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**THE PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH OF SANKOFA:
PERSPECTIVES ON HISTORICALLY MARGINALIZED
DOCTORAL STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES
AND SOUTH AFRICA**

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ABSTRACT

Aim/Purpose

This work contributes to the expansion of dialogue on doctoral education research in the United States, South Africa, and within the context of higher education internationalization. There is an emphasis on identifying and reinterpreting the doctoral process where racial and cultural aspects have been marginalized by way of institutional and systemic exclusion. An underlying premise is to support representation of marginalized doctoral student experiences to raise questions about participation and contributions within the dialogue on doctoral education research and practice.

Background

Decades of reporting provide evidence of statistical portraits on degree attainment. Yet, some large-scale reporting does not include representation of historically marginalized doctoral students until the 1970s in the United States, and the 2000s for South Africa. With the growth of internationalization in higher education, examination of the impact of marginalization serves to support representation of diversity-focused discussions in the development of regional international education organizations, multilateral networks, and cross-collaborative teaching and research projects.

Methodology

The philosophical approach for this conceptual paper embraces the Sankofa tradition as a process of going back to previous trends in literature on doctoral degree completion to identify opportunities for interrogation and reinterpretation of the doctoral experience. A dimensional framework of diversity and critical race theory, CRT, guides interpretation of racial and cultural perspectives focused on exclusion, structural diversity, and the psychological/behavioral experiences related to doctoral degree completion in the United States and South Africa. A purposeful sampling strategy is used to identify of literature sources where these dimensions are identified.

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Contribution	A major contribution of this work is the use of a dimensional diversity framework in doctoral education in both the US and South Africa.
Findings	Interpretation of previous studies reveal critical insight for understanding the racial and cultural aspects of the doctoral process through comparison of perspectives on the historically marginalized doctoral experience in the United States and South Africa. They include consideration of the social developments leading to the current predicament of marginalization for students, awareness of the different reporting strategies of data, implementation of cultural philosophies to broaden the focus on how to understand student experiences, and an understanding of the differences in student-faculty relationships.
Recommendations for Practitioners	Recommendations for practitioners highlight the application of cultural approaches in the development and implementation of practical strategies for supporting historically marginalized doctoral students.
Recommendations for Researchers	Recommendations for researchers consider the application of cultural approaches in the development of scholarship supporting historically marginalized doctoral students within a global context.
Impact on Society	Intended outcomes for this work include increasing awareness about historically marginalized doctoral students. Recommendations are focused on improving their academic and career experiences in the United States and South Africa with global implications regarding their contributions.
Future Research	Future research should consider the application of cultural philosophical approaches when examining the historically marginalized doctoral experience within global, national, and local contexts.
Keywords	doctoral studies, internationalization, racial and cultural diversity

INTRODUCTION

Sankofa, *Se wo were fi na wosankofa a yenkyi*, is an Akan philosophical tradition of the Adinkra cultural heritage system and a way of knowing for the communities of Ghana and throughout the Diaspora (Temple, 2010). It translates into “it is not wrong to go back for that which you have forgotten” and “offers a solution to reconstituting a fragmented cultural past” (Temple, 2010, p. 128). This cultural way of knowing is the inspiration for this work of interrogating and (re)interpreting doctoral education with consideration of the experiences of historically marginalized doctoral students. In the case of experiences of historically marginalized doctoral students, resources typically available to support an understanding of academic achievement, doctoral student success, and degree attainment are fragmented due to systemic exclusion and misrepresentation. The process of Sankofa in this work represents its explicit acknowledgement to honor its function as a cultural philosophy for addressing this fragmentation in doctoral education research. It is a way of looking back on previous literature on the doctoral experience by using well-cited cultural dimensions of diversity and critical race theory (CRT). In doctoral education research, acknowledgement of Sankofa is not widely used as a lens for understanding the contributions and experiences of historically marginalized doctoral students. In the United States, South Africa, and other countries around the world, oppression, like slavery and apartheid, has shaped policies and practices influencing national systems of education and the way historically marginalized students experience academic processes within doctoral education.

In the United States and South Africa, doctoral education research and practice are represented by several significant trends shaping current and future developments in doctoral education for both countries. For example, in the United States, research on diversity, race, and culture has evolved considerably over the past thirty years to influence the development of policy, institutional contexts, institutional leadership, and an understanding of student experiences and student identities (Harper &

Hurtado, 2007; D. Smith, 2016; W. Smith, Altbach, & Lomotey, 2002). This research has led to the application of cultural frameworks that interrogate the influence of systemic exclusion within institutional environments to examine racial and cultural aspects of student experience (Antony, 2002; Barker 2012; Ellis 2001; Felder 2010; Felder & Barker, 2013; Gildersleeve, Croom; & Vasquez, 2011). An underlying goal of this work is to identify perspectives addressing barriers to academic success to increase degree completion and transition into the professoriate and other career pathways.

