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Karen C. Nelson  
Deconstructing White  
Privilege: Social  
Variables that may  
Affect White Males'  
Racial Identity  
Development

## ABSTRACT

This mixed method study explored aspects of White privilege that may affect White males' White racial identity development (WRID). Janet Helm's White Racial Identity Attitudes Scale was used along with nominal demographic information and five open-ended questions. WRID has been identified as an aspect of identity that determines one's ability to dismantle racism and internalize a positive White identity. This researcher did not hypothesize that specific demographic data would yield specific results; however, the literature implies that those with the multi agent status are less likely to develop a sophisticated White racial identity.

Fifty-four White adult males were surveyed to identify if socioeconomic status (SES), public versus private high school, or attending high school in rural, urban, or suburban environments has an influence on their WRID. Survey participants were recruited through the internet and connected to Survey Monkey.com.

The data yielded results with the majority of participants in the last stages of WRID. The scores of those with lower SES tend to correspond to higher levels of WRID. Study findings indicate that multi agent status may not have a negative influence on the ability to achieve sophisticated levels of WRID, but less privileged White men have better opportunities to do so. The implications of study findings for the helping

professions and social work curriculum in the area of addressing race and racism are discussed.

DECONSTRUCTING WHITE PRIVILEGE: SOCIAL VARIABLES THAT MAY  
AFFECT WHITE MALES' RACIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

A project based upon an independent investigation,  
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Social Work.

Karen C. Nelson

Smith College School for Social Work  
Northampton, Massachusetts 01063

2008

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

As Social Workers, we work on an intimate level with very diverse populations. Accordingly, Social Work education places a great deal of emphasis on the implications of “White privilege” and on what it means to be a person of color in our society, where being White is the norm. The National Association of Social Workers’ Code of Ethics states that promoting social justice is central to the value base of the profession. The National Association of Black Social Workers promotes a similar set of values among members who “will consciously use [their] skills, and [their] whole being as an instrument for social change, with particular attention directed to the establishment of Black social institutions” (<http://www.nabsw.org/mserver/CodeofEthics.aspx>, referenced 12/15/2007).

It is clear that having an understanding of the impact of race on one’s experience is imperative for a helping profession; however, as “being the norm” implies, there has been little emphasis in the literature on what exactly “White privilege” means. If it is necessary to recognize White privilege in order to dismantle racism, then we need to be very clear, as clinicians, how we can best address this issue in our work with White clients, specifically those with multiple agent status.

Racial identity theory was developed in the 1970’s and, not surprisingly since being White is considered the norm (Tatum, 1997, Dyer, 2005), it focused on racial

identity development for African and Asian Americans, not Whites (Baluch & Reynolds, 2001). Baluch and Reynolds (2001) explain how these early developments of racial identity focused on how African and Asian Americans “made sense of themselves as racial beings” (p. 153). Since then, stages of White racial identity development (WRID) have been identified and studied, most notably, the six stages defined by Janet E. Helms (1990). These six stages have been identified as: Contact, Disintegration, Reintegration, Pseudo-Independence, Immersion-Emersion, and Autonomy. The process of developing racial identity is quite different for Whites than for Blacks because of the different positions these populations occupy in American society (Tatum, 1997). “For whites there are two major developmental tasks in this process, the abandonment of individual racism and the recognition and opposition to institutional and cultural racism” (Tatum 1994, p.462).

The stages of racial identity development provide a way to measure and understand an individual’s understanding and acceptance of their place in society. For Whites this includes their acknowledgement and acceptance of their White privilege. Thus, in consideration of WRID, the recognition of White privilege is an integral part of this development that happens toward the end stages of development. While there are six stages to Helms’ WRID, it is not a given that these stages are completed by every White American individual. On the contrary, it is those with undeveloped White racial identity who play a fundamental part in maintaining racism in the United States since it is not until the end stages of Helms’ proposed development that one is able to internalize a new

understanding of what it means to be White; thus, is able to dismantle racism (Helms, 1990).

All aspects of identity that embody privilege can be considered within a similar framework, like being male for example. In McIntosh's article *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack*, (1989) she posits that while men may be aware of women's disadvantages and may say that they are willing to work to equal the playing field, they are not willing to give up their own privileges that keep these disadvantages in place. In the same regard, Whites do not want to give up their privileges either (Wise, 2005). Even for those Whites in low socioeconomic status (SES) whose White privilege provides them little reward, it is the absence of the negative consequences of being a person of color, which leaves one unwilling to give up privilege for what they may inherit as a consequence (Buck, 2001). Further, Whites who are aware of non-Whites' disadvantages are often unable to see that they are privileged as a result of these disadvantages (McIntosh, 1989); thus, they are not able to give up privileges they cannot see.

Each aspect of identity has an agent and a target identity; target identities are those identities that hold less power in society. For example, the target identity in gender is female; in race it is people of color, but more specifically in America it is African Americans; with age the target identities are those who are not in early to middle adulthood; in sexual orientation the target identity is those who are not heterosexual; and with SES it is lower SES. Those who embody aspects of target identities are more cognizant of these aspects because they experience a cognitive dissonance as a result of

unequal treatment and the experience of less value being placed on these aspects of their identity. The male gender, those in upper SES, and the White race are considered “agent status”, which is defined by Hardiman and Jackson as: “Aspect[s] of identity groups that corresponds with unearned privilege”; and, all positions of agent status are difficult for one to recognize as being a part of because agent status are all internalized as being the norm (Miller & Garren, 2008, p.120). These agent identities are internalized as superiority although not necessarily on a conscious level. Considering the nature of agent identities with regard to one’s ability to be cognizant of them and therefore question them, one may assume then that White men in upper SES may be the least likely to be aware of the privilege they hold in society, this is compounded when the individual has not had much contact with others who hold target identities; the likelihood that they might recognize their situations as being granted to them in part because of their agent status can be assumed to be low since it is said that the privilege is difficult to even recognize.

Branscombe, Schiffhauer, and Schmitt (2007) state that often Whites, of both genders and all SES, respond to education regarding racial inequality, from which they benefit, with increased modern/passive racism. They define modern racism as: “a denial that the existing racial inequality is due to discrimination and an assessment that Blacks are making illegitimate demands for change” (p. 204). This is in line with Helms’ reintegration stage of WRID, the third stage of the six, which is explained as a means to defend against what is too shameful to acknowledge (Helms, 1990). Considering this phenomenon, we are left to wonder if agent status, in both gender and SES has a positive

relationship with beginning stages of WRID. Given the nature of White privilege and agent status, it might be assumed that those with agent status, such as White men with higher SES, are less likely to have gained a sophisticated understanding of racial identity, and that a negative relationship exists between White men who have experienced additional social privileges, and more sophisticated levels of WRID.

Despite the profession's emphasis on addressing and challenging social injustice, this researcher has not come across social work literature that directly addresses the influence of demographic and social variables that may influence White racial identity development. This study asks the question: Given uneven development of WRID among White American males, what are the social variables that may influence this development? Are there current social variables, such as class status, and access to private education, for example, that have an influence on the development of White males' racial identity? What are the social variables that might be associated with incomplete development in individuals who have been unable to navigate their way through these stages? In particular, this study aims to look into region, SES, and education in greater depth. These social variables are interesting because the privileges counterparts of these may prevent one from having exposure to diversity, or to experiences different from their own culture and race. In other words, the individual who maintains these agent statuses may not have had the opportunity to experience a cognitive dissonance necessary to challenge their White privilege and move through the stages of WRID and reach a sophisticated level which is understood as being necessary to dismantle racism.

The implications for gaining a broader understanding concerning racial identity development in White males for the profession include increased levels of understanding in numerous areas relevant to practice and policy. First, a broadened understanding on the part of clinicians regarding the etiology of White privilege and its intersection with agent status may serve both White and African American clients in clinical settings. Clinicians' ability to incorporate individuals' racial identity development into their practice in a range of settings is further supported through such broadened understanding of this construct. Further knowledge about WRID may permit Social Workers to better serve their clients in relation to *their* racial identity development and how others' racial identity development affects their lives (Baluch & Reynolds, 2001). Additionally, clinician increased understanding and application of new knowledge in this area in their work with clients directly supports and furthers the cause for social justice by enhancing efforts to help clients move along their own understandings of themselves in relation to others, and to advocate on behalf of oppressed populations.

Although this study represents a beginning investigation of the phenomenon of racism and White privilege as it pertains specifically to White adult males and their racial identity, it is hoped that the findings will point to areas for further study and greater recognition of the relevance of these issues to professional practice.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature review will begin with a discussion of the historical roots of the social construction of race. The social construction of race is a relevant phenomenon to look at for the purpose of this research because it gives us insight into how the motivation behind the construction of race still affect race relations today and plays an integral part in of the development of a White racial identity. This will lead us to a discussion of the concept of White privilege and the relationship of both constructs to class status and the maintenance of class distinctions. Class and agent status will be explored and discussed for the purpose of gaining a deeper insight into both the social construction of race and White privilege, as well as for the purpose of dissecting aspects of social status which contribute and perpetuate racism and keep one from developing a sophisticated understanding of the sociopolitical implications of being White. This researcher will also define and address three models of White racial identity development including the model that is used for this study as proposed by Helms. Empirical literature about Helms' White Racial Identity Attitudes Scale (WRIAS) will be reviewed. Issues regarding public versus private schooling, socioeconomic status, and rural versus urban versus suburban differences with regard to issues and perspectives on race will also be discussed.



### *The social construction of race*

The social construction of race means exactly what it implies, that race is a social product. It means that there is no biological/real difference between races, and that the idea that there is a difference between people dependent on their skin color is a social product used to keep those without power from rebelling and those who have power able to keep it (Wander, Martin, & Nakayama, 2005).

The social construction of race is a complex theory that is far from one-dimensional or one that can be understood in terms of one aspect of social life. Race and racism are all encompassing social products that are held in place and perpetuated by many different aspects of our society: "...laws, court cases, formal racial ideology, social conventions, and popular culture in the form of slang, songs, films, cartoons, ethnic jokes, and popular theater" all worked, and still work, to perpetuate the social construction of race and racism (Barrett & Roediger, 2005, p. 36). Lopez gives a good description of this complexity by referring to the legal aspect, which can be used to understand other aspects of what perpetuates racism, when he states:

...the legal construction of race pushes in many different directions on a multitude of levels, sometimes along mutually reinforcing lines but more often along divergent vectors, occasionally entrenching existing notions of race but also at other times or even simultaneously fabricating new conceptions of racial difference. (2006, p. 81)

As a means to keep the races separate, almost all of the individual United States made laws about what constituted an individual as non-White. The focus of these efforts was on what made one non-White, not on what made one White- i.e., the focus was on *other*. These were the antimiscegenation laws, laws that legally

excluded individuals from being considered White depending upon what percentage of “Negro blood” defined them as such. This law was not “struck down by the Supreme Court [until] 1967” (Lopez, 2006, p. 82). These laws “sought to maintain social dominance among specifically racial lines, and at the same time, sought to maintain racial lines through social domination” (Lopez, 2006, p.82). Legal definitions had to be established regarding race in order to regulate and criminalize behavior in racial terms. Legally managing the interracial marriage and, therefore, interracial children, worked to insure “the continuation of the ‘pure’ physical types on which notions of race are based in the United States” (Lopez, 2006, p. 82). Theories were developed which helped to justify unequal treatment of Blacks. According to author Feagin (2000), Charles Darwin also applied his ideas of natural selection to African Americans. Darwin’s writings put forth the idea that African Americans were “between whites and gorillas, and spoke against social programs for the ‘weak’ because they permitted the least desirable people to survive” (Feagin, 2000, p. 85). There were also many federal court cases that were held between the years of 1878 and 1923 that legally decided what people were *not* White and therefore, not deserving of certain rights (Wander, Martin, & Nakayama, 2005, Feagin, 2000). Therefore, those who were considered non-White had fewer privileges available to them in the realms of occupation, marriage and place of residence. The purpose of the social construction of race was to establish and maintain the power held by the White elite (Buck, 2001). It was about separating landless Europeans and Africans, who

greatly outnumbered the White landowners, from rebelling against them by punishing them for relating with one another and simultaneously creating meaning about the color of skin in order to justify unequal treatment. “Given the tendency of slaves, servants, and landless free Europeans to cooperate in rebellion, the elite had to ‘teach whites the value of whiteness’ in order to divide and rule their labor force” (Buck, 2001).

The notion of White privilege is both premised on and maintains the stability of the construction of race, in that it makes almost impossible the undoing of our beliefs about race. Unraveling the historical context of these social constructs helps to illuminate the barriers that may exist for individuals to reaching the end stages of racial development or simply to moving past the beginning stage(s).

Social aspects of the social construction of race make it challenging for those on the privileged side of race to be able to acknowledge and understand their position in society and the affect it has on others. It is important that, along with a detailed description of what is meant by “the social construction of race”, a brief history of the context in which the social construction of race took place be given so that the reader may be able to see how the motivation behind it is still a powerful force, which still keeps it in place. It is these same invisible aspects of society that an individual has to come to recognize in order to reach end stages of WRID. The social factors that propelled the social construction of race are the same aspects of society that make WRID such a complicated process today. Following is a description of how and why this complicated phenomenon took place.

The social construction of race began after Bacon's Rebellion in 1676. Bacon's Rebellion was a revolt of indentured Africans; indentured and landless Europeans; and European laborers "against class oppression in the colonies" (Feagin, 2000, p. 30). Before this time in American history, Africans and indentured European servants socially maintained the same status, they saw each other as equals, and did not place any value on skin color, rather they saw their commonality in their struggle to survive and their anger over being oppressed. They worked together, "made love with each other, married each other, ran away with each other, lived as neighbors, [and] liked or disliked each other according to individual personality" (Buck, 2001, p. 31). Because there were many more indentured servants and laborers than there were land owners and those who were in power, a revolt against those that did have power was a tremendous threat to those who had wealth to be able to maintain it. In fact, as early as 1663, White servants and black slaves conspired and rebelled together, there were many revolts in the South and the Northeastern parts of America involving these groups together, and that was a great fear for those very few who owned the land, the wealth, and the power over these individuals (Zinn, 2003).

These oppressed people working together were an enormous threat to maintaining class distinctions the way they were. In fact, the last group of rebellions to surrender in Bacon's Rebellion was a group of eighty Black slaves and twenty English servants (Zinn, 2003). Something had to be done in order to split apart the lower class so they wouldn't have as much power to threaten those in power. It is easy to tell people apart by skin color; so, laws were developed that attempted to make it appear that people of color were

less than Whites and these same laws made it clear that White people were superior. This divided the lower class as a means of protecting the wealth and power of those who had it.

After Bacon's Rebellion, laws were passed that made it illegal to vote or bear arms if you were a person of color (Takaki, 1993), and for Whites and people of African descent to live together in any capacity other than as slave and owner. White men who had fathered children with African women had no legal responsibility to their children—they could not pass on any wealth to their bi-racial children (Fredrick, 1845, Buck, 2001). Interestingly, if these White fathers, who were usually wealthy slaveholding plantation owners, were to have divided their estates equally among *all* of their children, it “would have created a significant wealthy black segment of the population” (Buck, 2001, p.32). Additionally, White women's children whose fathers were African were considered Black and were thus born into a lifetime of slavery and separated from their mothers (Takaki, 1993). The social construction of race paved the way for the passage of laws that placed meaning on what it means to be White and what it means to be Black (Allen, 1994), and the lifelong enslavement of Africans who had been indentured servants, and whose children, and whose children's children would also be slaves for life.

Whites were similarly punished for associating themselves with Africans. They were beaten, enslaved, imprisoned, or murdered for befriending, trying to help, teach, or for running away with them. The terror that created and maintained the separation of the races which once were harmonious is best described by Lerone Bennett in his book,

*Shaping of Black America: The Struggles and Triumphs of African-Americans, 1619-1990s:*

The whole system of separating and subordination rested on official state terror. The exigencies of the situation required men to kill some white people to keep them white and to kill many blacks to keep them black. In the North and South, men and women were maimed, tortured, and murdered in a comprehensive campaign of mass conditioning. The severed heads of black and white rebels were impaled on poles along the road as warnings to black people and white people, and opponents of the status quo were starved to death in chains and roasted slowly over open fires. Some rebels were branded; others were castrated. This exemplary cruelty, which was carried out as a deliberate process of mass education, was an inherent part of the new system. (1975, p.73-74)

#### *White Privilege*

In an attempt to maintain the construction of race positive attributes were placed on what it meant to have White skin simply by the rights that were afforded to landless Whites and White servants. Landless Europeans inherited the privilege of *not* enduring the same abuse (such as being whipped) they once had, as well as the privilege of internalizing the belief that they were, in fact, biologically superior. “White settlers institutionalized a possessive investment in whiteness by making blackness synonymous with slavery and whiteness synonymous with freedom” (Lipsitz, 2005, p.69). Being White meant you had privileges that others did not: they could have jobs that were illegal for non-Whites to have, even if the non-White was more qualified; they could get married; they could live where they wanted; they could own land; they could obtain an education; and they were free from the rights of others to beat them for not obeying (Lopez, 2006). Whites were allowed to bear arms, to protect themselves, White indentured servants were given freedom after their indenture, Whites were given jobs to oversee Black slaves, they had a monopoly on skilled jobs, they were allowed to marry

and to have families, and they were given the legal right to beat any Black individual if they were considered disrespectful (Buck, 2001). This has been come to be understood as the creation of “White privilege”, a concept that’s come into use more recently through critical analysis (Buck, 2001, Feagin, 2000, Garren and Miller, 2008).

Based on the work of Buck (2001), the idea that Whites are superior to Blacks served to support a system whereby Whites with money could maintain their wealth.

