AFRICANA WOMEN STORIES:
MOTHERING IN AFRICAN CENTERED EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

By

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ABSTRACT

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The current dissertation examines the stories of black women leaders in African centered education (ACE) in South Africa and Detroit using "mothering" as a core theoretical framework to examine black women's leadership globally. Pan-africanism, African centeredness, and womanism are theories within the study that provide a further understanding of their interwoven narratives. By focusing on the context, emergent themes, and aesthetic whole within a portraiture methodology – the study hopes to shed light on what it refers to as "Africana" women's stories. Distinctively, the dissertation study expands on the existing narrative of black women educators presenting them as leaders and using mothering as praxis by adding two originally researched elements - the experiences of black women leaders in African centered education and the current racialized and gendered transnational dialogue occurring between women in Detroit, Michigan and South Africa. "Mothering" as praxis is mentioned throughout the experiences of black women educators (Baylor)(Gumbs)(Msila)(T. Karenga) (Hill-Brisbane) (Johnson L) (Johnson)(Collins). The concept essentially "involves valuing and of itself a commitment to the survival and thriving of other bodies" (Oka, 52). The role of the mother includes the ability to nurture, teach, mold, pass down culture, mentor, and support spiritual regeneration of our ancestors (T. Karenga) (Dove, 520) (Godono). With the current dissertation, these activities extended to "emancipatory organizations, institutions, and social movements as is reflected in the

history of the mothers of the freedom movements in this country and throughout the pan-African

world" (Karenga).

This dissertation is a dedication to my mother and grandmother who supported me throughout my life and showed me the continued strength of a black woman. They provided me with the first example of radical mothering, and I saw the significance of their contribution to the family and their community. Also, I am very appreciative of the six black women in South Africa and Detroit who took the time to share their stories and spirit with me to inform this necessary black woman's work. The strength of my amadlozis carried me through this academic process, and I am forever grateful.

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INTRODUCTION

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"The survival of each and every society is based upon the strength of the woman…We inherited (knowledge) from our mother's breast and we pass it on by nursing our siblings and our young children and we pass it on for the generations to come…"
Dr. Ziphora Moichela, South Africa

On the phone, Makini Tchameni's voice resembled my Aunt due to her American accent; I had not known what I was going to hear on her call from Cameroon. She was interviewing me for a teaching position at her African Centered School in Douala – The African American Academy. I had just received my Master's degree in Pan-African Studies from the University of Louisville, and I was looking for employment. Another student had encouraged me to apply to the African Centered Educational (ACE) Foundation Volunteer Teaching Program, giving me an opportunity to teach and go to Africa. I had never been there before, so I moved quickly on the lead and applied.

I started working for Makini Tchameni's educational institutions in her African Centered Educational Foundation (ACE) in 2010, and for the last 9 years I have worked in similar spaces witnessing black women lead these schools, community centers, and hubs with a mother's love, steadfast passion, and a politicized cadence. Accepting the position to teach at The African American Academy in Cameroon was a leap of faith that led to my current research on black women leaders in African Centered Education and mothering in leadership.

Mrs. Tchameni an African American educator from Houston, Texas, was politicized by black power rhetoric and pan-African solidarity through organizations like the All African Revolutionary Party (AARP). She married a politician and revolutionary activist, Djeukam Tchameni from Cameroon, whom she met at one of the AARP meetings in Houston, Texas; after living in America for a while, they moved to Africa. After witnessing the colonial narrative that

her children were experiencing in the Cameroonian classrooms, she embarked on a life-long mission to counter racist and colonial curriculums by creating African Centered schools. The ACE Schools she created with her husband uses an African Centered curriculum that uplifts African culture through the engagement of lessons culturally rooted in black history, social sciences, math, and pedagogical approach. She joined the league of many black women in black resistance and liberation.

African Centered Education places the student and community experiences at the center, emphasizing black cultural traditions and knowledge. These particular institutions usually pride themselves on preserving and teaching cultural heritage traditions whether it is in a school, community center, bookstore, or now, a vibrant online community. It is also important to note that these African Centered institutions serve as spaces of innovation, where new cultural traditions are incubated and hatched and therefore they are not only a symbol of education, but the preservation of black cultural heritage.

Research on black women and their leadership roles in African Centered Education is scarce. The articles and books about women's leadership roles in these specific educational institutions are limited and hidden under a narrative of race, without the acknowledgment of gender roles. This phenomenon makes it difficult to find studies that speak directly to the roles of black women in leadership positions, specifically, in institutions that practice a form of African Centered Education. Specifically, there is a lack of information on black women roles as leaders, and the transnational reach of their institutions, not only in the United States – but in Africa as well. By expanding on the canon of African Centered Education, this research adds new information concerning women's leadership roles and their capacity to expand in different countries, specifically in South Africa.

In *We Are An African People: Independent Education, Black Power, and The Radical Imagination*, Russell Rickford historicizes the development of African Centered Schools and or Pan-African Schools, tracing the phenomenon back to the 1970s Black Power Movement. In one sentence, he addresses that women primarily led and taught at these schools; however, the expansive nature of their involvement was missing because the book did not go further into their stories (Rickford). Though research has been conducted on African Centered Education, there has been little discussion about black women as primary workers and leaders in these institutions of change. My dissertation adds to the narrative of black women's leadership roles, and their overall experience as creators, managers, and workers of African Centered Institutions. It also depicts them as prime participants and cultivators of African Centered Education in the ongoing black resistance towards marginalization and a status of inferiority. The study purposefully selected black women leading, managing, or contributing significantly to successful African Centered institutions, instead of using a deficit model.

Black women globally have contributed to the development and sustainability of educational institutions. My study focuses on their educational leadership roles in African Centered Institutions, specifically in South Africa and Detroit, Michigan. This creates a diasporic and transnational dialogue amongst these women that illustrates Pan-African solidarity in relation to African Centered Education. The gendered approach allows one to understand these women's holistic perspective while integrating their multiple roles as mothers, wives, community leaders, spiritual beacons, soul encouragers.

I use the concept of "Mothering" as a theoretical platform to capture the way that race and gender are seen as central components of Black women's leadership experiences. "Mothering" as praxis is mentioned throughout the experiences of black women educators

(Baylor)(Oka)(Msila)(Karenga) (Hill-Brisbane) (Johnson K) (Johnson)(Collins). The theory of Mothering essentially "involves valuing others and of itself a commitment to the survival and thriving of other bodies" (Oka, 52). The role of the mother includes the ability to nurture, teach, mold, bearer of culture, mentor, and conduit for the spiritual regeneration of the ancestors (T. Karenga) (Dove, 520) (Godono). These activities are extended to "emancipatory organizations, institutions, and social movements as is reflected in the history of the mothers of the freedom movements in this country and throughout the pan-African world" (T. Karenga).

Drawing from "Mothering" gender theories as a dimension of African-centered education, the current dissertation study examines six portraits of black women leaders in African Centered Education (ACE) in South Africa and Detroit using Pan-Africanism, Womanism, Mothering, and African Centered Educational Theory as scholastic frameworks. The theories work together to create an in-depth understanding of these women's stories. While, portraiture methodology creates a seamlessly woven narrative of these women's stories focusing on emergent themes that display commonality, but it does not exclude their differences adding to the authenticity of the narrative.

Research Questions and Thesis Statement

My primary research question is, what are the stories of black women leaders in African Centered Education to understand their unique contributions to education and black resistance? I am interested in learning about their unique experiences as leaders in African Centered Education and how they impact their communities in which these institutions are enmeshed. To answer these questions, I compiled the stories of several Black women educators of African Centered institutions to discern a range of interrelated question to guide the dissertation study. In addition, my dissertation explores emergent themes within their stories that unify their leadership

and identities. The study explores the rationale for black women in creating African Centered institutions, and their political implications towards black resistance. In addition, the research highlights their ability to navigate their roles as educational leaders with that of familial, societal, and personal obligations.

Distinctively, the dissertation study expands on the existing narrative of black women educators and mothering as praxis by adding two originally researched elements - the experiences of black women leaders in African Centered Education and the current racialized and gendered transnational dialogue occurring between women in Detroit, Michigan and South Africa. My investigation explores mothering as an aspect of womanist theory. The primary element that is analyzed within the women leaders' stories are their gendered and racialized worldviews. In addition, the study highlights their comparative and global political-economic entrepreneurship events, and their African-centered pedagogical impact in the decolonization of education and learning of African descendant and African children around the world. Critical theories co-exist in my study providing a broader lens in understanding their stories. For example, African Centered Educational Theory emphasizes the development of the black child by reinforcing their cultural history, pride, and collective belonging to a community that uplifts them (Lomotey, 29)(Matthew, 2).

Also called a Pan-Africanist education, it has a "commitment to linking black struggles worldwide" (Rickford, 2). Pan-Africanism refers to a globalized notion of Blackness forging community and identity in African heritage that reinforces black consciousness (Drake&Harris, 342) (Palmer, 30). It explains how Africanizing the curriculum in South Africa is rooted in similar prescriptions of African Centered Education in Detroit - indigenous knowledge, cultural pride, and centering the black student's experience due to racialized oppressions (Msila) (Botha)

(Mswazie, 2013). Due to the Pan-African agenda of African Centered Education, there is an emphasis on nation building -the "conscious and focused application of our people's collective resources, energies, and knowledge to the task of liberating and developing the psychic and physical space that we identify as ours" (Akoto). Nation-building was called race uplift by early black women educators, and motherhood was linked to an ethics of care and praxis of love (Hill-Brisbane) (Johnson K) (Mcdonald, 773).

Womanism is used to understand further "Mothering," defined as "Committed to the survival and wholeness of the entire people, male and female…." which provides depth to the gendered discussion and helps to explain the family-centered approach of these women leaders (Walker, xi). Womanism has also been stated to provide a womanist leadership framework (Hill-Brisbane and Dingus). Relatedly, examples of mothering and black leadership include activities by Anna Julia Cooper, Ida B. Wells, Fannie Lou Hammer, Wangari Maathai, and Winnie Mandela. Nah Dove states, "The love of the mother for her child, of necessity, challenges the European construction of her child's debased humanity. This love is in itself the seed of revolution because it is antithetical to the dominant belief in White superiority" (534). Motherhood is described as "an act of defiance in the midst of colonization" illustrating the overtly political, radical, and lethal stance it takes to mother a black child and community in a world that continues to denigrate them simultaneously (Oka, 51). Black motherhood has always been literally and figuratively a form of resistance. From Mamie Elizabeth Till-Mobley, the mother Emmett Till, to Sybrina Fulton, the mother of Trayvon Martin - it should be emphasized the dangers of motherhood that endure in a timeless state. Mothering continues to be a subject of importance in education as we continue to understand the role of black women in education and

their leadership styles. These three theories collectively help tell the stories of these women leaders in African Centered Education.

Methodology – Portraiture

The current research adds to the narrative of black women roles, black women leadership roles, and overall black women's experience as creators, managers, and workers of African Centered Institutions and prime participants and cultivators of African Centered Education. As such, I have selected a methodology that allows me to have flexibility in telling women stories while permitting me as a researcher to participate in the study in a holistic way. I consider myself a black woman, and an African Centered Educator who has served in leadership positions in African Centered Institutions. Hence, my own experimental knowledge and relationship with my subjects adds to the study. I wanted the women in my study to feel as if I respected them and that they were, in fact, human beings and change agents making a difference in this world rather than just a subject of my study.

There are many methods within qualitative research, and some do overlap. At times it can be difficult choosing due to the variety. However, for my study Portraiture Methodology is distinctive, "a method of social science inquiry distinctive in its blending of art and science, capturing the complexity, dynamics, and subtlety of human experience and organizational life" (Lawrence website). There is also an emphasis on the overall authentic experience of conducting the research, that "documents the culture of institutions, the life stories of individuals, stages of human development, essential relationships, processes, and concepts" (Lawrence website). Also, there is an emphasis on the authentic experience, "portraits are designed to capture the richness, complexity, and dimensionality of human experience in social and cultural context, conveying the perspectives of the people who are negotiating those experiences" (Lawrence website).

Using Portraiture Methodology allows me to focus on the narratives of these women leaders by joining the art of storytelling with qualitative rigor. It is a genre of inquiry that seeks to join science and art by blending literary principles, artistic resonance, and scientific rigor (Lightfoot, xv). Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot, a black woman, artist, and sociologist created this methodology that allows the paradox of art and intellectual inquiry to be used simultaneously in research. Lightfoot recalls how an experience of being sketched by a black woman and sociologist at an early age caused her to begin to think about the "evolving relationship" between the artist and subject (Lightfoot, 2005). She states,

> Her well-worn, strong, and knowing hands moved quickly and confidently across the paper. She seemed totally relaxed and unselfconscious; her fingers a smooth extension of the charcoal. Her deep calm soothed me and made me feel relaxed. But what I remember most clearly was the wonderful, glowing sensation I got from being so fully attended to. There were no distractions. I was the only one in her gaze. My image filled her eyes, and the sound of the chalk stroking the paper was palpable. The audible senses translated to tactile ones. After the warmth of this human encounter, the artistic product was almost forgettable. I do not recall whether I liked the portrait or not. I do remember feeling that there were no lines, only fuzzy impressions and that I was rendered in motion; Sara on the move (Lightfoot, 2005).

 That experience allowed her to contemplate and begin to internalize the "essence" of a portrait, which later led to her creation of the portraiture methodology that she began to materialize in her study *The Good High School* published in 1983 (Lightfoot, 2005). In describing her physical experiences with portraitures, she states,

> I learned, for example, that these portraits did not capture me as I saw myself, that they were not like looking in the mirror at my reflection. Instead, they seemed to   capture my "essence"; qualities of character and history, some of which I was unaware, some of which I resisted mightily, some of which felt deeply familiar. But the translation of image was anything but literal. It was probing, layered, and interpretive. In addition to portraying my image, the piece expressed the perspective of the artist and was shaped by the evolving relationship between the artist and me (Lightfoot, 2005).

The Art and Science of Portraiture with visual artist Jessica Davis describe how the methodology shapes your research using contours, scopes, dimensions, while simultaneously

setting boundaries (Lightfoot, 2005). Lightfoot states it is "about boundary crossing—about a methodology that hopes to bridge aesthetics and empiricism and appeal to intellect and emotion, and that seeks to inform and inspire" (Lightfoot, 2005).

It is not a coincidence that Sara Lawrence Lightfoot became a sociologist, just like the black woman sociologist who sketched her. At the age of 8, she was inspired by a role model who looked like her and dared Sara to investigate two of her passions: research and art. Just like the subjects of this study, Sara Lawrence Lightfoot is a black women leader in education making a difference with her spirit led research. She was also inspired by a black woman artist-intellectual when she was younger who drew a portraiture of her. Her methodology is deepened by her identity, story, and art. According to Lightfoot, a portraitist "seeks to record and interpret the perspectives and experience of the people they are studying, documenting their voices and their visions - their authority, knowledge, and wisdom" (Lightfoot, xv). Researchers who have studied Black women educational leaders have used Portraiture Methodology (Lightfoot)(Pollard) (Cabral)(Baylor). Lightfoot mentions Dubois' *Souls of Blackness* as a perfect blend of "story and scholarship", especially in his description of double-consciousness, an ideological theory for understanding people of African descendant in the United States.

The five essential features of Portraiture Methodology are Context, Voice, Relationship, Emergent Themes, and the Aesthetic Whole. The goal is to create an aesthetic whole by blending the empirical with the narrative, which will, "inform and inspire...document and transform...speak to the head and to the heart" (Lightfoot, 243). The aesthetic whole is the gestalt described as a quilt with many pieces put together strategically to make a beautiful art ensemble (Lightfoot, 244). By analyzing my data, highlighting emergent themes, and weaving my findings together I am able to create a piece that is reflective of these women' collective lives. which

encompasses my positionality as a black female African Centered Educator with experience in Detroit and South Africa (Lightfoot, 247).

Due to the location of the women in my study, in South Africa and Detroit, Michigan, a brief discussion on Pan-Africanism, the African Diaspora, and Nationalism helps to contextualize their story. Pan-Africanism refers to a globalized notion of Blackness forging community and identity in African heritage that reinforces black consciousness (Drake&Harris, 342) (Palmer, 30). The African Diaspora is the numerous locations of the African dispersal of people in which Pan-Africanism is used politically to unify them. Black Consciousness, a tenet of Pan-Africanism, is displayed in radical movements in both South Africa and the United States.

Research Design

I have selected 6 black women and educational leaders in South Africa (Johannesburg, Pretoria) and the United States to focus on (Detroit, Michigan). Each woman was interviewed, in addition, there was extensive time spent at their institution using participatory observation at their respective institutions. I have spent almost a year over time in both Detroit, Michigan and South Africa (Johannesburg and Pretoria) collecting data. In addition, I have spent time with my participants families, worked in their institutions in some type of capacity, while witnessing their joy and challenges. I have been welcomed as not only a scholar, but a sister in their endeavors, a mother to their children, and holder of their dreams.

Again, emergent themes, were key to my findings section. They were mostly found through my interviews and observations and contextualized through published research surrounding the topic. Next, there was a thorough analysis of all components, interviews, the literature, and multimedia associated with the black women's establishments using triangulation

to create the aesthetic whole. The extent of my research design and methodology is further expanded on in Chapter 2 – *Research Design and Methodology*.

Sites of Field Research

The women in South Africa are located in Midrand, Cosmo City, and Sunnyside - all areas within the two major cities, Johannesburg and Pretoria. All the black women educators from the United States are from Detroit, Michigan. The women leaders were previously selected based on earlier studies. These women leaders are from the following African Centered Institutions: Detroit, Michigan - Timbuktu Academy: Cha-Rhonda Edgerson (Mama Cha-Rhonda) and Zukhanye Nondabula (Mama Zukhanye) and the Hush House Community Museum and Leadership Training Institute, Reverend Mama Sandra Simmons.

The women leaders in South Africa and their respective African Centered Institution are the following: South Africa - University of South Africa in Pretoria: Dr. Ziphora Moiechela, African Union International School - Makini Tchameni, and Gogo Dineo's School of Spiritual Healing – Gogo Dineo Ndlanzi.

The research design consisted of several semi-structured questions that revealed their gendered, racialized, and politicized worldviews, as well as gives me their basic background information inclusive of their education and origin. My content analysis consists of a mixture of multimedia items, curriculums, propaganda, websites, advertisements, mixed media, and other narratives that describe the women's identities and African Centered Institution that contributes to finding emergent themes. Most of the women in my study have multimedia digital data assisted me in my description and content analysis. Visiting and participating in activities at all their institutions allowed me to carefully view how they embody their African Centered

Philosophy in their daily lives and through the interaction with the people who frequent their spaces.

Emergent Themes

Data analysis revealed three emergent themes shared between the six women in my study. The three pervasive themes in the women's stories were Mothering Leadership, Nation-building, and The Consciousness or Spiritual Call to Educate. Mothering in leadership describes how nurturing and other motherly characteristics are used in leadership positions. This investigation explores mothering as an aspect of the womanist theory. Womanism is used to further understand "Mothering", defined as "Committed to the survival and wholeness of the entire people, male and female…." which provides depth to the gendered discussion and helps to explain the family-centered approach of these women leaders (Walker, xi). Nation building consists of ideas and strategies used to unify a community or group of people due to systems that have marginalized them racially, politically, and economically. It is the basis of the Pan-Africanism that links the global struggles. Lastly, the consciousness or spiritual call to educate consists of the rationale for the women in the study to create, manage, and or teach at institutions that provide a form of African Centered Education.

Nomenclature

For the purposes of this study, Africana, African, African descendant, and black are terms used to describe the women collectively and their shared African heritage. Women born and raised in South Africa are termed South African. Ethnic groups in South Africa, such as Zulu, Xhosa, and Tswana also appear. The common term African American is used when discussing specifically women in Detroit, Michigan. In addition, an Africana woman, is a woman of African descent from Africa or the African Diaspora who identifies overtly with her African

heritage, while participating in black liberation and resistance struggles. Therefore, collectively I will call them, Africana Women.

Chapter Overview

The *Introduction* summarizes my dissertation and provides the rationale behind my study. Chapter 1, *Resistance, Liberation, and Education: Linking Africana Women Stories to a Greater Struggle* is a literature review. It locates the efforts of the six black women educators and leaders in my study in the greater struggle of black liberation and resistance. In addition, it historicizing black women educators and leaders in Africa and the African Diaspora, highlighting the United States and South Africa. Chapter 1 also frames the research with theories of Mothering, Womanism, Pan-Africanism, and African Centeredness. Chapter 2, *Research Design and Methodology* describes my research design and portraiture methodology. Chapter 3, *African Centered Women Leaders: A Biographical Context*, provides background information for the six women interviewed for this work. Chapter 4, *Mothering In Nation Building* discusses nation-building as an emergent theme. Chapter 5, *Mothering The Spirit Or Consciousness* explores consciousness and spirituality as a rationale for their choice to be African Centered Educators. Chapter 6, *Mothering In Educational Leadership* focuses on the emergent theme of mothering and leadership in African Centered Education. The Conclusion, *A Portraiture of Africana Women in African Centered Education*, weaves all these women stories and analysis together to create gestalt portraiture or the aesthetic whole of Africana Women Leaders in African Centered Education. Lastly, the conclusion provides an overall summary of my study and discussion of future research.

CHAPTER 1

Resistance, Liberation, and Education:
Linking Africana Women Stories to a Greater Struggle

"Africa is a woman…" Gogo Dineo Ndlanzi

Introduction

Chapter 1, a literature review, locates the efforts of the six black women educators and leaders in my study in the greater struggle of black liberation and resistance through their efforts in African Centered Education and nation building. There is an historical and theoretical account of major black assaults, like enslavement and colonialism, that contributed to the development of black resistance globally. It displays how these oppressions impacted the educational system so severely that an alternative educational pedagogical approach had to emerge as a form of black resistance. It was African Centered Education led and sustained primarily by black women (Rickford). In addition, there is an overview of major gendered theories like womanism that helps to understand these women lives. The chapter describes educational leadership and then connects the study specifically to African Centered Educational Leadership and the role of black women. Lastly, there is a background discussion of my emergent themes in nation building, mothering, and the spiritual/consciousness to educate. For the purpose of this chapter and the following, one should note that an Africana woman is committed to cultural the preservation in Africa and the African Diaspora. She knows that self-preservation comes first, including physical, mental and spiritual renewal, therefore she takes time to restore her energy so that she can continue to change the world - resting and retreating when necessary.

A Systemic Overview: Slavery and Colonialism

Slavery and colonialism are two major genocidal experiences within Africa and the

African Diaspora that contributed to the development of counter-narratives in education as a

form of black liberation and resistance. African Centered Education was a response to the

exclusion of the history and culture of African descendant people globally, a united effort to

include accurate knowledge to counter the destructive and fabricated narrative of African

people's inferiority. A brief historical review of how systems like slavery and colonialism

disrupted black civilizations is necessary in order to understand the significance of the six black

women creating African Centered Institutions in South Africa and the United States.

Education

Education is at the root of every society because it is the transferal and acquisition of

knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits based on the epistemological viewpoint of a culture.

Whoever is in a position of power, dictates who is superior or inferior – which becomes the basis

of what education relies on for its validity. In the case of my study, the European invasion of

Africa, attempting to strip their societies of cultural significance by fabricating a story of

inferiority on black people, is an example of a crude disruption of a culture due to greed and

supremacy. This has also been identified as Eurocentricity, an ideological system of knowledge

that places Europe and its counterparts at the center of intellectual thought. Other ideological

perspectives emerged and were created by African people to counter that narrative like

Afrocentricity which centers the African perspective as a display of black resistance towards an

imaginative subservient role created by white supremacist. However, unlike Eurocentricity,

Afrocentricity does not claim universality or proselytize their epistemological viewpoint through violence. Eurocentricity is the fundamental cause of these systematic errors on African people like enslavement and colonialism and why a various black resistance effort was created and sustained.

Enslavement

The word enslavement will be used to acknowledge that an African went through a process of subjugation, but was not born a slave, or in a state of servitude to his or her master. It should be noted that the African in America narrative does not start with enslavement or slavery. In addition, African people came to the Americas freely, first, before they were enslaved. There has been extensive research done on African explorers who traveled to North and South America on expeditions, traded with the natives prior to the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and have even influenced Native American culture (Sertima, Ivan Van).

Enslavement caused the uprootedness of Africans, dismembering them from their home base with an attempt to erase their memory of culture and achievement (N'Gugi). Slaveholders forced Africans to learn a new language, customs, and gave them new names (N'Gugi). In addition, to giving the African people a new memory of self, enslavement encouraged an inferior narrative of African people to plague the world to uphold white supremacy. Just like colonialism, enslavement was built on the idea that black people cannot rule themselves, they have to be ruled by suppressing black people's self-reliance to create a culture of dependence (N'Gugi).

Enslavement, An Historical Account

In 1444, the Portuguese began the slave trade by capturing Africans near the Senegal River, it continued until the end of the 19th century (Falola, 5). Europeans were searching for commodities and resources to use for their countries, in which sugar production, first, was a top priority (Falola, 5). This became known as the Transatlantic slave trade, "the largest transoceanic forced migration in history" from Africa to Europe and the Americas (Eltis, 1). This system has affected Africa and the world for over 500 years (Falola). Africa became a major player within the global economic system during the transatlantic slave trade, contributing in addition to people, palm oil, palm kernel, and cocoa (Falola). Other commodities included gold, silver, sugar, rice, coffee, muskets, and gunpowder (Smallwood). In the African diaspora, particularly North America, cotton and sugar was a major product produced by African slaves. However, the wealth Africa created through its people and commodities did not contribute to their own economic growth.

Slavery and colonialism are also considered global political-economic exchanges that led to new initiatives to stop their ongoing assault. In addition, the impact of slavery and colonialism led to black resistance initiatives like the Pan-African Congresses that were created by W.E.B. Dubois. These initiative garnered leaders from Africa and the African Diaspora to work together against ideological themes like Eurocentricity that contributed to the marginalization of African people. The women of my study who have created and or manage these African Centered

Institutions are extension of such joint collaborations like the Pan-African Congress. They are simultaneously working toward the annihilation of educational branches that continue to label black people as inferior, and incapable, due to assaults like enslavement.

Enslavement and Psyche

Schwartz, a historian who focuses on Brazil and slavery stated, "Whoever wants to profit from his Blacks must maintain them, make them work well, and beat them even better; without this there will be no service or gain…" (Schwartz). This quote explains the mindset of many slave masters and the objectification of the black body to a cash crop. Early American literature mentioned, "Negros are more…easily kept as perpetual servants…" (Over Black). Even Thomas Jefferson, famous for his penmanship of the Declaration Independence stated, "… the blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind" (Jefferson). In North America, the British made race in order to sustain, and legitimize slavery, and whiteness emerged as a category of freedom, due to the detriment of the slave's mind (Smallwood).

Naim Akbar, an afro-centric psychologist wrote, *Breaking the Chains of Psychological Slavery*, which discusses how slavery has affected the mind of black people. He discusses Willie Lynch, and how his plan to divide and destroy were said quite clearly in his 1712 speech about plantation organization, "My plan is guaranteed, and the good thing is that if used intensely for one year, the slaves themselves will remain perpetually distrustful..." (Akbar). Lynch's strategy of divide and conquer on the slave plantation contributes to what Akbar sees now as the challenges with black people uniting and working together 500 years after the traumatic assault (Akbar). Dr. Akbar also advocates for the accurate information about blacks to spread in order to help alleviate the symptoms of unconsciousness that occurs due to mental slavery, this is seen in

the efforts of African Centered Education (Akbar). Even W.E.B. Dubois has contributed his own theory to the black mental psyche. Dubois' theory of double consciousness discusses the challenges of being of an African descent in a white world (Dubois, 2003).

African centered psychiatrist, Frances Cress Welsing, discusses the behavioral characteristic and impact of white supremacy in her acclaimed book the *Isis Papers*. She considers white supremacy as a genetic means of white survival by any means necessary (Welsing). She advocates for black people to understand the nature of white supremacy that impact black culture in order to dismantle it (Welsing). She reverses the notions of people of African descent being inhumane and barbaric and exclaims, "the white collective is a mess of paranoid melanin deficient humans" (Welsing). Her goal is to show the barbaric inhumane side of the twisted white psychology that contributes to the enslavement psyche.

There are other theories created to further discuss the psychological impact of slavery. The Post-Traumatic Slave Syndrome (PTSS) theoretical framework by Leary, and further developed by Dr. Joy Degruy, explores the psychological and behavioral adaptations of black people's oppression. PTSS is a "condition that exists when a population has experienced multigenerational trauma resulting from centuries of slavery and continues to experience oppression and institutionalized racism today" (Leary, 2005) (Degruy, 2005). Leary focuses on the institutionalization of PTSS and advocates for the dismantling of the society in order to eradicate institutional racism that contribute to ongoing mental illness caused by racism.

Simultaneously, religion played a huge rule in transmitting the Eurocentric worldview to black people. In finding solutions to how Christianity has handicapped black people, he states, "We must remove the racial images of divinity from our minds…" and acknowledge the residue it has left on our minds to change, rebuild our culture and to celebrate and unite, and "Stop

participating in religions that were created to keep us down, but instead embrace a religion that empowers us" (Akbar). All these authors have contributed to the impact of slavery on the psyche of African descended people in North America and the world.

As stated earlier there are still remnants of slavery that still exist today. *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander discusses the challenges surrounding mass incarceration of black males that raises the public's critical consciousness to action to counter those who believe in a post-racial and/or color-blind America. The overarching themes she addresses in contemporary times are mass incarceration, second-class citizenship, economic disparity, and the racial caste system. There is this permeating idea embedded in the US culture that African descendant people should be enslaved.

Colonialism

Colonialism begun at the end of the 19th century after slavery, it continues to bring Africa into the global economy in an exploitative serving as the basis to create new cultures and colonial modernity (Falola, 40) (Jones). During colonialism, "Africans were subjects, not citizens…" (Falola, 326). Falola describes colonization as a "global project, the domination of Africa by Western forces, technology, and culture" (Falola, 61). Some of the characteristics of colonialism includes the African subject having another social system imposed on them, their native culture modified or destroyed, control is in the hands of people outside their native land, and racism is prevalent (Staples, 1976). When discussing colonialism, we are particularly interested in the experience on the African continent and how institutions like the African Union International School in South Africa and the Gogo Dineo Institute of Spiritual Healing are a response to it.

