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RACIAL FORMATION IN A "POST" RACIAL SOCIETY:

HOW ARE COLLEGE STUDENTS BEING PREPARED FOR TOMORROW?

by

KINYATTA N. TRICE

Under the Direction of Makungu Akinyela

ABSTRACT

Post racialism has emerged as a new racial project that could impact the distribution of resources in society. The resources that stand to be impacted by this ideology are social reform policies, social capital availability, access to professional and academic opportunities. This study explored how post racial ideology impacted the professional development of college students between the ages of 18-30. Students were recruited through flyers and snowball sampling. Ten students participated in semi-structured interviews that lasted from 30-60 minutes. Interviews were the sole source of data for this study. A qualitative case study methods was used to gather information in this study. Data was analyzed using a two level thematic coding approach. An analysis of the data revealed categories and properties related to participant's professional development experiences in relation to race. Three general conclusions were drawn from findings. Implications for policy, theory, study limitations, and recommendations for future research are provided.

INDEX WORDS: Racial formation, Critical race, Post racialism, Professional development

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KINYATTA N. TRICE

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

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HOW ARE COLLEGE STUDENTS BEING PREPARED FOR TOMORROW?

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DEDICATION

To my mother, Shirley Trice and Siblings, Valarie Trice, Corey Wright, Brittny Wright you have constantly been the wind beneath my wings and oftentimes my sole motivation to keep going. My dreams only become realities because you all never stop believing I can.

To my angels, George Wright and Ollie Mae Hartage, thank you for blessing me with your life before God called you home. I strive daily to make good use of the talents you both helped to cultivate.

To all of my Brothers and Sisters who comprise the diaspora, you are my constant motivation.

I dedicate this work to all of you.

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1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the background of the research problem and includes the problem statement. An overview of the theory being applied to this study as well as the research method being employed for this study will be provided. The purpose of the study and its significance are also addressed.

1.1 Background

The idea of race and racial ideology, as it exists today, has its origins in 17th century North America (Smedley, 2005). Prior to this time in history people identified and divided along cultural and ethnic lines. Conflicts between different ethnic groups were not uncommon and it was not outlandish for a particular group to be highly ethnocentric. The ethnocentrism that was practiced in this era had little to do with race. The notions and concepts that were held about race in the 17th century, and largely in the 21st century, were conceptually foreign to these ethnic groups. The distinct difference between the ethnocentrism displayed then and the racial ideology that was to develop, was the idea that immigrants should discard their ethnic idiosyncrasies. In 17th century North America the undergirding philosophy that dictated intergroup relations was "you will become like us whether you want to or not" (Smedley, 2005). In order to survive in America one had to assimilate. The beginning of the racialization of society emerged when economic and social needs of the "new world" demanded a group of people who could provide a cheap source of labor. America, as a new colony, initially operated on the labor of indentured servants. Indentured servants, however, only provided labor for a specified amount of time. (Fields, 1990). In order to continue to profit on the cash crop tobacco, farmers had to find a different form of free labor that would last indefinitely. The "new world" needed slavery.

Justification for the total subjugation of an entire group of people was necessary in a society that declared its independence on the "radical doctrines of liberty and natural rights" (Fields, 1990). The inventing of race and racial ideology was a necessity of early colonial society. The social condition that was the birth place for racial ideology was American slavery. People of "Afro-American [descent] had to be place[d] in a non-human status" (Smeadly, 1990).Though this ideology was strictly social in its origins, the fervent reification of its ideas and beliefs led to the solid establishment of the racial idea as it exists today. Within this realm of socially constructed racial categories are certain characteristics that are necessary for the continued existence of the dogma of race in North America.

Six characteristics are typical of a racialized society. First, specified racial groups are seen as distinct and exclusive of one another because of the continued divisions. Though this separation was a direct result of the social need for an inferior race, it came to be seen as biological and natural. Secondly, society must adhere to the idea that no race has an equally valuable standing and must be ranked. Thirdly, the idea that a race has its own set of cultural beliefs and behaviors dictated by biology is necessary. Fourthly, physical features are seen as innate and inherited. Fifthly, the differences between the races began to be seen as enormous and undeniable. This idea explained the need to separate the races in schools, neighborhood, etc. Lastly, racial classification was legally and socially stipulated (Smeadly, 1990). Though these notions and ideas have foundation in the 17th and 18th century, the racialization of society has lasted well into the 20th and 21st century.

