linear alignment at all organizational levels – including mission, vision, short-term and long-term goals that are actualized through drivers that push the process (e.g., recruitment; retention; promotions). |

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\(^{37}\) This dissertation recognizes that the implementation of the abovementioned recommendations is accompanied by an economic cost to not only to the U.S. Department of Commerce – but the nation as well.
and accountability mechanisms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process measures that ensure long-term consistency (e.g., merit-based selection process), and outcome measures that define outputs (e.g., workforce representation) (Wheeler, 1998).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continue use of the balanced scorecard as a strategic exercise to demonstrate the alignment between strategic planning and organizational performance (Ghoneim, 2012).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure consistency in basic content areas across strategic documents over fiscal years (e.g., mission statement; vision statement).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include workforce diversity goals in the performance plans of both agency and bureau-level leaders.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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race, ethnicity, and social economics. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (AAT 3296600)


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bureau of Economic Analysis</th>
<th>National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bureau of Industry and Security</td>
<td>National Telecommunications and Information Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureau of the Census</td>
<td>National Institute of Standards and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development Administration</td>
<td>National Technical Information Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics and Statistics Administration</td>
<td>Office of Inspector General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Trade Administration</td>
<td>Office of the Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority Business Development Agency</td>
<td>U. S. Patent and Trademark Office</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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38 Commerce (2007b)
APPENDIX B
DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Affirmative Action** – Policy aimed to overcome the impact of past discrimination through the reallocation of resources to members of a specific population (Kellough, 1992).

**American Indian or Alaska Native** – Person having origins in any of the original peoples of North, South, or Central America and who maintain tribal affiliation or community attachment (Greico & Cassidy, 2001).

**Asian** – Person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent (Greico & Cassidy, 2001).

**Balanced Scorecard** – Strategic planning and management system, which helps align business activities to the vision and strategy of the organization, improve internal and external communications, and monitor organizational performance against strategic goals (BSI, 2012).

**Benchmarking** – Organizational change process directed towards continuous improvement through the identification of best practices among industry leaders with superior performance, analysis of techniques for improved performance, and identification of lessons learned through successes and failures (OPM, 2012b).

**Best Practices** – Techniques and/or methodologies that have reliably led to desired and/or optimum results (Kreitz, 2007).

**Black or African American** – Person having origins in any of the original peoples of Africa (Greico & Cassidy, 2001).

**Business Case** – Document that presents a comprehensive rationale for a project, including justification for resource investment (Purdue, 2012).

**Career Ladder** – Mechanism used for vertical job promotion, including progression to high levels of pay, responsibility, and authority (OPM, 2012a).

**Career Plateau** – Point in a career when the likelihood of further hierarchical promotion is very low (Ference et al., 1977).

**Concrete Ceiling** – Formidable barriers that prevent women and minorities from achieving upper-management positions regardless of experience, education, achievements, and other qualifications (Catalyst, 2008).

**Content Analysis** – Research technique to describe textual material through the reduction of relevant and manageable data to identify patterns (Berelson, 1952).
Diversity – Characteristics that capture variation across religion, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic level, educational attainment, and general work experience among individuals within an organization (Bassett-Jones, 2005).

Diversity Management – Systematic organizational commitment to recruit and retain employees with diverse backgrounds and abilities (Bassett-Jones, 2005).

Diversity Policy – Organizational strategies designed to improve the representation of excluded minorities in workplace environments (Verbeek, 2012).

Gender – Sociocultural constructions of masculinity and femininity (Roscigno, 2007).

General Schedule – Basic compensation schedule for federal civilian employees in grades 1 through 15 (OPM, 2012a).

Glass Ceiling – Invisible and artificial barriers that prevent qualified women and minorities from advancing within an organization (GCC, 1995).

Grade – Level of authority in the federal civil service (OPM, 2012a).

Hispanic or Latino – Person having origins in any of the original peoples of Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Central America, South America, or other Spanish countries (Greico & Cassidy, 2001).

Human Capital – Development of individual skills and capabilities across the workforce (Coleman, 1990).

Human Capital Plan – Coherent framework of human capital policies, programs, and practices to achieve human capital requirements that directly support the agency’s strategic plan (OPM, 2012b).

Index of Dissimilarity – Measure of segregation that captures the percentage of individuals who would have to reallocate among units to equalize proportions and achieve total integration, which is divided by the percentage that would have to reallocate if the system started in a state of total segregation (Duncan & Duncan, 1955).

Intersectionality – Complex, irreducible, varied, and variable effects, which ensue when multiple axes of differentiation intersect (Brah & Phoenixi, 2004).

Leadership – Shared process by which individuals influence a group to achieve a common organizational goal (Northouse, 2007).