Because of these rights that were only afforded to Whites:

[t]hey were led to act on the belief that all Whites had an equal interest in the maintenance of whiteness and white privilege, and that it was the elite- those controlling the economic system, the political system, and the judicial system- who ultimately protected the benefits of being white. (Buck, 2001, p.33)

This took the form of “the extension to propertyless whites of certain privileges and benefits of whiteness, as well as an extensive ideology rationalizing white superiority... [and] was coupled with accenting racial solidarity across all white economic classes” (Feagin, 2000, p. 30). Zinn (2003) quotes Edmund Morgan’s explanation of these privileges as:

Once the small planter felt less exploited by taxation and begun to prosper a little, he became less turbulent, less dangerous, more respectable. He could begin to see his big neighbor not as an extortionist but as a powerful protector of their common interests. (p.38)

Tim Wise, in his book, *White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son* (2005), makes a statement explaining the American experience of being White:

... whether one is from the South, as I am, or from the North, West, or Midwest; whether one is rich or poor; whether one is male or female; whether one is Jew or Gentile, straight or gay, is to have certain common experiences based solely upon race: experiences that are about advantage, privilege, (in the relative sense, vis-a-vis people of color), and belonging. We are, unlike people of color, born to belonging, and have rarely had to prove ourselves deserving of our presence here.

At the very least we can say that our right to be here hasn't been questioned, for the most part, for a long time. (p.3)

As previously discussed, throughout the beginnings of our country, many laws were made, not about what made one White, but regarding who was *not* White. This focus determined the trend of focusing not on what it means to be White, but what it means *not* to be White. From the very beginnings of this country, in other words, Whites have been encouraged and supported in not looking at themselves in terms of racial identity, but to look to “non-Whites” to place meaning on what it means *not* to be White. Dalton explains this phenomenon when he states, “They know that they are White, of course, but mostly that translates into being not Black, not Asian-American, and not Native American. Whiteness, in and of itself, has little meaning” (2005, p.15). He goes on to offer an example that, “Chicanos, Salvadorans, Puerto Ricans, and Cuban-Americans readily distinguish among one another even though their Anglo neighbors can't (or don't bother trying to) tell them apart. West Indians and U.S.-born African-Americans are as distinct from one another as steel drums are from saxophones” (2005, p. 16). In other words, part of the privilege of being White is the “benefit of... not having to think about race at all” (Nilson, 2006, p. 26).

White people are not subjected to the idea of “race”; Whites are “just normal”, “just human”, Whites are the “human norm” (Dyer, 2005, Tatum, 1997, p.93). Part of White privilege is the idea that being White is the norm (Rothenberg, 2001, 2005, Tatum, 1997). According to Wise (2005), Tatum (1997), Dyer (2005), and McIntosh (1989), those with privilege, Whites, are considered the norm, often Whites are unaware of their privilege and therefore unaware of their part in maintaining racism because the treatment



they receive is simply “the norm”. There is nothing special about it, in fact, it is the Blacks who have the problem, not the Whites; after all, they are just normal (Tatum, 1997).

If being White is considered the norm, then a main component of White privilege is the “benefit of... not having to think about race at all” (Nilson, 2006, p. 26). Since it has been stated that being White is considered the norm, Whites would not consider that their accomplishments; privileges and opportunities, have anything to do with the color of their skin or the inherent privilege of it. Feagin and Vera (1995) raise the question: How could one recognize the privilege in something they don’t consider in the first place? Wise (2005) states that what follows from Whites’ lack of awareness of their privilege is the ability to surmise that all of the things they and their parents have accomplished throughout their lives has been a consequence of their hard work and has nothing to do with the color of their skin. Believing that everything earned is solely a consequence of hard work maintains the idea that we live in a democratic society that provides all of its citizens with equal opportunity and saves the White individual of any responsibility in the equation of racism (Miller & Garren, 2008). According to Feagin (2000), freedom from having to consider White privilege as being an integral part of one’s success was part of the purpose of the social construction of race and the creation of White privilege in the first place. Dalton (2005), Miller & Garren (2008), McIntosh (1989), and Tatum (1997), have all acknowledged the freedom from having to consider one’s self as part of a group as opposed to solely as an individual is a major part of why it is a privilege to be White. The opposite side of this is consistently looking at people of

color solely as part of a group as opposed to as individuals; therefore, considering their behavior as being a result of their group membership not as a consequence of their individuality. According to the above authors, this is a form of passive racism.

Shortly after Bacon's Rebellion, in 1705, as a means to separate the European servants and the African slaves who had been revolting together, newly freed White, male servants were given ten bushels of corn, thirty shillings, a gun, and 50 acres of land (female newly freed servants were given more corn and shillings, but no gun), while Black servants were never freed and given nothing (Zinn, 2003). This trend continued as late as 1948, the Federal Housing Administration "openly insisted on racially homogeneous neighborhoods, and their loans were made only to white neighborhoods... with the Federal government behind them, virtually all developers refused to sell to African Americans" (Brodkin, 2002, p. 47). Clearly, it is a privilege to have had the opportunity to generate wealth through property ownership, which accrues over the span of generations when others were not allowed. The dissemination of this opportunity has obvious implications for accruing wealth and maintaining class distinctions within color lines. This is a perpetuation of the purpose for the social construction of race- it keeps it in place, maintains White privilege, and perpetuates the ignorance that is necessary to keep the American dream alive.

As a consequence of normality being placed on what it is to be White and the creation of White privilege, African Americans "have been at an extreme economic, political, and social disadvantage compared to [Whites]... their lives have been shortened, their opportunities severely limited, their inherited resources all but

nonexistent, and their families pressured by generations of well-organized racial oppression” (Feagin, 2000, p.23). According to the 2000 census, African Americans earned 71.6 percent of what Whites earned on average, and “college educated African American men earned 78 percent of what white men earned” (Malveaux, 2001, p. 291). These things are not recognized as privilege by Whites because Whites are given these rights freely, and take them for granted because these freedoms fall under the ideology that our country is a “land of opportunity” which is the perpetuated ideology of America to White Americans. Research has shown that “[a] substantial majority of whites have a sense of personal and/or family well-being and do not seem to care, or are unaware, that this level of confidence is not available to many other Americans”, non-White Americans are “not as confident about the future” (Feagin, 2000, p.176).

Considering the implications of the social construction of race and of White privilege, there is no cognitive dissonance between what Whites are told regarding opportunity and privilege in America and what they experience. There being no cognitive dissonance since opportunity is in line with the ideology of being an American, one begins to understand why it might be difficult as a White, male, American individual to be able to recognize, first of all, the social implications of being White, and second of all, to be interested in giving up the privileges inherent in it. This researcher has been curious about what specific variables then might account for a White, male American to experience cognitive dissonance and have the opportunity to develop a more sophisticated White racial identity. This researcher is taking into consideration class status; whether an individual grew up in a suburban, rural, or urban environment; and

whether the individual went to public or private school. The reasoning for choosing these variables is explained below.

### *Class Status*

Class is an important aspect to consider when discussing the perpetuation of race, racism, racist ideologies, and White privilege for a number of different reasons. First, maintaining class distinctions was the impetus for the construction of race in the first place and continues to have a huge impact on the perpetuation of race and racism. “Historically, when white workers have sought to organize, white capitalists have sometimes used various workers of color- already hated by most white workers- to break up that organization, thus furthering the racist views of white workers” (Feagin, 2000, p 31). The exploitation of workers of color by those in control of the means of production, replicates historical patterns of pitting Whites against African Americans, described above in the discussion of the origins of the social construction of race.

Class is one category within the seven categories of “otherness” if with that category you are not in the upper SES (Miller & Garren, 2008). People are *most* aware of those aspects of their identity that fall under what is considered, “other”. These aspects of identity are also be referred to as target identities while the non-other identities are considered agent identities (Miller & Garren, 2008). Being White, an agent identity, has enabled those with this identity to have greater opportunities to help out their children financially and to have accrued wealth over generations through property, better educations, and more opportunities (Nilson, 2006). It’s difficult for people to recognize that their assets are not solely the outcome of their hard work and determination; that they

have because they received opportunity and resources. Additionally, it is unlikely that individuals are able to recognize that the home their grandparents bought, which their parents inherited and received a sufficient profit from was a consequence of Federal sanctions that did not allow African Americans to receive loans or move into White neighborhoods (Lipsitz, 2005).

The beginning of the trend of restrictive housing and its influence on predominately White suburban neighborhoods can be recognized as beginning as early as 1705 when the newly freed White indentured servants were given 50 acres of land upon their freedom since Virginia's upper and ruling class proclaimed that White men were superior to Black (Zinn, 2003). This continued until as recently as 1948 when federal funding was restricted for building homes for the purpose of rentals, so homes for sale began to be built (Brodkin, 2002). While it had been made illegal to by the Supreme Court in 1948 to discriminate when it came to housing, "the FHA continued to encourage builders to write [restrictive covenants] against African Americans. FHA underwriting manuals openly insisted on racially homogenous neighborhoods, and their loans were made only in white neighborhoods... With the federal government behind them, virtually all developers refused to sell to African Americans," (Brodkin, 2002, p.47). Brodkin goes on to explain that at the same time, urban renewal pushed Whites into the suburbs where African Americans were not allowed to move. This was due to what was called "redlining" in which the FHA, which was "created by and for banks and the housing industry... warned banks not to lend there... [which created] a self-fulfilling prophesy"

(Brodkin, 2002, p.49). These urban, predominately Black neighborhoods were “bad places to live” with little to no opportunity to move out of them (Brodkin, 2002, p. 48).

Similarly to the suburbs, private schools tend to be mostly White. Private school instruction, in general, has also been found to be more effective than that provided in urban public schools (Hansell, 1983). Hansell explains that, “private secondary schools maintained better discipline and provided better cognitive outcomes... had higher levels of self esteem and perceived fate-control than public school students” (1983, p. 163). Hansell reports that African American students in a private school located in an affluent Midwestern city, made up a mere 12 percent of the population and traveled up to two whole hours a day (1983, p. 165). At the time of Hansell’s 1983 study, the older participants of *this* study (those between the ages of 35 and 40) would have been in high school and junior high school; it is likely that these participants – had they attended private school – may have experienced a situation similar to that described by Hansell, in terms of the demographic makeup of their schools.

#### *White Racial Identity Development*

Racial identity development is a way to conceptualize how we come to understand ourselves in terms of race in relation to others within the larger society, within our respective culture, and in relation to our own complex, multifaceted individual identities. Simply stated, it is the process by which we come to acknowledge what it means to us personally and socially to be conceptualized as being a part of whatever race we are recognized as by society.

One of the earliest attempts at developing a model of the different stages of White racial identity development was made by Rita Hardiman in 1982. Hardiman's (1982) model consists of the following five stages in which the stages: Naivete, Acceptance, Resistance, Redefinition, and Internalization. In the first stage, Naivete, an individual likely holds negative attitudes and racial biases about people of other races, but has little awareness of race or racism. In the Acceptance stage the individual believes that everyone has equal opportunity and that if someone is not successful, this is solely a negative reflection on the individual and/or their race. In the third stage, Resistance, the individual has come into contact with an event or a person of color that would challenge their previously held beliefs. An individual in this stage may feel angry or hurt, they may want to distance themselves from their own White race; although they are beginning to recognize themselves as White and their own racist beliefs and attitudes. An individual at this stage may become self-conscious about themselves when in the company of people of color. In Hardiman's (1982) fourth stage of White racial identity, Redefinition, the individual starts looking at their own racism, stereotypes, and begins to understand what it has meant for them to be White. The individual in this stage begins to see how being White has benefited him or her and how that has been to the detriment for people of color. As a consequence of these acknowledgements, the individual also starts to become more comfortable around people of color. In the last stage, Internalization, the person has been able to develop a non-racist identity and is willing to work to get rid of oppression and racism.

Another model developed to understand a White individual's racial identity

development was created by Rowe et al. (1994). The focus of this model is on one's attitudes about racial issues and people of other races. It is separated by two distinct sets of stages: unachieved and achieved white racial consciousness. The first set, the unachieved white racial consciousness, contains three "types" within it: avoidant, dependent, and dissonant. The avoidant type is one who is unaware of their race and its significance and will express neither concern nor interest in racial issues. The dependent type has attitudes about race which are, in turn, dependent upon the attitudes of those with whom he or she associates. This type of individual has not developed their own understanding of race and racism for themselves. The dissonant type is beginning to move out of the unachieved White racial identity stage because of some interaction or experience with a person or people of color that conflicts with previously held beliefs.

The dominative type is the first of four types of development in the achieved White racial consciousness set of stages of White racial identity development. While the dominative type of individual has begun to gain an understanding of race and the meaning of being White, they hold very Eurocentric views, believing that Whites are superior "because they have achieved more" (Daniels, 2001, p. 261). Daniels (2001) gives an example of a viewpoint expressed by someone in this developmental stage as, "If minorities really want to get ahead in the country, they'd stop whining about racism and get to work" (p. 261). The second type of development in the achieved stage of White racial identity development is the conflictive type. This type demonstrates an inner conflict regarding racism because while they don't support overt racism they are also not supportive of programs or politics whose purpose is to combat racism, such as affirmative



action. The third type of White racial identity development in the achieved stage, as proposed by Rowe et al. (1994), is the reactive type. An individual in this stage is aware of the suffering inflicted on people of color by Whites having privilege and are embarrassed to be White. They may over-identify with people of color and distance themselves from other White people. The fourth and last type of development in this model is the integrative type. This type of individual does not idealize nor oppress people of color; they are not embarrassed to be White, they hold and maintain a realistic view of race and racism in society, and are comfortable interacting with all people regardless of race.

Helms' (1990) White racial identity development (WRID) is the model used in his study. The model "seeks to describe [one's] psychological experience for race... and to anticipate how differing racial identity status will affect individuals' cognitions and behaviors in a variety of settings" (Gushue & Sciarra, 2003,). Helms created a six-stage model of WRID that can be understood in "two major phases, the first being the abandonment of racism... [and] the second phase [is] defining a positive White identity" (Tatum, 1994, p.462). The stages that Helms has identified occur in the context of living in the United States. These stages are not contingent upon any factors other than being a White American.

#### *Contact Stage*

The first stage of WRID, called the contact stage, is the stage in which one does not recognize the significance of their skin color. At this stage, an individual has very little awareness of race and racism. This may be a consequence of having little contact

with people of color. Individuals at this stage may describe themselves as being “just normal” or simply the majority when asked about their race. They are unaware that there is such thing as racial understanding or influence of society on racism. They are also unaware of any prejudices they may have, consider themselves to be completely without any racist ideology, and certainly are unaware of any privilege inherent in Whiteness. “If they have lived, worked, or gone to school in predominately white settings, they may simply think of themselves as like the majority around them (Tatum, 1994, p. 463). At this stage, “white people... move through the world believing that they are deracinated, that they are just people, or Americans, but with little core awareness of being white and what it means in this society” (Miller & Garren, 2008, p. 89).

### *Disintegration Stage*

In the second stage, called disintegration, individuals begin to acknowledge that, “...their lives and the lives of people of color have been affected by racism in our society. The societal inequities they now notice are in direct contradiction to the idea of an American meritocracy, a concept that has typically been an integral part of their earlier socialization” (Tatum, 1994, p. 463). Swanson and Tokar (1991) explain the complexity of the disintegration stage as:

In disintegration, the reality of racism sets in, and White individuals feel anxious, guilty, and depressed as they experience conflict between their internal moral standards about past injustices against Blacks and the fear of ostracism by their fellow Whites, which may occur if they break the White racial norms governing cross-racial interactions. (p. 296)

Tatum (1997) uses an example of the disintegration stage from one of her students:

She couldn't help noticing how her Latina friend was followed around in stores and was asked for more identification than Whites when writing checks. She also saw how her friend's Black boyfriend was frequently asked to show his college ID when he visited their residence hall, while young White men came and went without being questioned. (p. 96)

### *Reintegration Stage*

During this stage, in trying to understand and create explanations for racism, Whites put the blame on those who are discriminated against and look to them to carry the burden of change. Helms explains this stage as:

The person consciously acknowledges a White identity. In the absence of contradictory experiences, to be White in America is to believe that one is superior to people of color. Consequently, the Reintegration person accepts the belief in White racial superiority and Black inferiority. He or she comes to believe that institutional and cultural racism are the White person's due because he or she has earned such privileges and preferences. Race-related negative conditions are assumed to result from Black people's social, moral, and intellectual qualities, and thus, it is not unusual to find persons in the Reintegration stage selectively attending to and/or reinterpreting information to conform to societal stereotypes of Black people. (1990, p. 60)

This would be considered to be part of *retreat and regression* stage in agent identity, part of their social identity development stages where the individual goes "back to the familiar, retrenching former assumptions, blaming victims for one's problems" (Adams, Bell, and Griffen, (1997), as cited in Miller & Garren, 2008, p.120).

### *Pseudo-Independent Stage*

At the point at which the individual begins to redefine a positive White identity, Helms (1990) suggests that the individual has begun the second stage of WRID, the pseudo-independent stage. This is the stage where the White individual begins to question the assumption that he or she is superior to people of color and starts to see White peoples' responsibility for racism. Individuals who have reached this stage may

become curious about Black people and are trying to make sense out of new information that contradicts previous beliefs.

...though the person may seek greater interaction with Blacks, much of this interaction involves helping Blacks to change themselves so that they function more like Whites on White criteria for success and acceptability rather than recognizing that such criteria might be inappropriate. (Helms, 1990, p. 61)

In Helms' White Racial Identity Attitude Scale (WRIAS) Social Attitudes

Inventory, this stage is assessed by questions that include: "I believe that Blacks would not be different from Whites if they had been given the same opportunities" and "Blacks and Whites differ from each other in some ways, but neither race is superior". While this first example does acknowledge that Blacks have not been given the same opportunities, it does still suggest that the "White way" is the goal, and that "different" refers to African Americans, this creates "otherness".

#### *Immersion/Emersion Stage*

During the immersion/emersion stage, the individual's focus is no longer to change Black people, but to change White people as well as understand "what it means and has meant to be White in the United States as well as in the world in general" (Helms, 1990, p. 62). In this stage, the individual begins to consider changing some of their behavior because they are recognizing that the behavior may be racist. This stage is also marked by a curiosity as to how racism affects one's White identity.