One of the most lethal weapons of colonialism was the cultural bomb, and it was a leech on Africa's and Africans in the Diaspora cultural system. Thiong'o states, "The effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves" (Thiong'o). In his book, *Decolonising the mind: The politics of language in African literature*, Kenyan theorist of post-colonial literature and novelist, Ngugi Wa Thiongo'o illustrates how imperialism and resistance affected African use of their own language (Thiong'o). His collection of non-fiction essays explores national culture, history, and identity focusing on linguistically decolonization (Thiong'o). Thiong'o states that colonialism, "has economic, political, military, cultural and psychological consequences for the people of the world today" (Thiong'o). The cultural bomb is heavily seen in education, and one of the main reasons African Centered Education was created.

Colonialism caused African scholars to respond to the negative views of Africa. The counter-narrative to colonialism is nationalism that occurred in anticolonial resistance (Falola, 64). Cesaire states in his anti-colonial literature, *Discourse on Colonialism*, "Colonialism decivilize the colonizer through torture, violence, (and) race hatred…" (Cesaire). This is important because much has been written about the colonized, yet he is able to express how the colonizer is affected by his own imperialism. Dubois' *The World and Africa* also provides a counternarrative to the traditional colonial discourse of colonialism. He is arguing for the inclusion of Africa as a critical player within World History due to the overt exclusion by racist white hegemonic structures created due to systems like colonialism. Dubois states, "The reason of this world mastery by Europe was rationalized as the natural and inborn superiority of white people, showing itself not only in the loftiest of religions, but in technical mastery of the forces

of nature-all this in contrast to the low mentality and natural immorality of the darker races…"

(Dubois, World). He explains the systems of colonialism and the rape of Africa, while

simultaneously exploring the great contributions African societies (Dubois, World). Dubois

critiques white scholars who have provided a skewed view of Africa with racist tendencies.

Colonialism and Psyche

When discussing the impact of colonialism, Africans and Africans in the diaspora were

exploring its effect. Particularly, two profound scholars of colonialism and psyche were not from

Martinique, Aime Cesaire and Frantz Fanon, displays how Africans and Africans in the Diaspora

were working together towards black resistance. Aime Cesaire, other than a literary artist and

major contributor to the Negritude Movement, was a major intellectual who discussed political

independence and decolonization in Africa, the Caribbean and North America (Gregson,1).

Fanon was a student of Aime Cesaire who studied psychology. His first-hand experience as a

psychiatrist in Algeria during its occupation by the French displayed the challenges of

colonialism.

The colonization of the African mind occurred first (Falola, 55). The previous statement

explores how the mind is the first location of the colonial regime, the process of subjugation

through the means of inferiorization. Cesaire states that colonization is based on a,

> psychology, that there are in this world groups of men who, for unknown reasons,
> (who) suffer from what must be called a dependency complex, that these groups are
> psychologically made for dependence, that they crave it, ask for it, demand it; that this
> is the case with most of the colonized peoples and with the Madagascan soul…
> (Cesaire).

Cesaire explains how colonialism creates dependency amongst its subjects by

encouraging them to believe that they have no agency within their subjugation. These are the

same ideas that permeated slavery, which provides rationale for the necessity of black liberation

and the duplication of African Centered institutions in South Africa and the United States created by black women.

Also, Christianity served as a vehicle to carry the Eurocentric worldview and scholars have critiqued it to dismantle its impact. Christianity historically aligned themselves with the views of slavery and imperialism (Falola, 57). The condemnation of indigenous worldviews, the stereotype of African religions as paganism, primitivization of African culture in lieu of the appreciation and exaltation of all things European was due to Christianity, spread by the faithful missionaries.

Educational Impact of Enslavement and Colonialism

After impacting the mind and identity of African descendant people, education was used to standardized the colonial slave mentality and the inferiority complex of black people. Western Education was the tool of colonization and race inferiority (Falola, 56). As stated earlier, it began by mind control, erasing Africa's greatness and replacing it with a mindset of servitude. In the 20th century, noted black studies scholar, Carter G. Woodson, in response to the American educational system, states, "…to handicap a student by teaching him, that his black face is a curse and that his struggle to change his condition is hopeless, is the worst sort of lynching" (Woodson). He continues, "If you teach the Negro that accomplished as much good as any other race, he will aspire to equality and justice without regard to race. Such an effort would upset the program of the oppressor in Africa and America" (Woodson). In order to create a class of servitude, America's slave's culture had to prevent blacks will and ability to learn. This can be seen in the laws created against black slaves in America like the one in North Carolina stating that a slave should not learn (North Carolina 1830-1831 Act).

Though it was illegal for slaves to have an education, some slaves were still able to write their narratives. Slave narratives are written works by former slaves to tell their stories and "represent the unrepresentable" (Earnest, 2001). Slaves learned to read and write through "clandestine instruction" (Sterling, 16). Some accounts are written with the assistance of someone else who takes dictions. They provide accounts of different eras of slavery from the colonial to the post-Civil War (Earnest, 2001). These narratives were a testament to their determination to speak their truth during a time period where blacks were punished and or killed for exhibiting literary skills. Some of the popular slave narratives were written by Olaudah Equiano (1792), Sojourner Truth (1823), and Frederick Douglass (1845). Even before Woodson's the *Mis-Education of the Negro*, black people understood the danger of the traditional educational system cloaked with white supremacy - therefore a collective community response was created to provide an inclusive and adequate educational system for black people. When blacks were punished for attempting to get an education, black churches and educated community representatives would take on the responsibility (Anderson, 1988). Also, African Americans created private schools for their children, showing great determination to instill in them knowledge. The strenuous efforts of Blacks collaboratively working together in the South to provide students with a quality education proceeded and created the American public-school system (Anderson). In the North there were even collaborations with White radicals like the Quakers and the American Missionary Association supported the educational advancement of Blacks (Douglas) (Cabral). It should be noted that Black women have always played a critical role in educating the black communities (Cabral) (Loder-Jackson, 267) (Baylor) (Johnson K) (Lusane).

The dominant narrative that Blacks were inferior to Whites, continued to engulf the educational experience of black people. Therefore, people of color were encouraged to take subordinate labor manual classes in early American education. In the South, there was a goal to educate African Americans in a domestic or manual labor trade; these school curriculums encouraged the development of maids, janitors, and cooks to assist with the economic growth of blacks, to prevent competition with whites for jobs (Anderson, 1988).

Due to the historical position of black slaves as inferior in America, it led to traditional curriculums created that sustained the belief of black as subordinates and totally erased their history from textbooks. Therefore, blacks retaliated by creating their own form of education that was inclusive of their culture, African centered education. It is an alternative educational pedagogy against the dominant narrative of white supremacy that infuses culturally relevant narratives, morale, academic excellence, and other holistic features to effectively educate and raise the African child (The Garvey School). This is one of the counternarrative to an educational system in America that assaulted black children for centuries.

As stated earlier African Centered Schools/Pan-Africanist Schools were urban area responses to structural racism in the United States. The Pan-Africanist education "combines concepts of black American nationality with commitment to linking black struggles worldwide" (Rickford). Beyond providing academic excellence, Pan-African nationalist schools decolonized minds, nurtured the next generation of activists, promoted black consciousness, and encouraged a global African identity (Rickford). Pan-African Nationalist schools were seen as a "political and spiritual extension of the Third World" positioning themselves against a global imperialism towards African descended people (Rickford, 3). Some of the first Pan-African schools emerged during the 70s and were started as community control schools like the Ocean Hill-Brownsville

School District in New York (Podair). Since then, African Centered Schools created by African descendant people living in America have emerged on the continent of Africa. This is illustrated through the Kamali Academy in Ghana, The ACE Foundation schools in South Africa, Cameroon, and Burkina Faso, and the United African Alliance Community Center in Tanzania.

Within a colonial discourse, language was used as a tool in education to assimilate Africans and annihilate any cultural residue, "The physical violence of the battlefield was followed by the psychological violence of the' classroom…" and "The bullet was the means of the physical subjugation. Language was the means of the spiritual subjugation" (Thiong'o). In discussing the role of imperialism on language, he states, "African countries, as colonies and even today as neo-colonies, came to be defined and to define themselves in terms of the languages of Europe: English-speaking, French-speaking or Portuguese-speaking African countries" (Thiong'o, 1). He argues for the decolonialization of language and urges African authors to use the traditional tongue in literature (Thiong'o). Keto argues for an African-centered paradigm to evaluate historical choices when discussing African people endeavors within the curriculum (Keto, 100). There is an ongoing fight against the way traditional history books neutralizes slavery, "These history books tend to celebrate a miraculous social transformation of Africans in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean" (Keto, 97). These ideas contributed to Africanizing the Curriculum.

Therefore, Africanization of the curriculum has emerged in the African context to further reestablish the cultural component into the curriculums, like African Centered Education in the United States. *Africanization* is defined as "the process or vehicle for defining, interpreting, promoting and transmitting African thought, philosophy, identity, and culture. It encompasses an African mindset shift from the European to an African paradigm" (Botha, 2010). This idea has

transferred over into current discussion surrounding education in Africanizing the Curriculum. Due to globalization, there has been a push for internationalizing Africa's educational system. However, some scholars believe that internalization solely encourages global needs at the expense of local needs, while Africanizing serves an important role for "promoting national culture, pride, and symbols" (Sehoole, 2004).

South Africa has been at the forefront of discussing Africanizing the Curriculum. In discussing the educational system in South Africa, one has to discuss apartheid,

> ... the racial institution that was established in 1948 by the National Party that governed South Africa until 1994. The term which means "apartness," reflected a violently repressive policy designed to ensure that whites, who comprised 20% of the nation's population, would continue to dominate the country (BLACKPAST).

Apartheid represents one of the many inhumane systems in Africa. Walker highlights "the bias of the syllabus, the dominant teaching methods, and teacher's inability or unwillingness to transform history in school classrooms" in South Africa due to Apartheid (Walker, 1990). The article highlights political repression, opposition, and resistance that has occurred as educators and students fought for the inclusion of the African experience. In the short film, *Some Children Are More Equal Than Others: Education in South Africa* there is a description of the current educational system in post-apartheid South Africa (Gottried, 2015). Scholars like Nomalanga Mkhize states that "Deracializing the school system did not solve the problem…Deracialization is not transformative…What is transformative is changing the structure that set up the system". To put this quote in context, education in South Africa was separated by blacks and whites. Some South Africans argued for the desegregation of school systems - but Mkhize states that it means nothing if you do not change the infrastructure that created it. There was also a discussion of the top/bottom school system and how the poor economic issues caused poor infrastructure.

Similarly, in South Africa, there were people like Steve Biko, a revolutionary scholar-activist, who promoted black consciousness as a way to combat the oppressive apartheid regime. Steve Biko defined Black Consciousness as "the realization by the black man of the need to rally together with his brothers around the cause of their operation-the blackness of their skin-and to operate as a group in order to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude" (Biko, 1978). He continues and states that it "infuses the black community with a new-found pride in themselves, their efforts, their value systems, their culture, their religion and their outlook to life". These are early remnants of Africanizing the curriculum.

The disparities within the South African educational system can be traced back to legislative mandates like the Bantu Educational laws. Former Prime Minister Hendrick Verwoerd stated in 1953 "…If the native in South Africa is being taught to expect that he will lead his adult life under a policy of equal rights he is making a big mistake…" (Walker, 1990). Bantustans were territories set aside for blacks in South Africa that was a part of the apartheid policy, known also as homelands. They were created as a result of the 1963 Land Act.

Many other events also occurred to attempt to challenge the Afrikaans's view of absolute rule in sectors like education. Yet, none was more boisterous than the Soweto Rebellion of June 16, 1976. Scholar C.R.D. Halisi stated that it "set South Africa on the path of irreversible change" (Halisi, 1999). The challenge was rather, or not African students would be allowed to learn English, an international language vs. Afrikaans and also the consideration that none of their African languages were included in the curriculum. A common slogan that was paraded was "Afrikaans is not spoken north of the Limpopo River" (Halisi, 1999). African students in South Africa gathered together to protest the imposition of the Afrikaans Language. The Soweto march consisted of 15,000 students who were going to Orlando Stadium, but they were

intervened by police who opened fired on them (Mafeje,1978). 50,000 rounds of ammunition against the students were used, 284 killed, and 2000 students were injured during this event according to Mafeje data (Mafeje,1978).

Africana Women Stories: Leadership, Activism, and Resistance

By understanding Eurocentricity and the systematic oppressions like slavery and colonialism that led to the necessity of black resistance– one can begin to understand the critical role black women have played in these efforts. Prior to discussing the distinctiveness in leadership, there is an exploration of black women, activism, and education through gendered theories and historical accounts. Within Black Women's activism, they have also been challenged by not only racism, but the patriarchy from both black and white men. These issues should be acknowledged, and also provides rationale for separate theories specific to the black woman's experience. An overview of Educational Leadership and African Centered Educational Leadership provides more background concerning the women in my study. In addition, the section on mothering and leadership specifies the women in my research leadership style and significance.

Multiple gendered theories can be used to explore these black women's experiences; however, my research is primarily womanist due to the women in my study lifestyle and their leadership positions that are primarily community oriented, garnering them to have a collective consciousness.

Black Feminism is a "self-conscious struggle on the behalf of Black women…" (Collins, Feminist 15). Black women have been stereotyped based on their intelligence, work habits, and sexuality (Collins, Feminist 25). There is a focus on preserving the Black Women's Intellectual Tradition as well within black feminism. Black Feminism has also contributed to the idea of

other-mothering, a characteristic of black women educators using parental skills in the classroom (Collins). Other black feminism includes Black Internationalist Feminism that "challenged heteronormative and masculinist articulations of nationalism while maintaining the importance, even centrality, of national liberation movements for achieving Black women's social, political, and economic rights…" (Higashida, 2).

Womanism is theoretical framework that focuses on the black women, however it has a more inclusive view the community and their relationship with black men and family. Alice Walker, links womanhood with community survival, which is the basis of womanism. She defined womanist in a twofold definition, emphasizing that a womanist is "Committed to the survival and wholeness of the entire people, male and female…." (Walker, xi). Most womanist ideologies have an emphasis on the collective including the family, community, and nation, versus just the woman herself (Walker) (Smitherman). Other womanist ideologies have been created to further deepen the black woman's role in her community like African, Africana, and Kawaida womanism.

Africana Womanism a theory first formulated by Dr. Clenora Hudson-Weems is considered to be family-centered and race-based with eighteen characteristics that include self-definer, family-centered, in concert with the male in the struggle, and spiritual (Weems). Kawaida Womanism by Tiamoyo Karenga is similar to Africana womanism, but based on a Kawaida philosophy that emphasizes cultural grounding and social change (T. Karenga). Kolawole's African womanism for African women states,

> There is feminism where all the problems in society are seen as caused by men. I don't believe in that. I don't believe men are the creators of the problems in society…I do believe that men and women have to work together to solve the problems in society… (Kolawole).

Rallying for the de-establishment of the binary opposition and the collective consciousness, she asserts, "To Africans, womanism is the totality of feminine self-expression, self-retrieval, and self-assertion in positive cultural ways…" (Kolawole). South African media guru, culturalist, and artist Masechaba Ndoluvu explains how she views her gendered self-concerning society,

> I'm not feminist. I'm an Africanist. I don't relate to the world-based view on gender and I don't think anyone should, because then we would be disempowering ourselves…I am for people. I am for Africa, I'm for building this continent, loving it and moving it forward for the sake of progress…(Masechaba).

Her statement displays the complexity of gender perception in Africa, and to box it under feminism or just womanism can be fragile. However, the ideas surrounding womanism still align very closely with Masechaba communal message. It helps to sum up the idea of a woman's role in nation-building, which is a very womanist agenda.

Educational Leadership

Leaders usually have two functions, provide direction and exercise influence within a specific social context (Leithwood & Riehl). Influence versus force is something that is highly necessary, especially as we think of a true educational context that is collaborative in nature. Traditionally within education, leadership has been identified with one's ability to progress learning and outcome goals, however due to systematic issues especially within a marginalized communities – leadership encompass so much more (Leithwood & Riehl) (Khalifa). It is not always affiliated with a particular position, it is a function, "persons in many different roles may do the work of leadership…" (Leithwood & Riehl). In addition, leadership is contextual and contingent based on the social organizations, individuals involved, and resources - it should be noted that "No one formula of effective leadership is applicable in all context" (Leightwood & Riehl). In general, school leadership is "the work of mobilizing and influencing others to articulate and achieve the school's shared intention and goals" (Leightwood & Riehl). The study

of educational leadership includes the school's leadership, and other components like morale distribution in maintaining school's culture, leadership functions, transformation processes in the organization, and instruction (Cambridge). Khalifa's research emphasized the community orientation of a school leader in an urban area, this idea is central to an African Centered Educational Leadership approach (Khalifa). Due to the hybridity of African Centered Education, and the different manifestations of African Centered institutions of learning that include community spaces, cultural heritage centers, and spiritual schools, a working definition of African Centered Educational Leadership is the study of styles and mechanism in influencing and mobilizing the institutions educational goals that are rooted in the culture and indigenous knowledge systems of the locale – in addition its obligation to the community as a whole.

South Africa's Educational Leadership and The Role of Black Women

In general, there is a lack of research on women's leadership role in Africa, however due to South Africa's positionality as a more developed country and leader in education – they have been identified as a country that has the highest publications on women's leadership (Nkoma). The study of women in leadership roles has been identified as a critical initiative to the African Renaissance, the total political and cultural renewal of Africa (Nkoma). Most articles discuss challenges of African women in leadership which are attributed to early socialization, limited educational attainment, multiple roles, gender stereotyping, subtle discrimination, organization policies and procedures (Nkoma). On other hand, many of the studies do not explore the experiences of the women leaders. Women multiple roles as mothers, wives, daughters, and workers contribute to their identities as well as challenges (Nkomoa). Also, women are identified as too soft, and emotional, they are subject to different standards (Nkoma). When studying African women and leadership, there has been a call for a meso-level approach that

includes individual, social, and organization. Women's leadership in African Leadership is transitory, not fossilized, and should not be upheld to old perspectives that are not relevant to the time (Nkoma). African's women's liberation is intrinsically linked with other liberation struggles like slavery, hegemonic globalization, and colonialism (Nkoma). In general, an African women's leadership should "deconstruct, dismantle, build, and construct" (Nkoma).

In Nelson Mandela's autobiography *A Long Walk To Freedom*, he mentions that his mother gave him his first educational experience through the Xhosa stories she told him when he was young (Mandela, 1995). She is representative of many black women in South Africa who teach their children from the womb even before they go to school. Simultaneously, black women have been their children biggest advocates for a good education. In Phyllis Ntantala's autobiography, *A Life's Mosaic*, she illustrates mothers speaking passionately against the implementation of the Bantu Laws (Ntantala, 2009). Bantu Laws created a marginalized educational system for black people in South Africa by prioritizing a curriculum that taught servitude similar to earlier schools in America. For example, one parent stated in a political meeting, "Whose children must be doomed to no education while other people's get education..." (Ntantala, 2009). According to Ntantala, "the fight against Bantu Education was a fight for the mothers of the nation", which further demonstrating black women's political activism surrounding their children education in South Africa (Ntantala, 2009).

However, in contemporary times, specifically in South Africa, gender has a negative impact on women's ability to lead in educational institutions due to the interplays of sexism, racism, and cultural traditions despite constitutional initiatives that include affirmative action, policies, and governmental departments (Lumby, 2011, Diko 2014, Chisholm, 2001). Black African women have struggled to obtain position due to gender issues and male dominations

that plays favoritism to male and white female counterparts (Mabokela, 2003; Mabokela & Magubane, 2004). In 1996 policies adopted the South African constitution, the Bill of Rights goal was to achieve and advocate gender equity (Diko, 2014). Even in 2003, the Department of Education established the Gender Equality in Education Policy to help in the "training of education administrators in the implementation of gender equity programmes," and yet due to social resistance the progress is minimal (Diko, 2014; Chisolm and September, 2004). Similar, as in the United States, black women educational leaders have and continue to experience the same challenges as their South African women counterparts when it comes to obtaining leadership positions (Mabokela and Yeukai 2016; Johnson and Thomas, 2012).

In the case of women obtaining leadership positions in educational institutions, sometimes, if women work in smaller schools in South Africa, she may obtain leadership roles easier, for example, a principal position (Lumby, 2011). On the other hand, males are less likely to work in these smaller schools due to the minimum pay (Lumby, 2011). There is a continuing message that male leaders are more competent than women leaders in South Africa. Therefore, women do not deserve higher pay for the same job or the opportunity to be promoted to leadership positions within education (Lumby, 2011).

United States

Black women have always played a critical role in educating black communities. In Cabral's work, *Letters from Four Antebellum Black Women Educators to the American Missionary Association, 1863-1870*, she explores their experiences in using self-help and race uplift to teach black's in the South (Cabral). Early Black women before and after slavery felt the strong urge to uplift their race (Cabral) (Loder-Jackson, 267) (Baylor) (Johnson K) (Lusane). Before it was legal for black people to read and write, they would secretly learn in churches,

deserted railroad cars, abandoned shacks, and under the moonlight (Lusane, 11)(Baylor). Later, religious and activist groups like the American Missionary Association that had an integrated membership (AMA) would encourage black women educators to teach in the South. When black women received their college degrees, they were not using them for individualistic gains, but to make their black communities a better place (Cabral). Early black women leaders in education values and work ethics tied to their communities. There strong commitment to the community was also attributed to their mothering leadership qualities in which radical care extended beyond their families.

There has been little research on the significant roles of black women in African Centered Institutions in the United States and Africa. In the recently published book *We Are An African People: Independent Education, Black Power, And the Radical Imagination*, he calls African Centered Schools Pan-African Nationalist Schools stating, "many Pan-African nationalist schools were founded and operated by women" (Rickford, 18). For example, Lonnetta Gaines and Victoria Skaggs created Atlanta's Learning House, Mary McDonald created the Pan-African Early Education Center, while Alice Walker created Philadelphia's ARD Self-Help Center (Rickford, 18). However, there is no discussion about black women and outliers like Makini Tchameni and Cheryl O'Neal who traveled to Africa from the United States to create African Centered Institutions. There has been some research created to discuss how Black South African and Black American women negotiate similar oppressed positions when in educational leadership positions (Johnson and Thomas, 164). To further validate these oppressions, "gender-based power dynamics and male-dominant norms have routinely limited the upward mobility of Black African women" (Johnson and Thomas, 163).

A study in the UK, *Black women's Intersectional Complexities: The Impact on Leadership*, also noticed similar challenges when it came to Black Women in Leadership, in addition to the lack of research concerning the topic. There was a discussion of Black women and biculturalism and their abilities to act as bridges for others sharing their cultural competencies (Curtis). Women in general share their interconnectivity through their parenting, motherhood, and social networks as women (Curtis). Black women's vitality is used to combat the daily challenges they face and is highlighted in the study as they overcome barriers while advocating for social change. Overarching themes in the black women leaders they interviewed in the article included echoes of their silentious presence (tokenism), the drivers and their narrative journeys (aspirations to stay in the field to overcome barriers) and Communal Kinship& Collective Identity (The ability to work as social justice advocates and their commitment to the community) (Curtis). These ideas can be found as well in the United States and South Africa. Cultural wealth is used skillfully as a competency within their work, and it is called culturally competent leadership (Curtis). Black women also use bridge leadership, linking people together. On the other hand, research essentializes black women's diverse experience by lumping them all in one category (Curtis). In addition, it should be noted that the devastating impact biculturalism on a woman's psyche amidst the racial and gender bias is an issue (Curtis). Black women leaders are also considered value driven leaders, not being guided by monetary gains but a commitment towards making a positive contribution to the organization. These women value communal kinship and collective identity, a common thread in my own research concerning women stories in African Centered Educational Leadership in South Africa and Detroit (Curtis).

African Centered Educational Leadership

There is limited research on African Centered Educational Leadership and the styles. There is research that explores ideological leaders of African Centered education like Asante, Marimba Ani, and Lomotey (Ashanti) (Hopson). Most research stresses the importance of Afrocentricity and the curriculum being rooted in one's black identity (Ashanti). African Centered Education is described as transformative, non-oppressive, and counterhegemonic. As we think of African Centered institutions overall environment, one can assume that these characteristics are also transferable to the leaders. The perspective of an African Centered Educational Leadership has been explore based on past leaders, but not current ones like my research.

However, there is a consistent lack concerning the daily lives and experiences of the leaders at African Centered Institutions, in addition to the current gender dynamic of black women leading these spaces. Due to the lack of literature concerning African Centered Educational Leadership, an article titled *What's Educational Leadership without an African-Centered Perspective? Explorations and Extrapolations* states that we must lean on the autobiographical context of former leaders in African Centered institutions like Carter G. Woodson who wrote the Mis-Education of the Negro (Hopson). In addition, as it concerns African American school's leadership, there is an acknowledgement to black women being at the forefront (Hopson). These women include Fanny Jackson Coppin, Anna Julia Cooper, Mary McLeod Bethune, Nannie Helen Burroughs, and Septima Clark, women who have contributed to the development of and African-Centered perspective in Educational Leadership (Hopson).

Black political leaders and organizations are also identified as critical, like Marcus Garvey, Haki, and Safisha Madhubuti, and the black panthers, an African Centered education is

highly linked to social justice rather is it's the Black Power Movement or the Black Lives Matter Movement (Hopson). It is also recognized that African Centered schools are shules did at one point have a robust leadership organization that emphasized an African Centered community and prototype with the creation of the Council of Independent Black Institutions (CIBI) in 1972 (Hopson). African Centered institutions were essentially community grassroot spaces of learning in spite of the catastrophic assault on the black mind that continues today though the Miseducation of the Negro was written in 1933 (Podair). African Centered Schools, also known as Pan-Africanist Schools, once started out as community based not wanting to affiliate with governmental resources, but now there are African Centered Schools that are charter, and this touchy relationship with the state and national government has impeded on the mission and vision of these schools with state mandates (Hopson). It has also been discussed that due to the challenges of resource attainment of African Centered Institutions, these radical spaces did take state money (Fabayo). Yet, organizations like CIBI did not want African Centered Charter Schools in their organization due to their original grassroot nature, which caused many schools to leave its establishment including one the institutions in my study Timbuktu Academy of Science and Technology in Detroit, Michigan.

Mothering In African Centered Educational Leadership

Mothering is an African Centered Educational Leadership style. It is used in many of the African Centered institutions by the black women globally who create, manage, and operate these institutions. Mothering has been identified as a leadership style among women leaders in education in both South Africa and the United States. In South Africa, it is a tool to provide social capital for their feminine roles (Lumby 2011, 2014; Corsun & Costen 2001). In a study that discusses women principals in small schools in South Africa, the text stated,

> The capacity for multi-skilling and the hard work necessary to run a family seemed translated into the attributes necessary to run a small school. Several respondents noted that, in their view, they had been appointed for their capacity for hard work (Lumby, 2011).

In describing women leadership styles in this small school, the text mentioned,

> Similarly, there appeared to be an attempt to transform the low-status role of the mother into a kind of social capital that could be used to lend symbolic power to   lead. The size of the school and, in some cases, lack of resource led to a mothering approach.

Mothering as a leadership style can be used as an advantage, however, at the same time, it can be used to limit their capacity as leaders due to the common perception as mothers being unable to do a job (Lumby, 2011).

Mothering as a tool in black women educators' experiences emerged on several occasions in the literature of black women educators (Baylor)(Oka)(Msila)(Karenga)(Hill-Brisbane)(Johnson K)(Johnson)(Collins). Black women educators practiced an ethic of care and praxis of love (Hill-Brisbane) (Johnson K). Black feminist thought has called it "other-mothering," however within womanism, it is described as just mothering (Johnson)(Collins)(T. Karenga). *In Revolutionary Mothering: Love On The Front Line*, Cynthia Dewi Oka, activist, and educator, explores the tenets of motherhood inclusive of political space. She quotes Dana Erekat, "Motherhood is an act of defiance in the midst of colonization…" (Oka, 51). Also, "The ethos of mothering involves valuing and of itself a commitment to the survival and thriving of other bodies. It presents a fundamental contradiction to the logic of capitalism, which unmoors us from each other" (Oka, 52). Women of color, in particular, have also been, "violently punished and stigmatized for mothering…" (Oka). Some of the tenets she suggests as she advocates for motherhood as a revolutionary praxis includes, politicizing familial love, advances in a justice-centered concept of health, development of radical mobile autonomous

free schools, collective distribution and sharing, and the decolonization of our relationship with

mother earth (Oka). In Kawaida Womanism, Tiamoyo Karenga discussed the importance of

motherhood in understanding her theory. Anna Julia Cooper, educator and black liberation

activist is seen as the prototype of someone who represents Kawaida Womanism. She states,

> The role of mother is not only one of co-procreation along with the father, but also
> one of assuming the social responsibility to nurture, teach, mold, mentor and bring
> into being spiritually and ethically grounded human beings in the interest of the good in
> the world and to ensure continuity in family and community. These practices are to be
> extended in society to build life-enhancing and emancipatory organizations,
> institutions and social movements as is reflected in the history of the mothers of the
> freedom movements in this country and throughout the pan-African world (T. Karenga).

She provides a panoramic view of the all-encompassing role of the mother within the African

Diaspora, in which teaching is at the center.

> Badejo connects mothering inextricably to African feminism by stating,

> African feminism embraces femininity, beauty, power, serenity, inner harmony, and
> a complex matrix of power. It is always poised and centered in womanness. It
> demonstrates that power and femininity are intertwined rather than antithetical.
> African femininity complements African masculinity and defends both with the
> ferocity of the lioness while simultaneously seeking male defense of both as critical,
> demonstrable, and mutually obligatory. African feminism is active and essential to
> the social, political, economic, cultural, and evolutionary aspects of human order
> (Badejo, 1).

In this definition, we are presenting with the all-inclusive role of the African woman, "who

defends both with ferocity of the lioness while seeking male defense," the African woman is

described as the protector of the global family (Badejo, 1). In describing the African woman,

she continues by asserting, "through the womb of woman all humanity passes" (Badejo,1).