Since the democratic transition in South Africa in 1994, doctoral degree attainment has increased and student participation has become increasingly diversified (Sefotho, 2018). As such, researchers have inquired about the identities of Ph.D. graduates and their disciplinary interests. In South Africa, the first published comprehensive study on doctoral degree attainment by the Academy of Science of South Africa in 2010 represents a watershed movement towards improving the representation of PhD recipients in the country. Scholarly observations of South Africa's national capacity to provide evidence-based advice to government has led researchers to examine critical partners for collaborative research endeavors, the development of innovative programs, strategic investments, and collaboration across sectors (Nerad, 2011).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

To facilitate examination of literature on historically marginalized doctoral students, research on critical race theory, interest convergence, and Sankofa align with theoretical concepts on institutional diversity. Analysis of previous studies on the representation of doctoral students in the United States and South Africa focuses on four dimensions of diversity (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1998) and how they have influenced both contexts: 1) systemic oppression and legacies of exclusion; 2) institutional structural diversity processes, typically represented by the numerical representation of demographic information; 3) psycho-social perspectives of student experience; and 4) critical interactions and relationships shaping student success, degree completion, and transitions post degree completion.

Furthermore, critical race theory is a conceptual framework that evolved out of critical legal scholarship based on a collective frustration about the slow progression of racial reform in the United States (Ladson-Billings, 1995). CRT addresses historic and contemporary issues of African American educational achievement in the United States (Allen, 1992) and is well-aligned with Sankofa principles by addressing issues resulting from a fragmented cultural past. CRT is helpful for interpreting the marginalized student experiences of African Americans and South Africans who pursue their doctoral degree by providing a premise for developing a counter-narrative in response to systems of exclusion in doctoral education. The counter-narrative serves to address the fragmentation in racial and cultural representation within doctoral education research. CRT is generous in facilitating an understanding of how students balance their experiences of persistence with stories of resilience and success. For instance, in an examination of the South African doctoral student experience, C. R. Snyder (2014) draws on the work of Ladson-Billings (1999) and Crenshaw (1991) to identify strategies for navigating expectations that challenge gender roles and identity for women of color.

CRT offers a lens to explore a shared history of achievement based on experiential knowledge about overcoming barriers to degree completion. Considering race as a key element of persistence towards doctoral degree completion should be an integral aspect of analyzing the marginalized student experience. Progression towards the doctorate evolves out of a system of racial and culturally based challenges that are considered "normal" and "enmeshed in the fabric of our social order" (Ladson-Billings, 1999, p. 12). Some challenges affecting belief systems and behaviors of historically marginalized doctoral experiences associated with the doctoral process in the United States and South Africa include socialization, advising, development of disciplinary identity, commitment to the goal of getting the degree, and post-degree completion career objectives.

CRT evolved out of work by American legal scholar, Derrick Bell (1980), whose early scholarship on interest convergence explains racial relations in the context of social justice for people of color. Interest convergence occurs when the interests, ideas, and realities of both people of color and Whites converge. For example, Wertheim (2014) found the CRT framework helpful in illuminating the post-apartheid challenges associated with cross-racial interactions among Black, White English and White Afrikaner undergraduate students. Wertheim suggests student perceptions of racial issues reveal broader social dynamics of race relations in post-apartheid South Africa relevant to developing strategies addressing legacies of exclusion. Further study of these racial dynamics is significant to South Africa's representation of doctoral degree production in the developing global knowledge economy (Mouton, 2011). Additional analysis of CRT is discussed in the literature review section.

To further examine South Africa's capacity to support diversity in doctoral education, this work identifies several areas of racial and cultural research widely cited in education in the United States and raises questions about its relevance to South African doctoral education. Furthermore, discussing these concepts serves to facilitate a broader dialogue about the important contributions of historically marginalized doctoral degree recipients and potential for future collaboration. Thus, perspectives of the doctoral process involve consideration of research focused on race and culture that brings to bear critical and important insights for interrogation. The terms Black and African American are used interchangeably to discuss representation of the historically marginalized experience within an international context. The focus on the degree attainment of Black and African American doctoral degree recipients considers how the process of degree attainment is reflective of historically marginalized student perspectives in other countries.

Literature for this work comes from searches using Google Scholar, African Journals Online, and scholarly sources on international higher education from the American Educational Research Association Special Interest Group for Graduate and Postdoctoral Education. The process adopted for the examination of this data is "qualitative research synthesis." This is a literature review with a purposeful sample. Literature selected to be reviewed is based on similarities in the reporting data as well as the representation of the diversity dimensions. Therefore, since the analysis is based on what has been identified in published sources, the conceptual framework and method sections precede discussion of the literature. The following questions guide the development of this work: What are racial and cultural characteristics related to historically marginalized doctoral students in the United States and South Africa? In what ways are the characteristics similar or different?

The primary audience includes individuals and organizations interested in learning more about the global implications of historically marginalized students within doctoral education research and higher education, broadly. For example, research synthesis presents aspects of systemic exclusion, structural diversity, the psychological and behavioral dimensions found within data trends published in the 1) The National Science Foundation's Survey of Earned Doctorates, for the United States (National Science Foundation, 2006; 2012) and 2) The Academy of Science for South Africa, The Ph.D. Study (2010) on participation and degree completion during the latter twentieth Century until today. Explanation of these data by way of this synthesis is particularly useful for faculty, student affairs practitioners, and students who have an interest in racial and cultural aspects of doctoral study and its contribution to the future of graduate education.

