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A Grounded Theory Study Of Inequities Of Power And Privilege: African-American Educators' Anti-Hegemonic Counter-Narratives

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INEQUITIES OF POWER AND PRIVILEGE: AFRICAN AMERICAN
EDUCATORS' ANTI-HEGEMONIC COUNTER-NARRATIVES: A GROUNDED
THEORY STUDY

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Educational Leadership and Foundations

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To my mother, Fannie Ruth Blidgen, whom I lost during my pursuit of this degree. It is with great sadness that you are not here to share this moment, but your spirit has continued to propel me towards reaching my goal.

and

To my daughter, Kelly,
and to borrow from B.K.S. Iyengar, may you continue to purge your intelligence so that it might bring you 'light on your soul'. As you see and do, you will find no need to search outside yourself for what is already inside you.

INEQUITIES OF POWER AND PRIVILEGE: AFRICAN AMERICAN
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ANTI-HEGEMONIC COUNTER-NARRATIVES: A GROUNDED THEORY
STUDY

By

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the racially relevant stories of African American teachers and educators in education settings. It explores the relationship of ideology, culture, and status as a minority while examining the intersection of this relationship in the context of a border community. It looks at beliefs and values about the teaching and learning process and attempts to determine if any of those beliefs, values, and/or actions are functions of (real or perceived) racial discrimination. It also looks at reactions, responses, management, and eventual consequences of perceived institutionalized racism. This grounded theory study utilizes both survey and interview methods of data collection.

It first reports the findings from surveys which include demographic information about the identified population and their responses from the *Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity* (MIBI) and focuses on African Americans' beliefs regarding the significance of race in (a) how they define themselves and (b) the qualitative meanings that they ascribe to membership in that racial group. Secondly, it reports the findings of 24 hours of semi-structured interviews exploring the participants' beliefs about the balance of power and privilege between African Americans, Whites, and non-White Hispanics both in the larger U.S. society and within their professional education settings

It concludes with a summary of the findings of both the survey and the interviews with a discussion of the degree to which they collectively addressed the questions which framed the study.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

General Overview of the Study

“When people speak of racism they usually mean attitudes rather than institutionally generated inequality,” wrote David Wellman in the opening chapter of his study *Portraits of White Racism*. The chapter is entitled “Prejudiced people are not the only racists in America” and this conveys precisely Wellman’s central argument. He acknowledges that research on attitudes is a legitimate area of inquiry, but argues that prejudice should not be conflated with racism. If it is, then “the crucial feature of race relations in America becomes the *ideas* that whites have about others; not their own superior position, benefits following from their position, or the institutions that maintain this relationship.” (p. 21)

This argument against a cause/effect relationship between prejudice and racism is further substantiated by Blauner (1972) and is one of the underlying assumptions in the theoretical underpinnings of this proposed study. Another underlying assumption: racial groups and racial oppression are central features of the American social dynamic provides the foundation for this study. Blauner clearly refutes the idea that prejudiced attitudes are the essence of racism. He does not deny the power of ideas of white superiority or the impact of racial

stereotypes on the conscious or unconscious mind. However, he cautions against accepting these phenomena as simple explanations for the causes of racism. Blauner posits that although extreme prejudice and hate are often associated with evil intent, it is not a requirement for the maintenance of a racist social structure. Many would agree that education and exposure has done much to reduce or even eliminate some of the more overt forms of prejudice, but can we say that racism does not exist in the United States in 2008? I maintain that anyone who believes that racism has been eliminated is oblivious to racial injustices and inequalities in their subtler forms. Precisely because race and racism is manifested in more insidious and subtle forms, educational researchers have a moral obligation to explore the role of race in examining the educational experiences of minorities. It is my intent to accept that responsibility while examining the experiences, beliefs, values, and decisions of African-American educators in their educational settings. Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a useful tool for this purpose and will be used as part of the theoretical and methodological framework for this study.

One of the main tenets of CRT is the permanence of racism and, as Derrick Bell (1992) states, "racism is a permanent component of American life." CRT focuses directly on the effects of race and racism while addressing the issue of white hegemony (Cook, 1995; Crenshaw, 1995; Dalton, 1995, Matsuda, 1995). It also specifically espouses the use of counter-storytelling which is critical to this study. This study will give voice to an otherwise marginalized group. African-

American educators will have an opportunity to tell their stories and help us to understand a new and unfamiliar world. The question becomes: if racism is not overt, how is it maintained? This leads to the actual thesis statement for the proposed study: racism is institutionalized. This study proposes to examine the ways that institutionalized racism excludes, restricts, or impacts the participation of African-American educators in their educational settings.

Justification for the Study

As an African-American teacher and administrator for more than thirty years, I have had many opportunities to witness various unexplainable attitudes and actions in school settings by both white and minority teachers. At times I could not understand the motivation for certain behaviors or attitudes, but did not feel compelled to rationalize others' behaviors. However, when I moved from a large urban public school system in the Midwest to a much smaller school system in a border city in the southwest, I began to notice what I would categorize as aberrant behaviors by some minority teachers. Upon reflection and conversations with some of these teachers, I began to sense that their racial identities, in some important ways, seemed to determine their behaviors as teachers. Finally, I became privy to a situation in which an African-American teacher's racial identity appeared to dictate all of her decisions and actions. Some

of these actions were illegal and worse, detrimental to the welfare of her students.

At about the same time, I began reading some of the research on *Stereotype Threat* and *Critical Race Theory* and *Latino Critical Race Theory*. Moreover, I was fortunate enough to attend the American Educational Research Association's Annual Meeting at which I attended several sessions on *Counter Storytelling*, *Critical Race Theory*, and *Anti-Hegemonic Research in Education*. As these three factors converged, I was convinced of the need to research and write about this topic of institutionalized racism.

This study will examine the racially relevant stories of African American teachers and educators in educational settings. It will explore the relationship of cultural identity, ideology, culture, and status (as a minority). It will look at beliefs and values about the teaching and learning process and determine if any of those (beliefs and/or values) are functions of (real or perceived) racial discrimination. It will also look at reactions, response, management, and eventual consequences of perceived institutionalized racism.

There are several possible implications which encourage this study. Many years of studies suggest teachers of color are important----both for students of color and white students. Scholars have identified several key reasons why students of color stay in school longer and achieve more when they have teachers who look like themselves. These include: the role model effect, the power of expectations, cultural relevance, and teacher retention. In other words, we need

teachers of color. We need to identify the barriers which prevent teachers of color from remaining in the profession and experiencing success. We need to discover the ways in which subtle and/or overt cases of racism cause teachers of color to respond in non-productive ways that either (1) prevent them from successful experiences; or (2) impede student success.

In order to highlight these issues, I propose the following research questions:

1. *What is the mode of managing, handling, and/or responding (action/interaction) to real or perceived systemically embedded racism within the cultural context of a school setting?*
2. *What do these minority teachers do? How do these actions affect their decisions that ultimately impact teaching and learning?*

This study is intended for educators, policymakers, politicians, sociologists, and anyone interested in understanding the subtleties and complexities of racism. In particular, it is intended to highlight the actions and interactions between individuals and the aggregate consequences of institutionalized racism within our educational systems. Moreover, this study can help to refute some lingering assumptions about race and racism, for example; 1) racism and oppression are not independent, dynamic forces, but reducible to economic or psychological causes; 2) most aspects of race/racism are attitudes and prejudices of whites; and 3) *the immigrant analogy* which is an assumption that there are no

differences between the third world or racial minorities and European ethnic groups. We cannot afford to continue to avoid a deeper understanding of the complexities and consequences of racial oppression. By using a CRT lens and taking a snapshot of one small segment of our society, i.e. African-American teachers and administrators, against a backdrop of racism, we can support systems of knowing and understanding that counter the dominant Eurocentric epistemology.

Many prominent educational researchers have called for additional analytical tools for the critical exposure of race and racism that serve as a source of *Othering*, as well as allow for the desilencing of marginalized individuals (DeCuir and Dixon, 2004). *Othering* is a term meant to describe the social and psychological process of systematically distancing oneself and/or cultural group from other persons or cultural groups based on race, gender, or sexuality. This distancing (or expulsion) is followed by a “repulsion” that founds and consolidates culturally hegemonic identities along sex/race/sexuality axes of differentiation (Young, 1988). Judith Butler (1990) writes that the operation of repulsion serves to consolidate “identities” founded on the instituting of the “other” or a set of “others” through exclusion and domination. This act of “othering” sets up a border which, when maintained, serves the purpose of social regulation and control over those deemed “other”. Critical Race Theory can serve as a tool to expose what some refer to as a “new” type of racism.

In her writings about racial discrimination and the process of impoverishment and marginalization, Menchaca (2001) discusses the influence of Omi and Winant's (1986) work on her writing about race. Omi and Winant call upon social scientists to study race to understand the politics and processes of racial categorization. Moreover, according to Menchaca, they emphasize the urgency to study race as a central source of societal organization since, in multiracial societies race has been used by those in power to share privileges with those similar to themselves. Menchaca cites the insightfulness of Omi and Winant's macroanalysis of state systems in which they propose that when one social group has power over the other group(s), the state encodes racial policies and the views of the dominant group are converted from ideology to policy. I believe that by extension, educational, social, and cultural institutions within the state systems reflect the same procedures for maintaining inequities between power and privilege. In other words, these institutions encode racial policies as the views of the dominant group are converted from ideology to policy. How are beliefs transformed into action? Menchaca reports that Omi and Winant concur with Pierre Bourdieu who posits that because individuals are products of society, they are habituated to internalizing externality which leads to a social outlook that promotes the maintenance of the status quo. This is, however, an oversimplified version of Bourdieu's position on habitus.

In *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Bourdieu proposes that practice is neither the mechanical precipitate of structural dictates nor the result of the intentional

pursuit of goals by individuals but rather “the product of a dialectical relationship between a situation and a habitus, understood as a system of durable and transposable dispositions which, integrating all past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions, and make it possible to accomplish infinitely differentiated tasks, thanks to the analogical transfer of schemata’ acquired in prior practice” (Bourdieu 1972/1977). Bourdieu’s theory of action allows individuals and society to converge and interact in such a way as to transcend objectivism and subjectivism; it allows a system that is both structured (by past social milieus) and structuring (by individual unique trajectories and situations). I will refer to Bourdieu’s work on habitus as it informs the conceptualization of my study.

I will also rely on the work of Anselm L Strauss whose philosophical, sociological, and methodological perspectives are closely aligned with a Pragmatist /Interactionist stance. This philosophical/theoretical framework will serve as a foundational platform for my study. It is intended to orient the readers to my outlook and theoretical sensitivities as a researcher and will also inform the conceptualization of the study. It is important for me to emphasize that neither of the above-mentioned frameworks is presented as a tool of analysis of findings since this study is using a grounded theory methodology.

I believe what Blauner (1972) stated thirty years ago remains true today: *Race and racism are not figments of imagination, but central to the economics, politics, and culture of this country.* I also believe that the first step in eliminating the

possibility of denying racism's existence is to identify it and connect it to its variant forms.

Although there are various definitions and perspectives of what actually constitutes racism, Memmi's (1968) definition of racism will serve as the reference for this study. Memmi states:

"Racism is the generalized and final assigning of values to real or imaginary differences, to the accuser's benefit and at the victim's expense, in order to justify the former's own privileges or aggression."

Clarification of Key Terms

Whenever it is possible to assign people to different groups, there is a tendency to develop stereotypes about them (prejudice) and to treat them on the basis of these qualities (discrimination). Prejudice comes from two Latin words, *prae* (before) and *judicium* (a judgment). It implies a judgment before knowing all of the facts. According to Horton and Hunt (1984), there seem to be five main roots of prejudice. One is the ethnocentric belief that one's own group is somehow better than others. Another is the simple fact that every day we make judgments of people about whom we know very little; stereotypes, though rarely accurate, serve as a handy guide in forming our opinions about others. Third, we generalize about others based on our previous experiences with members of some group. Fourth, we justify our stereotypes based on our beliefs about what the relationships and privileges of certain groups should be.

Critical Race Theorist's equate this notion of privilege to "property rights". They contend that in our society the privileges afforded to the dominant

culture translate into the value of property and sustain unequal accumulation of wealth. Finally, we tend to develop prejudices against people who compete with us.

Historical Context of Race Prejudice in the United States

Although a complete historical study of the origins of race relations in the United States is beyond the scope of this study, Chapter 2 will review pertinent discussions regarding race. The discussions will center on the writings of G.W. Ellis (1915), Albert Memmi (1965, 1968), and Robert Blauner (1972). The writings of these three authors provide a historic map which not only defines, but guides us through the analysis and interpretation of the mechanism of racism.

These writings allow us to conclude that culturally supported racial prejudice coupled with the economic, political, and social privilege afforded to members of the superior positioned group, has sustained and maintained itself and all of its complexities in United States culture for more than a hundred years.

This discussion will be followed by Omi and Winant's (1986) theory of the *ongoing racial formation process* while Gillborn (2000) offers an argument against the trivial use of multiculturalism. Further, Chapter 2 offers an overview of Joyce King's (1997, 2001) work on *dysconscious racism* that she describes as tacitly accepting dominant white norms and privileges.

Equally important, Chapter 2 outlines the theoretical and conceptual frameworks which undergird this study. Specifically, there are discussions of *Critical Race Theory*, *Racial Identity Development* (including the key components of the *Black Racial Identity Development* (BRID) Model and the *Multiracial Model of Racial Identity* (MMRI)), Bourdieu's (1989 , 1992)) theory of *Field, Capital, and Habitus*, Claude Steele's (1999) work on *Stereotype Threat*, and Anselm Strauss' manifestation of *Symbolic Interactionism*. These four theoretical and conceptual discourses form the multi-layered and interrelated framework that allows for awareness, consciousness, and positionality while engaging in the study of the individual and aggregate racialized and cultural systems of African-American teachers in their education settings.

The Methodology

It was necessary to use both quantitative and qualitative methods. In order to capture the participants' sense of identity, they were asked to complete the *Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity* (MIBI) which provided insight into their sense of racial identity and self-concepts along four dimensions. These four dimensions consist of: racial salience, the centrality of the identity, and the ideology associated with the identity. Racial salience and centrality refer to the significance that individuals attach to race in defining themselves; while racial regard and ideology refer to the individuals' perceptions of what it means to be Black (Sellers, Shelton, Smith, Rowley, and Chavous, 1998). The researcher also included the *RaLES- Brief Scale* which was developed to assess the impact of perceived racism on the behavior, psychological status, and health outcomes of ethnic minority populations. The survey included a section which provided useful demographic information.

The qualitative method used in this study is based upon the grounded theory methodology developed by Anselm Strauss. This investigation, presented in the form of a grounded theory study, is an analytic schema of a phenomenon, that relates to a particular situation. This situation is one in which individuals interact, take actions, or engage in a process in response to a phenomenon. To study how people act and react to this phenomenon, the researcher collects interview data and interrelates categories of information and writes theoretical

propositions or hypotheses (Cresswell, 1998). In this study, the phenomenon under investigation is racism (real or perceived) and the situation is the participants' actions, responses, and/or management of the phenomenon.

The basic sequence for the study was as follows: 1) The researcher developed and defended a proposal to conduct the study; 2) The researcher sent out the survey instrument to African American educators employed by the three largest school districts in a city on the U.S.-Mexico border in the southwestern United States; 3) The returned surveys were statistically analyzed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software package; 4) Subjects (who indicated an interest) participated in one and one-half to two hour long audio-taped interviews; 5) The transcribed data was analyzed using the constant-comparative method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and the researcher identified categories through this method. At the same time, to the extent possible, she set aside theoretical ideas and notions in order to permit the analytic, substantive theory to emerge; 6) When possible, participant confirmation was sought and revisions made as necessary. The methods are described in detail in Chapter III.

Selection of Participants

The selection of participants for the initial study was based on employee identification of African American educators in the three school districts. Two of the districts provided the researcher with a database of names of African

American educators in their school districts. One district did not include names of administrators. The third district required the researcher to complete an Open Records Act request. The identified employees (259 total) were sent the survey instrument and invited to participate in the study. The surveys were returned at a rate of 20.5% (53). Thirty-seven of the fifty-three indicated a willingness to participate in the interview stage of the study. The researcher scheduled interviews with 11 subjects which included participants from all three districts. All of the interviewees were enthusiastic and eager to participate. The interviews took place in public cafes during non-duty hours or on weekends. Most were scheduled during a holiday/vacation period.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations within this study include the following:

1) The researcher, as with all researchers, was guided by her own beliefs about the nature of reality, the relationship between the inquirer and the known, and how to gain knowledge of it. These beliefs shape the way that she sees the world and acts in it. According to Bateson (1972), the researcher is “bound within a net of epistemological and ontological premises which_____ regardless of ultimate truth or falsity_____ become partially self-validating”.

2) All research is interpretive; it is guided by beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied. Each interpretive paradigm is influenced by the questions the researcher asks and the interpretations the researcher brings to them.

3) Transcripts from the audio-tapes were used only for research data, and not for stimulated recall.

4) Interviews took place in a public place and, in some cases, interviewers were visibly uncomfortable discussing the sensitive topics which could have been overheard by others.

5) Because of the nature and context of the study, the research is not generalizable in the rationalistic sense. However, the transferability of the findings is intact through the trustworthiness and integrity of the data collection and analysis process.

The Outline of the Study

The basic purpose of Chapter I is to define the research problem and provide an overview of the relevant literature, and the justification, methodology, and limitations of the study. The remaining chapters and their general content are as follows: Chapter II reviews the literature on race and racism in the U.S., Cultural Identity, and Critical Race Theory; Chapter III presents the methodology of the study and the rationale for its utilization; Chapter IV provides an analysis of the data collected from the survey which provides the context from which to analyze the interview data. The survey, the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI) is a synthesis of the strength of two approaches to research on African American Identity. The first or mainstream approach has focused primarily on universal properties associated with ethnic and racial identities. The second approach has focused on documenting the qualitative meaning of being African American, with emphasis on the unique cultural and historical experiences of being African American. The MIBI synthesizes the strengths of these two approaches and proposes 4 dimensions of African American identity: salience, centrality, regard, and ideology; Chapter V analyzes and interprets the interview data resulting in a set of theoretical hypotheses pertaining to the phenomenon studied; Chapter VI summarizes the study, suggests implications for the study, and provides questions and recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

The purpose of this chapter is to present a review of the literature that has contributed to the conception, accomplishment, analysis, and interpretation of this research. The chapter will examine both the theoretical literature and empirical studies related to the research. The theoretical concepts of race and racism and Critical Race Theory are described, several theories of identity formation are identified, and the social theories of Habitus and Symbolic Interactionism are discussed.

Empirical studies related to race will highlight meanings attached to race, racial ideologies, and institutional and cultural racism. A more in-depth account of Critical Race Theory and Critical Race Methodology is presented since it is directly related to the study and used as a primary lens to analyze and interpret the research. A discussion of identity and stereotype threat is included as it relates to both social and professional identity formation. Finally, there is an in-depth discussion of Symbolic Interactionism and its relation to social identity, professional identity, actions, qualitative methods in general, and specifically, Grounded Theory.

Introduction

Psychology of American Race Relations

Although the world is plagued by anti-interracial feelings and hostilities, one of the most striking and interesting illustrations of the universal problem of race prejudice exists in the United States where the supposed two most widely dissimilar and divergent types of the human race are brought together in large numbers and in close contact, in the atmosphere of theoretical freedom and democratic equality (Ellis, 2001). This theoretical atmosphere provides a key to understanding the source of many of the racial issues in the United States. Most minority citizens identify themselves with the mainstream characteristics of the average American which include being democratic, equitable, and Christian. However, they often find that these basic American values are often not adhered to and not within their grasp. On the other side, those who culturally identify with the group responsible for bringing minorities to the United States and creating such a grave sociological dilemma often struggle to find moral and democratic solutions that are just to both races. Much of what is experienced between the two groups is some attempt to reconcile these two opposing positions. In some cases, racial prejudice has been and continues to be used to justify inequities.

Historical Context of Race Prejudice in the United States

A complete historical study of the origins of race prejudice in the United States would go far beyond the scope of this study. However, it is necessary to have a depth of knowledge which provides an explanation and understanding of the historical, social, and psychological factors that contribute to the false beliefs whites hold concerning non-whites and vice versa. In order to establish a perspective and provide a point of departure for this study, the researcher referred to G. W. Ellis' (2001) explanation for the origin of race prejudice in the United States. Ellis contended that in the United States race prejudice exists as a result of a basic belief system that acknowledges a natural intellectual, physical, religious, moral, and social inferiority of people of color. Although this explanation of race prejudice was used and continues to be used to theorize the causes and existence of racism, the ultimate fact(s) is (are) reflected in the benefits and privileges afforded to whites as a result of believing in their superiority.

Historically, this prejudiced belief system is based on two factors. The first is a natural antipathy or prejudice towards those unfamiliar and unlike oneself.

There ensues a natural tendency to protect and maintain ones established thoughts and ideas from the possibility of being overpowered by the new group's thoughts and ideas. Another contributing factor to the deeply embedded notion of white racial superiority evolved from some early ethnological writers like Gobineau of France and Ammon of Germany. As early as 1854, these

writings taught and established false theories that the races were naturally unequal. They postulated that scientific factors such as craniological differences, hair texture, and skin color indicated differences in intellectual and moral capacities. Moreover, these writers helped to set the white race as the acceptable standard of beauty and judged all others by their approximation or divergence from it (Ellis, 2001).

Historically, these two factors, natural antipathy towards differences and false scientific support for prejudice, account for the development and entrenchment of thought and ideas which endorsed a cultural environment supportive of racial prejudice. In ethnic relations, discrimination is a natural product of racial prejudice. Discrimination or treating people on the basis of group classification rather than individual characteristics has usually been practiced by a dominant group to protect its privileges.

Nearly a century ago, G. W. Ellis (2001) introduced the concept of privilege and asserted that the worldwide existence of interracial prejudice was the greatest sociological problem that confronted civilization. He explained that this era had begun with the physical conquest of the Americas in the New World, with the social and baneful institution of slavery, founded upon race and color. Its causes were chiefly economic on the one hand, with the political weakness of the Negro Africans on the other (Ellis, 2001). (Ellis focuses on racism as it exists in the United States.)

Ellis argued that in this society racism is based on two factors: first the belief that blacks (and other 'non-whites') are "naturally inferior to the white race", and second, a system of social, economic, and political benefits for whites at the expense of blacks. This concept of social, economic, and political privilege has been consistently present in discussions about racial prejudice and racism from earlier writings (at least from the beginning of the twentieth century) and is currently at the heart of Critical Race Theory (CRT).

Ellis continued to explore the historical backdrop for racial prejudice through a discussion of the transition from physical slavery to more modified forms, in which white nations take control by force and violence of the colored races and reduced them to political subjugation in Asia, Africa, and a number of islands. Although the white nations enjoyed economic advantages from these controls, they espoused more altruistic motives such as the growth of democracy and the progress of civilization (Ellis, 2001).

This culturally supported racial prejudice and discrimination coupled with the economic, political, and social privilege afforded to members of the superior positioned group, has sustained and maintained itself and all of its complexities in United States culture for more than a hundred years.

Horton and Leslie (1981) pointed out that much of the research in the 1950's and 1960's showed that a direct attack upon discriminatory practices was more effective than attempts to persuade people to change their attitudes and prejudices. Consequently, the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's removed

some of the most overt discriminatory practices and resulted in a lowered interest in research during the 1980's. For example, during 1980 and 1981, the Sociological Abstract listed only twenty articles under "prejudice", of which only four dealt with the nature, origin, and causes of prejudice. Most of the rest dealt with the extent of prejudice with a continued downward trend of research in this area. Yet, discrimination and inequities between power and privilege remain. Despite much progress in U.S. society during the past few decades, racism and prejudice are still ugly realities in all sectors of American life, including education. Today, racism may be less overt and virulent than in the past, but its effects can still greatly harm its victims. In fact, subtle, insidious forms of racism may be more harmful than more blatant forms. The psychological effects can be especially harmful and have far reaching consequences.

Theories on Race and Racism

Theory plays an important role in research. In conducting research, it is essential to have a perspective from which one can view and interpret the collected data. Theory, as perspective, is a useful tool for looking at data. In this study, the researcher has found the theoretical underpinnings of U.S Race Relations, Critical Race Theory (CRT), Racial Identity Formation, Bourdieu's theory of Field, Capital, and Habitus, Stereotype Threat, and Symbolic Interactionism as a basis for building a theoretical framework from which she could begin to explain the phenomena being explored. This section will present a

meta-review of some of the major theoretical literature attempting to explain the nature of racism, its origins, and manifestations.

Several theories have been advanced to explain the nature of racism, but for the purpose of this study, the researcher relied primarily on the works of Albert Memmi (1965, 1968) and Robert Blauner (1972) to provide a conceptual map for defining, analyzing, and interpreting the mechanism of racism. Memmi (1965) and Blauner (1972) also help to provide a fundamental understanding of the historical, political, economic, and social context of race prejudice and racism in America.

The Colonial Relationship.

In *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1965), Memmi developed the idea of comparing U.S. race relations with that of European colonialism. He describes the colonial relationship as that which:

- yields a chained dependence,
- molds character, and
- dictates conduct.

This description provides a useful lens from which we can view the white/people of color relationship. The first two aspects of *chained dependence* and *molded character* can be examined within a historical context. The final aspect provides a backdrop from which we can begin to look at and understand the more salient issue of conduct. Specifically, Memmi's description of the three

aspects of a colonial relationship served as a framework for a focused examination of how U.S. race prejudice and racism impact the beliefs, choices, and behavior of African-American educators in school and/or education settings/contexts.

A common theory espoused by Memmi and others states that *white privilege* is at the heart of the colonial and/or race-prejudiced relationship. This idea works to dispel the reductionist notion that the concept of a colonial relationship is merely economic. Memmi argues that although profit is often a benefit of the colonial relationship, the colonizer is also driven by privilege and usurpation.

Dominated Man.

Since a well-defined concept of racism as a system or mechanism is essential to this study, this section will present an in-depth discussion based on Memmi's *Dominated Man* (1968). Memmi begins his discussion on race and racism with a definition of racism which was useful throughout this study. Memmi defines racism as: "...the generalized and final assigning of values to real or imaginary differences, to the accuser's benefit and at his victim's expense, in order to justify the former's own privilege or aggression." These concepts of privilege and aggression are critical aspects of this study. One of the main assumptions upon which this study is designed is that the maintenance of privilege for the benefit of the dominant group to the "pain" of the dominated

group is at the core of a racist system. Another main assumption is that this racist system of privilege can only be maintained through psycho-social aggression and aggressive acts, albeit subtle or microaggressions. (The researcher's experiences with racialized microaggressions should be dutifully acknowledged since they constitute researcher bias in the study.)

Memmi's (1968) analysis of a racist attitude highlights four essential elements:

- 1) Stressing the *real* or *imaginary differences* between the racist and his victim.
- 2) *Assigning values* to these differences, to the advantage of the racist and the detriment of his victim.
- 3) Trying to make them *absolutes* by *generalizing* from them and claiming they are final.
- 4) *Justifying* any present or possible *aggression* or *privilege*.

Widespread Mechanism.

Memmi (1965) concludes that the term *racism* is not adequate to describe a mechanism of such depth and breadth. His commentary highlights the fact that the mechanism is construed in such a complex and varied way, and is based on accusations far beyond biological or cultural differences. He suggests the term *aggression-justification* as a more accurate description of the mechanism. This discussion of the complexity of the mechanism of racism supports one of the purposes of this study which is to highlight the complex and diverse nature of racism and to illustrate some of its more insidious and subtle forms. The shift towards viewing the complex nature of racism as a mechanism is movement towards acknowledging its systemic nature. Moreover, the utility of the word

aggression as a descriptor is undeniable since racism is manifested along a continuum of aggression and/or aggressive acts towards its victims from overt (macro) attitudes and/or behaviors to subtle (micro) attitudes, behaviors, or acts.

Stressing the Difference.

The researcher concurs with Memmi's analysis of the first element of racism as the stressing of differences between what Memmi refers to as the accuser and his victim. Perhaps, more importantly, the racist accuser invents or emphasizes, or interprets the difference to his advantage. Simultaneously, the racist assigns values to the differences which will ultimately discredit the victim and reflect credit on his accuser (Memmi, 1968).

Placing a Value on the Difference.

Memmi (1968) holds that the placing of value on the difference is one of the key elements in the racist process. He says that by emphasizing and placing values to the advantage of the accuser, the accuser is deemed superior and the victim is seen as inferior. A simple example can be seen with the difference in skin color between blacks and whites. Since whites hold the position of accuser, they can assign a higher value on white or light skin and a negative value on black, brown, or dark skin. The value system, then, marks these assignments to show that white skin is superior to black skin.

In this system a real biological difference such as the above example brings new meanings with it and can transform into what Memmi (1968) refers to as a harmful psychology that ultimately moves into a metaphysical life. As Memmi states, we go from biology to ethics, from ethics to politics, and from politics to metaphysics.

Once this value has been assigned, the absoluteness of this difference is essential while flattering the accuser and degrading the victim. As Memmi states, if the accuser wants to be radically superior, then the difference must be radical.

The Difference is Generalized.

Now that the value has been placed on the difference, it opens the door for discrimination. Accordingly, for example, in the case of skin color, the victim is characterized by his dark skin with additional negative meaning and symbols attached to the skin color. This process for generalizing the difference calls for all of the members of his social group to be targets for the accusation.

Equally important, Memmi (1968) points out that racists insist on making the differences absolute in order to show their superiority over the accused. This type of biological racism, Memmi asserts, penetrates the flesh, blood, and genes of the victim transforming into fate, destiny, and heredity. Biological racism, then, rarely escapes giving rise to psychological and cultural racism. The outcome is what is referred to as social determinism (Memmi, 1968). That is, since this biological difference has penetrated the victim's entire being and that

of all of the members of his/her collective group, it has become socially and inescapably determined. In fact, since it is now a collective defect, no one individual from this victim's group can escape this social determinism.

The Difference is Final.

Memmi (1968) explains that this stage of the process requires that the identified difference is final and absolute. For example, if Jews are viewed as greedy, then they are *all* greedy and each generation will *be* greedy. To use another example, if a black man is seen as an inferior human being, *all* black men *will always be* inferior.

Furthermore, the identified difference is often stretched to mythical proportions. Racists often portray blacks in sub-human forms or in caricature. In other words, in the extreme, racism merges into myth. One well known example of this racist portrayal of blacks in sub-human or caricature form is *blackface*. This style of theatrical makeup originated in the United States, dates back to 1789 and is used to affect the countenance of an iconic, racist, American archetype. White blackface performers in the past used burnt cork and later greasepaint or shoe polish to affect jet-black skin and exaggerated lips, often wearing wooly wigs, gloves, tails, or ragged clothes to complete the transformation.

Blackface was an important performance tradition in the American theater for over 100 years and was also popular overseas. Initially, blackface performers were part of traveling minstrel shows which were very popular in the United

States from 1828 through the 1930's. Consequently this entertainment genre played a significant and undeniable role in shaping the perceptions of and prejudices about blacks generally and African Americans specifically.

Undoubtedly, stereotypes embodied in the stock characters of blackface minstrelsy played a significant role in cementing and proliferating racist images, attitudes and perceptions worldwide. In some quarters, the caricatures that were the legacy of blackface persist to the present day and are a cause of ongoing controversy (<http://en.wikipedia.org> 6/4/2006). Although by the 1950's and 1960's in the U.S., blackface was essentially eliminated as it became associated with racism and bigotry, some remnants of this era remain an accepted part of U.S. culture especially through packaging and marketing of some major food brand items such as *Aunt Jemima* and *Cream of Wheat*. To illustrate the continued acceptance of iconic, racist mythical images of African-Americans as late as 2006, the researcher has seen at least three different "lawn jockeys" in blackface proudly displayed on the front lawns of homes in two separate upscale neighborhoods in Borderville, U.S.A.

Some social commentators have stated that blackface provided an outlet for whites' fear of the unknown and the unfamiliar, and a socially acceptable way of expressing their feelings and fears about race and control (Lott, 1993). Lott concludes that the mask of blackface offered a way to play with the collective fears of a degraded and threatening – and male – 'Other' while at the same time maintaining some symbolic control over them.

This control often in the form of degradation and dehumanization justifies the racists' view of the victim as incomprehensible, impenetrable, mysterious, strange, disturbing, etc. Consequently, the victim is destined to become inextricably linked to these characteristics and misfortune. At the same time, this system and process assures the accuser of keeping his role as rightful judge (Memmi, 1968). This process in which one race, class, or ethnic group holds such definite and final expectations about other groups is referred to as social or racial stereotyping.

Racial Stereotyping and 'Racial Stigma'.

The negative effect of this social and/or racial stereotyping is undeniable and represents the basis for one of the theoretical frameworks used to analyze and interpret the findings of this study. In looking at African-American educators' racialized identity and perceptions in educational settings, the researcher attempted to explore the effects of perceived racialized microaggressions and to theorize the possibility of their reactions, responses, behaviors, and/or actions to be understood or explained with Claude Steele's theory of stereotype threat. A discussion of Steele's notion of stereotype threat based on minority students' disengagement from schoolwork for fear of living up to negative stereotypes of minority intellectual inferiority is presented later in this chapter.

Since the historical and social mechanism of race dictates that African Americans view themselves as different from their peers outside of their group, this racial identity has implications for how they see themselves and how they view their racial group (Rowley, Sellers, Chavous, & Smith, 1998).

This study is designed to explore how the subtleties, perceptions, and symbols of the mechanism of race manifest themselves in the professional lives of African-American educators. Furthermore, although beyond the scope of this study, there are implications of how they impact and perpetuate the inequities of power and privilege observed in U.S. society. Glen Loury (as cited in Rowley, L, 2004) attempts to create a conceptual framework in order to clarify this aspect of 'race' and the observable intergroup disparities. Although Loury's conceptual framework addresses the larger issues of social and economic inequities drawing upon the fields of sociology and social psychology, the researcher found the concept to be relevant to this study in that it allows the significance of the historical context of race to remain as an integral aspect of the analysis.

Loury presents three axioms by which the reader can gain an understanding of race relations. Simply stated, the first axiom of "constructivism" posits that race is a social construct and not biologically based. The second axiom "anti-essentialism" postulates that African-American inequality is not the result of any innate characteristic or shortcoming of African-Americans. The third axiom represents Loury's most original and compelling key to understanding race relations. Moreover, it is closely related to the issue of

stereotype threat while providing a link between the discussion of racial identity and racial inequality addressed in this study. This third axiom involves the role of “racial stigma” in perpetuating inequality. The axiom reads in full as follows:

Axiom 3 (Ingrained Racial Stigma): An awareness of the racial “otherness” of blacks is embedded in the social consciousness of the American nation owing to the historical fact of slavery and its aftermath. This inherited stigma even today exerts an inhibiting effect on the extent to which African Americans can realize their full potential. (p.5)

This concept of “racial stigma” as the central factor in explaining racial inequality contributes to a broader understanding and use of “stereotype threat” as one of the theoretical frameworks used to analyze and interpret findings in this study. Additionally, Lounsbury’s theory of “racial stigma” acknowledges the link between what others think of African Americans as well as what African Americans think of themselves. Equally important, Lounsbury’s “racial stigma” connects with another theoretical framework used in this study, symbolic interactionism.

Symbolic interactionism sees meaning as social products. Though the meaning of things is formed in the social context and is derived by the person from that interaction, it involves more than just application of the derived meaning; it is an interpretive process. The notion of “racial stigma” is a social product from which actors derive meaning and interpret what they perceive to be appropriate behavior, responses, and attitudes. This notion of symbolic meaning embedded in the collective social consciousness and impacting the

actors is at the heart of symbolic interactionism which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Loury's main contention is the utility of "racial stigma" to displace racial discrimination as the conceptual approach to studying and understanding racial inequality. His argument is based on his assessment that group interactions and effects of stigma are of greater importance than individual interactions and effects. He argues the following:

In American society, where of historical necessity patterns of social intercourse are structured by perceptions of race, it is inevitable that developmental processes will also be conditioned by race. Historic racial reward bias, combined with race-mediated social relations, can lead to current and future development bias, particularly if the racially marked population group is stigmatized.

Although the researcher agrees with the corollary, she does not agree with the futility of including the exploration of racial discrimination as part of a conceptual approach to studying and understanding racial inequality. She views the two concepts as inextricably linked, yet possessing distinct characteristics relevant to the racial discourse. The researcher views discrimination and discriminatory practices as outcome behaviors and acts committed and perpetuated by the privileged accuser against the victim. Conversely, racial stigma is more of a complete reciprocal and interactive system based on psycho-social behavior steeped in historical perspective and influencing what Loury refers to as African-American "patterns of contact." He argues that these "patterns of contact" can be defined as the variations in the structure of

interracial relations and include “rules of contract” or the written and unwritten restrictions that have historically influenced how African Americans interact with members of other groups within American society and the researcher might add, with each other.

As the researcher has shown in this section’s discussion on racial stereotyping and racial stigma, these theories provide relevant frameworks, historical perspective and language useful in the analysis and interpretation of African American educators’ racialized perceptions, identity, and interactions in educational settings.

Justification of the Accuser.

The accuser uses racial stereotyping and negative images of the victim to explain and justify his attitude and behavior toward the victim. Memmi (1968) points out that although the process or mechanism of racism moves strategically and systematically towards the myth, the myth refers back to the racist. The researcher agrees that rather than racism being the racist’s *response* to some psycho-social stimulus, the motivation for racism lies within the racist. It is well documented in human psychology that man can fool himself into thinking just about anything that he needs to protect himself from the harshness of realities that he would rather not believe.

In classic Freudian psychology, *Projection* is defined as what occurs when a person unknowingly attributes his own instinctual impulses or the threats of

his own conscience to other people or to the external world. It is then easier to deal with an anxiety that arises from these internal threats. In the case of the racist, the impending threat is the threat or guilt associated with his behavior toward his victim. It is through this thinking that the racist projects the negative characterizations upon his victim as a way to justify his own behavior and allows him the freedom to justify his oppressive and negative behavior towards his victim. If his victim is an “inferior”, culturally deficient being, then he deserves to be ignored or treated according to his less valued status. Stereotypes bias our perceptions of individuals and can serve to perpetuate the myths which fuel the mechanism of racism. People tend to see what they expect to see: the confirmation of expectations is psychologically comfortable. To illustrate, the researcher points out the common pop culture practice of portraying educated, informed, and well-spoken (Standard American English) African-American characters as anomalies or in some way awkward. Most often these characters are portrayed as less valued and made fun of by their stereotyped African-American companion characters who, while portrayed as buffoonish, lazy, and/or sexually provocative, are more esteemed. In an attempt to explain this racist practice, the researcher suggests that in the same way that the confirmation of lowered expectations is psychologically comfortable to the racist, when confronted with individuals who do not fit the racist stereotype for African Americans, it is psychologically confusing. Presumably, the racist’s need to use negative stereotypes is both profound and well-integrated into U.S. culture.

Moreover, since negative racial stereotyping consists of negative qualities assigned to the *victim-group*, and is also known as ‘scapegoating’, it can be used to justify the hostility and aggression towards the victim. As implied, ‘scapegoating’ serves the purpose of relieving the responsibility and guilt associated with the attitudes, behaviors, and actions towards the victimized groups.

