

Revisiting Parker & ogilvie's African American Women Executive Leadership Model

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This conceptual paper addresses a unique niche. We summarize the qualitative, quantitative and theoretical research specific to African American women in leadership. Using an intersectional lens of race, gender and leadership identity, we revisit the seminal work of Parker and ogilvie's (1996) model of African American Women Executive Leadership to determine support for the model in theory and practice. We conclude by suggesting updates to Parker and ogilvie's model and discuss the future research needed to address this neglected demographic. This enhances leadership and diversity research and provides much needed recommendations on how to support diversity leadership in organizations.

INTRODUCTION

In 2014, 50% of U.S. children five years of age and under were minorities according to the U.S. Census Bureau (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). By 2026, this emerging generation of minority majority leaders will be adults in the workforce, and are certain to possess multiple identities of gender, race, culture, and religion. Human resource development (HRD) and other professionals, who practice in multi-disciplinary ways to support learning and leadership development in the workplace, are pivotal in furthering this cultural transformation and can help ensure the success of this diverse group of individuals and support them as leaders through the examination of different intersecting identities (Carter, 2018). In this conceptual paper, we center our attention on one such group of intersectional leaders—a single class of women who share a common cultural and racial heritage, has a labor force participation and educational degree achievement that is the largest of people of color, and are the fastest growing group of entrepreneurs in the U.S. – African American women (Haimerl, 2015; Sims, 2018; U.S. Department of Labor, 2016).

The personal and economic contributions of African American women are critical to ensuring the stability and growth of their families, as well as the U. S. economy. Since U.S. employment law made it illegal to discriminate against protected class members, African American women's participation rate in the U.S. labor force continue to rise and in 2016 was higher than that of all women, equating to close to 60% of African American women or one in seven women in the U.S. labor force (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016). Black women participate in the workplace in the positions of management and professional (35%), sales and office (29%), and service (29%). Of African American's in the U.S., women receive

66% of all bachelor's degrees, 70% of all master's and 60% of all doctorates and represent for women of color the largest group with educational degrees (Charen, 2017).

Despite their shared accomplishments in education and employment, as of 2019 there were no African American women running Fortune 500 companies among a field of 24 women (Catalyst, 2019). Collectively, African American women remain poorly represented in high level executive roles, lingering at 1.0% to 1.1% of CEOs and members of boards of directors (Beckwith, Carter, & Peters, 2016; Krawiec, Conley, & Broome, 2013; Mcgirt, 2017). This phenomenon, called the concrete or black ceiling, is said to be borne out of the cumulative biases African American women uniquely experience due to their complex positionality of race, gender and class as they represent 7% of the U.S. workforce (Mcgirt, 2017; Parker & ogilvie, 1996). Yet, because of their ability to code switch and successfully navigate between corporate and diverse cultures, African American women demonstrate sophisticated adaptive skills, innovation, creativity and leadership which benefits all organizations (Parker & ogilvie, 1996).

At the end of the last century, the work of Parker and ogilvie (1996) emerged amidst a flurry of leadership activity that specifically addressed African American women. Their seminal work defined a culturally distinct model of African American women executive leadership. The absence of substantive theory in the intervening years prompted an initial exploration of leadership literature that centered on African American women leadership. Finding few models since Parker and ogilvie (1996), our purpose now is to determine what support exists for Parker and ogilvie's model and how their model might be updated to reflect current research and theory. In this study, we discuss the revised model and address what practitioners and organizations need to consider for the cultural transformation on the horizon.