Sankofa is the process of expanding ways of understanding and critiquing the doctoral education experience through a racial and cultural lens by interrogating systems, contexts, perspectives, and spaces that have ignored or forgotten racial and cultural aspects of academic contribution. Sankofa acknowledges the marginal experiences where racial and cultural representation should make a valuable impact in educational systems and spaces. Sankofa *explicitly* centers the experiences of historically marginalized student contributions and their academic participation in multiple contexts and provides opportunity to increase witness of our collective experience. Therefore, in the review of literature, observations *emphasize* racial and cultural perspectives that in the past have been ignored and/or mar-

ginalized. Moreover, observations of the literature are considered as opportunities for cultural wealth based on Yosso's 2005 framework (Yosso, 2005).

METHOD - QUALITATIVE RESEARCH SYNTHESIS

Culturally-focused dimensions of diversity (Hurtado et al., 1998) are used to frame this examination and synthesize relevant literature focused on both contexts. Reviewing literature focused on these contexts identifies racial and cultural representation where there is opportunity to (re)consider racial and cultural perspectives associated with the historically marginalized doctoral experience. Creswell (2013) notes that in qualitative research, epistemology is concerned with the nature of knowledge developed through the subjective experiences of people. In the case of historically marginalized doctoral students, the subjective experience is often ignored in academic spaces, as this is often manifested in our lived experiences.

The epistemological stance in this paper is represented by what is known as “researcher positionality.” This refers to my (the researcher’s) role and relationship to the context and can involve self-inquiry of my heritage in developing philosophical perspectives of systemic inequities (Milner, 2007). As such, I see my relationship with this work from the perspective of a historically marginalized scholar whose lens of the doctoral experience is informed by higher education research characterizing the absence and lack of racial and cultural perspectives in the American higher education system as a “racial crisis” (W. Smith et al., 2002). Similar to a literature review, for this paper qualitative research synthesis (Ravitch & Carl, 2016) is a purposeful sampling strategy that provides an analysis of findings from multiple studies completed on an issue. Development of this perspective is extended to include culture, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, politics, and other forms of orientation where perspectives are marginalized due to systemic oppression. This strategy for examining literature involves my researcher positionality and epistemology that embraces Sankofa as a pathway towards constructing knowledge acquired from our past. I choose this approach to reviewing the literature to see myself and others who look like me in the United States and around the world.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This synthesis of literature develops from purposeful sampling strategy that identified sources focused on historically marginalized doctoral student experiences. This work is a step toward further analysis on the racial and cultural perspectives regarding the doctoral experience and how this knowledge can inform national and international dialogue on supporting the developing needs of students and academic programs focused on transition into the professoriate and other leadership roles. Synthesis of literature addresses three specific areas aligned with the dimensional framework – 1) structural diversity; 2) psychological dimensions related to the doctoral experience; and 3) critical relationships influencing academic success – addressing the behavioral dimensions of the doctoral process.

STRUCTURAL DIVERSITY

Legacies of exclusion have shaped reporting structures on the representation of historically marginalized doctoral students. In many ways their structural representation, and lack thereof, mirrors their experiences of student participation. This section presents two major reporting trends related to the production of doctoral degrees for historically marginalized doctoral students in the United States and South Africa. They include general observations on 1) who receives degrees and how this information is reported and 2) pathways to degree completion critical for historically marginalized doctoral students. Research on African American doctoral degree holders and its representation of the African American population is an effect of systemic inequities and has been documented as being deeply rooted in the racial segregation (Anderson, 2002). Reporting on doctoral degree completion for historically marginalized degree completers often juxtaposes the number of degree holders with the general population. For instance, when comparing the representation of earned African Ameri-

can doctorates with the general African American population, imbalances exist (Nettles & Millett, 2006). In 2000, African Americans accounted for 12.9 percent of the population, yet represented approximately 4 percent of those who held doctoral degrees (Hoffer, Dugoni, Sanderson, Sederstrom, Ghadialy & Rocque, 2001). Significant data trends in key reports of doctoral degree attainment from the United States and South Africa provide valuable insight on several areas relevant to the historically marginalized student experience including the availability of data in both countries, previous research and current sources, statistical enrollment of students, disciplinary interests of students, and the potential of available academic support systems. Reports include the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES) *Doctorate recipients from U.S. universities: 2011* (National Science Foundation, 2012), representing the United States, and The Academy of Science of South Africa's *PhD Study* (2010.) These reports were chosen due to their publication closeness in publication dates. Racial and cultural nuances reveal student characteristics related to academic preparation, recruitment and retention, research and practical interests, and transitions beyond degree completion into career pathways. Key trends offer guidance on themes of representation including, but not limited to, baccalaureate origins, top-producing institutions, and representation in broad fields of study. Though multiple ethnic groups illustrate what these trends mean for the historically marginalized doctoral students, particular attention is given to the Black/African American doctoral experience to highlight the impact and valuable contributions developed through, out of, and beyond, the system of slavery.