As discussed earlier, the racist’s characterizations and expectations of the *victim-group* is often exaggerated to extreme and mythical proportions which can go as far as dehumanization. Soldiers, for example, are often trained to regard the enemy as things rather than as people because it is psychologically easier to create hatred of, and justify aggression against people if they are perceived as “gooks” or “camel jockeys” rather than as other human beings.

Although the fact of individual motivation for racism exists, the important thing to note from this discussion is that it (racism) is easily supported and augmented through socially supported mechanisms such as negative stereotyping. Negative stereotypes and lowered expectations held by racists become tradition to the racists, permeate the culture, and are taught to new members by media, schooling, and social institutions, etc. In fact, the “socialization of racism” is an integral part of the mechanism or systematizing of racism. As Memmi (1968) points out:

“Individual motivation does not become genuine racism until it is filtered through the culture and ideologies of a group. In the prevailing stereotypes it seeks, and finds, the explanation of its own uneasiness, which is then turned into

racism. The individual racist actually discovers discrimination all about him ---- in his education and his culture---as a potential mental attitude, and he adopts it when he feels the need to do so. The intermediary of society is felt on two levels: that of the victim, as a member of a guilty and defective group, and that of the accuser, representative of a normal and healthy group."

Memmi's analysis of the mechanism of racism includes a reversal of the racist's common argument that he is punishing his victim because he deserves to be punished. Rather, writes Memmi, the racist calls the victim guilty because he is already punished or, even because he, the accuser is preparing to punish him, the victim. In other words, the victim is already living under the weight of disgrace and oppression. The racist does not typically aim his accusations at the mighty, but at the vanquished. The Jew is already ostracized, the African-American is already degraded, the colonized is already colonized. At this point, and in order to justify the situation, the racist utilizes a process of rationalization to explain away the ghetto, the underclass, and the colonial exploitation (Memmi, 1968). The researcher would suggest that in contemporary society, the same rationalization is used to explain away the ghetto, the underclass, minority crime rates, and achievement gaps between minority and white children.

The collective nature of the mechanism of racism helps to form part of the group values and can relieve the individual of the weight of any responsibility. As Memmi (1968) stated, "Where everyone tolerates and condones scandal, scandal disappears." Put another way, if society accepts and condones the injustice of racism, the injustice is silenced, and the racism flourishes.

Racism and Oppression

Memmi states, “racism is one of the best justifications of and symbols for oppression.” Later in this chapter the researcher will present a discussion on the significance and roles of symbols in the interactions between human actors. This partnership between racism and oppression emerges differently from one social and historical context to another. Although this relationship can be found for example, in anti-Semitism as well as in the colonial relationship, for the purpose and context of this study, the focus will be on the racism and oppression manifested through microaggressions against African American educators in professional settings.

Memmi’s work not only provides an ample definition and analysis of the fundamental mechanism of racism, but forms the basis for the underlying assumptions upon which this study was designed. In like manner, it will be useful in the analysis and interpretation of the data collected for this study. This mechanism, which is common to all racist reactions consists of: *the injustice of an oppressor toward the oppressed, the justification of the aggression or the aggressive act*, and as will be argued later in the discussion on Critical Race Theory, *privilege*. The concept of *privilege* at the core of permanent aggression, inflicted on a dominated man or group by a dominating man or group is one of the principal tenets of Critical Race Theory which is used as one of the theoretical and methodological frameworks for this study.

One of the principal beliefs framing this study evolves from the following assumption regarding privilege: Underneath its many layers, racism is the racist's way of giving himself absolution and justifying his *privilege*. It should be restated that although post-civil rights legislation accounts for fewer overt and radical acts of aggression by dominating men or groups, subtle, insidious microaggressions continue to be committed toward dominated men and groups in varied contexts every day. This research was designed, in part, to reveal such microaggressions toward African American educators in their professional settings. Moreover, the researcher expected to discover the impact of these real or perceived microaggressions on their professional choices and behaviors.

Memmi concludes his attempt to define racism by calling for knowledge about the mechanism as a step towards fighting and treating racism. In other words, he refers to it as an information campaign that is called for, as well as a political fight.

Institutionalized Racism.

Nearly a decade after Memmi's theories on the historical context and evolution of race as a social construct, Robert Blauner (1972) asserted that racial groups and racial oppression are central features of the American social dynamic. Specifically, he built upon Memmi's conception of comparing U.S race relations to that of the European colonial relationship and theorized that racial minorities are internal colonies of American Capitalism. In other words, he

posited that this colonial relationship between the United States and racial minorities is developed systematically and critically and results in the oppression of the colonized minorities.

It is noteworthy that although Blauner's work was published more than thirty years ago, he refuted some of the leading assumptions about race and racism which continue to be widely held beliefs in contemporary society some thirty years later. It is popularly concluded that race and ethnicity are not relevant in today's society, or at best can be attributed to individual attitudes and prejudices of whites. Further, there are many who would argue that there are no differences between third-world or racial minorities and European ethnic groups. The latter assumption implies that any lack of opportunity or resource is solely the victim's fault. The rationalization is first and foremost that since this country is founded upon an immigrant ideology____ and since other immigrants such as the Italians, Polish, and other Europeans have immigrated to this country, become educated, and acquired adequate wealth, resources, and opportunities____ African Americans (and other third-world groups) must be lazy, culturally inferior, or characterized by any other negative stereotype not to have made the same advancement. As discussed above, this position is often used to justify one's racist attitude and/ or behavior and serves to remove responsibility or guilt associated with one's actions. This assumption would surely yield a very different conclusion if filtered through a Critical Race Theory analysis or Loury's Racial Stigma Theory.

Many of the long maintained assumptions regarding ethnic minority relations in the United States can be traced back to early European social thought. Although leading figures in U.S. sociology such as Albion Small, William Graham Sumner, W. I. Thomas, Charles Cooley, and Robert Park gave major attention to race relations, their research on the conditions and problems of immigrants and racial minorities was soon overshadowed by European social theory (Blauner, 1972). The prestigious European social thought began to inform the analysis of modern societies including the United States. Blauner identified the underlying assumption of these social theories as the idea that race and ethnicity become increasingly less important as industrial societies develop and mature.

Blauner cited the work of Karl Marx, Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, Ferdinand Toennies, and Georg Simmel as having had the most influence on the development of a general conceptual frame which assumed the decline and disappearance of ethnicity as a major component of modern social structure.

Although this conceptual frame of decreased relevance of race is contrary to the realities of U. S. society, it continues to inform the analysis of racialized mechanisms. To illustrate, a recent paper from the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy (2001) discusses the connections between density, sprawl, and segregation by race and income in U.S. metropolitan areas between 1980 and 1990. Although the paper highlights some institutionally embedded discriminatory practices such as unfair mortgage lending practices, landlords' decisions not to rent

housing to blacks and Hispanics, and insurance companies' refusal to write homeowner policies in predominately black neighborhoods, it avoids analyzing segregation practices based on the mechanism of racism. The segregation patterns are analyzed based on mobility, income levels, and population density, and even though Pendall (2001) makes a connection between race-based discriminatory practices and the circumstances which impact the resources, opportunities and choices that are afforded to African Americans and Hispanics, his analysis has a tone of fatalism. He reports the practices in a *matter-of fact, nobody at fault, this is the way it is in this society* manner. He concludes his paper with a completely race-neutral tone by calling for policy reform to save open space, promote mass transit, economize on infrastructure, build housing affordability and mixed housing types, etc. By implication, then, the U.S. society will continue its discriminatory practices against African Americans and Hispanics and by extension, maintain the structure of the mechanism of racism. This paper exemplifies the continued practice of both using a race-neutral lens to analyze racialized issues and denying the impact of racism in U.S. society.

The assumption of race and ethnicity as increasingly irrelevant ideas as societies develop and mature is contrary to the observable realities of U.S. society. In *Racial Oppression in America* (1972), Robert Blauner attempted to refute the state of theory in the study of contemporary race relations. His belief (and that of the researcher) is that social theory should identify the significant social forces and trends of an historical period and in the least illuminate the relations

among them. The researcher has attempted to use Critical Race Theory, Stereotype Threat, and Symbolic Interactionism to analyze the experiences, beliefs, and behaviors of contemporary African-American professional educators in their professional settings. Moreover, the researcher has attempted to build new theory to explain the relationship between significant social forces and their experiences.

Equally important in his writing, Blauner refutes the leading ideas and assumptions which have guided sociological studies of race since the early European social thought discussed above: First, the view that race is not a salient issue in modern societies. Second, the idea that race and racism are merely products of economic and psychological causes. Third, that the most important aspects of racism can be traced to individual attitudes and prejudices. (All three of these ideas were well represented in the Lincoln paper discussed above and offered as explanations for land-use segregation in urban areas.)¹ Finally, the commonly called *immigrant analogy* which views no difference, in relation to the larger society, between third world or racial minorities and European ethnic groups. The danger of the *immigrant analogy* as a leading idea which guides the sociological study of race lies in the fact that it denies the impact of racism and discounts or minimizes the pervasiveness of racial oppression.

One of the most significant contributions from Blauner's writings which is not only relevant to, but frames this study is his rejection of prejudice as the

¹ Lincoln Paper explained racial segregation as a result of individual race prejudices.

reductionist cause of racism. He does not deny the existence of prejudice, but rather calls attention to the fact, in much the same way as Memmi (1968), that it (prejudice) is not an essential element to maintain a racist social structure. He cites examples of men of goodwill who take refuge in exempting themselves from the culpability of racism by taking comfort in their own favorable attitudes toward minority groups.

Blauner highlights the faulty logic of this position:

“...such men of goodwill help maintain the racism of American Society and in some cases even profit from it. This takes place because racism is institutionalized.”

In like manner, Turner (1979) argued that racism has become so endemic and historically rooted in U.S. society and its institutions that “it exists apart from and in some cases in spite of, the social attitudes of the people who administer these institutions.” In fact, the work of several sociologists including Memmi, Blauner, Turner, Winant and Omi, and others have all argued that the factor of “covert or institutional racism has a dynamic of its own, despite the capriciousness of prejudice and bigotry, real as they are.” The researcher accepts that it is not in the public interest to reductively translate racism as a function of prejudice and bigotry while obscuring the real issues. However, as discussed above, this explanation of racism as a function of prejudice provides a façade from which individuals can avoid responsibility of the subordination and oppression of minorities in general and specifically, African Americans in U.S. society.

This idea that racism is institutionalized is important to this study in that it is one of the underlying assumptions which frames the study. At the same time, the study has attempted to provide a forum for African-American educators to articulate their racialized experiences in response to Memmi's call for knowledge as a powerful weapon against racism.

The researcher has attempted to embrace the traditions of Dubois (1967), Frazier (1957), Cox (1970), and Hare (1965) by setting several basic aims: 1) to rescue the African-American experience² from the racist interpretations which characterize it as pathological and pathogenic, and represent it in the reality of its multidimensionality; 2) to create new concepts, categories, and analytical frameworks that enhance understanding of both African-American reality and the larger reality of U.S. society; and 3) to provide a framework for a future critical analysis of the structure and functioning of the U. S. society, especially in terms of race, privilege and power.

² Although the study was designed to analyze a particular segment of the African –American citizenry in a specific setting, it was expected to yield some generalities applicable to the larger reality of African Americans in U.S. society.

The Color-Blind Era

In the United States, under President Reagan, the 1980's witnessed increased centralization of power, the dominance of market economics and attacks on state intervention in social policy areas such as public health, welfare, and education (Gillborn, 2000). Despite what Gillborn refers to as a hostile national government, he suggests that for most of the 1980's anti-racism retained a strong presence in some areas: many education authorities, for example, adopted multicultural and/or anti-racist policy statements. However, the impact of such policies was often negligible. Troyna argued that such policies continued to present 'race' and racism as 'superficial features of society; aberrations, rather than integral to our understanding of the way society functions' (Troyna, 1993).

Omi and Winant (1986) advanced the theory of the socially constructed status of the concept of race which they labeled the *racial formation process*. They reported that the theory of race has been transformed to the point that it is now the conservatives who argue that race is an illusion. The evolution of this race-neutral position continues to be a convenient way for individuals and systems to avoid recognizing and acknowledging the salience of race in contemporary U.S. society. It underscores the main task facing racial theory for the last several decades since the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The central work of sociologists, intellectuals, activists, and others compelled to work towards an understanding of race in U.S society, is to focus attention on the continuing significance and changing meaning of race. It is to engage in a fight against the

notion of an illusory nature of race; against a widely reported death of the concept of race; and against the replacement of the category of race by other, supposedly more objective categories like ethnicity, nationality, multiculturalism, or class (Omi and Winant, 1993; McKinley, 2006).

David Gillborn (2000) addresses the issue of replacing race with a more objective category like multiculturalism. He begins by calling attention to the need to agree upon the sometimes confused meaning associated with the concept of anti-racism. For some the term denotes any opposition to racism, ranging from organized protest to individual acts of resistance through a refusal to adopt white supremacist assumptions (Aptheker, 1993). For others anti-racism describes a more systematic perspective that provides both a theoretical understanding of the nature of racism and offers general guidance for its opposition through emancipatory practice (Mullard, 1984). The former, broad conception of anti-racism is among the most common understandings internationally, while in Britain (Gillborn's home) the latter more specific usage is common.

In much the same way that Gillborn (2000) described the emergence of multiculturalism as a major component of British education in the 1980's, multiculturalism became an important part of k-12 curriculum in the U.S. However, in most cases it was limited to what Barry Troyna referred to as the three S's (saris, samosas, and steel bands) to characterize the superficial multiculturalism that paraded exotic images of minority peoples and their

‘cultures’ while doing nothing to address the realities of racism and unequal power relations in the ‘host’ society (Troyna, 1984).

Godfrey Brandt (1986) summed up the inadequacy and danger of the ‘multicultural’ approach to anti-racism. Drawing on the work of Chris Mullard (1982, 1984), Brandt argued that multiculturalism can be seen as the *Trojan Horse* of institutional racism. He argued that multiculturalism was a mere response to ethnic minorities’ experiences whereas anti-racism teaching should accord minorities an active and central role: anti-racism must be dynamic and led by the experience and articulations of the Black community as the ongoing victims of rapidly changing ideology and practice of racism.

Although Gillborn, Brandt, and Troyna’s theories were conceived within the context of Britain’s education system, they support the thesis developed in this study. For example, the researcher finds Brandt’s (1986) position on anti-racism aligned with the assumptions, ideologies, and purpose of the current study which is to advance the theoretical understanding of the mechanism of racism.

Another example of a belief system which supports less virulent or violent types of racism is what Joyce King (1997, 2001) calls ‘*dysconscious racism*’. King defines *dysconsciousness* as an uncritical habit of mind (including perceptions, attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs) that justifies inequity and exploitation by accepting the existing order of things as given. King offers her view of dysconsciousness as the uncritical acceptance of the social order in contrast to

critical consciousness which, according to Heaney (1984), “involves an ethical judgment” about the social order. She clearly states that it is not the absence of consciousness (not unconsciousness), but an impaired consciousness or distorted way of thinking about race as compared to, for example, critical consciousness. King characterizes the lack of critical judgment against society as a reflection of the absence of what Cox (1974) refers to as “social ethics,” a subjective identification with an ideological viewpoint that admits no fundamentally alternative vision of society. She cites Wellman’s (1977) view that uncritical ways of thinking about racial inequity accept certain culturally sanctioned assumptions, myths, and beliefs that justify the social and economic advantages white people have as a result of subordinating diverse others. King proposes that ‘*dysconscious racism*’ not only prevents a full and sincere embrace of the celebration of racial and ethnic diversity in US society, but ‘tacitly accepts dominant white norms and privileges.’

In a study of undergraduate students’ perceptions about racism, King found that white students attribute current social and economic problems of blacks, and black children in particular, to slavery (King, 2001). King contends that by overlooking contemporary factors which contribute to inequities of power and privilege, this perception defends, apologizes, and supports a system built on white privilege. More importantly, her study reports that the white students hold a strong belief that current U.S. institutions exhibit racial fairness and neutrality.

This belief system regarding slavery as the major factor responsible for racism is a widely accepted position. The researcher has worked with many non-African-American teachers who have commented on the need for African-Americans to “move on” or “get over it” since “slavery ended about 150 years ago.” In most cases the context was training for working with at-risk students and/or closing the achievement gaps between white and non-white students. In a recent example, the president of a local Parent Teacher Association was protesting the inclusion of special education students in the regular classroom and equated the practice with accommodating the special needs of minority students who should not be given any special consideration since “slavery ended almost two hundred years ago” (conversation overheard by researcher, January, 2005). These examples of the deep entrenchment of belief systems which support white privilege and power support the need for a study which can bring the current reality of racism to the forefront to examine existing ideologies and challenge the existence of a privileged discourse.

This study has attempted to meet that need and address the issue of how an anti-racism discourse can harbor the denials of the existence of racism or its effects. Often this anti-racism position includes a color-blind, race-neutral analysis which overlooks the oppression and dominance as well as the inequities of power, resources, and opportunities while permitting the dominant hosts to maintain their privileges. Moreover, the researcher has chosen education as an important arena from which to launch this anti-racism conversation. The

researcher believes that the education setting is an important context which must engage in the struggle against racism. The struggle begins with knowledge.

Summary

This first section has attempted to chart some basic theoretical territory which has framed the discourse on race and racism in the United States.

Memmi's theory of the colonial relationship provided insight into the belief that the relationship between minorities and the dominant culture in the U.S. is one of dominance and oppression for the purpose of maintaining white privilege.

Building on this theory, Blauner suggested that the attitudes and discriminatory practices associated with this relationship have become embedded in U.S. society and are systemically and institutionally maintained. Moreover, Blauner's work contributed to an understanding of the influence of Early European social theory on the development of ideas about race and racism in U.S. society. The leading assumption based on Early European social theory which continues to shape racial ideology in the U.S. is the idea that race and ethnicity become less relevant as societies develop. For decades, this assumption has informed U.S. sociology despite the fact that it does not match the realities of race and racism in U.S.

society. There was a discussion of Omi and Winant's theory that the Post-Civil Rights era is a part of the ongoing *racial formation process* which now characterizes race and racism as illusory. Gillborn's argument against the trivial use of multiculturalism which in actuality objectifies race and racism offered additional

examples of the complexities and subtleties of this new era of racism. Finally, there was an overview of Joyce King's work on *dysconscious racism* as a form of racism that tacitly accepts dominant white norms and privileges. King makes a distinction between unconsciousness as absence of consciousness and dysconsciousness as impaired consciousness. She characterizes the latter as a distorted way of thinking about race as compared to a critical consciousness. This study aimed to present a historical and social perspective on some of the belief systems and complexities of race. The researcher believes, in the words of Gloria Ladson-Billings (2002):

“....our conceptions of race, even in a postmodern and/or postcolonial world, are more embedded and fixed than in a previous age....(and)....this embeddedness or “fixed-ness” has required new language and constructions of race so that denotations are submerged and hidden in ways that are offensive though without identification”.

By using a critical race methodology of counter-narrative storytelling, the researcher has attempted to give “voice” to the racialized experiences of African American educators in their professional settings. The next section will identify the main tenets of critical race theory and critical race methodology.

Critical Race Theory and Critical Race Methodology

Introduction.

In *An American Dilemma* (1944), a study by Gunnar Myrdal, racism was characterized as a holdover from slavery “a terrible and inexplicable anomaly stuck in the middle of our liberal democratic ethos.” Forty years later, in *The New American Dilemma* (1985), Professor Jennifer Hochschild, examined Myrdal’s “anomaly thesis” and concluded that it could not explain the persistence of racism. She posited that the continued viability of racism demonstrates “that racism is not simply an excrescence on a fundamentally healthy liberal democratic body, but is part of what shapes and energizes the body.” Under this view, Hochschild continued, “liberal democracy and racism in the United States are historically, even inherently, reinforcing; American society as we know it exists only because of its foundation in racially based slavery, and it thrives only because racial discrimination continues. The apparent ‘anomaly’ is an actual symbiosis.” The permanence of this “symbiosis” ensures that civil rights gains will be temporary and setbacks inevitable (Bell, 1992).

Derick Bell (1992) was not vague or hesitant when he wrote, “Racism is an integral, permanent, and indestructible component of this society.” Bell, who was dismissed from his position as Weld Professor of Law for refusing to end his two-year leave protesting the absence of minority women on the law faculty, is credited with creating the environment which eventually spawned the movement known as Critical Race Theory (CRT). The impetus for CRT grew out

of a student boycott of law school classes when the students' request for a non-white person to teach Bell's "*Race, Racism and American Law*" class during his leave was denied. Minority law students responded by boycotting the university's class and developing an alternative course.

Less than a decade later, Kimberle' Crenshaw and other former students and teachers of Harvard's alternative course organized a workshop which included, among the 35 attendees, non-white professors from top law schools such as Derrick Bell, Mari Matsuda, Charles Lawrence III, Richard Delgado, and Patricia Williams. These scholars subsequently became leaders of the movement they labeled "Critical Race Theory" (Olmstead, 1998).

North American critical race theorists maintain race is a central feature in the social and economic organization of the United States. Rather than describing an objective reality or a psychological operation, according to these theorists, race is best understood as power relationships that define dominant and subjugated positions in society (Duncan, 2002).

Some scholars characterize CRT as a form of oppositional scholarship since it challenges the experience of whites as the normative standard and grounds its conceptual framework in the distinctive experiences of people of color. However, given that Critical Race Theory is an outgrowth of an earlier legal movement called critical legal studies (CLS) that challenged traditional legal scholarship in favor of a form of law that spoke to the specificity of individuals and groups in social and cultural contexts (Gordon, 1990; Ladson-

Billings, 1998), it is logical that CRT would embrace the importance of context in the analysis of racialized experiences. Taylor argues that the social and experiential context of racial oppression is crucial for understanding racial dynamics. Thus, CRT is grounded in the realities of the lived experience of racism and embraces this subjectivity of perspective while acknowledging that perceptions of truth, fairness, and justice reflect the mindset, status, and experience of the knower.

In 1993 Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate began a collaboration in which they grappled with this legal scholarship known as critical race theory. With the publication of the Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) paper, CRT began its movement towards the educational research/scholarly community. Critical race theory has become an important part of the discourse in the field of education and educational research. One only needs to peruse the Subject Indices of the Annual Meetings for the American Educational Research Association (AERA) for the last three years to find evidence of the generally growing interest in the social context of education and in particular, critical race theory. In 2004 and 2005 Critical Race Theory was not listed as a separate category, but rather, sessions addressing this topic were subsumed under other related categories such as critical theory. In 2006, there were 36 different sessions listed under *Critical Race Theory*. Equally important, there were 44, 70, and 67 sessions listed under the subject *Race* in the years 2004, 2005, and 2006 respectively. Perhaps the most revealing fact about the resurgence of interest in matters of race, equity, and

justice lies in the increase from 48 sessions in 2004 to 117 sessions in 2005 listed under the subject of *Social Context of Education*. Although the number decreased slightly in 2006, from 117 to 103, it seems apparent that educational researchers consider the *Social Context of Education* to be a topic relevant to the times and worth investigating. In like manner, it is worth noting that of the 154 AERA Special Interest Groups (SIG's), the Critical Examination of Race, Ethnicity, Class and Gender SIG has the largest membership.

Although the field of education has been slow to fully embrace a racialized discourse, education scholars have begun to draw upon the work of scholars from other fields such as ethnic studies, sociology, and law (Lynn, Yosso, Solórzano, and Parker, 2002). Critical race theory has begun to meet this need.

Critical race theory has three main goals: 1) to present storytelling and narratives as valid approaches through which to examine race and racism in the law and in society; 2) to argue for the eradication of racial subjugation while simultaneously recognizing that race is a social construct; and 3) to draw important relationships between race and other concepts of domination.

Basic Tenets of Critical Race Theory

Mari Matsuda (1991) views critical race theory as:

The work of progressive legal scholars of color who are attempting to develop a jurisprudence that accounts for the role of racism in American law and that work toward the elimination of racism as part of a larger goal of eliminating all forms of subordination (p.1331).

The definition of Critical Race Theory has been extended to include the view that it advances a strategy to foreground and account for the role of race and racism in education and works toward the elimination of racism as part of a larger goal of opposing or eliminating other forms of subordination based on gender, class, sexual orientation, language, and national origin. (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995; Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993; Tierney, 1993). For the purpose of this study, Critical Race Theory was a tool, framework, perspective, and method that was used to identify, analyze, and explain the structural and cultural aspects of the context that appeared to maintain subordinate and dominant racial positions in the participants' professional settings.

Critical Race Theory and methodology have at least the following five elements that form their basic insights, perspectives, methodology, and pedagogy: permanence of racism, challenge to dominant ideology, commitment to social justice, centrality of experiential knowledge, and a transdisciplinary perspective (Solórzano, 1997, 1998; Solórzano Delgado Bernal, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2000, 2001, in press-a).

Permanence of Racism.

Although there is no set formula from which one can deploy CRT, CRT begins with some basic assumptions. CRT begins with the notion that racism is “normal, not aberrant, in American society” (Delgado, 1995), and because it is so enmeshed in the fabric of our society, it appears both normal and natural to people in this culture. In fact, Taylor (1998) suggested that individual racist acts are not isolated instances of bigoted behavior but a reflection of the larger, structural, and institutional fact of white hegemony. This normalization of expected, race-based practices in employment, housing, and education makes the racism that fuels it look ordinary and natural, to a degree that oppression no longer seems like oppression to the perpetrators. It follows that, Derrick Bell’s major premise in *Faces at the Bottom of the Well* (1992) is that racism is a permanent fixture in American life. According to Ladson-billings, the strategy [of CRT] becomes one of unmasking and exposing racism in its various permutations. This study was designed to be a vehicle to give voice to the “natural” and “ordinary” racialized experiences of African-American educators and filter the realities of those experiences through critical race theory lens.

The Challenge to Dominant Ideology.

A critical race theory challenges the traditional claims that educational institutions make toward objectivity, meritocracy, colorblindness, race neutrality, and equal opportunity. Critical race scholars argue that these claims camouflage the self-interest, power, and privilege of dominant groups in U.S. society (Calmore 1992; Solórzano, 1997).

The commitment to social Justice.

A critical race theory is committed to social justice and offers a liberatory or transformative response to racial, gender, and class oppression (Matsuda, 1991). Critical race researchers acknowledge that educational institutions operate in contradictory ways, with their potential to oppress and marginalize coexisting with their potential to emancipate and empower.

The Centrality of Experiential Knowledge.

One way to give “voice” to marginalized groups and challenge the dominant mindset of society----the shared stereotypes, beliefs, and understandings --- is the telling of stories. Stories can help to build understanding and challenge the status quo. Critical race theory recognizes that the experiential knowledge of people of color is legitimate, appropriate, and critical to the understanding, analyzing, and teaching about racial subordination. In fact, critical race theorists view this knowledge as a strength and draw

explicitly on the lived experiences of people of color by including such methods as storytelling, family histories, biographies, scenarios, parables, *cuentos*, *testimonios*, chronicles, and narratives (Bell, 1987; Carrasco, 1996; Delgado, 1989, 1993, 1995a, 1995b, 1996; Olivas, 1990).

The Transdisciplinary Perspective.

A critical race theory challenges historicity and the unidisciplinary focus of most analyses and insists on analyzing race and racism by placing them in both historical and contemporary contexts (Delgado, 1984, 1992; Garcia, 1995; Harris, 1994; Olivas, 1990). Critical race methodology in education uses the transdisciplinary knowledge and methodological base of ethnic studies, women's studies, sociology, history, law, and other fields to guide research that better understands the effects of racism, sexism, and classism on people of color.

Interest Convergence.

Another tenet of CRT is Derrick Bell's theory of "interest convergence"; that is, the interests of minorities in achieving racial equality have been accommodated only when they have converged with the interests of powerful whites.

Summary

Since much of what was being looked at in this study hinges on the socially and politically constructed notion of race, it seemed appropriate to filter the information through a critical race theoretical perspective. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) assert that despite the salience of race in U.S. society as a topic of scholarly inquiry, it remains untheorized. An argument is made for a critical race theoretical perspective in education analogous to that of critical race theory in legal scholarship by developing three propositions: (1) race continues to be significant in the US; (2) U.S. society is based on property rights (privilege) rather than human rights; and (3) the intersection of race and property rights (privilege) creates an analytical tool for understanding inequity.

Critical race theory, then, is a discourse of liberation, and was used as both a methodological and epistemological tool intended to expose the ways race and racism affect the lives of African-American educators in Borderville while providing an alternative “voice” and unique ways of knowing and understanding the world. Although originally a legal theory of race and racism designed to uncover how race and racism operate in the law and in society, CRT was used as a tool through which to define, expose and address racialized issues in education settings.

Theoretical Framework for Racial Identity Development

Since one of the goals of this study is to investigate the influence of African American racial identity on behavior in professional settings, it is essential to provide a framework for conceptualizing African American racial identity. As discussed previously, this study is grounded in the assumption that African Americans' experiences in the United States have been and continue to be significantly different from those of members of other ethnic groups. Slavery, oppression, and inhumanity aside, no other group has been legally defined as property by the United States for almost a century.

As a result of their experiences with oppression in this society, the concept of race has historically played a major role in the lives of African Americans (Sellers, et.al., 1998). It follows that racial identity development can only be discussed within the context of a discussion of racism (Tatum, 1997). Tatum further concludes that it is because we live in a racist society that racial identity has as much meaning as it does.

As discussed, the overarching assumptions which frame this study are: racism is a permanent and integral part of U.S. society; the mechanism of racism is constructed in such a complex way that it is maintained through institutional methods and preserves a system of inequities of privilege and power between the dominant cultural group and ethnic minorities, specifically African-Americans. Moreover, attempts to promote "color-blind" and "race-neutral" approaches to racial issues only result in a proliferation of covert subtle acts of

racism and eliminate the possibilities for healthy dialogues which could lead to actions to eliminate some of the inequities.

This section presents some useful theories which attempt to provide some understanding of how individuals construct meaning about his or her racial identity in a race-conscious society. One of the goals of this study was to look at some of these meanings to determine if they influenced both individual and collective behaviors. Another goal of the study was to investigate the “symbiosis” or interaction between the meanings and their effects. Consequently, by theorizing about what it means to a person to be white or to be a person of color in U.S. society, it provided a framework for looking at how identity and meaning associated with identity may influence their behaviors. Of particular importance, is the notion of whether one meaning is dependent upon the other to construct its own meaning. It is also important to know what or if there is a symbolic nature of these meanings. A discussion of symbolic interactionism and its connection to racial identity development is presented later in this chapter.

Beverly Daniel Tatum (1997) suggests that most people know very little about racial identity development. Tatum believes that there is a limited exploration of this topic since it is not seen as salient for the dominant culture. Tatum writes that the consequence is that they (the dominant culture) are without an important framework to help them understand what is happening in their cross-racial interactions. Although the researcher might agree that this is a consequence, she does not view it as the most critical consequence. The

researcher suggests that this limited knowledge of racial identity development makes it difficult to have a complete understanding of the complexities and intricacies of the mechanism of race in racialized situations and encounters. This research was, in part, designed to explore some of the relationships between racial identity, racialized environments, and behaviors.

Tatum (2001), a trained psychologist, alerts us to the fact that the impact of racism starts early. Tatum describes an incident in a preschool classroom where one of her students was conducting research to investigate preschoolers' conceptions of Native Americans. The three and four year olds were asked to draw a picture of a Native American. Most of the students were unable to complete the task until the researcher rephrased the request and asked them to draw an Indian. The students immediately proceeded to draw pictures which included feathers and many of which included a knife or tomahawk depicting the person in violent or aggressive terms. Almost all of these children were White and did not live near or have interactions with Native Americans. Yet, as Tatum points out, these children had already internalized an image of what Indians are like. Interestingly, the children cited cartoons, in particular the Disney³ movie *Peter Pan*, as their number one source of information. Though Tatum does not characterize these children as prejudiced; she highlights the

³ The researcher notes that this is the second reference to Disney which has surfaced in her research on the cultural transmission of racial/ethnic stereotypes. The first reference was to the United Artists 1933 release "The Mellerdarammer" which was a film short based on a production of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by the Disney characters. Mickey, of course, was already black, but for his role in the play he dressed in blackface with exaggerated, orange lips; bushy, white sidewhiskers; and his now trademark white gloves (<http://en.wikipedia.org>).

stereotypes to which they have been exposed, to become the foundation for the adult prejudices so many of us have.

Assumptions, distortions, and preconceived notions can also come from omissions of information. For example, when contributions of minorities are omitted from textbooks, students are left to presuppose their lack of contributions; or when history is distorted in such a way as to show for example, colonialism as saving the indigenous people from their own 'savagery' or 'barbarism'.

Tatum (1997) draws on her own experiences in academia to illustrate this point. She gives examples of a white student's disbelief upon learning that Cleopatra was actually a Black woman. "That can't be true", the student exclaimed, "Cleopatra was beautiful!" Obviously this student had deeply ingrained assumptions about beauty and who could or could not possibly represent that standard. In another example, a white student expressed frustration over the fact that since Blacks don't write books, he didn't have any examples of Black authors to teach about to his students. These examples of stereotypes, omissions, and distortions contribute to the development of prejudice, a preconceived judgment or opinion, usually based on limited information (Tatum, 1997).

One of the worst aspects of negative identity formation is when the negative messages of the dominant group are internalized by the subordinate group resulting in self-doubt, or worse, self-hate. When members of the

stereotyped group internalize the stereotypical categories about his or her own group, the process has been named “internalized oppression” (Tatum, 1997). *Stereotype Threat*, one of the manifestations of this “internalized oppression” is discussed later in this chapter. Nevertheless, whether one manages to avoid the pressures of the dominant culture and reside in a state of pride in one’s own identity, the fact remains that it is unexplainably tiring, both physically and psychologically.

While an understanding of stereotypes, omissions, distortions, and prejudice is important in the discourse on racial identity development, it is, essential to avoid the reductionist view of racism as prejudice. To do so, disavows the view of racism as a system or complex mechanism including, but not limited to cultural messages and institutional policies and practices as well as beliefs and both individual and collective actions. Chapter 1 of this study begins with a quote from David Wellman refuting the widely accepted practice of conflating racism with prejudice. Wellman argues that this understanding of racism does not explain the persistence of racism. He goes on to define racism as a “system of advantage based on race.”

Although a comprehensive study of identity formation is beyond the scope of the current discussion, it is worth understanding that there are various aspects which determine the answer to the “Who am I?” question. In a large part, and central to this study, the answer depends on who the world around you says you are (Tatum, 1998). Who do my parents and peers say I am? What message

about who I am is reflected in the faces and voices of my teachers, neighbors, and store clerks? How am I represented in the media?

Tatum (1998) points out that although the answers to these questions and how one's racial identity is experienced will be mediated by other dimensions of oneself such as gender, sexual preference, economic status, physical ability, or religion. Moreover, research has shown that identity is impacted by the historical period in which one grew up (Stewart and Healy, 1989). Erik Erikson (1968) agrees that the social, cultural, and historical context is the ground in which individual identity is embedded.

In moving towards theorizing racial identity development, it is important to recognize certain basic assumptions: Although most people are not consciously assessing and reflecting upon their identities, when parts of our identities are noticed by others, it reflects back to us, and captures our attention. For example, as an African-American teacher in a school with approximately 80% Hispanic, 18% White, and 2% African American students, I was rarely conscious of my racial identity until I began to notice a strange phenomenon. Whenever one of my non African-American colleagues had occasion to send a message to me by a student courier, they almost always sent an African-American student (usually the only one in their class). This happened so frequently that upon discussion with other African-American teachers, we discovered that it was the same for all of us. We surmised that the teachers thought that this would somehow reveal to us that they were non-discriminatory

in choosing students to go on errands. Our actual consensus was that whenever the other teachers thought of us, the part of our identity that they noticed was that of our race rather than that of colleague. Another example to illustrate that race was (and continues to be) the aspect of identity which people notice is the “confusion” that others experience between two or more African-Americans’ names. I, along with two other African American and one Afro-Cuban teachers worked together for close to ten years at the same school. Two of us taught the same subject, one taught a different subject , and one was a counselor. We were varying ages, skin colors, hair colors, etc. For ten years, students, parents, office personnel, and fellow teachers “mixed-up” our names and called us by each other’s names. Likewise, in my current position, there is another African American female professional of a different skin color, hair color, body type etc. We routinely get each other’s calls from principals and other central office personnel who “confuse” us. This “confusion” does not happen with anyone else in our office. Again, I can only conclude that the most important part of our identities that people notice is race, rather than position, professional status, or competence. In as much as this aspect of identity is the target of others attention, and subsequently our own, it appears to be what sets us apart as exceptional or “other” in their eyes.

Tatum (1997) writes:

Kurt Lewin, a famous social psychologist, once said, “There is nothing so practical as a good theory.” A theoretical framework that helps us make sense of what we observe in our daily lives is very valuable.

For this reason, this section will highlight some modern theories of racial identity development. The researcher has used Tatum's definition of racial identity: the meaning attached to what it means to be a White person or a person of color in a race-conscious society. It is important to note that this meaning is one that embeds the concept of identity within context. Consequently, the researcher could not ignore the salience of the border context in her attempt to investigate the role of identity in motivating the participants' actions and interactions. Later in this section there is a discussion of salience as one of the dimensions of racial identity that addresses both the significance and the qualitative meaning of race in the self-concepts of African Americans. This study has attempted to illuminate the intersection of the border context and racial salience as individuals attach the significance of race in defining themselves.

Historically, research on African American racial identity has utilized two distinct approaches. Much of the early research referred to as the *mainstream* approach (e.g. Gordon Allport, 1954), has focused specifically on universal properties associated with ethnic and racial identity. In the late 1960s another group of psychologists, primarily African Americans, began to investigate African American identity by emphasizing the uniqueness of their oppression and cultural experiences. Gaines and Reed (1994, 1995) used the term *underground* to reflect the fact that the research from this approach has traditionally received little recognition from the broader psychological

community. They emphasize that the use of this term is not meant to convey secretiveness or subversive activity.

Mainstream Approach to African American Racial Identity

Gordon Allport (1954) maintained that living in a racist environment must have negative consequences for the African American psyche. This notion of an unhealthy stigmatized identity was representative of earlier conceptualizations of the African American self-concept prior to the late 1960s (Clark, 1965; R. Horowitz, 1939; Kardiner & Ovesey, 1951).

As the mainstream approach evolved, the focus was primarily on cognitive processes and social identities of various groups (e.g., Cheek & Briggs, 1982). Mainstream researchers approached racial identity within African Americans as an example of these cognitive processes. In other words, mainstream researchers employed measures of group identity that are applicable to members of a variety of groups (e.g., Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). Generally, the unique experiences of the groups were ignored. Put another way, with its focus on universal properties, significance of group identity to an individual, and contextual analysis of saliency of group identity, the mainstream approach has placed little value on the qualitative meanings associated with particular ethnic and racial identity.

Given the questions which frame this study and the qualitative methodology required, it is essential to both conceptualize and operationalize

identity utilizing the experiential properties associated with the unique historical and cultural influences associated with the African American experience.