Badejo mentions African and European feminism are culturally different and cannot be used to

exchange of each other due to Western patriarchy (2). She reiterates,

> The twin monsters of enslavement and colonialism marginalized African womanhood
> by denying the African male the power to protect women's custodial rights. In the West,
> without African male protection from external threats, the agency of African

womanhood was placed in direct conflict with Western male sexism. That Western sexism had denied its own womanhood legitimacy through its mythicoreligious systems first by demoting European womanhood from adult status to legal minors, and then denying them access to the priestesshood, a phenomenon that never occurred in traditional African societies (7).

In discussing mythico-religious foundations, she provides examples in Nigerian culture of motherhood and African feminism through the narratives of Osun, the goddess of wealth, feminity, power, and fecundity (2). Osun is also the only woman who was there at the creation of earth (2) She states, " As an African woman, Osun plays many, roles that emanate from her central role as woman and mother" (3). In addition, when we think of the Akan tradition, there is a woman central figure called the Queen-Mother (5). The Akan believe "through the womb of woman all humanity passes" women hold an extraordinary position in leadership and the political sphere (5). The main tasks of the Queen-mother,

> the only person allowed to correct the Ohene, the ruler, in public; and second, she is the voice for women's issues in the political forum. The chief priestess in the Akan structure also provides some examples of mythico-religious foundations of power and femininity in African social order (6).

These are just a few examples of how women in African culture and tradition display different tenets of the mothering figure.

In discussing women's educational leadership in Africa, concerning African Feminist Theory, Msila states, "mothering becomes a crucial factor in defining feminism" (Msila). He continues, "The values associated with motherhood have proven to be critical in organisations where women lead" (Msila). The leadership qualities of mothering include caring, loving, protecting, providing, and serving (Msila). Simultaneously, mothers are also targeted stereotypically for not being good leaders,

> Therefore women as actual putative mothers, maybe perceived as less of a match to the prototype of an ideal employee and particularly to that of a leader: women who wish to achieve and enact leadership roles must therefore contend with stepping

outside the acceptable notion of what it is to be a woman in order to match the leadership prototype. In doing so, they draw down disapproval for transgressing boundaries of being women (Msila 90).

There is also the challenge of being too motherly that includes the following signs, 1. Start to believe that the organization cannot do without her, 2. Cannot stand the thought that her followers might fail, so she tries to be overprotective 3. Tires herself and forgets her own needs, wants, and boundaries (Msila).

In the sincerest form of mothering, there is a stress of being a good mother within marginalized groups that contribute to illnesses like post-partum depression (Keefe, 2018). In most societies, it is considered to be an honor to be a mother; however, motherhood requires a lot of work inclusive of providing financial stability, emotional support, and physically attention manifested in time or going to events on behalf of your child (Mesman, 2016). In addition to the assumed task of being a mother, women of color have to deal with the intersection of race, class, and gender that adds to that difficulty especially when you are black or Latina (Keefe, 3) (Collins, 2000). There is this idealized perception of being a strong mother placed on women of color, which causes them to take on more than they can bear, ignoring self in order to fit a prototype of motherhood (Hamilton-Mason, 2009). All these things contribute to post-partum depression to mothers of color. Post-partum depression, similarly to other forms of depression includes "disrupted sleep, poor concentration and appetite, decreased self-esteem, feelings of failure, and lack of energy" (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Mothers are prone to these type of illnesses.

It is said that black women mother the nation. Nation-building is one of the core themes of black women educational leadership in African Centered Institutions, it is the "conscious and focused application of our people's collective resources, energies, and knowledge to the task of

liberating and developing the psychic and physical space that we identify as ours" (Akoto).

Akoto is an African Centered Educator and scholar who provided a definition of nation-building that is Pan-African in essence. Pan-Africanism emphasizes black people globally working together through black cultural sustainability and their preservation despite white hegemonic structures that have tried to annihilate black culture. Also, it should be noted that African Centered schools that emerged rapidly in the 1970s were created and operated by mostly women, and it emphasized nation building (Walker) (Rickford). Also called Pan-African Nationalist schools, they were "political and spiritual extension of the Third World" positioning themselves against global imperialism towards African descended people (Rickford, 3). For example, Makini Tchameni, a black woman educational leader embodies nation-building in my study. She states,

> As Africans commit themselves to the African Renaissance, which means a strong desire to rebuild, revitalize and develop the continent and its people worldwide, education must become a strategic tool for nation-building (Tchameni).

The co-creator of three schools in Africa, though she is a black woman from Houston, Texas. However, due to Tchameni's global idea of Nation-building and Pan-Africanism, her connectivity to the global black community has led to an expansion of educational institutions.

Cheryl O'Neal is another example of a black woman from America who develops African Centered Educational institutions in Africa based on nation building. She fled with her husband Pete O'Neal to Tanzania due to their involvement in the Black Panther Party. Cheryl contributed to the development of the United African Alliance Community Center (UAACC) in their hometown of Arusha. On the UAACC website, it states, "From the beginning, it was a family effort…", the family is also a word that includes nation and the collective community. The community center offers programs and courses in education, arts & crafts, computer

science, sports, and health. Pollard also has done a study on black women from the US creating or contributing to nation-building in Africa (Pollard).

Tchameni and O'Neal are black women leaders in education from the US with ACIs in Africa, and they are a part of the African Diaspora. The African Diaspora is a "triadic relationship linking a dispersal group of people to the homeland of Africa and to their host or adopted country" (Harris, 3). Hamilton furthers this definition and states it "connotes people whose social relationships have been largely inscribed by their geographical displacement at historically significant moments…" (Hamilton, 4). Tchameni and O'Neal are also participating in Black globalism also called Black Internationalism, the manner in which transnational relationships have encouraged cultural exchanges (Sterling, 1998). Transnational relations are "contacts, coalitions, and interactions across state boundaries that are not controlled by the central foreign policy of governments..." (Keohane and Nye, 1970). Their cultural exchanges displayed in the ACIs are examples of nation-building. Black women have globally preserved and archived black culture as a form of nation-building (Pollard) (Tchameni) (O'Neal).

Race-uplift is also a part of nation-building. The literature discussed how black women educators in early American history contributed to race uplift (Cabral) (Johnson K)(Loder-Jackson). Cabral states, "For the majority of African Americans, race uplift simply meant having all the rights reserved for all members of the American society, White and Black" (Cabral). It started as "grassroots effort among the slave community, growing from a constant murmur to a shout within the slave and Freedmen communities" (Cabral) (Baylor). She mentions, "These women internalized the importance of the uplift movement and sacrificed personal pleasures to educate and elevate" (Cabral) (Baylor). Cabral discusses intricately how race uplift and self-awareness are some of the key reasons black women went into education.

She continues by stating, "The notion of race uplift and elevation is interconnected with the concepts of race obligation, duty, and equality" (Cabral).

In addition, black women's spirituality and consciousness have sustained them in their leadership activities. Previous, research states, "Every community of resistance needs a collective of healers…", and the six black women that I study embody a power to heal through education (Oka). Through the Africana woman's healing role, a black woman's spirituality is linked to their nation-building efforts. This leads to an Afrocentric cosmology, connecting her spirit and consciousness to educate. The way black women educational leaders approach and sustain African Centered Educational institutions is "supernatural, intergenerational, and cosmological visions that fulfill their desire to lead the race into wholeness and prosperity, often knowing that the success of their activism would be a reward for the next or future generations" (Temple, 23). Afrocentric cosmology is "a category and tool for understanding African women's organic, or indigenous knowledge" (Temple, 24). It also regards to how "Africana women conceptually anticipated freedom and wholeness for African people and how they suspended and deprioritized the value of their present existence in order to predict, prophecy, and cognitively secure cosmological favor for the race" (Temple, 23).

While reading the literature concerning black women educators, ideas surrounding an Africana Woman Afrocentric cosmology emerged. In discussing early black women educational leaders and their commitment to the race uplift and their community, Cabral states, "These women internalized the importance of the uplift movement and sacrificed personal pleasures to educate and elevate" (Cabral). There was also an intuitive knowing and holistic vision amongst these black women educators "carry on the mission of its predecessors, serving as intergenerational bridge-builders" (Loder-Jackson, 287) (Baylor). Black women educators

"made a conscious and deliberate decision to put the basic needs of the Black community before their personal needs and professional aspirations" (Cabral). The emphasis on the internalization on the import of race upliftment shows an essence embedded into their work, an Afrocentric cosmology. The Afro-centric cosmology of black women educators in leadership in the past has been one of self-sacrifice, intuitive knowing, and community responsibility. These women display an optimal consciousness, and an embedded sense of responsibility to their culture.

Conclusion

Chapter 1, a literature review, locates the efforts of the six black women educators and leaders in my study in the greater struggle of black liberation and resistance through their efforts in African Centered Education and nation building. An overview of enslavement and colonialism helps to understand the emergence of black resistance. The various forms of black resistance combat a violent colonial and slave psyche that still affect African descendant people today especially in education. Though the literature concerning black women leaders in an African centered institution is scarce, we can see some trends in the scholarship about black women educators and their role in the greater struggle for black resistance. They have a clear commitment to their task to teach and uplift their community. Black women leaders also have an embedded desire to help transform the black community that is due to their cultural memory. These ideas exemplify nation-building, mothering, and their call to educate. Gendered theories like feminism and womanism provide a counter narrative to the traditional rhetoric of patriarchy as it pertains to black women and leadership. Then, there is a summation on the literature already in existence concerning the emergent themes in my study – Mothering, Nation-building, and The Call or Consciousness to Educate. Lastly, the black women educators and leaders are described in an Afrocentric Cosmology displaying their roles as healers. The literature review

frames my study displaying my research significance and how it fills in gaps, while locating

Africana women stories in the greater struggle and narrative of black liberation and resistance.

CHAPTER 2

Research Design And Methodology

I mean mothering is remembering, it's the broken parts and putting the dismembered parts together. It's calling them back and saying you will live, you will not die… Mama Sandra

Introduction

Chapter 2 describes my research design and methodology. Lightfoot's portraiture methodology allows me to blend the women's narratives with scholarship to create an authentic story that is also empirically rigorous. The hybridity of this qualitative methodology weaves these women's stories together in an aesthetic whole. In addition, the chapter explores the origin of women's leadership in South Africa and the United States as a critical tool in my methodology. Since the study focuses on Africana women, Africa is used as starting point to illustrate black women's historical positions of power. Leadership is used as a tool, and acknowledging black women's past and present leadership position adds to the story and analysis to place my study on a continuum.

Why Portraiture?

In searching for a methodology, I was looking for one that would allow me to have flexibility in telling these women stories and give me permission as a researcher to participate in the study in a holistic way. I also consider myself a black woman, who is an African Centered Educator that has served in leadership positions in African Centered Institutions. Hence, my relationships with my subjects mattered, rather, or not I have known them for a brief or long time – I wanted the women in my study to feel as if I respected them and that they were in fact human beings and change agents making a difference in this world vs. just a subject of my study.

There are many methods within qualitative research, and some do overlap. At times it can be difficult making a choice due to the variety. However, for my doctoral study, after much

contemplation, I have decided to use Portraiture Methodology, "a method of social science inquiry distinctive in its blending of art and science, capturing the complexity, dynamics, and subtlety of human experience and organizational life" (LawrenceWebsite). There is also an emphasis on the overall authentic experience of conducting the research vs. just the validity and or necessity of proving your research agenda. This method "document the culture of institutions, the life stories of individuals, stages of human development, essential relationships, processes, and concepts" (LawrenceWebsite). Also, the portraits illustrate dimensionality of human experience in social and cultural context, conveying the perspectives of the people who are negotiating those experiences" (LawenceWebsite).

There are 5 components of portraiture methodology: context, voice, relationship, Emergent Themes, and the aesthetic whole. Context is the research physical and intellectual setting. Voice is how the researcher inserts her own self into the study without being overbearing, but it also displays the relational nature between the researcher and subject. Relationship depicts the researcher's interaction to the subjects, to self, to the study, and its greater contribution to the world. Emergent themes occur through the coding and triangulation of the data, interview descriptions of the phenomenon or metaphors are used to describe the situation. Lastly, the aesthetic whole is your research creation, what is the overall picture that gathered from you inquiry.

A narrative inquiry is very similar to a portraiture methodology in that both are phenomenological studies of an experience. However, it consists of three commonplaces: Temporality, Sociality, and Place. I have a challenge with the ideas of temporality, there is an emphasis on the physical element of time. Time is only on earth, it does not include a space for a

more spiritual time, which cannot be viewed in a linear way. A space for Spirituality is important in an African Cosmology.

There is a spiritual element to these women stories that cannot be measured, and it transcends the traditional view of time. There is still this element of rigidity in narrative inquiry that negates the flexibility of sharing a story that is authentic vs just scientific. There is also a justification component in narrative inquiry. Yes, the research should be justifiable, but one is *practical justification* and I want to know according to whose practicality? Who justifies rather or not your research is valid. It is a western hegemonic way of looking at research that is too linear. Both Narrative Inquiry and Portraiture or Conceptual models, but one is more spiritual. Portraiture Methodology allows for the spirit of these women to shine through, transcending space and time to ancestral land. It surpasses the initiatives of general narrative methods by providing room for the known and unknown. It's not just temporal, it's spiritual. The conversation with spirit in my work is the perfect blend of science and art, portraiture. My research is ancestral, based on a lineage of black womanhood.

Portraiture Methodology

According to Baylor, "Portraitists resist grounding their work in deficiency model, therefore the starting point seeks out the good…", it is based on goodness (Baylor, 53). My research reveals successful black women educators and leaders in African Centered Education who have contributed to or created an African Centered Institution, displays continuous ties to their local and national community, and use mothering as a leadership style. These women have created in alternative educational institutions in response to the marginalization of black students and people worldwide believing that traditional spaces continue to assault our people and culture. These leaders take the stance that assimilation and multiculturalism are cultural assassination if

one is not rooted in self which inclusive of at least the basic knowledge of African(a) history and culture. These women have African Centered institutions that have a greater impact on their social justice and counteract deficit studies on marginalized groups. Though there is a lot of challenges in black institutions and leaderships, there are some spaces that are thriving despite issues. It is these black women continued efforts to find hope in the hopeless, and to live and not die.

Structure

Lightfoot posits five essential features of Portraiture Methodology that include Emergent Themes, Aesthetic Whole, Context, Voice, and Relationship (Lightfoot, xvii). Though these five themes work together seamlessly to create an interwoven study, there is an emphasis on emergent themes which are critical to my findings chapters.

Emergent Themes

Emergent themes are revealed through interviews and reoccurring motifs in the data collection in my study. It "reflects the portraitist first efforts to bring interpretive insight, analytic scrutiny, and aesthetic order to the collection of data" (Lightfoot, 185). The triangulated data, internal observation, and relevant preoccupations highlighted the emergent themes. The questionnaire used to facilitate the interviews reveal symbols and patterns in the women singular and collective story. Resonant metaphors, meaningful words and symbolism also represent "…the central core of institutional culture or the dominant dimension of the life story" (198). Also, through triangulation, "various strategies and tools of data collection, looking for the points of convergence among them...emergent themes arise out of this layering of data, when different lenses frame similar findings" (204). Therefore, "the portraitist enters the setting with a

perspective, a framework, and a guiding set of questions that are the result of her previous experience, her reviews of the literature, and her conceptual and disciplinary knowledge" (213).

Aesthetic Whole

The main goal within a portraiture methodology is to create an aesthetic whole by blending the empirical with the narrative, which will, "inform and inspire...document and transform...speak to the head and to the heart" (Lightfoot, 243). The aesthetic whole is the gestalt described as a quilt with many pieces put together strategically to make a beautiful art piece (Lightfoot, 244). By analyzing my data, highlighting emergent themes, weaving my findings together – I can create a scholarly and artistic work that is reflective of these women collective lives (Lightfoot, 247).

Context, Voice, and Relationship

Context is the research physical and intellectual setting. It is throughout the research discussions, in the introduction, literature review, and findings section. Context includes, but is not limited to, my rationale for researching women who are leaders in African Centered Institutions, as well as their political, cultural, and social environment. Voice is inclusive of the researcher and the participants. The researcher inserts her voice into the study through her ideas and revelation without being overbearing by displaying the relational nature between researcher and subject. Numerous voices are present in this methodology, such as the voice of witness, the voice of interpretation, voice as preoccupation, voice as autobiography, lastly, a voice in dialogue. My voice has multiple roles as researcher, participant, and interpreter. Lastly, Relationship depicts the researcher's interaction with the subjects, to self, to the study, and its greater contribution to the world. Creating authentic and ethical relationships with participants is imperative to a portraiture methodology,

> The relationship with actors of her research are empathetic in nature, the portraitist tries to develop an understanding of their perspective (Lightfoot, 146)…The portraitist is aware of the boundaries of her relationship, creating boundaries while protecting the vulnerabilities of the actors (Lightfoot, 152).

Finally, by highlighting emergent themes, weaving findings together, while being cognizant of how context, voice, and relationship interact with other – I am able to create an aesthetic whole that is reflective of these women collective lives (Lightfoot, 247).

Data Collection

The participants were chosen based on preliminary studies and my academic and career experiences. It was through experiences like the Research & Action in the New South Africa study abroad (RANSA) program offered by the African American and African Studies Program at my university that helped me to form relationships and interest in most of the women chosen from South Africa in my study. Also, I met some of the women in Detroit through a previous academic internship I completed at Timbuktu Academy of Science and Technology. I engaged in the observation of the women leader's institution before the beginning of my dissertation study to verify that it was African Centered in order for the women to gain entry into my study. After identifying the women and establishing that their institution fit the African centered criteria, each potential participant received an e-mail to gauge whether she wanted to participate in an extended study on black women leadership roles in African Centered Education. I also had the opportunity to have a brief dialogue with some of the women to garner participation. Before the interviews, all the women signed a consent form after an explanation of the study and their role. Triangulation is also an accepted analysis tool used to find the emergent themes in portraiture methodology. Particularly, using the interviews, content analysis and participant observation

together helped to reveal them. Using different form of data collection served as a way to cross-check and verify the validity of the dominant motifs.

Population, Sampling Methods, and Data Analysis

My research has received clearance from the Michigan State University Institutional Review Board (IRB). In order for me to conduct my interviews, I sent a summary of my research to IRB and questionnaire to get approval to proceed with my data collection. I also provided a member check for the black women in the study. A member check, "participant or respondent validation, is a technique for exploring the credibility of results. Data or results are returned to participants to check for accuracy and resonance with their experiences" (Birt, 2016).

Through preliminary research and travel over the last five years in South Africa and Michigan, I was able to identify six black women. I used purposive sampling to find black women who have created, managed, and or influenced African Centered Institutions. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to "select individuals or elements they believe possess unique characteristics or perspectives that will provide insight into a particular topic" (McDougal, 157). It should be noted that a "convenience sampling which involves drawing elements from a group (usually most appropriately regarded as a subpopulation) that is easily accessible by the researcher is one of the most commonly used purposive sampling technique" (Kemper, Stringfield & Teddlie, 2003, p. 280).

Currently, there is no sampling frame for African Centered Schools and institutions in Detroit and South Africa. The Council of Independent Black Institutions (CIBI), listed some African Centered Schools in the United States, however, the website content has diminished since its creation. Therefore, based on the scholarship of African Centered Education and my research, I have created an African Centered Institution criteria list:

1. The institution practices African Centered Education that allows the black student and community to be at the center of their learning experience, utilizing historical, social, and cultural examples that are valid to their experiences.

2. The institution is led, managed and or influenced significantly by a black women exhibiting an African Centered Consciousness.

3. The institution is located in South Africa and or Detroit.

4. The institution contributes successfully to the educational experiences of their black students and our community.

5. The décor, population, and or programs align with an African Centered agenda.

The study consists of 6 black women leaders from African Centered institutions diverse in structure. Their institutions include schools, universities, museums, and cultural heritage spaces to capture the diverse ways in which black women educate. Below, I provided a description of the women's institutions and context because in Chapter 3 – *African Centered Educators: A Biographical Context*, I provide a more in-depth view of their general lives and experiences in order for the reader to become familiar with the participant's background. Chapter 3 also serves as a form of context for the reader, which is an essential element of portraiture methodology.

The women in South Africa live in Midrand, Cosmo City, and Sunnyside - all areas within Johannesburg and Pretoria, two major cities. All the black women from the United States are from Detroit, Michigan. The women leaders have been pre-selected based on my earlier studies. Later, I provide the women leader's names and a description of their African Centered Institutions.

Using multimedia sources that describe the women's identities and African Centered Institution has contributed to finding emergent themes through content analysis. These sources

include curricula, propaganda, websites, advertisements, mixed media, and other narratives. Most of the women in my study have generated multimedia digital data relevant to content analysis. The digitization of their profiles, African centered institutions, and lives illustrate how digital humanities intersect with my work. Below provides a list online sources that discuss the women work you can find online about their institution and or their lives.

In addition, visiting all the institutions and participating organically in some events, has revealed the African Centered Institution and how each embodies their leader's philosophy through their activities, environment, community, and people who frequent these spaces. Observations have also revealed emergent themes, allowing me to witness these leaders in their natural state illuminating an authentic essence.

Lastly, through data triangulation revealed three emergent themes - mothering leadership, nation-building, and the consciousness and spirit to educate –, which converged in the stories of black women leaders in African Centered Education. Through repetitive narratives, metaphors, symbols, and common ideas surrounding their roles, emergent themes surface linking their stories together. For example, common terminology used in their interviews to describe their identities and perspectives were identified as it related to their roles. Some content was easier to decipher, while other content had multiple layers that required a more in-depth analysis. The multiple layers required a closer read of their interviews, content and understanding of silence or void. Lastly, there was a unification of the themes in the analysis chapter to get an aesthetic whole, a portraiture of the women as a collective.

Instrumentation

Using a survey design to collect data, the interview was the most important tool used to get information about their leadership roles and converging identities in African Centered

Education. I used structured interview, there was a "standardized set of questions in a fixed order" I used for my participants (McDougal, 230). I created structured interview questions to solicit the necessary information for the study that explores the women experiences and identities, which also reveal emergent themes that connect their stories.

In visiting each African Centered Institutions, I acted as a participant observer, interacting with participants as well as their students, clients, and community members. I also surveyed digital content concerning their dimensional lives and African Centered Institutions.

Origins of Black Women's Leadership

Understanding the Black Women's Leadership origins is an important tool in my study. There are many studies done on black culture from a deficit model like the Moynihan report. However, my study seeks to find the greatness of black culture, by highlighting the success of black women educators and leaders in African Centered Education. In order for me to discuss the positively about black women's leadership position, I must display early examples of their successful leadership campaigns to build my study upon. Therefore, the historical accounts, specifically the origins of black women leadership display again that black women's power has always been rooted in black resistance, liberation, and cultural preservation – it is not by happen stance. My study is a part of a strong legacy black women leaders, and I am just adding to it.

Since the existence of a black woman, beginning in Africa, she was a Queen or King, Queen mother, Amazon, Priest (ess), an Entrepreneur, and even at times socially accepted as a man in some complex cultural situations – nevertheless essentially, she was a leader. Before the infiltration of colonial regimes, women leaders in Africa were standard versus an anomaly, for example, matriarchal political systems (Ampofo, Beoku Betts, Njambi & Osirim, 2004; Booysen,1999; Msila, 2016). In the case of South Africa particularly, Vende women who

helped settle disputes, regency, initiation, and spiritual roles were called *makhadzi*, and they were the father's senior sister (Matshidze, 2013). Zulu royal women held leadership roles in the military, political, and economic areas before and after the reign of the infamous Shaka Zulu (Weir, 2007). Such Southern African groups like the Ba-Pedi encouraged women's leadership with a culture of women chiefs (Weir, 2007). The Lovedu, not only had female leadership, but passed the role down to their daughter to continue the legacy (Kuper, 1982). Women warriors in the Dahomey kingdom beheaded their enemies (Weir, 2007; Ogobomo, 2005). Even in South Africa, there are some past women leaders executing people in what now would be considered a very manly thing to do. For example, Barotsi Mokwa beheaded her prime minister; she also demanded the respect of her kingdom having constituents lay prostrate when they saw her (Coillard, 1971). She could even dismiss her husband if she wanted too (Coillard, 1971). The Asante people of Ghana had the Queen Mother, affectionately called Ohema, who appointed the Ashantehene, ruler, had reign over all the men and women of the kingdom (Ogbomo, 2005). Despite the neglect of the significance of the Queen Mother's role due primarily to males who have ignored it or described it as "ceremonial catering to women's demands and pride," the Queen Mother's role was important even in aiding in wars for her people (Ogbomo, 2005). The Asante are in fact a "matrilineal society, children belong to their mother's clan - and matrilocal - related females live in one village, but males belong to the Asafo or military companies of their fathers" (Ogbomo, 2005).

In Nigeria, chief women like Ahebi stood up to colonial rule despite it weakening their power and the Igbo society functioned from a place of egalitarian which accepted and facilitated women's leadership (Achebe, 2011). Even in patrilineal societies like the Yoruba, Queen Moremi facilitated military intelligence to save her people (Ogbomo, 2005). Also in the Yoruba

culture spirituality, there is a pantheon of goddesses, like Osun, in spirit form protects and fights

for her people. All these are examples of African women's continued leadership. Pre-colonial

African women experiences dispelled the myth of docile womanhood that was later forced on

African cultures due to colonialism disrupting pre-established systems of female leadership.

Afasi mentions,

> [T]he face of African society on gender equality changed owing to the influence of colonialism. Women began to suffer oppression from men. The shackles imposed by law, custom, religion, and attitudes forced women to play the second fiddle. In fact, women mostly remained relegated to the last rung of the social and political ladder. Women no longer were giving the opportunity to exercise any power except those supervised by men (2010).

Again, the chapter highlights past leadership of African women while exploring the literature

surrounding roles of black women educational leaders in South Africa and the United States,

focusing on their experiences in traditional and more recently, African Centered institutions. It

highlights the themes of mothering, nation-building, and spirituality as commonalities in these

black women stories and how African Centered epistemologies and methodologies can be used

to further understand their journeys. How are you connecting this previous section on history of

Black women's leadership to sections on Black feminist theory?

Due to systems like patriarchy, "a gendered power system, a network of social, political

and economic relationships through which men dominate and control female labor,

reproduction, and sexuality, as well as define women's status, privileges and rights in a society",

the story of the African women who reign and fearlessly wielded their power is skewed

(Kalabamu, 2004).

Yet and still, there have been female presidents in Africa like Joyce Banda in Malawi,

and Ellen Sirleaf in Liberia that displays the strength of women's leadership (Madimo, 2016).

Women have held short-term interim positions as presidents to assist with conflict or bridge

during a specific transition. Some of those women are Ivy Matsepe-Caseburri who served as the South African President in 2005, Sylvie Kinigi of Burundi who stayed in office from 1993-1994 to help rebuild a shattered government, Ohsan Bellepeau of Mauritius, Catherine Samba Panza who presided over the Central African Republic, and Rose Francine Rogombé in Gabon (Riley, 2015). Particularly, when it comes to the development of Africa, it is believed that "Women's politics, activisms, and personal practices are the core, the foundational basis, of this alternative future for Africa" (Makina, 2014). It is essential that we acknowledge black women's leadership roles irrespective of patriarchy violence. Though challenged, African women continue to press on, passing down ancient wisdom,

> Every woman lives, from one generation to the next in some society, and each woman also lives out her individual biography. By the very act of living, she contributes, however minutely, to the shaping of her society and to the course of history, even as she is made by society and its historical push and shove (Magubane, 2014).

However, due to colonial and western oppression, women's leadership have been under attack, and research has been used to combat stereotypes and actions associated with black women as leaders. Due to the marginalization of women in educational leadership positions, an accurate assessment of their administrative skills are limited (Johnson and Thomas, 157). It is important to explore their diverse and convergent experiences due to their intersectionalities (Johnson and Thomas, 159) (Collins).

Conclusion

The following chapter discusses my research design and methodology for the study. It provides some context on why these women institutions are African Centered. There is also a rationale for the usage of a portraiture methodology including the emphasis on goodness, mixture of art and scholarship, and the inclusivity of the researcher's perspectives. There is an

explanation of how the five tenets – emergent theme, aesthetic whole, voice, and relationship of portraiture contribute to the study. I describe my instrumentation, as well as my population and sampling method. I also provide my methods for data analysis and collection. In addition, I provide the origins of black women's leadership to display that there is a tradition of black women's leadership and this serves as an important tool of analysis.

CHAPTER 3

Africana Women Leaders: A Biographical Context

"A nation can rise no higher than its woman…" Mama Cha-Rhonda

Introduction

Chapter 3 provides biographical context for the women in my study. Context is one of the critical tenets of a Portraiture Methodology. This is an in-depth synopsis that provides a compact portrait of their lives, as well as a brief description of their educational institutions. The six women are the following - Dr. Ziphora Moichela, who researches indigenous knowledge systems, and works at the University of South Africa in Pretoria. It is known proudly as Africa's University. Makini Tchameni is the founder of the African Centered Educational Foundation (ACE) and principal of ACE schools, like the African Union International School in South Africa. Gogo Dineo Ndlanzi created the Gogo Dineo Ndlanzi Institute of Spiritual Healing in Cosmo City – a residential area in Johannesburg, South Africa. She has been a Sangoma and leader in African Spirituality for the last 10 years, and her school has been in existence for about four years. In Detroit, Michigan, Cha-Rhonda Edgerson, known as Mama Cha-Rhonda, is the principal of Timbuktu Academy. It is the last African Centered school in Detroit, Michigan. It began in 1997 by Mama Malkia Brantuo, who wanted to contribute positive change towards their black community. Zukhanye Nondabula, known as Mama Zukhanye, is a teacher and leader at Timbuktu Academy. She has roots in the creation and development of other African Centered Schools in Detroit like Aisha Shule. Lastly, Reverend Mama Sandra Simmons, also affectionately called Mama Sandra, is the founder of the Hush House Community Museum and Leadership Training Institute. The community organization and museum has multiple educational programs targeted for the black and global community. These are the six black

women educators of my study who have developed or contributed significantly to an African Centered Institution. In addition to preserving the black cultural tradition, their work is aligned with other forms of black resistance to counter ongoing racism and oppressions in the African world.