STRUCTURAL DIVERSITY - SOUTH AFRICA

Observations on existing literature and reporting on the historically marginalized experiences of doctoral students in South Africa are less revealing about connections to racial segregation and systemic inequities. For example, in presenting “who doctoral graduates are” in South Africa, according to the Academy of Science South Africa Consensus Report (2010) in 2007 most of the doctoral degree completers were white South African men in their 30’s and presentation of demographics is largely represented in racial terms. While there is a reported increase in Black and non-South African doctoral degree attainment between 2000 and 2007, when compared to Whites, numbers of Black doctoral degree completers were lower with little information about why this condition exists. See Table 1.

Table 1: Gender, race, age and nationality of doctoral graduates, 2000 to 2007 for South Africa.

Source: Academy of Science for South Africa, 2010.

<i>Demographics</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2007</i>
Gender								
Female	41%	37%	39%	39%	38%	44%	43%	42%
Male	59%	63%	61%	61%	62%	56%	57%	58%
Race								
Black African	19%	22%	23%	23%	27%	29%	30%	32%
Coloured	5%	3%	5%	5%	5%	6%	5%	6%
Indian	6%	6%	7%	9%	9%	7%	8%	8%
White	70%	69%	65%	63%	59%	59%	56%	54%

<i>Demographics</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2007</i>
Age at graduation								
<30	15%	17%	17%	18%	15%	13%	14%	12%
30-39	43%	37%	38%	36%	38%	41%	38%	39%
40-49	29%	31%	30%	30%	30%	29%	30%	30%
50+	13%	16%	15%	16%	18%	17%	18%	19%
Rest of world	4%	6%	7%	9%	8%	8%	8%	9%
Unknown	6%	6%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%

Findings in the report highlight several important insights on South African doctoral degree production. South Africa produced 1,274 doctoral graduates in 2007 (or 26 doctorates per million of the country's total population). In 2007 South Africa's population was approximately 50 million according to the World Bank statistics (The World Bank, 2019). Significant improvements observed in terms of racial representation among doctoral graduates may be offset by similar increases in the number of non-South African graduates. Risk factors for non-completion or the attrition of doctoral candidates in South Africa are reported as the age of the student at time of enrollment, coupled with professional and family commitments, inadequate socialization experiences, poor student-supervisor relationships, and insufficient funding. Major barriers along the educational route towards the doctorate severely limit the pool of potential PhD graduates. However, risk factors for attrition and barriers along the pathway toward the doctorate in South Africa do not specifically address racial and cultural issues related to degree completion or attrition. This is a contrast to national reporting on doctoral student attrition in the United States. For instance, national reports on doctoral degree completion for specific student populations highlight racial groups and acknowledge influences of systemic barriers to degree completion (Council of Graduate Schools and Educational Testing Service, 2012). Given the report's findings on the inadequacy of socialization experiences for South Africa doctoral students, previous research on critical race theory, race and doctoral student socialization, and cultural wealth suggest identifying with the broader social dynamics of race and culture and their influence on risk factors for attrition. Embracing the Sankofa tradition involves acknowledging the importance of race and culture when identifying these risk factors.

STRUCTURAL DIVERSITY - UNITED STATES

Between 1975 and 1999 approximately 26,000 doctorates were conferred upon Blacks/African Americans. The top five baccalaureate institutions for these degree completers were historically Black colleges and universities, representing approximately 9% of all baccalaureate institutions for Blacks/African Americans. Between 1995-99, approximately 6,600 degrees were conferred upon Black/African Americans. The top six institutions were historically Black colleges and universities; representing approximately 9%. Though HBCUs are often recognized as institutional origins for the top producers of Black/African American doctoral degree recipients during the 20th Century, only two doctoral degree-granting HBCUs existed by 1975: Howard University and Clark Atlanta University (National Science Foundation, 2006). By the end of the Century, fifteen HBCUs existed, see Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2. Top 5 and Top 6 Baccalaureate Institutions of Black, U.S. Citizen PhDs: 1975-99 and 1995-99 (National Science Foundation, 2006)

<u>1975-99 Baccalaureate institution</u>	<u>PhDs</u>	<u>1995-99 Baccalaureate institution</u>	<u>PhDs</u>
All U.S. institutions	25,872	All U.S. institutions	6,631
Howard U. * †	752	Howard U. * †	174
Southern U. †	419	Spelman College * †	100
Hampton U. * †	386	Hampton U. * †	82
Florida A&M U. †	382	Florida A&M U. †	78
Tuskegee U. * †	361	Jackson State U. †	71
		Southern U. †	71
Top 5 as percentage of total	8.9	Top 6 as percentage of total	8.7
<p><i>Note:</i> Institutions that were tied are listed alphabetically. * Privately controlled. † Historically black college or university.</p>			

Table 3. Doctorates Awarded to Black U.S. Citizens by HBCUs: 1975-99, (National Science Foundation, 2006). Note: HBCU = historically black college or university.