Although the researcher had not been previously informed of the 2 distinct research approaches to racial identity, it became immediately apparent of the necessity to be cautious in choosing an underground rather than mainstream theoretical model of identity development which reflected a specificity of the African American experience. A brief discussion of the underground approach and some widely used models including the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI) which was used in this study is presented in the next section.

Underground Approach to African American Racial Identity

W.E.B. Dubois (1903) did not view the African American self-concept as necessarily damaged. He recognized that African Americans could develop strong self concepts even while being stigmatized and devalued by the larger society. The underground approach to racial identity developed from these theoretical roots (Sellers, 1998). The underground perspective emphasizes the specificity of African American racial identity. It provides a description of what it means to be black and provides profiles regarding attitudes and beliefs associated with membership in the black race. These profiles may differ as a function of identity development (Cross, 1971); or exposure to a nurturing sociocultural environment. Nevertheless, an optimal set of beliefs and attitudes regarding one's race are either implicitly or explicitly stated.

Black Racial Identity Development (BRID) Model

One of the most widely used models of Black identity development is based on Cross's model of Nigrescence (1971, 1978, 1991). The Nigrescence model describes five stages of racial identity development that African Americans experience as they develop psychologically healthy Black identity (Cross, 1971, 1991; Helms, 1990; Parham, 1989). Cross's model was developed to describe the unique cultural and structural experiences associated with becoming Black in the United States (Cross, 1971). In 1991, Cross revised the model to encompass broader experiences. The revised model, Cross's Black Racial Identity Development (BRID) model includes five stages identified as:

1) Preencounter; 2) Encounter; 3) Immersion/Emersion; 4) Internalization; and 5) Internalization-Commitment.

Preencounter.

African Americans have absorbed many of the beliefs and values assumed by the dominant culture including superiority of the dominant culture over the African American culture. As a result of negative stereotypes, though not always on a conscious level, African American's often seek to assimilate and be accepted by the dominant culture while often distancing oneself from other Blacks.⁴

⁴Both Parham (1989) and Phinney (1989) suggest that a preference for the dominant group is not always a characteristic of this stage. For example, children raised in households and communities with explicitly positive Afrocentric attitudes may absorb a pro-Black perspective, which then serves as the starting point for their own exploration of racial identity (Tatum, 1992).

Encounter.

An individual moves into this phase upon encountering an event or series of events that forces the individual to acknowledge the impact of racism upon their life. The individual then faces the reality that he/she will not be viewed in any way other than as a member of the group targeted by racism. The individual is forced to focus on his or her identity as a member of a group targeted by racism.

Immersion/Emersion.

The *immersion/emersion stage* is where the greatest transition is made towards developing a positive racial identity. The immersion stage often begins with a desire to denigrate the oppressor and affiliate oneself with the culture and people of one's identified group. They actively explore the history and other aspects of their own culture. After acquiring and processing this information relative to one's cultural group, and experiencing newly found pride in one's group, often the anger towards the dominant group diminishes and a newly defined and affirmed sense of self emerges.

Internalization Stage.

This newly emerged stage moves on into the *Internalization stage* where one is infinitely more secure in his or her own racial identity. This newly internalized individual has less animosity towards members of the dominant group who demonstrate respect towards his or her acknowledged identity while

at the same time maintaining strong links to their own community and possibly even forging alliances with members of other oppressed groups. In general, pro-Black attitudes become more expansive, open and less defensive (Cross, 1971, p.24).

Internalization-Commitment.

Cross suggests that there are few psychological differences between the fourth stage *Internalization*, and the fifth stage, *Internalization-Commitment*. He characterizes those at the fifth stage as having found ways to translate their “personal sense of Blackness into a plan of action or a general sense of commitment to the concerns of Blacks as a group, which is sustained over time (Cross, 1991, p.220).

Multiracial Model of Racial Identity (MMRI)

The Multiracial Model of Racial Identity (MMRI) represents a synthesis of the strengths of both the mainstream and underground approaches to research on African American racial identity (Sellers, et al., 1998). Sellers, et al. describe the model as a conceptual framework for understanding both the significance of race in the self-concepts of African Americans and the qualitative meanings they attribute to being members of that racial category. The researcher found this model to be useful for this study since Sellers et al. also proposed a mechanism

by which racial identity influences individuals' situational appraisals and behaviors.

Four assumptions undergird the MMRI. First, the MMRI assumes that identities are both situational and inherent properties of the individual. A second assumption of the MMRI is that individuals have a number of different identities and that these identities are hierarchically ordered (Markus & Sntis, 1982; McCall & Simmons, 1978; McCrae & Costa, 1988; Rosenberg, 1979; Stryker & Serpe, 1982; 1994). The MMRI focuses on the importance that the individual places on race in defining him or herself. A third assumption of the MMRI is that individuals' perception of their racial identity is the most valid indicator of their identity. The MMRI recognizes the role that societal forces play in shaping the individual, but emphasizes the individual's construction of his or her own identity. Of particular interest to this study is the fact that although the person's self-report is expected to correlate with race-related behaviors and activities, overt behavior associated with a particular identity is also constrained by contextual factors (Stryker & Serpe, 1982). Finally, the MMRI is primarily concerned with the status of an individual's racial identity as opposed to its development.

The MMRI proposes four dimensions of racial identity that address the significance and the qualitative meaning of race in the self-concepts of African-Americans. These four dimensions consist of: racial salience, the centrality of the identity, the regard in which the person holds the group associated with the

identity, and the ideology associated with the identity. According to Sellers et al. (1997), "Salience and centrality refer to the significance of race, whereas ideology and regard refer to the qualitative meaning that individuals ascribe to their membership in the Black community" (p.806). Shelton and Sellers (2000) stated that salience is situationally influenced, whereas the other dimensions are believed to be relatively stable across situations.

Mechanism by Which Racial Identity Influences Behavior

While the researcher had proposed to explore the influence of race and perceived racism on the behaviors of African American educators in their professional settings, she had not yet realized the lack of such representation in the current literature. In fact, Sellers et al.(1997) state that the processes by which individuals' beliefs regarding the meaning and significance of race can influence the way in which they appraise and behave in specific events has not been delineated in the current literature on racial identity. The MMRI attempts to address this oversight through the conceptualization of salience and its relation to constructs in the construct accessibility literature.

Sellers et al. (1998) cite several studies (i.e. Bargh, Bond, Lombardi, & Tota, 1986; Bargh, Lombardi, & Higgins, 1988; Bargh & Pietromonaco, 1982) which have demonstrated that the construct that is most significant to an individual during a situation is the construct most likely to be used in judgments of behavior or impression formation in that particular event. Sellers et al. refer to

Higgins' (1989, 1990) delineation of two forms of accessibility in describing the ways in which a construct may become accessible in a given situation. Higgins reports that a temporarily accessible construct can become available as a result of recent contextual or situational factors, while a chronically accessible construct is one that has a high probability of becoming accessible in any situation. These chronically accessible constructs develop out of individuals' unique histories and social encounters. A construct can be both chronically and temporarily accessible in a situation in which both the situational clues and the person's proclivity point to the same construct.

Sellers et al. (1998) write:

The salience and centrality dimensions of the MMRI are consistent with the conceptualization of construct accessibility. Individuals' regard and ideology beliefs represent constructs about the meaning of being Black. Salience and centrality represent the accessibility of the regard and ideology constructs. Salience is consistent with the concept of accessibility in a particular event. Race may become salient (accessible) in a particular event as a function of situational factors, making it similar to Higgins' (1989) notion of temporary accessibility. However, race may also be salient in a particular event as a result of an individual's proclivity for race to become salient (centrality or chronic accessibility). In general, both the situational cues and the personal proclivity interact to influence the salience or accessibility of race.

In sum, in a specific event, racial centrality and situational clues interact to influence racial salience. The level of race salience then moderates the extent to which the individual's ideology and regard beliefs influence their interpretation of the event as well as their subsequent behavior within the event. This represents part of a process by which the content of one's identity may influence behavior at the level of the situation (see Figure 1).

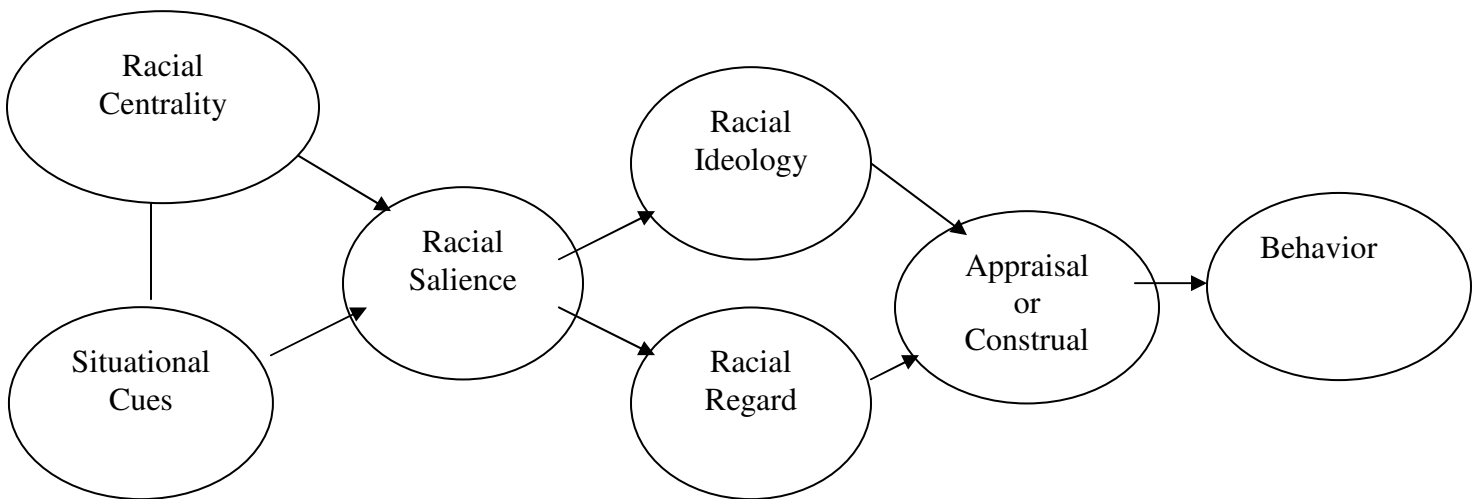


Figure 1: The process by which racial identity influences behavior at the level of the event (Sellers et al., 1998).

Lewis and Bell (2006) offer another model on racial identity development which is grounded in and aligned with symbolic interactionism, one of the sociological theories that frame this study. Sheldon Stryker (1980; Stryker and Burke 2000) asserted the role of symbolic interaction in identity formation and negotiation. In like manner, Lewis and Bell (2000) suggest that as social interactions occur, individuals work to present their most desirable self while at the same time reacting to the definitions and beliefs of others. A discussion of symbolic interactionism is presented later in this chapter and throughout this study. According to Lewis and Bell, a dichotomy between personal and social identity may not be applicable to people of color in the United States. Moreover, they posit that the racialized social system in the United States dictates that the social identities of marginalized group members are likely reflected in their personal identities. Lewis and Bell cite David Harris and Jeremiah Joseph Sim's (2002) conceptualization of identity as an entity that is internally defined, externally ascribed, and behaviorally expressed. Lewis and Bell argue that racial identity is both a personal and social identity for people of color in contemporary American society. They introduce a model, the Intersectional Model of Identity (IMI), that addresses the intersection of individual behavior and social contexts.

Since the context of this study is a U.S.-Mexico border community in which the African American population is situated within a majority Hispanic population, the influence of context becomes a significant issue to explore. Lewis and Bell (2000) suggest that in the case of racial identity, for people of color,

group identity informs personal identity and vice versa. The reciprocal nature of this relationship is important when attempting to understand marginalized groups. Finally, Lewis and Bell suggest that the individual is generally “an individual in context.”

Summary

Beverly Tatum (1998) describes the collective environment which spawns the images, stereotypes, distortions, and exclusions which assign the meanings and values to being white or a person of color in the United States. She goes on to map out the process for how these values are transmitted across the society as well as how each group is assigned their roll as either oppressor or oppressed. Next, William Cross’s (1971; 1998) Model of Black Racial Identity (BRID) is presented to provide an explanation of how an individual African American might work his or her way through this societal mechanism and arrive at his or her own individual racial identity.

Cross’s model of Black racial identity development identifies the following five stages: Preencounter, Encounter, Immersion/Emersion, Internalization, and Internalization-Commitment. Although Cross’s model is presented in a linear step by step manner, the researcher suggests from personal experience and the observed experiences of other African Americans, that these stages may occur in a more cyclical nature with periodic returns to earlier stages. Although it is not logical that one would return to the Preencounter stage, it has

certainly been the researcher's experience to return to the Encounter stage and work through the subsequent stages as indicated by the situations.

Next, a brief overview of Sellers et al.'s (1997) Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI) is presented. Sellers et al. stated that the MMRI focuses on African Americans' beliefs regarding the significance of race in (a) how they define themselves and (b) the qualitative meanings they ascribe to membership in that racial group. One of the most significant aspects of their model is their positioning of racial salience as the determining factor in both interpretation and negotiation of events. The researcher has found this conceptualization of salience as a critical tool of analysis in her attempt to explore the intersection of racialized ideology and racialized situations and its influence on behavior. Salience provides an important bridge between the macro and micro levels of analysis. It provides a way to look at individual responses to situations while providing some generalizations and predictions about the contextual cues regarding race, as well as the significance that the individual attributes to being Black.

Finally, Lewis and Bell's (2000) Intersectional Model of Identity (IMI) is presented. This model, grounded in a psychological-sociological analysis addresses the interaction of individual behavior and social contexts. Since this study relied on both psychological and sociological theories to explain racialized phenomena, socio-psychological understandings of racial identity must acknowledge the interplay between the individual and the group. The reciprocal nature of this relationship is important in attempting to understand marginalized

groups due to the complexities of racial identity formation. Moreover, by exploring the psychological and social 'self' within a lens of symbolic interaction, it may be possible to gain insight into the expressed behaviors of the 'self' within a specified context.

Bourdieu's Theory of Field, Capital, and Habitus

In *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, Pierre Bourdieu and Loic J.D. Wacquant (1992) outline the usefulness of theory to research. In an interview format, Bourdieu provides an overview of his theory of *field*, *capital*, and *habitus*⁵. The researcher found this interview process particularly helpful in that it varied the angles and uses of the theories and offered comparisons and counter positions between object domains and other theoretical stances. Finally, it offered a deeper insight into Bourdieu's logic and thinking by forcing him (Bourdieu) to "tinker" with his own theories in order to respond to the questions and find varied ways to express his ideas. Wacquant (1992) sums up the benefits of the interview technique as follows:

"An analytic interview shakes the author from a position of authority and the reader from a position of passivity by calling attention to the form of inquiry itself and by enabling them to communicate free of the censorship embedded in conventional forms of scholarly intercourse."

⁵ Although the researcher had originally proposed the use of Bourdieu's theory of *habitus* as a tool of analysis, upon gaining a deeper understanding of Bourdieu's work, she realized the meaninglessness of discussing *habitus* apart from *field* and *capital* which comprise the organization of Bourdieu's social theory of action.

Although the researcher's original intent was to summarize Bourdieu's social theory of *field*, *capital*, and *habitus*, she gained the unanticipated advantage of thinking along with Bourdieu.

One of the most salient points from this work is Bourdieu's rejection of the duality of the individual and society. In fact, Wacquant (1992) characterizes Bourdieu's work as "unsettling" and insists that this "unsettling" nature is the result of Bourdieu's persistence in straddling some deep-seated antinomies in social science. Among the most notable contradictions are the seeming antagonisms between subjectivist and objectivist modes of knowledge, the separation of the analysis of the symbolic from the material, and the continued "divorce" of theory from research (Bourdieu, 1973c, 1977a, 1990a). Bourdieu also manages to collapse two more recent dichotomies, those of structure and agency on one hand, and of micro and macro analysis using his conceptual and methodological devices. The researcher does not claim to have utilized the body of Bourdieu's work *in globo*, but rather to have attempted to use his sociological method of posing problems in a set of conceptual tools and procedures. In a *London Times Review* (1981), Mary Douglas wrote that "the greatest interest in Bourdieu lies in his method." Broady's (1990) analysis of Bourdieu's work concluded that it does not offer a general theory of society but should instead be construed primarily as a theory of the formation of sociological knowledge.

This study has attempted to explain the perceptions, attitudes, and actions (Bourdieu's *Practice*) of African American educators (Bourdieu's *Agents*) as a

function of both the macro objectified context of U.S. racialized society and the micro subjectified context of Individual Ethnic Identity (Bourdieu's *Structure*). In an effort to realize this goal, the researcher has presumed the value of analyzing both the objectivity of the social context, the subjectivity of the human agent, and the interrelatedness and interaction which produce action.

The researcher's epistemological stance is rooted in the belief that the construction of 'social reality' is determined by the subjectivity of objective social structures. History, context, and experiential influences converge with the objective structures to produce a 'perceived reality'. Bourdieu's (1989 a: 7) words resonated with the researcher when he outlined the task of sociology as follows:

".....to uncover the most profoundly buried structures of the various social worlds which constitute the social universe, as well as the 'mechanisms' which tend to ensure their reproduction or their transformation."

The researcher has attempted to design a study that provides what Bourdieu refers to as a bidimensional "system of relations of power and relations of meaning between groups and classes." In other words, she has crafted a set of double-focus analytic lenses that capitalize on the epistemic virtues of each reading. For example, the first reading is represented by an analysis of the objective structure of a U.S. racialized environment which can be observed, described, and measured independently. Using the tools of statistics and ethnographic description, the researcher was able to decode the environment. Bourdieu (1992) cautions against limiting one's exploration at this point since the analysis would not include the experience that the agents have of it. The

researcher agrees that the consciousness and interpretations of the agents are essential components of the full reality of the social world. The raw data collected through the surveys and interviews served this purpose.

The Logic of Fields

The notion of *field* together with those of *habitus* and *capital* form the central organizing concept of Bourdieu's work. Bourdieu (1992), himself, acknowledged that his work was criticized for gaps and indefinite concepts and the lack of neat, precise definitions. This researcher accepts, perhaps embraces, Bourdieu's explanation of his deliberate use of open concepts as a way of rejecting positivism. Bourdieu argued that his use of open concepts was a permanent reminder that concepts have no definition other than systemic ones, and are designed to be put to work empirically in systematic fashion. Such notions as *habitus*, *field*, and *capital* can be defined, but only within the theoretical system they constitute, not in isolation.

To think in terms of fields, writes Bourdieu (1992), is to think rationally. He believes that the relational, rather than the structural mode of thinking is the hallmark of modern science. Bourdieu's analytic definition of field is:

".....a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions. Thee positions are objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation (*situs*) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other

positions (domination, subordination, homology, etc.) (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).”

In other words, fields are systems of objective relations that are constituted by various species of capital. They are related by differences in regard to power, rather than through interaction. Fields are not to be confused with social networks which are actual connections. In a school environment one could probably identify both social networks and fields. An example of a network might be the various curriculum departments working collaboratively to improve student achievement. A field might develop when an issue emerges which could be influenced by one group having power over the other. Take for example, a situation in which a school committee was considering a new dress code such as a school uniform. If a parent/community group which included a school board member opposed the new policy, the tension and bargaining power between the two groups would be influenced by the power (real or perceived) of the parent/community group which included the board member.

Bourdieu (1992) cautiously compares a field to a game. He argues that there are “stakes” which are the product of the competition between players. The players participate only to the extent that they concur in their belief (*doxa*) in the game and its stakes. The hierarchy of the different species of capital (economic, social, cultural, symbolic) varies across the various fields. The value of a species of capital (e.g. knowledge of content, linguistic skill, cultural and/or social standing) hinges on the existence of a game, or a field in which this competency

can be employed. In the case of the field(s) identified in this study, it is likely that social, cultural, and symbolic capital yield the most valuable competencies in the form of cultural and social standing.

In empirical work, it is one in the same thing to determine what the field is, where its limits lie, etc., and to determine what species of capital are active in it, within what limits, and so on. Clearly, Bourdieu's notions of capital and field are tightly interconnected. Moreover, the strategies of a "player" and everything defining his "game" are a function not only of the volume and structure of his capital at the moment under consideration, but also of the evaluation over time of this capital, that is, of his social trajectory and the dispositions (*habitus*) constituted in the prolonged relation to a definite distribution of objective chances (Bourdieu, 1992). Although the researcher finds this notion of *habitus* as a more useful tool for analyzing the "space" between subjectivity of the individual and the objectivity of the structure, she is aware of the necessity to view the field as a system in order to get an accurate reading of what is really going on.

Self-efficacy and Stereotype Threat

The purpose of another study, *A Case Study of an African American Teacher's Self-Efficacy, Stereotype Threat and Persistence* (Milner and Hoy, 2003), was to understand the sources of self-efficacy for one African-American teacher in a suburban high school in the United States. The researchers attempted to identify and interpret the sources of efficacy that encouraged the teacher's persistence in

an unsupportive environment. In addition, the study considered how the concept of stereotype threat might help us better understand the teacher's situation. Findings of this case study have implications for explaining minority teacher self-efficacy theory and persistence.

Claude M. Steele's work on "*Stereotype Threat*" also seems particularly relevant to my study. Claude M. Steele, a professor of psychology at Stanford University has attempted to explain the unsettling phenomenon of underperformance by black college students. In *Thin Ice: Stereotype Threat and Black College Students*, Steele reports his research findings which tested his hypothesis that the explanation for failure of capable black students to perform as well as their white counterparts, has less to do with preparation or ability than with the threat of stereotypes about their capacity to succeed.

Professor Steele's research was based on the dismal fact that throughout the 1990's the national college dropout rate for African-Americans had been 20 to 25 percent higher than that for whites. Moreover, among those who finished college, the grade-point average of black students was two thirds of a grade below that of whites (Steele, 1999). However, despite this underachievement in college, black students who attended the most selective schools in the country went on to do just as well in postgraduate programs and professional attainment as other students from those schools. What was going on? How could this be explained?

The debate on the cause(s) of this phenomenon stems from such basic questions as whether or not the problem evolves from something about black students themselves, such as poor motivation, a distracting peer culture, lack of family values, or the unsettling suggestion of *The Bell Curve* --genes? Or, as Professor Steele suggests, does it stem from the conditions of blacks' lives: social and economic deprivation, a society that views blacks through the lens of diminishing stereotypes and low expectations, too much coddling, or too much neglect?

Based on his research, Professor Steele builds a compelling argument which offers evidence to support a theory of "stereotype threat" as a contributing cause of underachievement by black college students. He defines "stereotype threat" as: *the threat of being viewed through the lens of a negative stereotype, or the fear of doing something that would inadvertently confirm that stereotype*. Steele points out that we all experience negative "stereotype threat" based upon our various group affiliations; from women to male Methodists to Harley riders, we are often judged on the basis of our affiliations. What is different about applying this to black college students is that the researchers wanted to determine if this "stereotype threat" affected intellectual abilities.

Psychologists Jennifer Crocker and Brenda Major purport that individuals might learn to care less about the situations and activities that bring these feelings on. They use the term "disidentification" to refer to such a "psychic adjustment." They claim that the pain is lessened by ceasing to identify with the

cause of the pain. They go on to say that the withdrawal of psychic investment is supported by members of the group who are experiencing the same pain. Ultimately this “disengagement” can become a “group norm.” Although this “disengagement” can be viewed as lack of motivation, it is often a price willingly, albeit unconsciously, paid for psychic comfort. Professor Steele believes that groups contending with powerful negative stereotypes about their abilities, such as women in advanced math and African-Americans in all academic areas, often pay this high price.

Professor Steele and colleague, Joshua Aronson designed an experiment which tested their suspicions that “stereotype threat” does indeed impair intellectual functioning of black students. The researchers tested for validity by repeating their experiment with whites having no societal stereotype which alleges inferiority. They found that they, too, when put under a form of “stereotype threat,” displayed impaired intellectual performance. Interestingly, though, among the black students, they found a difference between students with strong skills and students with weak skills. The weakly identified students did not perform well because they “gave up” when the task became too difficult; they did not differ depending on any threat of being judged stereotypically. It was the strong students who felt pressure of “stereotype threat.” They were the ones who vigilantly worried that their future would be compromised by society’s perception and treatment of their group. Professor Steele suggests that the

implications for educators are to find ways to build trust that stereotypes will not have a limiting effect in their school world.

Since it is possible that some notions of *resistance*, *risk aversion* or *disengagement* may emerge, Professor Steele's theory on *Stereotype Threat* may well serve as one of the frameworks for interpreting the emergent theories from my research.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic Interactionism is a sociological perspective which examines how individuals and groups interact, focusing on the creation of personal identity through interaction with others. Of particular interest is the relationship between individual action and group pressures. In that the researcher is interested in exploring and interpreting the relationship between the individual actions of African American educators and the structure of their (real or perceived) racialized environments, symbolic interactionism provides a useful perspective. Moreover, the researcher views this perspective as closely aligned with Bourdieu's *habitus*, since it too, examines the idea that subjective meanings are socially constructed, and that these subjective meanings interrelate with objective actions.

In *Continual Permutations of Action*, Anselm L. Strauss (1993) writes about the complexity of interaction. Strauss' work on action/interaction is closely

aligned with a Pragmatist philosophical stance. He acknowledges the connection between University of Chicago Interactionist Sociology and philosophic Pragmatism. As stated earlier, my own biographic processes and theoretical sensitivities embrace this Interactionist/Pragmatist perspective and guide this study.

Strauss emphasizes that the concept of “trajectory” lies at the heart of this theory of action. Later, he maps out a “conditional matrix” which can be useful to a researcher as he/she tries to “keep track of the conditions which bear on the phenomenon [under study].” These three points of interest, the meaning and purpose of an Interactionist Theory of Action, an understanding of the concept of “trajectory”, and an understanding of the use of his conditional matrix are very useful to me as a beginning researcher interested in being ‘grounded’ in theory.

Simply stated, Strauss characterizes an Interactionist Theory of Action as one that “embodies certain basic assumptions of a sociological theory of action and puts them systematically to use.” His list of 19 assumptions about action and interaction are derived from Pragmatism and are designed to capture the nature and details of the social universe.” Although a full discussion of all nineteen assumptions goes beyond the scope and purpose of this study, the researcher believes that the following five⁶ assumptions provide not only the essence of Strauss’ theory of action, but the most relevance to this study:

⁶ They have been numbered based on Strauss’ listing in *Continual Permutations of Action* (1993).

- **Assumption 2.** *Actions are embedded in interactions –past, present, and imagined future. Thus, actions also carry meanings and are locatable within systems of meanings. Actions may generate further meanings, both with regard to further actions and the interactions in which they are embedded.*
- **Assumption 4.** *Meanings (symbols) are aspects of interactions, and are related to others within systems of meanings (symbols). Interactions generate new meanings and symbols as well as alter and maintain old ones.*
- **Assumption 16.** *A major set of conditions for actors' perspectives, and thus their interactions, is their memberships in social worlds and subworlds. In contemporary societies, these memberships are often complex, overlapping, contrasting, conflicting, and not always apparent to other interactants.*
- **Assumption 17.** *Other conditions bearing on interactions can be thought of in terms of a conditional matrix, ranging from broader, more indirect conditions to narrower and more directly impacting ones. The specific relevance of conditions can be analyzed by means of tracking conditional paths.*
- **Assumption 19.** *Also, problematic interactions frequently bring about a process of identity change that entails some degree of suffering and strangeness toward the selves of individuals or collectivities.*

Strauss offers three main purposes of an Interactionist Theory of Action:

1) understanding range of human actions; 2) guiding us to informed observations and reflections about action; and 3) suggesting research areas/problems and providing guidelines for approaching them. All three purposes are relevant to me as a beginning researcher. Since I was interested in surfacing the underlying factors which influence African American educators' actions, it was essential that as I collected and interpreted the data, I had a broad and deep understanding of the range of human actions and interactions which might or might not have impacted their behavior. Moreover, it was essential that I be able to engage in informed observations and reflections about actions and

interactions if I were to accurately report reliable and valid interpretations of the data. I needed to be able to “see” beyond the surface and understand the history, experience, and intent that was part of the inherent complexity of the action/interaction that I was observing/coding/documenting.

Strauss’ concept of ‘trajectory’ resonated with me as I approached my research. The essence of what I attempted to study lies within that chunk of existence that Strauss refers to as ‘trajectory’. Strauss is careful to point out that trajectory includes more than one aspect. The first is described as a course of action over time and the second refers to the actions and interactions contributing to its evolution. Strauss emphasizes that phenomena do not simply unfold nor are they determined by social, economic, political, cultural, or other circumstances, but are shaped by the interactions of the concerned actors. I am inclined to accept Strauss’ theory that the inclusions of the interactants’ actions and interactions provide a comprehensive picture of the phenomena under investigation.

Moreover, Strauss’ theory provides a reconciliatory approach to the issue of the voluntarism-determinism (human nature) debate. At one extreme, there is a determinist view which regards man and his activities as being completely determined by the situation or environment in which he is located. At another extreme, the voluntarist view perceives man as completely autonomous and free-willed. Strauss’ theory allows for both situational (contingencies) and voluntary (interactants actions/interactions) factors in accounting for the activities of

human beings. His theory demands the inclusion of the interactions of concerned actors. In Strauss' words, it "gives life and movement to studies of phenomena and related interactions; it forces one to view interactants as active in attempting to shape the phenomena."

Strauss emphasizes the need to consider context and how it influences how an activity is carried out, by whom, for what purposes, when, and with what consequences. This deference to context is very rooted in Pragmatist tradition and has serious implications for the researcher. For the Pragmatist, it is easy to predict the level of potential inaccuracy that would surround research which focused on objectified structures while ignoring the impact of the contextual conditions of the setting. An example might be if I were to gather and attempt to interpret data based merely on the number of African-American teachers pursuing Gifted and Talented certification compared with the number of African-American teachers certified in Special Education without some attempt to examine the multiplicitous and ambiguous contexts which might have impacted the procedures involved in decisions to pursue one or the other of those certification areas. Such findings would be either totally inaccurate or incomplete at best.

Strauss points out how history is crucial to the work since both the contextual conditions and the work itself have histories. I like his use of the sedimentation image. One can visualize the "particles of history" floating over and sticking to the context and the work itself. In other words, the respective

histories become embedded in the context and the work. This notion of history within the work is very much a part of what I expected to capture in my research. This is precisely why Chapter 2 includes a discussion of discriminatory race relations in the United States. The discussion provides a historical framework from which we can pursue an informed examination of the racialized context under study. Moreover, the discussion on cultural identity helps to frame the analysis of the subjects' sense of self and their role in their racialized environments. This approach attempts to mirror an interactionist's "untangling" of the complicated, multiplicitously woven social world. There is little doubt of the importance of precisely framing the research questions in order to be able to find the layers of history in both the contextual conditions and the work itself.

This approach, aligned with the ideographic approach to social science, is based on the view that one can only understand the social world by obtaining first-hand knowledge of the subject (individual/group/situation/phenomenon) under investigation. This approach emphasizes "getting inside" situations and letting one's subject unfold its nature and characteristics during the process of investigation. This approach is directly opposed to a positivist approach to social science which tends to emphasize the importance of basing research upon systematic protocol and technique (Burrell and Morgan, 1979).

Strauss' discussion of the Conditional Matrix has been very useful. It was a sound way to help me "conceptualize, discover, and keep track of the conditions that bear on the phenomenon" which I have investigated. It provides

a structure to help one stay focused and protect against “falsely identifying realms as being independent or conversely, as needing to be related.” In my case, using Strauss’ Matrix has given me a schematic from which I could plan, conduct, and ultimately analyze my research. For example, in the center circle, I might place 1. *Individual/Collective Action* and proceeding outward I would place 2. *Personal*, 3. *Community/Organizational/Institutional*, 4. *Societal*, and 5. *National/International*. In this way, I was able to keep track of and monitor the relevance of the phenomena which impacts the individual/collective action in the center of the matrix.

To illustrate, I could begin with an African American teacher’s decision not to participate in a particular campus event, and trace backwards through the matrix to discover what conditions were operating, how they were manifested, and what were the consequences (real or perceived). A thorough understanding of Strauss’ Conditional Matrix and subsequent tracing of conditional paths is a very helpful and relevant analytic tool for researchers.

Strauss points out the fact that some social scientists build upon underlying preassumptions when explaining phenomenon⁷. I believe that it is irresponsible to “explain” phenomena based on underlying assumptions tied to mere correlations. Very often researchers report correlations in such a way that it implies a causative relationship. To illustrate, a NPR (National Public Radio)

⁷ The researcher notes her belief that it often appears to be the basis for much of the correlation research found in education.

story 'reported' the FDA's 'findings' on children's use of antidepressants and violent behavior. Actually, they reported that many children who take antidepressants exhibit violent behavior. However, the report clearly encouraged the listener to make the "leap" towards perceiving that antidepressants cause violent behavior among children. The study did not examine any other factors which may or may not contribute to juvenile violent behavior. Unfortunately, this lack of attention to context and subjectivity is common and possibly reflects the researcher's underlying preassumptions. The study is possibly a vehicle for proving his or her theory about antidepressants and violent behavior in children. Since my research looks at the decision-making process, it is essential that I try to surface the meanings, intentions, beliefs, and values (both cultural and societal) that influence the covert actions which precede, accompany, or succeed the interactional course.

As Strauss writes about this interactionist view of behavior and its theory of action, he references both Mead's (1934) analysis of self-interaction in relation to overt interaction and Blumer's (1969) later analysis. Strauss sites these bodies of work as providing "general orientations" for research in which individual and collective behavior are linked. Strauss says that these works legitimize the use of "self" concepts and support criticism of a more deterministic (biological, structural, economic) explanation of behavior.

Pragmatism and University of Chicago Sociological Interaction

This connection between a philosophical stance and a sociological theory of action is useful for this study. The philosophical stance helps to guide the researcher's methodology by supporting an epistemological position. The sociological theory of action (Interactionism, Habitus) guides the researcher's quest to understand the actions and interactions between the individuals (African-American teachers and administrators) and the structures (society, institutions).

Strauss outlines the Pragmatism/Interactionism connection through a short historical background. According to Strauss, as early as 1896, John Dewey attacked stimulus-response psychology by refuting that a stimulus external to an organism elicits a response. Dewey asserted that organisms need not be set into motion, for any stimulus must play into whatever is the ongoing activity, so that the response elicited is the result of an interaction between the two (Dewey, in Strauss, 1993).

Eventually, Dewey elaborated on this assertion with ideas about ongoing action; routine action that can be interrupted by environmental or situational blockages, which precipitate mental processes leading to review of options, choices, and leads to the reorganization and continuance of action. This transformation through interaction of lines of action, objects, environment, self, and the world is central to Dewey's theory of action (Strauss, 1993).

The early Chicago sociologists like W. I. Thomas, Robert Park, and Everett Hughes came by their interactionism with John Dewey and William James. These men and their students developed concepts and styles of research consistent with philosophic Pragmatist perspectives and assumptions about action/interaction. The clear implication is that one or several interactional processes may be going on simultaneously and among the various interactants. I propose that by conducting my study and analyzing the results through this “theory of interaction” lens, it was possible to gain deep insight into the context from which African-American teachers are impacted by race, stereotype threat, and identity issues. It has provided some understanding of how they develop professional images and make professional decisions.

The theoretical framework for this study is multilayered and interweaves Symbolic Interactionism (G. H. Mead, Georg Simmel, Herbert Blumer, and Anselm Strauss), Habitus (Pierre Bourdieu), Stereotype Threat and Identity, and Critical Race Theory. The guiding principle for this multilayered framework is to give an anti-hegemonic voice (Gramsci) to the racially relevant stories and experiences of African-American teachers in education settings. Specifically, this study has sought to counter the effects of so-called color-blind language which completely invalidates the oppressed person's experience. This study has explored the relationship among ideology, culture, and status (as a minority) while keeping race at the center of the analysis. CRT and the use of Narratives permit the oppressed to tell their stories and bring the racially relevant

experiences to the forefront. This will result in counteracting the stories (or silence) as told by the dominant culture.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Introduction

Finding answers, or at least pondering the questions which identify knowledge remains one of the most challenging issues confronting mankind. The theory of knowledge, or, “epistemology,” from the Greek word episteme, meaning knowledge, is central to these fundamental questions with which philosophers, scientists, and researchers must grapple. Philosophers and scientists alike have posed such questions as: Is there any knowledge in the world which is so certain that no reasonable man could doubt it?; Can we trust the evidence of our senses?; What is the relationship between appearance and reality?; Is knowledge objective or subjective? Philosophers attempt to explore such questions critically. Natural scientists attempt to prove the existence of ‘truths’ based on empirical evidence. Social scientists seek to explain the “reality” of social phenomena using one of two opposing dominant research approaches.

Epistemological assumptions include ideas about what forms of knowledge can be obtained, and how one can sort out what is to be regarded as ‘true’ from what is to be regarded as ‘false.’ Even this dichotomous notion of ‘true’ and ‘false’ implies a particular epistemological position. It implies a view of the nature of knowledge itself: for example, is it possible to identify and communicate knowledge as objective, real, and capable of being transmitted in

tangible form, or is knowledge, more subjective, even metaphysical, based on experience and insight of a unique and personal nature. These epistemological views determine one's position on the issue of whether knowledge can be acquired, or is something that must be experienced.

Clearly, a researcher's epistemology guides his/her approach and method. The positivist's approach, which is most closely related to the scientific method, asserts that things are only meaningful if they are observable and verifiable. This method first formulates an hypothesis from theory and then collects data to test its validity. This method is quantitative and generally predicts future behavior. One of the major criticisms of this approach is the implicit set of values which the researcher brings to the research. The fact that the research question generally implies an anticipated outcome is often criticized. A limitation to this type of research is that human factors such as beliefs, intentions, and feelings cannot be directly observed (Anderson and Arsenault, 2000).

In contrast, the pragmatist's approach considers values and perspectives as critical components in the search for knowledge. This type of research is generally carried out in naturalistic rather than experimental or clinical environments. It relies on the researcher rather than instruments as the means of gathering data. It is qualitative and values the participants input in interpreting the data. The limitations of this type of study are questionable reliability, internal validity, and inability to generalize.

In summary, there are two main views on the means to discover new knowledge: the positivist view and the pragmatist view. These two views support differing research approaches or traditions. The researcher's view of the social world and beliefs about what constitutes knowledge is implicit in his/her research approach. In assuming a pragmatist posture, my scientific position is two-fold: a position on truth and a method of inquiry. Pragmatists favor an operative theory of knowledge, where knowledge is "the active control of nature and of experience," (Dewey in Tamanaha, 1997). For a pragmatist, truth is what works, not "anything goes," but contingent upon context, experience, and interpretation. From this perspective, I chose a methodology which supported my intent to explore some possibilities which are situational, historical, and contextually based.