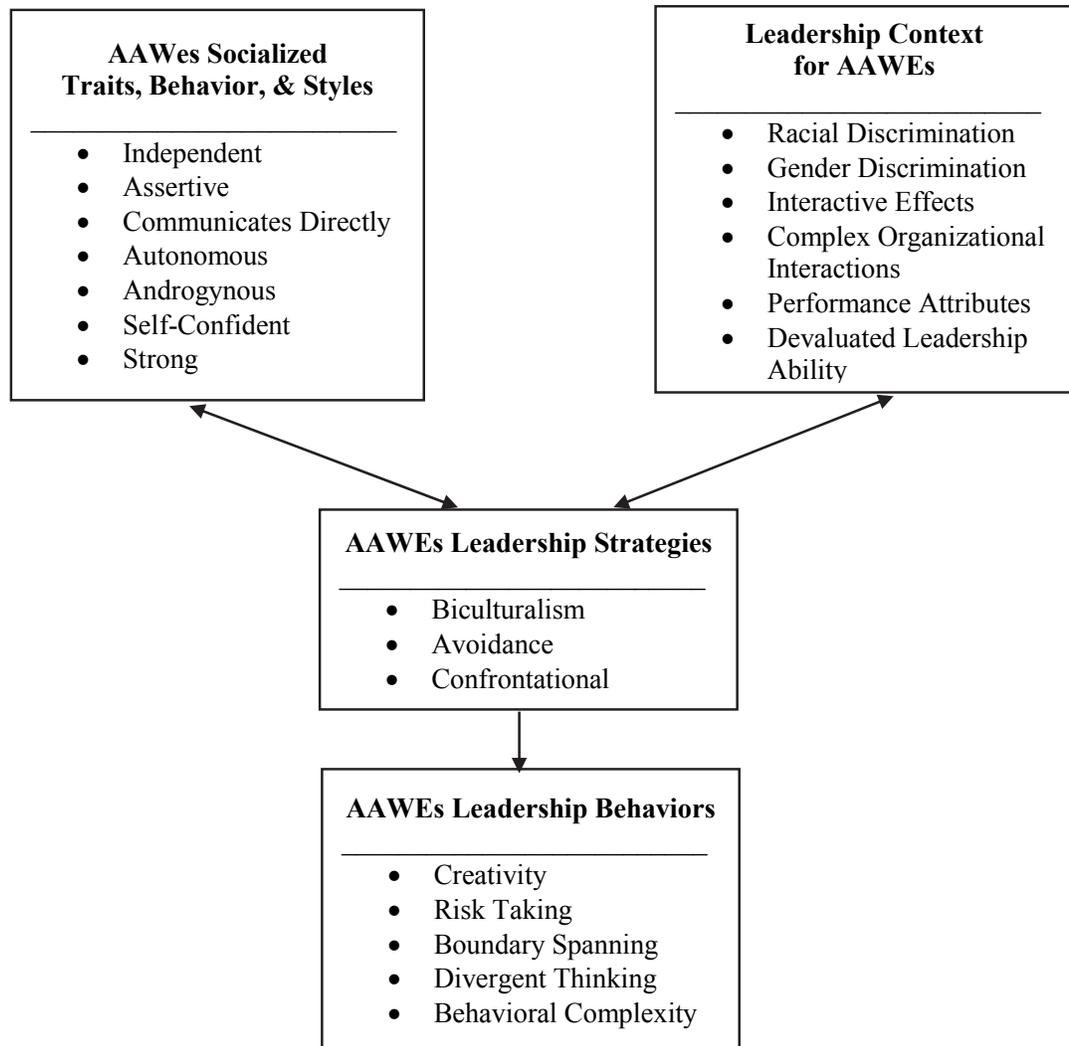
LITERATURE REVIEW

Underlying many leadership theories is the study of primarily Anglo American men and the assumption that their leadership strategies apply to all other demographic groups. Parker and ogilvie (1996), challenged this assumption when they advanced that leadership should be viewed from an intersectional lens of gender and race. These authors argued that gender does not operate the same way regardless of cultural traditions any more than race operates the same way regardless of gender (Parker & ogilvie, 1996). Furthermore, they advanced that the strategies African American women use in leading others is a manifestation of their socialization and loci within the dominant culture which results in a leadership style uniquely their own (Parker & ogilvie, 1996).

Based on interviews with African American women, Parker and ogilvie (1996) generated a theoretical framework (Figure 1) which has the antecedents of socialized traits, behavior and styles and their unique social location within dominant culture which produce a strategic response of leadership strategies and resulting leadership behaviors (p. 192). African American women used competing leadership strategies of avoidance and confrontation to interact with Anglo America and employed biculturalism to successfully navigate Anglo and African American cultures (Bell, 1989, 1990; Parker & ogilvie, 1996). In response to biculturalism, African American women use the leadership behaviors of divergent thinking, creativity, risk-taking and boundary spanning along with behavioral complexity (Parker & ogilvie, 1996). To manage the dual worlds African American women encounter, Parker and ogilvie used the theory of behavioral complexity to suggest that African American women professionals and leaders employ a variety of complex cognitive and performance skills as they enact multiple and competing roles in complementary and integrated fashions (Hooijberg, 1992; Parker & ogilvie, 1996).

Parker and ogilvie (1996) further asserted that the communal and agentic leadership styles, found to be more closely aligned respectively with Anglo women and men, are equally used by African American women leaders. For example, African American women were found to use the Anglo male traits and styles of self-confidence, independence and strong influence strategies; the Anglo women styles of democratic and transformation; and adopt both the male and female traits and styles of autonomy and nurturing, and directive and participative.