<u>Institution</u>	<u>Doctorates</u>	<u>Institution</u>	<u>Doctorates</u>
All HBCUs	1,804	Grambling State U.	43
Howard U.	716	Florida A&M U.	23
Clark Atlanta U.	508	Alabama A&M U.	18
Texas Southern U.	187	North Carolina A&T State	5
South Carolina State U.	76	Southern U. A&M College-Baton Rouge	2
Meharry Medical College	74	U. Maryland-Eastern Shore	2
Jackson State U.	56	Hampton U.	1
Morgan State U.	48		
Tennessee State U.	45		

While the number of degrees achieved has increased over generations, the representation of Black/African American doctoral degree recipients remains a cause for concern. For example, in 1977, African Americans earned approximately 4% of all doctoral degrees and by 2005 that increased to 5.8% (T. D. Snyder, Tan, & Hoffman, 2006). This has contributed to the paucity of Blacks with doctoral degrees and the lack of representation of Black faculty at American colleges and universities. In 2003, Blacks comprised 6% of all full-time faculties, with 5% as full professors, 6% as assistant professors, 7% as instructors, and 5% as lecturers. These data remained the same over a decade later with 6% of full-time faculty represented as Black/African American (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

Data reveal insights relevant to the transitions towards career pathways for Black/African American doctoral students. The National Science Foundation (2018) Survey of Earned Doctorates, reporting for 2017, notes approximately 3,000 doctoral degrees were conferred upon Blacks/African Americans among nearly 54,700 total doctoral degree recipients for all groups. Blacks/African Americans are likely to attain doctorates later in their lives compared to other racial/ethnic groups. For instance, the median age for Black/African American doctoral recipients is about 36 years of age, the second highest age reported among historically marginalized groups: American Indian or Alaska Native, 39; White, 32; Asian, 31; more than one race, 31; other race or race not reported, 33. Blacks/African Americans are likely to pursue their degrees for a longer period of time compared to other racial/ethnic groups. Blacks/African Americans have the second highest time-to-degree completion rate, 12. years, compared to other groups: American Indian or Alaska Native, 13.; Asian, 9; More than one race, 9; other race or race not reported, 10; ethnicity not reported, 9.0. Blacks/African Americans are more likely to have a master's degree related to their doctoral degree with 83% doctoral recipients with master's degrees reported for all fields. Furthermore, out of all doctoral degree recipients reporting attainment of a community college degree, 20% of them were Black/African American. Black/African American doctoral degree attainment and representation in the field of education during the 20th Century is significant for the following reasons.

There were more doctoral degrees conferred in education between 1962 and 1999 compared to any other field of study during the same time period (National Science Foundation, 2006). Education continues to be a vehicle to improve public and societal conditions and to transform socio-economic situations for people from all backgrounds. For the Black/African American experience specifically, education remains vital to our survival and success to transcend oppressive spaces of exclusion. The doctorate represents this vitality at some of the highest levels of our society. In the field of education, this vitality is demonstrated in seminal transformative research on race and culture including a focus on critical race theory and interest convergence (Felder & Barker, 2013; Gildersleeve et al., 2011; Harper, Patton, Wooden, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Milner, 2007). An underlying goal of this seminal research is to present pedagogical strategies to improve educational opportunities for historically marginalized populations.

Educational pathways towards the doctorate have been challenging for historically marginalized students in South Africa. For example, Academy of Science for South Africa (2010), *The Ph.D. Study* report identifies school-drop out at various points of the academic pipeline significant for Blacks resulting in attrition at various points leading to the doctorate. The report includes data on institutions most productive in conferring doctoral degrees. However, the type of institutions facilitating transition beyond the undergraduate degree and certificate programs towards the attainment of the doctorate are critically important to examination of historically marginalized doctoral students. This work acknowledges the critical role of institutions with functions specific to the facilitating uplift and academic success. To understand the role of these institutions more deeply in both contexts, and South Africa, in particular, further research is needed.

PSYCHOSOCIAL DIMENSIONS RELATED TO THE DOCTORAL EXPERIENCE

Doctoral student socialization continues to be a seminal concept for examining the process of doctoral degree attainment and serves as a key framework for understanding the impact of racial and cultural issues. As research on race and culture evolves, understanding this work within the context of doctoral education will be important to institutional diversification efforts that serve to transform academic environments towards inclusivity. Research on the student aspects of socialization (Gardner, 2008; 2010; Gardner & Barnes, 2007) and the organizational elements of socialization have been cited widely (Tierney, 1997; Weidman, 2006; Weidman & Stein, 2003; Weidman, Twale, & Stein, 2001) but more research on the racial and cultural aspects of the doctoral process is needed to provide guidance on creating strategies to increase participation and degree completion from underrepresented groups (Ellis, 2001; Twale, Weidman, & Bethea, 2016).

While scholars have considered the ways that racial experience complicates the doctoral process when students must address discrimination and racism including academic preparation, parental educational background, interactions with faculty, and advisement (Antony & Taylor, 2004; Barker, 2011; Cleveland, 2004; Ellis, 2001; Gay, 2004; Green & Scott, 2003; Willie, Grady, & Hope, 1991), additional empirical study is needed to understand why there has been little increase in doctoral degree completion and transition into the professoriate for Black/African Americans and other underrepresented groups. Research regarding observations of psycho-social issues at the doctoral level is at the center of many institutional diversity efforts and is the goal of transforming academic environments away from historic legacies of exclusion towards environments that are more inclusive. For instance, C. R. Snyder (2014) cites Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen and Allen (1999) in an examination of women of color in South African doctoral programs. She considers four areas where historically marginalized students face barriers to degree completion: challenging race and gender roles, balancing multiple roles, managing financial concern and access to resources, and finding support.