Although part of the data yields some quantitative data in the form of demographic information, the methodology used in this study is primarily qualitative. A flexible grounded theory methodology was used to gain an understanding of how African-American teachers, in a specific context, interact, take actions, and manage in response to racialized environments in education settings. This method was selected because it is a systematic means to investigate the meaning of the subjects' statements and to make analytic sense of them. Simply stated, grounded theory methods offer systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories 'grounded' in the data themselves (Charmaz, 2006). The characteristics of a grounded theory

study are presented within this chapter in discussion of the intent, the selection of the participants, the design of the study, data collection, data analysis, and the establishment of trustworthiness. This chapter is concluded with a brief discussion of the researcher's philosophical position on the nature of and access to knowledge. This discussion is raised at both the beginning and end of the chapter to emphasize its role in the researcher's choice of methodology for this study.

Intent

Highlighting the complex and subtle actions that support inequities of power and privilege is difficult, and addressing the issues that maintain that relationship does not guarantee that all African-American educators will become self-determined, self-efficacious, confident, and competent professionals. However, neglecting to examine, uncover, and challenge spaces where race and racism operate in education settings will certainly guarantee that privileged discourses will remain unchallenged. As an African-American teacher and administrator and now doctoral student, I have both a personal and an academic interest in examining the racially relevant counter-stories of African-American teachers to explore the relationship of ideology, culture, and status (as a minority). The study is designed to look for beliefs and/or values as functions of real or perceived racial discrimination. Finally, the study will categorize some of

the reactions, responses, management, and eventual consequences of perceived systemically maintained relationships of power and privilege.

Design of the Study

Both the intent of my study (to give voice to African-American teachers' counter-stories pertaining to their racialized experiences in educational settings) and my epistemological stance provided a rationale for doing a qualitative analysis to build theory. I conducted my study using a grounded theory method in order to formulate theoretical interpretations of the data grounded in the reality of what is really happening. Grounded theory, which has been formulated and developed during the last thirty years on the work of sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967), is a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analyzed. What most differentiates grounded theory from much other research is that it is explicitly emergent. It does not test a hypothesis. It sets out to find what theory accounts for the research situation as it is. In this respect it is like action research: the aim is to understand the research situation. The aim, as Glaser in particular states it, is to discover the theory implicit in the data. Glaser and Strauss regard grounded theory as a general theory of scientific method concerned with the generation, elaboration, and validation of social science theory. For them, grounded theory research should meet the accepted canons for doing good

science (consistency, reproducibility, generalizability, etc.), although these methodological notions are not to be understood in a positivist sense. The general goal of grounded theory research is to construct theories in order to understand phenomena. A good grounded theory is one that is: (1) inductively derived from data; (2) subjected to theoretical elaboration and (3) judged adequate to its domain with respect to a number of evaluative criteria. Although it has been developed and principally used within the field of sociology, grounded theory can be, and has been, successfully employed by people in a variety of different disciplines. These include education, nursing studies, political science, and to a very limited extent, psychology. Glaser and Strauss do not regard the procedures of grounded theory as discipline specific, and they encourage researchers to use the procedures for their own disciplinary purposes (Haig, 1995).

This inductive approach to theory development can be graphically visualized as two funnels joined where they narrow, at the center. At the top, new data are collected in multiple stages; emergent themes are identified, interpreted, compared and refined. This process creates a funnel of new information from which constructs and theories are developed (the middle). These theories can then be cast out into various sampling groups to determine the strength of the similarities and differences of the theoretical constructs with different populations. The stronger the support for the theoretical propositions, the wider the base at the bottom (Anderson and Arsenault, 1998). The aim of this

approach is to discover underlying social forces that shape human behavior, by means of interviews with open-ended questions, focus groups, informal conversation, group feedback analysis, or any other individual or group activity which yields data.

The intent of a grounded theory study is to generate or discover a theory, an abstract analytical schema of a phenomenon, that relates to a particular situation. This situation is one in which individuals interact, take actions, or engage in a response to a phenomenon. To study how people act and react to this phenomenon (in this study, inequities of power and privilege), the researcher collects primarily interview data, makes visits to the field (interviews), develops and interrelates categories of information, and writes theoretical propositions or hypotheses or presents a visual picture of the theory (Cresswell, 1998).

The centerpiece of grounded theory research is the development or generation of theory closely related to the context of the phenomenon being studied (Cresswell, 1998). Strauss and Corbin (1990) describe context as follows:

The specific set of properties that pertain to a phenomenon; that is, the locations of events or incidents pertaining to a phenomenon along a dimensional range. Context represents the particular set of conditions within which the action/interactional strategies are taken.

Note that there are two meanings ascribed to context. In this study, the first meaning (dimension) would refer to perceptions and experiences of racial inequities that range along a continuum from societal to personal. The second meaning would refer to specific incidents/events in which the participants acted/intersected or handled perceived racial inequities.

Grounded theory is an action/interactional oriented method of theory building. There is action/interaction, which is directed at managing, handling, carrying out, and/or responding to a phenomenon as it exists in context (along a continuum) or under a specific set of perceived conditions (education setting).

According to Strauss and Corbin (1994), the theory, developed by the researcher, is articulated toward the end of the study and can assume the form of a narrative statement (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), a visual picture (Morrow & Smith, 1995), or a series of hypotheses or propositions (Cresswell & Brown, 1992). In this study, the researcher will articulate the theory in narrative form.

Although grounded theory has only been widely used in educational research since the 1960's, it represents an inductivist position stretching back to John Stuart Mill. To illustrate, in Chapter II of *On Liberty* Mill writes:

....Very few facts are able to tell their own story, without comments to bring out their meaning. The whole strength and value, then, of human judgment depending on the one property, that it can be set right when it is wrong, reliance can be placed on it only when the means of setting it right are kept constantly at hand. In the case of any person whose judgment is really deserving of confidence, how has it become so? Because he has kept his mind open to criticism of his opinions and conduct.....Because he has felt that the only way in which a human being can make some approach to knowing the whole of a subject is by hearing what can be said about it by persons of every variety of opinion, and studying all modes in which it can be looked at by every character of mind. No wise man ever acquired his wisdom in any mode but this; nor is it in the nature of human intellect to become wise in any other manner.

Mill's position on the "process for moving toward the truth," his espousal to allow beliefs to be challenged, and his opinion that without hearing the other side, we judge our certainty "higher" are all well-aligned with grounded theory. The central difference between grounded theory and other kinds of intellectual

endeavor labeled theory is the temporal placing of the intellectual organization; in most theorizing one might say that presupposition exists, while what occurs in grounded theory might be called “postsupposition” and an iterative visiting of the data to refine the theory (Thomas, 1997).

The researcher believes, along with Blumer (1969); Diesing (1971); and Glaser (1978), that the development of theoretically informed interpretations is the most powerful way to bring reality to light. The theoretical formulation that results not only explains reality, but provides a framework for action. Since grounded theory is an action/interaction oriented method of theory-building, I want to use it to systematically look at how African-American teachers in an educational context, manage, handle, and/or respond to what can be categorized as systemically embedded racism.

As discussed earlier, the researcher’s epistemology and the goals of the research converge to guide the methods used to conduct the study. Grounded Theory is suited to this study because it is philosophically aligned with a pragmatist’s view of the nature of knowledge. Moreover, the Grounded Theory procedures for data collection and analysis are easily complemented by a Critical Race Theory perspective.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory provided a theoretical and analytical framework which ensured what Bell (1995) refers to as a “realist view” of the dominant role that racism has played and continues to play in American society. As required by CRT, the data was easily filtered through a Critical Race Theory perspective by keeping race and racially-based events as the focus during data collection and analysis. For example, survey and interview questions were formulated to extrapolate beliefs and values about race and pedagogical practices based on those beliefs and values.

The first stage surveys were designed to elicit the teachers’ self-reported life histories with emphasis on their cultural identities, experiences, and beliefs about race. The researcher chose to use the *Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity* (MIBI) since it defines racial identity in African Americans as the significant and qualitative meaning that individuals attribute to their membership within the Black racial group within their self-concepts. This definition can be broken into two questions; “How important is race in the individual’s perception of self?”, and “What does it mean to be a member of this group?” By addressing these questions, the researcher was able to collect data which provided a context from which she could interpret the interview data.

Following the logic of CRT, the interviews elicited histories of significant events throughout their lives that have affected their beliefs about race, following the counter-storytelling method of contextualizing both the events and

participant's personal development in the social and political milieu in which the events occurred (Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995). The interviews also probed for their pedagogical profiles while focusing on their beliefs about race, descriptions of their practices, and their perspectives of the relevance of race-based issues encountered in their practices. It is important to note that this CRT perspective will be inextricably linked to the grounded theory method of data collection and analysis which is described in more detail below.

This study, guided by a philosophical framework which views knowledge as dynamic, situational, contextual, and dependent upon human interpretation, is situated within a theoretical framework that merges Critical Race Theory, Symbolic Interactionism, and Stereotype Threat. As described above, CRT provides a focus and usefulness as a tool for analysis. However, one caveat exists to challenge the researcher. Although Stereotype Threat and Symbolic Interactionism may be used to examine and explain the data, the researcher must put aside these theoretical notions, as much as possible, at the onset, so that the analytic, substantive theory can emerge (Cresswell, 1998). Stereotype Threat and Symbolic Interactionism must occupy a tentative role while the substantive theory emerges from the grounded theory analysis. After the emergence of the substantive theory, and if the data supports it, Stereotype Threat and Symbolic Interactionism may be used to explain the phenomenon under study.

Context and Strategies for Data Collection and Analysis

The research was conducted in the three school districts which serve Borderville, U.S.A.⁸ Borderville is the seat of Borderville County in a U.S. state which borders Mexico and is part of the American Southwest. According to the 2006 U.S. Census population estimates, the city had a population of 609, 415. It is the sixth-largest city in its state and the 21st-largest city in the United States, as well as the 7th fastest growing large city in the nation from 2000-2006. The metropolitan area, which includes parts of surrounding counties, has a population of 736, 310 (<http://en.wikipedia.org>, 04/05/08). Borderville stands along the U.S. border across from a major city in Mexico.

As of the census of 2000, there were 563,662 people, 182,063 households, and 141,098 families residing in the city. The racial makeup of the city was 76.6% White, 3.12% African American, 0.82% Native American, 1.12% Asian, 0.10% Pacific Islander, 18.15% from other races, and 3.40% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race were 76.62% of the population. The census states that only 87, 274 Borderville residents are white and not of Hispanic origin (about 14.6%).

The city is home to a state university and a major United States Army installation. From World War II until the 1980's, the expansion of this installation from a frontier post to a major Cold War military center brought in thousands of soldiers, dependents, and retirees. Twelve thousand soldiers are currently

⁸ Pseudonym

stationed at this military installation and, it is the second largest employer in Borderville with nearly 7,000 (civilian) employees.

The city of Borderville is served by three school districts which are the Borderville⁹, Zuni¹⁰, and Alamo¹¹ Independent School Districts, and are the first, third, and sixth largest city employers respectively, employing more than 19,000 people between them.

Borderville ISD, the largest, consists of 109 schools with a total student enrollment of 63, 811 and a teacher population of 4, 432. The second largest, Zuni ISD, has 66 schools servicing 46,115 students with a teacher workforce of 2, 982. Thirdly, Alamo ISD the smallest district, has 41 schools, 36, 842 students, and 2,188 teachers. (<http://nces.ed.gov>, 04/12/08). The ethnic distribution of teachers and students in the three districts follow the makeup in the city in that the largest population is Hispanic, followed by non-Hispanic Whites, African Americans, Native Americans, and Asian/Pacific Islanders. The actual percentages of the ethnic distribution of students in the Borderville ISD more closely mirror those of the city while the Hispanic population is proportionally greater in the Zuni ISD and greater still in the Alamo ISD. In teacher ethnic distribution, the Zuni ISD is closer to the overall city ethnic distribution while the Borderville distribution indicates a much larger population of non-Hispanic White teachers (39.9%) than that of Whites (17.2%) in the overall city makeup. In

⁹ Pseudonym

¹⁰ Pseudonym

¹¹ Pseudonym

all cases (See Tables 1. and 2.), non-White Hispanics make up the largest ethnic group.

Table 1: Ethnic Distribution of Students in Borderville School Districts

	<u>Hispanic</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>African</u> <u>American</u>	<u>Native American</u>	<u>Asian/Pacific</u> <u>Islander</u>
Borderville ISD	76.4 %	17. 2%	4.3 %	0.3 %	1.7 %
Zuni ISD	87.4 %	8.8 %	2.4 %	0.8 %	0.6 %
Alamo ISD	90.6 %	6.7 %	2.1 %	0.2 %	0.4 %

Table 2: Ethnic Distribution of Teachers in Borderville School districts

	<u>Hispanic</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>African</u> <u>American</u>	<u>Native</u> <u>American</u>	<u>Asian/Pacific</u> <u>Islander</u>
Borderville ISD	56.6	39.9	2.4	0.1 %	0.9 %
Zuni ISD	73.0	23.8	2.0	0.3	0.8
Alamo ISD	75.9	21.4	1.8	0.1	0.7

The Survey

The initial survey (*Appendix A*) was sent to the identified populations from the Zuni ISD and Alamo ISD populations in November, 2006. The survey included a cover letter (*Appendix B*) which explained the purpose and scope of the study as well as letters of Informed Consent (*Appendices C and D*) confirming confidentiality of participants and anonymity of responses. Moreover, they were advised of any risks involved and given contact information for the researcher as

well as a contact person at the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects (ORSP) at the university should they want to report a research concern.

The survey was designed to elicit the teachers' self-reported life histories with emphasis on their cultural identities, experiences, and beliefs about race. The discussion of identity, which is the part of the person that refers to one's real self, or psyche, based in part on one's status and roles in the world, provided the structure from which to address the issues of beliefs and values. In this study, identity is a particularly salient issue in that it focuses on one's racial identity.

The researcher chose to use the *Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity* (MIBI) since it defines racial identity in African Americans as the significance and qualitative meaning that individuals attribute to their membership within the Black racial group within their self-concepts. This definition can be broken into two questions; "How important is race in the individual's perception of self?", and "What does it mean to be a member of this group?" By addressing these questions, the researcher was able to collect data which provided a context from which she could interpret the interview data.

Several related incidents followed within the next two days¹². The first incident was a phone call to the researcher from an obviously irate person who proceeded to state how angry and insulted she was to have received a survey asking her questions about being an African-American. She then asked the

¹² The researcher includes an account of these incidents due to their possible relevance to both the topic under investigation and to the data collection process used in the study.

researcher, “What are you?” The researcher, being stunned by the nature of the call, did not recognize the meaning of the question and simply repeated, “What am I?” The caller, appearing more agitated, said “Yes, What race are you, are you Caucasian?” The researcher then calmly answered, “I’m African-American.” After a brief pause, the caller stammered, “Oh.....Uh..... Ah.....I’m just too upset to discuss this.” She then hung up. Early the following day, the researcher was contacted by the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects (OSRP) and notified that someone had called the previous day to lodge a similar complaint about having been identified as African-American¹³. Since the caller did not identify herself, the researcher does not know if these calls were made by the same or different person(s). The second incident was another call from someone who wanted the researcher to know that, “I’m sorry, I can’t help you, I’m not African-American.” The third incident was a returned *uncompleted* survey with a bold marker-written note across the top which read: “I am NOT African-American!”

As noted in the footnote on the previous page, the researcher has chosen to include these accounts for two important reasons. First, these three incidents, particularly the first one, alerted the researcher to her omission of stating her racial identity in the cover letter. This omission surfaced on several occasions

¹³ In all three districts, the African-American population was identified by their respective school districts. Borderville and Zuni ISD’s provided the researcher with a database of their African-American teacher populations from which she mailed out the surveys. In the case of Alamo ISD, the researcher did not receive a database of names; the surveys were mailed directly to the research population by their district’s Office of Research and Evaluation.

during the interview stage of the data-collection process and will be discussed in both Chapters V and VI. Secondly, the researcher believes that these incidents are significant indicators of the often denied salience of race and racialized discourse in U.S. society.

Due to a delay in obtaining the database from Borderville ISD¹⁴, the surveys were not sent out to their African-American teacher population until April, 2007. The researcher did not begin the data analysis of any of the surveys until 30 days after the deadline date and it was evident that the return was completed. Fifty-three surveys were returned at a rate of 24%. Using Excel, the researcher entered all data by the seventy-three questions as submitted to create a spreadsheet. The data was then entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software and analyzed for 1)Frequency of descriptive data, 2) Correlation of responses, 3)Frequency of responses, and 4) Crosstabulation of responses by district. The analysis is discussed in Chapter IV.

¹⁴ *Borderville ISD* required an *Open Records Act Request* to access the population. Due to an incorrect report from the first request, the researcher had to make a second request. These delays account for the five months between sending the surveys to *Zuni* and *Alamo*, and then to *Borderville*.

The Interviews

The interviewees were initially selected based on their willingness to participate which they indicated on the returned surveys. From the 14 surveys returned from Borderville, 10 indicated a willingness to participate, 18 of the 26 from Zuni, and 9 of the 13 from Alamo. This represented a total of 37 of the original 53 or 70% of those who had completed and returned the survey.

The researcher considered willingness to participate crucial to the success of the study due to the depth and complexity of the topic under investigation. For this reason, the researcher was careful to schedule only those participants eager and enthusiastic about participating in the interviews. The final interview sample included 11 subjects and represented all three districts: 4 from Alamo, 5 from Zuni, and 2 from Borderville. The sample consisted of five males and six females. The researcher collected 24 hours of audio-taped data and 285 pages of transcribed data. The interviews were one and one-half to two hours long and lasted until the subject indicated that they had exhausted the topic.

The interviews were semistructured, with a set of guiding questions, but with an open-ended style which remained responsive to the lead of the interviewer. The interviews explored their beliefs about the balance of power and privilege between African Americans, Whites, and non-white Hispanics both in U.S. society and in education settings. In all cases, the interview began with the following open-ended question: *"What do you think about the distribution of power and privilege between African Americans and non-minority whites in U.S. society?"*

The interview continued to probe for their perceptions of how their beliefs, perceptions, and experiences converge with their professional selves. Most importantly, they were asked to reflect upon the ways that their self-identities are aligned with their pedagogical and professional decisions and actions. The researcher probed for embedded motivations for their actions. The researcher remained aware of the necessity to surface responses which described how behaviors fit together rather than why they made a certain choice. The researcher used questions to alter the conditions. For example, if you did *x* under *y* condition, would you have done *x* under *z* condition. In this way, I avoided a reductionist interpretation of the data.

The interviews continued to explore the participants as teachers including a general description of their pedagogical profiles and focusing on their beliefs about:

1. The manifestations of power and privilege in education settings
2. The distribution of privilege and power between African-American and non-minority white educators in education settings
3. The distribution of power and privilege between African-Americans and Hispanics in education settings
4. The psychological, emotional, and social effects of equitable and inequitable distribution of privilege and power in education settings
5. The impact of living in a Hispanic-majority environment on an African-American's Critical Race Awareness

6. The links between equitable and inequitable distribution of power and privilege and pedagogical choices.

By engaging in in-depth interviews with the subjects, the researcher was able to explore the topics and experiences under study. Moreover, the interviews enabled the researcher to elicit the participants' own interpretation of his or her experiences. The researcher asked the participants to describe and reflect upon his or her experiences while listening with theoretical sensitivity. The questions reflected a symbolic interactionist emphasis on learning about participants' views, experienced events, and actions (Charmaz, 2006).

Following is a description of the data analysis process. The analysis of the data was an ongoing process, continuing throughout the study. As discussed, this study was conducted using a grounded theory methodology. Classic grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978) emphasizes creating analyses of action and process. The researcher used an approach of simultaneously collecting and analyzing data as a way of allowing the data to inform the analysis. The main grounded theory question is:

- What is happening here? (Glaser, 1978)

This question leads to a further analysis by answering the following questions:

- What are the social processes?
- What are the social psychological processes?

After transcribing the interview data, the first step in the grounded theory analysis was coding. Grounded theory coding consists of at least two phases: *initial* and *focused* coding. Charmaz (2006) describes initial coding as studying fragments of data ----- words, lines, segments, and incidents ---- closely to their analytic import. The researcher began with a line by line coding, paying attention to words and language; she was careful to capture *in vivo* codes where possible. *In vivo* refers to codes of participants' special terms. *In vivo* codes help to preserve participants' meanings of their views and actions in the coding itself; they can serve as symbolic markers of participants' speech and meanings. Charmaz (2006) outlines three kinds of *in vivo* codes potentially useful during the analysis:

- Those general terms everyone 'knows' that flag condensed meanings
- A participant's innovative term that captures meanings or experience
- Insider shorthand terms specific to a particular group that reflect their perspective

In vivo codes proved to be quite valuable in the analytic process as the researcher looked for implicit meanings and attempted to compare them with emerging analytic categories. These codes allowed the researcher to develop a deeper understanding of what is really happening and what it means. In other words, the use of *in vivo* codes anchored the analysis with the participants' worlds (See Charmaz, 2006).

The second phase of coding was focused coding. Focused coding begins synthesizing the data by using the most significant and/or frequent earlier codes

to sift through large amounts of data. Focused coding requires decisions about which initial codes make the most analytic sense to categorize the data incisively and completely. Through focused coding, the researcher was able to move across the interviews and compare the experiences, actions, and interpretations to determine if there were recognizable categories of reactions, responses, or management of events or situations. Charmaz (2006) describes this process as condensing and getting a handle on the data.

Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998; Strauss, 1987) present a third type of coding, axial coding, to relate categories to subcategories. Axial coding specifies the properties and dimensions of a category, and reassembles the data which was fractured during initial coding and gives coherence to the emerging analysis. Axial coding asks how categories and subcategories are linked. The researcher begins by identifying central phenomenon (i.e. a central category about the phenomenon), exploring causal conditions (i.e., categories of conditions that influence the phenomenon), specifying strategies (i.e., the actions/interactions that result from the phenomenon), identifying the context and intervening conditions (i.e., the narrow and broad conditions that influence the strategies), and delineating the consequences (i.e., the outcomes of the strategies) for this phenomenon (See Cresswell, 1998).

Axial coding provides a frame for researchers to apply and may extend or limit one's vision, depending upon subject matter. The researcher did not choose to use axial coding according to Strauss and Corbin's formal procedures but,

rather, used a more flexible model described by Charmaz (2006). She developed subcategories of a category and showed the links between them as she analyzed the experiences the categories represent. The subsequent categories, subcategories, and links reflect how she made sense of the data.

This model is aligned with Glaser's (1978:72) *theoretical coding* which he describes as conceptualizing 'how the substantive codes may relate to each other as hypotheses to be integrated into a theory.' Glaser (1992) argues that these codes preclude the need for axial coding because they 'weave the fractured story back together' (Glaser, 1978: 72). These codes helped to build the analytic story and helped the researcher to conceptualize how the substantive codes were related, and helped to move the analysis towards a theoretical direction. The final step involved synthesizing the analysis through the conceptual framework that was used. In this case, the researcher is describing and relating the phenomenon under study through the concepts of symbolic interaction, stereotype threat, and critical race theory.

Finally, after initial coding, focused coding and theoretical coding, the researcher began writing memos on emerging theories. Subsequently, she engaged in theoretical sorting, diagramming, and integrating memos to move towards building an analytic frame from which to develop a substantive-level theory. The data analysis categories are the major elements of Chapters IV and V. These chapters include participant profiles and excerpts from the interviews providing substantiation for the interpretations.

Establishment of Trustworthiness

Many authors and researchers emphasize the necessity to be alert to bias in a naturalistic study such as this one (e.g. Guba and Lincoln, 1981). Janesick (2003) lists the identification of the researcher's own beliefs and ideology as one of the essential tasks to undertake at the beginning of a qualitative study. She argues that research is ideologically driven and that there is no value-free or bias-free design. Early on, according to Janesick, the qualitative researcher identifies his or her own biases and articulates the ideology or conceptual frame for the study. By identifying one's biases, one can easily see where the questions that guide the study are crafted. Janesick continues her argument that qualitative researchers are also attuned to making ethical decisions regarding such issues as how much to disclose in the final report. The researcher must be fully aware and be able to decide what information best captures the social setting yet, not compromise or harm any members of the study.

As principal investigator for this study, the researcher has constantly disclosed her perspective on the study and generously discussed the ideology that guided and shaped the study. For example, the researcher did not attempt to discover whether or not racialized environments exist, but rather, how the participants respond to and/or manage them. Clearly, the researcher's ideology includes the belief that racialized environments are a permanent part of U.S. institutions as well as the society at large. At the same time, the researcher remains aware of the purpose of qualitative research such as this study. The

intent is to look at what is happening within the context of the study to determine what is really happening. This reflects a symbolic interactionist emphasis on learning about subjects' views, experienced events, and actions (Charmaz, 2006). The study does not propose to prove anything; the focus is on understanding the given social setting.

Strauss and Corbin (1990), identify the criteria by which one judges the quality of a grounded theory study. They advance seven criteria related to the general research process:

Criterion #1: How was the sample selected? What grounds?

Criterion #2: What major categories emerged?

Criterion #3: What were some of the events, incidents, actions, and so on (as indicators) that pointed to some of these major categories?

Criterion #4: On the basis of what categories did theoretical sampling proceed? Guide data collection? Was it representative of the categories?

Criterion #5: What were some of the hypotheses pertaining to conceptual relations (that is, among categories), and on what grounds were they formulated and tested?

Criterion #6: Were there instances when hypotheses did not hold up against what was actually seen? How were these discrepancies accounted for? How did they affect the hypotheses?

Criterion #7: How and why was the core category selected (sudden, gradual, difficult, easy)? On what grounds?

They also advance six criteria related to the empirical grounding of a study:

Criterion #1: Are the concepts generated?

Criterion #2: Are the concepts systematically related?

Criterion #3: Are there many conceptual linkages, and are the categories well developed? With density?

Criterion #4: Is much variation built into the theory?

Criterion #5: Are the broader conditions built into the explanation?

Criterion #6: Has process (change or movement) been taken into account? (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, pp. 254-256).

The researcher argues the need to validate both the research process and the research findings. The above criteria were used for benchmarking the research process and providing a standard for validation. By adhering to such a process, the researcher has been able to establish rigor and trustworthiness of the study.

Validation Strategies

The researcher believes that because in grounded theory conceptualized notions evolve into theorized notions, there needs to be additional strategies to ensure the accuracy of the findings. Cresswell and Miller (2000) use the term “validation strategies”. The researcher utilized elements of five of Cresswell and Miller’s validation strategies frequently used by qualitative researchers.

- Prolonged engagement and persistent observations in the field include building trust with participants, learning the culture, and checking for misinformation that stems from distortions introduced by the researcher

or informants (Ely et al., 1991; Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998). In the field the researcher makes decisions about what is salient to the study, relevant to the purpose of the study, and of interest for focus. Although the researcher did not work with the subjects day in and day out, she spent time to establish rapport and build trust prior to interviewing them. She constantly checked for misinformation and distortions. She cross-referenced and clarified responses from the survey instrument during the interview. As topics arose, she made decisions as to what was salient to the study.

- In triangulation, researchers make use of multiple and different sources, methods, investigators, and theories to provide corroborating evidence. Typically, this process involves corroborating evidence from different sources to shed light on a theme or perspective. The researcher made use of multiple sources of data by collecting data from both the survey *Multiple Inventory of Black Identity* (MIBI) and the interviews.
- Clarifying researcher bias from the outset of the study is important so that the reader understands the researcher's position and any biases or assumptions that impact the inquiry (Merriam, 1988). The researcher has freely disclosed past experiences, biases, and orientations that have likely shaped and influenced the approach and interpretation of the study.

- Rich, thick description allows readers to make decisions regarding transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) because the writer describes in detail the participants or setting under study. In this case, the researcher has provided detailed description enabling readers to transfer information to similar contexts to determine whether the findings can be transferred “because of shared characteristics” (Erlandson et al., 1993, p. 32).

By utilizing elements of these validation strategies, the researcher experienced a high level of assurance that the findings were valid and reliable within the context of the study. The researcher furthered the reliability by employing a good-quality tape for recording and by transcribing the tape. This type of complete transcription was able to indicate the trivial, but often crucial, pauses and overlaps. She even invested in a transcription machine to assist with the arduous task of transcribing. The researcher believes the grounded theory method used for this study inherently provided additional validity due to the many layers of coding and linking conceptualized categories.

Integrity

Every effort was made to conduct an investigation of integrity. The researcher conducted herself ethically at all times. The subjects were informed of the nature of the study; the anonymity of the participants and their work locations have been well protected, and the data has been recorded, analyzed, and presented as accurately as possible. Chapters IV and V will discuss the

analysis and interpretation of the data. Moreover, the researcher will discuss the extent to which her study has met the criteria discussed above as set forth by Strauss and Corbin (1990).

Conclusion

Much of what we want in education and how we think we ought to get it depends on our position on ideas like human nature and human behavior. In important ways, these positions determine our research questions, approach, and methodology. The outcomes are in some ways predetermined based on the positions that the researchers take before the investigation begins. Perhaps the best we can offer is to be as thorough as possible in reflecting on those positions and being aware of how they inform our approaches to research. In my case, my intent was to use a framework for inquiry which would generate rather than test theories. Central to my research is the aim to look at how African-American teachers in an education context, manage, handle, and/or respond to what can be categorized as institutionalized racial prejudice and racism. At the same time, I want to tell the counterstories and give voice to those whose experiences of oppression have been overlooked or invalidated through silence.

Cashmore and Jenkins (2001) close their edited readings on racism with a quote from Bryan Singer's 1995 movie *The Usual Suspects* in which one of the characters compares the mysteriously elusive arch-criminal Kaiser Soze to the devil: 'The devil's biggest trick is in persuading the world that he really doesn't exist.' An additional purpose of this study is to prevent the reality of racism from mimicking the devil.

CHAPTER IV

Findings

Overview

As stated in Chapter I, the study reported here examined the racially relevant stories of African American teachers and educators in education settings. It explored the relationship of cultural identity, ideology, and status (as a minority). It looked at some of their beliefs and values about the teaching and learning process while attempting to determine if any of those beliefs and/or values are functions of (real or perceived) racial discrimination. It also looked at reactions, responses, management, and eventual consequences of perceived institutionalized racism. The chapter is organized in terms of both the survey and interview methods of data collection as well as the two research questions which framed the study.

It first reports the findings from the surveys which includes demographic information about the identified population. In addition, it reports the elicited responses that ascertained their positions on their cultural identities, experiences, and beliefs about race. The instrument, the *Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity* (MIBI), was created by Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, and Smith (1997) to operationalize the *Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity* (MMRI) (Sellers, et al. 1997)¹⁵. The authors stated that the MMRI focuses on African

¹⁵ See Chapter III for discussion of MMRI

Americans' beliefs regarding the significance of race in (a) how they define themselves and (b) the qualitative meanings that they ascribe to membership in that racial group.

As discussed in Chapter III, Sellers et al. (1997) have delineated four dimensions to describe the significance and meaning of race in the self-concepts of African Americans: (a) identity salience, (b) the centrality of identity, (c) the ideology associated with the identity, and (d) the regard in which the person holds African American people. According to Sellers et al. (1997), "Salience and centrality refer to the significance of race, whereas ideology and regard refer to the qualitative meaning that individuals ascribe to their membership in the Black community" (p.806). The authors state that "The MIBI was created as a measure of the three stable dimensions (centrality, ideology, regard) of the MMRI. Every dimension is measured with the exception of the salience dimension, because it is too dependent on situational factors (Sellers, et al., 1997). For this reason, the MIBI consists of three scales (Centrality, Ideology, Regard), which yield a total of seven scores. A score is derived from the Centrality scale, four scores from the four Ideology subscales (Nationalist, Oppressed Minority, Assimilationist, Humanist), and two scores are derived from the two Regard subscales (Public and Private Regard; Sellers et al., 1997). In sum, the instrument encouraged the participants to reflect on how they identify themselves culturally and what meaning they ascribe to that identity. The survey also provided a context through which the interview responses could be filtered to determine if and how

one's sense of racial identity drives, motivates, and/or influences their behavior in a social context such as a school or other education setting.

Secondly, this chapter reports the findings of 24 hours of semi-structured interviews. The interviews explored the participants' beliefs about the balance of power and privilege between African Americans, Whites, and non-White Hispanics both in the larger U.S. society and within their professional education settings. The participants were probed to reveal how their beliefs, perceptions, and experiences converge with their professional selves. They were given the opportunity to expand and clarify their survey responses by reflecting on and talking about ways that their cultural identities are aligned with their professional decision-making and actions.

Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the findings of both the survey and the interviews with a discussion of the degree to which they collectively addressed the questions which framed the study.

Survey Results

Borderville U.S.A.¹⁶ was an ideal site to study the racially relevant stories of African American teachers and educators in their professional settings. It provided a unique context from which the researcher could explore the relationship of cultural identity, ideology, culture, and status as a minority. The researcher was able to look at their beliefs and values about the teaching process and determine if any of those beliefs and values are functions of real or perceived racial discrimination within the unusual context of being a minority in an environment in which the majority population is another minority group. Although not an initial consideration, Borderville provided yet another contextual factor which the researcher could not ignore, that of having a large community of military-affiliated citizens. This uniqueness of contextual factors such as the U.S.-Mexico border, minority status in a minority-majority environment, and a strong military presence provided the researcher with a richly-layered context from which she was able to look at reactions, response, management, and consequences of perceived racism.

As reported in Chapter III, the population for this study consisted of the African-American teachers and educators from the three largest school districts in Borderville, US.A.¹⁷. The three districts, Borderville ISD¹⁸, Zuni ISD¹⁹, and Alamo

¹⁶ Pseudonym for a U.S.-Mexico border city in the southwestern United States.

¹⁷ Pseudonym

¹⁸ Pseudonym

¹⁹ Pseudonym

ISD²⁰ have a combined African-American teacher population of 212. Borderville ISD, the largest, has 108, Zuni ISD has 68, and Alamo has ISD 43. This represents 2.4%, 2.0%, and 2.3% respectively of their teacher populations. (www.tea.state.tx.us).

After securing access to the target population from the Human Resources Departments of the three school districts, the researcher began the data collection process. The initial stage of data collection involved the 212 African-American teachers identified by their school districts. This number represents 2.2% of the total teacher workforce of the three districts which is approximately 10,000. There are approximately 6,000 Hispanic educators, 3,000 non-Hispanic white educators, and 212 African-American teachers in the city. In comparison, the composite student population includes 126,000 Hispanics, 27,000 non-Hispanic whites, and 4,589 African –Americans (www.tea.state.tx.us).

The following analysis of the seventy three question survey provides demographic information via a frequency of descriptive data, as well as a correlation of responses, frequency of responses, and a crosstabulation of responses by district. Part I of the survey consisted of the 56 item MIBI followed by Part II, the 9 item *Racism and Life Experiences Scale-Brief Version* which asked the subjects' to reflect on and rate the frequency of recent and/or lifetime experiences with racism, racial discrimination, or racial prejudice. Finally, the researcher added a Part III to the survey. This was an 8 question survey used to

²⁰ Pseudonym

gather information regarding 1) gender; 2) age; 3) years of experience in education; 4) preference in how they wished to be racially identified; 5) highest academic degree; 6) history of residence in other states in the U.S.; 7) history of residence in countries outside of the U.S.; and, 8) willingness to participate in follow-up interviews with the researcher. Fifty three surveys were returned at a rate of 24%. The results from part III are presented in the following section.

Part III - Descriptive Data.

Table 3

Descriptive Data of Sample					
Gender	Male	Female			
	30	23			
Age	25 or Less	26 -35	36 - 49	50 - 65	66 or Over
		5	18	27	3
Years in Education	5 or Less	6-10	11-15	16-20	21 or Over
	6	9	8	6	24
Racial Identification	African-American	Black	Biracial/Multiracial	Other	Doesn't Matter
	15	27	5	1	5
Highest Academic Degree	Bachelors	Masters	Doctorate	Other	No Answer
	26	20	1	3	3
Residence in Other States	Yes	No	No Answer		
	43	9	1		
Residence Outside the U.S.	Yes	No			
	35	18			
Participate in Interview	Yes	No			
	37	16			

Gender and Age. 56.6% identified themselves as female and 43.4% as male.

Slightly more than half, or 50.9% were between 50 and 65 years old. 34% were between 36 and 49, 9.4% were between 26 and 35, and 5.7% were 66 and over.

Years of Experience and Education. 45.3% claimed 21 or more years of experience in the field of education. 17.0% claimed 6-10 years, 15.1% claimed 11-15 years, and 11.3% claimed 16- 20 years and 5 or less, respectively. 49.1% indicated having earned a Bachelors Degree, 37.7% a Masters Degree, and 1.9% a Doctorate. 5.7% did not answer and 5.7% indicated a High School Diploma or Associates Degree²¹.

History of Residence in Other States within the U.S. and in Countries outside of the U.S. 81.1% responded that they had lived in other states in the U.S. 17.0% indicated that they had only lived in the current state and 1.9% did not respond to the question. Of the 81.1% that had lived in other states, 36 out of the fifty states were mentioned with the highest percentages from Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Washington, and New York. 66% indicated that they had lived in countries outside of the U.S from 1-6 years. Four respondents indicated that they had been born and raised in other countries (Germany, England, Kenya, Panama) and had come to the U.S. as adults. Of those who had lived in other countries, 58.5% indicated military affiliation. Other reasons were school or family related.

Preference for racial identity. 50.9% of the respondents indicated a preference to be identified as Black, 28.3% preferred African American, 9.4% preferred Biracial or Multiracial (These five respondents described themselves as

1)Black/Irish/Indian, 2)African American-German, 3) Black/Panamanian, and 2

²¹ The Alamo ISD sent the survey to all of their African American employees which included some non-degreed paraprofessionals

did not specify), 9.4% indicated that it does not matter and 1.9% preferred Other and specified 'Human'²².

Part I - Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity. This 56 item part of the survey instrument was designed to assess African Americans' racial identity. Specifically, the *MIBI* measures the three stable constructs: *Centrality*, *Ideology*, and *Regard*.

Centrality.

The centrality of identity is one of the four dimensions which Sellers et al. (1997) delineated to describe the significance and meaning of race in the self-concepts of African Americans. Centrality refers to the stability and dominance of a person's race in the individual's self-concept. Sellers et al. (1997) stated that it is a measure of whether race is a core part of an individual's self-concept. Centrality is similar to salience in that both refer to significance of race. The only difference between the two constructs is that salience is situational and centrality is normative.²³ The *centrality* construct implies the existence of a hierarchical ranking of several different identities such as sexual orientation and gender, in terms of how close they are to the individual's core definition of self (Sellers et al., 1997).

²² This respondent reported Kenya as place of birth.

²³ The interview component of the data collection process has been designed to capture the salience of race in the participant's self-concepts.

Succinctly stated, the *centrality* dimension measures how often an individual defines him or herself in terms of race.