Dr. Ziphora Moichela

The problem is that there is a type of problem with the kind of education system which is not relevant hence the dire need…for a review for the kind of education system that is fed to the indigenous people of the country …in this case Africa is a continent and South Africa in particular… (Caesar, 2016)

I met Dr. Moichela in the summer of 2014 as she was finishing up her doctoral studies in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management at the University of South Africa in Pretoria (UNISA). The University of South Africa, in Pretoria, is an open distance learning institution, and has the largest library in Africa. UNISA's mission is to "find answers to Africa's educational and developmental problems", demonstrating the institution's African Centered nature (UNISA). In Dr. Moichela Department of Educational Leadership and Management, particularly there is an emphasis on creating a strong African leadership in education while uplifting the disadvantaged and being community oriented.

Biographical Context

According to Dr. Moichela, in her interview, she stated when she was young, teaching was seen as a stable position; "you will never lack bread on the table, you will never lack a place to stay" (Caesar, 20). Government bursaries or scholarship were available to assist with tuition and in addition to providing a stable income for women from poor backgrounds, there were perk in being a teacher in South Africa They received a subsidy for a home, and jobs were always available. It was specifically the security of a teacher, and access for women that drew Ziphora toward educational pursuits. While teaching she encountered bias in the South African

curriculum that overtly withheld the culture and history of black South African from the students. This can be seen as a residual of apartheid that occurred from 1948-1994. these, deficiencies motivated her to pursue her educational journey with passion, receiving her honors particularly there is an emphasis on creating a strong African leadership in education while uplifting the disadvantaged and being community oriented. These particular features are also aligned with an African Centered perspective. Since our first conversations, she has finished her doctoral degree and inserted herself into the conversation about indigenous knowledge systems and the South African curriculum through teaching, writing, and lectures.

In her office, you are welcomed by South African art that illustrates a vital element of indigenous knowledge systems - the creation of mealie meal. Dr. Moichela discusses the artwork with strong appreciation for the artist's visual interpretation of repetitive physical work commonly done by black women in the villages. She is a proud South African woman deeply rooted in her culture who believes that the current curriculum should reflect an African Centered Perspective. Dr. Moichela has over 25 years of teaching experience, including serving as a high school teacher, and 10 years of experience in higher education. Masters, and most recently a doctoral degree by studying while she continued to teach. Bringing herself up from the "ashes", Ziphora worked to get herself into a position where she could contribute to the educational advancement of black South African children.

The current discussion on Africanizing the curriculum focuses on adding the African perspective to the South African curriculum. However, in order to Africanize the curriculum, the culture's indigenous knowledge systems must be identified. Dr. Ziphora Moichela's scholarship has focused on this identification and dissemination. In describing indigenous knowledge systems, she states,

Indigenous is an umbrella term for the indigenous people across the globe, people who are still native to their roots…They are all indigenous…depending on where they are in their time and place in the world, if the indigenous people of Africa would say, they are Africans...we talk about Africanizing the curriculum in term of the indigenous modalities…

Her research argues for indigenous knowledge systems at the basic level due to the inability of institutions in higher education to reach the masses who need it the most. Dr. Moichela she states,

…politically we realize that institutions of higher learning…have become arrested to higher ideology and nothing is actually happening and the more they try to bring about the solutions… the more the education becomes more and more irrelevant to the needs and aspiration of the Africans…as a result we are saying how about look at the roots…basic education…

Her ability to conceptualize, identify, and protect South Africa's knowledge and culture makes her a women leader in South Africa's educational system.

Gender Equity in Education

Dr. Ziphora Moichela passionately supports women's roles and opportunities in education. She believes women are the holders of tradition and encourages girls to attained good education by emphasizing an African proverb, "If you educate a girl child, you are educating the whole village…" Though, there is an increasing understanding of the importance of educating a girl child, traditional beliefs serve as an obstacle. Girls are expected to care for the family and marry early to fulfill womanly duties,

I'll talk about the current curriculums whereby women in Africa in particular are still seen, unfortunately still seen along the lines of patriarchies …whereby a girl child, especially from rural areas is still seen as a girl who must abide their African course…waking up early in the morning, making sure everything has been tended, their siblings been taking care of, the house is clean, you've collected wood, you've made fire, done this and that, and during your puberty years you'll be prepared for womanhood and all that…

Dr. Moichela promotes the critical needs of girls in South Africa by advocating for their

educational rights while she counteracts the traditional narrative that South African women must care for the whole family and neglect her own education.

Gogo Dineo Ndlanzi

I have always been doing the work of educating the world, educating Africans, educating people around me on what it means to be proudly African…you know some of it you can't get in mainstream education … (Caesar, 2018)

While studying abroad in the Research Abroad Program in the New South Africa (RANSA) program, we were taken to different cultural heritage events. I met Gogo Dineo after a Sangoma ceremony I attended. Sangomas, according to Gogo Dineo, are "facilitators of healing" by "going deep into an element of your spiritual identity… we work with body, mind, and spirit and when a lot of people come to us we know that something is out of tune at a spiritual level" (Caesar, 2018). In essence, Sangomas use the ancestors, god and mother nature to heal people And bring them back into good spirit and health. I was enlightened by my first Sangoma consultation. I learned that the Gogo Dineo Ndlanzi Institute of Spiritual Healing preserves indigenous knowledge in South Africa by training others with spiritual gifts. it was in every essence an African Centered School.

I have participated in Sangoma consultations with her as well as being one of her students for 8 months– and gaining information from her *Indumba*, spiritual room. There were classes that range from topics on the healing power of *muti* or medicine and how to understand your "gift" in order to facilitate healing with your patient – here African Centered Institution is a place where God, the Ancestors, and nature are at the center and it is centered on South African indigenous belief systems.

Biographical Context

Gogo Dineo Ndlanzi grew up in Alexandria Township in South Africa (Caesar, 2018). She identifies herself as a spiritualist, a person "who is not cast in stone and it's one that always

is evolving. Most of her spiritual belief systems are grounded in African spirituality. She mentioned, "I don't believe Africans were religious at all…I don't believe there was African religion…I believe there was African spirituality and that informed our culture and culture is a way of being" (Caesar, 2018).

Her educational background is not one of importance in the traditional sense, she states,

I feel very strongly and closest to, is my qualification as a healer you know African Centered Education is not based on you go and do this thing and it's not quite rigid and religious in its function …for us teaching, learning, and qualification is continuous work on the craft that you are trying to master and that work is not always centered around a particular type of period based on framework (Caesar, 2018).

Gogo Dineo continues to state how Western frameworks cannot be placed on African worldviews. Gogo Dineo has 15 years of experience in facilitation and discussions in schools and institutions surroundings African Spirituality. She also teaches cultural and emotional balance classes about life in general. She is trained as a relationship and human system coach. She continues and states,

I don't like to wear my qualification hats…because sometimes theory on its own is quite limiting …and when we speak about who and what has been my greatest teachings… always speak about myself and my own life experiences and what I have encountered in life…that has taught me the most than what the classroom had … when I birth into becoming a healer, a lot of things made sense on why things happen the way they do…sometimes doing things by the book did not present me with the answers that I was seeking…(Caesar, 2018)

Just as she was called to become a Sangoma; Gogo Dineo was called to become a Sangoma trainer and open up an institute. Gogo Dineo Ndlanzi named the institute after herself because she was already a known household name in South Africa, as someone who pioneered African Spirituality into mainstream media with her broadcasting on the radio and television.

At her school she trains Sangomas to consult patients and look into their physical, emotional, and spiritual well -being to facilitate a healing treatment. It must be noted that one

cannot just enroll in her school. Entry is given to those with an ancestral calling and be shown through dreams, symbols, and intuitive impulses their place of training. Only the *gobela*, or spiritual teacher, can confirm the authenticity of the student, and if he or she agrees – then they will train them to become a Sangoma. It is an ancient training that is secretive in nature and deals heavily with the esoteric realm. Through her institute, Gogo Dineo works towards demystifying myths and stereotypes around indigenous healing practices**.**

Healing Through Dance And Music

A Sangoma is known to use music and dance to facilitate healing, it is a form of gratitude and honoring your higher power. The drum is commonly played at most ceremonies, and especially at gitas in which participants evoke spiritual entities. Many songs are associated with praising the ancestors, for example *Umoya* is all about the spiritual journey to become a Sangoma and the returning spirit. When Gogo Dineo performs spiritual, the spirit takes over. She also teaches her children at an early age the power of the ancestors, healing, and performance and they usually accompany her in the ritual.

> *…here on the African continent…my children enrolled in school were being taught that colonialism was a good thing …that is the colonizing, the literal occupation of African countries was a good thing by European Powers…the dividing of Africa into pieces…and splitting families and roots and everything was a good process…because in my child's history book they were being told that was something that helped Africans from killing each other and that if it had some disadvantages …one of the disadvantages was that some Africans resisted and they were killed… (Caesar, 2016)*

Makini Tchameni

I have taught and done administrative work for the African Centered Educational Foundation (ACE) for the last 8 years in South Africa, Cameroon, and the United States. The co-creator of the ACE Foundation, Makini Tchameni is an African American woman, who left the United States after marrying, and went to Africa politicized by Pan-African organizations in the

United States.

The ACE Foundation is, "an organization that was put in place to help with the efforts of establishing African Centered Schools on the continent, but also in the Diaspora" (Caesar, 2016). In addition to creating African Centered Schools and curriculum, the ACE Foundation also helps "those schools, individuals, and organizations that would like to move towards African Centered Education" (Caesar, 2016).

The African American Academy (AAA) in Cameroon opened in 1998, was my first encounter with the ACE Foundation. The ACE school has been operating for 18 years, and is known as a leading institution where students can also obtain an International Baccalaureate, which allows students to competitively apply for university admission globally. Almost 10 years later in 2009, the ACE Foundation opened the African Union International School (AUIS) in Midrand, South Africa. AUIS operates as a primary school using the same ACE curriculum as the African American Academy in Cameroon.

In describing the significance of her African Centered Schools, Makini explained,

What is unique about our two schools, in addition to African Centered elements – we add a leadership element…That leadership development element is an important aspect because we need all our children to see themselves as leaders, carry themselves as leaders… (Caesar, 2016).

While in Cameroon, she started African American Academy (AAA) in Douala, Cameroon along with her husband due to the colonial narrative that were taught to her students. They were joined by other dissatisfied parents. AAA was the first institution that I worked at; later I would work at their school in South Africa – the African Union International School.

Biographical Context

Makini Tchameni was born in Houston, Texas and it was in her hometown where she learned about the importance of an African Centered Education. In the beginning of her

educational career she received the opportunity to teach at a school run by a couple, Mr. Franklin and Ms. Rowe. This school run by a black woman and man displays the dedication they had for their community, and later on in life Makini Tchameni would emulate this structure creating several African Centered schools with her own husband. They were creating their own African Centered Curriculum (Caesar, 2016). She described Ms. Rowe as "the mother, she was the person that the children and the parents looked to inspire" (Caesar, 2016). [CTD6] Makini also stated that Ms. Rowe left a huge impression on her and was a very important role model in her educational career (Caesar, 2016). Makini was introduced to radical mothering at an African Centered school in Houston through Ms. Rowe.

Radical mothering again is the ability to nurture your community and surrounding in which black consciousness is transferred and created. She continued her education and received her Bachelor of Arts in communication and journalism from the University of Houston in Texas. She also earned a Master of Arts in Education from the College of New Jersey in New York. As an active member of the All African Revolutionary Party (AARP) in Houston, her ideas on teaching nation building to our youth were formed. The AARP began in 1968 in Guinea Conkry as a study group, after Kwame Nkrumah published a book called *Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare*, in which he stated the,

> formation of the All-African People's Revolutionary Party (A-APRP) is to co-ordinate policies and to direct action… A political party linking all liberated territories and struggling parties under a common ideology; and thus smoothing the way for continental unity… While at the same time greatly assisting the prosecution of the All-African People's War. (Nkrumah, 56-57).

By 1972, the AARP had its first chapter in the United States. Truly a Pan-African organization the AARP has locations in 33 African countries, US, Europe and Canada (AARP). It should also be noted that in 1980, the AARP began their All African Women's Revolutionary Party that

"understands that the liberation of African people cannot come to reality without the effective and genuine liberation of African Women" (AARP).

Throughout her educational career she has served as a teacher, head of department, and administrator. Now she serves as the principal of the ACE Foundation schools in Cameroon and South Africa. When I asked Makini Tchameni her rationale for becoming an educator, she stated, "I chose education out of necessity," (Caesar, 2016) adding,

> I found myself and my family here in Cameroon, where the post-colonial educational system was in place and is still in place, and therefore children were, are educated from the perspective of the colonial powers. So, we, being my husband and myself, decided that it was really important that we try to provide and make available a different perspective to our children and to the children of Cameroon (Caesar, 2016).

From those earlier experience, the first ACE school was founded – The African American Academy in Douala, Cameroon.

Pan-Africanism

It was also in an AARP meeting in Houston, Texas that she met her husband, Djeukam Tchameni from Cameroon also studying at the University of Houston. A political leader in Cameroon who ran for president in 2004, he has been a critical element in the creation of the ACE Foundation and schools. Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana and founder of the AARP stated, "All people of African descent, whether they live in North or South America, the Caribbean, or in any other part of the world, are Africans and belong to the African Nation" (Nkrumah, 4). Lastly, Black Panther and activist scholar Kwame Ture, Afro-Trinidadian, and founder of the AARP defined Pan-Africanism as the total liberation and unification of Africa under an all-African socialist party. It was through this Pan-African political identity that Mrs. Tchameni understood herself as an African despite her American origins, a part of the global African community.

Cha-Rhonda Edgerson

African Centered Education to me is really taking the African child and putting them in the center of their education… where everything is surrounded by Africa and the child in the center… (Caesar, 2017)

I did a summer internship at Timbuktu Academy of Science and Technology. The first person I was in correspondence with and met was Cha-Rhonda Edgerson, the principal. She helped me to make arrangements, allowing me to interview and sit in on classes even before I narrowed down my research to black women leaders who own and operate African Centered Institutions. For the last three years, I have maintained a relationship with Timbuktu Academy teachers and staff.

Biographical Context

When you walk in Timbuktu Academy, you may not even notice immediately Mama Charhonda - she is hardly in her office. She frequently walks up and down the hall finding solutions to daily problems, or just stopping in to say "hi" to the students and giving teachers support, as well as encouragement. She is a hands-on principal who keeps her door unlocked Teachers and students come in freely, knowing that Mama Charhonda will always make time for them. Timbuktu was founded in 1997 and currently serves K-8th grade students. The school instills cultural pride in their students through African Drum and Dance, a Family environment, and community support program like food drives.

Mama Charhonda is a native to Detroit, growing up on Harper and Van Dyke, which is actually very close to Timbuktu Academy. When describing her location in Detroit, she states, I have been "an east-sider all my life". She proudly identifies herself as an African. She attended King High School, Wayne State University, and Marygrove College, ending her traditional academic career with a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership, all in Detroit. In her

neighborhood, she proudly claims, "I was always the teacher, had students on the block" (Caesar, 2017).

Naturally, her educational pursuits in the community led her to becoming a tutor in a school, instructor of Africana Studies, and a teacher of many hats at Timbuktu Academy of Science and Technology. Her legacy at Timbuktu has also included working in the food department and being the dean of discipline. In each role that she held, she did it with love learning the landscape of the school. In describing African Centered Education and her institution, she states,

> *Timbuktu…takes the best of all the African centered traditions, practices, ceremonies, and customs and adding it to the education they provide for the students …at the same time they are putting the student in the middle of their education…they are also exposing them to the best traditions, the best customs, and the best practices we have found in African centered or African countries, let me say that …*

She also mentions how African Centered Education is more than just the aesthetics of wearing dashikis and visual performances of playing the djembe drums. She described it as embedded in the school culture, through the nurturing behavior of the teachers, and the community outreach programs that helped families. African Centered Educations was also displayed in the field trips to the Black Jesus statue at the corner of Chicago and Linwood in front of the Sacred Heart Seminary. African Centered Education is a mind, body, and spiritual experience.

Gender Balance

Mama Charhonda is big on balance, she believes that men and women should work together in the education to help the child. She states,

> *I am big on balance…so as much as you see women in our buildings you would see them…I want to make sure students get the full perspective…there are some things that*

babas can only teach boys and there are some things that only mamas can teach girls…so I do feel that man play that backbone, the ones for when there is trouble, we call on the babas to help us out…in terms of being a little more stern where Baba Bernard will come in, I'm the person that is kind of understanding, compassionate, although he can be those things to…

She also continues and discusses the need to have positive male influences around the school,

…just having positive men, be positive role models for students is important for me…so it doesn't have to be a certain type…because we are all different people so…we have the babas that wear suit and ties…and then we have the ones who will rock locks and a daishiki…we have those who will wear simple business clothes…so have a variety of men around students...

Even though women play a huge role in the school, she doesn't discredit the efforts of men.

Matter of fact, she praises them for being there and their positive interaction with the students.

Victoria "Zukhanye" Nondabula

I would have summer school on my front porch with children in our community and it was just a need that we educate ourselves. Due to the fact, no one will put more energy into someone as far as through the full of education other than teaching your own, I mean it's your responsibility (Caesar, 2017)

I also met Zukhanye Nondabula, also known as Mama Zukhanye, at Timbuktu Academy of

Science and Technology. She was a primary teacher who had a revolutionary edge. Through our

conversations, I learned that she helped to develop other African Centered Schools in the United

States, and I knew that her diverse experiences would add value to my research. Mama

Zukhanye has also travelled to South Africa for cultural engagement, immersing herself in

a global African dialogue.

Biographical Context

She was born Zukhanye Nondabula in Detroit Michigan but changed her name to Mama

Zukhanye when she married her South African husband. She identifies herself as an African born

in America. Like many black children in the United States, she received her first educational

experiences from the mommas that surrounded her. Her grandmother, who lived in Camilla, Georgia, a small city with a history of racially incited events, had the greatest impact on her.

The Camilla Massacre, a bloody Sunday, September 19, 1868 - black freedman and white liberals marched to Camilla from Albany to protest the forced removal of black politicians from their government, it resulted in the death and injury of many blacks, as well as the white stakeholders (formwalt, lee). Mama Zukhanye family fought for their rights, and she inherited a love for children and took up the initiative to educate black and brown babies for the rest of her life. In referencing the education she received from her grandmother's stories, she states, "I think those stories were the most knowledge that I received, um, that have carried me throughout life and has helped me, um, determine my principles to live on".

She attended Alabama State University and University of Maryland, Eastern Shore, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Physical Education. She also took some classes at Oakland University as well. She has occupied several positions in education, particularly at Timbuktu Academy; she served as a math teacher, parent liaison, and tutor.

However, prior to her experience at Timbuktu, she worked at other African Centered Schools. The first one was the Marcus Garvey School in Los Angeles, where she was a fourth grade teacher, and Lugemah, where she was a pre-school teacher. At Aisha Shule in Detroit she was a gymnastic coach and a math teacher. Mama Zukhanye co-founded Nsoroma Institute in Detroit, where she occupied a position as an elementary teacher.

It Takes A Village

Family history was also very important to Mama Zukhanye. Her grandmother remembers when her own grandmother told stories of her mother (Mama Zukhanye's great-great grandmother) being sold into slavery. Education was not limited to the schoolhouse; neighbors

taught children, for instance, "Mr. Masingayle who always taught children through play. And we would win pennies if we could answer questions". Mama Zukhanye used to also teach the neighborhood kids on her porch; she called it summer school. Her grandmother and aunts taught her through stories, and expressed it takes a village to raise a child illustrating the essence of African Centeredness.

Reverend Mama Sandra Simmons

African Centered Education is "Teaching justice, peace, environmental studies, teaching spiritual warfare from the perspectives of survival, of healing" (Caesar, 2018)

By investigating different cultural heritage institutes in Detroit, Michigan – I found out about the Hush House Museums co-created by Sandra Simmons. She has also created educational programs nationally and internationally focusing on African people, women, education, land and cultural preservation.

A natural storyteller, her words on and off the page demand attention, and she takes her job as an educator of the people, ordained by God and her ancestors, very seriously. Though she grew up in Detroit, she defines herself as a southerner *or* a northerner with a southern flair. Her family migrated from the South and have retained their southern culture. She identifies herself as a black-woman, leader, healer, deep woman of faith, seer, reader, fighter, and general. She states, "All those identities require a deep amount of sacrifice and so that's how I see myself" (Caesar, 2018).

In 2016, her and her husband opened the Simmons Center for Peace Justice Environmental and Education Studies. One of their main projects is an online free school for black students. She and her husband, Baba Charles, also have the Hush Your Multimedia, a collaborative department that teaches students how to strategically use the media to get their information out in the world. The Hush House Collective's board of directors is comprised of

many individuals central to the black scholarly and activist worlds, including Dr. Gloria House, former secretary of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and prolific scholar in African American Studies, Dr. Max Standford, civil rights activist, founder of the Revolutionary Action Movement and Black Studies Scholar, and Dr. Sonia Sanchez, African American poet, playwright and scholar.

Biographical Context

Mama Sandra believes that African Centered Education is the constant relocation of the center and the negotiation of space in an environment that continually assaults us (Caesar, 2018). African Centered Education is "Who see what and read by whom and from where" because "the center, just like us, keeps moving or being moved, being pushed" (Caesar, 2018). African Centered Education encompasses everything from books that discuss the abuse of black women to prison-based educational programs for healing. "To teach how to bear witness and how to read madness through its core…" is African Centered Education.

Though she grew up in Detroit, she also calls herself a southerner *or* a northerner with a southern flare due to where here family migrated from and their ability to retain the southern culture. She identifies herself as a black-woman, leader, healer, deep woman of faith, seer, reader, fighter, and general – she states, "All those identities require a deep amount of sacrifice and so that's how I see myself" (Caesar, 2018).

No matter what institution she worked, she made sure that she took all of her blackness. While teaching at Wayne State University, she mentions,

> *But a black woman, a woman is who centered within her own self, she can turn anything into an African centered institution. I turned Wayne State into an African centered institution every time I walk into the classroom. When my students walk into the room and they saw me with this head wrap on my head and these clothes and this talk and this way of seeing, what's going on you understand (Caesar, 2018).*

Particularly when it comes to African Centered Education and black women's contributions, she has exposed both her white and black students to W.E.B. Du Bois, Audre Lorde, and Ida B. Wells. She is the definition promoting and being unapologetically black.

Kitchen School

Mama Sandra recalls how, when she was growing up, the kitchen served as a school for the women when they would congregate. She mentions,

> *You know Fridays at my grandmother's house when my maternal grandmother would have, holding court with all of us. We would all, all the women would come and we would stand around the stove, summer or winter when she roasted yams and had her feet up in the oven door. And they talked about being mothers, about being women and how we did it and how we didn't do it and why we didn't (Caesar, 2018).*

In this description, she discusses how black women would teach each other the secrets of the world from childbirth to marriage. Today Mama Sandra continues in that same vein, having this intimate conversation with women not only in her kitchen, but also in the neighborhood and around the world.

African Centered Institutions

University of South Africa: Pretoria, South Africa (Main)

Dr. Ziphora Moichela, Lecturer and researcher

The University of South Africa in Pretoria consists of Sunnyside and the main campus on Preller, which are not too far from one another. The main campus, where I conducted my primary research, is distinctive in that it is located on elevated land, you can see it high in the sky from the roads. If you look up at the main campus you will also view a tall image of Nelson Mandela, the first black president of the newly democratic South Africa. The campus includes big brown buildings that are mostly linked together by pathways and stairs. I spent most of my time in the AJH Building Van Der Walt Building in the Department of Educational Leadership

and Management. My South African advisor, Dr. Nomalanga Grootboom is a professor within the department. It was through her assistance during the summer months, I was able to identify an African Centered Educator at UNISA. Through my relationship, I was introduced to her student and now, Dr. Ziphora Moichela. Dr. Ziphora Moichela studies the necessity and practicality of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) after spending years as an educator, teaching in areas like history, in the South African School System.

The University of South Africa in Pretoria is known as Africa's University in service and humanity due to its deep commitment to South Africa and Africa in general (Unisa). Their vision is "towards the African university in the service of humanity" (Unisa). It is considered the largest open distance learning institute in the world, and nearly one-third of South Africans attend this university (Unisa). UNISA is in the process of establishing "the institution as an African open distance and e-learning (ODeL) university leading the world in using all the technologies available in integrated ways so that technology is a means to an end, not an end in itself" (UNISA). It should also be noted that UNISA has the largest library on the African continent and selection of e-material.

It was founded in 1873 under the name the University of the Cape of Good Hope. UNISA has made significant efforts in becoming an African University focused on promoting authentic African scholarship. For example, decolonising the Curriculum is a major topic on the campus. Recently, there was a conference to interrogate decolonialism in Africa further, it was titled *De-colonisation and Re-Afrikanisation: A Conversation* (UNISA). I was able to attend this conference and be a part of a global discussion surrounding restructuring the African narrative through decolonialism and African Centered Thought. Currently, the Change Management Unit at UNISA is in charge of this initiative in which their policy goal is to "promote African thought,

philosophies, interests and epistemologies through inquiry, scholarship and partnership…Seminars, colloquia, debates and focus groups are planned to explore the nature of knowledge production, epistemic justice and an infusion of new thought paradigms" (UNISA). UNISA strives to emphasize the "importance of academia in turning the previously colonised into participants in a new and moral and cognitive venture against oppression through the development of a plurality of insights and critical traditions" (UNISA). The university has several institutes and programs that are currently leading in African thought and development such as the Institute of African Renaissance Studies, Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute, The Archie Mafeje Institute for Applied Social Research, The Institute for Global Dialogue, The Institute for Dispute Resolution in Africa, The WIPHOLD-Brigalia Bam Chair in Electoral Democracy in Africa, and the Africa Speak Program. All these branches of UNISA are African Centered, encourage African oriented research, with a strong lean towards community development. Within African Centered Thought There is a strong link to community.

UNISA has graduated some very distinguished people in Africa and the world including African presidents Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki, Robert Mugabe, Cyril Ramaphosa, priest Desmond Tutu, politician activist Oliver Tambo, Edna Molewa, writer Sindiwe Magona, as well as UNISA principal and Vice-Chancellor Professor Mandla Makhanya. Dr. Ziphora Moichela comes from a lineage of African thinkers and provokers. She continues in the legacy by interrogating Indigenous Knowledge Systems and its role in basic education.

Gogo Dineo's School of Spiritual Healing: Johannesburg, South Africa (Cosmo City)
Gogo Dineo Ndlanzi, Owner and Teacher

In the middle of Cosmo City, a neighborhood area within Johannesburg, you will find Gogo Dineo's School of Spiritual Healing. Their patients come in and out for spiritual, mental,

and physical support utilizing traditional African methods. Also, the space that embodies a clinic orientation is full of generational and herbal remedies created by South Africans. It is a school to train Sangomas, traditional healers in South Africa. Often South Africans are using both traditional and western medicine to assist with their illnesses (Mbelekani, 1). Black women in South Africa are usually formal or informal primary caregivers (Mbelekani, 1). The household is a "curative space of care," where major decisions are made regarding illness and type of treatment that is sought out. The woman plays a major role in those health decisions as primary caregivers. The belief in traditional healers are deep and loyal in South as mentioned in a research concerning traditional healing the Free State, "There is always a traditional healer, who will be able to heal that illness" (Mbeklani, 6). In addition to health issues, medicine is used to prevent supernatural cause of in illness as well that may be provoked by bad or ancestral spirits (Mbelekani, 6).

Early research revealed that there were 200,000 traditional healers in South Africa, with one at least in every black neighborhood (Mbelekani, 2, Dickinson, 2008, King 2012). A Sangoma is a healthcare provider and extends their reach to the esoteric world that is usually ignored within the traditional sciences. There is also a Traditional Health Practitioner Council that oversees these issues of healers, therefore the government supports and acknowledges the use of these practices (Mbelekani, 2). The Sangomas are a part of the medical eco-system in South Africa, a part of an African Cosmology, "that renders different lifeworld views on medicine to those associated with the scientific inquiry" (Mbelekani, 2, Dickinson 2008).

The World Health Organization describes health as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being; and not merely the absence of disease infirmity" (1998:9). Health is viewed in a holistic way, inclusive of the mental and spiritual wellness, and preventative

methods. A Sangoma's practice is complementary with a traditional western or biomedicine approach. However, the challenge with a traditional western approach is the pervasiveness of Eurocentricity that impacts treatments, diagnosis, and how patients are treated. As stated in a recent article on the usage of traditional healers in the Free State,

> …practitioners are often unfamiliar with patients' backgrounds, and they may lack empathy and humanity while operating state of the art technology (Charon, 2001). Patients are treated homogenously despite diverse cultural backgrounds and different understandings of the illness and healing modalities… (Mbelekani, 2).

When a South African chooses a treatment, there are "social-economic, traditional, and cultural trajectories associated with negotiating medical treatment" (Mbelekani, 1). The traditional route is usually less costly and more accessible. Also, there is a stigma surrounding diseases like AIDS that may contribute to how a patient may decide to choose the right healthcare. Black South Africans access to adequate healthcare is low due to wealth disparities and cultural norms (Mbelekani, 1). Based on my observation in South Africa, due to the racial tension that still exists, some black South Africa's fear of white doctors. This contributes to what scholar Harriet A. Washington coined in her book *Medical Apartheid*, iatrophobia, blacks fear of doctors (Washington). The book discusses African Americans long history of medical battles in the medical field. For example, American medicine frequently used black bodies for experiments without consent, the feelings of fear of white doctors and people are similar in South Africa due to the extreme violence inflicted on Black South Africans due to apartheid. Also, the medical field, comprised of mostly white South Africans does not have a cultural grounding in the diverse black South African lives. Therefore, traditional healers, like Sangomas, rooted in culture, provide a real space for South Africans and their healing that is at times safer and more comforting than a biomedicine facility. A Sangoma's practice is seen as comfortable and culturally grounded.