Minority – Aggregate group of members belonging to a racial or ethnic category (OPM, 2011c).

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander – Person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands (Greico & Cassidy, 2001).
**Occupational Segregation** – Degree to which groups are distributed differently across work settings (Collins, 1983).

**Organization** – Assembly of people working together to achieve common objectives through the division of labor (Young, 2007).

**Race** – Social concept used to classify groups of people based on physical traits, such as skin color (Hunt, 2011).

**Racism** – Belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others and thereby the right of dominance (Lorde, 1984).

**Segregation** – Differential distribution of social groups across organizational units (James & Taeuber, 1976).

**Sexism** – Application of beliefs and attitudes regarding implicit characteristics based on gender that indirectly impact one's abilities (OECD, 2008).

**Stereotypes** – Set of beliefs held by individuals about personal attributes shared by a group (James, 2000).

**Strategic Alignment** – System of human capital strategies aligned to the agency mission, goals, and objectives through analysis, planning, investment, measurement, and management of human capital programs (OPM, 2012b).

**Strategic Planning** – Process to examine internal strengths and weaknesses, evaluate the external environment to position the institution accordingly, produce decisions and actions, and help the institution maximize its strengths, minimize its weaknesses, and capitalize upon opportunities (Nunez, 2003).

**Succession Plan** – Systematic approach to building a leadership pipeline, which ensures leadership continuity by identifying the best candidates for positions, developing potential successors, and concentrating resources on the talent development process (Commerce, 2010b).

**Token** – Individuals within a minority population that constitutes less than 15 percent of the entire group composition across an organization (Witherspoon, 2009).

**Tokenism** – Phenomenon in which a person or group enters an organization as a fix to underrepresentation (Kanter, 1977).

**Underrepresentation** – Number of members in a minority group within an occupational category across the public workforce, which constitutes a lower percentage of the total number of minority employees within an occupational category across the civilian labor force (5 CFR 720.202).
Wage Discrimination – Discrepancy in compensation between two groups as a result of a bias towards a specific characteristic (Roscigno, 2007).

White or Caucasian – Person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Middle East, Europe, or North Africa (Greico & Cassidy, 2001).

White Paper – Document that presents a specific position and/or solution to an organizational problem (Purdue, 2012).

Workforce Diversity – Development and implementation of organizational systems and practices to manage people and permit individual differences among employees (Cox & Smolinski, 1994).

Workforce Plan – Coherent framework of human capital requirements designed to identify competency gaps, develop strategies to address human capital needs and close competency gaps, and ensure the organization is appropriately structured (OPM, 2012b).
### APPENDIX C