There is ample evidence in the present day literature that illustrates the continued racialization of society. Because racialization became systemic, many scholars believe that it has become so embedded in the way that we negotiate reality that it is inextricable. Although many counter-arguments have been presented about the shortcomings of a racialized society, race still remains as a tenacious entity. A notion of present day racial ideology that is distinctly different from

the notions that were held historically is the notion that race and racial divisions are variable in nature. The general idea is that racial meanings are socially constructed to fit the needs of a certain society. What race means in 2012 is conspicuously different from what race meant in the 1900's. The nature of race and the creation of racial categories are a direct result of specific social and historical factors that necessitate a specific meaning and use of race. Omni and Winant are two scholars that state that "racial formation [is a] sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed and destroyed" (Omni and Winant, 1994,55). Because of the dynamic nature of racial ideology and racial categories many have attempted to make the claim that race is arbitrary and is no longer a point of worthy discussion. Sociologist John L. Jackson Jr. contends that:

> Taking away race's vocal chords, the acoustic concreteness of its explicit bark, does not mean that one has defused its bite. If anything race becomes more compelling in silence, when unspoken…. When race and racism work best, we don't even talk about them; they cannot be really seen. We noddingly eschew any and all public policy implications (Jackson, 2005, 394).

Implicit in this idea regarding race is the fact that race has become so pervasive in American society that it continues to live independent of race talk or people intentionally reinforcing it.

Conversations about the significance of race can be traced back to ideas presented by Dubois in 1903 in his work *Souls of Black Folk*. Dubois stated that "the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line." Some groups of sociologists, political commenters, news commentators, and the like are providing a new perspective on the significance of race. Society had begun to entertain the idea that America has entered an era where race is no longer significant. After the enactment of civil rights initiatives and laws, the seeds of post raciality ideology were planted. Publication of Julius Wilson's book *The Declining Significance of Race* in 1980 only solidified that this idea was a viable concept.

Arguments similar to the one presented by William J. Wilson in 1980 use a class analyses to support the idea that race is no longer significant. Wilson's book *The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions* details his contention that:

> …Black's "life chances" were formerly determined by racial stratification. After state enforced racial inequality was eliminated by civil rights legislation, black were admitted to the society wide system of stratification, rather than being confined to a specific location by segregation. The results are a black community which is stratified into a small privileged "class" whose opportunities are equivalent to those of whites with similar high levels of training and skills, and a massive black "underclass" which is relegated to permanent marginality (Wilson, 1980).

Though post racial notions have been met with much critique, it has been continually growing as a new racial project in social, political, legal, and economic arenas. Many believe, in accordance to Wilson's contention, that class, rather than race, is a better determinate of social cleavages. Scholars who have been captured by the heuristic nature of this ideology pinpoint the concrete start of this era to the Supreme Court decision in the *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1* in 2007 (Cho, 2009). In this court decision, justices declared that racial diversity initiatives and race conscious student assignments should only be implemented when they held a compelling state interest. Once racial classification had been used in this way and diversity within the school system had been achieved, racial classification was to be "narrowly used and when absolutely necessary" (Chao, 2009, 1618). The opinion that the court wanted to convey was that the actual focus on race and racial classification was the problem. The solution to the problem was to disregard racial classification and race in order to move past the race issues. This court decision wanted to encourage society to move beyond a focus on race.

Post raciality spread it metaphorical wings in 2008 with the election of the first African American president, Barack Obama. His campaign strategy coupled with the symbolic nature of an African American president supplied the rhetoric needed to push forward this new racial project. Racial projects as described by Omi and Winant (1994) are:

> Simultaneously an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial dynamics, and an effort to reorganize and redistribute resources along particular racial lines. Racial projects connect with what race means in a discursive practice and the way in which both social structures, and everyday experiences are racially organized, based upon that meaning (pg. 56).

The interpretation and explanation of racial dynamics initially began with media personalities directly after the election of Barack Obama. (Temple, 2010; Apollon, 2011). The election of Obama led to the conclusion that a new "racial project," post racialism, had emerged. Within this racial project, as with all racial projects described by Omi and Winant, the distribution of resources began to be questioned and scrutinized. Some of the resources that began to be questioned were affirmative action policies, admission policies that factor in race in an effort to diversify school districts and the existence of minority voting districts. (Cho, 2009). A key feature of post raciality is that all race based remedies to social and political ills should be avoided. Race neutral tactics and universalism becomes the preferred method of political, social, and legal operation. Pundits of the post racial project feel that this ideology will largely appeal to the millennial generation, people born after 1980. The idea is that this generation adheres to significantly different ideas than their parents and grandparents. The negative stereotypes and the necessity of racial categorization are thought to be less salient and largely insignificant for this group. Proof of this, according to postracialists, is that millennials unreservedly date outside of their racial group (Apollon, 2011). Ideas about the saliency of race and the importance of racial categorization often take place on collegiate campuses.