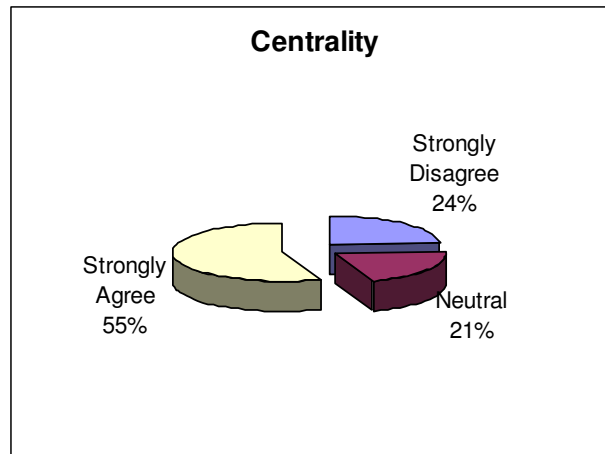


Figure 2: Centrality Scale – Frequencies

A composite frequency analysis of the 8 items of the *centrality* scale found that slightly more than half of the responses report that race plays a significant role in the respondents' identities. Figure 2 shows that 55% of the responses strongly agree that the respondents often define themselves in terms of race. Twenty-four percent of the responses indicate that participants do not define themselves in terms of race and 21% of the responses are neutral in terms of the role of race in defining their identities.

Ideology

Ideology is defined as the individual's beliefs, opinions, and attitudes regarding the way he or she feels that members of the race should act (Sellers et al. 1997).

According to Sellers et al. (1997), this dimension represents the person's

philosophy about the ways in which African Americans should live and interact with other people in society. Sellers et al. (1997) described four ideologies: (a) individuals with a *nationalist* philosophy emphasize the importance and uniqueness of being of African descent, (b) individuals with an *oppressed minority* ideology are characterized by a viewpoint that emphasizes the commonalities between African Americans and other oppressed groups, (c) individuals with an *assimilationist* philosophy stress the commonalities between African Americans and the rest of American society, and (d) individuals with a *humanist* philosophy emphasize the commonalities of all human beings. Sellers et al. (1997) asserted that these ideologies are manifested across four areas of functioning: political-economic issues, cultural-social activities, intergroup relations, and interaction with the dominant group. Although some African Americans may hold one primary ideology, others may hold different aspects of more than one ideology (Cokley and Helm, 2001).

Nationalist

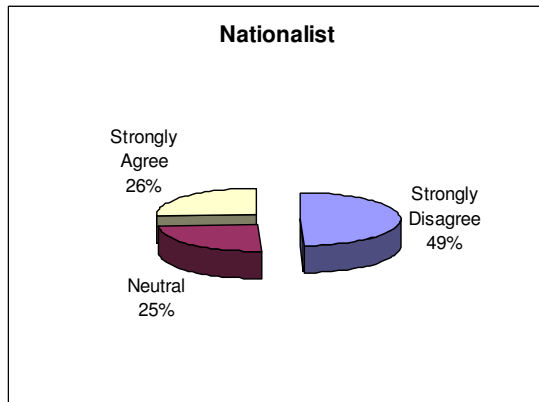


Figure 3: Nationalist Subscale – Frequencies

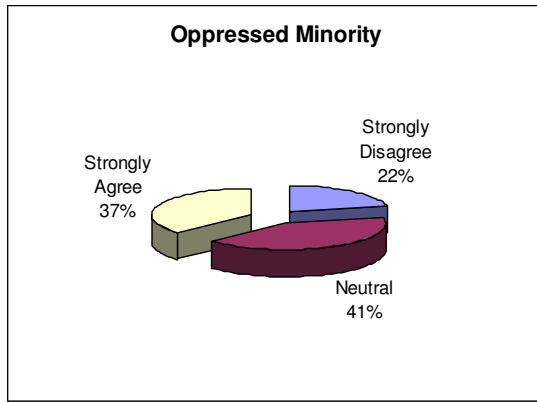


Figure 4: Oppressed Minority Subscale -

A composite frequency analysis of the *nationalist* subscale is displayed in Figure 3. Twenty-six percent of the responses strongly agree with a *nationalist* ideology and 25% are neutral. In contrast, almost one-half, 49% of the responses, strongly disagree with a *nationalist* ideology which reflects both an affirmation of Blackness without an anti-white or separatist sentiment as well as a strong separatist and anti-white sentiment. The *nationalist* ideology stresses the uniqueness of being Black. As such, the *nationalist* person views the African American experience as being different from that of any other group. A *nationalist* ideology posits that African Americans should be in control of their own destiny with minimal input from other groups.

Oppressed Minority

The *oppressed minority* subscale assesses individuals' viewpoints that emphasize commonalities between African Americans and other oppressed groups. Like the *nationalist* ideology, individuals who espouse this philosophy are acutely aware of the oppression that continues to confront African Americans. However, the *oppressed minority* ideology sees a link between the oppression that African Americans face and that of other minority groups (Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998). Sellers et al. (1998) assert that this model allows these minority groups to differ according to the individual. For some individuals, other oppressed groups with whom they identify as minority may consist of women, gay men, lesbians; others may define minorities as only consisting of ethnic groups of color. Sellers et al. (1998) contend that an individual endorsing the *oppressed minority* ideology is more likely to view coalition building as the most appropriate strategy for social change. From an intellectual standpoint, Sellers et al. (1998) argue that individuals with an *oppressed minority* ideology are often interested in the nature of oppression. From a cultural perspective, these individuals are as interested in the culture of other minority groups as they are their own.

Figure 4 illustrates that slightly more than a third, 37% of the responses strongly agree with this ideology. Twenty-two percent strongly disagree and 41% are neutral responses.

Assimilationist

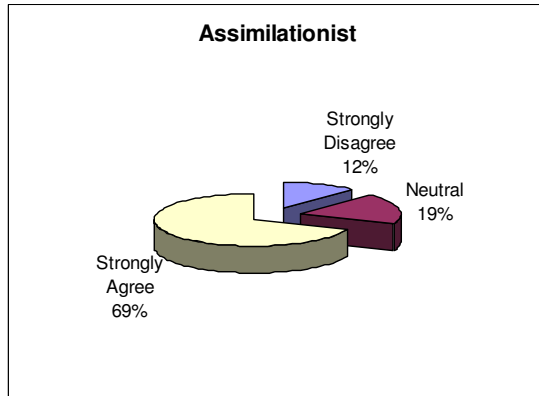


Figure 5: Assimilationist subscale

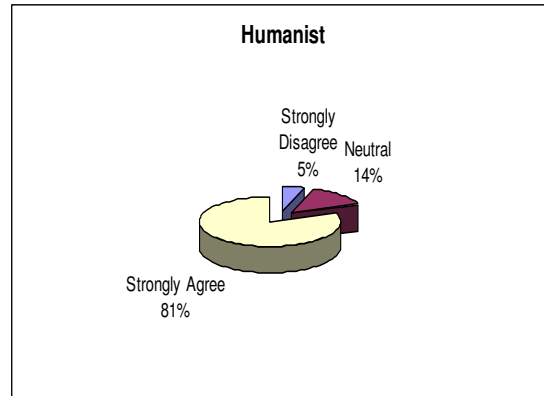


Figure 6: Humanist subscale

Figure 5 illustrates that a composite frequency analysis of the *assimilationist* subscale reports that 69 % of the responses support a strong identification with an *assimilationist* ideology. Twelve percent of the responses strongly deny this ideology and 19% of the responses are neutral.

According to Sellers et al. (1998), the *assimilationist* ideology is characterized by an emphasis on the similarities between African Americans and the rest of American society. A person with an *assimilationist* ideology acknowledges his or her status as an American and attempts to enter, as much as possible, into the mainstream. An *assimilationist* does not necessarily de-emphasize the importance of their status as an African American nor do they imply a lack of recognition of racism in America. In fact, a person with an *assimilationist* ideology can be an activist for social change (Sellers, et al., 1998). However, they are likely to feel

that African Americans need to work within the system to change it.

Interpersonally, persons with an *assimilationist* ideology are more likely to believe it to be important to interact socially with Whites.

Humanist

The *humanist* subscale assesses the fourth ideological philosophy of the *ideology* dimension of the MIBI and emphasizes the similarities among all humans. Sellers et al. (1998) assert that persons with a humanist viewpoint do not think in terms of race, gender, class, or other distinguishing characteristics. They are likely to view everyone as belonging to the same race — the human race.²⁴ A humanist ideology is often concerned more with “larger” issues facing the human race (such as the environment, peace, and hunger). Oppression is seen in terms of “man’s inhumanity towards man.” Individuals with a humanist ideology see race as being of only minor importance with respect to the way that they lead their lives (low centrality) and view the world. As a result, they are more likely to emphasize the characteristics of the individual person, regardless of race (Sellers, et al., 1998).

Figure 6 shows that the sample for this study overwhelmingly responded to support a *humanist* viewpoint. Eighty-one percent of the responses strongly agree

²⁴ This is congruent with the *humanist* subscale responses of the Kenyan respondent, cited above, who identified his preference to be identified as “human”. Of the 8 *humanist* subscale items he or she responded 7 (strongly agree) five times, 6 (two times), and 5 (one time).

with a *humanist* philosophy, 14% of the responses are neutral and 5 % of the responses strongly disagree with a *humanist* philosophy.

Summary: Ideology Subscales

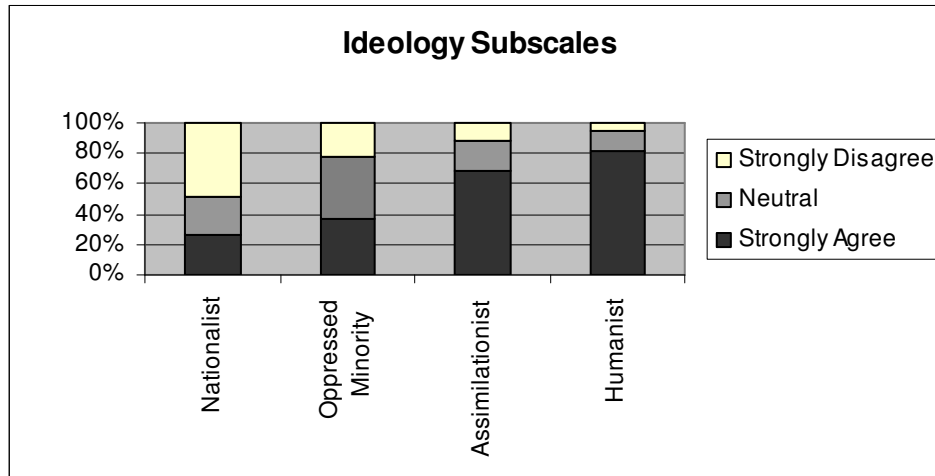


Figure 7: Summary of Ideology Subscales

Cokley and Helm (2001) conducted a study to test the validity of scores on the *Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity* (MIBI: R. M. Sellers, S. A. Rowley, T. M. Chavous, J.N. Shelton, & M.A. Smith, 1997) using confirmatory factor analysis and correlation. According to the *MMRI*, the model upon which the MIBI is designed, the racial identity constructs should correlate with each other in theoretically predictable ways. (Cokley and Helm, 2001).

The results demonstrated the predicted pattern of relationships and supported the hypotheses. Individuals for whom race is a central part of their identity were more likely to endorse nationalist attitudes ($r = .47$) and have positive private regard for African Americans ($r = .42$). Individuals high in race

centrality were also less likely to endorse assimilationist ($r = -.23$) and humanist ($r = -.25$) attitudes. The other Ideology subscales also correlated with each other in the hypothesized manner. Assimilationist and humanist attitudes were positively correlated with each other ($r = .58$), while being negatively correlated with nationalist attitudes ($r = -.39$ and $-.44$, respectively). Oppressed minority attitudes were positively correlated with assimilationist ($r = .27$) and humanist attitudes ($r = .45$).

Figure 7 shows a pattern congruent with Cokley and Helm's (2001) findings. Figure 6 suggests a high correlation between *Assimilationist* and *Humanist* attitudes while suggesting a negative correlation to *Nationalist* and *Oppressed Minority* attitudes. These attitudes might have been predicted by the responses from the *Centrality* subscale in which only slightly more than half of the participants report race as a central part of their identity.

Regard

Racial regard, as defined by Sellers et al. (1997) refers to a person's affective and evaluative judgment about his or her race in terms of positive-negative valence. In other words, it is the extent to which the individual feels positively about his or her race.

Sellers et al (1997) conceptualized the regard dimension of the MMRI based on Crocker and her colleagues' work on collective self-esteem (Crocker & Luhtanen,

1990; Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine, & Broadnax, 1994; Crocker & Major, 1989; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992).

Public regard is defined as the extent to which individuals feel that others view African-Americans positively or negatively. It is the individual's assessments of how his or her group is viewed (or valued) by the broader society. *Private regard* is defined as the extent to which individuals feel positively or negatively towards African-Americans as well as how positively or negatively they feel about being an African-American.

Figure 8 illustrates that 22% of the respondents felt strongly that others view African Americans positively, whereas 23% indicated a belief that others view African Americans negatively. A slight majority, 55% responded neutrally on this judgment of how others view African-Americans.

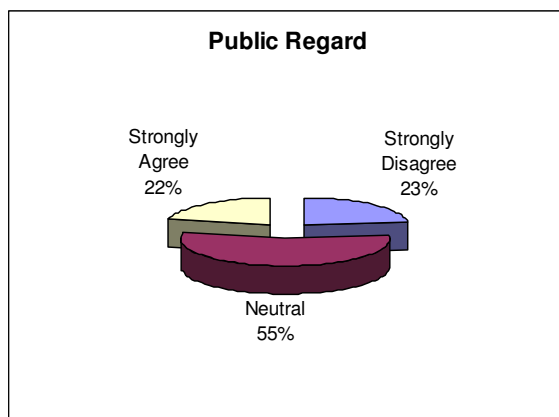


Figure 8: Public Regard Subscale

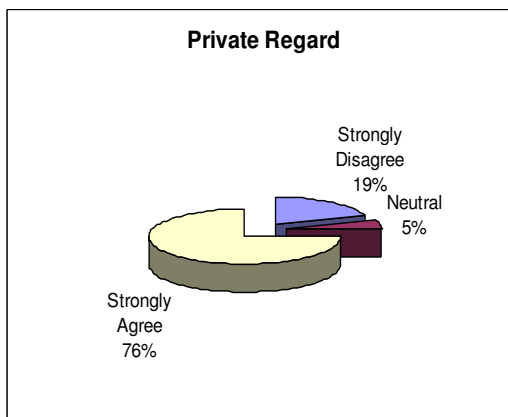


Figure 9: Private Regard Subscale

In contrast, Figure 9 demonstrates that 76% of the respondents indicated that they feel positively towards African-Americans and their membership in that

group, 19% strongly disagreed and gave responses to the contrary while 5% were neutral.

Part II – Racism and Life Experiences Scale – Brief – Version (RaLES – B)

This part of the survey asked the subjects to reflect on and rate the frequency of recent and/or lifetime experiences with racism, racial discrimination, or racial prejudice. The nine items, based on the Racism and Life Experiences Scale-Brief Version (RaLES-B) (Harrell, 1994) is a self-report measure that samples the perceptions of minority group members as it relates to the impact of racism on their lives.

Given that one of the goals of this study is to determine the mode of managing, handling, and/or responding (action/interaction) to real or perceived systemically embedded racism within the cultural context of a school setting, this early history of the RaLES-B supports its use as a measure of the psychological distress associated with racism.

For question one (see *Figure 10*), the findings report that when asked how much they have personally experienced racism, racial discrimination, or racial prejudice *during their lifetime*, 1.9% indicated *not at all*, 11.3% answered *a little*, 47.2% stated *Some*, 34% stated *A Lot*, and 5.7% answered *Extremely*.

Question 2 asks the same question regarding their personal experience of racism, racial discrimination, or racial prejudice *during the past year*. Figure 11 shows these responses to be 18.9%, *Not at all*, 35.8% *A Little*, 37.7% *Some*, and 7.5% *A Lot*. No one reported *Extremely*.

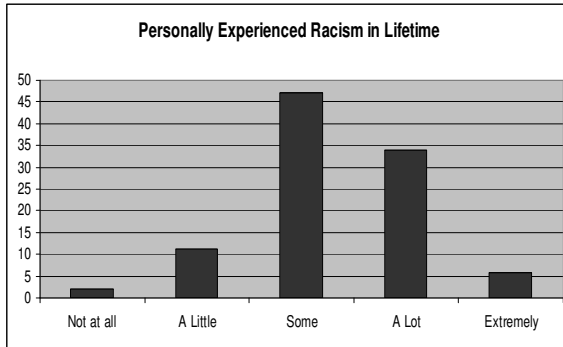


Figure 10: Question 1 – RaLES-B

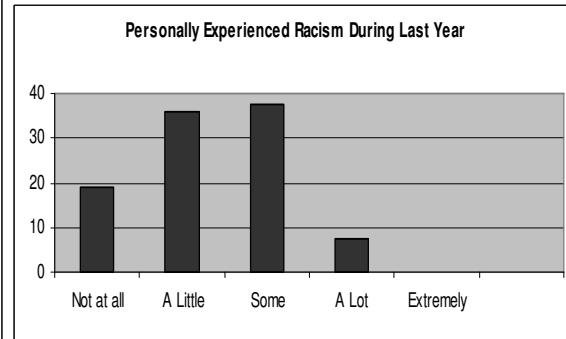


Figure 11: Question 2 – RaLES - B

Question 3 is designed to assess one's beliefs about how racism affects the lives of people in their same racial/ethnic group. Figure 12 shows that 3.8% responded *A Little*, 32.1% answered *Some*, 49.1% answered *A Lot*, and 15.1% answered *Extremely*. No one answered *Not at All*.

Question 4 asks how much they think racism has impacted the life experiences of their family and friends. Figure 13 shows that no one responded *Not at All*. 3.8% responded *A Little*, 43.4% responded *Some*, 34% answered *A Lot*, and 18.9% answered *Extremely*.

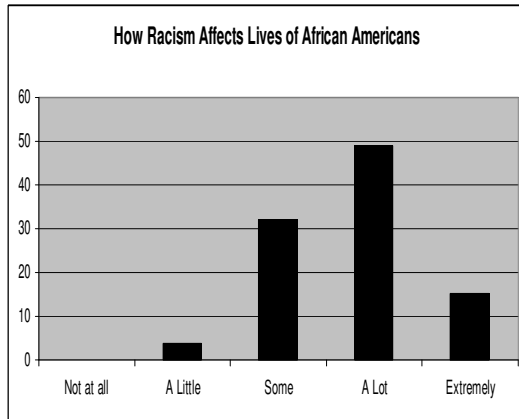


Figure 12: Question 3 – RaLES-B

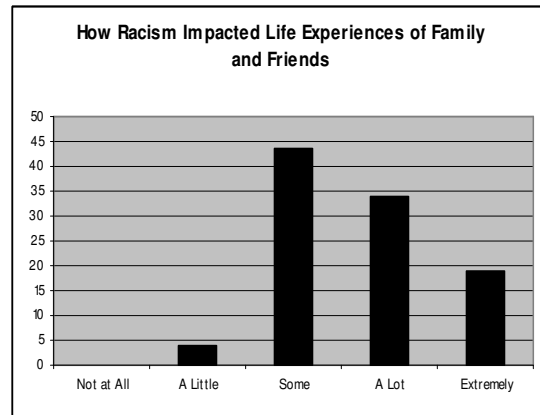


Figure 13: Question 4 – RaLES-B

Question 5 asked respondents to reflect on how they think people from their racial/ethnic group are regarded in the U.S. The responses (see Figure 14) are as follows: 5.7% *Very Negatively*, 49.1% *Negatively*, 30.2% *Neutrally*, 15.1% *Positively*, and None responded *Positively*.

Question 6 asks about how often they hear about incidents of racial prejudice, discrimination, or racism from family, friends, co-workers, or neighbors, etc. 9.4% reported *Once a Year*, 34% reported *A Few Times a Year*, 37.7% answered *1-2 Times a Month*, 15.1% answered *Once a Week*, and 3.8% responded *Everyday* (see Figure 15).

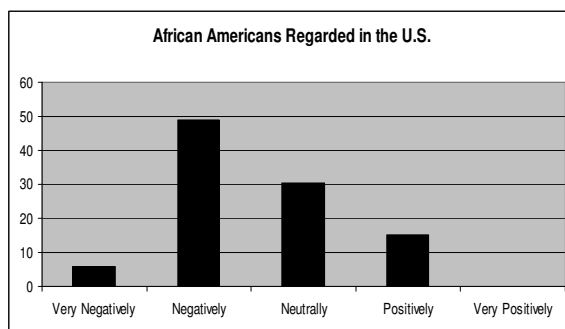


Figure 14 Question 5 – RaLES-B

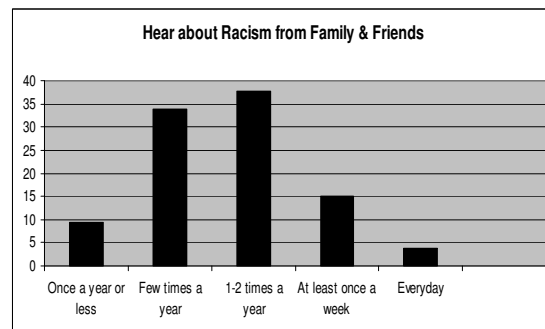


Figure 15 Question 6 – RaLES-B

Question 7 (see Figure 16) asks the respondents in general, how much they think about racism. 17% reported *Rarely or Never*, 26.4% answered *A Little*, 34% answered *Sometimes*, 17% answered *Often*, and 5.7% reported *Very Often*.

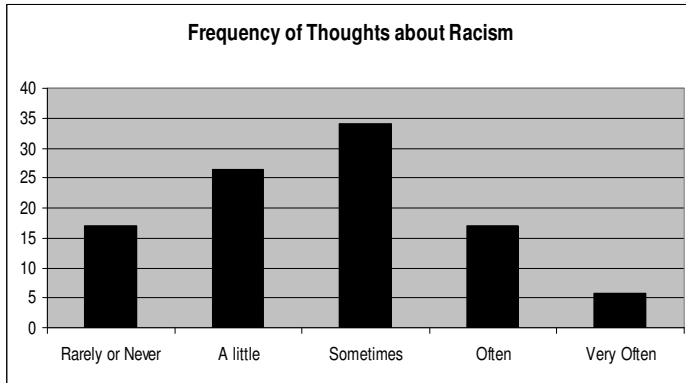


Figure 16 Question 7 – RaLES-B

Questions 8 and 9 ask about how much stress racism has caused *during their lifetime* and *during the past year*. For stress *during their lifetime*, the responses were 11.3% *None*, 28.3% *A Little*, 35.8% *Some*, 18.9% *A Lot*, and 5.7% *Extreme* (see Figure 17). For stress *during the past year*, the responses were 32.1% *None*, 28.3% *A Little*, 26.4% *Some*, 13.2% *A Lot*, and None responded *Extreme* (see Figure 18).

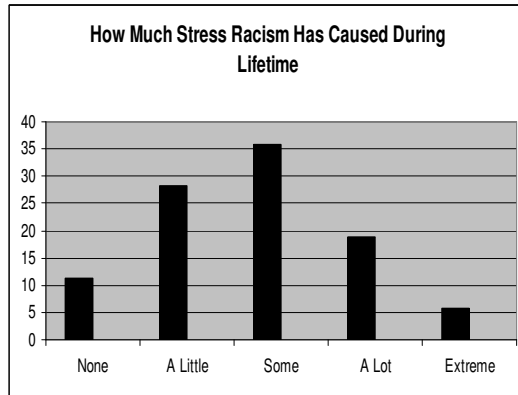


Figure 17: Question 8 – RaLES-B

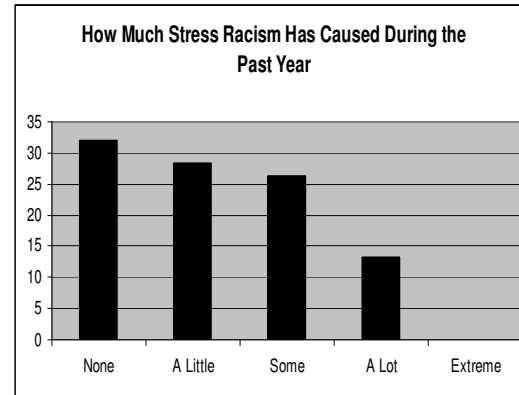


Figure 18: Question 9 – RaLES-B

The RaLES-B was developed to assess the impact of perceived racism on the behavior, psychological status, and health outcomes of ethnic minority populations ²⁵. Given that one of the goals of this study is to determine the mode of managing, handling, and/or responding (action/interaction) to real or perceived systemically embedded racism within the cultural context of a school setting, this early history of the RaLES-B supports its use as a measure of the psychological effects associated with racism. Chapter V will include these findings in the analysis of how perceived racism has affected them individually and/ or their race group as a whole.

²⁵ The first version of the RaLES was developed in 1992 and used in a study to assess the degree to which perceived racism influenced a group of ethnic minority (African-American and Latino) men to participate in a substance abuse treatment program (Utsey, 1998).

Interview Results

This section presents the findings of a semi-structured interview with eleven teachers and/or educators ²⁶ concerning their personal beliefs about the distribution of power and privilege between African-Americans, non-minority Whites, and Hispanics. The subjects were also asked to reflect upon their education settings and discuss the extent to which, if any, their experiences involved real or perceived racism as a factor impacting their actions, interactions, and pedagogy. The term pedagogy here is used to encompass the understanding of the whole child, the psychology of children as it is related to teaching. Moreover, the subjects were probed for discussions on their management of any real or perceived racism. While this section will report the findings, the interpretation and analysis will be discussed in Chapter Five.

²⁶ One subject was identified as a special education paraprofessional.

**Table 4 –
Interview Participant Data**

<u>Yrs Experience</u>	<u>Pseudonym</u>	<u>Military</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Place of Birth</u>	<u>District²⁷</u>
6-10	Beverly	Yes	36-49	New Jersey	Alamo
6-10	Shemar	Yes	26-35	Illinois	Alamo
16-20	Clyde	No	50-65	New York	Alamo
6-10	Annie	yes	50-65	Kentucky	Alamo
21-over	Alice	Yes	50-65	Mississippi	Zuni
21 or over	Leonard	Yes	36-49	Europe ²⁸	Zuni
11-15	Sam	No ²⁹	36-49	Borderville	Zuni
6-10	Jessica	No ³⁰	36-49	Borderville	Zuni
6-10	Victor	Yes	50-65	Pennsylvania	Zuni
6-10	Leah	No	36-49	Illinois	Borderville
21 or over	Dorothy	Yes	50-65	Illinois	Borderville

In all cases, the interview began with the following question:

What do you think about the distribution of power and privilege between African Americans and non-minority Whites in the U.S.?

Although the researcher asked each participant the same guiding questions, the follow-up questions were based on their individual responses. The interviews concluded with a review and confirmation or clarification of responses from their previously submitted surveys. The interview questions appear in Appendix E.

²⁷ Pseudonyms

²⁸ Leonard's family was military and stationed in Europe at the time of his birth.

²⁹ Sam's father was military.

³⁰ Jessica's father and grandfather were military.

The semi-structured nature of the interview allowed the researcher to probe for more details and follow leads to other topics. All interviews were taped and transcribed. The following section of this chapter presents the findings of the thirteen interviews organized first by a brief profile of each participant and then by the topic areas which emerged from the coding process described in Chapter Three.

Participant Profiles

Beverly

Beverly is a young African American teacher with 6-10 years of teaching experience. She teaches in the Alamo ISD which has the lowest population of African American teachers and students. Beverly seems to enjoy her job and has aspirations of moving into administration, but appears to harbor a fair amount of anger and bitterness towards her environment. When asked the initial question of what she *thinks about the distribution of power and privilege between African Americans and non-minority whites*, she responded:

Um. I feel that, uh Blacks are able to rise, you know as far as they can, but I think that in some areas, some fields, some businesses that there's a, a certain level they allow them to rise. Um, I still believe in that glass ceiling. Um, I believe that, um, your non-minority whites have a-- feel a bit guilty about certain things. They'll let us rise, but just so far, just to, just to keep the status quo to say that we're doing something. You know, unless you're exceptionally good, unless you're willing to, how should I say, give up your certain racial beliefs and play whatever game is set, then they might let you rise a little bit further, but I still believe that there's a cap.

The researcher asked Beverly to describe her feelings about living in Borderville. She answered, *angry*. When asked if the anger developed here in Borderville, she responded:

Yes, it developed here. And I'm not prejudiced. You know, I've been all over, you know, you know, different places. I, I you know to me I like other cultures. I try to take the best out of every culture, of what it has to offer. But what I don't like is this, I would rather do with the blatant prejudice of calling me the "N" word to my face than dealing with, you know, um, *just do it our way*. And I think what angers me the most is that I feel what the minority in charge here is doing to themselves. They're locking themselves in one place and, and they don't realize that they are not going to be anything else but just here. And they think that this is their world and it angers me that you put down someone who has been so many palaces, who has done so many things, but yet you don't matter. Your culture doesn't matter because you're not us.....

Beverly was clearly the most Afrocentric of the subjects who participated in the interview. She expressed a high level of pride in her racial identity and makes a point of wearing traditional African garb on a regular basis. She said that it is one way that she lets her presence be felt. She feels that it is important for black people to surround their children with black art, music, and literature, but she doesn't agree with exclusivity. She also clearly articulated her patriotism and pride in being an American. Beverly voiced the most resentment towards the Hispanic population of both the Alamo ISD and Borderville at large.

Shemar

Shemar is a young 26-35 year old man with 6-10 years of experience in education. Originally from the Midwest, Shemar has lived in Borderville at three different points in his life. As a military child, he first came to Borderville during

his elementary school years. After returning to the Midwest, he later came back to Borderville for part of his middle school education. He then completed his entire high school education overseas. After completing military service himself, he finished college and taught for approximately one year in a large Midwestern city. Shemar married a young Hispanic woman from Borderville and has lived there for the majority of his professional teaching career.

When asked the initial question about the balance of power and privilege between African Americans and non-minority whites, Shemar responded:

I don't think that minorities have enough power in this country. I don't think it's representative of our numbers and I think that in the last ten years the structure has changed so that power and things like, uh, discussions such as, you know discrimination, racism are no longer.... its' almost as if it has become taboo to talk about it.

Later in the interview, the researcher asked Shemar the following question:"

How has your critical race awareness been influenced by being an African American or Black in a Hispanic majority community?

Okay. Two ways. Two ways. I'm very careful about what I say and about the way that I act. I don't change my behavior, but I am very careful. I think about it a little bit more than I used to. And the second thing is that I think it just shocked me. How, they don't realize how good they have it. These people don't realize how good they have it in Borderville because it's Anglo (White) 40 - 50 miles away from here. They would get to experience racism as soon as that. And the thing is, it really upsets me because where I come from we stuck together. You know what I mean? It's like all of us. Not really against white people, but we stood together just in case, you know?....But here it's like, not like that. They (Hispanics) see themselves as superior to us and it used to bother me, now I just feel sorry for them. ...And it's more than attitude, they think that, you know what? They're better than me. It's okay. I mean. I don't know.....

Shemar shared many stories about his experiences in Alamo ISD and Borderville. In sum, Shemar appears to have suffered many disappointments and

has concluded with a “fatalistic” point of view, but has learned to “pick his battles”:

I think, I think it's, I think it's “white is right”. This is the bottom line. I think that if you're doing things that white people think are acceptable, you're acting professionally, then you're fine. If you're not, then you're over....I think also that the white power structure is afraid. It might be that they are afraid that one day we're going to be able to prove that we're just as good as they are. I think that deep down they know it....I'm learning to....pick my battles. Everything in this world is wrong, but now, as I get older, I mean, as you and I...by talking to you, or talking to some other people...they may be able to hear what I'm saying.

Clyde

Clyde, a 50-65 year old from an East Coast state, has 16-20 years of teaching experience and teaches in the Alamo ISD. He teaches Health and Physical Education as well as coaches basketball. Clyde does not believe that there is an equitable distribution of power and privilege between African Americans and non-minority whites. Clyde says:

Um, well, you know a lot of times power, power is a perception. And, um, you may have an African American in a position that usually carries a certain amount of power, but in many cases it doesn't carry the same amount of power when it comes to, uh, whites. They don't perceive African Americans' as having the power that the position normally carries. And so, um, power and privilege um, has a , there's an assumption that in our society privilege has to do with color. And, and if, if, if you're an African American who has reached a certain status, you should be happy that you've been allowed to reach that status. But you don't get the same privileges as the white people who have the same status.

Clyde gave examples such as being a parole officer, dressed in a suit and tie, and being followed around a shopping mall. He also told about some of his African American friends' experiences as high ranking police officers:

...So, there would be a call, the police would go, and then they (High Ranking African American Police Officers) would arrive as supervisors, but the

complainant would not talk to them. They would always talk to the white officers even when the officers pointed out that they (African Americans) were in charge. They wouldn't see them in charge even though they had the high rank, they weren't given the respect that the high rank carried.

Clyde reflected for a moment, then added:

You know, so there's always, I'm gonna put it this way, there always seems to be, uh, some doubt. And maybe that's the privilege I'm talkin' about. If you're white, there's an assumption that, you know, you're qualified and you know what you're supposed to do. If you're African American, there's some doubt. And so that's probably, when I talk about privilege, I think that's part of what I'm talking about.

Clyde, who came to Borderville on a basketball scholarship and has lived there for over twenty years, characterizes himself as more outspoken than most of his African American friends he has who have grown up in Borderville. He said:

Um, they're more about trying to get along here...And not wanting to rock the boat or not wanting to cause any friction whatsoever...Even if they see something that's not right.. I think they grew up here just trying to get along, be successful, and try to get along.

Clyde sees the Borderville community as organized into a hierarchy. He sees the white people on the top with the Hispanics comfortable with their position in the middle as long as they're second. This leaves the African American population at the bottom...and trying to find a way to fit in.

Clyde adds:

I think, I think a lot of people have accepted it and I haven't, so, um, you know, I speak up on things I think I need to, you know, speak up and I'm not concerned about fitting in.

When the researcher asked him what happens when he speaks up he just said that he probably feels a little more isolated. He said that often others will agree with him privately, but they're never going to say anything. He said quietly:

They're not gonna say anything, so if you do speak up, then you're really gonna be on your own.

Although Clyde presented a strong and self-confident exterior, at times he was visibly saddened as we visited some of the issues of inequities and racism that surfaced during the interview.

Annie

Although all of the interviews took place in the same public café, Annie, a 50-65 year old teacher from the South was clearly the most uncomfortable with the interview environment. She was constantly looking around and leaning forward to whisper her responses. At one point the researcher suggested moving to a different location which seemed to be slightly more comfortable for her. As she became more accustomed to the researcher and more involved with the topic, she relaxed more and allowed her responses to flow naturally.

Annie was born in the South, but traveled all over the country since her father was in the military. She later married a military man and continued to live in various states as well as overseas. After settling in Borderville, Annie spent more than twenty years working in the private sector before moving into the

education field where she has been both a paraprofessional and now a teacher for the past 6-10 years.

When asked about the distribution of power and privilege between African Americans and Whites in the U.S, Annie responded:

We, as African Americans, I don't think we'll ever have the power, uh for us to be as many as we are. That's just not gonna happen in our time. Uh, the privilege, um, we are...As far as our privilege, we haven't gone that - we haven't gone too far from 100 years ago. We really haven't. Everything is sugarcoated to make us think that we've gone a long way, but we really haven't.

Annie has a strong belief that Borderville is *not part of the real world*. She thinks that in Borderville, Black people are perceived as *ignorant, uneducated, stupid, and loud*. She gave an example from her previous twenty-plus year career in the private sector where she was constantly passed over for supervisory positions:

But, even though I had twenty years of experience, they would hire people off the street to be a supervisor. I think I was their token, pretty much. Never missed a day. Um, the thanks I got was they just kept hiring, you know, supervisors who made more money than me. They had, uh, I believe three white supervisors and a Hispanic supervisor and I just could not get my foot in that door at all.

Annie admitted to the possibility of feeling bitterness, resentment, and hostility as a consequence of the many inequities that she has experienced. Nevertheless, she insists that she has learned to cope with it. Her final comment in the interview:

Um, I'm comfortable with who I am. Uh, like I said earlier in the interview, uh, I was put here, I was made this way, there was a reason I was made this way. I can't feel hurt, resentful, or any of that stuff because it makes you sick. And so, I just take what I was given and just go with it.

Alice

Born and raised in the south, Alice has lived in Borderville for 30 years. She is 50-65 year old Health Physical Education teacher and coach with more than 21 years of teaching experience. Alice has lived in other states as well as overseas as a military wife. When asked what she thought about the distribution of power and privilege between African Americans and non-minority Whites, she responded:

I know that whoever has all the money is the one that usually has the most power. I think we have some key positions , but we don't have, we don't have, uh, let's say, a proportion of that power as compared to whites.....We're very smart as a race, but we don't have the knowledge and background that, that put them in power.....Plus, what happens is once they're in power they help, they keep their own in power

Alice talked a lot about the lack of African American administrators in her school district and gave some examples of what she considered to be improprieties in hiring practices and holding African American administrators to different standards. In one case, she talked about an African American administrator who had produced positive academic results, but was moved because someone didn't like her personality. Alice said:

You gotta have it all. Well *you* have to have it all, and *I* have to have it all. *They* don't have to have it all. That's what I mean.

Alice appears to have worked through any feelings of frustration or resentment with these inequities that she witnesses, but has arrived at a place of quiet resignation:

Nothing's really bothering me now. Uh, it's just that I'm so close now to what it is that I want to do. My concentration is more on insuring that my students get the help that they need... Insuring that my teams win,...I've moved through it. I have moved through it, I really have. What do I do? Just let it go.

Annie seems to really enjoy her work and takes pride in doing a good job. Even though she has "worked through it" she still commented that she "watches her back" at all times.

Leonard

Leonard was born in Europe, and as a military family, moved back and forth quite a bit, but spent most of his childhood in Borderville. He is 36-49 years old and has been teaching more than 21 years.

During the interview, Leonard spent a lot of time pointing out there is such an emphasis on labeling individuals in new positions by their racial identity. He said that it is never a university hiring a new coach, it is a university hiring a new *black* coach. He has also noticed that there seems to always be some sort of tally such as there's six *black* head coaches in the NFL or so many *black* college coaches. When the researcher asked him what he thought that meant, always attaching that label, he replied:

It means look out, that we're going a different way. People are scared to make those moves, you know. It's never that we've got a guy coming in with two years experience. He was here, he was there, it's always that, you know, he's *black*. To me it sounds like they're talking about look out because you'll have a *black* boss. And I don't know if that's good or bad or, you know, look out for a big change.

Some people, I think, some people have a hard time adjusting to that. Answering to somebody of another color.

Leonard talked about protecting his position and his job by *sitting back and keeping his mouth shut* because he has two kids. He's glad that he has a job and has no interest in *standing up for his rights* as long as they don't *mess with his paycheck*. Leonard shared many examples of inequities that he had personally experienced, but chose *not to make a big stink*. He claims to have found a way to *just deal with it*.

Sam

Sam was one of two participants born and raised in Borderville. He has never lived any other place and has been teaching for 11-15 years. When asked about the distribution of power and privilege between African Americans and Whites in the U.S., Sam replied that it is not equal and that the Whites have the power. He feels that some Blacks have overcome many obstacles and become very successful, but it's a very limited amount. To support his position, Sam shared two poignant stories relating to his father. One story revealed quite a bit about the Korean War. Sam's father was a POW in the Korean war for almost three years during which time the U.S. army was segregated and even as a POW, the Chinese kept the POW's racially segregated. He also talked about the fact that most of the POW's were either Black or Hispanic since they were the ones pushed past the 38th parallel.