FIGURE 1
A CULTURALLY DISTINCT MODEL OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN FEMALE EXECUTIVE'S LEADERSHIP



(Parker & Ogilvie, 1996, p. 192)

Moreover, African American women possessed unique behaviors including androgynous, both masculine and feminine leadership traits, and a direct communication style. The authors concluded by advocating future research should provide additional insight to what makes these African American women successful leaders and stress the need for inclusive cultural leadership styles that address the unique intersection of gender and race African American women occupy (Parker & ogilvie, 1996). Moving forward, we focus on summarizing what the literature undergirding Parker and ogilvie’s original model revealed about African American women’s leadership.

Intersectionality of Gender, Race and Leadership

The limited theoretical research on African American women leadership since Parker and ogilvie (1996) acknowledges changes in the understanding of the context in which Black women enact leadership. African American women leaders are informed by their lived experiences at the intersection of

race, gender and social class identities. Combined, these identities interact to produce a substantially distinct experience for women leaders (Symington, 2004). Moreover, the presence of African American women leaders challenges the status quo of Anglo men leadership, and thus inherently redefines what it means to be a leader (Byrd, 2009; Rosser-Mims, 2010; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010).

Leadership development is identity work; one becomes a leader as one's leadership identity is formed (Ely, Ibarra, & Kolb, 2011). It is through having leadership role models and interacting with leaders that one tries on leadership identities and eventually comes to adopt a leadership identity as their own. Because African American women have not had a preponderance of African American women leader models in mainstream America, women with African American identities are likely to draw inspiration from their unique social context (Byrd, 2009; Rosser-Mims, 2010).

Research found African American women valued their intersected black-woman identity more than their individual woman identity and black person identity (Settles, 2006). When one identity conflicts or interferes with another identity, identity interference can result (Settles, 2006). For example, one study found that when African American women experience interference with their black identity, but not their gender identity, these women reported less self-esteem and depression (Settles, 2006). Conversely, having a positive gender and leader identity reduced the amount of conflict between women's gender and leader identities, resulting in favorable outcomes, and caused women to have a more positive view of leadership (Karelalaia & Guillen, 2014).

Qualitative studies of minority leaders in faith based higher education institutions suggest that indifference to leadership roles was based on the perceptions that leadership was bestowed as a gift, was secondary to their career interests, and lack of aspiration to pursue a role other than the one they currently have or in short, these individuals likely had not developed a strong leadership identity (Change, Longman, & Franco, 2014). The more central and integrated the identities of gender and leader, the more authentic the leader (Sims, Gong, & Hughes, 2017).

As a result, possessing multiple identities of gender, race and/or leader can be detrimental or synergistic based on how well individuals integrate and leverage their multiple identities (Settles, 2006; Sims et al., 2017). It has been argued, integrated identities are important if individuals are going to be true and authentic to who they are at their core (Sims et al., 2017), and research findings support the value of an intersectional framework to study African American women leaders in both theory and practice.

When analyzing African American women leaders in Anglo organizations, an intersectional lens is needed due to the complex dynamics of having multiple and disparate social identities – gender, race, social class and leader. The theory has been supported in academia as race and gender was found to be salient for African American female college presidents but not social class (Waring, 2003), a study of African American women professors indicated that they developed a Black cultural identity (Alfred, 2001), and race and gender were prominent for African American college students (Settles, 2006). Intersectionality offers us the ability to examine how a unique set of identities interact to shape the organizational experiences of African American women leaders in the workplace (Collins, 1998; Davis, 2016; Parker, 2004).

Leadership Context

Historically, African American women were active in effecting institutional change through social activism and operate as caretakers of family and community (Rosser-Mims, 2010). Moreover, Byrd (2009) suggests African American women interpret and enact leadership based upon a rich culture of counter stories, narratives and autobiographies, often born out of oppression. The early experiences of African American women in senior leadership positions find that their family, school and the community were instrumental in cultivating a positive self-image and a desire to lead (Alfred, 2001; Davis, 2016).

Women with African American identities may lead by rejecting authority based on unjust and oppressive hierarchies; promoting group solidarity, networking, and empowerment; cultivating leaders to ensure group advancement and wellbeing; while pursuing systemic change (Byrd, 2009; Change et al., 2014; Green & King, 2001; Rosser-Mims, 2010). A leadership style which aims to address oppression is

very different than leadership enacted to influence others, exert positional authority and power to encourage others to act to achieve goals (Change et al., 2014; Davis, 2016; Waring 2003).