#### *Autonomy Stage*

Autonomy is the last stage of White racial identity development in this model. According to Helms (1990), the individual no longer needing "to oppress, idealize, or denigrate people on the basis of group membership characteristics such as race because

race no longer symbolizes a threat to him or her” marks the autonomy stage; it is the highest level of White racial development (p. 66). The individual in this stage will also have become more aware of other forms of prejudice and will actively be trying to learn more about them and address these issues within themselves and with others.

Miller and Garren (2008) explain an individual’s acknowledgment of their race by looking at Damasio’s (2000) model of consciousness, which states that there are two components to consciousness. According to Damasio, the first component is one’s acknowledgement that he is both the “actor who is both the author and reader of any narratives that constitute consciousness and self-awareness; the second component involves an awareness of ‘objects’ outside of ourselves that impinge on us and modify and alter how we think and feel” (Miller & Garren, 2008, p. 88). This model posits that people of color are much more likely to be aware of racism than Whites because, “They are more likely to have an ongoing racial self-awareness”; and, “They are highly aware of the social world outside of them and how it can encroach upon them” (Miller & Garren, 2008, p.89). This theory supports the notion that Whites are less aware of their racial identity. For purposes of this investigation, Damasio’s theory along with the notion of agent status, supports that White men may be even less aware of their racial identity than other Whites given the multiplicity of agent status that they carry and the complexity involved in seeing oneself when socially you are considered the societal norm.

#### *Empirical Evidence*

Several studies have been conducted using Helms’ (1990) WRIAS. Jane L. Swanson and David M. Tokar (1991) conducted a study to test Helms’ (1984, 1990)

claim that later stages are associated with higher levels of self-actualization and greater personal adjustment. They used Helms' and Carter's WRIAS along with the Personal Orientation Inventory (POI) (Shostrom, 1963), which tests an individual's self-actualization or their positive mental health. The mean age of the participants was 19.5, slightly more than 50 percent of them were male, and "most were concentrated in the middle and upper-middle socioeconomic status levels" (Swanson & Tokar, 1991, p. 297). Their findings indicate that there is a positive correlation between high WRIAS and POI scores and a negative correlation between a high POI score and low WRIAS. Swanson and Tokar also found that "Preliminary analyses indicated no significant differences in WRIAS scores or POI scores as a function of gender, age, socioeconomic status, academic class level, religious affiliation, or parents' education level" (1991, p. 298).

Gushue and Carter (2000) conducted a study that compared individuals' WRIAS scores with recognition memory of "stimulus paragraphs embedded with Black and White stereotypical items" one week after having read them (p. 199). In this study, the vast majority of the participants were women (135 to 62), the average age was 23.3, and the mean reported socioeconomic status was middle class. This study concluded that WRIAS status do affect how racial stereotypes affect information processing.

Gushue and Sciarra (2003) conducted a study comparing White individuals' WRIAS scores and the scores of their religious orientation using 3 different religious orientation measures. The participants, again, were mostly women, 134 to 97, the mean age was 20.1, and the income level of their family of origin with the highest percentage was 22 percent between \$60,000 and \$80,000. This study concluded that there was a

positive relationship between high development in participants' White racial identities and high "more integrated and flexible forms of religious orientation"; fundamentalism versus quest (Gushue & Sciarra, 2003, p. 463).

The implications of these previous studies are highly relevant to the field of Social work and the counseling professions in attempting to understand the implications of an underdeveloped WRID; thus, the importance of addressing it. In order to gain a deeper and multidimensional assessment of a patient's presenting problem, the source of their struggles, and their personality organization, clinicians need to take numerous variables into account, WRID is an important aspect of one's personality organization that should be considered. It is only as we gain more understanding of our clients that we are able to develop realistic short and long term goals to work towards through the therapeutic relationship.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

This purpose of this study was to explore and describe the factors that might be associated with White males' White racial identity development. This study considered as variables: environment of high school attended (rural, suburban, or urban), type of high school attended (private versus public), and participant socioeconomic status. While there have been a number of other studies that have compared individuals' stage of WRID and other aspects of identity, there have not been any studies that have considered additional social factors that may influence the stage of WRID among adult, White males with multiple agent status. Additionally, previous studies have focused primarily on younger college aged and educated populations, whereas this study focuses on adults from a broad range of backgrounds whose racial identity development has already been formed.

#### *Study Design and Sampling*

The current study employed a mixed method on-line survey using a 63 item multi-sectioned scale validated in previous study [WRIAS, (White Racial Identity Attitudes Scale)], a demographic information section made up of eight questions, and five additional open-ended questions, developed by the author, exploring participants' feelings about discussing issues of race, their family attitudes about race, their own attitudes about racism, and their feelings about being a White male.

The questions that guided this study included the aspects of Helms' WRIAS that define the six stages of WRID. The items in the survey included: demographic



information; quantitative data using Helms' WRIAS (1990); and five open-ended, qualitative questions for a richer description of their particular awareness of what it means to be White. A fixed method survey provided focused inductive conclusions about WRID and to accompany these fixed method findings, the open-ended questions proved to provide a broader understanding of what was concluded from the survey. Anastas explains that flexible method research "may be designed to describe significant facts more completely" (Anastas, 1999, p. 60-61).

A sample of White, adult males was sought for this study because these participants have agent status in gender, age, and race. According to the literature, the nature of agent status makes it difficult for individuals to recognize its significance, themselves; therefore, individuals with all of these aspects of agent status, theoretically, would find themselves in the earlier stages of WRID. This provided an opportunity to consider other variables that may influence White males' WRID and look for possible associations between a participant's stage of WRID and the additional variables included in the demographic and descriptive section of the questionnaire. Participants within the age range of 25 and 40 were recruited because current research conducted by Larry Nelson (2007) suggests that adulthood doesn't begin until at least age 25 and the researcher's interest lies particularly in White racial identity development among a younger adult population.

A web-based, anonymous survey was selected for this study to recruit widely, without regard to geography, and to minimize the potential effect of discomfort on the part of participants in responding to questions regarding a sensitive topic. It was also felt

that web-based recruitment might open up the survey to a broader demographic, than would be possible through a non-web-based snow-balling method. The inclusion criteria consisted of being White, male, and between the ages of 25 and 40.

Participants were located through posting a recruitment letter (See Appendix B) on the following listservs: MySpace.com, Facebook.com, and Craigslist.org. A link to the survey on SurveyMonkey.com was provided at the end of the recruitment letter. The survey began with the informed consent form which had to be completed and submitted in order to open and complete the survey. The survey consisted of the WRIAS survey; five-qualitative questions. A list of resources was provided at the end of the survey for further information and support if the participant was interested. If the prospective participant did not agree to the consent form they were redirected immediately to the list of resources for information and support at the end of the survey. The participants were also asked to forward the survey to other White men who may have been eligible for the study.

#### *Data Collection*

The study received approval from the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subject Review in February 2008 (Appendix A) and data collection began immediately afterward. Participation in the study involved signing the letter of consent and completing the online survey.

Section One of the survey included the following demographic and other descriptive items: age, current income; level of education; parents' level of education,

occupational status high school environment (urban, rural, or suburban); and if they attended public, private, or another type of high school.

Section Two include the *White Racial Identity Attitude Scale* (WRIAS), a 63-item scale designed by Helms (1990) used to measure attitudes associated with the six White racial identity development status theorized by Helms (1990). The scale consists of 60 items assessing Whites' racial attitudes using five distinct, five-point, likert-type subscales ranging from 1, strongly disagree, to 5, strongly agree. Scale scores were derived by summing the 10, appropriately keyed, items for each attitude scale. In addition to 3 questions asked participants the percentage of people from varying races they think they have as neighbors, and the number of people from varying races they have as close friends. In this manner, each attitude score has a raw scale score that could range from 10 to 60. Each attitude score has a raw scale score that could range form 10 to 60 and each attitude scale represents one of the six stages of WRID. The attitude scale that received the highest score for each participant was then assigned to that participant.

Section Three consisted of 5 open-ended qualitative questions created by the researcher and based on aspects of the participant's racial identity, based on the theoretical stages of White racial identity development (WRID) (Helms, 1990). These aspects included their response to race being talked about around them, their families attitudes about race, what they think the best thing they can do about racism is, how they feel being a White male affects them, and what they believe the usual idea of what a White male is.

The informed consent (Appendix D) explained the study, detailed the topic, as well as the potential risks and benefits to participating. Confidentiality was protected by creating an anonymous survey where participants were identified by a number that was assigned to each interview and survey. The primary risks to participating in this study were that participants may have had distressing feelings in regard to their racial identities and their perceptions and beliefs. They may have felt uncomfortable emotions, such as shame and/or guilt, as they thought about their thoughts and feelings regarding race and racism. Potential benefits included an opportunity to contribute to an area of research that may contribute to providing clinicians with a deeper understanding of White males' perspectives and experiences, which would allow for more practical goal setting and accurate assessments regarding the presenting problem and effective interventions. They also included the opportunity to gain a new perspective and to share their experiences and perspectives on race. There was no financial benefit for participation. The informed consent form also contained: this researcher's and Human Subjects Review Committee contact information if participants had additional questions regarding the survey and/or the research project and referral sources if participants experienced continued distress after their participation. Participants were asked to print and keep the informed consent for their records since the completed survey was kept separate from the consent form, it was not possible for participants to withdraw from the study once the survey was submitted since it was anonymous.

The consent forms and the survey were automatically kept separate through the online survey service utilized. All information, including responses to the survey

questions, was stored in an online protected storage holder to which no one but myself, my research advisor, and the data analyst had access to. As required by Federal guidelines, this online information, before being deleted, was printed and will be kept in locked files for a period of three years, after which time it will be destroyed.

### *Sample Characteristics*

Participants in this research represent a group from a variety of backgrounds. The average age of the participants was 32 with an age range of 25 to 40 years old. In terms of socioeconomic status, 53.7 percent of participants had obtained a 4-year degree, 42.6 percent held manager positions, and gross income ranged from below \$25,000/year (14.8 percent) to \$150,000+/year, (13 percent), with a median gross income of between \$50,000 and \$75,000. The percentage of participants that grew up in rural, suburban, and urban environments was 14.8, 55.6, and 25.9, respectively. The percentage of participants that attended public vs. private high school was 74.1 percent to 22.2 percent respectively, while 3.7 percent reported “other”.

### *Data Analysis*

This researcher entered data into an Excel spreadsheet and sent the data, via email, to Marjorie Postal at Smith College School for Social Work, who ran the data in the statistical program SPSS. The Fisher’s Exact test was used for the nominal demographic information and was paired up with the participant’s WRIAS score to check for correlations.

The qualitative data was included when reporting the statistical findings in order to provide richer descriptions for the quantitative data and was analyzed manually in two

ways. First, it was analyzed for themes that related to the six stages of White racial identity development and the descriptive and inferential statistics. Secondly, the narrative data was analyzed as a whole for themes and patterns related to the six stages of WRID.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

The major questions that were addressed in this research project were: Are there correlations between the participants' WRIAS scores and the setting in which they attended high school? Are there correlations between the participants' WRIAS scores and the type of high school they attended? Are there correlations between the participants' WRIAS scores and their gross income? What aspects of White privilege affect White men's WRID?

#### *Major Quantitative Findings*

##### *Demographics of Participants*

The participants in this sample were men between the ages of 25 and 40. Although 91 people responded to the on-line survey, only 54 of these completed the WRIAS and 46 of the 54 completed the open-ended section of the survey as well as the WRIAS. Out of the remaining 37 participants, five of them were either under or over age and 32 of them simply agreed to the consent form, but did not fill out one question of the survey. The findings reported below reflect the responses of the sample of 54 participants that completed the WRIAS, including the 46 that also completed the open-ended questions. Demographic data outlining the age, level of education, occupational status, gross income, high school setting, type of high school, WRIAS scores, and qualitative responses of the 54 participants are outlined in Tables 1 through 8,

respectively. The mean, median, and standard deviation of participants' age, gross income, and WRIAS scores are outlined in Table 9.

The average age of participants was 32 with a range of 25 to 40. Fifty-three point seven percent of participants completed a 4-year college, 42.6 percent of them had managerial positions in the workforce, and 27.8 percent of them earned a gross income between \$25,000 and \$50,000 a year. Additionally, 55.6 percent of the participants attended high school in a suburban setting, and 74.1 percent attended a public high school. A large percentage, 33.3 percent, of participants fell in the fourth stage of WRID, pseudo-independence, which is also the beginning of the second half of WRID in which the individual has let-go of racist ideology and has gained an intellectual acceptance of their own Whiteness and quasi-recognition of the sociopolitical implications of racial differences. Eighty-one point five percent of participants filled out the open-ended questions at the end of the survey.

As outlined in Tables 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6, the average age of the sample is 32 years old. This is a well educated group, with 80 percent of the sample having at least a four-year college degree or above. The average gross yearly income is approximately \$50,000 - \$75,000. Well over half of the sample attended public high schools in the suburbs. Seventy-five point nine percent of participants' WRIAS scores belong in the last three stages of WRID.



Selected Demographics of Participants

Table 1

<i>Age</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
25	5	9.3
26	4	7.4
27	4	7.4
28	2	3.7
29	3	5.6
30	3	5.6
31	0	0.0
32	10	18.4
33	4	7.4
34	2	3.7
35	2	3.7
36	1	1.9
37	4	7.4
38	1	1.9
39	1	1.9
40	1	1.9
Total	54	100.0

Table 2

<i>Level of Education</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
HS/GED	2	3.7
Some College	2	3.7
2 yr college	9	16.7
4 yr college	29	53.7
Masters	8	14.8
Doctoral	4	7.4
Total	54	100.0

Table 3

*Occupational Status*

<i>Occupational Status</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Unemployed	3	5.6
Farm or Service Worker	1	1.9
Blue Collar	6	11.1
Clerical	2	3.7
Small Business Owner	9	16.7
Manager	23	42.6
Medium Business Owner	1	1.9
Executive	3	5.6
Other	6	11.1
Total	54	100.0

Table 4

*Annual Gross Income*

<i>Annual Gross Income</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Below \$25,000	8	14.8
Between \$25,000 and \$50,000	15	27.8
Between \$50,000 and \$75,000	14	25.9
Between \$75,000 and \$100,000	4	7.4
Between \$100,000 and \$125,000	4	7.4
Between \$125,000 and \$150,000	2	3.7
\$150,000+	7	13.0
Total	54	100.0

Table 5

*High School Setting*

<i>High School Setting</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Rural	8	14.8
Urban	15	27.7
Suburban	31	57.4
Total	54	100.0

Table 6

*Type of High School Attended*

<i>Type of High School</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Public	42	77.8
Private	12	22.2
Total	54	100.0

Table 7

*White Racial Identity Attitudes Scale Scores*

<i>WRIAS Scores</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Contact = 1	8	14.8
Disintegration = 2	3	5.6
Reintegration = 3	2	3.7
Pseudo-Independence = 4	18	33.3
Immersion/Emersion = 5	7	13.0
Autonomy = 6	16	29.6
Total	54	100.0

Table 8

*Qualitative Responses*

<i>Qualitative Respondents</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Yes	46	85.2
No	8	14.8
Total	54	100.0

Table 9

*Selected Mean, Median, and Standard Deviation Demographics of Participants*

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
<i>Age</i>	31.7	33.0000	4.33793
<i>Gross Income</i>	Between \$50,000 and \$75,000	3.0000	1.90745
<i>WRIAS Scores (WRID Developmental Stage)</i>	4.1 (Stage 4 Pseudo-Independence)	4.0000	1.71614

Janet Helms' WRIAS also includes a section which asks participants to estimate the percentages of their neighbors and the number of their closest friends that fall under different racial groups. The highest frequencies of the percentages of their neighbors are outlined in Table 10 and the mean, median, and standard deviations for these data are outlined in Table 11. The highest frequencies of the number of their closest friends are outlined in Table 12 and the mean, median, and standard deviations for these data are outlined in Table 13.

Table 10

*Percentages of Neighbors*

	<i>Percent of Neighbors</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
<i>% of Asian Neighbors</i>	5	15	27.8
<i>% of Black Neighbors</i>	10	8	14.8
<i>% of Hispanic Neighbors</i>	10	8	14.8
<i>% of Native American Neighbors</i>	.00	35	64.8
<i>% of White Neighbors</i>	5	5	9.3
	99	5	9.3

Table 11

*Mean, Median, and Standard Deviations of Neighbors*

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
<i>% of Asian Neighbors</i>	15.50	5.0000	25.75483
<i>% of Black neighbors</i>	24.05	15.0000	27.42566
<i>% of Hispanic Neighbors</i>	25.61	17.5000	28.51045
<i>% of Native American Neighbors</i>	8.09	.0000	26.01470
<i>% of White Neighbors</i>	56.40	59.5000	30.37906

Table 12

*Number of Closest Friends*

	<i>Number of Friends</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
<i># of Asian Friends</i>	.00	14	25.9
<i># of Black Friends</i>	.00	13	24.1
<i># of Hispanic Friends</i>	.00	13	24.1
<i># of Native American Friends</i>	.00	41	75.9
<i># of White Friends</i>	10	6	11.1

Table 13

*Mean, Median, and Standard Deviation of Closest Friends*

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
<i># of Asian Friends</i>	10.22	2.0000	26.05051
<i># of Black Friends</i>	10.61	2.0000	25.66358
<i># of Hispanic Friends</i>	11.12	3.0000	25.65007
<i># of Native American Friends</i>	7.57	.0000	26.10906
<i># of White Friends</i>	41.05	20.0000	38.20521

In an attempt to more closely analyze the sample and the data, this researcher chose to dissect the sample according to the demographic information that has been proposed as contributing to maintaining lower levels of racial development, as well as the counter to those demographic variables, in order to compare that which is proposed as creating cognitive dissonance with those demographic variables that is proposed as keeping one from cognitive dissonance. The demographic variables that would allow one to experience cognitive dissonance, according to the literature, are having a lower income, growing up in urban environments, and/or attending public schools. These demographic

variables were selected for further analysis, and then compared with their counter demographic variables.