While there are many critical issues to consider when examining the racial experience, the practical strategies attempt to prioritize supporting the psycho-social aspects of the racial experience and how student perception is a guiding feature in the multiple processes associated with doctoral student socialization. In examining the differences in doctoral student success among Black, Hispanic and White students, Nettles (1990) discusses the severe (and systemic) underrepresentation of Black doctoral students and asserts that Black and Hispanic students perceive more feelings of racial discrimination and receive less research and teaching assistantships than their White counterparts. He notes that out of three groups, Black doctoral students require the most intervention for support due to challenges with undergraduate preparation, availability of research opportunities, and the reliance on personal resources to finance doctoral study. Nettles' quantitative study does not identify specific psycho-social issues regarding the racial discrimination experienced by Black students. However, his work underscores that perception that experience is essential to understanding the role race plays in the doctoral process.

Morehouse and Dawkins (2006) also discuss the severe underrepresentation of Black doctoral degree recipients as a long-standing pattern and suggest that more research must be developed to understand how students could be supported once they are enrolled in doctoral programs. Their work with the McKnight Doctoral Fellowship program demonstrates the importance of seamlessness as an effective approach to supporting African American degree completion and success beyond the doctorate. They assert that opportunities should facilitate a connection between research activities and student interests and suggest that these research interests may be related to the African American experience. A seamless approach also considers the environmental constraints associated with the African American student experience in predominantly White spaces where accounts of indirect discrimination and racism may occur about their participation as students as well as the ways in which their research interests are supported.

Consideration of these experiences can inform program organizers of practices that have typically served to complicate intellectual development that emerges from student research interests. A seamless approach involves a series of activities that serve to counteract racist norms through supportive activities designed to embrace students' research interests and empower their intellectual development. In addition to these important motivational elements, Morehouse and Dawkins (2006) also discuss program essentials such as providing funding for doctoral study and mentors who are willing to provide guidance on research activities. Taylor and Antony (2000) find that motivation about research was directly linked to the racial experience for doctoral students. They assert that African American doctoral students feel pressure to respond to stereotype threats of not being able to meet standards of academic achievement and feel the need to prove themselves. Furthermore, the need to prove themselves often puts them at risk of responding to false standards that do not encourage their intellectual development. Taylor and Antony note that African American students carry the weight of wanting to improve education for their communities and this obligation is deeply intertwined with their research agendas. Moreover, African American doctoral students' obligation to social justice is often correlated with an objective to strengthen historically underserved marginalized communities (Hopp, Mumford, and Williams, 2003). In fact, for some doctoral students their racial experience may extend beyond the goal of degree completion towards a commitment to a broad agenda of social justice where racial politics are central to life-long obligation of service, research, and teaching -- serving to uplift the very communities they represent. To understand doctoral student socialization holistically, race must be considered an aspect of doctoral students' research orientation in an effort to facilitate meaning-making of the learning experience, strides towards greater intellectual development, degree completion, and success.

Furthermore, considering the racial experience will serve to inform faculty and administrators who are interested in strengthening their capacity to support marginalized doctoral students, enacting our commitment to uplifting our community. Since this work examines race from a psychosocial perspective it's important to acknowledge scholarship on racial identity/ideology and its significant contribution to the discussion on the psychosocial experiences of Black/African Americans, including Cross' (1991) *Shades of Black: Diversity in African American identity* and Helms' (1990) perspectives on racial identity theory in her work, *Black and White Racial Identity, Theory and Practice*. Cross and Helms present measurement scales and interventions regarding the ways African Americans perceive their identities in relation to their personality development, interpersonal interactions, and environment. Within the context of doctoral student socialization, Cross and Helms' perspective on personality development may be aligned with scholarly intellectual development (scholarly personality or scholarly voice), interpersonal interactions may be aligned with the student-faculty relations (or relationships with other academic community members), and doctoral students' academic setting might be considered for environment.

Relevance of Cross's (1991) and Helms' (1990) work brings to bear on the significance of psychology on the racial experience being a critical aspect of socialization for African American doctoral students. Perspectives on the role of racial identity within the doctoral experience are addressed in the examination of doctoral students' interactions with faculty mentors and curriculum design (Felder, 2010; Hall & Burns, 2009). Furthermore, the concept of racial identity is relevant to Black doctoral students' perceptions on their struggle to persist towards degree completion (Gildersleeve et al., 2011) and in understanding their experiences in cross-race advising relationships (Barker, 2012). These perspectives are consistent with the process of Sankofa as they centralize the importance of race and culture in consideration of academic success, degree completion, and transitions into career pathways.

CRITICAL RELATIONSHIPS INFLUENCING ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Faculty advisement and supervision

The student-faculty relationship is essential to socialization and academic success for historically marginalized doctoral students in both contexts. In comparing the experiences of historically marginalized students in the literature, a key distinction of the student-faculty interaction is the difference of how authority is managed. In the United States faculty members are typically seen as advising students on the development of their research and are often formally known as faculty advisers. When considering policy research suggestions focused on the academic advisement of historically marginalized doctoral students in the United States and South Africa, two important issues should be considered: how to advise students regarding non-academic career pathways and preparation for future faculty roles. In terms of advising Black/African doctoral students about non-academic career pathways, strategies must be multifaceted to advise students about opportunities (Barker, 2012; Felder & Barker, 2013).