Racial and Gender Discrimination

The leadership context for African American women is less overtly discriminatory and has given way to micro and macro aggression (Sue, 2010). When one is subjected to brief disparaging remarks due to their social identity, one is experiencing microaggressions (Sue, 2010). Microaggression was coined by Pierce in 1970 in his work with Black Americans, in which he defined it as “subtle, stunning, often automatic, and nonverbal exchanges which are ‘put downs’ (Pierce, Carew, Pierce-Gonzalez, & Willis, 1978, 66)”. The unconscious delivery of subtle snubs, dismissive looks, gestures and tones in exchanges that are pervasive and dismissed as being innocent and innocuous has also been termed as microinequities (Sue, 2010). Microaggressions and microinequities are detrimental to women and/or persons of color because they impair performance and sap the psychic and spiritual energy of recipients and create inequities (Sue, 2010). In a similar fashion, gender discrimination is now gender bias, a term Eagly and Carli (2007) derived from the concept that men are associated more with being leaders and women are less apt to be viewed as leaders because they demonstrate communal qualities (e.g., compassion) and found women used both agentic and communal leadership skills to create social capital.

Stereotype Threat and Complex Organizational Interactions

One explanation for the complex organizational interaction (Parker & Ogilvie, 1996) which women with African American identities may experience is stereotype threat. Stereotype threat occurs when an individual encounters a situation where one of their social identities can help explain why they might perform poorly; the stereotype then manifests when performance is needed (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010; Steele & Aronson, 1995). Research has found that identity interacts with stereotype threat and may be triggered simply due to being a numerical minority (Davis, Aronsen & Salinas, 2006). The intersection of race, gender and leadership in practice leads to racial and sexual stereotyping, token status and inaccurate assessment of work productivity, and unrealistic expectations that mitigate against attainment of higher level positions (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). Conversely, having a strong racial identity has been found to mitigate stereotype threat (Davis et al., 2006). Moreover, research has borne out that individual with multiple identities have unique and novel ways to solve problems that benefit organizations (Richardson & Loublier, 2008).

Extending the Parker & ogilvie Model

Recent scholarship which address African American women and women leadership overall, extend and provide support for Parker and ogilvie’s (1996) model of African American women leadership. We find continued support for African American historical social context as an antecedent to leadership strategies (Byrd, 2009; Rosser-Mims, 2010). Research reinforces that leadership context matters e.g., gender bias and stereotype threat informs the leadership strategies of African American women, and support was found that organizations benefit by having individuals with multiple identities (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Richardson & Loubier, 2008; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). We suggest the adoption of Byrd’s (2009) suggestion that leadership theories need to be evaluated on how well they address the dynamics of race, gender and social class and enable African American women to reach effective outcomes, be authentic and advance African American women and the African American society as a whole.

One new leadership context theme that emerged from the literature which Parker and ogilvie did not address was tokenism, isolation and invisibility. Kanter (1977) defined tokenism initially in proportional terms, when a subgroup is less than 15% of the whole, and subsequent researchers discussed how tokenism is experienced differently based on race and gender. Yoder’s (1991) analysis found that Anglo men benefitted from token status while women’s, African American women’s and men’s token experiences were associated with negative consequences of performance pressures and apprehension, social isolation and invisibility along with heightened racial identification (Sekaquaptewa, Waldman,

& Thompson, 2007; Yoder, 1991). When one is recognized and well regarded by others, one is visible, and conversely, one becomes invisible when one's presence and authority is ignored, devalued, circumvented and silenced (Settles, Buchanan, & Dotson, *in press*). When African American women are solo or token representatives in their organizations they are likely to experience hypervisibility - scrutiny based on perceived difference often interpreted as deviance from the norm and failures become magnified (Holder, Jackson, & Ponterotto, 2015; Mowatt, French, & Malebranche, 2013; Ospina & Foldy, 2009).

Due to their unique intersection of identities, African American women were negatively impacted as they were often the only one with this unique set of identities in their role as student, professor, leader and professional (Alfred, 2001; Davis, 2016; Settles 2006). They discussed how they felt "invisible, voiceless, discriminated, isolated, undermined, treated unfairly, oppressed, challenged and demoted" (Barrett, Cervero, & Johnson-Bailey, 2003; Davis, 2016, p. 8). Conversely, some expressed their unique status made them feel special; others discussed that they were at times isolated from Anglos, black men and even black woman because they were atypical to the group norms because of their speech pattern, complexion (too dark or too light) etcetera (Settles, 2006).

Socialized Traits, Behaviors and Styles

Relative to socialized traits, behaviors and styles, research on African American women leaders since Parker and ogilvie's (1996) have found support that women college presidents employed androgynous styles – some were task oriented while others were relationship oriented — and a different group of minority leaders preferred relational work environments (Chin & Trimble, 2014; Change et al., 2014; Davis, 2016). African American women leaders in business and academia revealed they possess the socialized traits and behaviors in their early years of self-pride and self-reliance and as adults were determined to be self-reliant and not embark in traditional mentoring relationships as they were concerned that Anglo male co-workers might question their competencies and abilities (Change et al., 2014; Davis, 2016). Resilience was mentioned by Parker and ogilvie (1996) and was found as a dominant outcome of a qualitative study of African American business and academic leaders (Davis, 2016).