Participants were separated by their annual gross income, those who earned the highest and those who earned the lowest, and were analyzed separately, as illustrated in Tables 14 through 19.

Of the seven participants who reported making \$150,000 or more a year, 42.8 percent attended public high school and 57.2 percent attended private high school. Seventy-one point four percent attended high school in suburban settings while only 14.3 percent attended high school in urban and 14.3 percent attended high school in rural settings. Of these seven participants, two participants had scores that fell into the contact stage of WRID, and two participants had scores that fell in the pseudo-independence stage. The findings for participants who earned the highest gross income did not reach statistical significance; there was almost an equal number (3) of participants among this group who fell into the first three stages as the number (4) that fell into the last three stages.

Demographic Percentages of Participants who earn \$150,000+ yearly

Table 14

*Type of High School Attended by Participants who earn \$150,000+ Annual*

<i>Gross Income</i>		
<i>Type of High School</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Public	3	42.8
Private	4	57.2
Total	7	100.0

Table 15

*Setting of High School Attended by Participants who earn \$150,000+ Annual*

<i>Gross Income</i>		
<i>Setting of High School</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Suburban	5	71.4
Urban	1	14.3
Rural	1	14.3
Total	7	100.0

Table 16

*White Racial Identity Development Stage of Participants who earn \$150,000+ Annual*

<i>Gross Income</i>			
<i>WRID Stage</i>		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Contact	(Stage 1)	2	28.6
Disintegration	(Stage 2)	0	0.0
Reintegration	(Stage 3)	1	14.3
Pseudo-Independence	(Stage 4)	2	28.6
Immersion/Emersion	(Stage 5)	1	14.3
Autonomy	(Stage 6)	1	14.3
Total		7	100.0

The findings for the eight participants who earned the least amount of gross income (< \$25,000/year) were slightly more significant than those who made \$150,000 and above. Fifty percent of these participants attended high school in rural settings and 87.5 percent attended public high school. However, of these eight participants, not one of them scored within the first three stages of WRID. In fact, 50 percent of them scored in the pseudo-independence stage and 37.5 percent scored in the last stage, autonomy, leaving only one participant, 12.5 percent, who fell in the immersion/emersion stage of WRID.

Demographics of Participants who Earn Below \$25,000

Table 17

*Type of High School Attended by Participants who earn below \$25,000*

*Annual Gross Income*

<i>Type of High School</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Public	7	87.5
Private	1	12.5
Total	8	100.0

Table 18

*Setting of High School Attended by Participants who earn below \$25,000*

*Annual Gross Income*

<i>Setting of High School</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Suburban	1	12.5
Urban	3	37.5
Rural	4	50.0
Total	8	100.0

Table 19

*White Racial Identity Development Stage of Participants who earn below \$25,000 Annual*

*Gross Income*

<i>WRID Stage</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Contact (Stage 1)	0	0.0
Disintegration (Stage 2)	0	0.0
Reintegration (Stage 3)	0	0.0
Pseudo-Independence (Stage 4)	4	50.0
Immersion/Emersion (Stage 5)	1	12.5
Autonomy (Stage 6)	3	37.5
Total	8	100.0

Participants were separated by the type of high school they attended: those who attended a private high school and those who attended a public high school, and were



analyzed separately. These data are outlined in Tables 20 through 25 and will be discussed further in the discussion chapter.

Of the twelve participants who attended a private high school, 75 percent of these participants fell into the last three stages of WRID with 33.3 percent of those in the pseudo-independence stage, 25 percent in the immersion/emersion stage, and 16.6 percent in the autonomy stage. Sixty-six point six percent of these participants make \$100,000 and above a year, while the remaining 33.4 percent earn \$50,000 and below.

Selected Demographics of Participants who Attended Private High School

Table 20

*Setting of High School Attended by Participants who attended Private High*

*School*

<i>Setting of High School</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Suburban	6	50.0
Urban	3	25.0
Rural	3	25.0
Total	12	100.0

Table 21

*Annual Gross Income of Participants who attended Private High School*

<i>Annual Gross Income</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Below \$25,000	1	8.3
25,000-50,000	3	25.0
50,000-75,000	0	0.0
75,000-100,000	0	0.0
100,000-125,000	2	16.6
125,000-150,000	2	16.6
150,000+	4	33.4
Total	12	100.0

Table 22

*White Racial Identity Development of Participants who attended Private High School*

<i>WRID Stage</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Contact (Stage 1)	2	16.6
Disintegration (Stage 2)	0	0.0
Reintegration (Stage 3)	1	8.4
Pseudo-Independence (Stage 4)	4	33.4
Immersion/Emersion (Stage 5)	3	25.0
Autonomy (Stage 6)	2	16.6
Total	12	100.0

Seventy-four point five percent fell into the last three stages and 26.5 percent in the first three stages of WRID. Additionally, of these 42 public high school participants, 79.5 percent earn a gross income of \$75,000 and below while only 20.5 percent earn \$75,000 and above. The majority, 59.1 percent, attended high school in a suburban setting.

Selected Demographics of Participants who attended Public High School

Table 23

*Setting of High School Attended by Participants who attended Public High*

<i>School</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Suburban	25	59.1
Urban	12	28.9
Rural	5	12.0
Total	42	100.0

Table 24

*Annual Gross Income of Participants who attended Public High School*

<i>Annual Gross Income</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Below \$25,000	7	16.9
25,000-50,000	12	29.0
50,000-75,000	14	33.6
75,000-100,000	4	9.5
100,000-125,000	2	4.8
125,000-150,000	0	0.0
150,000+	3	7.2
Total	42	100.0

Table 25

*White Racial Identity Development of Participants who attended Public High School*

<i>WRID Stage</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Contact (Stage 1)	6	14.5
Disintegration (Stage 2)	3	7.2
Reintegration (Stage 3)	2	4.8
Pseudo-Independence (Stage 4)	13	31.2
Immersion/Emersion (Stage 5)	4	9.7
Autonomy (Stage 6)	14	33.6
Total	42	100.0

Participants were separated by the setting they attended high school in: those who attended high school in an urban setting, those who attended high school in a suburban setting, and those who attended high school in a rural setting, and were analyzed separately. These data are outlined in Tables 26 through 34 and will be discussed further in the discussion chapter.

Of the fourteen participants who attended high school in an urban setting, 78.3 percent attended a public high school, 78.8 percent earn less than \$75,000 annually, and 77.9 percent fell into the last stages of WRID.

Selected Demographics of Participants who attended High School in an Urban Setting

Table 26

*Type of high School attended of Participants who attended High School in an*

*Urban Setting*

<i>Type of High School</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Public	11	78.3
Private	3	21.7
Total	14	100.0

Table 27

*Annual Gross Income of Participants who attended High School in an Urban*

*Setting*

<i>Annual Gross Income</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Below \$25,000	3	21.6
25,000-50,000	6	42.9
50,000-75,000	2	14.3
75,000-100,000	1	7.1
100,000-125,000	1	7.1
125,000-150,000	0	0.0
150,000 +	1	7.1
Total	14	100.0

Table 28

*White Racial Identity Development of Participants who attended Public High School in*

*an Urban Setting*

<i>WRID Stage</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Contact (Stage 1)	3	21.6
Disintegration (Stage 2)	0	0.0
Reintegration (Stage 3)	0	0.0
Pseudo-Independence (Stage 4)	4	28.4
Immersion/Emersion (Stage 5)	2	14.2
Autonomy (Stage 6)	5	35.3
Total	14	100.0

The majority of participants who attended high school in a suburban setting, 80.8 percent attended a public high school, 61.3 percent earn less than \$75,000 annually, and 78.4 percent are in the last three stages of WRID with the remaining 21.6 percent in the first stage, contact. There are 0 percent in either the disintegration stage or the reintegration stage of these participants. The highest percentage of participants, 35.3 percent, fell into the most sophisticated stage of WRID, autonomy.

Selected Demographics of Participants who attended High School in a Suburban Setting

Table 29

*Type of High School attended of Participants who attended High School in a*

*Suburban Setting*

<i>Type of High School</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Public	25	80.8
Private	6	19.2
Total	31	100.0

Table 30

*Annual Gross Income of Participants who attended High School in a Suburban*

*Setting*

<i>Annual Gross Income</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Below \$25,000	1	3.3
25,000-50,000	9	29.0
50,000-75,000	9	29.0
75,000-100,000	3	9.9
100,000-125,000	2	6.4
125,000-150,000	2	6.4
150,000 +	5	16.0
Total	31	100.0

Table 31

*White Racial Identity Development of Participants who attended Public High School in a Suburban Setting*

<i>WRID Stage</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Contact (Stage 1)	4	12.9
Disintegration (Stage 2)	3	9.7
Reintegration (Stage 3)	1	3.2
Pseudo-Independence (Stage 4)	7	22.6
Immersion/Emersion (Stage 5)	4	12.9
Autonomy (Stage 6)	11	38.7
Total	31	100.0

Of the eight participants who attended high school in a rural setting, 62.5 percent attended public high school, 75 percent earn a yearly gross income of \$75,000 and below.

While the majority, 75 percent, of these participants fell into the last three stages of WRID, they all fell into the pseudo-independence stage of WRID, the first stage of the last three stages of WRID, while the remaining 25 percent fell into the reintegration stage of WRID, the last of the first three and the most defensive stage.

Selected Demographics of Participants who attended High School in a Rural Setting

Table 32

*Type of high School attended of Participants who attended High School in a Rural*

<i>Setting</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Public	5	62.5
Private	3	37.5
Total	8	100.0

Table 33

*Annual Gross Income of Participants who attended High School in a Rural Setting*

<i>Annual Gross Income</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Below \$25,000	4	50.0
25,000-50,000	0	0.0
50,000-75,000	2	25.0
75,000-100,000	0	0.0
100,000-125,000	0	0.0
125,000-150,000	1	12.5
150,000 +	1	12.5
Total	8	100.0

Table 34

*White Racial Identity Development of Participants who attended Public High School in a*

*Rural Setting*

<i>WRID Stage</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Contact (Stage 1)	0	0.0
Disintegration (Stage 2)	0	0.0
Reintegration (Stage 3)	2	25.0
Pseudo-Independence (Stage 4)	6	75.0
Immersion/Emersion (Stage 5)	0	0.0
Autonomy (Stage 6)	0	0.0
Total	8	100.0

A Spearman correlations test was run to determine if there are correlations between participants' WRIAS scores and their education level, yearly gross income, the percent of neighbors they have of people of color, and the number of friends they have of people of color. No correlations were found between their WRIAS scores and these demographic data. A correlations test was also run to test to determine if there are correlations between participants' WRIAS scores and their yearly gross income, the type of high school they attended, and the setting in which they attended it. The result was

that WRIAS scores placed the majority of participants in the last and most sophisticated stages of WRID, regardless of demographic characteristics. These findings proved to show some differences, however, which are discussed in further detail in the final chapter.

### *Major Qualitative Findings*

The survey consisted of five open-ended questions, which were listed at the end of the survey. The purpose of asking these questions was to provide richer data than what the quantitative data could provide; specifically, this researcher decided open-ended questions would provide a clearer picture of how participants are thinking about issues around race and racism as well as a more literal picture of where, why, and how they fell into the stages of WRID. Most importantly, this researcher was interested in seeing if the participants' open-ended questions, after being analyzed, had a positive correlation to their WRIAS scores.

This study provides information regarding what may keep White men from reaching more sophisticated levels of WRID with respect to specific aspects of White privilege. Questions were designed to elicit responses that would give us some insight into how and/or why participants respond the way they do around issues of race and racism and how and/or why they ended up with the WRIAS scores that they did. The open-ended questions were designed to correspond directly to the stages of WRID. WRID as proposed by Janet Helms is dependant upon an individuals awareness around their racial-group membership and the effect it has on others, their willingness to address issues of race and racism with the people around them, their ability to integrate an active racial humanism, and a development of a positive White identity.



The open-ended questions give us an opportunity to not only see why respondents responded the way they did to Helms' survey questions, but they allow us to see how they are thinking about these defining aspects of WRID. For example, the open-ended questions: "I think being White affects me in this/these ways:" and "I think being a White male affects me in this/these ways:" give us a clearer idea of participants' responses to Helms' survey statements: "I hardly ever think about what race I am" and "I believe I receive special privileges because I am White". For example, if the respondent doesn't think about what race he is, than he also wouldn't have put very much thought into how being a White male affects him. On the other hand, if he has put a lot of thought into his racial-group membership, than he may have a substantial answer to how being a White male affects him. Dependent upon how all of these open-ended questions were answered, they were identified as relating to one of the six stages of WRID; and therefore, will give us an alternative picture of where these men fell in the six stages of WRID.

The first open-ended question: "When issues regarding race are brought up around me I usually:", was designed because in Helms' survey she asks several questions about participants' feelings and behaviors regarding race related issues and situations. For example, the first open-ended question allows participants to expand on some of Helms' questions such as: "There is nothing I can do by myself to solve society's racial problems." "I just refuse to participate in discussions about race", and "I do not express some of my beliefs about race because I do not want to make White people mad at me." If participants answered that they don't think about it, or they simply ignore it, it was analyzed as being a response that belonged to someone who fell into the contact stage of

WRID. However, if they answered in a way that suggested they were active with their beliefs of racial humanism, then it was analyzed as being s response that belonged to someone who fell into the autonomy stage of WRID.

The second open-ended question: “I have heard my family members say these things about Black people:”, was designed to provide some background information regarding the type of influence participants’ have had regarding issues around race and racism. While this survey measured participants’ individual WRID, this question may provide some insight into how and why they scored the way they did. This question may also provide some insight into the influence one’s family has on participants’ understanding of their White racial-group membership and their feelings and behaviors around race and racism. Therefore, if the participants’ predominately scored high on the WRIAS, but the responses to this question were predominately analyzed as belonging to the beginning stages of WRID, it can be assumed that their family’s influence on their perspectives of race and racism are low, and visa versa. However, it could also be assumed, that participants felt more comfortable expressing racial slurs that originated from someone other than themselves, or visa versa, even though this study was anonymous.

The third open-ended question: “I think the best thing I can do to deal with racism is:”, like the first open-ended question, was designed by this researcher to relate to some questions in Helms’ survey where she asks about participants’ feelings and behaviors regarding race related issues and situations. The respondents’ answers to this open-ended question may provide a deeper understanding around their belief and value systems when

it pertains to social responsibility, their awareness of their White privilege, and the degree to which they have internalized a positive White identity. For example, participants answered this question with responses that varied from, “nothing can be done” to “Admit that racism exists, both within myself and with in society, and then do my best to not let it control the decisions I make...”. These responses indicate quite different values and beliefs and provide a richer understanding to some of Helms’ questions such as: “I am taking definite steps to define an identity for myself that includes working against racism” and “I have refused to accept privileges that were given to me because I am White”.

The fourth open-ended question: “I think being a White male affects me in this/these ways:”, was designed by this researcher to relate to some of Helm’s questions which measure respondents’ awareness of their White privilege. If participants scored high on Helms’ survey to questions that pertained to one’s awareness of White privilege, it would indicate that they have moved past the first three stages of WRID, if they scored low on her survey to these questions, it would indicate that they are somewhere in the first three stages of WRID which involves a lack of awareness, confusion regarding, and/or a passive endorsement of White superiority. For example, Helms’ questions: “I am examining how racism relates to who I am”, “I believe that I have special privileges because I am White”, and “I do not understand why Black people blame me for their social misfortunes”, allow us to gain some understanding around how participants’ understand themselves in relation to their racial-group membership and the effect their racial-group membership has on people from other races. However, because Helms’

survey is a likert-scale survey, the extent to which a respondent can expand on their understanding of the significance of their agent status in both race and gender is very limited. Respondents provided a wide range of responses that were interpreted as belonging to opposite stages of WRID. These ranged from responses that were analyzed as belonging to the contact stage of WRID, such as, “sorry it doesn’t affect me” to responses that were analyzed as belonging to the autonomy stage of WRID, such as, “inherently places you in a position of privilege which must be challenged and questioned”.

The fifth open-ended question: “I think the usual idea of what a White male is this:”, was designed by this researcher to relate to the extent to which participants’ have internalized a positive (nonracist) White identity, as well as their awareness of the implication their agent status in both gender and race affect others. This question was especially difficult to analyze since participants may be aware of the implication they have on others by expressing some negative perceptions of who they are, which would place them in a more sophisticated stage of WRID; however, they may also be expressing the view they have on themselves as a reflection of shame and guilt in being a White male, this perception of the origin of their response would then be analyzed as belonging to earlier stages of WRID since they had not integrated a positive White identity. This researcher chose to perceive the responses as originating from their understanding of the implications their multiple agent status have on others since this was the purpose of the open-ended question.

The open-ended questions have not been used in any other studies, they were designed by this researcher. As mentioned above, the narrative responses to each of these five questions were analyzed together and grouped with respect to the six stages of WRID as proposed by Janet Helms.

#### *Primary Themes from Narrative Data*

In the literature review, this researcher provided definitions of Helms' six stages of WRID. These stages have provided a framework for analysis of the narrative data and were useful tools in organizing the participants' responses; however, the responses that were grouped for themes did not always fall neatly into any one of Helms' stages. The responses that did not fit into Helms' stages as neatly as did some of the others can be identified as relating to two or more stages and are discussed in the discussion chapter. To review, as defined by Helms' (1990), the six stages of WRID are the following:

- 1) Contact: naiveté and lack of awareness of the sociopolitical significance of racial-group membership, especially one's own.
- 2) Disintegration: confusion and self-disorientation with respect to one's own Whiteness as well as ambivalent awareness of the implication of race for members of other racial groups.
- 3) Reintegration: active and passive endorsement of White superiority and Black inferiority.
- 4) Pseudo-Independence: White liberalism characterized by an intellectualized acceptance of one's Whiteness and quasi-recognition of the sociopolitical implications of racial differences.