In addition to traditional gatekeeping systems, supportive and holistic advisement must involve reviewing prospective networking and professional development opportunities within one's institution in addition to students' relevant disciplinary and industrial communities. Students must be aware of the ways their knowledge and skills can be honed to contribute in ways that align with the way they make meaning of their academic experiences, disciplines, and practices. For many Black/African American students this may involve acknowledging and understanding the ways their racial and cultural perspectives inform their research and practice agendas and incorporating this into advisement strategies (Ellis, 2001). Realities about the availability of faculty opportunities must be considered to address the racial and cultural interests of students. These realities may include advising students about faculty opportunities related to a student's research interests, the ways they may or may not be supportive of these interests, and identifying other opportunities where a student may be able to thrive both professionally and personally. For instance, if a Black/African American student's research agenda prioritizes race and culture, an adviser should consider how this agenda will be supported in post-degree completion within a faculty role. Furthermore, professional development at the doctoral level must address students' ability to hone transferable skills and the ways these skills might address their interest in racial and cultural issues. Sefotho (2018) discusses the process of identity development for emerging faculty supervisors in South Africa, their role and contribution both on the world stage and within their country.

The relational aspects of interest convergence and the racial and power dynamics involved in this negotiation are essential towards the building of racial equality awareness in the relationships between faculty and historically marginalized doctoral students. Within HBCU contexts these relational aspects within the student-faculty relationship have served to support historically marginalized student transition into doctoral education. For most of the 20th Century, these institutions were the primary providers of opportunities for graduate education for Black/African Americans (and continue to make substantive contributions). Research on HBCUs as baccalaureate origins, as well as, producers of doctoral degree completers for Black/African American doctoral degree recipients, provides foundational background information for understanding the institutional cultural traditions fundamental to academic success at the doctoral level. Policy research suggests our graduate education system is vulnerable regarding the recruitment and retention of students from historically marginalized backgrounds (Council of Graduate Schools and Educational Testing Service, 2010). HBCUs facilitate opportunities for graduate schools to identify and attract talented students in the United States, South Africa, and other parts of the world. Furthermore, these institutions specialize in creating interventions that increase degree completion for Blacks/African Americans. In this way, these institutions are key national assets in facilitating institutional diversity and building capacity to support historically marginalized doctoral students by minimizing vulnerability in the graduate education system.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Disciplinary areas focused on education, social sciences, and humanities have been identified to have strong representation of Black/African American doctoral degree completers (National Science Foundation, 2006), while doctoral degrees in the sciences have been an academic priority for doctoral students in South Africa. Therefore, understanding trends about career opportunities related to these areas is essential to supporting academic success, degree attainment, and transition beyond degree completion. An understanding of these trends must involve consideration of the racial and cultural aspects of the doctoral student experience. To maximize interest in disciplines of students from underrepresented backgrounds, grant programs that leverage the interests represented by the academy and industries should consider the ways racial and cultural issues inform research and practice. In doing this they will be better positioned to understand and support contributions from doctoral students from historically marginalized communities.

The doctoral experience is multi-faceted and complex, with numerous issues to consider for understanding how to develop holistic support efforts/strategies for historically marginalized doctoral students. There are three areas of socialization that are critical to the ongoing support of Black/African American and South African doctoral student success and degree completion: 1) *Prior socialization*, how race and culture can inform the process of preparing students for doctoral study, 2) *Augmented advisement* strategies create support for developing new opportunities for building cultural wealth, and 3) understanding the ways *disciplinary interests* are expanding and transforming in response to shifting societal needs. Strategies that increase awareness and understanding of these issues can serve to strengthen institutional/organizational diversity initiatives. How and why these students persist through to completion can be integral for learning more about their persistence in other disciplines. Strategies for future analysis should lay the groundwork for deeper examination through interrogation of literature with the use of questions based on a culturally-focused dimensional framework for diversity. Sankofa embodies the application of these questions. That is to say, this philosophical approach promotes an underlying premise to continually engage permissiveness in freedom for representation in spaces of our past, present, and future where there is a right and need to exist. Findings address four dimensions: legacies of exclusion, structural diversity, psychosocial aspects of student experience, and student faculty interactions through the practice of advisement in the United States, and supervision in South Africa.

There are several benefits to studying the racial and cultural aspects of the doctoral experience as they relate to understanding Black/African American doctoral students. First, issues contributing to racial and cultural inequities in doctoral education that relate to a student's prior socialization, advisement needs, and institutional commitment to supporting students' interests, inform our understanding of how to support academic success, degree completion and transitional experiences beyond the doctoral process. Second, looming socio-historical factors and the existence of racism and exclusionary policies in higher education have contributed to systemic educational marginalization.

Critical race theory and interest convergence provide important foundational philosophical frameworks for building practical strategies that align with the historical and intellectual needs of Black/African American doctoral students related to historic legacies of exclusion. Third, the study of racial and cultural experiences at the doctoral level contributes to the existing body of knowledge about the ways Black/African American students experience the doctoral process by examining issues that have contributed to the underrepresentation of Blacks/African Americans. Research on the racial and cultural aspects of the doctoral experience must expand to support the value of storytelling and narratives about student experience. These efforts emphasize the racial and cultural experiences associated with socialization for historically marginalized students.