Parker and ogilvie's (1996) use a trait-based approach in their leadership model as they focused primarily on the individual. Current theory views leadership as a dynamic set of relationships among – the leader, those whom they lead, those who lead the leader, the organization as a whole and the organization's culture. In short, individuals cannot be fully assessed unless one knows the social context from which they operate (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009). Current leadership scholars now conclude that "life context" is much more important in predicting leadership emergence than the traits one inherits; thus, leaders are more likely made than borne (Avolio et al., 2009). One might conclude that Parker and ogilvie (1996) were prescient as they addressed the broader social context in their model.

As a leader develops, it is theorized, so will their identity. Scholars are exploring how a leader's identity emerges, transforms and manifests in their behavior (Swann, Chang-Schneider, & Larsen McClarty, 2007). Moreover, it is hypothesized that those with different leadership styles, e.g., authentic or transformational, may have a different self-concept (Avolio et al., 2009). This theory suggests that leadership style may manifest as a unique self-identity. By extension then, those with a distinct African American leadership style may possess a leadership identity uniquely their own.

A leader's working self-concept is constructed of the moment's circumstances as well as long term and stable leadership identities (Avolio et al., 2009). Trigger events are considered to activate the leader's working self-concept (Avolio et al., 2009). Though these concepts are conceptualized as part of authentic leadership, one can argue that Parker and ogilvie's (1996) model draws upon individuals' stable self-concept and identities of gender, race and leader. The model suggests that African American women leadership styles are based upon the leadership events they personally experience overtime, in trigger moments, and we argue - their observations of leaders with whom they share similar identities. Ultimately these short and long-term experiences and observations will color how African American women internalize and project their leadership identities. Similar to Chin and Trimble (2014), we support the need to shift from the trait theory of Parker and ogilvie's (1996) leadership model to a social identity paradigm.

Leadership Strategies

We agree with Parker and ogilvie's (1996) conception that African American women rely upon three leadership strategies - biculturalism, avoidance and confrontational. Biculturalism is manifested when individuals with minoritized identities respond to discrimination, microaggression and microinequities, and find it necessary to adjust their behaviors to increase the likelihood they will be accepted by the Anglo community or risk further alienation and marginalization (Guy, 1999). Individuals who navigate two cultures – the dominant or Anglo culture and their historic cultural or minoritized identity, are bicultural. Biculturalism has its roots in DuBois' term "double consciousness" that was used to describe the "two-ness" African Americans in the 19th century felt in being both American and African American" (Martinez & Welton, 2015, p. 126).

Bicultural individuals learn how to navigate between their heritage and the dominant culture. Some individuals safely alternate between the two cultures in an integrated and harmonious way while others might experience the cultures as conflicting and choose to compartmentalize each culture. Biculturalism can bring benefits to the individual as they demonstrate intellectual flexibility and creativity or be detrimental as individuals experience "stress, isolation and identity confusion" (Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2013, p. 125).

Of the three qualitative studies which addressed biculturalism after Parker and ogilvie (1996), Alfred (2001) placed biculturalism at the center of her career development model of African American women in Anglo dominated institutions of higher education. Relative to women and men faculty of color, another study indicated they experienced double consciousness as they drew upon their bicultural skills to navigate their academic departments (Martinez & Welton, 2015). Black human resource developers were assessed as outsiders within their traditional work organizations and became skilled using bicultural strategies (Barrett, Cervero, & Johnson-Bailey, 2003). Thus, the bicultural framework Parker and ogilvie advanced in 1996 continues to capture the experience African American women and men use to navigate with more or less success in their workplace (Alfred, 2001; Barrett et al., 2003; Cuyjet, 2008; Martinez & Welton, 2015; Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2013).

Avoidance and Confrontation

Parker and ogilvie (1996) originally theorized that African American women used avoidance and confrontation based on the situation in which they found themselves. Holder, Jackson, and Ponterotto (2015) examined the experiences of racial microaggressions in the workplace and determined the coping strategies of Black women managers in corporate American positions. Women research participants cited that they avoided responding to racial microaggressions, showing emotion in reaction to microaggressions, internalizing negative messages, interacting with racist colleagues, and, being viewed as a spokesperson for all Black women. Confrontation was rarely used by the women for fear of fulfilling the stereotype of the angry black woman (Holder et al., 2015).