After the war, Sam's father became a patrolman in the Sheriff's Department where as late as 1965, he was told not to arrest a white person or pull a white person over. He was told that it had to be *white on white*. The researcher asked Sam if any of these stories had influenced his views on race and racism. He said:

My father always wanted me to understand that things aren't going to be perfect. He, and, yes, he would talk to me a lot about that and get me to understand and see things.

Sam's father and his father's friends, some of whom are very influential African Americans, advised him to avoid putting himself in controversial situations. They held the position that one should take a backseat and say, *hey, as long as I'm taking care of my family, then other people can figure their own thing out*. Sam is comfortable being a teacher and does not have any aspirations to move up the career ladder. He believes this is one of the reasons that he has not experienced any racial incidents.

Throughout the interview, Sam, continued to insist that he had not personally experienced any racism until he began to review some of his responses to the survey. In contrast, his survey responses indicated that yes, he had experienced a lot of racism in his lifetime. After probing for some explanation for the discrepancy in his interview responses in which he had claimed the absence of racialized experiences in Borderville and his survey responses, in which he had indicated the opposite, Sam revealed several instances where he had been the victim of racial profiling. He discussed an

incident where he had been falsely accused of threatening a White man at a local gymnasium. Sam stood up to a White man who had been bullying some youth on a basketball court at a local YMCA. Upon leaving the YMCA, Sam and his friends, who were also black, found themselves surrounded by policemen with drawn weapons. The (White) man had called the police to report that a 6 foot tall black man had threatened him with a gun which he had in his gym bag. The police search proved the accusation to be false. The police did not apologize, but maintained they were just 'doing their job'. Sam also talked about several experiences related to interracial dating. In one case he was standing in front of a mall with his (White) girlfriend when the security guard drove up to the girl and asked her, "Is everything okay?" In another case, he was pulled over while driving with the same girlfriend because the car "fit the description of a stolen car". Yet another time, while walking down the street with a (White) girlfriend, a police car pulled up, put him against the car, and started frisking him with no explanation. He also recalled an incident of not being served in a local chain restaurant.

Sam maintained that these were isolated incidents and makes a distinction between the relationship between Blacks and Whites and the relationship between Blacks and Hispanics (in Borderville)

Jessica

Jessica is a 36-49 year old native of Borderville with 6-10 years of teaching experience. Jessica, who spent close to 15 years working in the private sector, went back to get her teaching credentials and continued on to complete a Masters Degree in education.

When asked about the distribution of power and privilege between African Americans and Whites in U. S. society, Jessica did not hesitate to respond. She was not sure if her sensibilities and or perceptions have changed over the last fifteen, ten, or even five years, but she had no doubt that inequities appear more prevalent and distinguished, or maybe are just coming to the surface more than in the past. She told the researcher:

Um, the power structure, I still feel that African Americans are not even. Although at face value they may be treated as second class citizens, we'll never be first. But I still feel there is a class struggle and, we will never..., I don't feel that we will ever, unfortunately meet the equality that we feel and deserve and that people that are non-African American experience.

Jessica continued and theorized about why her perceptions of how the racial climate has changed:

When I mentioned earlier about the distinct class systems, I think this is where it comes into play quite a bit. I was born and raised here and when you're little I think that people are polite and don't want to be as negative and nasty, but when you're an adult, those gloves come off and you get it with everything they've got.

Jessica talked about her early experiences at a well-respected private school in Borderville. She discussed her friendships with non-African Americans

and non-Hispanics³¹ She never felt that she had to prove anything to them (Whites). Then, she added some insight into social dynamics as pertains to a border community such as Borderville:

But, the Hispanics who came from across the border, who noticed I didn't have as much money and, you know, my eighth grade year my sweater was a little frayed and not the brand new sweater that just came out, you know, they noticed that and they made me very well aware of that.

Throughout the interview, Jessica pointed out her non-stereotypical interests and lifestyle and how that sets her apart from other African Americans.

At one point, she stated:

We all kind of felt like we were out of place here. All three of us (including her siblings). Because we don't do things that everybody expects us to do

Later in the interview Jessica seemed surprised to realize something about her identity as a result of growing up in Borderville. She said:

You know, with so little African American culture to embrace here, I guess I assimilated into the Hispanic culture because that was the easiest for me to grab onto.

When the researcher, asked her how she would describe her racial identity she said:

Well, I go based on what people, I, I kinda work from the outside in...what people see me as. Yes, I'm African American, Black, whatever, you know.whatever box is on the paper.

³¹ Jessica never used the term White.

After some discussion about the differences between racial and cultural identities, the researcher asked her how she identifies herself culturally. She responded:

That's interesting. I, culturally, it's weird. I feel more Hispanic Asian³² than anything else because I've been living here so long. But I think more Hispanic than actually Black Black because it wasn't until I was in high school that I learned who Angela Davis was...And, you know, I just, I didn't make the connection and it was things like that...But I could tell you who Vickie Carr was.

Jessica offered some interesting insights into the development of one's racial identity when growing up in an environment with limited members of that racial group.

Victor

Victor is a 55 year old paraprofessional in the Zuni ISD. He was born and raised in a northeastern industrial state, joined the military immediately after high school, and spent 3 of those military years overseas.

After the military service, Victor settled in Borderville where he has been living for the past 22 years. He volunteered in the schools before deciding to become a teacher's aid. He enjoys working with special education students and believes that he makes a positive difference in their lives. The researcher asked Victor the initial research question regarding his views on the distribution of power and privilege between African Americans and non-minority Whites in U. S. society. Victor responded:

³² Jessica's mother lived in Asia for many years. Also, Jessica majored in an Asian language in college.

Well, in, in terms of being equal, I, I don't think that, that's the case right now simply because in order for them (the power and privilege between African Americans and Whites) to be equal, you would have to have equal amounts of participation on both sides of the fence, black or white, and that's not the case yet. You don't have as many blacks in positions of power as you do whites right now, even though there are a lot more than what there were, say, even ten, fifteen years ago.....Cause we, we, as black people, we haven't been given the full opportunity to get ahead, the availability, or the means to get ahead, you know, whereas a lot of the other minorities, uh they don't seem to be put down as much as blacks in general, And they have more of an ancestral background to, uh, get ahead, that's why they (other minorities) get ahead. Overall, though, the majority of it, the strongest power has come from, you know, traditionally speaking, coming from the white, from the white culture.

Victor continues the interview and discusses his perceptions of the racial climate in Borderville in general and specifically in his school district. Victor clearly denied any improprieties as far as any racial relationships. He said that he had never heard of it or seen it himself. He said that he had never come across any racial difficulties. When the researcher asked him if he is conscious of his racial identity as he goes through the day, he replied:

...I've had kids come up and pat my hair. I would get a kick out of it even though I tell you, that sometimes it makes me feel like I'm a little puppy or a cat or anythi—but, you know, that's just me. But, you know, and I'm, I never got the impression that they were considering me to be like a little puppy.....they would say, "it feels like wool" and all this other stuff....and they were just amazed at how my hair feels and I got a kick out of that.And this---some kids would overcome their fear of what I would do to them.

The researcher probed a bit and asked, "So, do you think that it has been your experience to go through life as a black man, or just a man". Victor replied:

Just as a man.

Victor added that a lot of the Hispanic kids are into black culture and expect him to act a certain way. He said:

So I act, I act the way that I am which is not the way that they're expecting me to be. I'm not into the 'what's up' homey' stuff or' from the hood' stuff and everything like that. One of the girls now, she has this thing about calling me a 'gangster'.They don't see the whole spectrum of blacks as, as a person.

Later in the interview, the researcher asked for some clarification on some of Victor's responses on the survey. Victor had indicated that he had not personally experienced racism at all in the last year. However, he indicated that he thought that other blacks were affected by racism a lot. The researcher asked him to comment on these two different responses. Victor elaborated:

Well, a lot. I think, I think myself, that I don't concern myself with it as much as other people find - find - the other Black people do. I, I, uh, I get, I get, I don't, I get emails from, from my sisters from time to time...Blacks oriented towards Blacks and one of them was about some Black Think Tank, I forget where it was, maybe Washington, or wherever. But they came up with interesting points that my sister passed on to me. And I don't know that she's all, more so than I am, concerned about being Black and, and, interactions between Blacks and Whites. But, I don't get that they're as laid back about it as me. Maybe they are, maybe they're not. And, and it could be that they're still immersed within a much more of a total black culture on a daily basis than I am. My, my basis over here (Borderville), I see Blacks, I mean, I see Blacks everyday, but I'm not ex- there's not a lot of Black-Blackness exposed, you know.....You know, and it's, uh, once again, but it just goes back to me being a human being. Let's try to get beyond this and, it's, it's a very difficult road to travel down. And I know, I don't know. But that's, that's the whole thing. I just think, uh, I just think there's more that there's more (racism) for a lot of people than what it is for me. You know. My, my daily life, um, I'm not exposed - it doesn't affect me. Not as much as it does a lot of other people.

Victor paused, then added:

Yeah. And that just could be a deception thing.

Consistently, through the end of the interview, Victor added these statements:, “It’s not bothering me one bit, you know”, “It’s not hurting me, or whatever”, “But, it’s not bothering me”, So, it’s not having an affect on me anyway”. He ended the interview by saying that “what you want people to do is stand on their own two feet...to make their own way”.

Leah

Leah is a 37 year old teacher who has been living in Borderville for close to 19 years. She was born and raised in the Midwest and spent one semester living in England. Leah prefers to be racially identified as *multi-racial* since she accepts all of her ancestry which includes African American, Native American, and European (White). She feels strongly that she is not just “one thing”.

When asked the initial question about the distribution of power and privilege, Leah recalled a recent conversation with a relative in which they discussed the lack of Black businesses, that is, Fortune 500 companies on Wall Street. She said that she had always “known” that white people had more power, but she had not fully grasped the idea that it was out there...in black and white, in the newspaper, for everyone to see and acknowledge. The researcher asked her why she thought this was the case and she responded:

Well...um, I figure it has to do with the fact that these White people who are now descendants of White people who came here as pilgrims got a head start....They got a headstart...They have been working towards this for ...hundreds of years now. So...um, it’s been in place since the beginning of the United States of

America. Well, I guess what I'm trying to say is they...the White people, have a head start and uh, they have oppressed black people for a long time, the White people have been holding all of the power cards, I guess and they would not allow Black people to make any moves...uh..for more than a hundred years....And then, it just doesn't seem as though there are that many Black people in a position to create fortune 500 companies. They're just trying to have a nice house and get their kids educated and....not go under with debt. It seems like...they are so busy with their own little part of the world that they can't even get to that next step of getting a business and taking it that far.

The researcher asked Leah if she thought education had anything to do with it.

Leah answered:

No, I don't. Look at Donald Trump. I don't think he's well educated. He just had opportunities where other people (Blacks) did not have them.

On the other hand, Leah talked about some of her observations of the inequities in the quality of education between Blacks and Whites. She talked about one Black teacher who was so poorly prepared that she was barely able to follow the curriculum. Another Black teacher, with many years of experience, who was unable to complete her assigned tasks, was often the subject of ridicule by the other teachers. This teacher was so frustrated that she actually became abusive with the children. Even though the incompetence and abusiveness was reported, nothing was ever done. Leah believed that the teacher was allowed to continue working because she was working with profoundly handicapped children. In fact, both of these teachers were Special Education teachers. Leah commented:

In the Special Education classes, you see a lot of poorly educated teachers. It's worth mentioning that they are disproportionately Black.

Leah sees this phenomenon as one of the consequences of some of the inequities in our educational systems. She continued talking about her own experiences and feelings of inadequacy. Even though Leah attended private schools and was brought up in a middle class environment, she always felt inadequate in classes with White students.

Near the end of the interview, Leah summed up what she wishes for:

When I was in England, I don't remember feeling uncomfortable with them. They treated me like an *American* as opposed to an ethnic group. I was more of a nationality....which was really nice. I mean, more often than not I'd get, Oh, you're an *American!*" instead of...Oh, what (race) are you?

Dorothy

Dorothy, a 50-65 year old teacher, began her teaching career in Germany and has been teaching in the Borderville I.S.D. for fourteen years. Her husband is military and she has lived in various states and overseas. When asked to talk about the distribution of power and privilege between African Americans and non-minority Whites in U.S. society, Dorothy responded:

Okay, um, no, I do not think Blacks and Whites have equal amount of power and privilege. I think that it is definitely skewed in the sense of um, I don't know any other way to say it except that...that as long as I've been in this world, I have always seen that if there was ever a situation where both races were vying for the same position, the Black person had to have really REALLY have EVERYTHING going for him or herself and even at that, sometimes it just wouldn't happen. I guess I'm answering by saying no.

Dorothy said that she has witnessed people (African American) responding to it (racism) in different ways as far as going overboard to try to prove themselves worthy of acceptance. She added that it's just not that

important to her. If people have problems with her simply because of the color of her skin, that is just pre-judging and that, Dorothy says, that's on them.

Findings from Interviews

The 11 interviewees in this study give voice to their experiences and perceptions as African Americans living, generally in contemporary U.S. society, and specifically as professional educators, living in Borderville, a U.S. city on the U.S.-Mexico border in the southwestern United States. As stated throughout this study, the interview was designed to explore the intersection of both racial and cultural identity, ideology, and status as a minority. The interview questions encouraged the participants to reveal their beliefs and values about teaching and learning and given opportunities to discuss their perceptions about real or perceived racial discrimination both in the society at large and in their professional settings. The researcher used initial, focused, and axial coding based the work of Glaser (1978). to discover reactions, responses, management, and/or consequences of their perceptions. In the words of Kathy Charmaz (2006):

After all, making discoveries about the worlds you study and pursuing these discoveries to construct an analysis is what grounded theory is about.

This process of discovery or analyzing what is really happening in their worlds is the basis of symbolic interactionism which is one of the theoretical lenses used to frame this study. The researcher attempted to use this lens as a tool in interpreting the findings which will be discussed in Chapter Five. This

section will present the categories which emerged from the initial, focused, and axial coding processes. The researcher found Strauss and Corbin's (1998) axial coding strategy helpful in organizing the categories.

Strauss and Corbin define axial coding as the act of relating categories to subcategories along the lines of their properties and dimensions. They suggest that axial coding helps to provide answers to questions such as *why* or *how come*, *where*, *when*, *how*, and *with what results* and in so doing uncover relationships among categories. In other words, it helps to relate structure with process. Structure represents the problems, issues, happenings, or events under investigation, whereas the process denotes the action/interaction in response to the problems, issues, etc.

Since the main purpose of this study is to really understand why certain issues occur as well as how persons act/interact within the given context, the process of axial coding is a useful strategy to capture the dynamics of the phenomenon being explored. Their strategy allowed the researcher to organize the categories as follows: 1) conditions, 2) actions/interactions, and 3) consequences.

Conditions

Strauss and Corbin (1998) define *conditions* as encompassing the circumstances or situations that form the structure of the studied phenomena. The researcher has identified several pertinent categories from the 11 interviews which she believes to illustrate some of the structure of the participants' worlds. When asked to discuss their beliefs regarding the balance of power and privilege between African Americans and Whites in U.S. society, in all cases, the participants believed Whites to have more power and privilege than African Americans in U. S. society. Some of the responses revealed that they believe that African Americans have been held back, have had limited opportunities, and in some cases, forced to give up or "downplay" their cultural identity in favor of emulating what White's value. Five central themes which addressed the conditions emerged from the interviews. They are 1) Playing the game, 2) Silenced Dialogue 3) White guilt, 4) Fear, and 5) Otherness.

Playing the game. Several participants talked about having to "play the game" if they want to get ahead. Many believe that the only way to be successful is to accept the dominant culture's values as their own (playing the game).

Beverly stated:

.....You have to hide in a way, the way you feel about certain things. Um, you have to be able to be knowledgeable about what non-minorities value. You have to be able to speak and value what they value as far as their culture. Basically...to be able to um, you know, just downplay who you are as a black and up-play them and then, only then would they accept you or feel that you are truly educated. Because you're downplaying who you are as far as your dress, as far as your manners, as far as what your values are, as far as your music and that

type of thing....that is of no value. You have to value what they do.....Then they will accept you and not be as fearful of you, because I still think there's a fear.

Shemar said:

I think, I think it's, I think it's "white is right". This is the bottom line. I think that if you're doing things that white people think are acceptable, you're acting professionally, then you're fine. If you're not, then you're over....I think also that the white power structure is afraid. It might be that they are afraid that one day we're going to be able to prove that we're just as good as they are. I think that deep down they know it.

'Silenced Dialogue', 'White guilt', and Fear. Several interviewees discussed the phenomena of Whites' discomfort in discussing or acknowledging the existence of racism along with what appears to be feelings of guilt and fear. For the purpose of the following discussion, 'silenced dialogue' will be understood to refer to the active silencing of dialogue concerning race and racial issues. Lisa Delpit (1995b) labeled this phenomenon to describe how teachers and parents of color tend to get quiet in the presence of more verbal White educators. Delpit suggests that this silence occurs because educators and parents of color often feel their racial experiences are deprecated or invalidated by White educators. In *Courageous Conversations About Race*, Glenn E. Singleton and Curtis Linton (2006), add that this silence is likely to occur in faculty meetings, in the principal's office, and even during informal conversations when people of color describing a racist experience or situation are told, "Aren't you exaggerating it a little?" "that (White) person didn't really mean it that way," or

“you probably just misunderstood them.” As this happens time and time again, people of color grow silent, refrain from sharing their stories and opinions, and no longer speak the truth.

As mentioned above, the findings from the interviews establish that several interviewees have experienced some form of silenced dialogue. For example, Shemar made several remarks pointing out that discussions on race or discrimination have almost become taboo. He believes that now, if one (Black) talks about something (racial) that has happened, one is treated as though they are the one with the problem

Shemar stated:

I see a lot of, uh, there, there's a lot of confusion, there's also a lot of fear, I think. From both sides, you know, because we're not allowed to discuss certain things anymore. It's not that they say you can't talk about it...it's just that when you try to talk about it, no one wants to hear it. It makes everyone uncomfortable. And I don't think that is a problem that comes from, (I like to say Black people really). Black people having less power. I think it's a natural result of white people having all the power.

Beverly stated:

If I feel the need to speak out, they say, “Oh, you're always talking about the Blacks”. And, they make it seem as if I have the problem... that I have to get over it. It's like something I have to get over or that I'm reading things into things that aren't there and, and, and, um, but yet I know. You can feel it, and so to, you know, not to make people get uncomfortable, I do blend in. I don't sit and talk about this or that is not fair.

I, I take me as an example. I'm sitting with, um, a non-minority and we could be talking about, I would say what went on with let's say civil rights or slavery. And when I tell them the brutal truth then you can see the, what? But, that's, you know, that, you know, that's not how we are anymore and you can, you, it's like you have a responsibility to downplay. Like it's okay, it's okay, we know it's okay, and you know it's like we have to do the appeasing. And, uh, that's what I, I see.....That and as far as to make them feel like, no, it's, it's not as bad and no, we don't feel so awful anymore. You know, with that. You know, we've gotten

over it then and everything is okay, you know, so, it's like we're doing, in my experience, a lot of apologizing, or if you do say how you feel, if you do give them examples of things, such as personally, have happened to you, uh, they find it unbelievable. That, that it's just not true. You know, so you find yourself saying, okay, you know, just, let's leave it alone.....I don't try to help them not to feel guilty and, just to make it clear, I don't ask anything. I'm not looking for someone to feel guilty, to give me anything, or that they owe me anything.

Both Beverly and Shemar believe that this is all based on some inner fear that we (African Americans) are going to retaliate violently or that we're going to take over and then put them in that same powerless position. Beverly acknowledged later that maybe she does, in some way, try to assuage the fear rather than the guilt. Sam discussed the consequences of this same notion of *silencing* and *fear* from the recent past. He gave examples of the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and others. He believes that they were killed because they had become a threat. The people holding the power began to realize, *wait a minute, this is not good*. They had to shut them up *'cause they were becoming too powerful and even White people were following along with them*. He believes they achieved their purpose. Since that time, many African Americans, even those in positions of power, have been less inclined to speak out against inequities or put themselves in controversial situations. He mentioned Colin Powell as an example.

Living on the border and "Otherness". The final theme will be discussed within the context of the border which is one of the unique aspects of this study designed to explore the racialized environment of a minority (African American)

population living in a border community where the majority population is another minority (Hispanic). The intention was to investigate if and how that context impacted the African American experience.

When asked to discuss the distribution of power and privilege between African Americans and Hispanics in Borderville, the responses varied from “everything is equal” to “I feel like I don’t belong here”. There is a difference in responses between the two native born respondents and some of the others. Jessica and Sam, the two native born respondents affirm the positive nature of the relationship between African Americans and Hispanics in Borderville and claim, for the most part, not to have experienced significant acts of racism. Jessica maintained this position throughout the interview. Sam, on the other hand, claimed not to have experienced racism, but shared several stories describing racially motivated incidents

Jessica stated that she grew up with Hispanics who were and still are her friends and that culturally, she identifies as Hispanic more than African American. She stated that she has not and does not experience any inequities between herself and the local Hispanic population. She described some of her relationships with the Hispanics that she grew up with:

My family was respected for who they were. The little girls that I played with in elementary school never made me feel any different. If we had sleepovers or something and I happened to be in their homes (Hispanic), they would introduce me just like I was , you know, a good friend of the family, if not part of the family. Never thought, never blinked an eye. And even today, I still see a couple of them and you know, it’s like “How’ve you been? What have you been doing? Come on over, the wife would love to see you.” And, you know, I, I just assumed

that's the way all people (Hispanic) were until I attended Lourdes³³ and the Hispanic students who had crossed the border made a point of pointing out people's differences.

Sam strongly denied the possibility of Hispanics keeping the 'power' away from African Americans in Borderville just because they are the majority population. He stated:

I think our (African Americans) relationship with Hispanics is different than it is with Whites. I feel that we are oppressed in similar, similar ways. I think, um, you know, again going back in time here. Let's just go back to the 60's here. Your Hispanics were your maids or they did your yard work or they, they were limited. They were restricted on what they could do. Actually, I think they were probably treated worse than Black people back then. Like I said, the Sheriffs department was predominately White in 1965 and they hired two Blacks. There were probably well-qualified Hispanics, too. So I think that the relationship here is just different. I think-I do feel that Blacks from the outside, struggle at first, especially military coming in and they've seen a lot of things, and they get here and at first it takes sometime to adjust. I'm not going to say it's like a perfect relationship, but I think that I would have a better chance moving up with a Hispanic Superintendent than a White one.

In sharp contrast, some of the interviewees who have migrated to Borderville have a different perception of the racialized environment on the border and the relationship between Hispanics and African Americans in Borderville. These interviews established a phenomenon, routinely experienced, which appears to be directly related to the border environment and/or their interactions with Hispanics. To frame this discussion, it is appropriate to briefly review the concept of "otherness". Beverly Tatum (1997) identified seven categories of "otherness" commonly experienced in U.S. society. People are commonly defined as other on the basis of race or ethnicity, gender, religion,

³³ A pseudonym for a private high school in Borderville.

sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, and physical or mental ability.

Each of these categories has a form of oppression associated with it: racism, sexism, religious oppression/anti-Semitism, heterosexism, classism, ageism, and ableism, respectively. In each case, there is a group considered dominant (systematically advantaged by the society because of group membership) and a group considered subordinate or targeted (systematically disadvantaged) (Tatum, 1997).

For the purpose of this discussion we will understand ‘otherness’ to mean being positioned in such a way that one’s racial and/or ethnic identity is viewed as a representation of a ‘racial and/or ethnic other’. Their “being” is rendered in a manner that at best, places it on trial or worse, ignores its existence. In the examples that follow, the interviewees describe experiences and perceptions which illustrate feelings of “otherness” or subordination by the dominant group, which in this case, is another minority (Hispanic) group. Shemar, who had been accustomed to positive relationships with Hispanics in a large urban city in the Midwest, was surprised at the attitudes of Hispanics in Borderville. He said:

In Urban City³⁴, it wasn’t like that, you didn’t get a sense of me and them (Hispanics). It was like a very harmonious relationship, you know what I mean? But, when I got here (Borderville), it was communicated very strongly. They wouldn’t talk to you. Or sometimes they would talk to the person next to you when they should be talking to you kind of thing. Coming here was different because these people were immigrants, you know, and, and, and they came to you with this attitude like they just hated Black people for some reason and I didn’t understand it. Where I came from, we used to stick together. Not really against White people, but we stood together just in case, you know? But here, it’s

³⁴ Pseudonym for large urban city in the Midwest.

not like that. They see themselves as superior to us and it used to bother me, now I just feel sorry for them.

When the researcher asked Annie to talk about the balance of power and privilege between Hispanics and Blacks in Borderville, she said:

It's, um, there's no comparison. Um, in here, in Borderville, uh, it's Hispanically operated. Black people are out of their league here. We do the best we can with what we have, which is nothing, but we go on.

Annie said that you can't always see the inequities, but you can feel it. She added:

Nobody has to give us a big piece of paper saying you're not welcome. We feel it. Annie talked about an incident when she hosted a meeting in her classroom and a teacher, instead of complementing her on her neatness, asked her if someone had helped her to get it ready for the meeting. Annie felt like this teacher would not have asked a White or Hispanic teacher the same question. She felt that it was an example of how Black's competencies and qualities are constantly scrutinized.

Although Beverly has been living in Borderville for 10 years, she continues to be overwhelmed with a sense of being assigned to a position of "cultural other". She spoke passionately about her experiences and perceptions in Borderville:

It's very difficult. It's very difficult. It was a culture shock for me. It is still very difficult because, um, I feel that being Black within a minority control that we are not, we're overlooked. That's the word, we're just overlooked and that we have to blend in. We just have to blend in. You just better blend in. That's the attitude I get. You blend in. Other than that, you're just 1% of the population here in Borderville. You don't make a difference, so....

Beverly continued:

In my school they tell me that I need to learn Spanish and I tell them no, you need to learn English. When I come back at them, they look at me like, how dare you, this is our realm. You're a visitor. You either blend in or you're insignificant. What I have noticed here is that they (Hispanics) don't want to (acknowledge, respect) any other's culture than their own... For example, if I bring a dish (food) to a celebration, it remains untouched because it's not something they are accustomed to. If we are playing music and I put on a rhythm and blues song, everybody sits down and won't dance, then when the mariachi music or cumbias come on, everybody's up (on the dance floor) again. So you feel devalued. You know. That's a subtle way of saying, "this is our thing." Well, I don't know if that is considered subtle and I don't know if it's deliberate, but that's how it is and I feel it.

She added:

I would rather deal with the blatant prejudice of calling me the "N" word to my face than you know, just do it our way...they think this is their world and their attitude is, "your culture doesn't matter because you're not us".

Clyde, a coach from the East Coast had some observations of how growing up on the border has impacted his African American friends from Borderville:

And, um, you know, I guess I'm more outspoken than most of the African American friends I have that grew up here. They may feel the same that I do about certain things, but they don't want to say anything.

When asked to offer an explanation for their attitude, he said:

I think it's growing up, um, in a community where you're very, there's such a small minority of Blacks. Um, they're more about trying to get along here. And not wanting to rock the boat or not wanting to cause any friction whatsoever. even if they see something that's not right. And I think, um, I think, you know where we are, it's kind of a situation I think where African Americans are trying to find a way to fit in. You have a small White population, a large Hispanic population, and then it's us. You know, and I think that they (Blacks) just grew up trying to get along, be successful and trying to get along. That's how the Hispanics see it too. So, we just kinda fit in, do our thing, fit in, you know.

Clyde added:

This is what I get, I get the feeling that they like, you know what, if we don't rock the boat, and we don't cause any problems, maybe they won't notice that we're African Americans and we can just fit right in so when they see another one, they think, "oh you know, I know that guy". You know what I mean? They just want to fit in. They were raised to fit in. And when you are living in an environment where the dominant culture is not your own, you're just trying to fit in, and making an issue of your own culture is not going to fit you in.

Clyde talked about how he has observed the impact on their cultural identity:

You know, I have friends here, I have books at home because you know, when I was raising my daughters, I have a lot of cultural books, African American poetry and different African American writers and stories. Well, my friends that grew up here, don't have any of this. They have none in their houses. We have statues that we have bought, ebony statues, and they like them, but do they own any? No. They just, you know, they have like Native American or Southwestern art, you know what I mean? But none, none, no, none of the cultural things that will make you identified as African American.

When the researcher asked Dorothy to talk about the distribution of power and privilege between African Americans and Hispanics in Borderville, she said:

Um, it...I have seen, here in Borderville, we're the real minority....one's language lends towards an advantage for them and so...and so I've seen, I need to phrase this right..um...where it's...it's kind of like, Okay, we (Hispanics) like our own kind. We want somebody like us to ...again, I'm going with the jobs and the positions. Um...I'm not sure why that necessarily is...I guess it's just a kindred spirit that people have so...answering you, I think that Hispanics have more power.

The researcher asked Leah if her critical race awareness was any different living in Borderville from what it had been living in other cities or outside of the country. Leah said:

Yes. Hispanic people (in Borderville) seem to make a bigger deal out of racial differences than...others. Although I've lived in other places, they (Hispanics) are always POINTING it (the differences) out.

Actions/Interactions

Strauss and Corbin (1998) write that *strategic* or *routine* tactics or the *how* by which persons handle situations, problems, and issues that they encounter are termed actions/interactions. These represent what people, organizations, social worlds, or nations do or say. *Strategic* actions/interactions are purposeful or deliberate acts that are taken to resolve a problem and in so doing shape the phenomenon in some way.

Routines are actions/interactions that tend to be more habituated ways of responding to occurrences in everyday life. Strauss and Corbin (1998) maintain that these types of actions/interactions tend to maintain the social order. The responses from the interviews suggest a set of topics which can be organized into this category of actions/interactions. These topics, acquiescence, resignation, “dealing with it”, and stereotypes, begin to answer the first research question which guided this study:

What is the mode of managing, handling, and/or responding (action/interaction) to real or perceived systemically embedded racism within the cultural context of a school setting?

Acquiescence, Resignation, and/or “Dealing With It”. The interviews suggest the existence of the phenomena of acquiescing to, resigning oneself to, and/or “dealing with” the conditions of their (racialized) environments. Nearly all of the interviewees discussed their experiences of ‘just dealing with it’ or ‘not making an issue of it.’ Some direct quotes follow:

Sam: "So they kind of take the backseat and say, hey, as long as I'm taking care of myself and my family, then other people can figure their own thing out.

Beverly: As a teacher, I sort of find myself with my young students showing them what my culture is because it's easier to do it that way, than to do it amongst your peers, because they're (the children) willing to embrace it....So, and that's how I sort of get over that while my, you know, my culture or what I value is not important because if I want to survive, I have to embrace theirs.

Shemar: I didn't even go through the whole process with her³⁵ because I knew it wouldn't make any difference.....You know what I'm saying. I said if I get angry with this lady, it's just going to make us all uncomfortable. So, I'm, I had to eat crow all day.

Shemar: Because, because, you know, I'm tired. I'm so used to it, but I'm tired. I really am. Like I used to fight every battle, now I'm thinking this guy³⁶, if he doesn't want to make commission on this \$45,000 sale---if he doesn't want to treat me with respect, that's his loss, not mine. You know where I'm coming from?

Shemar: Well, it doesn't bother me anymore. Sometimes, like every once in a while, I'll get really angry, but I'll only get angry when I'm embarrassed. But, if it's something like that lady with the video³⁷, I'll just let it go. You know what I'm saying?

Leah: I wish things would change. I'm tired. I'm 37 years old. It really does get to you.

Annie: I can't imagine Black people not coping, with everything that we've had to deal with. Um, this is a breeze compared to where we were. You know, even though a lot of things have changed -they change, but they remain the same, kind of. We learn how to cope. We have those coping skills and mechanisms. That goes along, to me, with Black people not committing suicide because of our problems. We deal with problems. We were born with problems, and we just never can get away from them, so we have to cope and we do the best we can with what we have and I think that's sad as a race, though. We have to cope.

Leonard: I have a fear of, okay, you won this (if he speaks up), but we're going to make that job hard for you so you'll quit. So, I keep my mouth shut. Okay? I'm glad I still have a job now for 24 years. Uh, never been sued...never even thought of being sued. I never had to use my liability insurance. I have a good record. But

³⁵ Shemar was describing a conflict with a student's parent.

³⁶ Shemar was describing an incident where he had been ignored at a luxury car dealership.

³⁷ Shemar had described an incident where a coworker had asked him if he thought it was "racist" if she allowed her students to make a video presentation in "blackface".

I don't want to be boisterous, you know. I don't want to be Jesse Jackson or somebody. You know what I mean? I don't want to stand up for my rights as long as they don't mess with my paycheck and put me in the poor house, whatever.

Leonard: But, uh, that's how I, you know, you gotta learn to, to deal with it. Otherwise you're going to be fighting everybody.....So, you gotta keep, kind of keep stuff to yourself and work with it....But you gotta know how to deal with stuff everyday. You gotta know how to deal with it, because like I said, you can't go around complaining. You gotta make things happen. You gotta create good things. You gotta put good things ahead of you, put the bad things behind you.

Dorothy: I just kind of go on about my business. I guess I've done it so long and I have had some little experiences (racially motivated). Not to the point where I feel negative about it. But I just like...okay..this is the way it is. Just take it and run with it. So, if I can ignore it, I pretty much just ignore it.

Stereotypes. Another strategic tactic of action/interaction that some interviewees described is that of avoiding or denying stereotypes. For instance, when Jessica was explaining why she 'got along well' with the non-minority Whites at the private school that she attended, she said:

But, um, my interests are not the 'stereotypical' African American interests, if there are any. I do not like rap music. I can't stand the stuff. I don't go to clubs, I don't drink. I don't have kids, you know, and these are things when people see me...that's what they expect.

She continued:

I got my bachelor's in French and Mandarin Chinese so the Army kept calling me. I actually considered it until I met a recruiter who asked me how many dependents I have. When I said I don't have any. He said, "Oh come on, you can't not have any kids". It really hurt me, especially since the recruiter was Black. To a degree, it made me more determined not to become that stereotype.

Some of the interviewees discussed the role of stereotyping in their interactions with their students. In the case of Shemar, he found himself not being accepted by his students because he didn't fit their 'stereotypical image of

how a Black man is supposed to talk or behave. Shemar discussed this

phenomenon in the following manner:

Now, when a kid gets up, I'll, instead of saying, um will you please stop? After a couple of times, I say, "listen, sit your butt down and don't get back up". When I first started teaching that was kinda seen as not app—it wasn't appropriate. You know---to say, "sit your butt down". You know, but when I would say something like, "please don't move your chair", the kids would laugh. They couldn't identify with that, you know what I'm saying? I mean, like it sounded too artificial to them, so they wouldn't respond. Because they saw in me, they saw it as being artificial. They saw it as me trying to be somebody I wasn't. But now, if I say you're going to sit your butt down and don't get back up, they listen. But, but, originally I had problems with that.....

Beverly, on the other hand, strategically sets out to demythisize stereotypes about African Americans. She said:

Yes, um, within, uh, the school that I teach at now, I do wear a lot of my African garb. Um, very, um, and the kids, the kids and my peers alike find it fascinating because in their minds they have an ideal of what Blacks are really like. Um, when I do my social studies – since I teach sixth grade now, I could (choose) to do Africa. They're just floored by the culture and the value systems that Blacks really have as far as family, as far as the matriarchal system that we have within our race, as far as the pride, because they never saw that. I project it onto my students and, as far as my peers, when they see the African garb, they want to know more about the Black culture. They find it an aspect that they never knew of at all. To them, Black is just rapping, jail, that type of thing.

Leah appeared to be the most profoundly affected by stereotyping and described the most extreme reactions to it. She said:

People here in Borderville are always coming up to me in some sort of *hip hop* kind of "HEY girlfriend" and all That and I kind of look at them like they are crazy. At school, people are always asking me about *Kwanzaa* and Oprah! uh, they are always trying to start up conversations about Oprah...Or more recently, of course, Oh! Barack Obama, he's a good candidate, huh? And things like that.

Leah continued:

There is always a general amount of surprise at how much education I've had...and how well I write and how intelligent I am. People here...are always...seem to be very surprised. I have had guys...especially White guys here...are always VERY surprised at how intelligent I am... They will say something like, oh WOW, you know THAT? They will actually say that.

The researcher asked Leah if she could talk about reactions or responses to situations purely based on her critical race awareness. Leah said:

Yeah...I go...I go out of my way to avoid any conversations that refer to...any type of stereotypical thing that is Black. I will never admit to liking rap music. I will never admit to liking certain ethnic foods. Uh...I will deny knowing about certain Black people who are in the media or in popular culture. I don't want people to see me as just a race. I want to be seen as an individual.

The researcher asked her if she thinks that it works. Leah said:

I used to think that it worked...but now I think they just say, "Oh, that's an unusual Negro."

Leah also discussed some instances where her actions/interactions might best be categorized as *Stereotype Threat* which has been defined by Claude Steele (1999) as: *the threat of being viewed through the lens of a negative stereotype, or the fear of doing something that would inadvertently confirm that stereotype*. Leah said:

I don't like working in groups because I'm afraid that someone is going to find out that I don't know something. And I figure that everyone else knows everything so, I would just rather work by myself so then, that way, I can't be discovered if that, if that's....if you want to know the truth of the matter. Unfortunately...I have some residual feeling of White people knowing more than...than I do. Even though I know a lot...I still feel like they know more. It started in high school when I took an Honors Shakespeare class. I realized.....I was in there with mostly White students. And in almost every single case they had already read the book that we were assigned and like...I hadn't read it yet so here I was reading it for the first time and this was their second or sometimes third reading. It made me feel inadequate. I still carry that feeling sometimes.

Throughout the interview, Leah appeared to be psychologically burdened that her actions/interactions could confirm and/or challenge stereotypes about African Americans in general.

Consequences

Strauss and Corbin's (1998) final paradigmatic term is *consequences*. They explain that whenever there is action/interaction or a lack of it taken in response to an issue or a problem or to manage or maintain a certain situation, there are ranges of consequences, some of which might be intended and others not. The interviewees' responses revealed an unexpected pedagogical consequence and phenomenon which is explained by and attributed to their racial identity and cultural experiences. This consequence helps to answer, in part, the second research question which framed this study:

What do these minority teachers do? How do these actions affect their decisions that ultimately impact teaching and learning?

In 100% of the interviews, the participants talked about their experiences and methods of relating to students and managing their classrooms. All of the subjects described their methods as having roots in their own upbringing in African American culture. Most of them talked about using the same style that their parents and/or grandparents had used to raise them to be responsible adults. These methods relied heavily on concepts and strategies such as: 1)

Relating to students, 2) High expectations, 3) No-nonsense approach, 4) Serious tone of voice and facial expression, 5) Treating students like their own children, 6) Demonstrating and expecting Respect, 7)'Oral Tradition' or Storytelling, 8) Responsibility and Consequences, and 9) Creating an environment of "family."