SANKOFA

The process of Sankofa involves applying scholarly cultural perspectives to previous literature where there is a need to learn more about the historically marginalized doctoral experience. Four dimensions of diversity and critical race theory provide guidance to prioritize racial and cultural perspectives of literature on the doctoral experience. Sankofa allows for interrogation of academic exclusion to explain why current racial and cultural predicaments exist. Future acknowledgement of Sankofa as a philosophical approach might consider how widely cited research within specific disciplines promotes and facilitates philosophical re-examination of literature lacking insight on cultural perspectives. For instance, availability of data representing doctoral students in specific ethnic groups reveal effects of systemic marginalization caused by slavery and apartheid. While the first doctorate was awarded to these minority groups in both countries in the late 19th Century, 1876 and 1899 respectively, publicly available statistical reporting on historically marginalized populations was not available until 1975 in the United States, and much later in South Africa, 2010. Given the progressive economic and social developments in each of these countries, application of Sankofa considers why there is an absence of formal representation of ethnic groups from doctoral education for over a century. James Anderson (2002) describes racial conditions of the Black/African American doctoral experience in the following way: “The origins and development of American higher education paralleled the evolution of a national system of racially qualified slavery and its attendant ideologies of racism and class subordination” (p. 3). Unfortunately, this suggests the existence and/or potential of these ideologies to influence our academic systems and their constituents.

CULTURAL WEALTH

This work illustrates the uniqueness of the African American and South African doctoral experience and their inextricable connection with the tenets of slavery and apartheid. To examine the dimensions of diversity as they relate to the United States and South Africa, the philosophical approach Sankofa facilitates reconstituting racial and cultural perspectives regarding the doctorate. For historically marginalized doctoral students in the United States and South Africa, there is often an absence of, or challenges to, the development of cultural awareness along their educational journey and restoration of knowing is vital to academic success and degree completion. The concept of cultural wealth provides specific guidance for embracing the lived experiences of communities of color; this involves consideration of race when it is involved in responses to structures, practices and discourses (Yosso, 2005). In particular, five areas regarding these responses are considered: the intercentricity of race and racism; the challenge to dominant ideology; the commitment to racial and social justice; the centrality of experiential knowledge of people of color; and the utilization of interdisciplinary approaches.

Yosso’s (2005) work is particularly useful in its practicality for implementation of strategies that combat practices that don’t promote doctoral student success and are not attuned to the ways the racial experience shapes individual and institutional culture. Implementation facilitates the building of cultural wealth and proposes a model of community cultural wealth that centralizes the lived and gained experiences that nurture communities of color to form six forms of capital: They include Aspirational capital, which refers to the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers. Sankofa is an example of aspirational capital. It’s important to consider the ways race influences aspiration to pursue the doctorate and, once enrolled, degree completion. Linguistic capital includes the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style.

Moreover, historically marginalized students have struggled in environments that have not been receptive to cultural difference and language expression. Familial capital refers to cultural knowledge nurtured among family (kin) who carry a sense of community history, memory, and cultural intuition. Social capital can be understood as networks of people and community resources. Over the last decade, social media has become an increasingly collaborative platform to build community, networks,

and sources of support for students who do not benefit from cultural wealth in their home academic environments (Felder, Parrish, Collier, & Blockett, 2016). Navigational capital refers to skills of maneuvering through social institutions. Successful doctoral students attain both theoretical and heuristic knowledge to gain access with gatekeepers. Finally, resistant capital refers to knowledge of oppositional behavior that challenges inequality.

CONCLUSION

Cultural perspectives serve as a lens for the interrogation and reinterpretation of data, policies, and practices to illuminate opportunities for deeper knowledge and understanding of barriers to academic success and doctoral degree completion. Future research might consider the value of the racial and cultural aspects of the doctoral students for any meaningful strategies designed to support Black/African American doctoral students (and students from historically marginalized backgrounds). Practical strategies might address how faculty members consider culturally relevant practices. Mentoring relationships between faculty and students of color, particularly at the doctoral level, are critical to doctoral degree completion for African Americans and other students of color (Barker, 2011; Davidson & Foster-Johnson, 2001; Taylor & Antony, 2000)

Development of this work involving a Sankofa perspective serves to raise questions about what historically marginalized experiences look like for students in other countries around the world. In particular, this work facilitates broader inquiry to consider ways Sankofa could be applied as a lens to inform knowledge of the racial and cultural aspects of doctoral experience in contexts where legacies of exclusion exist. Cultural philosophies like Sankofa, as well as critical race theories, can be used to develop these recommendations and to explore other implications for the development of institutional and student policy serving as legacies of exclusion. Also, research must continue to provide research on doctoral degree attainment to include personal narratives of historically marginalized doctoral students.

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BIOGRAPHY



Pamela P. Felder's research examines the relationship between the belief systems and behaviors of Black and African American doctoral students and their impact on academic socialization, success, and degree completion. Her work examines systemic and societal factors shaping barriers to degree completion and students' approach to navigating these barriers. This involves exploring students' racial and cultural experiences and ways they influence socialization.