African Union International School: Johannesburg, South Africa (Midrand)

Makini Tchameni, co-creator and principal

The African Union International School is a part of a collective of African Centered Schools in the ACE Foundation. This foundation tries to bring African centeredness throughout their school systems within their curriculum, classrooms, activities, training, supplemental material and environment. When evaluating teachers, there is a section on the evaluation form that states rather or not the teacher has implemented African Centered and Culturally Relevant information in their teaching. On teacher's yearly and weekly plans, they are required to show African Centeredness throughout their lessons. Most teachers are coming from colonial schools and training in Africa. They set up educational and training programs during school meetings to help teachers attain African Centered pedagogy,

> Teachers and School staff "standard" Training has been and still is basically Eurocentric. The contribution of non-Europeans to the world's civilization is marginalized, and other knowledge systems are excluded. Such training develops in teachers and staff a number of barriers to good instruction. The greatest of these barriers stem from the teacher's attitudes and behaviors which are themselves the result of the teacher's training: Lack of understanding of the "other cultures", low expectations for African students, the imposition of double standards etc…Teachers must thus be retrained to deliver an African centered curriculum. The training workshops will assure that the instructional staff is competent in the delivery of the African Centered Education as well as the core curriculum.

Even at the beginning of the school at general assembly, the students are instructed to say creeds and pledges displaying positivity towards African culture,

> We will remember the humanity, glory and suffering of our ancestors. And honor the struggle of our elders. We will strive to bring new value and new life to our people…We will be free and self-determining. We are African people. We will win, we will win, will win" from their African Pledge.

One of their school songs is R Kelly song *I am the Greatest*, and he is an African American singer from Chicago. There are plenty more elements that demonstrate their Pan-

Africanism through their African Centered Education, but that was just a few. In a short video about the African Union International School in Midrand, South Africa, a brief description of the school is presented. The reporter begins by stating that AUIS has a "unique curriculum (that) is dedicated to grooming a new generation of African leaders" (SABC).

Next one of the school administrator, Shabaka Tchameni, states,

> What makes the school unique (is that) we focus on African centeredness, meaning that we teach students to know their identity and be proud of where they come from…most student don't know that we descend from the people who built the pyramids...(SABC)

After more discussing AUIS authentic approach, and their urgent need to promote and African focused educational curriculum, South African teacher Nkululeko Keith Vumo talks about their small classes being equal to or less than ten students. He states that the small classes allow adequate time for the students to express themselves. From the video, you are informed that the school serves students from PreK-12 grade, serving all 53 states in the African Union and the worldwide African Diaspora. The reporter also mentions the ACE foundation long-term goal to create a "United prosperous Africa''. Before the video ends, there is an introduction to a 1st-grade pupil name Nandi who states, "My favorite subject is English because you read and you can write…my next favorite subject is math, science, circle time, story time, phonics…" The reporter ended by stating that the "We can expect a great crop of scientist with an African focus from AUIS" (SABC). The goal of the ACE schools is to create a global citizen rooted in their culture.

   Also, if you examine the surroundings, a viewer will see many African Centered items. For example, The African Union International School displays the ACE Foundation symbol that includes an image of Egyptian God Thot representing his contribution to the creation of sciences, African maps, President Obama, Egyptian Mummies, the father of African Nii Quaynor, and

hieroglyphics. On the African Union International website, there is also a brief historical

summary of the school,

> Founded in 2005 by the African Centered Education Foundation (ACE Foundation), AUIS is registered with the South African Department of Education as an independent international school and is accredited by the United States Board. The African Union International School (AUIS) is a unique pan-African co-educational institution dedicated to grooming a new generation of African Leaders. The school accepts fulltime Kindergarten to Grade 12 students from the 53 states of the African Union and from the worldwide African Diaspora. AUIS seeks to instill in learners the competency and the commitment to become Servant Leaders and Social Entrepreneurs striving for a united and prosperous Africa as well as a just and peaceful World.

What makes AUIS unique other than the shared components of all the other ACE

Foundation School is that it has a Language Centre, where they teach Swahili, French, and

English while they teach other African Languages on demand. The classes are for traditional

students to executives, and they have three terms in which all are three months. AUIS also states

on their website display that they have "the competency and commitment for African Rebirth",

showing an overtly political stance towards the liberation of all African people.

Timbuktu Academy of Science and Technology: Detroit, Michigan

Cha-Rhonda Edgerson (Mama Cha), principal/ Zukhanye Nondabula (Mama Zukhanye), teacher and community leaders

Many of the African Centered Schools closed in Detroit, as Nsoroma and Aisha Shule

have closed due to funding issues. Nsoroma, in particular, was a school considered very

traditional and robust in its African Centered curriculum. Uniquely, Timbuktu is one of the few

African Centered schools in the Detroit area that is still in existence. Equally important,

Timbuktu continues to meet the guidelines for a successful reauthorization process in the Detroit

Public School system. According to the Detroit Public Schools Office of Charter Schools (OCS),

the reauthorization process is based on academic achievement, ability to follow regulatory

procedures of the charter agreement, and financial stability (Reauthorization). Notably,

Timbuktu has found a successful model that allows them to preserve their African Centeredness while meeting DPS standards of accreditation for a charter school, despite this being a difficult task.

I was first introduced to Timbuktu Academy when I did a summer internship in 2015. Timbuktu was opened in 1997 as an African Centered institution. The school defines African-centered as,

> …the foundation on which (they) stand-collectively and individually, academically and socially, mentally and morally, in thought and deed- (with) the very best wisdoms, lessons and practices of African people around the world" (ACE Handbook, 2).

Education is viewed as holistic because their instruction is multimodal addressing different learning styles (ACE Handbook, 2). The vision of Timbuktu is the following,

> To build and maintain a model African-centered institution founded on integrity that holistically nurtures the development of critical thinkers who use science and technology to improve the quality of life for families and communities around the world…(ACE Handbook, 3)

Additionally, the school involves the student's families and communities into their establishment, furthermore contributing to their African Centeredness. Timbuktu Academy is a part of a collective of alternative schools that provide a counternarrative to the structural racism that exist in urban areas (Rickford) (Anderson) (Podair).

Every adult at the school is called Mama or Baba, which is a sign of respect; they use those terms because they see themselves as a part of a big extended family (ACE Handbook, 4). During the week they have several Unity circles in the morning that serves to motivate and encourage the general assembly. I provides a sense of community that consist of songs, mantras, dancing and even the smooth jazzy sound of a saxophone played by one of the Babas. Subsequently, each grade level had a positive word to share with the school before they went to

their first class called Roll Call Good-News. Students, faculty, and staff also repeat the Nguzo Saba (Swahili values the reinforce family, community, and culture), Praise the Flag, Council of Independent Black Institutions (CIBI) Pledge, Words of Wisdom, Harambe, and Lift Every Voice and Sing (The Black National Anthem) (ACE Handbook, 7). The morning affirmation was very similar to the African Union International School in South Africa.

One of the teachers, Mama Jas, stated that Timbuktu is very family-oriented; they have family nights and activities that include the community (Timbuktu). Mama Jas shared a story of a parent who spoke to her about familial challenges for hours, and she listened. Teachers at Timbuktu Academy usually care for the student's academic success and the well-being of their family and community.

One of the benefits of sitting in the staff lounges or curricular development areas was talking to different staff members about Timbuktu. I asked one staff member about the progression and challenges of Timbuktu over time. He told me that in the beginning there was much more parent participation in the school activities, however, over time the parents became younger, and less active within their student's academic life. He also noted teachers in the initial years of Timbuktu Academy displayed more care.

To put it differently, he did not believe in the stereotypical views of African Centered Education that appeared to have an emphasis on Dashikis and Ancient African traditions. He mentioned that the current community members would not be able to relate, and it is essential to incorporate curricular issues that the community as a whole could relate to and comprehend. I thought of the necessity a "New African Centered Paradigm," one that included more of the current and does not focus solely on past conceptions. Within the school there were several African Centered mannerisms that I immediately witnessed. The school uses a variety of Swahili

words spoken in East African countries like Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. For example, Mama Jas told me that when you enter into a class you have to say Hodi, Hodi which means (May I come in…), then the teacher or staff in the class would say Karibu (welcome) (ACE Handbook, 6). These are just a few things that describe how Timbuktu Academy of Science and technology in Detroit represents an African Centered Institution.

Hush House Community Museum and Leadership Institute: Detroit, Michigan

Sandra Simons (Mama Sandra), co-creator

The Hush House Museum, located in the middle of Detroit, is in a primarily black neighbourhood on Wabash near the Motown Museum. The community has vacant and occupied buildings. In the community you witness the economic downfall and the movement to revitalize it, however it is not yet gentrified like some areas. The Hush House Collective hopes to counter these debilitating processes. Some of the Hush House buildings, consists of Dr. Charles Simmons family homes. The Hush House Collective also had an initiative to create a self-sufficient community with homes and gardens that would provide sustenance due to the ongoing structural racism and the onset of gentrification. Though the neighborhood appears to be delipidated, Mama Sandra and Baba Charles have decided to stay within the neighborhood providing an African Centered institution that can help uplift the community despite their means to leave. They enthusiastically participate in cultural heritage preservation, not only in the restoration of the Detroit homes, but the black experience exhibits you can find in their museum – literally, a house on the block that was turned into a museum. Both Mama Sandra and Baba Charles Simmons previously worked in higher education in Michigan universities, but decided together to create African Centered Institutions that contribute to their local Detroit community.

One of the main initiatives of the Hush House Museum and collective is community

building, their website states,

> As a collaborative organism, The Hush House makes opportunity to see, to participate, to
> invigorate, and to create the ground of peace where people find ways to share their
> highest selves. We see local to global grassroots community building with our hearts, our
> collective intellect, as well as with our eyes   endeavoring to evolve a collective vision
> (HushHouseWebsite).

The acknowledgement of the local and global is very Pan-African in nature.

The Hush House Museum has exhibits created by African American curators from the

Smithsonian in Washington, DC (HushHouseVid). It was compiled at Howard University in

1988 and traveled to several cities in the United States. The exhibits focuses on social justice and

human right struggles of African Americans. It is one of the only museums that had a traveling

exhibition created by black people, for black people. Baba Charles Simmons stated the reason

they have a museum in the middle of the ghetto is because "we have to take the art and culture to

the people", especially in a time period where the Detroit Education system is failing and

students are not going on field trips as frequently as before. Baba Charles and Mama Simmons

mainly wanted to reach a disadvantaged group, like poor black people in Detroit so that they can

experience black cultural traditions without the fees of the major museums. Besides, they also

operate as a Bed and Breakfast and have hosted people from more than 20 countries ranging

from France to South Africa. This African Centered Cultural heritage institute and educational

center is highly sought out for its uniqueness and dedication to the black and global community.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have provided the reader with six short portraits with contextual

information of my participants. There is a discussion on how I met each, and in addition to

biographical information, I described their African Centered Institution. The chapter also includes something unique about their life, whether it is their emphasis on balance between men and women or their advocacy for girl's education. By understanding these women a little more, it is easier to connect to the discussion of them in the proceeding chapters that include their finding.

CHAPTER 4

Mothering In Nation Building

As Africans commit themselves to African Renaissance, which means a strong desire to rebuild, revitalize and develop the continent and its people worldwide, education must become a strategic tool for nation building… ~Makini Tchameni

Introduction

Chapter 4 describes nation building as an emergent theme in my study. I provide examples, primarily from my participant's interviews, of nation-building as an emergent theme in black women's leadership roles in African Centered Education. There is also a discussion on how the participants' womanist ideologies also contributes to the significance of nation building within their narrative. The section highlights a Pan-African dialogue between black women educators in South Africa and Detroit as it concerns their dedication to African Centered Education that in itself is a form of nation building. It further displays their collective efforts in black liberation and resistance.

Mothering The Nation

In *Revolutionary Mothering: Love On The Front Line*, Cynthia Dewi Oka, activist and educator, explores the tenets of motherhood inclusive of a political space. She quotes Dana Erekat, "Motherhood is an act of defiance in the midst of colonization…" (Oka, 51). In addition, "The ethos of mothering involves valuing and of itself a commitment to the survival and thriving of other bodies. It presents a fundamental contradiction to the logic of capitalism, which unmoors us from each other" (Oka, 52). In Mama Sandra's interview, she discusses mothering the nation as a form of healing and survival. Women of color have been, "violently punished and stigmatized for mothering…" (Oka). Tenets suggested for motherhood as a revolutionary praxis includes politicizing familial love, advances in a justice centered concept of health, development of radical mobile autonomous free schools, collective distribution and sharing, and

the decolonization of our relationship with mother earth (Oka). As displayed previously, there has already been research conducted that has connected mothering to nation building, also known as race uplift in past studies, and my dissertation adds to that narrative.

Nation building is one of the core themes of black women educational leadership in African Centered Institutions, it is the "conscious and focused application of our people's collective resources, energies, and knowledge to the task of liberating and developing the psychic and physical space that we identify as ours" (Akoto). It is a key to the African Renaissance as stated by Makini Tchameni, "As Africans commit themselves to African Renaissance, which means a strong desire to rebuild, revitalize and develop the continent and its people worldwide, education must become a strategic tool for nation building" (Makini). Pan-Africanism is important in nation building because it emphasizes black people globally working together through black cultural sustainability and preservation against white hegemonic structures that have tried to annihilate black culture. Also, it should be noted that African Centered schools that emerged rapidly in the 1970s were created and operated by mostly black women, and it emphasized nation building (Walker) (Rickford). Also called Pan-African Nationalist schools, they were seen as a "political and spiritual extension of the Third World" positioning themselves against a global imperialism towards African descended people (Rickford, 3).

Findings

What is Nation building?

Some of the women within their interview gave specific definition and tenets of nation building, by sharing their responses, we witness similarities within their identities as black women educators and leaders in African Centered Education in South Africa and Detroit. In

some participants' interviews nation building was discussed throughout their interview like

Makini Tchameni, the creator of the African Union International School In South Africa. She

described nation building as,

> *…an African perspective, even more so than teaching from an African perspective, it is what I call nation building…it is indeed a step towards nation building …it is through education that we build and lay the foundation of the nation…so for me African Centered Education to me is the attempt to rebuild the African nation that has been destroyed through mis-education and therefore, now we are attempting to rebuild, to strengthen, to rebound from the miseducation towards true education for nation building…to be a stronger nation, to be a stronger people, that is what I considered African Centered Education to be (Tchameni).*

In this statement she defines nation building as African Centered Education. It is important to

work collectively together against the mis-education of colonialism. There is an

emphasis on creating a stronger nation and people beginning with knowledge attainment.

Dr. Ziphora Moichela defines nation building through the lenses of women's

empowerment. Though most of the women of the study talked about women's role in

nation building, her gendered orientation in nation building was more profound,

> *…I'm not propagating a party political slogan here, but the women of 1956 who marched against the past legislation…there was this popular slogan… "You Strike A Woman, You Strike a Rock!" Women everywhere in every communities are the bedrock of each and every communities. The survival of each and every society is based upon the strength of the women and not male in particular because women are able to face death, and to say we are prepared to die for the future of our children or for the future of generations to come (DrZiphoraMoichela).*

Within her narrative, the black woman is the core of nation building, "the bedrock".

While Dr. Ziphora Moichela asserts that nation builidng lies in the power of the woman, Gogo

Dineo, states that Nation building cannot occur or exist without the acknowledgement of your

ancestors,

> *…you can't be African and remove yourself from the very core thing that define you as African …and for me what define me as African is those core values and belief systems that remain rooted and grounded in my spiritual identity…*

Mama Charhonda connects nation building to local community building,

> *I mean nation building is just what it says, building a nation… unfortunately, the nation inside of the USA doesn't really exist for us, so what we are trying to do is establish some form of …I wouldn't say…we are trying to establish some form of modeling, government, or just community building, is what we can actually do in the US…because we are…unless we become a nation within a nation…but other than that we are doing some community building and making sure that the community that we live in, that we play in, we work in, which we support is supporting us as well…*

For Mama Charhonda stated it is very difficult to build a nation within a country where you are continuously marginalized – therefore she stresses power of change over her community jurisdiction where she is an African Centered Educator and leader.

Mama Zukhanye discusses nation building in the form of pooling resources together and Sharing. This displays elements of the Kwanzaa principle, Ujamaa, meaning cooperative economics,

> *I would define nation building as recognizing how we pull our resources as an African community. And as, to pull our resources together as an African community and provide for ourselves and do for ourselves. Meaning gardening, teaching each other how to can, how to heal ourselves through herbal medicine. How to respect, elders, their knowledge, their wisdom, their experiences…*

Mama Zukhanye emphasized the collective, while Mama Sandra starts at the individual level in describing nation building. Mama Sandra recognizes a black person's greatness no matter how small the act,

> *But this is my point, what is a nation? When I look at you I see my nation, when I look at my children, I see my nation. When I go to any place in the world and I look at the face of my beloved people, my babies on the beaches of Ghana, or South Africa carrying peeled oranges because they can't go home till they sell the whole tray, I see my nation.*
>
> *When I see my babies and I ask them, I say well baby what do you want to be when you grow up? A maid, and I say no baby. I say how about you owning 7 companies that do maid cleaning, I can do that, I see my nation. So, nation building for me is not this fallacious thing that white men have created, this is a white thing, this is what they created. This is, the people, my people are my nation. My people, in every encounter I*

create nation, in every encounter. And our ideology is created through our conversations and our sharing like we're doing right now. This is nation building…

All these definitions or strands of nation building involved linking the local and or both local and international community together centered in black womanhood. From education to personal interaction, they all represent a form of nation-building.

Women, Nation-building, and Education

Most of the women discussed how nation-building stems from an extremely oppressive Western and traditional curriculum that has been void of African cultural narratives. Cheryl O'Neal, an African American woman, fled with her husband Pete O'Neal to Tanzania due to their political involvement in the Black Panther Party. Cheryl contributed to the development of the United African Alliance Community Center (UAACC) in their hometown of Arusha. On the UAACC website it states, "From the beginning it was a family effort…" family is also a word that embodies nation and the collective community. The community center offers programs and courses in education, arts & crafts, computer science, sports, and health.

Makini Tchameni

Through a narrative of Nation building and Pan-Africanism, Makini Tchameni created three African centered institutions in Cameroon, South Africa, and Burkina Faso due to her connectivity to the global African community. Below I have extracted some statements that highlight the importance of nation building to her as an educational leader,

> *What is unique about our two schools, in addition to African Centered elements – we add a leadership element…That leadership development element is an important aspect because we need all our children to see themselves as leaders, carry themselves as leaders because even the mission and the, I can say the objective of rebuilding the African nation is going to require leaders so therefore in addition to instilling cultural pride into our children, as we are educating them, we also need to build them up as leaders to move forward and carry that education that they received …and to move forward and build on that as well…*

If you want to have a strong nation, you have to build the capacity of the people. Therefore, the

emphasis on creating leaders to rebuild the African nation also speaks to aspects of

nation building, it encourages educational institutions encourages unity. Makini Tchameni

continues,

> *what is interesting is that you will find African students present many more*
> *nationalities…they have many different passports…yet they are still African in origin…so*
> *it's very interesting …when you see and put all of them together…how they are able to*
> *work together…and to play together and learn together …when they have a knowledge of*
> *self…and they are comfortable with who they are…and the other nations are confident in*
> *who they are…it's really a beautiful thing to see…*

Nation building contributes to love for oneself and culture. Also, it contributes to protection and

preservation of our cultural property,

> *I'll like to add that unfortunately what happens a lot in our struggle and has happened in*
> *the past in our struggles and continue to happen…when we are attempting to rebuild the*
> *African nation, rebuild the African family …our concepts are being confiscated,*
> *appropriated, and twisted …and for multiculturalism to be seen as a concept where*
> *others are not able to express themselves …it means that it's been captured…that*
> *concept has been captured…and they are now trying to turn it against what it was*
> *intended to be…that's unfortunate, but that's a part of the ongoing onslaught and mis-*
> *education and oppression that takes place in America…it's an ongoing process…*

Some of the challenges of nation building is the stealing of our ideas and the cultural

appropriation of our talents. Within nation building there is an emphasis on protecting not only

the people, but our culture rather that is our history, art, stories, and technologies. There is an

African proverb that says, "Until the lion has its own storytellers, the hunter will always have the

best part of the story". Therefore, nation building is just as much about protecting the culture as

it is about building the nation. The ACE Foundation schools are for Africans in Africa and the

African Diaspora and she identifies the work of Marcus Garvey as critical,

> *I feel like Marcus Garvey that our work is still very much ahead of us, there still a lot*
> *work to do, and that no matter where we are in terms of African people, rather we are in*
> *Africa or rather we are in America or in Europe or in Asia…we have to strengthen that*

knowledge of self and we also have to continue to push for nation building…for our African nation to be rebuilt…and to solidify our stance together as well as the way others see us and perceive us…we have a lot of work to do on the continent as well as off the continent…

Within nation building there is also this notion of working together, "rather we are in Africa or rather we are in America or Europe or in Asia", we have to join forces to create change similar to what scholar-activist Marcus Garvey did with the creation of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and the African Communities League.

Dr. Ziphora Moichela

Dr. Ziphora Moichela works at the University of South Africa in Pretoria (UNISA). Nation building is a very important element at her institution, it is even written within the mission. Below, are some ways in which nation building is displayed in her role as an educational leader in South Africa. In discussing her research on indigenous knowledge systems, she mentions its relevance and its necessity to build a nation,

> *I would say globally we talk about indigenizing the curriculum in context of the continent we will talk about Africanizing the curriculum which actually mean that the curriculum should be indigenized to cater for the indigenous people who were not there or who were silent in the curriculum of the education system during the time of colonialism and even after the colonial period…Because even after the colonial period in our case in 1994 the policy education was still determined by so called external experts…which were western in particular…and really we realized more and problems were occurring…the more education is advancing, technology is advancing, but the problems of Africa of poverty, economic deprivation…They still are there…The problem is that there is a type of problem with the kind of education system which is not relevant hence the dire need…a review for the kind of education system that is fed to the indigenous people of the country …in this case Africa is a continent and South Africa in particular …*

Dr. Ziphora Moichela mentions that if we are going to building a nation, "the curriculum should be indigenized to cater to the indigenous people". These ideas are similar to Makini Tchameni when she was discussing the relevance of African Centered Education and her institutions. In the next statement, she discusses the necessity of African countries working together to create a

curriculum,

> *I think if we talk of the continent Africa…Africa is Africa…From Egypt to the Cape, and first of all we have to look at ourselves, as far as our identity, its African concerned, we have seen that Egypt which was the stronghold of Africa has crumbled…we have seen with the Arab Spring riots…you name them all they…the big States, the economical hub of Africa like Libya…it crumbled…and all that…the ideas like the people of Modar Gadaffi purported for, which was the integration of all the States of Africa which I believe they died for were real and genuine which is actually trying to tell us that we can never talk of one common curriculum for Africa unless and until there is this political and social cohesion of the whole continent…*
>
> *so only when we have received this integration of all the countries in Africa, then we can talk of one curriculum…Yes there are going to be challenges that have been created by the colonizer based on the fact that they are legalise of the colonies of the Anglophone, the Francophone countries…then the second thing will be what type of languages will be used to Africanize the curriculum…so that will be another issue...*

In this last statement she discusses how countries in Africa have to join forces against colonialism. She discusses the "crumbling" of Africa's strongholds. She mentions the destruction of Egypt and Libya and how without "social cohesion of the whole continent" even the idea of creating an Africanize curriculum with indigenous knowledge systems. This is a direct call to build the nation, the African nation. She also mentions great Pan-African leader Marcus Garvey and how Pan-Africanism within the debate of Africanizing the Curriculum in South Africa is a missing narrative that will hopefully emerge again,

> *Pan-African thought is the thought of Marcus Garvey you know or the great scholars of Africa which unfortunately seem not to be having that stake in the dialogue of the Africanizing of the curriculum, which is just a pity. As far as I'm concerned I think those are the people that really had the ideas of Africa pure Africanization at the bottom of their heart…Maybe that could have been the start …Pan-Africanism could really lay a very solid foundation of what we actually mean…or what we aspire Africanized curriculum…but unfortunately with all sort of ideas…the edge of different generational gaps…feeling the we are wasting to much time…we wasted to much time…in trying to free ourselves from colonialism …our fore fathers after independence wasted a lot of time on trying to fight the ideologies of Pan-Africanism, renaissance or whatever to let's just talk Africanization of the curriculum and as a result it seems that Pan-Africanism is being downplayed…but as far as I'm concerned, I think some or somehow, it will emerge again on its on once the stride for Africanization of the curriculum is come to fruition.*

She highlights the fact that people in South Africa have fought so long against colonialism and

debated ideas surrounding Pan-Africanism that now people just want to discuss one thing at a

time because to discuss anything else is "wasting too much time". The fact that she identifies

Pan-Africanism and Marcus Garvey displays the notion of nation building. Throughout Dr.

Moichela's interview, there are references to women and nation building in South Africa. Dr.

Moichela is quite adamant of the role of women in nation building,

> *So, we've got an adage and old adage in Africa in one of the African proverbs which says, "If you educate a girl child, you are educating the whole village…" or as opposed to educating a man…or just educating a cabal… or just a group of people…(we come so much nature)…with this type of education we inherit it…We inherited from our mother's breast and we pass it on by nursing our siblings and our young children and we pass it on for the generations to come… And there is also a saying which says, "Culture…The women are the holders of each and every communities culture…" If the culture has been embedded in the hands of women you are sure of that, it will be kept safe, nurtured and it will be passed on…generations to come…so women are the real holders of each and every culture and they are the good banks to deposit the stride towards Africanization of the curriculum.*

She explains the nation cannot survive without women, which most of the women stated in some

form or fashion. In discussing the necessity of her own research that looks at the indigenous

knowledge systems at the basic level, Dr. Moichela states,

> *…politically we realize that institutions of higher learning…have become arrested to higher ideology and nothing is actually happening and the more they try to bring about the solutions the more the education becomes more and more irrelevant to the needs an aspiration of the Africans…as a result we are saying how about look at the roots…basic education and saying if we argue …if the curriculum is indigenized from the bottom up and not from the other way around…maybe we can build step by step and make this tree grow…and flourish…*

In this statement, she explains that the reason she does this research is so "we can build step by

step and make this tree (education) grow". Education is one of the most basic forms of

nation building, and she makes a relevant point stating that if our education system, no matter if

it is an Africanized Curriculum with an Indigenous Knowledge System – if it is not created with

the practicality of the people – it is useless. She is discussing accessibility and how this type

of education help build the nation and the people. She reiterates this idea of a good education

being at the foundation of creating a better nation,

> *that it doesn't matter if I've been talking about the Africanization of the curriculum, it doesn't matter if I've been talking about indigenization of the curriculum, but at the end of the day…here we are…all of us…those who have been at the bottom, we are all talking with one voice and one people…it doesn't matter which continent you have been, but all indigenous people are free being trampled upon, from being non-visible entities, because with education …you are able to change the concept, you are able to change the world…*

She believes that you cannot affect change in a nation without a good educational system, based

on the knowledge of the people. This is displayed in the form of indigenous knowledge systems,

beginning with "the original civilization in Africa".

Gogo Dineo

The preservation of culture also includes spirituality and ancient traditions in medicine.

This is a perfect example of what Dr. Ziphora Moichela would consider an indigenous

knowledge system. Within the Sangoma tradition, you witness ancient forms of healing that is

inclusive of the ancestors or spirit world as well as herbal natural remedies. As stated before,

nation building is also about the preservation of culture, the passing down of ancient wisdom.

Baba Dineo expresses how her leadership position is a form of nation building,

> *I have always been doing the work of educating the world, educating Africans, educating people around me on what it means to be proudly African that you know some of it you can't get in mainstream education …we are in Africa, and people would assume that one of the main things we learn is about what does it mean to be African and taking pride in that identity…what are your values and norms and what are the things we believe in and that's not accurate because we are …we live in a country that is still dominated by religious belief systems and so it's not an obvious…*

Gogo Dineo, through her Sangoma practice, teaches cultural pride in African heritage. She

admits that currently South Africa is dominated by Judeo-Christian faiths and western

hegemonies that do not acknowledge African contributions. She is a "proud African", aware of

the biasness in mainstream education. Gogo Dineo, also mentions specifically the assault of Western Education,

> *...a lot about who we are as Africans is projected to us by the West...ummm we understood ourselves through the books that we read based on stories from the West...we understand who we are through religious text and we have truly misplaced ourselves in those messages...because most of the messages that was taught from early on was to despise anything that really connected us and rooted us to our true identity...*

Mama Charhonda

Mama Charhonda, the principal of Timbuktu Academy in Detroit, acknowledges

nation building first with the role of women similar to Dr. Ziphora Moichela,

> *There is a saying that the nation can rise no higher than its woman...we are the mothers, the teachers, and me as a black woman running an institution that caters to black children...I think that it's important because you get that motherly feel...*

She acknowledges the "motherly feel" and the nurturing aspect that black women give to

education. Mama Charhonda discusses the community aspect of nation building as well,

> *So, I think African Centered Schools kinda came out of the Pan-African Movement...But at this point it is becoming a movement in itself...so as you see more schools failing our kids...there's a movement to have more schools that will educate them about their heritage, about their culture, about themselves...and I'm not saying it is just for African kids because if there was a group of Chinese kids I think that their education should teach them their culture, their heritage, and about themselves...so I think it's a winning combination...when you're in a situation where you are educated about yourself...*

She emphasizes teaching students from a culturally relevant perspective.

Mama Zukhanye

Mama Zukhankye is a teacher at Timbuktu Academy, the way she identifies herself

displays nation building, *"I identify, I identify myself as an African born in America."* She places

herself in a black global narrative connecting to Africa the continent and not just Detroit, a city

in Michigan. She provides the importance of self-identification and nomenclature,

> *There have been so many terms to describe African people, from colored to Negro to black to Afro-American, now African American. And then I realized when other*

people identify us as a people we must realize at some point we must identify ourselves.

Even in her definition of African Centered Education, she mentions Africans in Africa and in the

Diaspora similar to Makini Tchameni,

African centered education, African centered education is an, is a system of educating through a world perspective and giving credit that is due to African people throughout the Diaspora. Because often African people contributions to the world civilization is neglected through text books.