College campuses are a particularly informative site for race studies because of the fact that most racial groups tend to be separated until the college experience. . Upon entering college, interaction among racial groups is unavoidable because many institutions have some type of policy to ensure that they have a racially diverse student body (Lewis et al, 2000). This is largely a result of the social movements of the 1960's, affirmative action policies, and state incentives for public educational institutions to enroll all races. African American students who enter this environment have historically been subjected to adverse treatment and culture shock (Cabrera et al., 1999; Lewis et al, 2000; Guiffrida & Douthit, 2010). Despite very specific race based policies that seek to remedy the ills of discrimination and the efforts of college campuses to cater to minority populations, Black students continue to have noticeably different experiences in predominately White universities. One factor that has shown to buffer negative experiences in college for African American students is positive interaction with faculty and staff (Guiffrida & Douthit, 2010). Studies have also revealed that negative interaction or lack of interaction with faculty members can perpetuate feelings of alienation and discrimination in college settings (Lewis et al., 2000). Despite the numerous studies that have been completed with regard to the racial experiences of collegiate students, college populations continue to be studied to gain insight about the effects of racial discrimination; the importance of race for different groups; levels of racial perceptions; and how societal meanings and conversations about race affect intergroup relations. In addition to this college campuses are also an environment with large millennial populations.

1.2 Problem Statement

Postracialism creates a predicament for critical race and racial formation theorists. These theorists are undergirded by the idea that race is a significant factor in society and is largely unable to ever be transcended in social, legal, political, or economic matters. If race has morphed into a point

of non-existence, critical race theories, and to a lesser degree, racial formation theories are no longer useful for explaining social dynamics in society. Because these theories are grounded in the existence of race they are useless in a post-racial society. For groups who have been marginalized by racism, the most dangerous aspect of post racialism is the fact that it serves to undermine the centrality of race and racism in American society. Failure to adequately understand the role of racial categorization in the United States could have negative implications for American society as a whole. Without making certain that racial inequities and racial discrimination are a thing of the past, taking a post racial stance serves to further hinder racially disadvantaged American populations. Similar to the Racial Backlash movement (Cho, 2009) that emerged simultaneously with the Civil-Rights movement, post racialism's aim is to spread the idea nationally that any political or social remedy that considers the race of a group of people should be renounced. The general idea behind the retreat from race based remedies is that America has transcended race. Because White America still remains the dominate culture in America, stating that race and racism are items of the past, results in the adaptation of an unbridled White standard. This standard becomes synonymous with what it means to be American and any and all who identify as an American should embody White standard characteristics (Cho, 2009). Another ominous implication of post raciality is the fact that Black political organization is devalued. Instances of racism and discrimination are seen as erroneous use of the "race-card" and Black political initiatives are seen as "old school civil rights activists" (Chao, 2009). Before assumptions of this nature are acted upon in American society, post racialism must be investigated.

This study used a qualitative case study method to explore how post racial ideology impacts the professional development of college students between the ages of 18-30. This questions was appropriately presented because race studies have historically taken place within the context of the collegiate experience and because post racial ideology has been stated to most closely align with

people between the ages of 18-30. Professional development was chosen as a variable of exploration because it is a resource, whose availability has implications for the future life chances of an individual. The correct professional development prepares students to be able to take advantage of professions and career choices after graduation. The professional development of college students usually directly steams from working closely with university staff and faculty. Because the past literature stated that positive interaction with faculty usually translates into a positive collegiate experience for minorities, professional development was a good place to garner information about the overall experiences of students within their respective departments.

1.3 Purpose Statement

The study employed a qualitative case study research method. Qualitative methods were used in order to include the voice of the millennial generation in the conversation on post racial America. In addition to this, qualitative interviews aided in gaining insight about the personal professional development experiences of college students. This study sought to explore the aspects of professional development identified in the literature as well as other areas of professional development that are most likely to be provided in a collegiate setting. Questions were asked to gain insight about the ways in which race impacted this process. In addition to this this study sought to uncover the current meanings people ascribed to race as well as the importance of race and racial categorization to this age group. This study targeted students of all races and genders enrolled in Georgia State University. Students were recruited from academic programs that offered, a least, a masters level terminal degree.