Recent research on how people of color and women respond to microaggression provides an alternative, in-depth approach (Sue, 2010). Sue's (2010) microaggression process model serves to inform Parker and ogilvie's (1996) model and is described next. Sue's process model consists of these phases where the participant: 1) experiences the microaggression incident, 2) examines the incident to assess whether or not it was racial/gender motivated, 3) chooses whether and how to react internally or through behavior, 4) interprets and gives meaning to the incident, and 5) addresses the cumulative consequences of the incident – behavioral, emotive or cognitive.

Sue (2010) identified six microaggressions individuals with African American identities and eight microaggressions women commonly experience. There were only two microaggressions African American and women had in common and these were second-class citizenship and assumption of inferior status/ inferiority. African American women were likely to experience twice as many microaggressions due to their dual status than African American men or Anglo women. The research which supports this double whammy of micro aggressions include Berdahl and Moore (2006) and Holder et al., (2015) who found African American women experienced more harassment overall than majority men, minority men

and majority women. Holder et al., (2015) added an environmental microaggression - a lack of black women in the organization.

Leadership Behaviors

Parker and ogilvie's (1996) model identified the following leadership behaviors of African American women – creativity, risk taking, boundary spanning, divergent thinking and behavioral complexity. Regarding multicultural competence, research suggests that individuals who have to negotiate multiple cultures are more likely to be flexible, open to change, creative and able to problem solve; creativity was associated more with African American students; and, result in divergent thinking (Antonio, Chang, Hakuta, Kenny, Levin, & Milem, 2004; Eagly & Chin, 2010; Kaufman, 2006; Leung, Maddux, Galinsky, & Chiu, 2008; Musteen, Barker, & Baeten, 2006). As organizations become more diverse, leaders use boundary spanning to navigate among the social identities of their diverse and dominant employees. Thus, leaders can bridge the social identity boundaries within their organizations (Ernst & Yip, 2009; Miller, 2008; Slay, 2003). Regarding risk taking, no modern research specifically addressed the presence or absence of this behavior in African American women. Research on women and gender were mixed; women were considered more risk adverse than men, but by 2003, the differences between the genders were small and decreasing (Eagly & Carli, 2003). Another study found gender neutrality in risk propensity and decision making whereas other cross nation studies found women were less likely to engage in economic risk taking (Humbert & Brindley, 2015; Maxfield, Shapiro, Gupta, & Hass, 2010).

Behavioral complexity, the last behavior of Parker and ogilvie's (1996) leadership model, focuses on the tension inherent in effective leadership which requires managers to perform multiple competing and paradoxical roles associated with getting tasks done and managing the interpersonal relationships required in organizations (Denison, Hooijberg & Quinn, 1995). According to Quinn's competing value framework which linked organizational theory with role theory, leaders needed to address competing values of stability versus flexibility and internal versus external balance as they perform Quinn's (1988) eight managerial roles which include, for example, innovator, producer, monitor and mentor. It should be noted that when conceived, transactional, and transformational leadership were the competing leadership theories discussed by Denison, Hooijberg and Quinn (1995).

In 2009, Lawrence, Lenk, and Quinn updated behavioral complexity theory. Flexibility was replaced with the human resource model of collaborate, stability with the internal process model of control, create became an open system model, and the rationale goal model is now complete. The demographics of the population which the new behavioral complexity instrument was tested remained predominately Anglo men. No information was provided on the extent to which women, let alone women of color, performed in the analysis (Lawrence et al., 2009). Behavioral complexity is considered an appropriate tool by which to measure how well a manager performs the complex, paradoxical interlocking behaviors associated with meeting the demands of the individuals they manage, performance of administrative tasks, and the ability to move the organization forward while ensuring shareholder demands are met.

Parker and ogilvie's (1996) purpose in selecting behavioral complexity theory was its ability to capture not only Quinn's (1988) original eight organizational roles typically associated with Anglo leaders, but also the multiple intersecting roles African American women occupy in the workplace due to their unique positions on race, gender, social status and environmental context. Parker and ogilvie (1996) argue that women with multiple roles are associated with greater mental and physical health due to their ability to maintain sharp boundaries, and knack for compartmentalizing their roles and not depending on one role by which to define themselves. Current research suggests that the more women successfully integrate, and not compartmentalize, their roles of gender, leader and race, the more positive the outcomes e.g., self-esteem, desire to lead others, authentic leadership among others (Kareliea & Guillen, 2014; Settles, 2006; Sims et al., 2017). It appears, behavioral

complexity has not been used to measure the roles of gender, social or culture and other leadership behaviors African American women leaders use to navigate multiple cultures.