She continues and describes Timbuktu Academy,

Timbuktu is an institution that recognize the need of African children and they are willing to provide that need through any means necessary. It's very important that our children recognize the contributions that our ancestors have given as well as what is in their DNA. As the mothers of civilization it's very important that we combat, um, negative images that's projected through the media of people of color. If we look through the foundation of, education we all know that all races have been mis-educated when it comes to who African people are and what we have contributed to the world.

The emphasis on DNA is critical, and being centered in your ancestors like Gogo Dineo would

prescribe is mentioned. She also states,

So many books that do not reflect their images as well as our culture. Um, so it's all important that we revisit education because too often education is used to control a group of people.

The description of education, and the lack of culturally relevant material is also important and

resonates with what the other participants have stated,

Well, I've visit South Africa and as an educator it makes me recognize and understand that a book that I read years ago. The name of the book is The Miseducation of the Negro by Carter Woodson, was so, can be applied today. And as we mentioned the term Negro and colored it depends on what generation, what generation or what year or decade you were born on how a certain term can identify you. It is extremely important that we recognize how we've been miseducated and how we've been taught through education that we should value a system that oppresses us and uplift others.

To add to the similarities, Mama Zukhanye states,

Well one thing that I can say is that the struggle that I see with African people on one continent is the same struggle that I see on other continents. They are the same, the

system of education is the same, or the system of miseducation is the same. And, the political structure is the same. It's very important that when I think about the values that we have, we base our politics on our value system and the principles. And with that we will have focus on how we should develop our children as well as you know adults, including myself in the future.

Again, these sentiments are similar to Makini Tchameni. She also asserts that

Africans should have their own standards,

> *Yes, I think often we must not measure our children through the standards that other people measure their children. Our children are highly gifted, extremely intelligent and often we measure our children concerning a test that Europeans measure their children.*

Mama Sandra

Mama Sandra, an ordained minister, educator, and international activist has done

educational, spiritual, and outreach in Africa and the African Diaspora. Some of the countries

she has worked in has been Ghana, Liberia, and Belize. Within the study, I primarily discuss her

influence with the Hush House Collective in Detroit, that she runs with her husband, it should be

noted that Mama Sandra is truly a global woman taking upon initiatives all around the world,

especially as it relates to our black brothers and sisters. On one of her missions to Belize she

discussed how an African Centered ceremony was drenched in Eurocentrism,

> *But you know and then what blew my mind is that in many of these churches it's one, I went to this ceremony, an African centered ceremony where people were remembering how they came to be in Belize, how black Africans came to be in Belize. But it's a mad up story, it's not true. It's, if you look at the history it's something that whites have perpetuated and black folks have accepted it too. But still there was some memory in it. It was beautiful, had to do with boats and I have film of all of that. So, I followed the crowd to this church where they were culminating, freaked me out. I walked up into this, this, it had to be about a statue that was about 7, 8 feet tall of this white Jesus standing up, holding his hands out.*

Apart of nation building is identifying the erroneous nature of Western mythology on African

culture. The idea that an almost 8ft tall statue of white Jesus was centered in the African

Diaspora showed the erasure of a social, cultural, and historical narrative. Next, she discusses the

concept of teaching from a place of survival. As stated before, nation building in about the preservation of African culture. She comments on the need to protect the knowledge for generations to come,

> *Teaching justice, peace, environmental studies, teaching spiritual warfare from the perspectives of survival, of healing. This perspective, gaining this perspective of, is deeply complex because the idea of how we're centered I'm trying to get to my question. This idea of how do we become centered in our African places because of the assault on us continually. We have, we're constant re-centering and re-orienting our view. One thing is clear we know we know who the monsters are, we've always know who the monster are. They come, sometimes it's, in the bible there's a passage it says light which, it's darkened lightness, it's this idea of light that's really dark. We have been able to interpret that, and interpreting that we have birthed this form of teaching that has to do with survival. This notion of teaching to live and not die centers on it.*

There is an emphasis on healing in teaching and participating in African Centered Education, as She mentioned, "How do we become centered in our African places because of the assault on us continually?" We have to teach "spiritual warfare from the perspectives of survival, of healing". This statement is also connected to the ancestral traditions of Sangomas presented by Gogo Dineo. Mama Sandra links Pan-Africanism to mothering,

> *Because the wombs centers my darling. And so the idea of Pan-Africanism, I think that You almost have to, if you don't really study mothering, radical, which encompasses radical healing. Which encompasses radical gathering, then you can't really talk this pan thing, this you know.*

Mama Sandra states that nation building begins with a woman, social movements begin with a woman, "the womb centers my darling", when studying Pan-Africanism, you have to study "mothering". She also states that Pan-Africanism includes sharing your knowledge with one another and teaching what you know,

> *Yeah, I believe that absolutely teach what you know, trust and believe. We think that what we have, we don't have enough to offer to teach. The sisters in the neighborhood need to teach. If you know how to sweep a floor teach that. If you know how to wipe up good teach that. If you know how to braid hair teach that. Whatever you, whatever we have is the information that we need to know.*

We need to embrace and understand that everything that we do is important. How we do it is important. I need to know how the sisters in South Africa minister to young brothers who have, sisters who have PTSD. Because they have had to live in a war zone their entire life because, I have actually borrowed ways of learning. Did you lost that, I have actually borrowed ways from my sisters in Liberia who stood up together to fight, to get our brothers to stop warring against them in a national or country-wide war that consumed them, women to be exact. But we have to teach each other what are we doing in our communities to combat depression, to come against that would tell us that we are not worthy…

Nation-building is sharing knowledge.

Nation Building and African Centered Institutions

Each woman is affiliated with an African Centered Institution in Detroit or South Africa. These women own and manage these institutions or they are in leadership positions that contributes to change. In this section there is a discussion on how Nation building is exhibited within the structure and existence of their establishment. Again, nation building is the "conscious and focused application of our people's collective resources, energies, and knowledge to the task of liberating and developing the psychic and physical space that we identify as ours" (Akoto). The question then entails, does the development of African Centered Institutions contribute to the collective resources, energies, and knowledge of liberation? In addition, do they develop the psychic and physical space of Africans and Africans in the Diaspora?

The African Union International School in Midrand, South Africa

The African Union International school (AUIS) illustrates a distinct contribution to black globalization through Pan-Africanism. They use a liberatory model of education described as African-Centered whereby the curriculum emphasizes the holistic need of the African child teaching historical and cultural information pertaining to black people in Africa and the Diaspora. In engaging with classic African-centered and Pan Africanist philosophies and practices, this form of Black internationalism can bring a distinctive contribution through the

joint efforts of Africans in Africa and in the Diaspora, as African Centered Education emerges as a form of global education via globalization and transnationalism. There has been research conducted on African Centered Schools in the US (Rickford)(Podair)(Murrell)(Robinson); little work has been done to understand the 'international' study of African-centered schools. The schools are grounded in theories like Afrocentricity is a critical perspective that means "placing African ideals at the center of any analysis that involves African culture and behavior" (Asante 2). Afrocentricity goes against the idea of universality which places emphasis on the Eurocentric culture and makes it the standard of measurement for everything (Asante 3). During the Black Power Era there were many schools that arose as well (Rickford) (Biondi). In Carter G. Woodson book the *Miseducation of the Negro* he writes,

> If you can control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his action. When you determine what a man shall think you do not have to concern yourself about what he will do. If you make a man feel that he is inferior, you do not have to compel him to accept an inferior status, for he will seek it himself. If you make a man think that he is justly an outcast, you do not have to order him to the back door. He will go without being told; and if there is no back door, his very nature will demand one (Woodson, 71).

Biondi states that the "goal of these schools was to create Black educational independence and self-determination in an African-Centered Framework and to shape and cultivate the next generation of leaders" (220). The New Concept School in Chicago founded by Carol Lee and Haki Madhubuti during Black Power Movement, occurred in conjunction with the Black Studies Movement. African Centered schools were a political resistance to white institutions that mis-educated black children. Also African Centered Schools can be found in countries like Cameroon and South Africa further expanding the Pan- African and transnational narrative of nation building. The African Centered Educational   Foundation is as "an International NGO working in the field of educational research and development. Africans from the continent and the Diaspora initiated the foundation in 1996. The ACE Foundation currently

has offices in Western and Southern Africa and works on projects in the six regions of the African Union." (ace).

YouTube Video 1:

> *Africa's Basic Education can be transformed to reflect the needs of individual countries...* Published on Sep 14, 2013 (*From SABC News, Africa's news leader at www.sabc.co.za/news is the online news portal of South Africa's public broadcaster.*)

In this short video (2:35min) about the African Union International School in Midrand, South Africa, a brief description of the school is presented. The reporter begins by stating that AUIS has a "unique curriculum (that) is dedicated to grooming a new generation of African leaders" (sabc). Next one of the school administrator, Shabaka Tchameni, states that "What makes the school unique (is that) we focus on African centeredness, meaning that we teach students to know their identity and be proud of where they come from…most student don't know that we descend form the people who built the pyramids". AUIS an urgent need to promote African focused educational curriculum. South African teacher, Nkululeko Keith Vumo, talked about their small classes being equal to or less than 10 students. He mentioned the small classes provided adequate time for the students to express themselves. From the video, you are informed that the school serves students from PreK-12 grade, serving all 53 states in the African Union and the worldwide African Diaspora. The reporter also mentions the ACE foundation long term goal of created an "United prosperous Africa''.

YouTube Video Two: *ACE Volunteer Teacher 2011-2012: Douala, Cameroon*

The Ace Volunteer teacher cohort from 2011-2012 consisted of three individuals, Lamar Johnson, Keisha Brown, and Ngozika Amalu. The ACE Foundation Volunteer Teacher Program gives Africans in the Diaspora an opportunity to teach in Africa, providing a cultural exchange program. It also displays nation-building,

A volunteer is a young person of African descent that wishes to give one or two years of his/her life to travel to and teach in Africa. The Volunteer will get an experience that will enrich his/her life and uplift his/her resume. The receiving school will cover all travel and living expenses and give to the volunteer a stipend. Though the volunteer does not get what would be considered a professional salary in the USA or Europe, he/she receives a stipend that is equivalent to a middle class salary in Africa. The love for Africa and African people should be the greatest motivating factor for the Volunteer The video clip consisted of all three volunteers plus a student named Adissa Tarek. Lamar Johnson, an African American from Houston, Texas from discussed the mission of the ACE Foundation, as well as the journalist named Junior. Lamar stated, the ACE Foundation "develop schools on Africa and around Africa such as the schools in Cameroon and South Africa…and serve as an annex to the universities in Africa and the world…shaping into a college placement program". He stated that the ACE Foundation "gives educators in the United States an opportunity to teach from an African Centered Perspective in Africa…" He also emphasized there character development program that begins at Pre-K.

ACE Website

The Ace Foundation has three websites; one is the official website for ACE Foundation (http://www.acefoundation.org), while the other two are for each of their schools that include the African American Academy in Cameroon and the African Union International School in South Africa (http://africanamericanacademy.com and http://auis.co.za/). On the ACE Foundation website, a viewer is provided with a background of the foundation that includes a definition of African Centered Education, Philosophy and Vision, Strategic Vision, and Updates concerning African schools. For example their philosophy begins with *A Global Citizen rooted in his/her own culture*,

The ACE Foundation believes that true multicultural education is the key to a brighter tomorrow in the Global Village. Knowledge of one's history and culture instills pride, unlocks creativity and promotes academic excellence. Once self-knowledge is acquired, it is also important to teach children the truth about other people. School curricula must be designed to produce an international citizen rooted in his/her own culture with open arms reaching out to other members of the human family.

There is also information about their major realizations that include: the African American Academy, African Union International School, and AU Council for International Education, and their International Student Assistance Program. The websites even have four publications from their key members of the ACE Foundation Makini Tchameni and Djeukeum Tchameni that are comprised of the following titles: *The Roadmap From Colonial To African Centered Education, Primary & Secondary Education For African Renaissance, Inclusion and Multiculturalism in South African Schools: A major challenge for the second decade of Democracy, and Inclusion and Multiculturalism in South African Schools: A major challenge for the second decade of Democracy.*

In addition, the ACE Foundation educational programs include The African Renaissance Youth Camp and Saturday Academy. There is information on their curriculum as well as their consulting and training programs, and college placement program. All traditional subjects are supposed to be infused with culturally relevant material such as Social Studies described as:

KMT: Our African Ancestry - History that begins with the origins of humankind and moves to one of the greatest civilizations of all times, KMT (Egypt). The contributions of Africans is related to current western philosophy, monuments and symbols.

Some of African Centered Educational Books are *African Mathematical Genius, Heshima To Hotep, Becoming an Afrocentric Language Arts Curriculum, and KMT: Our African Heritage*.

On the African American Academy website, you are greeted with the principal Mrs. Tchameni and some students. You are provided with the history of the school that states,

The African American Academy is a K – 12 international school created in

1998. Accredited by the ACE Foundation, the Academy offers a holistic and multicultural curriculum leading to the International General certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and the Advanced Placement International Diploma (APID). Our graduates have gained admission in the best universities in the United States Europe and Africa.

There is also a summer program for grades 6-9. There is also a page for you to donate your

money to help in their educational endeavors. Knowing most of their teachers are coming from

colonial school in Africa, they set up programs at meetings to help teachers attain African

Centered pedagogy,

> Teachers and School staff "standard" Training has been and still is basically Eurocentric. The contribution of non-Europeans to world civilization is marginalized. Other knowledge systems are excluded. Such training develops in teachers and staff a number of barriers to good instruction. The greatest of these barriers stem from the teachers attitudes and behaviors which are themselves the result of the teacher's training: Lack of understanding of the "other cultures", low expectations for African students, the imposition of double standards etc…Teachers must thus be retrained to deliver an African centered curriculum. The training workshops will assure that the instructional staff is competent in the delivery of the African Centered Education as well as the core curriculum.

Even at the beginning of the school at general assemblies the students are instructed to say creeds

and pledges like,

> "We will remember the humanity, glory and suffering of our ancestors And honor the struggle of our elders. We will strive to bring new value and new life to our people…We will be free and self-determining. We are African people. We will win, we will win, will win" from their African Pledge.

Also, one of their school songs is R Kelly song I am the Greatest, and he is African

American singer from Chicago. There are plenty more elements that demonstrates their Pan-

Africanism through their African Centered Education, but that was just a few.

On the African Union International website, there is also a brief historical summary of

the school,

Founded in 2005 by the African Centered Education Foundation (ACE Foundation), AUIS is registered with the South African Department of Education as an independent international school and is accredited by the United States College Board. The African Union International School (AUIS) is a unique pan-African co-educational institution dedicated to grooming a new generation of African Leaders. The school accepts fulltime Kindergarten to Grade 12 students from the 53 states of the African Union and from the worldwide African Diaspora. AUIS seeks to instill in learners the competency and the commitment to become Servant Leaders and Social Entrepreneurs striving for a united and prosperous Africa as well as a just and peaceful World.

What makes AUIS unique other than the shared components of all the other ACE

Foundation School is that it has a Language Centre, where they teach Swahili, French, and

English while other African Languages are taught on demand. The classes are for traditional

students to executives, and they have three terms in which all are three months. AUIS also states

on their website that they have "the competency and commitment for African Rebirth", showing

what seems to be a more overtly political stance than the African American Academy though

they are both, essentially, the same.

Timbuktu Academy of Science and Technology, Detroit Michigan

Timbuktu Academy was created to "extend African-Centered learning experience" to an

east side community in Detroit where despite its impoverished state, parents and caregivers

continued to advocate, create, and search for a quality of education for their children

(Testimonial Resolution). It originally was called Operation Get Down's Ujima Early Childhood

Development Center, however when charter school legislation was passed in 1995, the leaders

E. Malkia Brantuo and Bernard Parker decided to make it into a school (Testimonial

Resolution). The school opened in 1996 and was called Timbuktu Academy. It was named

Timbuktu because "Timbuktu is a city in Mali, West Africa, in which the University of Sankore

stood as an ancient seat of advanced learning" (Testimonial Resolution). Even when the school

closed for a few months, it was re-opens due to local efforts and black academic powerhouses

like Dr. Gloria (Aneb) oversaw a lot of the school's expansion. Due to the growth of the school

over the past 20 years, it has moved to at least 3 different location. Throughout the development

of Timbuktu Academy of Science and Technology there is nation building. The school started

out first as a small African Centered childhood development center, and then they expanded to a

school that now house many students due to the ongoing community involvement.

However, one of the more interesting facts, the founder Mama Malkia Brantuo, left

Detroit, Michigan and founded another African Centered School in Ghana called Ayensudo

Akoma International Academy of Arts of Science. It was one of her lifetime dreams to build an

educational institutional in Africa, and she did so with her own money and donations. Most of

the students that she served in this small rural area in Ghana where orphans and or their parents

could not afford to pay. She was affectionately known as Queen Mother Malkia Brantuo or Big

Mama. The school is primarily being operated by her daughter Chekesha (Bomaniyoutube).

Mama Charhonda and Mama Zukhanye both work at Timbuktu Academy of Science and

Technology. The school defines African-centered as,

> *"...the foundation on which (they) stand-collectively and individually, academically and socially, mentally and morally, in thought and deed- (with) the very best wisdoms, lessons and practices of African people around the world*" (ACE Handbook, 2).

Education is viewed as holistic because their instruction is multimodal addressing different

learning styles (ACE Handbook, 2). The vision of Timbuktu is the following,

> *To build and maintain a model African-centered institution founded on integrity that holistically nurtures the development of critical thinkers who use science and technology to improve the quality of life for families and communities around the world...(ACE Handbook, 3)*

Additionally, the school also involves the student's families and communities into their establishment, furthermore contributing to their African Centeredness.

A couple of days a week the school begins with a Unity Circle that occurs before school starts as a motivational general assembly. It incorporates a sense of community. It incorporates a sense of community through song, dance, and collaboration. Subsequently, each grade level has a positive word to share with the school before they went to their first class. Timbuktu is very family-oriented; they have family nights and activities that include the community.

Mama Jas shared a story of a parent who just spoke to her about familial challenges for hours, and she listened. The teachers care for students holistically. Uniquely, Timbuktu is one of the few African Centered schools in the Detroit area that is still in existence.

Equally important, Timbuktu continues to meet all the guidelines for a successful reauthorization process in the Detroit Public School system. According to the Detroit Public Schools Office of Charter Schools (OCS), the reauthorization process is based on academic achievement, ability to follow regulatory procedures of the charter agreement, and financial stability (Reauthorization). Notably, Timbuktu has found a successful model maintains African Centeredness while meeting DPS standards of accreditation for a charter school, despite this being a difficult task.

Though, Timbuktu Academy does have a lot of family involvement, they are also dealing with a younger generation of parents who just drop their students off. Teachers are put in position where they are parents, mothers, fathers, and grandmothers, giving the children extended care. These type of interactions are very common at an African Centered School.

Within the school there were several African Centered mannerism that I immediately witnessed. The school uses a variety of Swahili words spoken in East African countries like

Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. For example, Mama Jas told me that when you enter into a class you have to say Hodi, Hodi which means (May I come in…), then the teacher or staff in the class would say Karibu (welcome) (ACE Handbook, 6). Also, as mentioned earlier, all the teachers were called Baba's and Mama's as a sign of eldership (ACE Handbook, 4).

Both schools begin the day with a school gathering in which there is a roll call/good news, encouraging praise songs and mantras, as well as words of wisdoms. AUIS uses the Nguzo Saba within their curriculum. Also, both schools have strong women leadership within their administration and faculty. Timbuktu and AUIS emphasizes a socially conscious rhetoric throughout both schools concerning the well-being of the African people.

The Hush House Museum

The Hush House Museum is located in the middle of a black neighborhood in Detroit, Michigan. Despite the block having vacant and occupied buildings, there is still a robust community. At any giving moment you will see children on the street and the sidewalk playing with each other, a neighbor having a gathering outside with music playing and barbecue smoke in the air. It is definitely a neighborhood, not the one described by the American dream, with the white picket fence, two working parents, and a dog, but one built on resilience despite the economic fall and the stereotypes associated with black people and Detroit. It is not considered your idea place to create a museum, however Mama Sandra and Baba Charles believed that there is community. In addition, the community deserves a chance to receive quality educational tools and exhibits about the black experience that would inspire them despite being a community that would be described as partially dilapidated. They created with the help of early black Smithsonian curators a great exhibit sharing black history and culture.

Prior to the black cultural exhibit having a home in the Hush House, it toured all around the United receiving critical acclaim. Believing in the power of word and creation, Mama Sandra and Baba Charles took one the old abandoned buildings and created a museum, "If you say it's a museum, then it's a what?...a Museum…" Nation building is all inclusive of people, they are not just serving high class black people or even upper middle class black people, they wanted to make sure to create an institution for people who would not ordinarily go to museum due to location and lack of experience could frequent. Even in their positionality in a mixed income black neighborhood, you see their attempt to create a space for everyone.

In addition, the Hush House Museum is global. They receive guest from all around the world who visit the museum and stay at their bed breakfast. Essentially, they are sharing their nation building mission all around. They have received guest from South Africa, France, Guyana, Nigeria, and other parts of the world. Even world-renowned stars like Danny Glover have visited the Hush House Museum. Nation building is local, national, and international – and that exactly describes the Hush House Museum. *University of South Africa In Pretoria* Nation building is global, as discussed earlier. The University of South Africa in Pretoria is one of South Africa and Africa's premier institution. One of their key features that makes them stand out from the rest is their Open Distance Learning Program. This program allows you to attend classes and finish your degree online. Through their ability to reach masses via technology, they are able to build not only Africa, but also the world. It is highly advisable that students have personal computers to assist them, though UNISA provides computer labs for the students if needed. In addition, UNISA library is the largest library in Africa, allowing students to access a plethora of e-books and e-material that will allow them to complete their courses (ODL). UNISA serves students

from all around Africa, and even outside of Africa due to their Distance Learning Program.

Also, Nation building is seen through UNISAs community engagement and outreach programs. UNISA has over 100 program that engage the community including the Mothong African Heritage Project, Polokwane Rural School Project, and the End Violence – Talk to children about gender violence. All these programs are extension of UNISA mission and objectives. It also displays locally how they are able to nation build outside the campus.

Conclusion

Though the literature concerning black women leaders in ACIs is scarce, we are able to see some trends in the scholarship about black women educators as it concerns nation building. Black women leaders in educations have a clear commitment to their task to teach and uplift their community locally and globally. They treat their students like their children affectionately, generally teaching from a place of love. Black women leaders also have an embedded desire to help transform the black community that is due to their cultural memory. These ideas are expressed in the connection of nation building and mothering.

Lastly, I would like to call these black women leaders in education, Africana women. Africana allows me to acknowledge both African women in the diaspora and on the continent simultaneously. Though, I am very happy that these women have worked very hard to establish a better education for black students - I am concerned about their self-care. To me an Africana woman does not just work, work, work for the liberation of the people,

An Africana woman is committed to cultural preservation in Africa and the African Diaspora. She knows that self-preservation comes first, including physical, mental and spiritual renewal, therefore she takes time to restore her energy so that she can continue to change the world - resting and retreating when necessary.

CHAPTER 5

Mothering the Spirit or Consciousness

I see, I hear, I connect to African spirits…I am a Sangoma… Gogo Dineo

Introduction

Chapter 5 discusses how each women were led to become educators by spiritual call or black consciousness. Mothering the spirit or consciousness discusses why the six black women of my study in Detroit and South Africa created African Centered institution. During their interviews and my observation, most of the women mentioned how or a higher power, rather, it was ancestors, spirit, or God contributed to them opening their institutions. Most of these women were driven by a cause greater than themselves when they decided to open their African Centered Institution. This is also rooted in the history of black women educators who in early American history educated the black south due to race upliftment. Chapter 5 provides a definition and explanation of spirit and consciousness as it relates to their stories. It displays trigger stories, phrases, and words that connected them to spirit or consciousness revealed through their stories and institutional creations. In addition, Chapter 5 connects their institutions to the spirit or consciousness of the women, and how it reflects a deeper manifestation of their soul.

Mothering The Spirit Or Consciousness

In previous chapters, we have discussed the significance of mothering, stating that it "involves valuing others, and of itself a commitment to the survival and thriving of other bodies" (Oka, 52). According to previous scholarship, characteristics of mothering is to nurture, teach, mold, be a bearer of culture, mentor, and to be conduit for the spiritual regeneration of the ancestors (Karenga) (Dove, 520) (Godono). Mothering is extended to "emancipatory

organizations, institutions and social movements as is reflected in the history of the mothers of the freedom movements in this country and throughout the pan-African world" (Karenga) Again, in this chapter we are emphasizing mothering as being a "conduit for the spiritual regeneration of the ancestors" and a creator, consciously of emancipatory organizations as "mothers of the freedom movements" did and continue to do (Karenga) (Dove, 520) (Godono).

A key word within mothering is "nurture", you have to cultivate different things to manifest. In this chapter, we discuss how these women nurture their spirit and consciousness and in turn, their spirit and consciousness give them the strength to continue to teach, lead, and manage their African Centered institutions.

In addition to consciousness, most these women exhibited what South African activist Steve Biko called a "Black Consciousness". He described it as,

> Black Consciousness is in essence the realization by the Black man of the need to rally together with his brothers around the cause of their oppression - the blackness of their skin and to operate as a group in order to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude. It seeks to demonstrate the lie that black is an aberration from the normal which is white. It is a manifestation of a new realization that by seeking to run away from themselves and to emulate the white man, blacks are insulting the intelligence of whoever created them black. Black consciousness therefore takes cognizance of the deliberateness of God's plan in creating black people black. It seeks to infuse the black community with a new-found pride in themselves, their efforts, their value systems, their culture, their religion and their outlook to life… (SASO NEWSLETTER, SEPTEMBER 1971)

Even in Biko's definition, he emphasizes three major points that are critical to a black consciousness, black people should 1. *rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude*, 2. *take cognizance of the deliberateness of God's plan in creating black people black*, **3.** *infuse the black community with a new found pride in themselves, their efforts, their value systems, their culture, their religion and their outlook to life*. All these women subscribe to at

least one or all of these tenets of black consciousness. In the essence of these women lives, consciousness is not only spiritual, but as Steve Biko has highlighted, it is political.

What is Spirit and Consciousness?

Consciousness is defined as the "permeating essence or pervasive energy, or spirit" (Optimal Psychology, 13). Consciousness is energy, it is spirit, and it is a manifestation of you. Spirit "refers to that permeating essence we come to know in an extrasensory fashion" (i.e. energy/consciousness/God) (12). Consciousness and spirit are interchangeable, and it is felt outside of the normal five senses. According to Mutombo Nkulu-N'Sengha, an African scholar, in an African epistemology there are the supernatural, the natural, and the paranormal paths to knowledge (68). The paranormal paths skirt the edge of the unknown. However, spirit is one of the elements that is frequently discussed within an African world view and is essential in these women lives. A spiritual experience is subjective to the individual; it is accepted as true based on his or her own knowledge.

Understanding the sacred and secular, also helps us to understand the parallels of consciousness and spirit. The fusion of the sacred and secular is one of the components of an African worldview. The encouragement of the diunital, when complementary opposites coexist- such as the spiritual and secular, has been documented in traditional African cultures. According to Myers, this fusion has the ability to provide a remedy to the negative effects the Eurocentric worldview has had on the African mind. Optimal consciousness recognizes the erroneousness of the Eurocentric epistemology and attempts to alleviate the manacles of the cultural brainwashing placed on the descendants of Africans. Myers states, "[t]he intellectual imperialism of Western patriarchy has proven to be viciously intolerant of any perspective that breaks the bonds of its

conceptual incarceration" (Optimal Psychology 4). Viewing the sacred and secular as a unit versus separate entities assists in breaking the conceptual bondage of Blacks in America, Africa and the greater African Diaspora. It also helps us to better understand the complexity of spirituality in these women lives.

Findings

Women, Spirit, and Education

Makini Tchameni

When Makini Tchameni decided to create her first African Centered Institution along with her husband in Douala, Cameroon – it was out of mere necessity. There was just no school in the surrounding area that could properly educate their children with an African Centered ideology, so she solicited the help of other parents who also wanted a quality education and asked them to assist her in the process. She was driven by a force beyond herself, *the spirit of a mother* who wanted the best for her children. She started more than a 30 years ago, and she has not stopped, creating schools and curriculum in four countries in Africa including the United States of America. She further explains her rationale for starting these African Centered Schools,

> *Ms. Caesar, I chose education out of necessity. There was, at the time I made that choice, a very strong need for a perspective that was different from the one that my children were exposed to…So it was really out of sheer necessity. For me to ensure that, not only my children, but other children also – would have access to a perspective that was not colonial because at that particular time when that decision was made, I found myself and my family here in Cameroon, where the post-colonial educational system was in place and is still in place, and therefore children were, are educated from the perspective of the colonial powers. So, we, being my husband, myself decided that it was really important that we try to provide and make available a different perspective to our children and to the children of Cameroon.*

There is an emphasis on the challenges of the post-colonial educational system and the need for a different perspective, one that was African-Centered.

She also discusses her philosophy that she links to the spirit of being a woman,

…My philosophy would be that first of all the woman, the mother, the women in the society are the ones that transmit or have very strong roles in transmitting the culture and learning…of course we need our men to be able to do that well …I find that I don't have any particular "ism" that I am linked to philosophically other than it takes a village to raise a child… and the mother is the one that is generally providing the first education to the children and therefore she is at the center of their educational process…

In this quote, she emphasizes the importance of the role of the woman in the educational process of the child, she states "women in the society are the ones that transmit…the culture and learning". It is a form of feeding the society or as Ziphora Moichela discussed, "Breastmilk". It is the role of the woman, linked to her duty within any functional society. Also, even though she acknowledges women primary roles in tending to the educational needs of a child, she states, "it takes a village to raise a child" providing an illustration of how collectivism is rooted in her consciousness, as well as Pan-Africanism. This is also a very womanist perspective in which women see themselves as a part of a community, and one of their roles is to uplift it and facilitate it's progress, even though she does not associate with any "isms" like many of the other women in my study.