Nearly all of the subjects described having fewer discipline problems than their White or Hispanic colleagues. Several of them talked about their administrators and/or colleagues approaching them and asking what they do differently. In some cases, these interviews provided their first opportunity for them to reflect on the actual origin of their management styles. Following are some examples of their discussions:

Leah: I'm much stricter than the White teachers. Way more strict than the White teachers. It's not harsh, I'm never degrading to the students or...that's not the word...I never mess with their self esteem. I guess it comes from my upbringing. I guess it does. I was raised in a strict environment...I would consider it strict. Not harsh...just strict. I do know that some people find my strictness a little surprising...I can see that teachers will look at me like, "wow, that's...you were kind of harsh", but I just don't think that children should be running all over the place with noise and getting out of their seats.

Victor: So, it's a thing, a lot of the questions and other interactions that they (the students) have with me are not the same as what they have with the other teachers. They just don't, the other teachers don't approach them in the way that I approach them. Basically, my approach to them is, these are my kids. Just like my girls are my kids. There's nothing I won't do for them, okay? So then, the kids, I give them boundaries, let them stay within the boundaries and for the most part it does work well. I treat them like my kids. I even act like they're my grandkids. But, uh, I have that relationship with them, where, where they're like family to me. And I want them to understand as much as possible outside of the educational process and inside the educational process also. As I said, the bottom line is to get them to think.

The researcher asked Victor where that approach comes from. Victor continued:

Victor: You know, in general, life experiences. Just ones I've gone through, then in particular, you know...family, close friends...and some of what I have experienced. You know, it's just, just, just my approach. And it's just me, you know. And a White person now, they haven't had the benefit of learning from my parents, aunts, uncles, and, uh, people from back when I was a child, like that. And that's in essence then, it's coming from the Black experience. Being Black.

Throughout the interview, Beverly talked a lot about her racial identity. The researcher asked her to talk about how her racial identity impacted her behavior in the classroom.

Beverly: As I teach, I project that having manners, respect, what we call the old school way, I want my classroom like that. So my students see me as a role model and that does make an impact because I'm using what I've been taught within my culture.

She continued:

Beverly: I've noticed that with your Hispanic teachers, when they have to deal with their students, and I've noticed this since we have, um, White and Hispanic teachers, and with the Hispanic teachers, I've noticed when they have to discipline or have to discipline the classroom, it's more of a begging, pleading kind of thing. With the Anglos (Whites), there's no nurturing at all. With the Black, how I do it, how I've been brought up, you have the nurturing, but you have to have the attitude of "you're the child and I'm the adult". When I say something, do it. And that's a cultural thing, 'cause you know, within the Black race, the mother (is that way), and that's how I do it. I'm mom while you have me and I treat you like you're my own. I nurture you, I discipline you, there's mutual respect. The way we speak as Blacks...our tone of voice, you know, they know what's expected by my tone of voice. You know, kids respond to that as an authoritative way of talking and we don't plead for kids to listen to us.

Beverly added:

Beverly: I look my students in the eye. Hispanic cultures are taught to put their heads down. You know, um, the White teachers are afraid of a lawsuit and I'm not. I say, "look at me" and I go on" blah, blah, blah". I play my little gospel music in the class and so they feel, they feel comfortable, you know, and every value I've learned as far as nurturing the kids, that's how I do it in my classroom. Beverly: So, I have my discipline, um, the kids' respect too. I have the authority

because of the way I was brought up...the way I've seen my mother, my grandmother, my great grandmother, my aunts, the way they disciplined us, trained us.

Beverly said that some of her colleagues have asked her how she gets the students to listen to her. They've noticed that she never "hollers" at them.

Beverly told them that she doesn't have to "holler," she just looks at them, she doesn't beg and she doesn't plead. Beverly said that once in a while a parent will take their kid out of her room because they feel that she's 'too tough' or they might say "you made my kid cry". Beverly told the researcher, "But to the Black culture, yeah, I did my job. If I got you to know your place as a kid, I did my job".

Leonard talked about how he believes that he gets more respect from the students than many of his colleagues. He says that he's "different", that he "knows where they're (the students) coming from", and that he has a good sense of humor. He says that for a lot of the other (Hispanic and White) teachers, it is about come in, sit down, and this and that. Leonard said that it may be sometimes, not all of the time, that they don't learn anything "out of the book," they just talk about what is going on, in general. He said that he often has students come to him for guidance and direction when they find themselves in situations that they cannot handle. He said that kids do not feel scared to come up to him and tell him their problems.

The researcher asked Leonard to talk about why the students may find him more approachable than some of his colleagues. Leonard said:

Leonard: I think, uh, we're a unique, we're a unique group, okay, we're a unique, uh, race. Okay. We come in all different this and that. We're doing a lot of things that weren't done a long time ago. I think just, uh, being able to relate to the kids. Okay, I have a better time talking with the kids than hanging out with the faculty. The students will figure you out. This guy can be trusted. When the kids come up to me and they say there's a problem. We're gonna go and straighten out that problem. Go get some numbers, we'll make some phone calls. Also....I listen to the kids. I know I'm in charge, but, you know, sometimes they have good ideas. You know they have good ideas that can help you teach, but still you expect the kids to know that you're here for a reason, this is your job, um, I'm here to help you. I'm trying to pass kids, I'm not trying to fail kids. .And some teachers are like that, they're trying to trick kids with a question and this and that. I try to tell kids, "I'm trying to get you out of here so you can do what I'm doing". Maybe they can teach my children. Most of their parents come and want to know who I am because their kids tell them about me. They (the parents) tell me that their kids like being in my class and feel better about themselves and this and that.

Shemar talked about how his style of interaction with his students and classroom management techniques evolved over time. He said that initially he had problems with both the administrators and the students. He said that he thought about it and asked himself what it was that he wanted. It was clear to him that he wanted to teach and he had to figure out how to make that happen. He said:

Shemar: So, I just started talking to the kids. I just started talking to them and letting them talk to me, and the more I let my guard down, the better I understood them. And the better they understood me. You understand where I'm coming from? And so I think there was a tradeoff, yes, but I think that it has made me a more successful teacher.

Shemar continued:

Shemar: And you know, when I stopped having those problems and my students started performing better than anyone else's students, they (his colleagues) started asking him "What do you do?" and "How did you get them to do this?" One administrator said that it's because of the time that he (Shemar) invests in each kid.

The researcher asked Sam to reflect on his identity as an African American and talk about any ways that his racial and or cultural identity manifested itself in his teaching. Sam did not hesitate and stated:

Sam: I think it's there because a lot of times I have to use real life situations with my students. I have to be very realistic with them --- (for example), even though it is math class, I have to get them to understand things and a lot of times when they start 'goofing off' or we get sidetracked, I'll use that situation. And, I'll tell them that they're going to end up like our poor custodians, who don't speak English and are doing the best that they can because they don't have an education. I ask them if they want to envision their futures sweeping floors and cleaning toilets, other than at home? So, I use a lot of situations like that. I don't have to tell them that I had to struggle as a Black man, because I didn't, but I'm able to talk about my parents a lot and I tell them to ask their grandparents about things. Often, I talk about Cesar Chavez and what he fought for and believed in. I try to get them to understand that they're being babied at school and I say, you, know, out there (the real world), that's not gonna happen. It's not gonna happen. So that's how I think it (my racial and cultural identity) comes out in my teaching.

Later in the interview, Sam added:

Sam: Uh, I'm hard on them. I have expectations, but then I have to know when to back off. I have to know which students I can push and which students I cannot. The way that my father talked to me or my mother talked to me about things is the same way that I talk to these kids. One thing I have learned not to take for granted...uh I used to assume that because of the school where I teach and the homes in the area³⁸ that these kids were coming from homes with structure. But, it's not the case. I have so many kids that don't have fathers. Some don't even know who their fathers are. I have several young men who don't even live with their parents; they live with their grandparents. They've gotten away with things and there's no discipline---so I make it fun, but I make sure that we're gonna learn about life as well in this experience, Whether it's in my classroom or whether it's with me on the basketball court, they will learn about responsibility and consequences.

The researcher asked Clyde to talk about his identity and if and how it manifests itself in his teaching style. Clyde talked about how important it is to 'carry himself in a certain way' and to be professional. He said that it is, of

³⁸ Sam teaches in a relatively affluent area.

course, always important to be professional, but especially so if you are the only person from your race or ethnic group, who they (the students) are going to come in contact with. He added:

Clyde: Um, it's important that you know your topic, your subject, um, you know, there are times when I tell them, I may give them some personal stories when I feel like they are having problems with motivation, self-motivation, or self-confidence. You know, those kids who, who just come to school because they have to. They're not trying to accomplish anything so I use myself, my wife, and my daughter as examples (to motivate them). I, uh, I emphasize certain things because, because a lot of the kids come from a similar socioeconomic level that I grew up in. So on that level I try to connect with them because I am trying to show them or explain to them how they can use their education to overcome the situation that they're in now.

These teachers all expressed pride in what they are doing to help their students succeed. Several of them commented on the fact that they feel responsible to do a good job. Clyde feels that since people (African American) before him paved the way for him to have opportunities, that he has to make sure that he does things the right way so that if, if the door closes, it will not be because of something that he has done.

Summary

Chapter IV has presented the findings from the surveys. The first part of the survey presented demographic information of the subjects interviewed for this study as well as the results from the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI), which is designed to determine one's position on cultural identities, experiences, and beliefs about race. The results of a composite analysis of the three stable constructs of *Centrality*, *Ideology*, and *Regard* were presented. A composite frequency of the 8 items of the *Centrality* scale indicate that slightly more than half of the responses report that race plays a significant role in the respondents' identities. The four *Ideology* subscales of *nationalist*, *oppressed minority*, *assimilationist*, and *humanist* suggest a high correlation between *assimilationist* and *humanist* attitudes while suggesting a negative correlation to *nationalist* and *oppressed minority* attitudes. Finally, composite frequency analyses of the *public regard* and *private regard* subscales indicate that less than one-fourth (22%) of the respondents feel strongly that *others view African Americans positively*. In contrast, slightly more than three fourths (76%), indicate that they *feel positively towards African Americans and their membership in that group*. The second part of the survey, the ***Racism and Life Experiences Scale - Brief-Version*** (RaLES – B) assessed the impact of the subjects' perceived racism on behavior, psychological status, and health outcomes.

Equally important, this chapter has reported the findings of more than 24 hours of semi-structured interviews which explored the subjects' beliefs about

the balance of power and privilege between African Americans, Whites, and Hispanics in the broader U.S. society, Borderville, and within the context of their professional settings. The findings were reported based on the results of initial, focused, and axial coding. This coding system allowed the researcher to report the findings based on the following categories:

1) *conditions*, 2) *actions/interactions*, and 3) *consequences*. Five central themes emerged which were organized under the first category, conditions: 1) *playing the game*, 2) *silenced dialogue*, 3) *White guilt*, 4) *Fear*, and 5) *“otherness”*. These themes allow us to begin to understand the structure and help to define the problems, issues, and events under investigation. The coding process suggested four themes in the second category of actions/interactions; *acquiescence*, *resignation*, *“dealing with it”*, and *stereotypes*. These four themes illustrate purposeful and deliberate acts taken to solve problems as well as ways of responding to occurrences in everyday life. These themes, collectively, begin to offer a structure for addressing the first research question which guided this study:

What is the mode of managing, handling, and/or responding (action/interaction) to real or perceived systemically embedded racism within the cultural context of a school setting?

The third category, *consequences*, revealed an unexpected pedagogical consequence. All of the subjects described classroom management styles and methods which relied heavily on their identities and experiences as African Americans. These methods relied on concepts and strategies such as 1) relating to students, 2) high expectations, 3) no-nonsense approach, 4) serious tone of voice

and facial expression, 5) treating students like their own children, 6) demonstrating and expecting respect, 7) 'oral tradition' or storytelling, 8) responsibility and consequences, and 9) creating an environment of "family".

This consequence is helpful in answering the second research question which framed the study:

What do these minority teachers do? How do their actions affect their decisions that ultimately impact teaching and learning?

Chapter V summarizes and discusses the results.

CHAPTER V

Summary and Discussion of Results

This chapter presents a summary of the study and important conclusions drawn from the data presented in Chapter IV. It provides a discussion of the limitations of the study, implications for action, and recommendations for further research.

Summary of the Study

Overview of the Problem

Concepts of Race and New Manifestations of Racism

Despite much progress in U.S. society during the past few decades, racism and prejudice are still ugly realities in all sectors of American life, including education. Tatum (1997) affirms that understanding racism as a system of advantage based on race is antithetical to traditional notions of an American meritocracy and that for those who have internalized this myth, this definition can generate considerable discomfort. A common way to avoid this discomfort is to think of racism as a form of prejudice. In this way, one does not have to address notions of power and privilege thereby perpetuating the advantages associated with such a system. Tatum (1997) asks the following provocative question: *"Whose interests are served by a "prejudice only" definition of racism?"*

For many whites, an awareness of the benefits of a racist system elicits feelings of pain and guilt. Although many would agree that a belief system grounded in the existence of a “just world” would be preferable, the researcher, along with Tatum (1997), believes that racism directly contradicts a notion of “justice for all” and remains an integral part of the social structure of U.S. society.

Even though many whites readily acknowledge the blatant racism of the past in the forms of intentional acts of bigotry and discrimination, they often seem oblivious to or in denial of the more passive forms of racism. Today, racism may be less virulent than in the past, but its effects can still greatly harm its victims. In fact, subtle, insidious, or *passive* forms of racism may be more harmful than more blatant forms. Tatum (1997) defines *passive* racism as follows:

Passive racism is more subtle and can be seen in the collusion of laughing when a racist joke is told, of letting exclusionary hiring practices go unchallenged, of accepting as appropriate the omissions of people of color from the curriculum, and of avoiding difficult race-related issues. Because racism is so ingrained in the fabric of American institutions, it is easily self-perpetuating. All that is required to maintain it is business as usual.

Horton (2002) refers to this type of passive racism as mutated, and to illustrate the persistence of racism in revised forms, he discusses the emergence of multiracials and “neo-mulattos” in U.S. social structure. He explains the mutated, changed appearances, and manifestations of racism and the role of the emerging multiracial phenomenon. According to Horton, structurally speaking, a new mixed-race population functions as a “neo-mulatto” class that has been provided access to what he terms “white space”. He maintains that this

“whitespace” is a conceptual tool that defines the role of “neo-mulattoes” in modern U.S. society while serving as a means of identifying and operationalizing racism as well. The essence of his argument is that these mixed-race (neo-mulattoes) have returned to their antebellum role as a buffer between blacks and whites. Thus, Horton writes, they have greater access to “white space”, but the essential racist nature of the social structure can be maintained because these “neo-mulattoes” are defined as other than black.

As an example, Horton discusses Barack Obama, who, at the time of Horton’s (2004) writing, was a candidate for the senate seat from the state of Illinois. Horton writes:

Obama identifies as a Black man in the United States, although he has gained access to *white space* because his father was an African immigrant and his mother was White. Thus, he is perceived as acceptable as a “neo-mulatto”. Obama’s circumstance underscores the difference between concepts of mixed-race and neo-mulatto: access to *white space*. However, more generally, one could logically argue that Obama represents the first of many future “neo-mulattoes” who will run for political office. From a research prospective, one would argue that that “neo-mulattoes” would be expected to hold office disproportionately relative to their numbers in the general Black population.

As we move forward in time to the current writing of this study (2008), Barack Obama, won the senate seat from the state of Illinois, ran against Republican Senator John McCain for president, and has now become the first African American president of the United States. At first glance, this appears to strongly affirm Horton’s (2004) argument that Obama, as a “neo-mulatto”, has gained enough *whitespace* to run for and win the highest political office in the nation. However, many would argue that access to this so-called *whitespace*,

which in and of itself is a conceptionalized form of racism, does not protect its occupants from being victimized by racism in its new, mutated manifestations. To illustrate, in a recent New York Times article (2008), Brent Staples reported on Barack Obama, John McCain, and the language of race apparent in the recent (presidential) campaign. His most compelling examples of “race talk” were the use of the terms “uppity” and “boy” in reference to Obama. A Georgia state representative described Obama as “uppity” in response to a reporter’s question, and a Kentucky state representative, in a comment of his opinion of Obama’s readiness to assume the role of president, warned that “that boy’s (Obama’s) finger does not need to be on the button”. In a final example of the *language of race* in the presidential campaign, Staples describes a campaign commercial that accuses Obama of being “disrespectful” to his opponent’s White female running-mate. Staples compares this to the Old South, when competent, confident Black speakers on matters of importance were termed “disrespectful”. Staples argued that the blatant use of this language in the current presidential campaign is rooted in the historical and racial antecedents of slavery and racism. He comments on the persistence of such racially-based themes since Barack Obama became a plausible candidate for the U.S. presidency.

In another New York Times article (2008), Kristof discusses the effort to “otherize” Obama by exaggerating his (Obama’s) differences such as his place of birth and religion, in an attempt to de-Americanize him. Kristof calls for “blowing the whistle” on such egregious fouls, that he believes both undermine

the political process and magnify the worst prejudices that our nation has done so much to overcome.

Another outcome of classifying people into groups based on race is the tendency to develop stereotypes and treat people differently based on these assigned qualities. In the case of African Americans and non-minority Whites, this has produced and continues to support a structure of dominance and oppression leading to not only cultural exclusion, but systematic exclusion of African Americans from American history and deprivation of their own African history. It might be argued that the most devastating result emanates from the fact that the oppressor often denies the nature of this structure. The psychological effects of this denial on the oppressed could be harmful and have far reaching consequences.

Additional implications encouraged this study. Many years of research suggest teachers of color are important, both for students of color and other students (Hall, 1990; Miles, 1993; Braxton, 2000). Nora and Cabrera (1996) argue that some minority students experience problems adjusting to predominantly White institutions leading to an overall lower quality educational experience. Johnson, Crosnoe, and Elder (2001) write:

Beyond the composition of the student body, the composition of the teaching staff may shape students' engagement behaviors and feelings of attachment. Students' sense of belonging may be aided by having teachers resemble them. Race-ethnicity may be one of the few dimensions along which students can identify with teachers.

These and other scholars have identified several key reasons why students of color stay in school longer and achieve more when they have teachers who look like themselves. These include the role model effect, the power of expectations, cultural relevance, and teacher retention. In other words, we need teachers of color. We need to identify the barriers which prevent teachers of color from remaining in the profession and experiencing success. We need to discover the ways in which subtle and/or overt cases of racism cause teachers of color to respond in non-productive ways that either (1) prevent them from having successful experiences; or (2) impede student success.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

Narrative and Counter-Narrative

While the researcher does not suggest that the purpose of this study is to “blow the whistle” on the persistence of racism in U.S. society, she does view the purpose as providing African American educators in Borderville a “voice” to tell their own stories about their racialized experiences in contemporary U.S. society.

As a tenet of Critical Race Theory and one of the conceptual and theoretical lenses framing this study, the importance and centrality of narratives and counter-narratives or stories, particularly stories “told by people of color” cannot be underestimated (Lopez, 2003, p.84). Critical Race Theorists believe that knowledge can and should be generated through the narratives and counter-

narratives that emerge from and with people of color. In Critical Race Theory, narratives and counter-narratives place race and racism at the center of the discussion.

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) explain, “A theme of ‘naming one’s own reality’ or ‘voice’ is entrenched in the work of critical race theorists” (p. 57). Milner (2007) cites Solórzano and Yosso (2001) to explain that Critical Race Theory in education works to “challenge...dominant ideology” (p.2) and to centralize “experiential knowledge” (p.3). Emphasis and value are placed on knowledge construction, on naming one’s reality, and on the multiple varied voices and vantage points of people of color. Chapman (2007) asserts that communities of color are empowered to tell stories often much different from the ones that have been told in the past.

Decades earlier, W.E.B. Dubois (1903, 1996a) suggested that African Americans have, by virtue of their position, a critical awareness of the American social system which can be a cultural resource that facilitates structural change. In an effort to provide a forum for African American educators in Borderville to name their own reality, challenge the dominant ideology, give “voice” to Dubois’ critical awareness and be a cultural resource to facilitate structural change, this study has allowed eleven African American educators to subjectively share their point of view. The researcher believes Allan (2007) when he states that because of their experiences, oppressed groups are able to see their positions from the

perspective of the “other world” – the White and/or dominant social world around them. In other words, Blacks and other oppressed groups have a particular point of view of society that allows them to see certain truths about the social system that escapes others (Allan, 2007). Their stories allow us a glimpse of their racialized experiences in many of its mutated contemporary forms and their perspectives of how they fit into social world around them.

For example, in this study, Annie describes a ‘truth about the social system’ similar to Horton’s (2002) discussion of *whitespace*. Although she did not claim to be mixed-race, she self-identified as having some “safety” from the harshest forms of racism because of her skin color. The researcher asked Annie to clarify why, on her survey, she had indicated that during her lifetime she had experienced ‘*some racism*’ and during the past year she had experienced ‘*a little*’, but when asked about the lives of other people in her same racial group, she indicated that they had ‘*experienced a lot (of racism)*’. Annie explained:

There’s a reason for that. I know why I put that answer down. Uh, number one is because I’m a light-skinned black girl. And that makes a world of difference. Makes a world of difference in how you’re treated. And how people perceive you. It’s just different.

The researcher noted that even though Annie, who grew up in the South, classified her age in the 50-65 year old age range, she referred to herself as a ‘girl’. Although the researcher would not have thought of Annie as ‘light skinned’, Annie appeared proud to both describe herself in this way and occupy this ‘safe space’ similar to the *whitespace* described by Horton (2002).

Leah, the only interviewee who racially identified herself as '*multiracial*' seemed almost eager to reside, or perhaps hide in a 'space' similar to Horton's *whitespace*. When asked what "*multiracial*" means to her, she replied:

Leah: This means that...It just means that I uh, don't see myself as one thing. ...One category...I recognize, the Black of course and then there is more than that...there is White and Native American.

Leah talked about her perceptions of other Black teachers that she had met:

Leah:the only person...the only Black coworker that I've known made me wonder how they were able to get a teaching certificate...um...not even that...I couldn't even understand how they were able to get to the point to GET a teaching certificate...I don't know how they got, like, a high school diploma..or got through any college courses. I still don't know how...they have...those credentials. Cause they...what they don't know ...is incredible to me...

She continued:

Leah: Yeah...so much so that I don't want to be associated with those people...but I do associate with them because I have a guilt complex that I don't want to just leave them in the dust and just hanging out there and I feel bad about that...but, on the other hand, I don't like being seen with them, but...it's like this whole double edged sword.

Leah appeared disturbed about the fact that this lack of preparedness from the Black teacher seemed to meet the expectations of the (White) administrators and other teachers. When asked how the rest of the faculty responded to the (Black) teacher, she replied:

Leah: People are always saying things like...that person is a "trip" or "they are so funny" or "aren't they something else?"

Although, clearly, Leah fears being perceived as the “same” as this Black teacher that she describes, Leah has another cause for concern. She commented:

Leah: Well, um...whatever groups the less educated teachers work with are not getting the same quality of education. For example, in the Special Education department, a lot of poorly- educated (Black) teachers are working with these special education students...more than average...it's quite striking. It's a stark contrast to, for example, the Gifted program, where most of the students are White, and most of the teachers are White also. What is the message?

Leah seemed to be very confused about her own “space”. She said that she gets traumatized when people try to stick her into that (Black) category. She even admitted that she doesn't feel good about Black people. She said, *“They...I feel that the images that I get from them to be incredibly embarrassing, they embarrass me. I'm embarrassed when...”* The researcher asked her if she referred to all Black people and she said, *“All of the ones I get to see. Not my family”*. She went on to name a few exceptions such as Colin Powell, Condoleeza Rice, and Barack Obama. The researcher asked Leah to explain her survey response that *she strongly feels that her destiny is tied to the destiny of other black people*. Leah said:

Leah: Yeah, because I feel that I can only get so far because people see Black people the way that they see them.

Even though Leah was clearly one of the most racially conflicted participants in the study, she certainly named her own reality and gave voice to her ideologies, perceptions and experiences. The examples above perhaps illustrate Leah's search to find “whitespace”, or some other psychological ‘space’ that offers its mixed-race occupants an ‘acceptance’ and identity other than Black.

In terms of Cross's (1971, 1978, 1991) model of Black racial identity development, discussed in Chapter II, Leah would most likely be identified as *Preencounter*. In this stage, the African American has absorbed many of the beliefs and values of the dominant White culture, including the notion that "White is right" and "Black is wrong." Though the internalization of negative Black stereotypes may be outside of his or her conscious awareness, the individual seeks to assimilate and be accepted by Whites, and actively or passively distances him/herself from other Blacks.

In interpreting Leah's responses and perceptions, the researcher is reminded of Memmi's (1965) view of the assimilationist:

The candidate for assimilationist almost always comes to tire of the exorbitant price which he must pay and which he never finishes owing. He discovers with alarm the full meaning of his attempt. It is a dramatic moment when he realizes that he has assumed all of the accusations and condemnations of the colonizer, that he is becoming accustomed to looking at his own people through the eyes of their procurer.

In summary, the purpose of this study has been to examine the cultural identities, experiences, and racial beliefs of a population of African American educators in a city on the U.S.-Mexico border of the United States in which the majority population (Hispanic) is another U.S. minority. Moreover, it has critically examined the racially relevant stories of these African-American teachers and educators in educational settings to explore the relationship of ideology, cultural and racial identity, and status (as a minority). It has looked at

the intersection of their beliefs regarding the significance of race and their beliefs and values about the teaching and learning process and attempted to determine if any of those (beliefs and/or values) are functions of (real or perceived) racial discrimination in either its older forms or in some of its newer less recognizable mutations and manifestations.

This study, intended for educators, policymakers, politicians, sociologists, and anyone interested in understanding the subtleties and complexities of racism, is intended to highlight the actions and interactions between individuals and suggest the aggregate consequences of institutionalized racism within our educational systems. Moreover, this study was designed to help refute some lingering assumptions about race and racism, for example; 1) racism and oppression are not independent, dynamic forces, but reducible to economic or psychological causes; 2) most aspects of race/racism are attitudes and prejudices of whites; and 3) *the immigrant analogy* which is an assumption that there are no differences between the third world or racial minorities and European ethnic groups. The researcher believes this study enhances knowledge of the general topic of race and the specific, yet complex topic of the intersection of cultural identity and racialized environments while providing a deeper understanding of the many expressions of racial oppression and microaggressions committed towards African Americans. This snapshot of one small segment of our society, i.e. teachers, against a backdrop of assumed racism, can help us take a rational look at race while allowing us to look at reactions, response, management, and

eventual consequences of perceived institutionalized racism. The following research questions have guided this study:

1. *What is the mode of managing, handling, and/or responding (action/interaction) to institutionalized racism within the cultural context of a school setting?*
2. *What do these minority teachers do? How do these actions affect their decisions that ultimately impact teaching and learning?*

Finally, the intent has been to highlight and perhaps provide an understanding of the subtleties and complexities of modern day racism in some of its mutated manifestations.

Review of the Methodology

This grounded theory study was designed to examine the racially relevant stories of African American educators in education settings. It explored the relationship of ideology, culture, and status as a minority, both within U.S. society at-large and in the unique environment of a U.S.-Mexico border city. It looked at beliefs and values about the teaching and learning processes to determine if any of those (beliefs and/or values are functions of real or perceived racial discrimination. It also looked at reactions, responses, management, and consequences of real or perceived racialized microaggressions. The first part of the data collection consisted of the survey results. The second part of the data

collection process included the eleven-subject interviews which were analyzed to allow concepts and relationships to emerge for the purpose of theory-building.

The study used both quantitative and qualitative methods. In order to capture the participants' sense of identity, they were asked to complete a three part survey which included demographic information, the *Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity* (MIBI), and the *Racism and Life Experiences Scale – Brief Version* (RaLES – B). The *Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity* (MIBI) was created by Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, and Smith (1997) to operationalize the *Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity* (MMRI), a synthesis of the strength of two approaches to research on African American Identity. The first or mainstream approach has focused primarily on universal properties associated with ethnic and racial identities. The second approach has focused on documenting the qualitative meaning of being African American, with emphasis on the unique cultural and historical experiences of being African American. The MMRI proposes four dimensions of African American identity: salience, centrality, regard, and ideology. Racial salience and centrality refer to the significance that individuals attach to race in defining themselves; while racial regard and ideology refer to the individuals' perceptions of what it means to be Black (Sellers, Shelton, Smith, Rowley, and Chavous, 1998). The MIBI measures the three stable dimensions of centrality, ideology, and regard. The salience dimension is not measured since it is considered too dependent upon situational factors (Sellers, et al., 1997). The *Racism and Life Experiences Scale – Brief Version*

(RaLES-B) (Harrell, 1994), is a self-report measure that samples the perceptions of minority group members as it relates the impact of racism on their lives. The returned surveys were statistically analyzed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software package.

Although the surveys yield some significant quantitative data and demographic information, the primary methodology used in this study is qualitative. A flexible grounded theory methodology was used to gain an understanding of how African-American teachers, in a specific context, interact, take actions, and manage in response to racialized environments in education settings. This method was selected because it is a systematic means to investigate the meaning of the subjects' statements and to make analytic sense of them.

The researcher collected 24 hours of audio-taped interview data and 285 pages of transcribed data. The interviews were one and one-half to two hours long and lasted until the subjects indicated that they had exhausted the topic. The interviews were semi-structured, with a set of guiding questions, but with an open-ended style which remained responsive to the lead of the interviewer. The interviews explored their beliefs about the balance of power and privilege between African Americans, Whites, and non-white Hispanics both in U.S. society and in education settings. In all cases, the interview began with the following open-ended question: *"What do you think about the distribution of power and privilege between African Americans and non-minority whites in U.S. society?"*

The transcribed data was analyzed using the constant-comparative method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) of initial, focused, and axial coding. The researcher identified categories and themes through this method. 6) When possible, participant confirmation was sought and revisions made as necessary. The methods are described in detail in Chapter III.

Discussion of the Results

Major Findings

The purpose of this section is to highlight some of the findings and compare them to aspects of the literature, draw tentative conclusions, discuss the limitations, and to make suggestions for future research studies.

A number of conclusions were tentatively drawn. Some are related to the literature reviewed in Chapter II and will be discussed below. No attempt is made to generalize the findings due to the belief that every context and participant brings its own historical, situational, and experiential context. Possible similarities and differences are respectful to the process and are only suggested.

Major Findings from the Survey

More than half of the population that returned the surveys were female and between 50-65 years old. Eighty-one percent had lived in other states and 66% in other countries. Of significance, 60% reported military affiliation³⁹.

As described in earlier chapters⁴⁰, the 56 item *Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity* (MIBI) measures the three stable constructs of racial identity, specifically, *Centrality*, *Ideology*, and *Regard*.

Centrality Scale

The most surprising result came from the *Centrality* scale which measures whether race is a core part of an individual's self-concept; it measures how often an individual defines himself or herself in terms of race. A composite frequency analysis of the 8 items of the *Centrality* scale found that slightly more than half (55%) of the responses report that race plays a significant role in the respondents' identities. Conversely, this indicates that 45% either do not identify themselves in terms of race, or are neutral. The researcher was surprised by this result until the interview phase of the study when several participants began to talk about being an "American" first. With more than 60% of the total population of the study identifying themselves as affiliated with the military, the researcher believes this

³⁹ Borderville is home to a large U.S. military installation.

⁴⁰ See Chapter III for a complete discussion of the MIBI.

offers at least a partial explanation for such a strikingly low (55%) response that race plays a significant role in their identities.

The Military

In an article entitled "*Military and Societal Values: The Relevance of Knowing and Doing*", Malham M. Wakin

(<http://www.usafa.edu/isme/JSCOpe95/Wakin95.html>), outlines the convergence of values that are functionally necessary for the military and those that we know are fundamental to social existence. Since there is a link between one's cultural identity and social existence, we can expand the analysis of that convergence in terms of values based on military affiliation and those based on cultural identity. Several of Wakin's (1995) key points provide a clue to understanding the unexpected response rate pertaining to centrality.

Wakin points out that the key to understanding the relationship between military and societal value systems lies in the oath of office taken by every member of our military profession. He writes:

All commit themselves to both support and defend the U.S. Constitution as a condition of military service. Many believe that the basis for our societal value system is contained in that Constitution which spells out fundamental rights and freedoms. Essentially, those values specifically mentioned in the Constitution, characterizes a way of life which respects human dignity – protected individual rights within the context of a pluralistic community. The military profession in this country is charged with the preservation and protection of that way of life – consistency would seem to demand that military members themselves exemplify in their personal lives those values to which they have made a clear and overt commitment.

Possibly one of the most compelling and relevant points lies in Wakin's discussion of the American military's isolation from the mainstream of American society. The idea of the military's "isolation" is more than physical isolation, but includes the idea of an isolated value system, that is, isolated from mainstream America's value system. For example, American society generally fosters individualism and the freedoms and rights of the individual. The military profession generally fosters conformity, obedience, hierarchical organization, and the subordination of the individual to the unit. The military values unit and mission loyalty which can often be in conflict with extreme individualism. For Huntington (1957), the military's isolation from civilian values seemed to guarantee its professionalism; its pessimistic view of human nature guaranteed its readiness to respond to national emergencies – its preparedness to fight.

Scholars such as Huntington (1957) and Janowitz (1960, 1970) perceive that the uniqueness of the military function will always keep its leading practitioners slightly apart from the mainstream of the civilian society and certain societal values. This brings to question the ways and degrees to which one's cultural and/or racial identity is woven into their societal values at large. This, of course, is not the topic of this study, but suggests a possible direction of thinking which might begin to explain the high percentage of military-affiliated African American participants who do not consider their racial identity central to their identity. In view of the above discussion, we can begin to see the conflict

between identifying oneself with the military which subordinates individuality and defining oneself in terms of race.

Moreover, it is significant that the human rights mentioned in the U.S. Constitution include a listing of some important values critical to the way of life worth defending. Military professionals swear an oath to defend those values, that life style which incorporates the minimal conditions of human dignity. The researcher agrees with Wakin's (1995) assessment that military professionals, in order to perfect the instrument of defending these values, of necessity curb their own exercise of some of these freedoms. They accept restrictions on the liberty to speak, they refrain from partisan politics, they are denied political office while on active duty, they accept restrictions on their freedom of movement, and in general subordinate personal preferences to the good of the military unit and the good of the country. In these ways, military values differ from civilian values—in ways involving the exercise of certain freedoms to act. The results from this study suggest that racial identity is also impacted by military values.

This view brings up the question of whether or not these African Americans have access to the same fundamental rights and freedoms that they are committed to protect. The discussion will return to this point below when discussing the interview data.

In view of the above discussion on the possible military influence on racial identity, the remaining survey results seem less surprising. On the *Nationalist* subscale of the Ideology scale, only 26% strongly agree with a nationalist

viewpoint which emphasizes the importance and uniqueness of being of African descent. Not surprising, on the *Oppressed Minority* subscale, only 37 % strongly agree with an oppressed minority ideology characterized by a viewpoint that emphasizes the commonalities between African Americans and other oppressed groups.

Conversely, and again suggesting a possible military-based influence, the *Assimilationist* and *Humanist* subscales report that the participants overwhelmingly responded that they strongly agree with an assimilationist viewpoint which emphasizes similarities between African Americans and the rest of American society. A person with an assimilationist viewpoint acknowledges his or her status as an American and attempts to enter, as much as possible, into the mainstream. In like manner, 81% of the responses agree with a humanist viewpoint which sees race as being of minor importance with respect to the way they lead their lives and see the world.

In view of the suggestion of a military influence on African Americans' racial identity, the researcher suggests this as a future topic to be explored. By researching this topic, we could understand additional aspects of the complexities of racial identity and how it impacts one's values and perceptions of the world around them.

Major Findings from the Interviews

In *Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism*, Derrick Bell

(1992) writes:

...we and those Whites who stand with us can at least view racial oppression in its many contemporary forms without underestimating its critical importance and likely permanent status in this country.

In 2008, the responses of the interviewees in this study seem to confirm Bell's (1992) prediction regarding the permanence of racism. Although different in background, age, gender, and experience, the 11 interviewees all indicated that they had experienced some type of racism in their lives. None of them believed there to be an equal distribution of power and privilege between African Americans and non-minority Whites in contemporary U.S. society. The amount of and degree to which they reported their experiences with racism varied.

This study has reported the findings of more than 24 hours of semi-structured interviews which explored the subjects' beliefs about the balance of power and privilege between African Americans, Whites, and Hispanics in the broader U.S. society, Borderville, and within the context of their professional settings. The findings, based on the results of initial, focused, and axial coding, produced the following categories: 1) *conditions*, 2) *actions/interactions*, and 3) *consequences*. Five central themes emerged which were organized under the first category, conditions: 1) *playing the game*, 2) *silenced dialogue*, 3) *White guilt*, 4) *Fear*, and 5) *"otherness"*. The coding process suggested four themes in the second

category of actions/interactions; *acquiescence, resignation, "dealing with it", and stereotypes*. These four themes illustrate purposeful and deliberate acts taken to solve problems as well as ways of responding to occurrences in everyday life. These themes, collectively, began to answer the first research question which guided this study:

What is the mode of managing, handling, and/or responding (action/interaction) to real or perceived systemically embedded racism within the cultural context of a school setting?

The third category, *consequences*, revealed an unexpected pedagogical consequence. All of the subjects described classroom management styles and methods which relied heavily on their identities and experiences as African Americans. These methods relied on concepts and strategies such as 1) relating to students, 2) high expectations, 3) no-nonsense approach, 4) serious tone of voice and facial expression, 5) treating students like their own children, 6) demonstrating and expecting respect, 7) 'oral tradition' or storytelling, 8) responsibility and consequences, and 9) creating an environment of "family".

This consequence is helpful in answering the second research question which framed the study:

What do these minority teachers do? How do their actions affect their decisions that ultimately impact teaching and learning?

Conditions: Playing the Game, Silenced Dialogue, White Guilt, Fear, and "Otherness" on the Border

Several of the interviewees described a technique of "playing the game" as a mechanism for navigating through their environments. They typically described "playing the game" as not "making any waves" or drawing extra attention to themselves by discussing racial issues or concerns. They talked about frequently overlooking what they perceived to be "racial slights" in favor of maintaining a quiet and peaceful existence. A companion to this maneuver is the existence of a "silenced dialogue" where any meaningful discourse about race is silenced. Some interviewees talked about examples of (White) colleagues, who actively discouraged their attempts to discuss racial issues by telling them that they had probably "misunderstood" the (racialized) incident. Some interviewees were aware that the active silencing of dialogue concerning race has in some instances become taboo for some members of U.S. society in the post-civil-rights era and has become a mechanism of oppression for African Americans. The interview data has suggested a symbiotic relationship between "playing the game" and "silenced dialogue". This symbiotic relationship is related to at least 3 other ways in which race dialogues are systematically silenced:

1. *A lack of race awareness.* This lack of awareness can actually be from either the dominant group or the subordinate group. In the case of the dominate group, they can either deny the existence of racial issues or discourage the

discussions. The subordinate group can “play the game”. In either case, race dialogues become prohibitive.