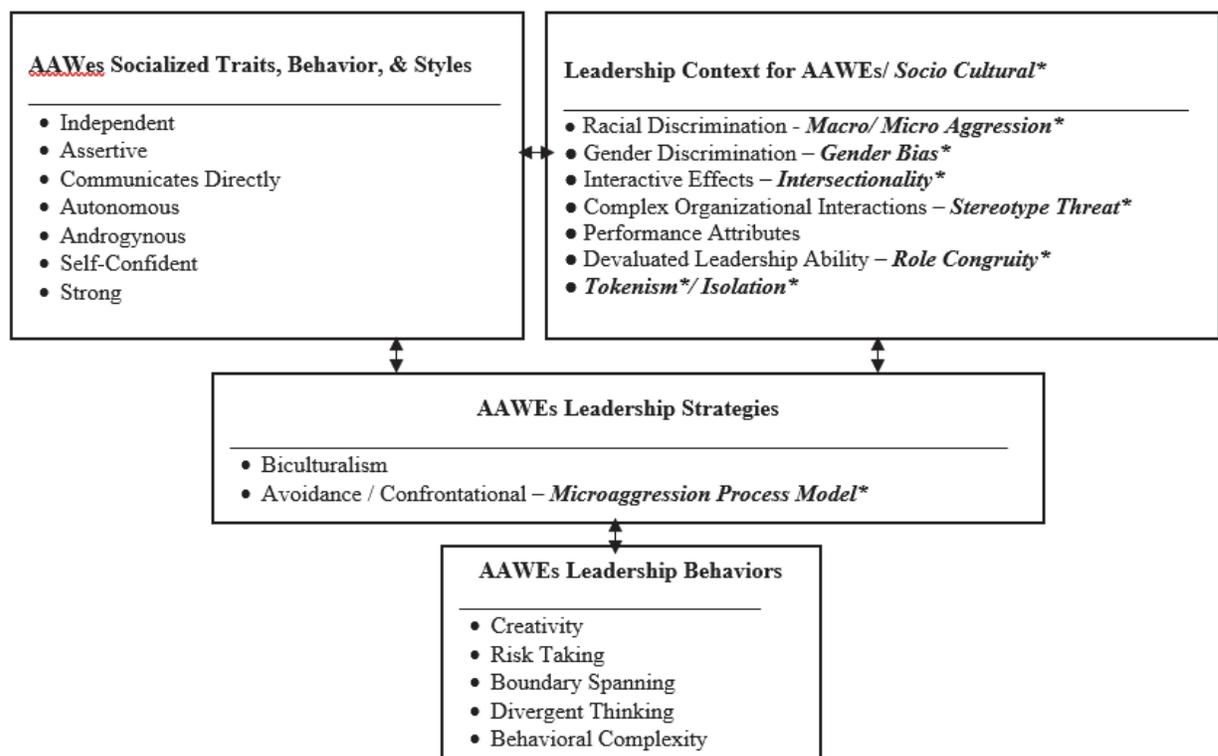
Leader/Follower Interactions

Unlike several current leadership models e.g., authentic leadership (follower attitudes and behaviors), servant leadership (follower well-being), leader member exchange (dyadic social exchange), and others, Parker and ogilvie (1996) do not address the impact their leadership model is likely to have on African American women leaders and their followers in the workplace (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May, 2004; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). Across several studies discussed herein on African American women, women and minorities leaders, the common follower outcomes from leaders' behaviors were actively working to advocate and empower diverse others and promote gender and racial equity (Davis & Maldonado, 2015; Martinez & Welton, 2015).

Updated Model

Based on the literature reviewed herein, we propose a revised African American Women Leadership Framework as theorized by Parker and ogilvie (1996), see Figure 2. Revised and new elements are bold and asterisked.

FIGURE 2
REVISED CULTURALLY DISTINCT MODEL OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN FEMALE EXECUTIVE'S LEADERSHIP



* Revised and new elements are bold and asterisked.
(PARKER & OGILVIE, 1996, P. 192)

DISCUSSION

It has been over twenty years since Parker and ogilvie (1996) developed their culturally distinct model of African-American female executive's leadership. The model was borne out of the experiences of those who occupy a unique position in America as women of African descent and we advance based on interim scholarship that the model should be updated. Leadership Context should be revised and changed to the Socio Cultural context to more fully capture the historic and contemporary challenges which punctuate African American women's leadership experiences (Byrd, 2009; Rosser-Mims, 2010). Since the end of the last century, existing and new theories and models have been proposed and researched to address how racial and gender discrimination now manifests itself as – microaggressions, microinequities, gender bias, diversity intelligence, stereotype threat, role (in)congruity, tokenism, isolation, invisibility - to name a few (Davis et al., 2006; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Hughes, 2016; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010; Sekaquaptewa et al., 2007; Settles et al., 2018; Sims, 2018; Sue, 2010). Though the names have changed, these discriminatory practices reflect the reality that African American women must navigate an onslaught of negative experiences due to the intersection of their gender, race and social position which these women have to process and mitigate in their pursuit of the career and leadership roles to which they aspire and are well prepared to assume.