Gogo Dineo

Gogo Dineo is a leading Sangoma in South Africa, who also has an institution called the *Gogo Dineo Ndlanzi Institute of Spiritual Healing* that trains people who have a "calling" to become a Sangoma. The school represents how South Africans have preserved indigenous knowledge systems within their society. Even though the Sangoma tradition is at times seen as taboo, Gogo Dineo continue to press own advocating for the usage and continuation of traditional healing being very vocal on different media streams including radio and television. She believes that a part of her calling is to breakdown stereotypes of what it means to be a traditional healer because moste people believe,

> *Sangomas are people who cannot express themselves, you know Sangomas are people who are not educated or you know like there is a lot of stereotypes around it…and my work is to challenges those belief systems…*

Gogo Dineo provides a space where African spirituality can flourish and be contested in an healthy way.

Unlike most schools where you ordinarily can just apply in order to obtain admittance into the institution, the *Gogo Dineo Ndlzanzi Institutite of Spiritual Healing* is not the same. One must have an ancestral calling that is accompanied by some type of esoteric signs that can be interrupted as "the calling". It was "the calling" that caused Gogo Dineo Ndlanzi to undergo initiation, and since then, her whole life has been dedicated to healing and preserving the traditional culture. It is the primary of the reason that she became the a Sangoma and created a school to train others. She reiterates the esoteric essence of the calling,

> *and on a bigger scale…I also train Sangomas, people who are called to take on this work…I am always very hesitant to say this because it's not an institute where you can just show up and register, and then you're in it…being a Sangoma…you're called…you're chosen…you're called…and the same way whoever is going to mentor, coach, and train you is also called into that position…and you are also sent through to that person…so there is something on an ancestral or spirit level that happens to …to facilitate those things…*

She acknowledges the spiritual elements and mysterious nature of the school, and sacredness of the gift.

Her identification with spirit was more overt than some of the other women that I interviewed. In her description of herself, she states,

> *So identify myself as a spiritualist, and what I mean by being a spiritualist is one who is not cast in stone and it's one that always is evolving and one that always tries to be present with this time and this moment… and a lot of my spiritual belief systems are grounded in African spirituality…I don't believe Africans were religious at all…I don't believe there was African religion…I believe there was African spirituality and that informed our culture and culture is a way of being, but the way of being is informed by you know that spiritual identity so that's how I identify myself as an African spiritualist*

*and then everything else branches out from that core…which is me an African
spiritualist…*

As mentioned before, a Sangoma is a traditional healer who works with the ancestors, in
addition to other spiritual entities and nature to create healing. She directly calls herself an
African spiritualist connecting herself with a higher power. She continuously emphasizes that her
roots are in "African Spirituality", and that displays her African Centeredness. Gogo Dineo does
not discuss a stagnant spiritual system, but one that "evolves" with time, which allows her
fluidity in her spiritual practice and interpretation of the divine. Even though she disputes
between religion and spirituality, she recognizes spirituality in general as an indigenous
knowledge system that informs South Africa's culture and must be taught accordingly. Currently
in South Africa, there is discussion surrounding the Africanization of the curriculum and what
will inform that new educational tool that inform the South African knowledge system. Much
research has stated that you cannot Africanize the curriculum without adding indigenous
knowledge systems, ways of knowing rooted and related in South African traditions. Sangoma's
represent a traditional form of medicine, many schools in South Africa that were once entirely
drenched and covered in western ideologies and methodologies are now looking at traditional
medicine for answers. Therefore, Gogo Dineo continue to speak at universities concerning
traditional medicine and the possible collaborative efforts with western ways displaying how
science and spirit can work together in a holistic healing.

Gogo Dineo states at the root of a society is spirituality and from that "everything else
branches". She takes her role as a transmitter of tradition by initiating others, primarily women,
into the Sangoma wisdom very seriously. She also describes it as a birthing process when she
teaches someone the essentials of being a healer. Being a "Baba", a spiritual teacher and leader
is just like being a parent, the only difference is she focuses on helping her students birth their

spiritual "calling" while being holders of an ancient healing practice. Gogo Dineo continues and

breaks down the fundamentals of African Spirituality, which for her, is the fundamentals of

being a Sangoma,

> *what has been the most frequent request is about our relationship to God as*
> *Africans…and if we believe in those who lived before us, in African Spirituality we*
> *believe that the body dies, but the spirit goes on to live on it reconnects to the creator, the*
> *divinity, which people call God… we call it…Mvelinqungi, Modimo, Ramasedi…in that*
> *context there is no gender, there is no color, there is nothing of those isms or*
> *skisms…affiliations associated to it…we call that creator energy …*

The highest power in African Spirituality is the creator energy or God, there are different names

for it, yet the same. She does discriminate or provide hierarchies for nomenclature on who your

God or creator energy, God is genderless, colorless, and without ism, God and or creator energy

just is, and it cannot be explained as anything else. For her, in many ways Christianity has

assaulted African spirituality, adding all of these characteristics, creating it into a white Jesus that

is a man with blue eyes and blond hair. That is not what African Spirituality promotes at all. On

the other hand, though the creator energy is genderless, when there is a highly spiritual, in

African tradition, it was held by a woman. So, if a gender was ascribed to God, it would be

woman usually,

> *you know patriarchy mostly does come from Western belief systems…if you look at*
> *religion…you know mostly Western religions have God as a man…and in African culture*
> *God is a woman…(Zulu word for God) Uthixo, Modimo…there's no gender attached to*
> *that…right there is no gender attached to that…and you know we use to have queens,*
> *matter of fact we still have a queen of South Africa which is Modjaji…we have the role of*
> *the Makatzi, which nothing can happen without Makatzi …so the Makatzi is the main*
> *facilitator of a lot of things that need to happen in the family, but because we have been*
> *programmed to believe that a man is more powerful because, there, we have a man who*
> *is a God…then some of those things are you know…downplayed in African spirituality…*

She continues to discuss the spiritual tier of African spirituality by stating that after the creator

energy, there is the ancestor,

...and we then believe in our ancestors, those who have lived on this earth and have served us would continue to serve us on the other side as spirit guides and they intercede between us and the creator energy...

When you Pahle or pray, you always acknowledge God and the creator energy, however it is your ancestor that will intercede to God on your behalf. As she stated prior, an ancestor is a someone who has passed away that is a part of your bloodline. In my case, for example, my mother and grandmother would be my ancestors. In a prayer, I would always acknowledge God with gratitude and ask for forgiveness, but I would ask my grandmother to help me with my problems or issues. My grandmother spiritually helps me and also ask God to assist me through an intercession. Though, many South Africans have some type of reference o this tradition, she states the difficulty of people now accepting this as true,

> *but people have found it very difficult to believe in their African ancestors, to believe in the spirit guide of their grandmother, the spirit guide of their late father, late ...anyone...but you know they are very ok to go to the spirit guide of Abraham, Joshua and so forth...not that there is anything wrong with it...but it's something wrong...when what is our own...is demonized and what is not our is celebrated and acknowledged and been made ok...so that is what the institute is trying to do...(break stereotypes)*

She emphasizes the negative association with indigenous knowledge systems of South Africa, and yet many people are fine with worshiping something that has nothing to do with their culture. For her, that is the anti-thesis of African Centered, to practice another form of spirituality is one thing, however to then demonize your own cultural tradition is a form of self-hate and denial. She mentions more about breaking stereotypes as it concerns African Spirituality,

> *I'm like that to...I see, I hear, I connect to African spirits...I am a Sangoma...you know I was once at one these big conferences and I always introduce myself as, my name is gogo dineo ndlanzi, and yes I am a Sangoma and yes I am going to burp and I'm not going to apologize and at the end of that conference...one of the ladies who have never told anyone in public that she is an Sangoma stood and burped and said I am Sangoma and said thank you very much to gogo dineo...so if this institute can serve a purpose where people are ok what has been demonized or discriminated against you know then to me it serves its purpose and I also need to challenge some of the assumptions and stereotypes*

about you know what is our way of being as Africans because people also automatically assume because I'm Pan-African that I'm automatically against things that seem or deemed as western… like you know same sex marriages…people always believe that my opinion would be like no that's not African…I don't believe Africa is like that…I believe African culture has always being present to this time…that's what I believe African spirituality is about…

It is important for Gogo Dineo to describe herself in terms of an evolving definition of African Spirituality, and she reiterates similarly that she does not really identify with feminism, womanism, or any "ism", especially when comes to her calling and her people,

I'm a spiritualist…so I can't stand by womanism, feminism…I believe in the interconnection of people so even when I have strong views about…you know I'm a Pan-Africanist …so meaning I am pro things that are African, but I am pro things that are allowing for Africans to thrive and progress…

It is clear that Gogo Dineo wants to see Africa move forward and that she is pro change, as Long as it move the African people forward.

She is also very respected by her family, men and women alike. A Sangoma in the family is one of the highest signs of leadership in a family, and she affirms it by saying,

and when I call my family forward and call my family to order … no one is like you're a woman…you're this…you're young there is not any of that because of my role as a Sangoma and my family revere that I am a Sangoma and they trust in it…everything else com after…that I'm a woman, that I'm young , and all of those things don't play when I'm speaking to the men I care about cause there is a lot of respect that I get, honor, there's a lot of trust in my ability to carry the family forward and I don't believe that's because of me along…I believe it's because you know…in it, us as Africans…we know how powerful the woman is…how the womb is powerful…I mean woman…"womb man" as others may refer to it…is it's where all life begins I believe in it as Africans we do know that you know life begins with a woman and women are the life givers and they facilitate a lot of things…

Her spiritual position in the world, places her at the head of the table with her family. She serves in a leadership advisory role that is highly respected. It is clear that Gogo Dineo's spiritual practice has a huge position in her life.

Dr. Ziphora Moichela

Dr. Ziphora Moichela is a lecturer at the University of South Africa in Pretoria, she

studies indigenous knowledge system and the logistics of incorporating into the current South

African curriculum. The University of South Africa in Pretoria is one of largest universities in

South Africa, and it is known as the African University, for Africans and by Africans. UNISA

have created radical and inclusive space for years that conducts research for the betterment of

Africa and African people. Though, Dr. Ziphora Moichela is very conscious of the rationale for

conducting research on indigenous knowledge system in a post-apartheid South Africa, she was

one of the few members who had a different reason for becoming a teacher. Dr. Ziphora

Moichela states,

> *In my case I would say, looking at my background in South Africa, teaching was a way out…I would say it was a poor persons profession whereby if you were struggling at home it was the only way out where you will get a bursary, a government bursary…and into 10 you would go for teaching whereby then it was seen as a profession for women and a kind of stable profession and you knew that if you are there, there will never be a situation whereby there will be no jobs…and also the benefits that went with teaching …coming from a poor background, you knew that if you were really serious and dedicated about life…you will never lack bread on the table…you will never lack a place to stay…even if you don't get that lucrative salary, but there are benefits at the end of the day…you'll be able to get a government subsidy to buy a house or buy your family house which they didn't have…so mostly went into teaching for that…of which, if you had a wide vision, you could expand…just like I said…I started as an ordinary teacher, but because I knew my basics that I come from the ashes…I did not relax…when I was a teacher I started improving and studying privately until I acquired my honors, my masters, and right now I'm busy doing my PhD, just from being a teacher…*

In her case, she was looking for a better life. She was looking for an economic advantage.

However, through her experience in the South African school system, she was conscientized to

the disparity of black people in education and became more radical with work as seen in her

research. She states,

> *my PhD subject is on the indigenization of the curriculum, so anybody can say…what do you mean by indigenizing and Africanizing … I would say globally we talk about*

indigenizing the curriculum in context of the continent we will talk about Africanizing the curriculum which actually mean that the curriculum should be indigenized to cater for the indigenous people who were not there or who were silent in the curriculum of the education system during the time of colonialism and even after the colonial…period…Because even after the colonial period in our case in 1994 the policy education was still determined by so called external experts…which were western in particular…and really we realized more and problems were occurring…the more education is advancing, technology is advancing, but the problems of Africa of poverty, economic deprivation…They still are there…The problem is that there is a type of problem with the kind of education system which is not relevant hence the dire need…a review for the kind of education system that is fed to the indigenous people of the country …in this case Africa is a continent and South Africa in particular …

Again, through her research she was able to recognize the challenges of the apartheid era education and the 1994 policies that were still drenched Western modalities. This caused her study indigenous knowledge systems that would influence this new Africanized.

Also, she mentions how education is passed down from one generation to another through a woman's body,

We inherited from our mother's breast and we pass it on by nursing our siblings and our young children and we pass it on for the generations to come… And there is also a saying which says, "Culture…The women are the holders of each and every communities culture…" If the culture has been embedded in the hands of women you are sure of that, it will be kept safe, nurtured and it will be passed on…generations to come…so women are the real holders of each and every culture and they are the good banks to deposit the stride towards Africanization of the curriculum.

The metaphor of the breast feeding a child education is a very spiritual depiction. It displays how women give mental, physical and spiritual life. The act of passing down one's culture is also a very sacred act that are kept safe "in the hands of woman". Even though Dr. Ziphora Moichela did not have spiritual or consciousness epiphany like the other women on why she decided to get into African Centered education, by the end of her PhD program she had reached that spiritual moment.

Mama Charhonda

Mama Charhonda is the principal of Timbuktu Academy of Science and Technology in

Detroit, Michigan. She discussed the responsibility that she has to serve her people, she states,

Also just to know the plight of some of the students gives us an even bigger and even better edge…because I was born in the neighborhood just like this …and I have the same experiences, we share some of the same relatives I see them in the grocery store so it's important for a black woman to head an institution that is catering to black children…

She relates to the community and students because she grew up in the same neighborhood.

Mama Charhonda know these students, because she was one these children too! Just like some of

the women like Gogo Dineo, she describes herself as a Pan-Africanist,

So the closest thing you could say is a Pan-Africanist, I think… grew up in an era where we were just proud to be black…and you know, we wanted to make sure we were heard and seen and that because of all the past oppression and past neglect that black people had had or African people have had…Is that we wanted our fair chance to represent to let the world know that we did make contributions to this world…

Mama Charhonda grew up in an era where she was just "proud to be black", so it was instilled in

her to carry that same legacy to the next generation. Another thing that she stated was that black

community need is love,

you know umm knowing that our kids sometimes just need some love, some guidance, some support…and sometimes that spiritual background they just don't have…and so although I won't force anything religion, or spirituality on them …I think it's important for them to recognize that there is a higher power or although things may seem bleak today…there's hope for the future…

Her ability to share a sense of hope to students that have been told they are hopeless due to the

color of their skin and economic situation provides that students with a black consciousness that

allows them to take pride for themselves, "proud to be black". She was heavily rooted in black

consciousness, understanding the notion of Sankofa – in order to move forward you have to go

back and remember you past.

Mama Zukhanye

Mama Zukhanye discussed like some of the other women, becoming an educator was an

easy thing to do because she grew up in a neighborhood where she would play teacher,

Well it was just, a natural process. I remember as a child I always played wap school where, you know children played teacher and there was this elder named Mr. Masingayle who always taught children through play. And we would win pennies if we could answer questions. And, actually it was just a need, it was a need. I would have summer school on my front porch with children in our community and it was just a need that we educate ourselves.

Due to the fact, no one will put more energy into someone as far as, through the full of education, other than teaching your own, I mean it's your responsibility. I wouldn't ask a cat to teach a fish, I think it's very important that we teach the children in our own community.

Within her community, she was instilled a sense of responsibility, community, and consciousness. She knew at early age that "no one will put more energy into someone…other than teaching your own". The school games that she played with the elder Mr. Masingayle left a lasting impression on her, because she continued to teach her own by being an African Centered educator in various places around the United States. Mama Zukhanye continues to describe her philosophy,

My spiritual practice is upliftment in life...everything that I've tried to do or I seek to do I recognize that my actions affect my community. And it is crucial that just for, to sustain a certain principle that I need to live, I need to live and practice, the richness of African culture.

Within her life she practices a communal orientation, similar to some of the things that Mrs. Tchameni stated when she described some of the things that helped her to push forward. She states, my spiritual practice is "upliftment", "my actions affect my community", and "I need to live…and practice the richness of African culture". All these statements are profound because it describes her spiritual essence and the rationale for why she continues to work with little black children at Timbuktu Academy.

I never, well just to think about the question I would say, as an African woman we can do because we're capable. I will use that as a philosophy. We are brilliant and we are beautiful, we're graceful. And if we want to identify what a woman is I would say as an African look at me.

Everything is rooted in blackness.

Mama Sandra

Some of the women were very overt about their spiritual calling to educate like Reverend Mama Sandra Simmons. When asked why she decided to be an educator she stated, *"I didn't choose a career in education, teaching is my gift from God"*. The gift in her mind that continued to give, even now, as she battles her own personal ailments, she continues to educate with ease and a skill that can only be described as a natural born gift. She even describes herself in spiritual terms,

> *besides being an African American woman, I see myself as a leader, healer, and in that…a deep woman of faith, a seer, a reader certainly all those other designations that were given…partnership as a mother, a woman, a fighter…and I often say that I'm a general because it's absolutely necessary …because all those identities require a deep amount of sacrifice and so that's how I see myself…*

These other adjectives include words likes healer, a deep woman of faith, and a seer. These biblical references cover her, and she makes sure that her life is guarded by the power of the Godly word and spirit. She trusts God's journey with her faith, she cures the sick with her healing power, and practices spiritual divination with her ability to see into the future. Reverend Mama Sandra Simmons gifts more than educating others, she has been called by her God and the ancestors for a very special mission in her live that she takes very seriously.

Even while growing up, older women use to look at her differently. There were African American colloquiums they you use to tell her,

> *So, you know in my life I've always been told you just so old, my god mother used to tell me that. You, you're just like a little old lady, you've been like an old woman ever since you've been a baby you know what I'm saying.*

Within the African American tradition these saying are common, either you act a little bit too old for your age or your character resembles an ancestor. Maybe you act like Grandma Joyce or you

following the ways of Uncle Peete. The point of it all, there is a hint of reincarnation in these

undertones that somehow or one way or another your spirit has been her before and we, being

friends and family, recognize, that old soul of yours – it is an ancestral acknowledgement.

Reverend Mama Sandra Simmons also discusses how she was taught as a young girl, and

the way wisdom was passed down from one generation of black women to the next. She

discusses how the kitchen and the gathering of the black women folks was not only a school for

little girls like herself at the time, but it was sacred. She provides memories of her early

schooling days,

> *You know Fridays at my grandmother's house when my maternal grandmother would*
> *have, holding court with all of us. We would all, all the women would come and we would*
> *stand around the stove, summer or winter when she roasted yams and had her feet up in*
> *the oven door. And they talked about being mothers, about being women and how we did*
> *it and how we didn't do it and why we didn't. And you learn mothering when you hitched*
> *up the back of your skirt and you heated your butt at the fire and…And I was taught the*
> *mysteries of life in mothering. Now this complex experience of being taught by women,*
> *how to mother, they created a womb, you see when women gather together, when we*
> *encircle ourselves we create yet another womb. This is our birthing place…*

In this quote, Reverend Mama Sandra Simmons discusses the power that occurs when women

gather. Magic occur with black women gather in the kitchen, it is not just a place where women

cook and serve food, it is a place that teaches the "mysteries of life". She even expands on the

mothering metaphor and discusses that a womb is created, a womb in this since is a space where

something is generated or as Gogo Dineo states the "womb man". Once, it is cared for and

nurtured, it is birthed into creation. This is the original black girl magic, and according to

Reverend Mama Sandra Simmons – it began in her granny's kitchen.

Reverend Mama Sandra Simmons continues,

> *This is our birthing place, you and I we're gathered together. In our gathering together*
> *we have created this womb where no one can hurt us, where we teach each other, where*

we are listening with our spirits, with our minds and with our learning place. This deep space in our wombs that teach us things that cannot be comprehended in natural life, it happens in spiritual life. So, this is the incantation of live and not die. This is that, I thought about, and this incantation that creates this womb of living and not dying, centered that, the centre called African. Is this place where we remember, and I mean this literally. I mean mothering is remembering, it's the broken parts and putting the dismembered parts together. It's calling them back and saying you will live, you will not die.

There is no separation with between the sacred and secular in the world of Reverend Mama Sandra Simmons, her work is all encapsulated together. The kitchen was a sacred, healing, and a wombman place. There is no end to her creating wombs and giving birth, the point is of ending does not existent – like the cycle of life it continues, it the repetition of "putting the dismembered parts together…It's calling them back and saying you will live and not die…". The womb is a circle, it is never ending.

She also continues and discuss her philosophy, incorporating her spiritual self, reinstating,

my philosophy is this, that we shall live and not die. That we shall, we shall live and not die. To have the power to say it that is claiming the power to resurrect, that is claiming the power that we shall live. That is claiming the power that we, we, in my tongue, in my mouth, that I have the power to make it live.

Within her conglomerate of community institutions within the Detroit and the world, she makes sure continues to incorporate her faith and spiritual belief system, taking her job of mothering deliverance very seriously. In describing the Hush House Museum, she states,

Our spiritual practices are the lights that guides hush house. We consider our self a lighthouse you know and everywhere we go we plant lighthouses because we want out people to find that we're here.

Again, the Hush House Museum and collective is led by herself and husband, Dr. Baba Charles Simmons. They work together with a board, community of fellows, and volunteers to operate several functional services within the community that include educational tours and events at the

Hush House Museum, The Tru Da Soul Bed and Breakfast, and community programs that program creative, spiritual, and economic growth. She continues to give a description of the establishment she and her husband created,

> *We want them to find their way to hush house wherever we plant it. And we believe that we are under a mandate by the creator to do this work. And we know it to be true because of the deep sacrifice, I did not have to live poor. I didn't, you know we did not have to choose to live, before this became a gentrified space we, this was a deeply impoverished space in terms of how people were living their lives and so on. But I know that I was guided here by the creator and accepted that challenge.*

There is an emphasis on a force greater than them to complete their mission and their call. She describes it as a "mandate", by her community. She even recognize the community as a space that is impoverished, but emphasizes that she will go where over the Lord sends her to complete her mission. Though, she is a reverend, she chooses to approach people in a different way,

> *Because on Easter for instance you won't likely find me in a church dressed up, you'll find me in the street knocking on cars of people smoking weed you know saying hey come on let's get this blessing on right here. Or having Sunday school you know prayer with sisters that's working the corner. Or maybe serving some children some food on the porch you know. So it informs what I do else wise I could have, I have not been able to give this work up and I've wanted to. I've wanted to walk away from it because it's too hard to bear.*

When you have a calling on your life to do something, nothing can stop you. She continues,

> *So, this spacing, my spiritual practice comes out of faith, my strong faith and belief. The faith that saved me as a child out of brutality... (to live and not die…)*

Conclusion

Most of the women became educators because they had a spiritual calling and or a strong black consciousness to educate their community. Dr. Ziphora Moichela was the only woman who became an educator due to economic advancement, however by the end of her PhD career at UNISA she was politically aware of the importance of her research on indigenous knowledge systems in South Africa. Many of the women identified as not only spiritually connected to their

work, but as Pan-Africanist or some type of collective being working for their community. Many of the women did not particularly describe to isms, agreeing that feminism and womanism

were terms they were unfamiliar with or that it did not describe what they were doing or

represent them culturally.

Mothering in Educational Leadership

There is a saying that the nation can rise no higher than its woman…we are the mothers, the teachers, and me as a black woman running an institution that caters to black children…
I think that it's important because you get that motherly feel… Mama Cha-Rhonda

Introduction

Chapter 6 discusses more in-depth how mothering is displayed in these women's leadership styles. The role of black women in educational leadership is increasing in importance. Due to the marginalization of women in educational leadership positions, there is a limited assessment of their true administrative skills (Johnson and Thomas, 157). It is critical to explore their diverse and convergent experiences due to their intersectionalities (Johnson and Thomas, 159) (Collins). Through there interviews and my participant observation at their African Centered Institution, one witnesses how mothering and leadership merges together to create this unique leadership style amongst black women educators.

Findings

Mothering and Educational Leadership Experience

Makini Tchameni

Makini Tchameni is the leader of the ACE Foundation, she leads several African Centered institutions in Africa. Most of her institutions are led by women whom she has also trained to be leaders as well. In discussing her leadership style, experience, and training, she states,

> *I feel that What I am doing, is just a continuum of what …our African women…the mothers of the world, the mothers of the nation have always done and what many African women are still doing throughout…You know…Education is something that starts at home…we may have a school, but I'm running it like my home, because these are my children…I'm teaching and training from the same perspective as if they were my*

biological children…and that even the teachers and the staff members working with me…I'm working with them as well, as if they are my younger…my adult children…

Makini Tchameni discusses that her role as an educator is nothing new amongst African women, "the mothers of the world, the mothers of the nation have always done and what many African women are still doing". Black women and Education are tied legacy. She states that "Education starts at home" and that she treats all her students like her "biological children". She takes upon motherly position as a leader and uses it to her advantage to connect to her students. She continues,

> *so I feel that the role of the woman and women in education has not really changed…that's why they would say for example that children's speak their mother's tongue, which means they learn how to speak…they learn how to communicate from the mother…the mother is laying the foundation of the culture of the language, of their values in the society…so I just feel that I am doing something that's continuing that legacy…nation building of educating the children, educating the village, educating the people…I just feel that I'm doing it here, and instead of maybe where I was born but that historical role continues…*

There is a primordial dimension added to black women and education, mothers are the first to instill culture into children. Makini Tchameni talks about the magnificent role black woman have played in African Centered Education,

> *African women born in the diaspora and African women on the continent …one of the first schools that I taught at being run in Houston by a couple…and the couple, man and woman, very, very much engaged…but they were writing the curriculum…they were building their African Centered curriculum…and she was the mother, she was the person that the children and the parents looked to inspire and that was a very important role model for me going into education …at that time I was just a tutor …but, it made a very big impression on me…*

 She describes that black women globally have contributed to African, and one of her most memorable experiences was teaching for an African Centered School in Houston, in which the woman was considered as "the mother…the person that the children and the parents looked to inspire" them. Even today, she provides information about some dynamic women who are creating African Centered curriculum and books,

You also have African women that are writing and are actually making literature…lessons, books, and textbooks…African Centered…one of them that come to mind is Dr. Freea…she written a whole series of books that we have used in our educational facilities…and then you have even younger people that are still writing…even younger women that is still writing…the one that comes to mind is …and we are using her books in the school is Nikala Asante…whose writing…so I feel that there are many…many that I haven't even named…many that I am not aware of that are making contributions…I know that the Council of Independent Black Schools would bring together a lot of those people working on African Centered Education…and women are very much involved in the council…

Makini Tchameni was influenced by a black women leader as well, and inspired by new and younger women who are carrying the African Centered torch.

Dr. Ziphora Moichela

Dr. Ziphora Moichela is very overt about her feelings concerning the disparity of South African women in leadership positions. She states,

In South Africa, I don't know about other countries, women are still finding themselves at the lowest ladder of leadership…whereby as a woman…you have to work triple times to prove yourself that you deserve that position…you have your qualification…

Dr. Ziphora mentions that women have to work three times as hard to prove themselves, and still they find themselves "at the lowest ladder of leadership". She continues,

this macho male forces, of saying, you can have this or that, but at the end of the day you are a woman and this is your place…women have made strides, but at a very slow pace…they are getting there but they have not hit the glass ceiling…

Even in the strides that women have made in South Africa, they continue to hit a glass ceiling that caused by "macho male forces". These "macho male forces" are even witnessed in the current South African curriculum,

A lot of standards…and gender stereotypes in…I'll talk about the current curriculums whereby women in Africa in particular are still seen, unfortunately still seen along the lines of patriarchies …whereby a girl child, especially from rural areas is still seen as a girl who must abide their African course …waking up early in the morning, making sure everything has been tended, their siblings been taking care of, the house is clean, you've

collected wood, you've made fire, done this and that, and during your puberty years you'll be prepared for womanhood and all that…

She provides examples on how traditional male dominated discourses have infiltrated the curriculum whereby a girl from the rural area "is still seen as a girl who must abide their African course" in which a quality education is not provided, but a life of docility and domesticity. These ideas are made worse with the Western educational system,

So even if you are being exposed to Western Education there is still this concept of saying at the end of the day you are going to be somebody else's wife…you need to abide by the rules and regulation of a community…so, there is still that aspect of gender stereotype in as far as education to what African girl child is concerned…as compared to other communities whereby so far they have really moved ahead in a girl is a girl, education is education…all children…rather you're a girl or you're a woman…you are more…you are a human being first before you are a girl…

Dr. Ziphora Moichela emphasizes the continuation of Gender Equity issues that happen in South Africa when it comes to women and leadership positions.

Gogo Dineo

Gogo Dineo, the creator of the Gogo Dineo Ndlanzi school of Spiritual Healing mentions that the role of black women in leadership and education is nothing new and that historically in South Africa, African women held leadership positions in the family even with the onset of colonialism disrupted it,

I think for me, my role as you know a black woman in education or in preserving…is the role of which a lot of woman played or underplayed it…or underplayed or unrecognized because…historically as well men left or they were taken away…some were forcefully taken away from their home and they had to come work in the city of gold and work in the mines and the women were left home to take care of the kids…and they had to a lot of education…they had to teach boys how to be men and they had to teach girls how to be in a relationship with a man…I mean you know like there were a lot of dynamics, I mean African women have carried so much…this is not new, I mean I think whats new about women and African Centered Education is that, we are becoming…as we challenge patriarchy and patriarchy is a system that feels that men are superior same as you know white supremacist that feels that white is superior to any other color that comes under it…

She discusses the impactful role of women, even in the most difficult time. When South African

men would leave home to go work in the mines and farms, women would hold down the front, taking care of the household and raising the children. Gogo Dineo blames patriarchy, a western construct for a lot of the destruction of the women's humanity and leadership position,

> *also I don't believe African culture was patriarchal…because from what I learned and understood about African culture and African spiritual belief systems, it is based on theinter -connection of the collective, that I am because you are I mean the one that is overly used all the time is the spirit of Ubuntu…*

Again, she displays the interconnected nature of men and women, the collective, there is equality, and a shared responsibility, "the spirit of Ubuntu". She continues and show how this spirit effects women,

> *When women are in position of preservation and you know there is nothing wrong with it that we also see women naturally as nurturers, and women as healers, and we see women as givers of life, you know we have names like Mascheba meaning mother of the nation …nzalabantu the one that gives birth to all of life…so that is some of the statements we have… in our belief systems…so in the essence of those words…already you can see that the role of African of women in institutions is much greater than what people want to believe…a lot of women still take a lot of responsibility to raise kids on their own so that education, the family education is also a huge component…so the women was already serving that role…*

Women have always been in leadership position, and the family atmosphere is a great example.