5) Immersion/Emersion: proactive and self-initiated development of a positive White identity.

6) Autonomy: active racial humanism expressed from a positive White (nonracist) identity.

Responses were analyzed as belonging to the contact stage if it appeared that respondents had a lack of awareness of naiveté of the sociopolitical implications of their racial-group membership. Two statements from Helm's survey whose responses were measured as belonging to the contact stage of WRID are: "A person's race is not important to me" and "I hardly ever think about what race I am". For example, if responses to the open-ended questions included phrases such as: "Don't think too much into it", or "We are all just human", they were analyzed as belonging to the contact stage of WRID. These responses indicate that the individual has not had or taken the opportunity to question the implications of his multiple agent status. In other words, he has not experienced cognitive dissonance in relation to his Whiteness or his gender-group membership.

Responses were analyzed as belonging to the disintegration stage if it appeared that respondents were confused or disoriented with respect to their own Whiteness and/or if they appeared to have an ambivalent awareness of the implication of race for members of other racial groups. Two statements from Helm's survey whose responses were measured as belonging to the disintegration stage of WRID are: "I have come to believe that Black and White people are very different" and "I do not believe I have the social skills to interact with Black people effectively". For example, if responses to the open-

ended questions included phrases such as: “nothing can be done [about racism]” or “Not sure how to respond to this...”, they were analyzed as belonging to the disintegration stage of WRID. These responses indicate that the individual has a vague idea of what the implications of their Whiteness in relation to themselves as well as in relation to others.

Responses were analyzed as belonging to the reintegration stage if it appeared that respondents maintained an active and passive endorsement of White superiority and Black inferiority. Two statements from Helm’s survey whose responses were measured as belonging to the reintegration stage of WRID are: “Society may have been unfair to Blacks, but it has been just as unfair to Whites” and “I feel hostile when I am around Blacks”. For example, if responses to the open-ended questions included phrases such as: “I am on the other side of racism against whites by blacks and liberals that think im guilty of something.” or “Black people are unwilling to take ownership of their own lives...”, they were analyzed as belonging to the reintegration stage of WRID. Additionally, responses that had a general angry feeling to them, display feelings of guilt or shame, and/or place blame on people of color for the consequences of racism, were analyzed as belonging to the reintegration stage of WRID. These responses indicate that the participant is in a defensive position as a result of cognitive dissonance, but has yet to individuate from racist ideology.

Responses were analyzed as belonging to the pseudo-independence stage if it appeared that respondents have an intellectual acceptance of their Whiteness and a quasi-recognition of the sociopolitical implications of racial difference. Two statements from Helms’ survey whose responses were measured as belonging to the pseudo-independence

stage of WRID are: “I believe that Blacks would not be different from Whites if they had been given the same opportunities” and “Blacks and Whites differ from each other in some ways, but neither race is superior”. For example, if responses to the open-ended questions included phrases such as: “...there are power imbalances in society that black people have babies early and don’t get to go to college because of racism and privilege”, or “I participate in the conversation [about racism] if I feel I have something positive I can contribute to it”, they were analyzed as belonging to the pseudo-independent stage of WRID. Additionally, these responses did not include implications of a positive White identity nor an active racial humanism. These responses indicate that the participant has moved out of racist ideology and has some understanding of the implications of his racial-group membership for himself and for others.

Responses were analyzed as belonging to the immersion/emersion stage if it appeared that respondents have initiated a positive White identity and have moved out of a racist ideology. Two statements from Helm’s survey whose responses were measured as belonging to the immersion/emersion stage of WRID are: “I am making a special effort to understand the significance of being White” and “I believe I receive special privileges because I am White”. For example, if they feel confident and secure enough to “actively engage in [sic] conversation[s]” around race and racism, or if responses to the open-ended questions included phrases such as: “...I have an easier time with jobs, police, and prejudices in general” or “[I can] Be myself around others [regardless of their race]...”, they were analyzed as belonging to the immersion/emersion stage of WRID. These responses indicate that the participant has begun to internalize a positive White



identity and has, at least, a quasi-recognition of the sociopolitical implications of his racial difference; however is not engaging in active racial humanism.

Responses were analyzed as belonging to the autonomy stage if it appeared that respondents have an active racial humanism from a positive White (nonracist) identity. Two statements from Helm's survey whose responses were measured as belonging to the autonomy stage of WRID are: "I involve myself in causes regardless of the race of the people involved in them" and "I have refused to accept privileges that were given to me because I am White". For example, if responses to the open-ended questions included phrases such as: "Join with others of all nationalities and races to fight forms of racism and other forms of oppression and exploitation together..." or "[being a White male] inherently places you in a position of privilege which must be challenged and questioned" they were analyzed as belonging to the autonomy stage of WRID. These responses indicate that the participant has a positive White identity and is actively engaged in racial humanism.

The number of responses that fell under each stage of WRID for each question are outlined in Table 35. The percentage of responses for each question, under each stage of WRID are outlined in Table 36.

Table 35

*Number of Responses Under each Stage of WRID for each Open-ended Question*

	Contact	Disintegration	Reintegration	Pseudo-Independence	Immersion/Emersion	Autonomy	Total
When issues regarding race are brought up around me I usually:	4	3	7	10	22	0	46
I have heard my family members say these things about Black people:	8	9	18	3	0	0	38*
I think the best thing I can do to deal with racism is:	5	5	4	10	6	16	44*
I think being White affects me in this/these ways:	7	6	8	5	17	1	44*
I think the usual idea of what a White male is this:	13	6	15	1	0	1	36*
Total	37	29	52	29	45	18	

\* Question totals with an asterisk indicates that the remaining responses were left blank.

Table 36

*Percentage of Responses under each Stage of WRID for each Open-ended Question*

	Contact	Disintegration	Reintegration	Pseudo-Independence	Immersion/Emersion	Autonomy	No Ans.
When issues regarding race are brought up around me I usually:	8.7	6.5	15.2	21.7	47.8	0.0	0.0
I have heard my family members say these things about Black people:	21.1	23.7	47.1	8.1	0.0	0.0	
I think the best thing I can do to deal with racism is:	10.9	10.9	8.7	21.7	13.0	34.8	0.0
I think being White affects me in this/these ways:	15.2	13.0	17.4	10.9	37.0	2.2	4.3
I think the usual idea of what a White male is this:	28.3	13.0	32.6	2.2	0.0	2.2	21.7
Total	16	12	23	13	20	8	9

### *Contact Stage*

Responses were determined as belonging to the contact stage if it appeared the respondent had a lack of awareness about the socio-political significance of their racial-group membership and/or appeared naive regarding issues around race and racism.

The first question, “When issues regarding race are brought up around me I usually:”, elicited four responses that were analyzed as belonging to the contact stage of WRID. These responses are: “Ignore the idiot that thinks there is an issue and focuses on it, we are all human”, “I usually point out that there is only one race ‘the human race’”, “Depends on the situation. I generally don’t discuss race. I was taught growing up to judge individuals by their character and their behavior, and to treat others the way you want to be treated”, and “Don’t think too much about it”.

The second question: “I have heard my family members say these things about Black people:”, elicited eight responses that fall into the contact stage of WRID. These responses are: “Uh, we don’t talk about ‘black people’. People are individuals in my family”, “Not much in the way of overt racism. My parents never attributed characteristics that individuals had to race. They always talked about individuals”, “I don’t think I have heard my family have a discussion about ‘black people’. Usually, conversations about groups of people focus on their socio-economic grouping, not their race”, “Generally we don’t have discussions in my family focused on race” “Blacks hold no unique fascination for my family”, “Not sure how to respond to this – grandparents are racists, other than that I don’t think an individual’s race is something that is

considered/mentioned”, “never. My family is God bearing Christians and love everyone equally”, and, “Nothing that I comes to mind.”.

The third question: “I think the best thing I can do to deal with racism is:” elicited five responses that were analyzed as belonging to the contact stage of WRID. These responses are: “deal with people as people”, “Be a good person”, “Live a life of love and tolerance”, “Treat people with kindness and fairness”, and “I don’t really think of it”.

The fourth question: “I think being White affects me in this/these ways:”, elicited seven responses that were analyzed as belonging to the contact stage of WRID. These responses are: “doesn’t”, “sorry it doesn’t affect me”, “No idea. I just try to be a good person, regardless”, “Makes me the majority...”, “I live in michigan, northern michigan. I don’t feel effected. I feel welcome”,

I haven’t really thought about it has directly impacted me. I have just tried to work hard and get by on my merits. But that would be a perfect world. I know that there are underlying issues of race and gender in a lot of areas, but I can’t think of any instance where it has substantially impacted my life.

and “I don’t give too much thought to it”.

The fifth question, “I think the usual idea of what a White male is this:”, elicited thirteen responses that were analyzed as belonging to the contact stage of WRID. These responses are: “Everyone is there own person. Some influences come from how ur raised”, “I don’t have one”, “ I have no idea”, “ I don’t.”, “Boring.”, “sex sex sex sex sex”, “The white male is in denial of what is going on in his society”, “boring”, “Kind of simple. Likes football. Pretty closed emotionally. Not very revelatory”, “someone that is not fully engaged in understanding the experiences of those that are not white male.”, “Oblivious to what is really going on as far as race and gender for that matter”,

Depends on what you mean by 'usual idea'. I don't get this question. I generally spend very little time thinking about race. For instance, if a co-worker excels at his job, I don't think, 'Wow, great job for a black man'. And if he's bad at what he does, I think he's a poor employee, not a 'poor black employee'.

and "Just a man, no more, no less".

### *Disintegration*

Responses were determined as belonging to the disintegration stage if it appeared the respondents were confused about the implications of their Whiteness and had ambivalent awareness of the implications of their race on other races. Additionally, individuals who belong in the disintegration stage of WRID do not know how to feel about White people nor Black people and they feel there is nothing they can do to alleviate racism.

The first question, "When issues regarding race are brought up around me I usually:", elicited three responses which were analyzed as belonging to the disintegration stage of WRID. These responses are: "For me, it's the use of the word 'nigger'. Although not often, when it comes up, it stops me in my tracks. This is not actually with my close friends, but with acquaintances", "Don't soak it up. I am always afraid of offending people", "and "Keep quite unless I'm among only close friends".

The second question, "I have heard my family members say these things about Black people:", elicited nine responses that were analyzed as belonging to the second stage of WRID. These responses are: "I don't remember anything specific right now. I think my parents believe, like many other white people of their generation and class, that racism is wrong, but still hold some racist attitudes anyway. I don't judge them", "years ago I heard things like they are lazy or stupid (from elders) but they evolved in their

thinking and I haven't heard anything like that in years", "My family is the most open minded family I have ever met. My dad thinks black people are better athletes", "lazy, stupid, intelligent, strange, foreign, ugly, handsome", "Victor is coming to dinner...",

Yes, I have heard the word Nigger many times. I can not change the way they feel. How can you make someone 60 years or older change who they are? At the same time I have heard nice things about some individuals that are black from these same mouths.

Gangsters, 'niggers', lazy, cause problems, get on welfare. I have recently heard more positive things, since my sister is now in college. Sometimes I hear things like, 'I'm not racist and I don't dislike black people, but I don't want you to ever marry one.' I hear that from my mom and grandmother.

"They should be treated as equals with respect, or that they should not be trusted at all", and "They would make a good president. Obama!"

The third question, "I think the best thing I can do to deal with racism is:", elicited five responses that were analyzed as belonging in the disintegration stage. These responses are:

Truthfully, I try to treat it as a non-issue as much as I can. I attempt to make sure that race isn't being used to discriminate in any way. But beyond that, I think the only way to alleviate racism is to stop reinforcing the assumption that people who have a different skin color are ultimately different. This isn't the case and saying that someone deserves preferential treatment because of the color of their skin (white or black) only deepens the divide between races. If we keep saying people are different because of the color for their skin, then that's what people will believe.

"Ignore it", "nothing can be done", "Make fun of it to show how stupid it is", and "I have no idea. I am also sick of hearing about it".

The fourth question, "I think being a White male affects me in this/these ways:" elicited six responses that were analyzed as falling in the disintegration stage. These

responses are: “I think being male affects me more than being white.”, “I don’t know, I’d have to say solely appearance and the way some people perceive me.”, “I’m sure it does affect me but I’m not sure in which ways, specifically.”, “I don’t think of myself as a ‘white male’. I define myself in many other ways”, “When it’s a very sunny day I can get sunburned. Also, more prone to drug abuse.” and “I’m not sure. It seems that I would have to see the other side of the coin to compare”.

The fifth question, “I think the usual idea of what a white male is this:”, elicited six responses that were analyzed as belonging in the disintegration stage of WRID. These responses are: “I don’t believe there is a ‘usual idea’. A white male could be John F Kennedy, Larry the Cable guy, a brain surgeon, or a high school janitor”,

A white male can be anything- that’s one of the roots of racism and sexism is that there are these preconceived images of what everyone else is like, while white men don’t have the same initial assumptions attached to them. Of course I am required to know about tools, cars, sports, and making fires, and must always live everything, but that’s not really the same thing.

This is too broad of a question – there is no ‘usual idea’ of any group of people. Generally the white males that I interact with the most are educated, reasonably successful individuals, but this is more a function of having met them in college or in a professional setting.

I think that’s an overbroad question, as were most of the previous questions in the survey. Really, it’s such a huge category to try to narrowly define people by race – and honestly I don’t think it can be done. Within the ‘white male’ persona we have everything from the dumb yokel hillbilly from Appalachia, the surfer dude, the star-trek watching science nerd, the power-brokering, business suit wearing wall street type and everything inbetween.

“I am always given a hard time for being white. Does it matter to me? I’m not sure. I blame the world for so much. Being born white is just amusing to me. Most people can’t



catagorize me by my race alone”, and “I can’t say since my idea is seldomly the same as that of the general populace.”.

### *Reintegration Stage*

Responses were determined as belonging to the reintegration stage if it appeared the respondents had an active and passive endorsement of White superiority and Black inferiority.

The first question, “When issues regarding race are brought up around me I usually:”, elicited seven responses that were analyzed as belonging to the reintegration stage of WRID. These responses are:

When they are brought up it is a black saying we made their families slaves. I wasn’t even born when there were slaves, how is that my fault. It sounds like a human being looking for an excuse for a crappy life. When my life gets crappy, I can only blame myself.

“laugh.. I think racism is way too serious and has become more of a joke than a debate.

Except for the idea of reparations.....that is a crock of shit!!!”, “Ignore it, this is 2008

people need to get over the past”, “make jokes”, “make jokes”, “Participate, depending

on the level of hostility in the room. If there is more hostility toward blacks, I feel freer to

talk. If there is more black hostility toward whites, I say little”, and,

I tell people I have a hard time with people from India or china or korea. I don’t like their views on my country and i find it almost unforgiving for a race of people to come over here and spit on my country. Many moons ago it was ok to just shoot them. I feel there should be some sort of holocaust on them in this day and age, otherwise we will face certain economic and social doom.

The second question: “I have heard my family members say these things about Black people:”, elicited eighteen responses that were analyzed as belonging to the reintegration stage of WRID. These responses are: “? Usually they are sick of hearing

about racism. Everyone is a minority in some way”, “Mostly in jest I have heard them make fun of black people, but that is purely joking to my knowledge”, “Niggers are moving in the neighborhood. Fucking Niggers. Etc... My family members don’t particularly want to be around black people”, “people are people. But don’t marry one”,

My dad is racist who is in denial. When I’ve talked to him about how race is a piece of fiction he goes to the ‘look at blacks in sports’ defense. He once told me that this one jovial black person was jovial because he was putting a face on for white people.

“Uncle- ‘That area is bad cause of those blacks that are there’”, “Lazy, criminals, untrustworthy, several slang expressions”, “My mother has said that she would have issue with me marrying a black girl”, “Stupid, dumb, lazy, greedy brother. The word black nearly always is associated with welfare, even though to my knowledge more poor lazy white people depend on it than they do”, “Lazy, likely criminals, poor ignorant”, “They need to help themselves. They’ve got to quit blaming others for their problems. Slavery ended how many years ago?”, “Making fun of names. Making fun of types of speech. Slighting the race as the butt of little jokes”, “niggers, dirty stupid, and don’t know how to act”, “My grandfather, father, and brother use racial slurs”, “Not good things but I’m working on it”, “Bell curve”, “Lazy, arrogant,” and “Typical white clichés. You know...”.

The third question, “I think the best thing I can do to deal with racism is:”, elicited four responses that were identified as belonging to the reintegration stage of WRID. These responses are: “Not engage in the type of behavior that elicits racist feelings in others, as well as stand up for myself when someone shows racist behaviors”,

lead by example and not create an issue about it. People that identify themselves as being disliked solely for race, often overlook their own shortcomings, and perpetuate the problem by using racism as excuse for why others don't agree with them.

"I honestly as cold as this may sound but I feel no obligation to deal with racism, I suppose that best I can do is restrain myself from using racial slurs when one is used against me", and, "Avoid the whining people who try and blame me, 'the cracker' for causing their hardships. (i hired blacks to work for me and I have been called every 'white' name in the book.)".

The fourth question: "I think being a White male affects me in this/these ways:", elicited eight responses that were analyzed as belonging to the reintegration stage. These responses are: "I am on the other side of racism against whites by blacks and liberals that think im guilty of something", "other races tend to think some things are bequeated to you or sometimes I get the feeling that black people are making fun of white people all the time",

Race has nothing to do with class. I have no problems hanging out with class black people or classy white people – unfortunately I feel that stereotypes exist for a reason and the greater problem is that why do we see so few classy black people in the Media and so many more OJ Simpsons, Michael Vicks, or Rev. Al Sharpton. Rev Sharpton is looking for handouts. OJ and Michael Vick earned some of the most prostegious places in American society to waste it. Unfortunately I find it very difficult not to see those people as individuals, I see it as another example of a black man who had it all only to waste it.