**RACE AND GENDER STRATIFICATION THEORIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biological Theories</td>
<td>Great Man</td>
<td>White men are more equipped to effectively manage organizations because they possess innate leadership characteristics (Carlyle, 1988).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Patriarchy</td>
<td>Men maintain an inherent desire to relegate women to a dependent status in order to limit their career mobility (Strober, 1984).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sex Discrimination</td>
<td>Gender is used to maintain the power of numbers for men as the majority in order to guide their desire for social certainty (Kanter, 1977).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Role</td>
<td>Individuals are expected to conform to societal expectations in which men are considered career-focused, while women are expected to be maternal (Eagly, 1987).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Discrimination Theories</td>
<td>Disparate Impact</td>
<td>Organizations must eliminate employment practices that could cause an adverse impact on protected classes (Griggs v. Duke Power Company, 1971).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gendered Organizations</td>
<td>Women are disadvantaged due to organizational stereotypes and human capital barriers (Acker, 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Human Capital</td>
<td>Organizational practices are not to blame for adverse impacts to women and minorities, but rather they earn and advance less than their male counterparts because they possess less human capital, as a result of receiving less education and accumulated work experience (Becker, 1964).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rationale Bias</td>
<td>Gender discrimination is the result of intentional bias in decision-making by management, who are motivated by their own self-interest (Larwood et al., 1988).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Queuing</td>
<td>Employers deliberately hire women and minorities into existing low-wage positions (Kmec, 1993).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systematic Barrier Theories</td>
<td>Crowding Effect Hypothesis</td>
<td>The number of jobs for women is restricted to create an oversupply of females in the labor market (Bergmann, 1974).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Devaluation Hypothesis</td>
<td>Occupations filled by low-status employees become low-status in themselves (England, 1992).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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39 In 1971, the Supreme Court ruled in Griggs v. Duke Power Company (410 U.S. 424), establishing that organizations cannot establish employment criteria that do not pertain to an applicant’s ability to perform a job.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dual Labor Market</td>
<td>Men hold positions in primary sectors, such as science and finance; while women hold positions in secondary sectors, such as childcare and administrative support (Piore, 1970).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectation States</td>
<td>Social hierarchies are embedded in gender systems, in which gender stereotypes are encoded based on status beliefs (Wagner &amp; Berger, 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>Organizations need legitimacy to survive (Scott, 1995).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Jeopardy</td>
<td>Individuals occupy several social status positions that intersect to create a unique hierarchical space (Ransford, 1980).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advantage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative</td>
<td>Government agencies gain a sense of legitimacy when bureaucracy demographically mirrors the polity and government best benefits if its workforce demographically mirrors its constituency, which reflects the equitable accessibility to public resources (Kingsley, 1944).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureaucracy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Categorization</td>
<td>Self-identity and social categorizations serve as schemas, which are rooted in salient cultural distinctions and cause the dominant group to develop stereotypic attitudes regarding the capabilities and qualifications of the minority group (Cook &amp; Glass, 2008).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Dominance</td>
<td>Society is structured based on group hierarchies to promote conflict and discrimination in support of self-interest (Sidanius &amp; Pratto, 1999).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Equity</td>
<td>The pillars of public administration include efficiency, effectiveness, economy, and equity with social equity representing the fair, just, and equitable management of all institutions serving the public directly or by contract, distribution of public services, and formation and implementation of public policy (Frederickson, 1990; NAPA, 2012). Social equity is distinguished by segmented equality and block equality. “Segmented equality” is defined as the representation of a particular group across various levels within an organization. “Block equality” is defined as the overall representation of a particular group within an organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokenism</td>
<td>Interactional pressure experienced by a small proportion of a specific population is distinguished by a salient individual characteristic, which isolates them from the dominant group and creates an adverse burden of leadership (Kanter, 1977).</td>
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</table>
## APPENDIX D
### PAST DISSERTATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Advancement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aisuan (2011)</strong> conducted a qualitative, phenomenological study to identify determinants for career success among African American women. The study used a purposive sample of 20 African American women in senior leadership roles in Los Angeles City Government. The study found several determinants, including barriers, competencies and characteristics, mentoring and networking, education, and leadership styles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bailey (1996)</strong> conducted a mixed method study to examine the career advancement of African Americans in the federal government. The study analyzed data from the Central Personnel Data File, as well as interviews with African American members of the senior executive corps. The study found that participants demonstrated similar competencies as their White counterparts; however, their access to developmental opportunities was negatively influenced by race.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brinson (2006)</strong> conducted a qualitative study to examine barriers facing African American women to mid-management and upper-management positions in corporate America. The study documented the phenomenological experience of 15 African American women. The study found that African American female executives experienced racism as a barrier to their advancement – more so than just sexism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Callaway (2012)</strong> conducted a qualitative, phenomenological study to explore the critical factors and lived experiences that influence career advancement among African American women in government organizations across the state of Florida. The study used a snowball sample of 16 African American female executives to administer in-person interviews to identify key factors that assist African American women in obtaining executive status. The study found that education, mentorship, human capital, and leader competency were major themes. The study also identified advanced education and strong competency skills as critical career strategies for African American women seeking career advancement opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Calvert (2006)</strong> conducted a qualitative research study to determine factors that contribute to low promotion rates among African American women within corporate America. The study explored the relationship between promotional advancement, ethnicity, gender, and the glass ceiling. The data analysis consisted of interviews with 16 African American women in leadership positions across various industries. The study found that discrimination and stereotypes were the most common barriers to career advancement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clayton (2009)</strong> examined the primary mentor relationships of African American female executives in higher education. The study used a case study approach to examine the experience of six African American female executives. The study specifically explored career and psychosocial mentoring functions, the influence of race and gender in mentoring, relationship initiation, benefits of formal and informal mentoring, importance of mentoring constellations, critical career stages, and perceptions of mentors. The study found that mentoring relationships, both formal and informal, were vital to career success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diggs-Wilborn (1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gibson (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greaux (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gunn (1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry-Brown (1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson (2009)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
perceived difficulty to achieve senior executive ranking and perceptions of success factors, and the relationship between
demographic variables and perceptions of success factors. The study conducted a web-based survey, which was
administrated to 190 African American women serving in GS-14 through Senior Executive Service positions in the
federal government. The study found that African American women perceived the study’s key success factors as
important to career advancement.

Johnson-Drake (2010) examined the mentoring experience of African Americans in the federal government. The study
used interviews, focus groups, and other qualitative methods to gain an understanding of the mentoring experience for
this particular group. The study found that mentoring had positively impacted the lives of African Americans in diverse
organizations.