She also explains,

> *and for me it's not about you know we need to be all equal or an X number of women have to be placed in those institutions but that's also is important…it's not the only thing…but that's important you know as we transform and transcend understand that the ways of operation has been based on supremacist belief systems of who is superior over the other …and in this case when women are denied umm those opportunities the supremacist belief system around that is patriarchy because people always find it very difficult that women are able to do things if it's not the man leading…*

The society has to get over the "supremacist belief systems" and stereotypical ideas when it comes to women and leadership. Gogo Dineo states that motherhood was a training ground for her leadership,

The gift of being a mother in this time, in this modern time…is that children are our greatest teacher because how they interact and engage with us, it comes from a place of innocent and of their true form…parents we start shaping their belief systems saying this is wrong and this is right and a lot of some of the things I come to believe in come from my experiences I had as a mother … I've got four kids…and they are all very different four kids…what that has taught me and how that contribute to my institute …you know… everyone is unique in this institute…embracing diversity is not trying to get people to conform, but to appreciate then for who they are …once that appreciation happens, people find a way that they can conform…and they don't let go…they find a way in which they can get integrated…so that is what my kids have taught me…you know …I work with different personalities, I'm not just a mother to my four kids…I'm a mother to the initiates that come because they have to strip themselves of everything and become kids again so that they are able to surrender to the divinity that is within and has to be expressed through healing others…

Being a mother showed her the beauty of diversity, flexibility, and differences. All these things

help her as train initiates to become Sangomas,

through them I have learned that you can't have everyone wanting to be the same thing, you can't have everyone wanting to walk the same journey…I realize that everyone journey is different … but in that diversity it is still important to have certain principles…or principles of engagement in being ourselves…in being myself I have to make sure that I don't take away somebody's sense of being…because I need to validate myself so that's what it's been…

She continues, Gogo Dineo practices being a selfless leader and teacher, while being non-

judgemental to characteristics that she perceives as different. She believes in diversity,

acceptance, and flexibility. She provides a personal example of how one of her sons have been

one of her biggest lessons in understanding the true power of acceptance,

you know like I said, I mean I have a son who loves dolls…and loves long hair and loves doing nails and all of that and automatically based on what the world tells us or what I believe the box would be, well probably my son is gay or homosexual and he refuses that name because for him it's something else and he doesn't affiliate with that …so I learn a lot, it challenges some of my belief systems and they way I understand and I see things and when my kids ask me who is god and why we are not doing things this way because certain people are doing things this way…it really cause me to dig deeper into some of the things I carry…it makes me realize that I carry my own prejudices, we all have prejudices…cause we all grew up in systems that were trying to win over the other…

Children were her biggest asset and tool that Gogo Dineo continue to use to become a better

leader in African Centered Education and African Spirituality.

Mama Charhonda

Mama Charhonda is currently the principal of Timbuktu Academy of Science and Technology in Detroit, Michigan. It is one of the last African Centered Schools in the area and have stood the test time despite many of the schools closing. Some of the key points that she discussed in her leadership style is mothering and flexibility. She is also very aware of the strength of the woman like many of the other leaders on this research. Mama Charhonda states,

> *There is a saying that the nation can rise no higher than its woman…we are the mothers, the teachers, and me as a black woman running an institution that caters to black children…I think that it's important because you get that motherly feel…*

She has a deep respect for black women and acknowledges their leadership and strength, which is ultimately a "motherly feel". She creates an intentional relationship with her students, she describes the feeling of being a leader at an African Centered Institution, she states *"you get that I'm big momma…so I'm going to make sure that my babies are taking care of…".* Below she discusses the bond that she has with students,

> *I think as a mother, you know…there is this bond between mother and children that can't be broken and as the school leader here, I have formed bonds that I believe, I think are just unbreakable, you know…it's the mother intuition, the nurturing that mother's give to their children that you can find in this school setting…you may not be able to find in other school settings because at some schools you are taught not to make those intimate relations or interpersonal relationships…but that is one of the things that we at Timbuktu pride ourselves on building that relational capacity with students…I was just with a student just the other day, and I shared this with the staff that she is a child that is really, really, busy…but for her to come in sit on my lap…she instantly put her head on my shoulder and she was there for like 15 minutes and it was all good and she was better and I said you ready to go to class…and she said yep…and that just kind of worked for her…I think just having that mothering intuition, that nurturing, helps out with our students…*

She provides an example of how open she is with her students, caring, and unapologetically motherly. Though it is important to take care of the general administrative issues, it is also critical for her to create bonds with her students. They need to know that Mama Charhonda, the

principal school will allow you to go to her office and cry if necessary. This is a balanced

leadership approach. She also discusses how most of the African Centered Institutions come

from a black women's lineage,

> *So when I look at African Centered Institutions and I see the people that lead them…most of them are women…most of them are women …not only is it most of them women, it is a lineage of women…that operate these…so it is past down from mother, to daughter, to granddaughter, and we keep those legacies going…we keep the institutions going…Now not to say a lot bothers aren't doing anything…but we definitely have backbone, even here at Timbuktu…although I am the school leader, I have been here for 18 years…but Baba Bernard has always been in the background…the backbone the person that handles the budget, the person that handles the building, but when people see the school leader they always saw Mama Malkia, before Mama Malkia, she hired principals before her that was woman…we did have one man that was Timbuktu principal for about three years, but it seems as if longevity comes with the woman in the movement so…*

This lineage is discussed by many of the women. Again, the motherly familiarity approach helps

her leadership position at Timbuktu Academy of Science and Technology. She also blends her

motherly role at home and at the school, to her there is no distinction,

> *I don't have biological children…I have two children that I adopted…they were my nieces…and so my sister had 4 kids altogether…I became the legal guardian of two and I adopted the other two…so I have 4 children that I have raised as my own…but then I have also had 3 step children actually that I have helped to raise as well…apart of that is this extended family…us feeling like we have to take care of our own…and so that does lead to a role…you know that leads right into the school community…because although these babies aren't mine…they are a part of my extended family…and so it's just my nature to make sure that students are taking care of…One thing I think is that children are sacred …I protect them…I advocate for them…but I also expect a lot… I think that whole expectation of me wanting them to be the best that the can be comes from my role as a mother and adopting my nieces…*

Life truly reflects her leadership positions. However, there are challenges that arise from

being a women leader, as well as like seriousness and respect given to her based on her gender,

> *Women in general, I think are still struggling to get equal rights with men in terms of people in power, I mean so, I can just say this at Timbuktu …So there is myself and then there is Baba Bernard…So, I can say something maybe three times and he can say something once and it get done…even though I am the school leader, I'm the person they see every day… it's a struggle also in education, because you have people not only don't respect women, you have the parents and the staff they come in with there on biases*

...and I think education is a lot different than it used to be... I'm not saying it's better or worse, just different...

So, even though she has created a space that is balanced, respecting both men and women, she acknowledges that she still experiences some sexism.

Mama Zukhanye

Mama Zukhanye is also a leader, teaching the younger elementary students at Timbuktu Academy of Science and Technology in Africa. She discusses how her grandmother was a very strong influence on her as it concerned her becoming an educational leader,

> *hmmm...When I think about my educational background the first thing I think about are the stories that I received from my grandmother in Camilla, Georgia. And I think those stories were the most knowledge that I received, that have carried me throughout life and has helped me, determine my principles to live on...*

Again, her grandmother was a strong role mode, and Mama Zukhanye developed a respect and love for the knowledge that was passed down to her. Below she shares a story about racism that her grandmother told her,

> *those stories that she shared with me were stories of her experience as a woman. And those stories dealing with racism, which the stories were so intense and what she shared with me. It was actually when I visit her in Camilla, Georgia and she was telling me about racism. She wasn't using the term racism, but she was telling me of all her experience and growing up in the south, how wonderful white folks were. And she went on and on about all these things that white people had given her. But in conclusion she said don't you ever trust them. And with that I thought about the stories and the experiences that other folks and my family had, which my mother, her daughter, would never share with me, but I got these stories through my aunts and uncles.*

These stories shared to her by her grandmother and other family members truly shaped her. As Her grandmother taught her stories about life, it was her neighbor Mr. Masingayle who provided her with the sense of community and how we should all teach all the children as if they were our own,

> *I do have biological children but without a doubt all the children that I see, I take the responsibility that these children are mine. I remember growing up in a*

time where the community raised all the children as I mentioned Mr. Masingayle he was as much as my father as my biological father.

It was truly a representation of the idea that it takes a village to raise a child. At the same time, when it came to Mama Zukhanye's love for African Centered Education, her mother was profound example of black women building institutions,

my mother who is an ancestor now. She was a co-founder of Nsoroma Institute and she said we can do anything. And the question was we needed money for the institution, due to the fact that we're trying to get materials, pay rent, host building. And my mother said, my mother who picked cotton, she said we can raise money, everybody eats let's have a fish fry. And it was, it was amazing how much money we made. I mean just from organizing from, an elder who did not have what people call formal education. She was the foundation of raising money for Nsoroma Institute, which was an African centered institution that was established for maybe twenty years established for many twenty years.

She was also a co-founder of the and elementary teacher of Nsoroma Institute in Detroit, Michigan. When it comes to the seriousness of how she takes her job, she mentions,

As a black woman I describe my role as a mother, as a nurturer, as a provider and one Who values the offsprings that we bring. There's an African proverb that states, and I will say it in English, each one teaches one. And when I see my former students as young adults understanding the principles that I taught them years ago I felt that I did my job as well as an educator. Well I recognize that my students spend probably more waking hours with me than they would their biological mothers. And I take that role as an educator very seriously, and actually it's an honor that I can influence another generation.

Lastly, she describes the strength of a black woman,

when African women unite we can do anything. It's nothing that we can't do. We recognize that we are the mother of civilization, we are the healers, we are providers and we are well educated. The time, often, when we think about the philosophy of African centered education we think about all the things that we have gone through and survived and we want the world to know that we are strong people and we always rise.

As she stated, "we are the mothers of civilization, we are healers, we are providers…"

Reverend Mama Sandra

Mama Sandra is the creator of the Hush House Museum collective in Detroit, Michigan.

She a leader within Detroit and international, known for doing radical spiritual work in Belize as well. She also mentions within our discussions that her grandmother and other women in her life served as a great representation of what a black woman leader looks like. However, I will discuss her ability to train and teach other woman leadership qualities as the highlight of this particular section. I would like to just begin with her statement on how long she has been a mother,

> *well I've been a mother since I was 10 you have to understand because I mothered my own sisters and brothers. I've never really been a child in the same way children do. But many black women have the story of being a mother before they knew how to be a child, out of necessity. And I think that this mothering as you say, this education of, you said how does my role as mother contribute to the teaching. I think because I was taught at the knees of other mothers. I was taught at the knees and top bosoms of elders on the morning bench in the sanctuary of gas lights, I mentioned that to you before, an acquired peace that travels the direct conversation.*

The idea that she has been mothering since the age in 10, the emphasis that many black women knew how to be a mother before they were a child is reflective of many black women stories. Though she is a mentor within the Detroit area to many women, her international missionary work in Belize was quite profound,

> *And I looked around at the different churches and then God just put me at one that happened to be in walking distance of where I lived. And I was just so impressed by one young, well two women in particular. One woman was excited to be a teacher, of course I fell in love with her because she was so serious about what she was doing. And then there was this wild first lady Nowella which, whose husband is pastor of the church but she had all this fire.*

> *I became councillor to many of the women there that we were already leaders, and women who were aspiring to be leaders. So, through them I began, so I, we had this workshop where we taught the teachers and we began to understand the depravation of teachers.*

Africana women leader teach and train other women to be leaders as well. In addition, she discusses the how the word "Mama" signify authority,

> *I wrote something on that, it started off miss, ma'am, sister, professor, reverend. And then when the community members began calling me Mama. It took me a while to process that I was an elder in a different way. And I have had the deep blessing to be received by*

elders in the community, in my church, in my family as an elder. It blew, it used to freak me out when my elders would call me Mama. But I received it as a deep blessing and honor because they weren't addressing the woman in front of them they were addressing the spiritual woman inside of me.

It is a word that is a sign of endearment, leadership, and ancestral recognition. Lastly, she mention the power that Africana woman,

But a black woman, a woman is who centered within her own self, she can turn anything into an African centered institution. I turned Wayne State into an African centered institution every time I walk into the classroom. When my students walk into the room and they saw me with this head wrap on my head and these clothes and this talk and this way of seeing, what's going on you understand. And then when we began to teach and we began to yeah we going to use the material that the white folks have. I used tell my student, I said sweetheart don't even worry about buying that book but you're going to buy this one because they say we have to have it. And then I would go through that and I would pull out thesis that I would use, but I always had another, we always had other materials to use.

According to Mama Sandra Simmons, Black women had that magic.

Conclusion

Africana women leaders teach and train other women to be leaders. All students are treated as a part of an extended family no matter how old or young. Education is a legacy in black womanhood that is passed down from one generation to the next. Black mothers are the 1st to instill in their children a sense of culture. Grandmothers and mothers teach leadership and black women learn how to be leaders through oral traditions, stories and experiences that are passed down from generation to generation. The longevity of the African Centered Movement comes from women and the institutions or highly populated by black women who are teachers and administrators.

<div align="center">**CONCLUSION**</div>

<div align="center">A Portraiture of Africana Women in African Centered Education</div>

<div align="center">*And I was taught the mysteries of life in mothering…Mama/Reverend Sandra Simmons*</div>

Introduction

Black women globally have contributed to the development and sustainability of educational institutions. This research focuses on their educational leadership roles in African Centered Institutions, specifically in South Africa and Detroit, Michigan. This creates a diasporic and transnational dialogue amongst these women that illustrates a Pan-African solidarity in relation to African Centered Education and institutions. The gendered approach allows one to understand these women's holistic perspective, while integrating their multiple roles as mothers, wives, community leaders, spiritual beacons, and soul encouragers and its impact on African Centered Educational Leadership.

Overview

African Centered Education (ACE) is an alternative pedagogical approach for students of African descent, centering the child's culture and well-being. It is still a fairly new area of research. Though there are studies about the history, principles, theory, and pedagogy – there is a lack of discussion surrounding women's leadership roles in these institution, specifically as leaders, and the transnational reach of these institutions, not only in the United States – but in Africa as well. It should be noted that research on black women and their leadership roles in African Centered Education is scarce. The articles and books about women's leadership roles in these specific educational institutions are limited and hidden under a narrative of race, without the acknowledgement of gender roles. This phenomenon makes it difficult to find studies that speak directly to the roles of black women in leadership positions, specifically, in institutions

that practice African Centered Education. Therefore, in the expansion of the work concerning ACE, this research brings new and original information concerning women's leadership roles and their capacity to expand in different countries – while maintaining similar goals of decolonizing a student's mind, nourishing their spirit, supporting their cultural foundation, and aiding in their pride to be African and holistic leaders. By expanding on the canon of African Centered Education, this research adds new information concerning women's leadership roles and their capacity to expand in different countries, specifically in South Africa. It also provides more information on African Centered Educational Leadership.

Education constantly changes, therefore knowing the change-agents and contributors becomes integral, and black women's voices are left out. Though research on Black women educators has increased with authors like Audrey Thomas McCluskey writing about black women educators in the Jim Crow and Dr. Venus Evans Winters publishing continuously on black women educators and feminism; literature concerning the experiences of African Centered Educators and black women has not been well documented. In addition to amplifying black women's voices in education and leadership, my study specifically discusses women roles in the development and sustainability of African Centered Education, adding to the diversity of the literature.

The women of my research include Dr. Ziphora Moichela, who researches indigenous knowledge systems. She works at the University of South Africa in Pretoria, a South African establishment since 1873. It is one of the largest universities in South Africa, and has the biggest research library in Africa. UNISA prides itself on being Africa's University. Makini Tchameni is co-founder of the African Centered Educational Foundation (ACE) and principal of ACE schools, like the African Union International School in South Africa. In 1998, Tchameni

established her first ACE school, the African American Academy in Cameroon. Twenty years later, she has African Centered Schools in three African countries including South Africa and Burkina Faso. Gogo Dineo Ndlanzi created the Gogo Ndlanzi School of Spiritual Healing in Cosmo City – a residential area in Johannesburg, South Africa. She has been a Sangoma for the last 10 years and her school has been in existence for about four years. Gogo Dineo has pioneered African Spirituality to a mainstream audience through media in South Africa. Her institution teaches and preserves indigenous knowledge systems in South Africa as it pertains to African Spirituality. In Detroit, Michigan, Char-Rhonda Edgerson, known as Mama Char-honda, is the principal of Timbuktu Academy. The school is one of the last African Centered schools in Detroit, Michigan named after the great city in Mali. It began in 1997 primarily by African American women named Mama Malkia and Baba Bernard who wanted to contribute positive change towards their black community. Mama Malkia later left Timbuktu Academy to pursue her highest dream of opening an African Centered school in Ghana. Now that she has passed away, her daughter runs the school in Ghana. Timbuktu Academy continues to be run and led by black women. Zukhanye Nondabula, known as Mama Zukhanye, is a teacher and leader at Timbuktu Academy as well. She has roots in other African Centered Institutions like Aisha Shule and was the co-founder of Nsoroma Institute, another African Centered School Detroit that closed down. Reverend Mama Sandra Simmons is the co-founder of the Hush House Community Museum and Leadership Training Institute in Detroit. The community organization has multiple educational programs targeted to the black and global community, including an exhibit that toured with the Smithsonian on African American history and culture.

Through my research, the definition of mothering deepened and contemporary black women explore their processes of leading African Centered Institutions in South Africa and

Detroit, Michigan. None of these women have ever met; I am the common denominator bringing their stories together in a single portraiture, creating an Aesthetic Whole. The main goal within a portraiture methodology is to create an aesthetic whole by blending the empirical with the narrative, which will, "inform and inspire...document and transform...speak to the head and to the heart" (Lightfoot, 243). The aesthetic whole is the gestalt described as a quilt with many pieces put together strategically to make a beautiful art piece (Lightfoot, 244). By analyzing my data, highlighting emergent themes, weaving my findings together – I am able to create a scholarly and artistic work that is reflective of these women collective lives (Lightfoot, 247). Together the women voices created a Southern quilt, not a seamless mono-colored blanket, but a whimsical piece full of bright colors, customized patches, and a variety of stitches sewed all together to make one piece. Mothering as a leadership tool was the common denominator with the women that I studied. The leadership style was further explored in the three emergent themes. They were 1. *Mothering and Nation building* 2. *Mothering the Spirit or Consciousness* 3. *Mothering in Educational Leadership*. These were the branches of their leadership style. At times, some women connected more to one or two of the emergent themes, and not all. This was helpful, it also added to the learning process. There were also some interesting results concerning some of some of the theories I used to help identify the women and describe their story. For example, after I interviewed the women and spent some time observing the work at their African Centered Institution – most of them said they did not affiliate with any 'ism', unless it was Pan-Africanism, unity, and collectivity. When it came to identifying as a womanist, Pan-Africanist was the closest to their lifestyle. Though womanism did help me to explain their story, it left me with more questions, for example do we always

have to categorize black women? Can we just let black women be and self-define themselves without putting them in a box? Or is it time to create a new word or phrase for these women who believe they do not necessarily identify with contemporary feminism or other "isms"? Concerning their ability to juggle familial, societal, and personal obligations with their careers as leaders in African Centered Education, most of the women blurred the lines of all their responsibilities because mothering was presence in all areas of their lives.

My research creates a diasporic and transnational dialogue amongst these women that illustrates a Pan-African solidarity in relation to African Centered Education. The gendered approach allows one to understand these women's holistic perspective, while integrating their multiple roles as mothers, wives, community leaders, spiritual beacons, and soul encouragers.

I used the concept of "Mothering" as a theoretical platform of race and gender to analyze Black women's leadership experiences. "Mothering" as praxis is mentioned throughout the experiences of black women educators (Baylor)(Oka)(Msila)(Karenga) (Hill-Brisbane) (Johnson)(Johnson)(Collins). The theory of Mothering essentially "involves valuing others, and of itself a commitment to the survival and thriving of other bodies" (Oka, 52). The role of mother includes the ability to nurture, teach, mold, to be a bearer of culture and conduit for the spiritual regeneration of the ancestors (Karenga) (Dove, 520) (Godono). These activities are extended to "emancipatory organizations, institutions and social movements as is reflected in the history of the mothers of the freedom movements in this country and throughout the pan-African world" (Karenga).

Drawing from "Mothering" theories as a dimension of African-centered education, the current dissertation study examines six portraits of black women leaders in African Centered Education (ACE) in South Africa and Detroit. My study uses Pan-Africanism, Womanism,

Mothering, and African Centered Educational Theory as scholastic frameworks. The theories work together to create an in-depth understanding of these women's stories. While, portraiture methodology creates a seamlessly woven narrative of these women's stories focusing on emergent themes that display commonality, but it does not exclude their differences adding to the authenticity of the narrative.

Synopsis of Findings

Though the literature concerning black women leaders in ACIs is scarce, we are able to see some trends in the scholarship about black women educators as it concerns nation building. Black women leaders in educations have a clear commitment to their task to teach and uplift their community locally and globally. They treat their students like their children affectionately, teaching from a place of love. Black women leaders also have an embedded desire to help transform the black community that is due to their cultural memory. These ideas are expressed in the connection to nation building and mothering and the idea of caring for their extended family or community.

Most of the women are educators because they had a spiritual calling and or a strong black consciousness to educate their community. Dr. Ziphora Moichela was the only woman who became an educator due to economic advancement, however by the end of her PhD career UNISA she was politically aware of the importance of her research on indigenous knowledge systems in South Africa. Many of the women identified as not only spiritually connected to their work, but as Pan-Africanist or some type of collective being working for their community. The women did not particularly describe to *isms*, agreeing that feminism and womanism were terms they were unfamiliar with or that it did not describe what they were doing or represent them culturally.

Prior to systems like patriarchy, "a gendered power system, a network of social, political and economic relationships through which men dominate and control female labor, reproduction, and sexuality, as well as define women's status, privileges and rights in a society", women reign (Kalabamu, 2004). African women have held many leadership roles throughout history. African women leaders teach and train other women to be leaders as well. All students are treated as a part of an extended family no matter how old or young. Education is a legacy in black womanhood that is passed down from one generation to the next. Black mothers are the 1st to instill in their children a sense of culture. Grandmothers and mothers teach leadership and black women learn how to be leaders through oral traditions, stories and experiences passed down from generation to generation. The longevity of the African Centered Movement comes from women and the institutions or highly populated by black women who are teachers and administrators. Mothering used as a leadership tool is sometimes seen as a challenge by others due the leadership style being overly nurturing and protective at times. Male dominated forces like patriarchy still give women leaders challenges as well as other supremacist belief systems. Teaching black students is seen as a sacred space and is taking very seriously.

Sacrifice was also something mentioned amongst the women and their work. All these women were creative in their approach to education mixing traditional structures with new ones that is inclusive of the digital world for example. They all questioned the epistemology and cosmology of education, which led to their development of African Centered Institutions or them studying aspects of indigenous knowledge systems to get answers. The women defined themselves using a variety of adjectives – spiritualist, Big Momma, Mama, Watcher Seer, Reverend, Healer and more.

The Co-Existence of the Male/Female Leadership Relationship

It should be noted that most of the women who owned their African Centered Institution, managed and operated it with their husband and or significant male partner. Makini Tchameni, Gogo Dineo, and Mama Sandra Simmons husbands each play a significant role in their African Centered institutions. Mama Zukhankye and Mama Cha-Rhonda both mentioned the importance of the male counterparts at Timbuktu Academy of Science and Technology and in their lives. Dr. Ziphora Moichela was the only women who did not speak much about the influences of men in her position at UNISA, she spoke primarily against the patriarchy in higher education and the difficulty of South African girls to attend school due to sexist belief system that believe the primary role of a woman is to be married and have kids.

Though this study is not about the relationship per se with male counterparts, it should be noted that they all have fairly positive things to say about the black men in their lives. Also, it would be an interesting study to explore shared leadership between black men and women in African Centered Institutions. About 50% of my subjects created their institutions with their husbands, and that is pretty significant and it should be researched more. I will just provide just a few examples of how these women described their relationship with men. Gogo Dineo states,

> *Oh my men play a huge role…men in my life are very important …I think I do a lot of my work…my work you know is very busy…and I don't think I would be able to do it, if I didn't have very supportive man… I don't see men as the protector , but I see men as a co-creator and so I don't see like his there watching my back, but he is…and he has been a very strong support system…we have four kids and to have somebody who allows you to be yourself and be ok with it and challenges his own belief systems about what it means being a man in a family system…I'm the man, I'm the one who has to be the one that's busy…so that's…men in my life are important…so my uncles are very important…in African culture as well, both roles are important because men have particular role, your uncle and aunt have a particular role as you transition through your life…and you know, do what we call rites of passage ceremonies, both of those genders are very important…so I cannot disregard my relationship with my father, that's another because my father is also a healer and I also know when I can't step forward to do have people…I have to take caring family community …and what I learned is that my role in*

the family has been to really leverage the relationships that my grandfather…cause my grandfather is the man that taught me the core thing about family being important and pulling together and that we are all equal in his eyes planted to seeds for me and that's why I am able to do what I do today…

Gogo Dineo provides a very nuanced perspective of her relationship with black men. She states that they support, uplift, and take care of her. She, like the other women also have been positively influenced by their grandfather. She also talks about her leadership within the relationships, she looks at the man as the co-creator, not the creator. She intentionally engages in healthy relationships with men, not that their always perfect.

On the other hand, Reverend Mama Sandra Simmons provided a more diverse perspective when it came to the men in her life. She discussed issues of abuse and neglect experienced by black men, but she also balanced it with the wonderful love that she received from her grandfather,

So, on the one hand I had the brutality, on the other hand I had this man showing me the finer qualities of life and what I should expect from a man and how men should cover me. I never got involved with anybody else until they understood, well, do you know how to cover a sister?

Mama Zukhanye mentions the admiration that black men have for black women,

And you know, and I'm going to quote a black man, an African man born in America. He said it's nothing like a sister, as simple as that.

These perspectives are important to know, it helps us to understand the women spirit of community and shared responsibility.

Self-Care

Because too many times we take in somebody's brokenness. People teach their brokenness from one generation to another, they teach their hurt from one generation to another. So, I said that we have to have conversations about that and recognize that. Are you in pain?... Reverend Mama Sandra Simmons…

Within their interviews, no one really discussed the importance of self-care. The only one who mentioned something about protecting your space and self was Reverend Mama Sandra Simmons. In the quote above, she stated that in addition to leadership skills being passed from one generation to the next, "brokenness" is also passed. She warned that we as a people should be careful with receiving "somebody's brokenness". Outwardly, Reverend Mama Sandra Simmons has a regal representation. She always dresses in beautiful African garb, with customized jewelry to match and her hair is always wrapped in the silkiest scarf. However, just like the rest of the women in my study, she has endured physical, mental, and

spiritual stress from the heavy work she does in the community. She even mentioned that she tried to leave the "Calling", but she knew God wanted her to be there. Gogo Dineo takes a warm bath every day and meditates. She is very health conscious about the food that she eats and exercise, however her role requires a lot of endurance and sleepless nights. So, even though she has created a wonderful health regime, there is no way of escaping the daily compounded stress of being a spiritual leader, mother, wife, educator, mediator, and African Spiritualist in high demand. Though no one talked about, a consistent balance was very difficult to keep up with at times, one of the multiple roles that these women were playing end up suffering. Perhaps, the children do not get enough time, or mental strains cause occasional breakdowns, or the relationships that they worked so hard to preserve with their significant other is momentarily damaged. It left me thinking as I listened too and observed these women over the last three years, *Is the strength of the black woman overrated?* That is why I emphasize the importance of self-care amongst black women leaders in African Centered Institutions, they are prone to illness just like anyone else and should be more vigilant about taking care of themselves. A holistic

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definition of Africana woman is the following,

> *An Africana woman is committed to cultural preservation in Africa and the African Diaspora. She knows that self-preservation comes first, including physical, mental and spiritual renewal, therefore, she takes time to restore her energy so that she can continue to change the world, resting and retreating when necessary.*

Conclusion

The Circle Continues

Women gather in different ways now, with today's technology, the online community has been a great way to see women gather. Even this dissertation is a space where African women gather, and sacredness exudes from the spirit of these Africana women,

> *We would all, all the women would come and we would stand around the stove, summer or winter when she roasted yams and had her feet up in the oven door. And they talked about being mothers, about being women and how we did it and how we didn't do it and why we didn't. And you learn mothering when you hitched up the back of your skirt and you heated your butt at the fire. And I was taught the mysteries of life in mothering. Now this complex experience of being taught by women how to mother created a womb, you see when women gather together, when we encircle ourselves we create yet another womb…Reverend Mama Sandra*

APPENDIX

AFRICANA WOMEN STORIES:
MOTHERING IN AFRICAN CENTERED EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Questionnaire

1. Where are you from?
2. How do you identify yourself?
3. What is your educational background?
4. Why did you choose a career in education?
5. What type of positions have you held in education?
6. What is the name of your current African Centered Institution?
7. What is African Centered Education?
8. What is Africanizing the Curriculum?
9. Is African Centered Education different and or comparable to Africanizing the Curriculum?
10. How would you describe your role as a black woman in education?
11. How does your role as a mother and or mothering' contribute to your leadership identity and role in your African Centered Institution?
12. What is nation building, and is it an important element of your African Centered Institution?
13. Do you have a women's philosophy (i.e. feminism, womanism, Africana womanism) you stand by?
14. How are black women educators contributing to the development of African Centered Education?
15. How does men play a role in your life?
16. How does Pan-African political identities contribute to the development of African Centered Schools?
17. Is there anything else you would like to talk about being a woman in education in Africa and or the US?
18. How does your personal spiritual practice contribute to your success? What is your spiritual practice?
19. How is your spiritual practice engrained in your school practice?

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