Due to the common repertoire of socialized traits, the behaviors and styles that African American women draw upon enables them to meet the demands of their communities, workplaces, and families. Though originally considered more androgynous than non-women of color, overtime the mix set of direct and relational skills African American women exhibited have now become normative for most women (Chin & Trimble, 2014; Eagly, Gartzia & Carli, 2014). The trait approach to leadership has given way to a view that leadership is identity work born more out of context than genetics and socialization plays a key role in producing leaders (Avolio et al., 2009; Chin & Trimble, 2014). Future theories of African American women leaders will likely be based on how socialization and intersectionality of social and role identities contributes to a woman's leadership identities and focus less on traits (Collins, 1998; Davis, 2016; Parker, 2004).

The leadership strategies section of Parker and ogilvie's (1996) model in light of current leadership scholarship probably needs the most attention. Even as the leadership strategies of biculturalism, avoidance and confrontation included in Parker and ogilvie's (1996) model are still relevant today, we suggest that the strategies should be updated to include biculturalism and replace avoidance and confrontation with Sue's (2010) microaggression process model. We also argue there are additional negotiation strategies African American women can use to mitigate and address microaggressions. The issues African American women leaders encounter are not of their making and they alone cannot end these negative experiences. Therefore, the organizations in which they work – their leaders, peers and followers, and society as a whole must come together to eliminate racial and gender bias in the workplace.

While we find that double consciousness along with biculturalism has stood the test of time and continues to be well-researched and useful theories by which to understand how African American women navigate within their workplace's dominant cultures along with African American culture, it focuses only on the leader (Martinez & Welton, 2015). Moreover, though avoidance and confrontation accurately capture the reactions of African American women to workplace conflict, we suggest Sue's (2010) process models provides a more detailed description of how African American women may react to overt discrimination and microaggressions in the workplace. In general, current leadership theories examine the interaction of the leader and follower; and based on the experiences of African American women in the workplace, we contend that the relationship of the leader to their supervisor and work community would provide a more complete picture of how women successfully navigate, or not, their workplace environment (Avolio et al., 2009; Chin & Trimble, 2015; Sims et al., 2016; Sims, 2018).

Last, the leadership behaviors Parker and ogilvie (1996) theorized are still relevant today, and more evidence exists that African American women continue to navigate multiple cultures, as they make significant and numerous workplace contributions. African American women are creative, risk takers,

boundary spanners, and divergent thinkers. However, despite Parker and Ogilvie's (1996) embrace of behavioral complexity, no research was found on women of color employing behavioral complexity. The theories of leadership which were found beneficial to women and minorities should be explored including servant leadership and adaptive leadership (Barbuto & Gifford, 2010; Sims, 2018). Moreover, we would be remiss if we did not address the failure of mainstream leadership theory to address the needs of diverse individuals, thus new approaches are needed for leadership theory overall and African American women specifically (Hughes, 2016; Sims, 2018).

The study of African American women leaders continues to be neglected. Though limited, there are several qualitative studies and a plethora of dissertations that exist. Yet systematic and comprehensive quantitative studies that break out and address the needs of African American women are sparse at best. We suggest further research is needed to determine the impact of the revised African American women's leadership style presented herein. Also missing is research which assesses the extent to which this leadership style enhances individual and organizational outcomes e.g., satisfaction, engagement performance, retention, etcetera. Lastly, there is a need to examine next level up leadership and workplace practices which enhance and detract from African American women leaders' organizational success.

As the U.S. will soon become a minority majority workplace, the need for human resource development (HRD) practitioners and organizations to understand the intersecting roles of gender, race and social class is needed more now, than ever. If HRD professionals can begin to better understand how to develop and support one group of individuals with unique intersecting sets of identities, they should then be able to extend that approach to better understand those with different intersecting identities. HRD practitioners should be prepared to walk their talk by "avoiding tepid commitments to diversity that preserve prevailing power arrangements and prevent changes to the status quo" (Bierema, 2010, p. 14). Typically, an organization that has a competitive advantage of 3% is considered a game changer. Now imagine a work place where 7% of associates are active, engaged, and contributing at the top of their game. That's the benefit society can reap when African American women are enabled to bring their multitude of multicultural leadership talents to a workplace cognizant of, and eventually free of microaggressions and biases.

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