Lewis (2006) conducted a phenomenological study to explore how African American women reached executive-level
ranks within the federal government. The study conducted interviews with 25 African American female executives.
The study found several key themes that were consistent throughout the interviews, including qualities for success,
factors that limit success, and how success had been sustained.

Osuoha (2010) examined how ethnicity, gender, employment opportunities, mentorship, and professional relationships
impact the career advancement of African American women in corporate America. The glass ceiling syndrome was
synthesized to determine what steps African American women took to achieve promotions, success, and leadership
status. The study found that diversity plans and programs had not eliminated the prevalence of negative stereotypes.

Parham (2002) studied the underrepresentation of African American women in mid-management and upper-
management positions across the federal government. The study analyzed data from the Central Personnel Data File, as
well as civilian labor force statistics, a Merit System Protection Board survey, and personal interviews. The study
found that African American women possessed the qualifications to advance to mid-management and upper-
management positions, but encountered subtle barriers that prohibit their advancement.

Patterson (2006) conducted a study to identify perceptions of the glass ceiling among African American women, when
considering demographic variables, age, education, employment, and marital status. The study used a perception of the
glass ceiling score, ranging from one through five, based on a snowball sample of African American women. The study
found that the glass ceiling was a perpetual barrier facing African American women in work environments.

Porter (2003) conducted a case study analysis to examine the experience of successful African American women who
obtained executive-level positions in corporate America. The study used the emancipatory paradigm to conduct a
qualitative, multiple-case analysis. The study found that African American female executives that demonstrated hard
work experienced greater career mobility.

Riley (2006) examined strategies and motivational factors used by African American women to achieve executive status
in Fortune 500 companies. The study used an exploratory, non-experimental, qualitative research design to examine the
experience of 111 African American female executives. The study found that participants used several strategies,
including working harder than peers, attaining strong educational background and credentials, putting together a network of mentors, being flexible and relocating, acquiring and demonstrating excellent communication skills, making oneself visible to superiors, participating in leadership development programs, being comfortable with oneself, and taking responsibility for one's own career. Also, the study found that participants were motivated by their parents, personal drive, feelings of obligation, and need to make a living.

Safir (2007) conducted a qualitative, grounded theory study to explain how women have succeeded in attaining the career status in the Senior Executive Service and/or Senior Foreign Service. The study examined the career progress of 50 women and their perceptions about the factors that contribute to or impede their career advancement. The study found several emergent themes, including advocacy and mentorship, listening to intuition, leveraging opportunities, broadening experiences, networking, family, and education and training.

Scales (2010) conducted a qualitative, phenomenological study to explore the lived experience of 16 African American female leaders employed in corporate America. The study found that the following five key themes contributed to the underrepresentation of African American women in senior-level leadership: 1.) mentoring; 2.) hard work; 3.) informal social networks; 4.) exposure; and 5.) dual bias of race and gender. Also, the study found the following three (3) subthemes: 1.) family; 2.) education; and 3.) leadership.

Smith (2003) examined the successes and challenges experienced by African American female professionals in corporate America. The study used in-depth interviews to capture the phenomenological experience of 13 African American female professionals. The study found that mentor relationships were key indicators of career success.

Tarmy (2012) conducted a qualitative, phenomenological study to examine how African American female executives obtained upper-management positions. The study found that both race and gender negatively impacted their career advancement.

Taylor (2004) examined the attitude of senior executive women in the federal government regarding their career advancement. The study conducted a survey, which was administered to 450 female executives. A correlation analysis and regression analysis were used to explore relationships between demographic and career-progression variables. The study found that the demographics of the study population correlated with the demographics of all senior executives.

Thomas (2009) conducted a web-based survey to explore similarities and differences among 201 plateaued and non-plateaued African American women in mid-management positions. The participants provided data regarding their career history, career path potential, career attitudes, and demographic characteristics. The study found no significant difference in the views of plateaued and non-plateaued managers in regard to variables that measured career potential.