"NONE! Unless a black person is trying to compare themselves to me", "I do not get the mantel of victimhood", "Defining the culture with power and wealth", "My people run the world. There is no door of opportunity that I can't enter because of my race", and,

“People generally think I’m more approachable and less threatening than black men but at the same time are more willing to insult or harass me since the fear of irate retaliation is gone. I often feel disrespected as a man”.

The fifth question, “I think the usual idea of what a White male is this:”, elicited fifteen responses that were analyzed as belonging to the reintegration stage of WRID.

These responses are:

I think the term ‘white male’ has definitely become a perjorative for selfish, angry, close minded people who control society and exclude others. I think this is not the case, but I think that the term as a whole ‘white male’ has negative connotations. I do feel there is some kind of dislike toward me being a white man. Interestingly, people make assumptions about how my life must be easy and privileged because of my race. I think those attitudes are grossly overinflated, just as racism toward minorities is.

“I think white men are sometimes viewed as guilty until proven innocent, because white people feel guilty, and there are more than enough minorities to hold them responsible for withholding the opportunities they feel they’ve been denied.”, “sex sex sex sex sex”, “Powerful, aloof, racist”, “stupid yuppie fuck”, “Privileged? Racist? I don’t know...”, “Oblivious to his privilege, straight, strong, cocky, powerful”, “The people in control and therefore blamed. This is strictly an American stereotype, as I find Europeans and even Canadians much less hung up on race at all, let alone who’s fault it is”, “guilty, rich, stupid”, “Black people are unwilling to take ownership of their own lives to better themselves. No black person today has ever been a slave and I do not owe them a damn thing!”, “I’m not sure how to answer this question except that I think that the usual idea is that white men are cleaner, more sensitive, easier to frighten, wealthier.”, “Businessman, pinstriped suit, bond trader”, “privileged, educates, powerful”, “Rich and privileged. I

am from a working class family and have worked my ass off for what I have”, and “good religious mother loving god fearing money spending handsome man”.

### *Pseudo-Independence Stage*

Responses were analyzed as belonging to the pseudo-independence stage if it appeared the respondents had gained an intellectual acceptance of one’s Whiteness and quasi-recognition of the sociopolitical implications of racial difference. Pseudo-Independence is the fourth stage in WRID and the first stage in the second half of WRID.

The first question “When issues regarding race are brought up around me I usually:”, elicited ten responses that were analyzed as belonging to the fourth stage of WRID. These responses are: “Depends entirely on the environment it’s brought up. Sadly, topics like this are taboo most places. I would like to be able to be free to discuss things in open and direct communication”, “I participate in the conversation if I feel I have something positive to contribute”, “address it in whatever manner seems fitting. Basically don’t ignore it, but it depends on the situation race is brought up in”, “do a lot of listening”, “Interested, but reserved”, “Listen and possible discuss”, “Listen”, “It depends on what people are saying”, “Depends on how it is brought up: roll my eyes, listen and think, engage in the conversation”, and “Marvel at how ignorant people are, and engage if the issues are brought up in a discussion format”.

The second question, “I have heard my family say these things about Black people:”, elicited three responses that were analyzed as belonging to the pseudo-independent stage of WRID. These responses are: “They just have a different culture”,

Here’s a story from my father, and this is basically how I think about things. My father went to a central-city high school during the 60’s. Putting it in perspective,

he was the only white member on the track team, and was financially worse off than a large part of the community. One day a fellow student confronted my father and said, 'you don't like me because I am Black, don't you.' He responded by saying, "I don't like you because you are an a-hole, not because you are black." Moral of the story, it doesn't matter if you are black or white, it matters what kind of person you are and how you present yourself to everyone else. Race is always an issue that seems to be right underneath the surface, but you should judge people by their actions, not their race.

and "that there are power imbalances in society that black people have babies early and don't get to go to college because of racism and privilege".

The third question, "I think the best thing I can do to deal with racism is:", elicited ten responses that were analyzed as belonging to the pseudo-independence stage of WRID. These responses are: "treat everyone I meet with the respect that everyone deserves", "Treat everyone the same and not placate anyone because of their race", "Be accepting of everyone independent of the color of their skin", "I treat people the way I want to be treated, and make no assumptions about people based on race", "Not spread it", "acknowledge it and its continuing effects on/in society", "no care about it and socialize with people that have things in common with me regardless", "Have more diverse friends. Support organizations that respect different cultures", "look down on that person", and "Do what they do in cuba, if you run off at the mouth telling someone your better because of your skin, you should go to jail. That will stop that nonsense".

The fourth question, "I think being a White male affects me in these ways:", elicited five responses that were analyzed as belonging to the pseudo-independence stage of WRID. These responses are: "I probably get some privileges, but not as much as one may think.", "inherently more 'fair' chances because I do not walk into a situation being a minority. However, I do not feel that I receive special privileges, just the equal

opportunities that a lot Americans are supposed to receive”, “How I am viewed by others. The opportunities that I have been given. People’s first impression of me”, “No notable discrimination or reduced privileges. Black people sometimes feel tense around me if they do not know me”, and “I believed I am classed with cultural stereotypes until some one has the occasion to speak to me. I feel sometimes I am guilty by association for simply being a white male”.

The fifth question, “I think the usual idea of what a White male is this:”, elicited one response that were analyzed as belonging to the pseudo-independence stage of WRID. That response is: “From rural America: closed minded. Ignorant of the effects of racism and what they can have on it. From urban America: moving for change. Successfully passed some of the boundaries.”.

#### *Immersion/Emersion Stage*

Responses were determined as belonging to the immersion/emersion stage if it appeared the respondents had a proactive and self-initiated development of a positive White identity.

The first question, “When issues regarding race are brought up around me I usually:”, elicited twenty-two responses that were analyzed as belonging to the immersion/emersion stage of WRID. These responses are:

Wholeheartedly participate. I love intellectual conversations, and I think that race still plays a huge part in American politics and in our daily interactions. Be it on a conscious or subconscious level, I think we still consider race when interacting with others. And I don’t think that is a ‘bad’ thing, rather, it is natural and part of our socialization to recognize our racial differences. We all have been raised with those closest to us imparting their perspectives on race as well, hence, we have some notion of what our race means and what other races mean.

It depends greatly on what is being said and who is saying it. I like to discuss the teaching of revolutionaries such as Malcolm X on this question with anyone that is interested, regardless of their view or race, as long as they are not a white racist.

“Actively engage in the conversation”, “I usually just go with the conversation, being a very hard person to offend I’ll say what I feel I need to say. And if people are offended because they think I’m racist then that’s just kind of senseless”, “Listen and think about what is being said. I reflect on my own experience being white in American culture”.  
“participate in the conversation.”, “Give my opinion on the matter”, “enter the discussion”, “Listen and speak on the subject”, “Join the conversation”, “sit and listen before responding... then voice my opinion”, “Talk and debate”, “Explain”, “Discuss them”, “Tell them that it is a social construction. I’m a sociologist who studies race!  
Interesting survey”, “engage in the conversation and give my viewpoint, comments, and criticisms of other’s viewpoints”, “discuss them”, “get involved”, “Listen and see why it was brought up in the first place, and try to offer my view”, “engage”, “participate and discuss”, and “Voice my opinion in a non confrontational way.”.

The second question, “I have heard my family members say these things about Black people:”, didn’t elicit any responses that were analyzed as belonging to the immersion/emersion stage of WRID.

The third question, “I think the best thing I can do to deal with racism is:”, elicited six responses that were analyzed as belonging to the immersion/emersion stage of WRID: “Talk about it”, “I don’t think I have to ‘deal with it’. on a personal level I try not to pre-judge and that’s it”,



Change my own life. My best friend since 12-years old is black, I am one of his only white friends, he is one of my only black friends. We are both classy individuals whose families have become closer (and less racist) because of us.

“live daily with a positive attitude about race. Convince others to do the same when possible. Raise my children to do the same!”, and “Attempt to treat people in a similar fashion. I don’t give preference to a white person that I would not extend to someone of a different race.”.

The fourth question, “I think being a White male affects me in this/these way(s):”, elicited seventeen responses that were analyzed as belonging to the immersion/emersion stage of WRID. These are the responses: “Being born a white male has allowed me a fair amount of opportunities that I may not have otherwise had immediate access to”, “Unspoken white privilege based on nothing more than my skin color.”, “In a nutshell I experience reverse racism daily where I benefit solely from being a white male.”, “Gives me more opportunities in society... things such as employment.”, “makes life easy”, “makes work life easier.”, “Affords me some opportunities that are not available to other races and sexes.”, “People are usually more friendly They are more open about there racism because I am white”, “The world is just a little more open to me”, “As a white male I am not oppressed because of my race or sex.”, “I get sunburned more easily. I can go shirtless in the summer.... I have an easier time with jobs, police, and prejudices in general.”, “I have many privileges- just recently was offered housing without a background check or deposit because the landlord wanted ‘to get rid of the usual people who are in this area (african immigrants).”.

I like the fact that you are dealing with white privilege. It is a commodity that allows me to do things (like doing 5mph over the speed limit without worrying about getting a Driving While Black ticket) that other 'races' can't do.

It makes it more likely for me to get a job, less likely to get pulled over or arrested and more likely to be taken seriously as a crime victim. I'm more likely to be paid more in my work, and to be anywhere without being questioned. I have also been a target of violence for being a young white man too.

In a corporate setting I may receive preferential treatment without even noticing it, and without the person who is giving me that benefit conscious of it. I think the same thing happens in social setting when the demographic is primarily white. I have seen the opposite happen when I have been one of the only whites.

I think on a psychological level, I believe there is nothing that I cannot do. I think that part of this is because white people in general, and white men in particular, have attained many of the highest positions and achievements in American society. For example, I want to be President someday, and I have never doubted that I could attain that. I don't know if other races could as easily share my aspirational possibilities, since they do not have as easy of role models who have attained positions like the presidency. Also, the proportion of those in poverty are minorities (I'm almost positive from my days as a sociology major!). Although I grew up in a middle class neighborhood with other races that were also middle class, I do believe that being white helped my ancestors and continues to help me to have a slight edge in economic terms. I don't believe that direct racism happens often in the workplace, but again, on a subconscious level, I know that I can get any job that I set my mind to. My parents had jobs and incomes that education afforded them. That helped me economically as a child and going through school. White people in the United States did not face slavery, so they clearly have a leg up in a strict time sense: black people, for example, had to 'catch up' from slavery in becoming part of the mainstream occupations from which they were once shut out.

And,

I'm not totally sure always. I think there is a general ease that I enjoy in moving through society as a white male. An example is the way that I seem to be able to put on any professional 'costume' and be taken seriously. Like the time I interviewed to work for Morgan Stanly. If I were black and throwing on a suit I think I'd have a lot more to prove to the interviewer but as a white male I was taken seriously, even though I have no experience in the financial industry. I essentially looked like everyone in that setting. There was no question about my 'right' or 'qualifications' to be there.

The fifth question, “I think being a White male affects me in this/these ways:” didn’t elicit any responses that were analyzed as belonging to the immersion/emersion stage of WRID.

### *Autonomy*

Responses were determined as belonging to the autonomy stage if it appeared the respondents had an active racial humanism expressed from a positive White (nonracist) orientation.

The first question “When issues regarding race are brought up around me I usually:”, didn’t elicit any responses that were analyzed as belonging to the autonomy stage of WRID.

The second question, “I have heard my family members say these things about Black people:”, didn’t elicit any responses that were analyzed as belonging to the autonomy stage of WRID.

The third question, “I think being a White male affects me in this/these way(s):”, elicited sixteen responses that were analyzed as belonging to the autonomy stage of WRID. These responses are: “Know who I am and How I fit into society”,

Be myself around others and allow them to be themselves around me. The more nature I act, the better. There are bound to be moments of awkwardness or jokes that are funny to someone of a different race and not so much to me, but if I am comfortable in my own skin and express genuine interest and fascination in others, I think that leads to understanding and openness on the part of others as well.

Call out people in a polite manner when they say racist stuff (i.e. ‘Did you know that race doesn’t exist? So what you just said is wrong.’ They tell me I’m wrong so I give them a challenge. I tell them to give me every example on how race and I shot them down with doses of reality.’ One guy the other day thought that the claims by blacks that the prison system is rigged against them was B.S. I told him

the percentage of blacks in Southern prisons prior to the Civil War was 5%. After the war it was 95%, and so on and so forth.

“to intellectually engage it and attempt to represent what it is to be fair-minded.”, “openly discuss with others my viewpoints and their viewpoints of race.”, “think and talk actively about it. to confront it.”, “Speak out against it. Lead by example.”, “Be myself and defend people who are being infringed upon within reason.”, “Join with others of all nationalities and races to fight forms of racism and other forms of oppression and exploitation together whenever the opportunity arises.”, “organize, educate, resist, revolution”, “keep talking about white privilege”, “Try to monitor my own attitudes and challenge other people when they express opinions that mistake the part for the whole.”, “Be aware of my own actions, thoughts, and tendencies. Also, discourage racism among people I come in contact with.”, “Talk to other white people about their racist attitudes. And use whatever power I have in a given situation to minimize the effects of racism on people of color”,

admit that racism exists, both within myself and within society, and then do my best to not let it control the decisions I make, or the words that I speak. Negative thought about a specific race, are in my opinion, are hard to control without education on why one might think about things in that way. I find it helpful to think about people as people. Most people (regardless of race) when faced with difficulty respond similarly.

And, “listen and discuss in an intelligent and informed manner”.

The fourth question, “I think the usual idea of what a White male is this:”, elicited one response that was analyzed as belonging to the autonomy stage of WRID. This response is: “inherently places you in a position of privilege which must be challenged and questioned”.

The fifth question, “I think being a White male affects me in this/these ways:” elicited one response that was analyzed as belonging to the autonomy stage of WRID. This response is: “Proud”.

### *Complete Surveys*

This researcher asked the open-ended questions to enrich the quantitative data with the qualitative data. In order to see the extent to which the qualitative responses amplify any material of the quantitative data. Three respondents’ surveys, whose WRIAS scores fall along the range of WRID, were randomly chosen and will be described completely below.

The first survey examined is that of a 40-year-old who completed a 4-year college degree, works as a manager or white-collar worker, earns between \$25,000 and \$50,000, and attended a public high school in an urban setting. This participant scored within the contact stage of WRID. His response to the first question: “When issues regarding race are brought up around me I usually:”, was “make jokes”; this response was analyzed as belonging to the reintegration stage of WRID. His response to the second question: “I have heard my family members say these things about Black people:”, was “people are people, but don’t marry one”; this response was analyzed as belonging to the reintegration stage of WRID. His response to the third question: “I think the best thing I can do to deal with racism is:”, was “make fun of it to show how stupid it is”; this response was analyzed as belonging to the reintegration stage of WRID. His response to the fourth question: “I think being a White male affects me in this/these way(s):”, was “I am on the other side of racism against whites by blacks and liberals who think im guilty

of something”; this response was analyzed as belonging to the reintegration stage of WRID. His response to the fifth question: “I think the usual idea of what a White male is this:”, was “guilty, rich stupid”; this response was analyzed as belonging to the reintegration stage of WRID.

The second survey examined is that of a 34-year-old who completed a 4-year college degree, works as a manager or white-collar worker, earns between \$50,000 and \$75,000, and attended a public high school in a suburban setting. This participant scored within the pseudo-independence stage of WRID. His response to the first question: “When issues regarding race are brought up around me I usually:”, was “Actively engage in the conversation”; this response was analyzed as belonging to the immersion/emersion stage of WRID. His response to the second question: “I have heard my family members say these things about Black people:”, was “They need to learn to help themselves. They’ve got to quit blaming others for their problems. Slavery ended how many years ago?”; this response was analyzed as belonging to the reintegration stage of WRID. His response to the third question: “I think the best thing I can do to deal with racism is:”, was “to intellectually engage it and attempt to represent what it is to be fair-minded”; this response was analyzed as belonging to the autonomy stage of WRID. His response to the fourth question: “I think being a White male affects me in this/these way(s):”, was “inherently more ‘fair’ chances because I do not walk into a situation being a minority. However, I do not feel that I receive special privileges, just the equal opportunities that all Americans are supposed to receive”; this response was analyzed as belonging to the pseudo-independence stage of WRID. His response to the fifth question: “I think the

usual idea of what a White male is this:”, was “I have no idea”; this response was analyzed as belonging to the contact stage of WRID.

The third survey examined is that of a 32-year-old who completed some college, is unemployed, earns below \$25,000, and attended a public high school in an urban setting. This participant scored within the autonomy stage of WRID. His response to the first question: “When issues regarding race are brought up around me I usually:”, was “it depends greatly on what is being said and who is saying it. I like to discuss the teaching of revolutionaries such as Malcolm X on this question with anyone who is interested, regardless of their view on race, as long as they are not a white racist”; this response was analyzed as belonging to the autonomy stage of WRID. His response to the second question: “I have heard my family members say these things about Black people:”, was “I don’t remember anything specific right now. I think my parents believe, like many other white people of their generation and class, that racism is wrong, but hold some racist attitudes anyway. I don’t judge them.”; this response was analyzed as belonging to the disintegration stage of WRID. His response to the third question: “I think the best thing I can do to deal with racism is:”, was “Join with others of all nationalities and races to fight forms of racism and other forms of oppression and exploitation together whenever the opportunity arises”; this response was analyzed as belonging to the autonomy stage of WRID. His response to the fourth question: “I think being a White male affects me in this/these way(s):”, was “As a white male I am not oppressed because of my race or sex”; this response was analyzed as belonging to the immersion/emersion stage of WRID. This

participant did not give a response to the fifth question: “I think the usual idea of what a White male is this:”.



## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

This chapter presents how this study's findings compared with the literature regarding the interface between agent status, White privilege and White racial identity development. The implications of these findings for White male racial identity development are also discussed. Finally, the strengths and limitations of this study, implications for social work practice, and future research are also discussed.