2. *Fear of judgment.* Some interviewees commented that they believed some of their White colleagues feel guilty about the existence of racism and feel uncomfortable about discussing the issues. In some cases they (the interviewees) feel that some (White) colleagues feel some degree of fear of being judged as “oppressor”. The result is silenced dialogue.
3. *Conceptions of one’s own place (stereotypes).* When African Americans have bought into their oppressors stereotyped perceptions of themselves, they often avoid difficult conversations about race or racial issues. Some points from Jessica’s and Leah’s narratives illustrate this point. Both appear to have negative views of themselves and their racial group while attempting to build as much space as possible between themselves and their racial group. As expected, neither attempts to initiate or engage in race dialogue.

The interviews revealed that, as African Americans living in Borderville where the majority population is Hispanic, they were often made to feel like “cultural others”. To begin the discussion of “otherness”, the researcher returns to Tatum (1997), who lists at least seven categories of “otherness” commonly experienced in U.S. society. According to Tatum, people are often defined as other on the basis of race or ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic

status, age, and physical or mental ability. Each of these categories has a form of oppression associated with it: racism, sexism, religious oppression/anti-Semitism, heterosexism classism, ageism, and ableism respectively. In each case, there is a group considered dominant (systematically advantaged by the society because of group membership) and a group considered subordinate or targeted (systematically disadvantaged). In that we can all claim multiple identities, most of us will find that we are both dominant and targeted at the same time.

The interview data strongly suggests that many African Americans living in Borderville experience the reality of being a targeted identity by the dominant (Hispanic) group. While the category of race is a more commonly targeted identity, in the unique setting of Borderville, the interviewees more often ascribe their status as “other” more to culture than to race, specifically. This makes the analysis somewhat more difficult since, in the context of this study, it is very difficult to separate race and culture. For this reason, the researcher will refer to the phenomenon as “cultural otherness” and/or “cultural others”.

It is important to note that although, generally, in U.S. society, Hispanics are classified as a minority population, they represent the majority population in Borderville ⁴¹. Of particular interest is the fact that, even though Hispanics are the majority population, their minority status in U.S. society as a whole, limits the economic and political power which is typically associated with privileged

⁴¹ The 2000 U.S. Census reports 431, 875 Hispanic or Latino (of any race), which represents 76.62% of Borderville’s total population of 563, 662.

groups. In the unique setting of Borderville, Hispanics are dominant in terms of cultural power, and have the ability to define nonprivileged groups in an “us” versus “them” type of way.

The research data suggests that the dominant group (Hispanics), by definition, appear to set the cultural parameters within which the subordinates operate. Many of the interviewees report that Hispanics hold the cultural power and authority in Borderville which is often reflected in who gets certain jobs, which language is spoken, whose history is taught in schools, whose traditions are celebrated, whose music is played, and even whose food is served. In essence, Hispanics have the greatest influence in determining the cultural structure of Borderville’s society⁴².

When a subordinate group is defined as “other”, it is viewed as being unlike the dominant group in profoundly different, and sometimes negative ways. Groups that are “othered” are often seen as inferior in some way(s), and are often stigmatized” in a variety of ways. Being “othered” is much more than simply being seen as different. This is illustrated by the complex processes described by some of the participants. For example, Beverly discussed feeling “devalued” as an African American, and described a meeting with her campus administrator when the administrator told her (Beverly) to just “touch on”

⁴² In analyzing the social structure and cultural aspects of Borderville, it is essential to consider it’s proximity to Mexico which provides myriad images and activities that pervade the social, political, and economic environment. In fact, the special relationship with Mexico, in general, and with its sister city on the Mexico side of the border, in particular, is a major characteristic of Borderville.

Kwanzaa⁴³ and not to teach a whole segment on the (African American) holiday. Leah stated that Borderville Hispanics consistently “make a big deal of” or “point out” racial differences. In short, “otherness” is not binary; instead its construction is contingent and fluid, determined by context and individual response to that context.

The interview data suggests that some African Americans existing within this structure, often feel like undervalued and insignificant “cultural others.” They also feel “stigmatized” in the sense that their culture appears to be discredited and/or deemed unworthy by many Borderville Hispanics. Moreover, several interviewees talked about being victims of stereotyping, which is defined as having cultural beliefs about a particular group that are usually highly exaggerated and distorted. For example, according to a popular stereotype in U.S. society, African Americans possess innate talent in certain sports, namely basketball and football. Although African Americans are overly represented in the National Basketball Association and the National Football League, it is safe to say that, in reality, most African Americans, like most Whites, only have average ability in these two supports.

Clyde, an African American coach in the Borderville athletic region, discussed a “glaring” example of this athletic stereotype during his interview. Clyde said that he has had students (Hispanic) in various school districts in the

⁴³ In this case, Kwanzaa was just one holiday which was part of a Social Studies unit on “Holidays from Different Cultures.”

Borderville area who were afraid to compete if they were scheduled to play against a team with large numbers of African Americans. He said:

I would ask them why, and some of the kids (Hispanic) actually told me, uh, that, that their parents told them that you can't compete with African Americans because they're – in athletics, because they have an extra muscle that other people don't have. And I was like, what? And it, but they told me as if it was a fact you know.

Clyde said that he has worked in various school districts in the Borderville area and this stereotype comes up again and again. He recalled that some of his players from the Alamo ISD have asked him about the “extra muscle”, that their mothers' have told them about. Clyde said that he began to notice that if they were going to compete against a team that has some African Americans on it, they (Hispanics) automatically assume that those kids are better athletes just because they're African American.

Clyde continued:

....I said that's, that's offensive you know. I said you're assuming that we (African Americans) don't have to work hard for what we get. It's just something we're born with. And I had an experience with one of my players in Douglass ISD⁴⁴ who believed that, you know. He was a good kid, but you know – and so I went back home (to the East Coast) for the summer. His mother had a habit of just leaving him for weeks to go with her boyfriend and just leave him in the house. I was afraid that he was going to get in trouble so I asked his mother if he could go with us to (the East Coast). So she let him go. We stayed with family and I took him to the park to play (basketball) against some kids (African American). Afterwards, he said, “You're right, they can't all play. I thought everybody (African American) could play.” I said, “No, you only see the ones that can play”.

Clyde's story can also illustrate that in addition to being inaccurate, stereotypes often portray the group in question in negative ways.

⁴⁴ A pseudonym; Douglass is a small school district outside of Borderville.

In sum, othering, stigmatization, and stereotypes portray the targeted identity in negative ways. When looking at the African American basketball image, for example, one can see that it implies a larger context where African Americans excel in certain athletics, but not in intellectual endeavors. It is part of the general “dumb athlete” stereotype which includes everyone. In the whole process of “othering”, stigmatizing, and stereotyping, the negative attitudes are part of a larger social process whereby the dominant group oppresses the subordinate group in various ways. The interview data supports this view.

According to Pincus (2006), the negative attitudes, in this view, act as justification for the political and economic oppression. In other words, the oppression causes the negative attitudes, not the other way around. The implication here is that it would be impossible to get rid of the negative attitudes until the oppression is eliminated.

Bourdieu's Habitus

The researcher views Borderville's social context which includes othering, stigmatizing, and stereotyping in terms of Bourdieu's (1992) reflexive sociology concepts like *habitus* and *field* in which cultural activity may be characterized as situated in a particular matrix of presence or being. This being, or condition, is transfixed upon or inscribed upon specific social bodies in much the same way as Foucault (1977) notes punishment may criminalize individuals by the state. In

other words, *habitus* is a *structuring mechanism* that operates from within agents, though it is neither strictly individual nor in itself fully determinative of conduct.

Habitus is, in Bourdieu's words (1977a: 72, 95), "*the strategy-generating principle enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations...a system of lasting and transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks.*" As the result of the internalization of external structures, *habitus* reacts to the solicitations of the field in a roughly coherent and systematic manner. Even though the strategies of *habitus* are systemic, they remain "ad hoc" because they are "triggered" by the encounter with a particular field. *Habitus* is creative, inventive, but within the limits of its structures, which are the embodied sedimentation of the social structures which produced it (Wacquant, 1992).

The researcher suggests that Bourdieu's key concepts of *habitus*, *field*, and *capital* can provide a lens through which we can view Borderville's societal structure of Hispanic dominance over African Americans which results in "othering", stigmatizing, and stereotyping as forms of oppression. In Bourdieu's work, the agent is socialized in a "field" (an evolving set of roles and relationships in a social domain, where various forms of "capital" such as prestige or financial resources are at stake). In the case of Borderville, the roles and relationships are those of targeted identity (African Americans) and dominant group (Hispanics) in the social context of Borderville where the

“capital” might be defined as privileged power to assign the roles and set the parameters of the players. As the agents (all of the players) accommodate to their roles and relationships in the context of their position (dominant or subordinate) in the field (Borderville society), the agents (African Americans and Hispanics) internalize relationships and expectations for operating in this domain. These internalized relationships and habitual expectations and relationships form, over time, the *habitus*.

In addition, Bourdieu’s model offers a possible explanation for some of the perceptual differences between the Borderville-born African American subjects and those who have migrated to Borderville. For example, Jessica and Sam, the two Borderville-born subjects reported that they did not perceive race as an issue with Borderville Hispanics. Jessica, in fact, reported that she culturally identifies with Hispanics more than with African Americans. She said:

I guess I assimilated more into the Hispanic culture because that was easiest for me to grab onto⁴⁵.

When asked what he believed about power, fairness, and equity between African Americans and Hispanics in Borderville, Sam said:

Yes (I think it’s equitable), I mean, now they’re, they’re gonna have a slight edge because someone’s gonna help them. They help each other. Um, but I think we have a better opportunity as Blacks. Because I think here (Borderville) our relationship with Hispanics is different than it is with Whites. We’re depressed in similar ways.....I think – I do feel that Blacks, from the outside, struggle at first, especially military coming in and they’ve seen a lot of different things, and they get here and at first it takes some time to adjust. I’m not going to say it’s like a perfect relationship, but I, I think I would have a better chance moving up if, say, uh, Dr.(Hispanic

⁴⁵ Jessica had been discussing the fact that as a child, growing up in Borderville, there had been very few other African Americans.

person) is going to hire me as opposed to Dr. (White person) , or one of those other (White) associate superintendents that we have.

Sam sums up his perception of his environment:

So having grown up here, with the people my parents know, the people I've met, the networking that's happened. I think opportunities are a lot different for me. I'm in a very, very fortunate situation.

These perceptions are in sharp contrast with those held by Shemar and Beverly, both military affiliated, and both from other parts of the U.S. who reported strong conflicts and feelings of "cultural othering" by Borderville Hispanics.

In sum, Bourdieu's *field model* is a useful tool for analyzing this social structure. *Habitus* ensures that players are able to remain in the field and know *who*, know *what*, and know *how* to "play the game". Understanding the three elements of Bourdieu's model (*field, capital, and habitus*), has allowed the researcher to detail the context (*field*) and explain who gets to play and why (*capital*). Finally, the concept of *habitus* helps to analyze and describe the actions/interactions and strategies of both sets of players (African Americans and Hispanics). At the center of Bourdieu's work is the notion that these players, or social agents, operate according to their "feel for the game" (the feel being roughly *habitus* and the "game" being the *field*).

In other words, Bourdieu's work attempts to reconcile structure and agency, as external structures are internalized into the *habitus* while the actions of the agent externalize interactions between actors and the social relationships in the field. Bourdieu's theory, therefore, is a dialectic between "externalizing the internal" and "internalizing the external."

Actions/Interactions: Acquiescence, Resignation, “Dealing with It”, and Stereotypes

As presented in the Findings in Chapter 4, Strauss and Corbin (1998) use the term *actions/interactions* to refer to the strategic or routine tactics on the how by which persons handle situations, problems, and issues that they encounter. Whereas strategic actions/interactions are more purposeful, intentional, and deliberate, routines are actions/interactions that are more habituated. Although more reflexive, the researcher views Bourdieu’s *habitus* as an example of routine action/interaction. Strauss and Corbin maintain that these types of actions/interactions tend to maintain the social order.

The interview data has suggested the categories of *Acquiescence*, *Resignation*, and/or just “*Dealing With It*” as routine ways of responding to the “racialized” occurrences in their everyday lives. The researcher believes these responses can be explained using a pragmatist’s symbolic interactionism construct such as that espoused by Strauss (see Kivisto, 2003). Strauss espouses a constituted nature of reality which is built up. It is based on individual interpretation and its relation to collective meaning; individual experience is an important element. There are no “facts” as such, to be discovered, rather, there is a social construct of reality. Much like *habitus*, interpretation, which lies at the heart of *symbolic interactionism*, is based on a reciprocal (interactive) relationship between the individual and society. In this study, the *individual* is represented by

the African American interviewees and the existing social structure of Borderville represents *society*.

The researcher argues for a symbolic interactionist perspective that posits the African Americans as embodied agents struggling for their identities by adapting to the social and physical (i.e. U.S. – Mexico Border) environment of Borderville. As such, some of these African Americans have adapted by *acquiescing* to the environment and its conditions, others have *resigned* themselves to the environment, and finally, some just “*deal with it*”. Though the data suggest these categories of adaptation, it is not likely that they are mutually exclusive, or rigid. Of particular interest is the role of *agency* in this process.

In sociological terms, human agency is the capacity for human beings to make choices and to impose those choices on the world. It is normally contrasted to natural forces, which are causes involving only unthinking deterministic processes. In this respect, agency is subtly distinct from the concept of free will, the philosophical doctrine that our choices are not the product of causal chains, but are significantly free or undetermined. Human agency entails the uncontroversial, weaker claim that humans do in fact make decisions and enact them on the world. Even though a philosophical discussion to reconcile free will and interactionism is not necessary for the scope of this study, the question of agency appears to be relevant to the understanding of what is really happening with these African American educators who adapt through acquiescence, resignation and/or just “*dealing with it*”. The researcher posits that many

interviewees have reconciled themselves to the world as it is and may have relinquished their agency or at best, limited it to their relationships with their students. Although at first glance, just “dealing with it” appears to be a more purposeful and intentional “choice” of action, the outcome or consequence is an eroded sense of agency. Since, as educators, they *have* to be agents, to be directive and serve as guides, an obvious question becomes, “In what ways do a lack of and/or an eroded sense of agency impact their effectiveness as teachers?” Interestingly, the interviewees overwhelmingly identified themselves as very effective teachers. The following section will discuss the consequences of their actions/interactions and address this question of whether or not their eroded sense of agency has diminished their capacity of being directive and serving as guides.

Consequences:

The final category of Strauss and Corbin’s (1998) grounded theory model is *consequences* which they define as the action/interaction (or lack thereof) taken in response to an issue or problem or to manage a particular situation or phenomenon. They point out that these might not always be predictable or intentional, and it follows that the failure to take action/interaction also has outcomes or consequences.

The interview data has suggested that in the case of some African American educators in Borderville, their counter strategies to being designated

as targeted identities is to acquiesce or resign themselves to it, in essence, to not respond to it. According to Strauss' grounded theory model, this *no response* mode of action/interaction is at the same time a consequence, and in this case, becomes part of the conditions (as context) affecting the next set of conditions affecting the next set of consequences. Therefore, Strauss and Corbin (1990), posit that what are consequences of action/interaction at one point in time may become part of the conditions in another (point in time).

Strauss and Corbin's (1990) grounded theory model appears to have a cyclical nature and potential for reciprocity and/or reflexivity between conditions, actions-interactions, and consequences. The researcher found this model helpful in providing "filters" through which she could organize and analyze the data. In the final analysis, the model appeared to be congruent with both a pragmatist's symbolic interaction view of the world and Bourdieu's reflexive sociology: habitus.

As discussed, some African American educators' respond to their racialized environment with *acquiescence* and/or *resignation*. These responses imply an eroded sense of agency while creating the potential for limited effectiveness as teachers. While this may be expected, the data suggests that these educators are able to rechannel their agency towards their students.

In fact, the interview data strongly implies that these African American educators demonstrate an intense sense of agency towards their students. One hundred percent of the interviewees identified themselves as being very effective

teachers, and talked about having strong relationships with their students. According to Robert Marzano (2006), a leading researcher in K-12 education, *teacher-student relationships* are the cornerstone of classroom management which, in turn, is crucial to student academic success. Marzano argues that when a teacher has a good relationship with their students they use a variety of techniques based on their knowledge of their students' needs such as using assertive behavior, taking a personal interest in their students, and using equitable and positive classroom behaviors. The interviewees described, in detail, their techniques which mirror those discussed in Marzano's research.

The interview data revealed these techniques as an unexpected pedagogical consequence. The classroom management styles and methods which they described clearly relied heavily on their identities and experiences as African Americans. All of the subjects described their methods as having roots in their own upbringing in African American culture. Most of them talked about using the same style that their parents and/or grandparents had used to raise them to be responsible adults. These methods and techniques, which closely parallel those discussed in Marzano's (2006) research, relied on concepts and strategies such as 1) relating to students, 2) high expectations, 3) no-nonsense approach, 4) serious tone of voice and facial expression, 5) treating students like their own children, 6) demonstrating and expecting respect, 7) 'oral tradition' or storytelling, 8) responsibility and consequences, and 9) creating an environment

of “family”. Again, this consequence is helpful in answering the second research question which framed the study:

What do these minority teachers do? How do their actions affect their decisions that ultimately impact teaching and learning?

As discussed in Chapter IV, nearly all of the subjects described having fewer discipline problems than their White or Hispanic colleagues. Several of them talked about their administrators and/or colleagues approaching them and asking what they do differently. In some cases, these interviews provided their first opportunity for them to reflect on the actual origin of their classroom management styles.

Limitations of the Study

The researcher acknowledges a number of limitations to this study including, but not limited to, the possible lack of generalizability, the lack of in-depth follow-up, the need for further in-depth investigation of some intra-group differences among the African American population participating in this study, and finally, researcher bias.

To begin with, the study included a relatively small sample of African American educators living and practicing in Borderville. This necessitates some caution before applying the results of this study to other African American

educators. The return rate of the surveys was relatively small (53 or 24%), and of those 53, 11 participated in the interviews.

The researcher posits some possible explanations for this low rate of participation. First, she believes that her failure to identify herself as African American in the cover letter accompanying the survey may have inadvertently limited some African American's interest in participating in the study. Secondly, since Borderville ISD had a significantly lower rate of return than the other two districts, she believes that by sending the surveys to the Borderville ISD population through the "school mail" process, the recipients may have been reluctant to participate and/or reveal "sensitive" information. Even though the cover letter fully explained the protocol, they may have thought that the research was sponsored by or related to the school district. While small sample sizes are standard in qualitative investigations, it is imperative to emphasize that the findings do not represent all African American educators in U.S. society. It does, however allow educators, policy makers, sociologists, and other researchers to speculate from the experiences reported by these African American educators in Borderville.

Second, it is unclear to what extent, if any, motivation for participation in the study impacts the results. However, as an open-ended interview, the researcher did not include specific questions other than the leading question described in Chapter III. For this reason, the participants' motivation for participating in the study did not always surface. There was not always a way to

know whether or not they considered themselves to be “making a statement” or participating in a “confessional”. In some cases, the interviewee included a comment about why they chose to participate, but others did not. Since the researcher did not pursue this question systematically, it raises the question of how participant motivation may or may not have impacted the results.

Since there was some self-selection of the interviewees, it could have biased their responses. For example, interviewees who considered the interview as a “confessional” might have had different responses from those who used it as a forum for “making a point”. Since the question of reason for participation was not systematically addressed, it is difficult to assess the level or type of bias. Although the data appears to be thick and rich, the above reasons caution against generalizing the findings to include all African Americans. However, the researcher reemphasizes that the purpose of this study has been to give voice to *this* group of African American educators in *this* setting and allow them to tell *their* story. As such, generalizability has never been the intent.

Moreover, although the researcher followed Strauss’ (1990) model of grounded theory, this study would have benefited from a more iterative process of qualitative investigation. The researcher was not able to conduct follow-up interviews to ask questions that arose after the analysis. For example, after the analysis revealed a low *centrality* score on the MIBI, it would have been expeditious to follow up to gather more interview data to get clearer more consistent information about the relationship between the interviewees’ military

affiliation and their low measure of defining themselves in terms of race (*centrality*).

Equally important, this study did not fully and systematically investigate a comparison between the participants' experiences in other contexts (social structures) and their experiences in Borderville. In some cases, the open-ended flow of the interview led to this discussion such as in the case of Shemar, who compared his experiences with Hispanics in the Midwest with his experiences with Hispanics in Borderville. Overall, though, this question was not systematically addressed in order to provide clear distinct information on this topic.

Finally, the biggest challenge for the researcher has been to establish a reliable degree to which the findings are a function solely of the inquiry and not of the biases, motives, interests, and perspectives of the inquirer (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Although it is unlikely that this study is free of researcher bias, she has made every effort to report the findings in an objective manner. Every effort has been made to conduct the study in an ethical manner and report the findings with integrity. Even though the researcher believes it is impossible to conduct this type of study without bias, she believes the data presented and discussed in Chapters IV and V were credible and that the interpretations are defensible.

In summary, this study only examines the perceptions of African American educators in Borderville that self-selected to participate in the study.

Thus, generalizability is at best, dubious. It is advised to cautiously speculate about other African Americans' perceptions of their racialized environments.

Implications for Future Research

First, it would be beneficial for other studies to evaluate more closely African American educators in general with regard to military affiliation and regional background to determine if there are differences in their perceptions of their racialized environments. Specifically, it would be beneficial to conduct a comparative analysis of perceived racism between military and non-military affiliated African Americans in Borderville. It is generally accepted that, as with any other racial/ethnic group, there are intra-group differences among African Americans in U.S. society. Even though the interviewees of this study exhibited some similarities in assessment of their racial identity, perceived racism, and experiences, they also had some important differences that need further investigation. Variations in socioeconomic status, regional background, military affiliation, age, and gender influence perceptions of racialized experiences. Future studies might investigate how these differences impact their perceptions.

Secondly, Sellers and Shelton (2003) remind us that since the start of the last century, psychologists and other scholars have argued that perceived racial discrimination and racial stigma have negatively affected the psychological development of African Americans (see Cross, 1991, for review). However, there has been very little research on the reasons that perceived racial discrimination

affects African Americans' well-being. There is even less research on the relationship between the ways in which African Americans perceive racial discrimination and their mental health consequences (Crocker, Major & Steele, 1998; Swim & Stangor, 1998).

This study has addressed part of the gap in the research literature by investigating some of the relationships between different dimensions of racial identity. For example, the MIBI measured the dimensions of *centrality*, *racial ideology*, and *racial regard*, and the RaLES -B investigated individuals' accounts of the amount of racial discrimination they have experienced in their daily lives. The interviews provided additional data on perceived racism.

This study found that some African Americans respond to their racialized environments in different ways such as *acquiescing*, *resigning themselves to their environment*, *ignoring it*, or even *denying the existence of race* as a factor in their environment. Thus, this study adds support for the importance of examining the psychological effects of perceived racial discrimination and the extent to which specific dimensions of racial identity exacerbate or buffer these consequences. In other words, there needs to be further research with this sample population to determine whether or not certain dimensions of racial identity trigger the extent to which individuals perceive negative incidents as racial discrimination, and other dimensions of racial identity protect individuals from the adverse mental health consequences of such perceived discrimination. Moreover, it would be

beneficial to further examine the relationship between dimensions of racial identity, responses, and mental health consequences.

The researcher suggests additional studies to investigate the psychological effects of such responses as *acquiescence*, *resignation*, and/or *denial* to determine the extent to which, if any and ways that one's eroded sense of agency or loss of positionality affects one's mental health. The combined results of the current study and the suggested future studies would produce a sharper, richer illustration of the complex role of race, racial identity, and racialized environments in the everyday lives of African Americans.

Silenced Dialogue and *Otherness* are two of the central themes which emerged to define the problems, issues, and events under investigation in this study. The researcher agrees with Ladson-Billings (1999) and Ladson-Billings & Tate, (1995) that it is imperative that educational researchers provide analytical tools for the critical exposure of race and racism that serves as a source of "othering", as well as allow for the desilencing of marginalized individuals.

As an essential of Critical Race Theory (CRT), counter-storytelling is a powerful tool to cast doubt on the validity of accepted myths held by the dominant culture. It exposes and critiques racial stereotypes while challenging the "privileged" discourses of the majority by giving "voice" to marginalized groups.

This study and these counter-narratives support the call for additional studies which utilize counter-storytelling to help us understand what life is like

for “others”. For example, this study has allowed us to know how Beverly feels when the curriculum that calls for celebrating “diverse cultures” does not include her culture, or when Clyde, the coach, has to explain to his Hispanic students that, no, African American athletes do not have an “extra muscle” that gives them additional athletic abilities.

The researcher believes that this process of counter-storytelling has allowed these interviewees to reflect on their experiences in profound ways, and possibly challenge the silenced dialogue of their environment. The researcher suggests this method as a method to expose, challenge, and critique the privileged discourses that are often the perpetuated standard in U.S. society.

Finally, the researcher suggests additional studies which permit people of color to tell their own stories about their racialized experiences living in a society where there are many who do not acknowledge their experiences or view them as part of the American landscape. As people continue to hold up people who do not look like them as the “all-American “ prototype, African Americans and other minorities need to be given a “voice” to tell their own stories.

Concluding Remarks

The fact that race does not exist biologically is generally acknowledged by all but the most profoundly uninformed and uneducated. To illustrate, in response to the idea that race is biologically real, Pilar Ossorio (2003), a legal scholar and microbiologist commented:

All of our genetics now is telling us that that's not the case. We can't find any genetic markers that are in everybody of a particular race and in nobody of some other race. We can't find any genetic markers that define race.

Even though this is the case, the fundamental premise of this study asserts: race matters. It further asserts that benefits and privileges quietly and often invisibly accrue to dominant groups, not necessarily because of merit or hard work, but because of the racialized nature of our laws, customs, and social structures. Race as a matter of social, political, and legal construction, represents attitudes and beliefs about differences, not the differences themselves. It is still popular today to believe in innate racial traits to explain group differences such as the myths and stereotypes about African Americans' "natural" athletic ability or "natural" rhythm. Race continues to be a powerful social idea with real consequences in people's lives.

The intent of this study has been to illuminate some of the inequities of privilege, stereotypes, and stigmatization in order to recognize examples of the nuances of contemporary racial oppression. Whereas White privilege was achieved through overt racial practices, today it is maintained through subtle

institutional practices such as *silenced dialogue*, *"otherness"*, *"white space"*, *color-blindness*, and other contemporary mutations of racism.

The subtlety and complexity of this "new racism" calls for subtle and complex ways to combat it. For example, researchers need to utilize methods, such as the counter-narratives used in this study, to uncover differential treatment in a variety of situations. Another possibility, as suggested by Eduardo Bonilla Silva (2001) is to use this method to cross examine White's views and behavior on racial matters.

The main interest points of this work centers around the management and response to inequities of power and privilege between African Americans and both non-minority Whites and Hispanics. The findings of the study have revealed differences in African Americans' assessments of dimensions of identity, perceptions of racism, responses, and modes of management. Although the study has provided some insights into the lives and experiences of these African American educators, it has produced questions for further investigation.

The study has uncovered some key topics for future investigation such as the impact of and/or intersection of military identity and racial identity. It has also suggested the further investigation of the psychological effects of *acquiescence*, *resignation*, and *"dealing with it"* as categories of management which were uncovered in the analysis. Moreover, the study supports the continued use of a CRT framework and methodology as a tool to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences and lives of people of color. Counter-narratives, specifically,

provide a lens to counter the silenced dialogue of race and racism and the marginalization of oppressed groups.

The researcher believes that counter-narratives can help privileged groups perceive certain aspects of racialized power. While often it is the case that the oppressed need to know both their own world and the world of the oppressor in order to survive, the oppressor's privileged position often blinds him or her to the "complete" human experience. Race is a powerful social construction that has far-reaching and complex consequences for inequities of all kinds. One of the purposes of this study has been to surface some of the complex consequences.

Implications for Education

This study has implications for education in some important ways. Most would agree that competent teachers are essential for the maintenance of a civilized society. Each year teachers enter, leave, and move within the K-12 workforce in the U.S. making teacher shortages, teacher attrition, and teacher quality important issues for educational policymakers. As members of the K-12 teacher workforce, African American teachers are important to policymakers, educational researchers, and to the future of U.S. society. By understanding how race impacts their experiences and lives, we can have a deeper understanding of how race impacts our future as a society.

In recent times, the effort to address racism in education has been limited to making a case for equal opportunity. The argument is that good K-12

experiences generally lead to good post-secondary experiences. This is likely true, but does not address the fact that the challenges for people of color often fall outside of equal opportunity. The most complicated obstacle to overcome is that of institutionalized racism which is based on inequities of power and privilege. Equal opportunities do not eradicate stereotypes or stigmatization and does nothing to remove the barriers of entitlement and privilege.

These collective racial practices of White privilege and entitlement versus stereotyping and stigmatizing result in such negative consequences as eroded agency and loss of positionality. These results often impact values and attitudes, behavior, educational aspirations, and the development of a college-bound mentality. As an African American educator for more than twenty years, I have had the misfortune of witnessing the manifestations of these results in both African American and Hispanic students who have internalized the external and have no sense of entitlement to success.

This study has illustrated the salience of race and racism in education. Although the interviewees shared their experiences both outside of and within the school context, their stories show the insidious nature of racism and how it manifests in new and mutated forms within their educational contexts. More importantly, these counter-stories suggest ways that race and racism affect them as targeted identities navigating through a Hispanic dominated culture. Their counter-narratives, as part of a CRT framework, simultaneously illustrate some of the subtleties of race and racism while pointing to some of the practices and

policies that support them. For example, Beverly, Shemar, Annie, and Dorothy reported multiple experiences in which students were removed from their classrooms based on parental requests. The requests, often explained in vague terms such as “student did not feel comfortable” or “student felt afraid”, were granted by the administrators. Practices such as these, which might be explained in terms of “*cultural othering*”, need to be revealed, counteracted, and resisted in order to end the continuance of such racially motivated actions.

CRT, and specifically counter-storytelling is a powerful tool for the critical examination of race and how it is deployed in educational settings. It is essential in the fight against “color-blind” racism that supports the subtle, invisible forms such as “silenced dialogue” and otherness. While color-blind racism preserves the permanence of racism, CRT works towards social justice and social change. Counter-narratives, such as those illustrated in this study, are essential if, as educational researchers, we wish to counter the mainstream discourse in order to uncover the issues of race and racism, and give voice to educators such as Beverly, Shemar, Clyde, Leah, and the hundreds of thousands of other African American educators navigating through their racialized environments in U.S. society.

Researcher's Final Comment

"I am overwhelmed by the grace and persistence of my people." – Maya Angelou, 1992

Historically, Black Americans have demonstrated immeasurable amounts of strength and courage to overcome extreme racism and discrimination. The participants in this study are no different. They have shared their methods of responding to and handling some forms of contemporary racism at yet undetermined expense to their own well-being. They have diverted their eroded sense of agency towards their students and have found ways to be successful teachers. One of the most interesting findings related to education is the collective attributes of these teachers such as their ability to relate to the individual needs of their students while providing balance between structure and nurture, key factors for student success. Their stories have reminded me that the "struggle" starts from within. My sincere "Thank You" to all of them.

"Even so is the hope that sang in the songs of my fathers well sung. If somewhere in this whirl and chaos of things there dwells Eternal Good, pitiful yet masterful, then anon in His good time America shall rend the veil and the prisoned shall go free". – W.E. Burghardt Du Bois, 1903.

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April 19, 2007

Dear Borderville Educator Addressed,

I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Texas at El Paso. I am conducting a study which will examine the racially relevant stories of African-American teachers and administrators in education settings. It will explore the relationship of ideology, culture, and status (as a minority). It will look at beliefs and values about the teaching and learning processes and determine if any of those (beliefs and/or values) are functions of real or perceived racial discrimination. It will also look at reactions, response, management, and eventual consequences of real or perceived race-related experiences.

You are being invited to participate in this study. As a faculty, administrator, or staff member, your honest and candid perceptions regarding identity formation, beliefs about racial diversity, and convergence of beliefs with professional selves will help us to build an understanding of the actions and interactions of individuals and the aggregate in education settings. The results of the study will be useful in framing a theoretical concept of the ways that self-identities are aligned with pedagogical and professional decisions and actions.

If you agree to complete the survey, you can indicate your willingness to continue your participation at the next level which will consist of face-to-face interviews. You are under no obligation to participate in this study, but if you decide to participate, your rights and confidentiality will be well-protected. At no time will you, your colleagues, school, or district be identified by name. The surveys are anonymous and in no way will we be able to determine who answered what to any specific question. As soon as your survey is returned, your responses will be coded onto an answer sheet. Your rights are outlined in the enclosed Informed Consent document. Please read it carefully.

I hope that you will decide to participate in this study. If you have any questions, you can call me at xxx-xxx.

Sincerely,

Bonnie McKinley

IRB protocol # xxxx

Informed Consent (Survey)

“Inequities of Power and Privilege: African American Educators’ Anti-Hegemonic Counter-Narratives: A grounded Theory Study”

I, Employee, addressed, agree to complete the enclosed survey under the direction of Bonnie McKinley, a doctoral candidate at the University of Texas at El Paso

I understand that the purpose of this study is to explore identity formation, beliefs about racial diversity, and convergence of beliefs with one’s professional self. I also understand that in order for the investigator to examine the topic, I will be asked to answer demographic questions.

I understand that my participation is completely voluntary and that there are no consequences if I decide not to participate. I understand that there are no known physical risks involved in my participation in this study. I understand that by answering the survey questions, I may experience stress that can accompany the surfacing of hurtful and or fearful experiences from either my childhood or my professional life. I understand that I may ask the researcher questions about the survey.

I understand that the completion time for this questionnaire will be less than 60 minutes. When completed, I will place it in the addressed and stamped envelope included with the survey, and return by U.S. mail. If the envelope becomes misplaced, I will return to:

Bonnie McKinley
P.O. Box xxxxx
El Paso, Texas xxxxx

I understand that every effort will be made to keep my data confidential. My responses will be identified only by a code and never by my name. I understand that my responses and information will never be shared with or given to supervisors or colleagues. I understand that the results will be described and analyzed in the aggregate, not at the individual level. Pseudonyms will be used to describe school districts, schools, and individuals.

If I need to talk to someone about my experience of participating in this study, then I understand that I can call the Counseling Center at (xxx) xxx-xxx. I understand that if I desire, I may contact the researcher, Bonnie McKinley, at (xxx) xxx-xxx.

This project, (IRB protocol # xxxx), has been reviewed and approved by the University of Texas at El Paso Institutional Review Board. Any questions regarding this research or my rights as a participant may be directed to the, IRB Administrator at (xxx) xxx-xxxx.

This project has also been approved by the Borderville, Zuni, and Alamo Districts.

My completion of the attached survey will signify my consent to participate in this study after having read and understood the information presented above. I will keep this copy of the consent information for my records.

Researcher's signature

_____Date_____

Informed Consent (Interview)

“Inequities of Power and Privilege: African American educators’ Anti-Hegemonic Counter Narratives”

I, _____, agree to participate in a study under the direction of Bonnie McKinley, a doctoral student at the University of Texas at El Paso. I understand that I will participate in a taped semi structured interview with a set of guiding questions, but with an open-ended style which will remain responsive to the lead of the interviewee. I understand that the taped interview will take approximately 60 minutes. I understand that the investigator may request my participation in an Exit Interview which will give me an opportunity to agree or disagree with the investigator’s constructed themes based in part on my responses.

I understand that the purpose of this study is to examine the racially relevant stories of African-American educators in education settings. It will explore the relationship of ideology, culture, and status (as a minority). It will look at beliefs and values about the teaching and learning process and determine if any of those (beliefs and/or values) are functions of (real or perceived) racial discrimination. It will also look at reactions, response, management, and eventual consequences of real or perceived institutionalized racism.

I understand that my participation is completely voluntary and that there are no consequences if I decide not to participate. I am free to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting my relationship with the investigator or with the institution. I understand that there are no known physical risks involved in my participation in this study. I understand that the topic of racism is sensitive and emotionally laden. I further understand that by participating in this interview, I may experience stress that can accompany such an emotionally laden subject. I understand that I may ask the investigator questions about the research at any time.

Information gathered from this study will be used to formulate theoretical interpretations grounded in the reality of what is really happening. Theoretical formulations can provide a framework for action. Moreover, this information will help to give voice to those whose experiences have been overlooked or invalidated through silence.

I understand that every effort will be made to keep my data confidential. I understand that the tapes will be for the explicit use of this research project and will not be accessible to anyone other than the investigator. The tapes will only be used for transcription purposes and will not be released to employers or the

media. They will not be used at conferences or any other venue. The tapes will remain in a locked cabinet in the investigator's home office for up to one year or the successful defense of the investigator's dissertation at which time they will be completely destroyed. My responses will be identified only by a code and never by my name. I understand that my responses and information will never be shared with or given to supervisors or colleagues. I understand that the results will be described and analyzed in the aggregate, not at the individual level. Pseudonyms will be used to describe school districts, schools, and individuals.

If I need to talk to someone about my experience of participating in this study, then I understand that I can call the Counseling Center at (xxx) xxx-xxx. I understand that if I desire I may contact the Principal Investigator, Bonnie McKinley, at (xxx) xxx-xxx.

This project, (IRB protocol # xxxx), has been reviewed by the University of Texas at El Paso Institutional Review Board. Any questions regarding this research or your rights as a participant may be directed to the IRB Administrator, (xxx) xxx-xxx.

I understand that I will receive a copy of this consent form. I have read and understood the above.

Participant's Signature

Date_____

Principal Investigator's signature

Date_____

Interview Questions

Interviews will be semistructured with a set of guiding questions, but with an open-ended style which will remain responsive to the lead of the interviewee.

In all cases, the lead question will be:

1. What do you think about the distribution of power and privilege between African-Americans and non-minority whites in U.S. society?

After a natural progression from the lead question, the interview will continue using the following questions:

2. Talk to me about power and privilege in education settings.
3. What do you think about the distribution of power and privilege between African-Americans and non-Hispanic whites in education settings?
4. Talk to me about the effects of equitable and inequitable distribution of power and privilege in education settings.
5. .How has your Critical Race Awareness been influenced by being an African-American in a Hispanic-majority environment?
6. What do you think about the link(s) between power, privilege, pedagogy, and professionalism?

CURRICULUM VITA

Bonnie McKinley was born in Chicago, Illinois. The only daughter of Oliver and Ruth Blidgen, she graduated from Emil G. Hirsch High School and earned her Bachelor of Science in Education from Chicago State University. She received her Master of Science degree in Education from Northern Illinois University in DeKalb Illinois. She completed the requirements for both the E.S.L. Endorsement and the Mid-Management Certificate from the University of Texas at El Paso. In 2001, she became a member of Cohort 6 of the Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership at the University of Texas at El Paso and was the recipient of the Cotton Memorial Scholarship for Academic Excellence. While pursuing her degree, she worked full time as an instructional facilitator for Staff Development in the El Paso Independent School District. In addition to pursuing her degree and working full time, she was nominated for and accepted into the National Staff Development Council Academy. She is a member of the American Educational Research Association, and attends Annual Meetings, belongs to the *Social Context of Education* Division and is a member of the *Critical Examination of Race, Ethnicity, Class and Gender in Education, Qualitative Research, and Sociology of Education* Special Interest Groups (SIGS).