Wesley (2009) studied the impact of organizational culture and stereotypes on the career advancement of minority women. The study explored the experience of 20 African American, Hispanic, and Asian women working at the executive level across several nonprofit organizations. The study conducted semi-structured interviews to capture the participant's struggles with the glass ceiling. The study found that race and gender impacted their career progression.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Communication Style</strong></th>
<th>Wilkerson (2008) explored the lived experience of 20 African American women and their career accession to senior executive corps within the federal government. The study conducted semi-structured interviews to a purposive sample of 20 African American female executives, which were analyzed using NVivo software. The study found several career success indicators, including fundamental competencies and characteristics, barriers, mentoring and networking, education, self-knowledge and development, and leadership styles.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership Style</strong></td>
<td>Williams (2005) conducted a qualitative, phenomenological study using a modified van Kaam method to conduct semi-structured, taped, and transcribed interviews. The study conducted interviews with a purposive sample of 20 women to capture their lived experiences and perceptions, as it relates to their career accession to senior executive ranks in the federal government. The study found several career success indicators, including cross-functional experiences, professional networking and mentoring, advanced education, and interpersonal leadership skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication Style</strong></td>
<td>Lindsey (1998) examined the communicative behavior of African American women. The study conducted interviews with 12 African American women in the District of Columbia and Las Vegas, Nevada. The participants were asked to describe their communication behaviors within and across cultures, gender, and in the context of the workplace. The study found that when professional and supervisory communicative behavior was constrained, they resorted to emotional behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership Style</strong></td>
<td>Byrd (2008) conducted a qualitative, phenomenological study to examine the leadership experience of 10 African American women across predominately White organizations. The data was collected using in-depth interviews and analyzed through a narrative analysis. The study found that traditional and dominant leadership theories were inadequate in explaining the experience of African American women in predominately White organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership Style</strong></td>
<td>Wise-Wright (2006) conducted a qualitative study to examine the low representation of African American women in executive-level positions across corporate America. The study conducted 11 in-depth interviews with African American women occupying executive-level positions. The study found that African American women used a set of formal and informal networks to optimize support and maximize success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership Style</strong></td>
<td>Doss (2011) examined the phenomenological experience of African American female executives in leadership. The study conducted interviews with six African American women who were selected through purposive, criterion sampling. The study found that traditional and hierarchical forms of leadership transitioned into collaborative and relational styles of leadership to accommodate global business trends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership Style</strong></td>
<td>Mashayekh (1995) studied the attributes and characteristics of women in the executive levels of the federal government. The study used a 1991 survey of 278 female executives to explore the characteristics, personal attributes, barriers, experiences, and leadership styles of women who achieved executive status in the federal government. The study found that participants' identified with a leadership style of advocacy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parker (1997) examined leadership socialization among African American women, particularly their communication strategies for managing obstacles and opportunities within predominately White, male-dominating organizations. The study used a sample of 15 African American female executives. The study analyzed in-depth interviews, direct observations, and archival documents using grounded theory. The study found that the most influential messages received throughout the socialization of African American female executives were related to education, responsibility, race relations, integrity, self-definition, and self-affirmation.

Stokes (1992) conducted an ethnographic case study to capture the leadership experience of African American women. The study examined the leadership experience of two groups of African American women across six entry-level and six executive-level management positions. The study used an ethnoscience methodology. The study found that entry-level and executive-level groups experienced an adverse leadership experience, which was attributed to race and gender.

Witherspoon (2009) conducted a qualitative, phenomenological study to re-envision the glass ceiling based on constructs of race, gender, and ethnicity. The study explored the experience of 26 women and minority executives in the federal government. The study used a modified van Kaam method of analysis to explore and describe the glass ceiling, as well as implications for career advancement. The study concluded with the development of a burden-of-leadership theoretical framework to conceptualize the multifaceted complexities of the glass ceiling phenomenon.

Johnson (2006) examined race, gender, and class inequities among African American women in corporate organizations. The study conducted interviews with 10 African American women in leadership positions within predominately White, male-dominating cultures. The study found that African American women faced the challenge of "belonging" when advancing their careers.

Lanier (2005) examined the experience of isolation among African American women in the workplace. The study conducted interviews with a sample of 15 African American women across six industries. The study used an Afrocentric feminist epistemology as the theoretical framework. The study found that African American women experienced both social and emotional isolation in the workplace, particularly as it relates to tokenism and marginalization.

Lewis (1998) studied trends in the race and gender composition of federal employment across white-collar and mid-management positions. The study tracked differences in average salary based on race and gender, while controlling for education, experience, and employment location. The Index of Dissimilarity was used to measure segregation levels based on a 1 percent sample of full-time permanent, white-collar employees in the grade scale pay system. The study found that women and minorities earned significantly less than their White, male counterparts with comparable education and experience.

Hunt (2011) conducted a phenomenological study to examine the underrepresentation of African American women in federal executive positions and its impact on representative democracy. The social cognitive theory and social cognitive career theory were used to theoretically guide the study. The study found that heritage, birthright, and presumption of
responsibilities to carry forward a legacy of responsibility and forbearance helped participants overcome career obstacles.

Kim (2001) examined the relationship between presidential party, group representation in upper-management, and policy outputs favorable to that group. The study conducted a longitudinal analysis of aggregate-level data of the federal civilian workforce, which contained information on non-postal, white-collar senior executives. The study conducted a time-series analysis from 1979 to 1999. The study found that democratic party control was related to female and minority representation in executive positions and greater funding for female and minority-related programs.