#### *Current Findings and Previous Literature*

The purpose of this study was to explore and describe the factors that might be associated with White males' racial identity development, using the White racial Identity Attitudes Scale (WRIAS).to measure participants' stage of White racial identity development (WRID). An aim of this study was to begin deconstructing White privilege so that an understanding of the factors associated with racial identity and development, and its significance in clinical work might be more accessible to mental health professionals. Considering that the study was exploratory in nature and the sample was relatively diverse in terms of socioeconomic status and type/location of high school education, this researcher was not expecting specific results regarding WRIAS scores and correlations of scores with participant demographic characteristics, although there was some expectation of a relationship between agent status and stage of WRID.

According to the results of this study, the majority of participants' highest attitudes score fell in to the pseudo-independent and autonomy stages respectively, of Helms' WRIAS. Conversely, they fell into the reintegration and immersion/emersion stages respectively, in the open-ended questions. This disparity will be analyzed and discussed further.

As reported in the previous chapter, no correlations were found between any of the demographic variables and the WRIAS scores. In fact, statistical analysis revealed that most of the majority of participants WRIAS scores were consistent with being in the later stages of WRID. The demographic data showed that the average participant was 32-years-old, had earned a 4-year degree, maintained a managerial position in the work force, earned between \$25,000 and \$50,000 gross income a year, and attended a public school in an urban setting- where, according the literature, the likelihood of experiencing cognitive dissonance was higher than if they attended a private school in either a rural or suburban setting. The demographic information signifies that the majority of the participants have had the opportunity to face social conditions that may lead them to question their agent status. Indeed, the majority of participants fell into the pseudo-independent (33.3 percent) and autonomy (29.6 percent) stages of WRID in the quantitative data. These findings support the literature insofar as implying that individuals who have had the opportunity to experience cognitive dissonance do tend to have advanced to more sophisticated levels of WRID.

To provide a more accurate picture of these participants' demographic variables compared to their WRID, this researcher separated participants by the demographic variables of yearly gross income, and type and setting of high school they attended. Since the literature suggests that individuals with multiple agent status are more likely to be less sophisticated in terms of their WRID, this researcher chose to compare these demographic variables with their counterpart.

Insofar as these findings of those who earn \$150,000 and above a year can be, given the small sample available, they are quite significant. These findings support the literature in confirming that those who earn a smaller wage have a better opportunity at achieving sophisticated levels of WRID. Additionally, seven of these eight participants attended public high schools, which also supports the literature since the literature implies that it is a White privilege to attend private high school. Public high schools tend to house more students of color and perhaps, as a result, allow their White students to experience higher rates of cognitive dissonance, which leads them to a more sophisticated WRID.

Of the eight participants who earned the least amount of gross income (<\$25,000/year), not one of them scored within the first three stages of WRID. In fact, 50.0 percent of this group scored in the pseudo-independence stage (Stage 4) and 37.5 percent scored in the final stage, autonomy, leaving only one participant among this group who fell in the immersion/emersion stage (Stage 5) of WRID. These findings support the literature in confirming that those who earn a smaller wage have a better opportunity at

achieving sophisticated levels of WRID. Additionally, seven of these eight participants attended public high schools, which also supports the literature since the literature implies that it is a White privilege to attend private high school. Public high schools tend to house more students of color and perhaps, as a result, allow their White students to experience higher rates of cognitive dissonance, which leads them to a more sophisticated WRID.

Similarly to those who maintain the most amount of privilege in the demographic variable of gross income, those participants who attended private high school did not yield WRIAS results with the majority in the lower levels of WRID. However, the findings were not insignificant since there was a majority finding of 75 percent falling into the last three stages of WRID. Additionally, 66.6 percent of this group make a gross annual income of \$150,000 and above showing that privilege begets privilege.

Of the 42 participants who attended a public high school, they scored very similarly to their counterpart who attended a private high school on the WRIAS with 74.5 percent falling into the last three stages of WRID. The difference was that 33.6 percent of the public high school participants had scores that fell into this final stage of WRID while those who attended private high school had less than half of that, 16.6 percent. Another major difference between these two groups is the amount of annual income they earn. Out of the 42 who attended public school 79.5 percent earn a gross income of \$75,000 and below while only 20.5 percent earn \$75,000 and above, a stark difference to those who attended private high schools. From this data it is apparent that those who attended

private high school yielded results showing that 46.6 percent more of them, compared to those who attended public high school, make a gross income above \$75,000.

The findings of those who attended high school in an urban setting demonstrate that participants share demographic characteristics that are not considered as privileged as their counterparts; furthermore, while analysis revealed a bifurcation of the test scores/WRID among this group, the majority, 78.4 percent, are in the last three stages of WRID with the remaining 21.6 percent in the first stage, contact, and none in either the disintegration stage or the reintegration stage. Additionally, the highest percentage of participants, 35.3 percent, fell into the most sophisticated stage of WRID, autonomy. These data support the literature that individuals with multi agent status, but fewer aspects of White privilege, have more sophisticated levels of WRID.

Similar to those who attended high school in an urban setting, of the thirty-one participants who attended high school in a suburban setting, 80.8 percent attended a public school, and 61.3 percent earn a gross yearly income that is \$75,000 and less a year. Additionally, these participants have the majority, 74.2 percent, in the last three stages of WRID. Like those who attended high school in an urban setting, the highest percentage, 38.7 percent, of all of the stages falls into the last stage of WRID, autonomy, the most sophisticated stage. These findings do not support the literature as the literature suggests that living in suburbia is a predominately White privilege. However, the majority of these men fall into other demographic variables, such as income and type of high school, which

imply opportunity for cognitive dissonance; thus, a chance to develop a sophisticated WRID.

Of the fifty-four participants, there were only eight who attended high school in a rural setting. These men shared demographic characteristics in common with those who attended high school in suburban and urban settings. Sixty-two point five percent attended public high school, 75 percent earn a yearly gross income of \$75,000 and below. While the majority, 75 percent, of these participants fell into the last three stages of WRID, they all fell into the pseudo-independence stage of WRID, the first of the last three stages of WRID, while the remaining 25 percent fell into the reintegration stage of WRID, the last of the first three and the most defensive stage. This finding suggests that while the majority of this rurally-educated group have an intellectual understanding of the sociopolitical implications of their racial group membership, the remaining maintain an active and passive endorsement of White superiority and Black inferiority.

The analysis of selected demographic groupings yielded several findings with important implications for professional practice. Based on these findings, it would appear that demographic characteristics that imply White privilege may not necessarily be associated with the ability to develop a sophisticated WRID among White adult men. However, having demographic variables that are contrary to what is implied as White privilege may facilitate White men's ability to develop a sophisticated WRID. This is demonstrated in the higher WRID stages, overall, of those who earn a lower gross income as well as those who attended public high school. As might be expected, an association

was found between specific demographic characteristics in this group (i.e., a greater percentage of those with lower incomes attended public school, and a greater number of those with higher incomes, private school.)

While the literature implies that attending private high school is indeed a privilege, it may be that the private school environment itself - while privileged - is also conducive to a higher level of intellectual understanding regarding sociopolitical issues, allowing this group to experience a cognitive dissonance without the presumed fellow students of color around them. This may account for the majority of this group also falling into the last three stages despite the implications of privilege for the stage of WRID. It should be noted, however, that the majority of participants in this group fell into the fourth stage of WRID, pseudo-independence, which is the intellectual understanding stage- this may support the theory that these men have been allowed to develop a somewhat sophisticated WRID, largely, if not solely, due to their access to private education. Of note, the findings clearly demonstrate that attending private high school was positively correlated with a higher earning potential in this sample.

Initially surprising to this researcher was the findings that 46 of the 54 participants answered the open-ended questions. The assumption was made that there would be very few participants who would answer these open-ended questions since issues around race and racism, and one's feelings around these issues, are difficult for some to identify much less talk about. As a result of the survey and the preceding open-ended questions participants may have felt infringed upon, irritated, annoyed, angry,

confused, ad infinitum; therefore, defensive. Indeed, the open-ended questions were very personal questions to ask, which may have left participants feeling vulnerable. Furthermore, there was no compensation for responding to the survey, let alone answering open-ended questions. However, participants' defensive reactions were prevalent in the qualitative data, which also provided a deeper insight into the different reactions that discussion about race and racism elicit. In retrospect, given that the majority of the quantitative data fell into the more sophisticated levels of WRID, perhaps it is not surprising that the majority of participants completed the open-ended questions since, by definition, individuals with more sophisticated levels of WRID are more comfortable addressing issues around race and racism. To support this claim, the two open-ended questions that speak to the issue of addressing issues around race and racism ("When issues regarding race are brought up around me I usually:" and "I think the best thing I can do to deal with racism is:") elicited the majority of responses that were analyzed as belonging to the more sophisticated levels of WRID and which supported the quantitative data. The majority of participants reported that they would "address the issue" and/or "openly discuss it", which was further demonstrated in their taking the time and effort to complete the open-ended at all.

The qualitative data overall, however, provided different findings from the quantitative data with the majority of participants' responses falling into the reintegration stage (52 responses). These conflicting data have many implications. First of all, it should be acknowledged that almost 50 percent (18 out of 38) of the responses to the questions that asked what things they have heard their family members say about Black people fell



into the reintegration stage of WRID. Overall, 34 of the responses for this question were analyzed as belonging to the first three stages of WRID while only four fell into the last and more sophisticated stages. This implies that although these participants' families were analyzed as falling into the reintegration stage of WRID, from the participants' perspectives, the vast majority of participants themselves fall into the more sophisticated levels of WRID. Therefore, the participants do not represent their family's beliefs; on the contrary. These individuals may actually have had more of an opportunity to question their race and racism in general given that they were surrounded by racist ideology. This difference in interfamily views may also be a result of generational influence, or it may be that participants felt more comfortable reporting racist epithets stemming from their family members rather than from themselves. Whatever the case may be for this disparity, it is promising to see that participant reports of racist ideologies among family members were not necessarily matched with similar ideological stances among the participants.

Additionally, the fifth question, which asked participants what they believe the usual idea of a white male is, elicited a majority of responses that fell into the reintegration stage (Stage 3) of WRID, 15 out of 36. Overall, 34 of the responses fell into the first three stages of WRID for this question while only two fell into the last and more sophisticated stages. Rather than suggesting that these participants are actually in this stage of development, these findings suggest that these participants believe that others perceive them as being in this stage. Their response may imply, however, that these

participants have not developed a positive White identity as they reported believing that others think of them as being quite racist. Additionally, these responses may be an indication of the guilt and/or shame these men have for having multiple agent status, which they are projecting onto others. These responses may also be a result of the participants wanting to please the anonymous researcher by giving him or her a response they thought the researcher was looking for. These responses could also have been an immediate result of the survey eliciting guilt and/or shame in the participants. Whether or not these participants' perceptions of the general public's negative views towards White men are realistic we cannot know; the responses to this question only have implications about the respondents' perspectives of how others perceive them. Ten participants either left this question blank, or responded with question marks stating that they didn't understand the question.

The questions: "When issues regarding race are brought up around me I usually:" and "The best thing I can do to deal with racism is:" each elicited 32 responses that were analyzed as belonging to the last and more sophisticated stages of WRID; and, 14 responses that fell into the first three stages. Both of these questions speak to participants' comfort level with White male identity in interactions with others and/or with the larger community regarding issues of race and racism. Interestingly, for the first question, "When issues regarding race are brought up around me I usually:" elicited 22 responses that fell into the immersion/emersion stage of WRID (Stage 5), and no responses that fell in the autonomy stage (Stage 6). The third question, "I think the best

thing I can do to deal with racism is:" elicited only six responses that fell in the immersion/emersion stage of WRID and 16 responses that fell into the autonomy stage. While both of these questions were designed to measure how participants deal with issues of race and racism, it appears that when thinking about directly addressing racism, ("I think the best thing I can do to deal with racism is"), participants' reactions are not as sophisticated as their reactions to the question: "When issues regarding race are brought up around me I usually", which addresses how they react to racism *directly* with other individuals. For this question, in contrast,, 16 responses fell into the autonomy, the most sophisticated, stage of WRID. Some of these 16 responses were analyzed as belonging to the autonomy stage not because they reported addressing racism with others, but because they reported involving themselves with organizations and/or surrounding themselves with like-minded people. Additionally, some of these 16 responses report defending people who are being "infringed upon" or maintaining a self-awareness of their privilege while "discourag[ing] racism among [others]".

Perhaps associations with situations where race and racism are *directly* addressed in their presence are intimidating, aggressive, hostile, dangerous, and isolating; and therefore, elicited some degree of social and/or performance anxiety. But, in general, in dealing with race and racism they are allowed to feel some safety, security, and support. In other words, these situations are not immediate and they are situations where the individual may make life choices about with whom they wish to associate on a regular

basis, how they spend their time, and how they monitor their own self-understanding.

These are options that they integrate into their lives rather than situations that are forced upon them or in which something may be expected of them.

The fourth question, “I think being a White male affects me in this/these way(s)”, elicited 21 responses that fell into the first three stages of WRID and 23 responses that fell into the last, and most sophisticated stages. This is an interesting question because its purpose was to determine how aware these participants are of their White male privilege, and therefore these responses would also provide an indication of the extent to which they have integrated a positive White identity into their understanding of themselves. The results of the quantitative data show that the majority of participants fall into the pseudo-independence stage of WRID where they are considered to have an intellectualized acceptance of their White identity. The qualitative data show that the majority of participants fall into the immersion/emersion stage of WRID, the stage that follows pseudo-independence and suggests that participants have an active and self-initiated development of a positive White identity. Why then are 21 of the participants’ responses for this question in the first three stages of WRID?

Twenty-one of the responses to the fourth question indicate that these participants are not aware of the privilege their multi agent status provide them. The responses that fell into the contact stage (Stage 1) are those that indicate a belief that (Their status) either doesn’t affect them at all, or that they don’t think about it. There were seven, or 15.2 percent, of responses for this question that fell into the contact stage.

This is consistent with the 14.8 percent (N=8), of participants whose WRIAS scores fell into the contact stage. However, for the disintegration and the reintegration stages the numbers don't quite add up. For example, only three, (5.6 percent), participants fell into the disintegration stage on the WRIAS survey, while six, twice as many, 13 percent, participants fell into the disintegration stage of WRID for the fourth question in the qualitative data. These respondents report not knowing how it affects them and displaying a feeling of confusion regarding how their agent status affect them. Likewise, only two, (3.7 percent), participants fell into the reintegration stage on the WRIAS survey, while eight, four times as many, 17.4 percent, participants fell into the reintegration stage of WRID in the qualitative data.

The disparity between the fourth question's analyzed responses and the quantitative data elicits several implications. Participants may feel too guilty and/or ashamed to think about how being a White male affects them; they may avoid contemplating this topic, even though they know, according to the WRIAS scores, it affects them on an intellectual level. They may be aware of the sociopolitical implications of being a White male, but feel guilty and/or embarrassed by it and therefore, not want to admit these things they understand. It is also possible that it is easier to answer the WRIAS survey in ways that seem more appropriate or acceptable; therefore, questions that measured the participants' awareness of their social status on the WRIAS were easier to answer in ways that suggested a higher, and therefore more acceptable, understanding of the sociopolitical implications of being a White male. The WRIAS gives specific

choices that one may choose, choices that are on a likert-scale, which is much different than an open-ended survey where the possibilities of what the individual could say are endless and not controlled.

If the responses to the second and fifth questions (which explore messages participants received about race and racism within their families and how they believe they are perceived by others) are removed from the overall qualitative data, the majority of the qualitative data fall under the immersion/emersion stage of WRID. This stage is in-between the stages of pseudo-independence and autonomy where the majority of the quantitative data fell. Considering this, the findings in both the quantitative and qualitative sections of the study support each other. In other words, both the quantitative and the qualitative data confirm that these participants generally fall into the last, and most sophisticated stages of WRID.

By looking at the survey responses of the three participants provided at the end of the Findings chapter, we can see that while these participants' WRIAS scores and the qualitative responses don't always support the overall findings in relation to their demographic variables, their WRIAS scores and their qualitative responses do support one another since their WRIAS scores and their qualitative data are consistent with each other.

#### *Limitations*

There were several limitations to this study. Any study gathering data based on self-report poses a number of limitations. Questionnaires are highly subjective and

responses - including to demographic questions - therefore reflect the way that participants perceive themselves and what they believe about themselves rather than objective reality. Further, participants often provide answers they believe are socially desirable rather than their actual opinions and/or experiences. Given the sensitive nature of this material, along with the common theme of guilt and/or shame around these issues, the likelihood of social desirability may be higher than average.

Another limitation was that it was not possible to check the participants' understanding of the questions, (e.g., such as the open-ended question asking participants what they believe the usual idea of a White male is.) Several participants expressed confusion in the open-ended section of the survey and either answered it anyway or left it blank. Many more may not have understood the question(s) in the way it was intended and answered it regardless. Additionally, as the open-ended questions were developed by this researcher, their validity and reliability have not been established. And, since the stages of WRID are not fixed within an individual, as with all aspects of identity, while responses to Helms' survey provided quantitative data that could be used to measure each participant's stage of WRID, it is possible that this stage might change depending on the circumstances in which they find themselves. Completing the survey, alone, could have influenced participants' understanding of themselves and in relation to others, since the survey provides cognitive dissonance.

A major limitation of this study is the lack of generalizability of the findings due to having had a relatively small sample with access to the internet. In order to get a clearer picture of the influence demographic variables have on White men's WRID, at

least fifty participants would have to be analyzed for each of the demographic variables in question. Finally, while some areas of the country have greater diversity in the population, potentially affecting the results of measure of White racial identity development, it is not known in which part of the country participants reside, and those who elected to participate may not reflect the full scope of the country since it was not possible to control an even sample from all parts of the United States.

#### *Implications for Social Work Practice*

The importance of this issue to the field of Social Work is noteworthy. Part of Social Work's mission is to work towards social justice, which includes identifying and addressing the negative implications of racism in all its forms. White privilege is not only a major aspect of racism, but it works to maintain it. Not only is it not in Whites' interest to dismantle racism, but the nature of White privilege and agent status is its invisibility, which makes it that much more imperative that we pursue its exposure. If racism is to be eradicated, what perpetuates it must be fully respected in its power by working to understand it as much as is possible. This study is only a small fraction of what needs to be explored in terms of the current intricacies of White privilege that perpetuate racism.