Mitchell (2011) conducted a quantitative analysis to examine 48 federal agencies to determine how African American presence at the senior level contributed to African American increases at mid-levels of the federal government. The study used standardized structured interviews to determine to what extent African American administrators believed that it was important to increase the representation of African Americans. The study found that African Americans in GS-15 and senior executive positions had exerted a positive influence on shifts in the percentage of African Americans at GS-13 and GS-14 levels.
Well, children, where there is so much racket there must be something out of kilter. I think that 'twixt the negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the White men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this here talking about?

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man – when I could get it – and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne 13 children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?

Then they talk about this thing in the head; what's this they call it? That's it, honey. What's that got to do with women's rights or negroes' rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?

Then that little man in Black there, he says women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wasn't a woman! Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with him.

If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them.

Obliged to you for hearing me, and now old Sojourner ain't got nothing more to say.

40 Stanton et al. (1881)
APPENDIX F
AFRICAN AMERICAN EMPLOYMENT
BY FEDERAL AND CIVILIAN WORKFORCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Federal Workforce</th>
<th>Civilian Labor Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American Men</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American Women</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

41 OPM (2011a)
# APPENDIX G
## OVERVIEW OF ANALYSES MATRIX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Theoretical Rationale</th>
<th>Testing Method</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Independent Variable(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Has the U. S. Department of Commerce established strategic documents that mention explicit strategies to drive its goal to sustain a diverse workforce?[^42] | Hypothesis 1: Strategic documents mention an explicit commitment to workforce diversity. | The theory that cultural change within an organization is contingent on cooperation and communication suggests that strategic documents will have an observed effect on the representation of women and minorities across the workforce. Cooperation and communication are necessary to effectively articulate the organizational mission, vision, goals, and objectives to all stakeholders in support of cultural change. In support of the vision and mission, measurable goals and objectives should be defined to provide an overarching aim to ensure accomplishment of expected outcomes, as it relates to workforce diversity. | Content Analysis  
- Word List  
- Cutting and Sorting  
- Key Word in Context  
- Word Co-occurrence | N/A | N/A |

[^42]: The data source is 13 agency-specific strategic documents published between FY 1994 through FY 2010.
| Hypothesis 2: Strategic documents establish workforce diversity goals that are specific, measureable, and timely/time-bound. | The institutional theory posits that organizations need legitimacy to survive. Government organizations gain a sense of legitimacy when its bureaucracy demographically mirrors the polity. The utilization of workforce diversity management programs prevents the risk of diminished legitimacy in the eyes of the constituents it is trying to serve. Workforce diversity is a legitimate business goal. Workforce diversity goals should be aligned to a performance management system to track the organization’s progress towards creating, managing, valuing, and leveraging a diverse workforce to ensure organizational effectiveness, as well as sustained competitiveness and legitimacy. | Meyer’s (2003) Diagnostic Questions | N/A | N/A |

| What is the relative state of representation and segregation among African American women and other women identity groups at the U. S. | Hypothesis 3: The level of segregation among African American women has not decreased less than other race-gender groups consisting of both women and minorities. | The theory of goal setting suggests that there is a positive, linear relationship between hard goals and performance. The establishment of workforce goals with stated targets to | One-way Analysis of Variance | DIndex | Race and Gender |
| Hypothesis 4: The level of segregation among African American women across grades have decreased over time. | The theory that organizational discrimination prevents the progression of particular groups explains the segregation of women and minorities to lower-status positions. The theory argues that institutional barriers impede the career advancement of women and minorities. These barriers include personnel practices, job descriptions, mobility ladders, and job assignments. These barriers should be eliminated through the enactment of policies that prohibit discrimination and programs that encourage workforce diversity. | Time-Series Regression Analysis | DIndex | Fiscal Year (FY 1994 - FY 2005) |
| Hypothesis 5: The level of representation among White women in GS-13 through GS- | The theory of Black feminist thought suggests that African American women have neither Time-Series Regression Analysis | Grade Representation | Department Level - Fiscal Year (FY 1994 - |