Possible implications of the findings of this study for practice are the need to gain a more nuanced understanding of multi agent status White male perspectives on race and the interface of these perceptions with agent status and White privilege, challenging previous assumptions of practitioners about upper class males' WRID. The findings speak to the need for practitioners to understand their clients' interactions in their



respective communities and with countless others, and/or the limitations of their relationships with others in terms of issues of race. Theory may be impacted in further understanding how individuals are impacted by White privilege and racism in regard to their intrinsic relationship with each other. Policy could be impacted dramatically if the phenomenon of White privilege was further brought into the light in ways that are endless and unforeseen. Additionally, increasing one's knowledge regarding White privilege and WRID may aid in practitioners' and mental health professionals' understanding about how these aspects of identity and development affect others of different races and ethnicities.

#### *Implications for Future Research*

The findings indicate the need for further research looking at differences in WRID among a larger cohort of white males, allowing for greater opportunity for analysis of difference based on demographic characteristics such as those addressed in this study.

Further research is also needed on the impact of family members' ideology on the ability to develop a sophisticated understanding of race and White privilege. The finding that the majority of the participants in this study having predominately negative perceptions regarding how they are perceived by others is also of interest, lending itself to further study of the relationship of such perceptions to the perpetuation of negative feelings towards White men.

Finally, the findings speak to the need to evaluate educational and group interventions that promote discussion of issues involving White racial identity and the

experience of white racial development among a range of groups, in academic classroom and therapeutic settings.

### *Conclusion*

The importance of addressing and exploring social variables that may keep individuals with agent status from being able to develop the more sophisticated levels of WRID cannot be understated. As long as Whites maintain privilege without the ability to acknowledge it, dismantling racism is unlikely to happen, *and* the disparity between the races in terms of wealth and power will continue. This researcher used Helms' White Racial Identity Attitudes Scale as a practical way to deconstruct White privilege in the hopes of identifying social variables that may be associated with navigating the stages of WRID. The study findings provide empirical data upon which to build further exploration of the relationship between white privilege and the perpetuation of racism and to suggest a new and practical perspective from which to promote change. While there is an extensive amount of literature on the topic of White privilege and the realities regarding the disparity in wealth and power between races, clarifying beliefs and behaviors associated with the stages of WRID may provide those in the helping professions, as well as educators with the tools to begin to address these issues in the field and classroom. While WRID is an individual process, it is also social and political and should not be discounted as unimportant.

This study suggests that not only the experience of class privilege but the lack thereof, are both important in determining the development of WRID. Those participants

who attended public schools in urban settings and made the least amount of money had the highest percentages in the most sophisticated stages of WRID. These data support the literature that suggests that those with the least amount of privileges- conceivably those most likely to be living, working, and studying in diverse neighborhoods, workplaces and academic institutions- experience sufficient cognitive dissonance to develop an active racial humanism from a positive White identity.

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## Appendix A

### Human Subject Review Approval Letter

February 7, 2008

Karen C. Nelson

Dear Karen,

Your second set of revisions has been reviewed and all is now in order. We are happy to give final approval to your study.

*Please note the following requirements:*

**Consent Forms:** All subjects should be given a copy of the consent form.

**Maintaining Data:** You must retain signed consent documents for at least three (3) years past completion of the research activity.

*In addition, these requirements may also be applicable:*

**Amendments:** If you wish to change any aspect of the study (such as design, procedures, consent forms or subject population), please submit these changes to the Committee.

**Renewal:** You are required to apply for renewal of approval every year for as long as the study is active.

**Completion:** You are required to notify the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Committee when your study is completed (data collection finished). This requirement is met by completion of the thesis project during the Third Summer.

Good luck with your project.

Sincerely,

Ann Hartman, D.S.W.



Chair, Human Subjects Review Committee

CC: Beth Lewis, Research Advisor

## Appendix B

Approval Letter to use Janet Helms' White Racial Identity Attitudes Scale



## **DBA Huentity**

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April 6, 2008

Dear Karen Nelson,

In this order you are receiving 10 copies of the WRIAS scale, with permission to reproduce it up to a total of 250 times. Permission to reproduce this scale only applies to your graduate research work at the Smith School of Social Work. Please consider this document your official permission, granted by Dr. Janet Helms, to reproduce the WRIAS scale up to 250 times for use in your research project at the Smith School of Social Work.

Thank you for choosing DBA Huentity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Angela M. DeSilva'.

Angela M. DeSilva  
Administrative Assistant  
DBA Huentity

P.O. Box 600126, Newtonville, MA 02460, helmsja@bc.edu

Appendix C

Recruitment Letter

Dear Prospective Participant:

This is a letter requesting your participation in a study regarding White males' experiences and perspectives on race. I am requesting that you to fill out a brief questionnaire for a research project that I am conducting for my Master's of Social Work thesis at Smith School for Social Work. I will also be requesting your help in forwarding the study to other White men who are eligible to participate in this study, even if you should decide not to participate in the study yourself.

As mentioned above, the research concerns White males' experiences and perspectives on race. The study is an important one that could help clinicians who are working with this population. Participants must be between the ages 25 to 40, and identify as Caucasian or White, and male.

If you are willing to participate, please click on the link which will lead you to an Informed Consent Form as well as the survey. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. Your interest and efforts in helping with this research endeavor are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Karen C. Nelson  
Smith School for Social Work

## Appendix D

### Informed Consent Letter

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

February, 2008

Dear Research Participant,

My name is Karen Nelson, and I am a graduate student at Smith College School for Social Work. I am conducting a study because I am interested in White males' experiences and perspectives on race. Data obtained in this study will be used for my Master's thesis and for possible presentations and publications.

Your participation is requested because you are an adult, White male between the ages of 25 and 40. If you are interested in participating in this study, you must fall between the ages of 25 and 40, identify as a Caucasian or White, and identify as male. If you choose to participate, I ask you to anonymously complete the following survey regarding your experiences and perspectives as a White male about race and racism. In addition, I will ask you to provide demographic information about yourself as well as to answer to the best of your ability the five open-ended questions that follow. The survey will be conducted over the Internet and will follow this consent form.

The risk of participating in this study may be that some interview questions could elicit uncomfortable thoughts, feelings, or memories. At the end of this Informed Consent Form you will find a list of resources from which you may get more information or to seek additional support should you experience psychological distress as a result of participation in this study.

The benefits of participating in this study are that you have the opportunity to contribute to an area of research that may contribute to providing clinicians with a deeper understanding of White males' perspectives and experiences. Your participation may also convey the need for more training opportunities for clinicians' to enlighten their understanding of White men's identity development so they may be better served. Additionally, this survey gives you an opportunity to gain a new perspective as well as share your personal experiences and perspectives on race. Unfortunately, I am not able to offer financial remuneration for your participation.

Your privacy and the protection of any and all information you provide will be taken very seriously. Your answers to the questions will be kept separate from any identifying information and will be stored in locked files to which no one but me, my research advisor, and a data analyst has access. We will keep this information strictly confidential. As required by Federal guidelines, this information will be kept in locked files for a period of three years, after which time it will be destroyed. If any publications or presentations result from this research no information identifying any of the participants will be used; in publications or presentations the data will be presented as a whole and when brief illustrative quotes or vignettes are used, they will be carefully disguised.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. This is an anonymous study. You may decline to answer any interview question(s), and you may withdraw from

the study at any time without penalty by not submitting the finished survey. However, once you have submitted the survey you will not be able to withdraw from the study because it would be impossible to identify your particular survey once it has been submitted since it is anonymous. You have until April 1, 2008 to complete and submit the survey; after this date, I will begin writing the Results and Discussion sections of my thesis.

**BY AGREEING, YOU INDICATE THAT YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE INFORMATION AND THAT YOU HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, YOUR PARTICIPATION, AND YOUR RIGHTS AND THAT YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY. IF YOU HAVE ANY ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT ME AT: 646-498-1043 OR [KNELSON@EMAIL.SMITH.EDU](mailto:knelson@email.smith.edu) OR THE HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW COMMITTEE AT: 413-585-7974.**

If you are interested in participating in this study, please agree to this consent form and complete the survey by April 1, 2008. Please print and keep a copy of this consent form for your records.

If you have any further questions about this study, participation, rights of participants, or this consent form, please feel free to contact me with the contact information below. Additionally, if you are interested in exploring more about racial identity, you may find relevant information at the resources and websites listed below. If upon completing this survey you experience continued distress, you may wish to seek additional support or information. For this purpose there will be a list of resources that you may access when you submit the survey or exit from it.

Thank you for your time, and I greatly look forward to having you as a participant in my study.

Sincerely,

Karen C. Nelson

(646) 498-1043

[knelson@email.smith.edu](mailto:knelson@email.smith.edu)

Appendix E

Data Collection Instrument

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SECTION 1

## **DEMOGRAPHICS**

1. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
  - Less than High School
  - High School/ G.E.D.
  - Some College
  - 2-year College Degree
  - 4-year College Degree (B.A., B.S.)
  - Master's Degree
  - Doctoral Degree (Ph.D., M.D., J.D., etc.)
  - No formal education
  
3. What is the highest level of education your Mother's has completed?
  - Less than High School
  - High School/ G.E.D.
  - Some College
  - 2-year College Degree
  - 4-year College Degree (B.A., B.S.)
  - Master's Degree
  - Doctoral Degree (Ph.D., M.D., J.D., etc.)
  - No formal education
  - I don't know.
  
4. What is the highest level of education your Father's has completed?

- Less than High School
- High School/ G.E.D.
- Some College
- 2-year College Degree
- 4-year College Degree (B.A., B.S.)
- Master's Degree
- Doctoral Degree (Ph.D., M.D., J.D., etc.)
- No formal education
- I don't know

5. Which of the following best describes your occupational status?

- Unemployed
- Farm or service worker
- Blue collar- semi or non-skilled
- Clerical or Sales Worker
- Smaller Business Owner
- Manager, Administrator, or White collar professional
- Medium-sized Business Owner
- Executive, Large Business Owner, or Professional
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

6. Which of the following categories best describes your own total annual income from all sources, before taxes?

- Below \$25,000

- Between \$25,000 and \$50,000
- Between \$50,000 and \$75,000
- Between \$75,000 and \$100,000
- Between 100,000 and 125,000
- Between \$125,000 and \$150,000
- Above \$150,000

7. When you attended High School did you attend a public school, private school, or other?

- Public
- Private
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

8. Which best describes the setting in which you attended High School?

- Rural
- Urban
- Suburban
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

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**SECTION 2**

**WRIAS Social Attitudes Scale  
Janet E. Helms and Robert Carter**



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Instruction: This questionnaire is designed to measure people's attitudes about social and political issues. There are not right or wrong answers. Different people have different viewpoints. So try to be as honest as you can. Beside each statement, circle the number that best describes how you feel. Use the scale below to respond to each statement.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree

(circle here)

- |           |     |   |
|-----------|-----|---|
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1.  | I hardly ever think about what race I am.   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 2.  | There is nothing I can do by myself to solve societies racial problems.                           |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 3.  | I get angry when I think about how Whites have been treated by Blacks.                            |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 4.  | I feel as comfortable around Blacks as I do around Whites.  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 5.  | I am making a special effort to understand the significance of being White.                       |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 6.  | I involve myself in causes regardless of the race of the people involved in them.                 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 7.  | I find myself watching Black people to see what they are like.                                    |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 8.  | I feel depressed after I have been around Black people.   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 9.  | There is nothing that I want to learn about Blacks.   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 10. | I enjoy watching the different ways that Blacks and Whites approach life.                         |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 11. | I am taking definite steps to define an identity for myself that includes working against racism. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 12. | I seek out new experiences even if I know that no other Whites will be involved in them.          |

- 1 2 3 4 5 13. I wish I had more Black friends.
- 1 2 3 4 5 14. I do not believe that I have the social skills to interact with Black people effectively.
- 1 2 3 4 5 15. A Black person who tries to get close to you is usually after something.
- 1 2 3 4 5 16. Blacks and Whites have much to learn from each other.
- 1 2 3 4 5 17. Rather than focusing on other races, I am searching for information to help me understand White people.
- 1 2 3 4 5 18. Black people and I share jokes with each other about our racial experiences.
- 1 2 3 4 5 19. I think Black people and White people do not differ from each other in any important ways.
- 1 2 3 4 5 20. I just refuse to participate in discussions about race.
- 1 2 3 4 5 21. I would rather socialize with Whites only.
- 1 2 3 4 5 22. I believe that Blacks would not be different than Whites if they had been given the same opportunities.
- 1 2 3 4 5 23. I believe that I receive special privileges because I am White.
- 1 2 3 4 5 24. When a Black person holds an opinion with which I disagree, I am not afraid to express my opinion.
- 1 2 3 4 5 25. I do not notice a person's race.
- 1 2 3 4 5 26. I have come to believe that Black and White people are very different.
- 1 2 3 4 5 27. White people have tried very hard to make up for their ancestors' mistreatment of Blacks. Now it is time to stop!
- 1 2 3 4 5 28. It is possible for Blacks and Whites to have meaningful social relationships with each other.

- 1 2 3 4 5      29.    I am making an effort to decide what type of White person I want to be.
- 1 2 3 4 5      30.    I feel comfortable in social settings in which there are no Black people.
- 1 2 3 4 5      31.    I am curious to learn in what ways Black people and White people differ from each other.
- 1 2 3 4 5      32.    I do not express some of my beliefs about race because I do not want to make White people mad at me.
- 1 2 3 4 5      33.    Society may have been unfair to Blacks, but it has been just as unfair to Whites.
- 1 2 3 4 5      34.    I am knowledgeable about which values Blacks and Whites share.
- 1 2 3 4 5      35.    I am examining how racism relates to who I am.
- 1 2 3 4 5      36.    I am comfortable being myself in situations in which there are no other White people.
- 1 2 3 4 5      37.    In my family, we never talk about race.
- 1 2 3 4 5      38.    When I interact with Black people, I usually let them make the first move because I do not want to offend them.
- 1 2 3 4 5      39.    I feel hostile when I am around Blacks.
- 1 2 3 4 5      40.    I believe that Black people know more about racism than I do.
- 1 2 3 4 5      41.    I am involved in discovering how other White people have positively defined themselves as White people.
- 1 2 3 4 5      42.    I have refused to accept privileges that were given to me because I am White.
- 1 2 3 4 5      43.    A person's race is not important to me.
- 1 2 3 4 5      44.    Sometimes I am not sure what I think or feel about White people.

- 1 2 3 4 5 45. I believe that Blacks are inferior to Whites.
- 1 2 3 4 5 46. I believe that a White person cannot be a racist if he or she has a Black friend(s).
- 1 2 3 4 5 47. I am becoming aware of the strengths and limitations of my White culture.
- 1 2 3 4 5 48. I think that White people must end racism in this country because they created it.
- 1 2 3 4 5 49. I think that dating Black people is a good way for White people to learn about Black culture.
- 1 2 3 4 5 50. Sometimes I am not sure what I think or feel about Black people.
- 1 2 3 4 5 51. When I am the only White in a group of Blacks, I feel anxious.
- 1 2 3 4 5 52. Blacks and Whites differ from each other in some ways, but neither race is superior.
- 1 2 3 4 5 53. Given the chance, I would work with other White people to discover what being White means to me.
- 1 2 3 4 5 54. I am not embarrassed to say that I am White.
- 1 2 3 4 5 55. I think White people should become more involved in socializing with Blacks.
- 1 2 3 4 5 56. I do not understand why Black people blame me for their social misfortunes.
- 1 2 3 4 5 57. I believe that Whites are more attractive and express themselves better than Blacks.
- 1 2 3 4 5 58. I believe that White people cannot have a meaningful discussion about racism unless there is a Black or other minority person present to help them understand the effects of racism.
- 1 2 3 4 5 59. I am considering changing some of my behaviors because I think they are racist.

1 2 3 4 5

60. I am continually examining myself to make sure that my way of being White is not racist.

61. Estimate the percentages of your neighbors that are in each of the following groups:

\_\_\_\_\_ Asian \_\_\_\_\_ Black \_\_\_\_\_ Hispanic

\_\_\_\_\_ Native American \_\_\_\_\_ White

62. Indicate the numbers of your closest friends who are members of the following groups:

\_\_\_\_\_ Asian \_\_\_\_\_ Black \_\_\_\_\_ Hispanic

\_\_\_\_\_ Native American \_\_\_\_\_ White

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### SECTION 3

#### Qualitative Questions

1. When issues regarding race are brought up around me I usually: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

2. I have heard my family members say these things about Black people: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

3. I think the best thing I can do to deal with racism is: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

4. I think being a White male affects me in this/these way(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

5. I think the usual idea of what a White male is this: \_\_\_\_\_

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**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR RELEVANT INFORMATION AND SUPPORT**

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR SOCIAL WORKERS**

<http://www.socialworkers.org/>

**WEBSITES FOR RACIAL IDENTITY INFORMATION**

Stages of Racial Identity Development

[www.pierce.ctc.edu/tlink/development/theme\\_identity\\_and\\_cohort/race\\_stages.html](http://www.pierce.ctc.edu/tlink/development/theme_identity_and_cohort/race_stages.html)

Racial Identity in White American College Students: Issues of Conceptualization and Measurement

[http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3752/is\\_200303/ai\\_n9223079](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3752/is_200303/ai_n9223079)

Center for the Study of White American Culture

<http://www.euroamerican.org/editorials/quotes.asp>

**Psychotherapy Resources in New York City, New York**

Institute for Contemporary Psychotherapy

1841 Broadway

New York, NY 10023

212-333-3444

Training Institute for Mental Health

22 W. 21<sup>st</sup> St. 10<sup>th</sup> Fl.

New York, NY 10010

212-627-8181

Washington Square Institute

41 E. 11<sup>th</sup> St #4

New York, NY 10003

212-477-2600