43 The data source is personnel records for fulltime, permanent Commerce employees for FY 1994 through FY 2010.
15 and SES positions has increased to a greater extent than African American women over time. gender nor race in common with colleagues – unlike White women. Black feminist thought explains how the intersectional experience of African American women is more powerful than the sum of race and gender as independent variables. This dichotomous relationship causes African American women to negotiate the intersection of both race and gender. The glass ceiling phenomenon suggests that women encounter invisible and artificial barriers that prevent their career advancement. The enactment of policies to eliminate these barriers should prohibit discrimination against women. However, policies that reference the term “women” generally mean White women. These policies should disproportionally benefit White women, as they can more easily maneuver around organizational barriers because they only assume a single dimension of oppression.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is the level of representation among African American women higher in years following</th>
<th><strong>Hypothesis 6:</strong> The level of representation among African American women is higher in the year immediately.</th>
<th>The theory of goal setting suggests that there is a positive, linear relationship between hard goals and performance. When</th>
<th>Paired Sample Difference of Means Test</th>
<th>Grade Representation</th>
<th>Fiscal Year (FY 2002 – FY 2005)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FY 2010); Bureau Level – Fiscal Year (FY 2006 – FY 2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>the development of strategic documents that establish workforce diversity goals?</strong></td>
<td>following development of a strategic document that establishes workforce diversity goals.</td>
<td>organizations alter their policies and programs to support hard goals, they experience greater levels of race and gender balance. The balance of race and gender groups should be demonstrated through an increase in minority employment shares in subsequent years following the establishment of diversity policies.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX H
INDEX OF DISSIMILARITY
FY 1994 THROUGH FY 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>American Indian or Alaska Native Female</th>
<th>Asian Female</th>
<th>Black or African American Female</th>
<th>Hispanic or Latino Female</th>
<th>White or Caucasian Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY 1994</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 1995</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 1996</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 1997</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 1998</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 1999</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2000</td>
<td>37.3%</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td>33.2%</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2001</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2002</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2003</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2004</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2005</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question</td>
<td>Hypothesis</td>
<td>Finding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Question 1: <em>Has the U. S. Department of Commerce established strategic documents that mention explicit strategies to drive its goal to sustain a diverse workforce? If so, to what degree?</em></td>
<td><strong>Hypothesis 1:</strong> Strategic documents mention an explicit commitment to workforce diversity.</td>
<td>The findings support the hypothesis that each strategic document mentioned a stated commitment to reduce underrepresentation and increase workforce diversity.</td>
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<td><strong>Hypothesis 2:</strong> Strategic documents establish workforce diversity goals that are specific, measurable, and timely/time-bound.</td>
<td>The findings support the hypothesis that the strategic documents were specific, measurable, and timely/time-bound.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Question 2: <em>What is the relative state of representation and segregation among African American women and other women identity groups at the U. S. Department of Commerce?</em></td>
<td><strong>Hypothesis 3:</strong> The level of segregation among African American women has not decreased less than other race-gender groups consisting of both women and minorities.</td>
<td>The findings do not support the hypothesis that the level of segregation across minority women groups was not equal. This study fails to reject the null hypothesis.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Hypothesis 4:</strong> The level of segregation among African American women across grades have decreased over time.</td>
<td>The findings support the hypothesis that African American women demonstrated a decrease in index values over time. This study rejects the null hypothesis.</td>
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<td><strong>Hypothesis 5:</strong> The level of representation among White women in GS-13 through GS-15 and SES positions has increased to a greater extent than African American women over time.</td>
<td>The findings support the hypothesis that White women demonstrated greater increases in their level of representation in GS-13 through GS-15 and SES positions over time compared to African American women at the department level. This study rejects the null hypothesis.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Question 3: <em>Is the level of representation among African American women higher in years following the development of strategic documents that establish workforce diversity goals?</em></td>
<td>Hypothesis 6: The level of representation among African American women is higher in the year immediately following development of a strategic document that establishes workforce diversity goals.</td>
<td>The findings do not support the hypothesis that the level of representation among African American women did not increase in the year immediately following development of strategic documents with stated workforce diversity goals. This study fails to reject the null hypothesis.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VITAE

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

- **Old Dominion University**, Norfolk, VA  
  Doctor of Philosophy, *Public Administration and Policy*  
  2008 – 2013

- **Virginia Commonwealth University**, Richmond, VA  
  Master of Science, *Administration of Justice*  
  2005 – 2008

- **Virginia Commonwealth University**, Richmond, VA  
  Bachelor of Arts, *Ethnic and Cultural Studies*  
  2001 – 2005

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

**Northern Virginia Community College**, Annandale, VA  
Adjunct Faculty, *Administration of Justice*  
2013 – Present

- Provide part-time classroom instruction on criminal justice using interactive and blended learning methods, as well as a variety of instructional strategies in support of course objectives.
- Design course content including coordination of courseware and curriculum in accordance with institutional regulations.
- Encourage student engagement and evaluate student performance based on course deliverables and rubrics.

**Strayer University**, Washington, DC  
Adjunct Faculty, *Administration of Justice/Public Administration*  
2013 – Present

- Provide part-time classroom instruction on criminal justice and public administration using interactive and blended learning methods, as well as a variety of instructional strategies in support of course objectives.
- Design course content including coordination of courseware and curriculum in accordance with institutional regulations.
- Encourage student engagement and evaluate student performance based on course deliverables and rubrics.

**Booz Allen Hamilton**, Washington, DC  
Senior Consultant, *Program Management Logistics*  
2011 – 2013

- Built a human capital infrastructure by assessing key strategic needs, establishing strategies for the recruitment, retention, and development of a highly-skilled, diverse workforce, developing recommendations for strategic initiatives, and prioritizing initiatives with leadership to provide a blueprint to transition a workforce consisting of over 240,000 employees to a strategic organization to drive organizational effectiveness.
- Provided innovative business solutions and tools to drive enhancements in administrative operations and human capital service capabilities in life-cycle program management.
- Established trusted relationships and strategic partnerships with clients and key decision-makers in support of project delivery and data collection and analysis efforts to drive the continuity of operations.
- Led robust data collection and analysis processes, including facilitation of workforce development workshops, as well as strategic and tactical planning sessions to shape the prioritization and management of the strategic change agenda.
- Led establishment of strategic planning approaches, including development of workforce and operational metrics, analysis and design of program management training curriculum, and construction of a needs assessment tool designed with adaptability across occupational domains.
- Implemented communication strategies to promote awareness of programmatic offerings across professional development areas using several communications vehicles in support of defining leadership capabilities.
- Developed competency models with behavioral indicators for occupational series aligned to mission objectives and integrated across human capital management systems.
- Enabled market development through inputs to proposals and intellectual capital that position the firm for business growth.

**U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, DC**

**2010 – 2011**

**Management & Program Analyst, Office of the Secretary**

- Managed large-scale projects and provided recommendations on annual performance goals including support in improving operating efficiencies with an $8.9B budget.
- Analyzed operational and organizational productivity and programmatic efficiency and effectiveness based on the Human Capital Assessment and Accountability Framework to ensure effective human resources management and strategic human capital management.
- Established accountability systems to inform the strategic oversight of a workforce consisting of over 43,000 employees through strategic planning, diversity planning, human capital planning, workforce planning, and succession planning.
- Provided program management of the Presidential Management Fellows Program including oversight of staffing, classification, and recruitment activities.
- Assembled decision packages, technical reports, and staff studies to shape organizational solutions, which contained triangulated findings and recommendations.
- Conducted annual performance evaluations, impact assessments, accountability audits, and delegated examinations to ensure agency alignment with merit system principles.
- Developed performance metrics and targets using the balanced scorecard methodology to ensure department-wide strategic performance measurement and management in the areas of budget, facilities management, information technology, and human resources management.
- Conducted program evaluations based on process improvement methodologies to ensure performance metrics adequately assessed organizational outputs through measurement of outcomes.

**Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA**

**2008 – 2010**

**Doctoral Research Assistant, Office of Administration and Finance**

- Maintained allotment of $2.4M budget including management of area expenditures and annual assessment of fiscal activities.
- Led area-wide human resources management including recruitment, selection, training, evaluation, and direct supervision of approximately 25 staffers.
- Developed a comprehensive geospatial infrastructure in support of providing educative resources regarding on-site and off-site programmatic services.
Conducted empirical research to inform development of policy recommendations in support of building a robust living-learning infrastructure and curriculum based on the learning reconsidered methodology.

Provided classroom instruction and training facilitation on residential education to a workforce consisting of over 500 paraprofessionals.

**Department of Transportation, Richmond, VA 2006 – 2008**
Licensed Contracting Officer, Office of Administrative Services

- Provided multi-contract oversight and administration and managed procurements of goods and non-professional services using competitive negotiation and competitive sealed bidding processes.
- Drafted specifications and vendor qualification criteria for bids and proposals for service contracts upon researching the end-users' needs to ensure proper procurement and maximized competition.
- Served as liaison with the Virginia Department of Minority Business Enterprise to ensure the utilization of small, women, minority-owned, and disadvantaged businesses.
- Managed small purchase charge card transactions and coordinated travel expenditures of end-users.

**CERTIFICATES & LICENSURES**

- **Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA 2008**
  Graduate Certification, Criminal Justice

- **Virginia Department of General Services, Richmond, VA 2006**
  Licensed Virginia Contracting Officer

**HONORS & AWARDS**

- **Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA 2005**
  Distinguished Graduate Award, College of Humanities and Science

- **Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA 2003**
  Order of Omega Honor Society

**PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

- U. S. Department of Commerce Performance Excellence Council, Past Member
- Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, Member

**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

- Northern Virginia Special Olympics, Volunteer
- STEM Tutoring at the Butler Global School, Tutor
- Falls Church High School Jaguar 5K, Volunteer