1.4 Significance of the Study

African American Studies is a discipline that arose out of the need and demand of African American students. At the heart of the demand was the fact that little to no information regarding

the contributions and value of the Black race to American society was included in formal education. African Americans/Blacks concluded that it was necessary to create a discipline that was dedicated to the study of the race in order to properly situate the role of African Americans in the conversation regarding America (Rojas, 2007). Those most affected by the availability of ethnic studies programs are students who have never been exposed to information about their race or scholars who aim to address the social and political issues that plague the race. The discipline of African American Studies also aims to provide theoretical frameworks that provide comprehensive analyses of the world (Brown, 2007). The information gained in this study aides in determining if the discipline of African American studies and other ethnic studies disciplines are still a worthwhile allocation of resources.

Beyond the implications for ethnic studies programs, the conversation of post racialism, as it is posed, could influence government policies. The conversation emerged from a political campaign. The first response to Obama's election of media personalities like *Wall Street Journal's* Tim Rutten and *Richmond Times Dispatch's* Ross Mackenzi was that a post racial era has been entered. Politician Bill Bennet, a conservative from the Reagan administration, and the former Secretary of Education stated that race could no-longer be invoked as a barrier for Black populations (as cited by Apollon, 2011). Because post racial ideology largely emerged out of a governmental political occurrence it stands to be reiterated in this same context. Its appeal to the media, politicians, and majoritarian society poses it as a possible new policy making strategy in government. Instead of drawing conclusions about the state of race relations in America from a single event of racial progress, the election of the first Black president, research must be done to see if this occurrence is indicative of the overall racial climate. Research will also have to necessarily explore if the ability of Obama, to seemingly move beyond racial barriers, is indicative of the overall state of the Black population.

Though the literature on post racialism is immense, there are few empirical studies that have sought to collect information regarding its effects on the everyday reality of millennials. Most studies have investigated the impact of "colorblind ideology," however, post racial ideology has different elements than colorblind ideology (López, 2011). Another gap in the literature that this study addressed was the absence of the voice of the millennial generation in the conversation about postracialism. In addition to this, the collegiate experience has not been explored in relation to the effects of post racial ideology. By looking at the impact of post racial ideology in this context information was garnered about the validity of this ideology as a strategy for conceptualizing the needs and experiences of the millennial generation. The results of this study added to the body of research that informs policy makers, educators, as well as educational institutions. The goal was to make sure that these respective entities have correct information in assessing the needs of the American population.

In addition to adding empirical data to the body of literature regarding post racialism and including millennials in the conversation on post racialism, this study spoke to the ways in which the uses, meanings, and significance of race have changed in relation to the historical meanings found in the literature. This study illustrated the usefulness of a racial theory that accounts for the non-static nature of race. Racial formation theory, as presented by Omi and Winant in the 20th century, is still an applicable theory in understanding the construction of race. This study situated this theory within 21st century thought and critique regarding race.

1.5 Nature of the Study

This study employed a qualitative case study method in order to collect data. This study sought out multiple cases of professional development in order to illustrate the different aspects of professional development as it related to race. These cases were gathered from the people who have

been posited as the breeding ground for post racialism. Cases of professional development were selected from differing academic departments in order to show various aspects of the same issue. All of the cases of professional development occurred within the context of Georgia State University. Qualitative research was appropriate for this study because "[researchers that employ qualitative methods] admit that value-laden nature of the study and actively report their values and biases as well as the value laden nature of information gathered from the field" (Creswell, 2007, 18). In addition to this, qualitative research was appropriate in this study because the study sought to understand how the current significance and meaning of race has changed. This was done by investigating the current meanings and significances of race within the context of collegiate professional development. The study gathered information from the millennial population through semi-structured interviews in order to inform a discourse being held in majoritarian society. (Creswell, 2007).

The research design for this study was non-experimental. This design was appropriate because the study aimed to explore how the idea if post racial ideology actually impacted the professional development experience of millennial college students. An intervention was not necessary because the study simply wanted to know how this population was or was not affected by race. In addition to this this study wanted to know the level of significance this population ascribed to race. Multiple cases of professional development were reviewed in order to compare the experiences of the participants in order to illustrate a complex, yet detailed, picture of professional development at Georgia State University.

1.6 Research Question

The purpose of this study was to explore how post racial ideology impacts the professional development of college students between the ages of 18-30. The research questions guiding this study were as follows:

1. How does post racial ideology impact the professional development of college students between the ages of 18-30?
2. Is race and racial categorization important to this age group?
3. Are people in this age group able to recognize instances of racial discrimination?
4. Are people in this age group able to recognize post racial influence?

In the past, perceptions of racial discrimination have been measured within the context of the job market (Beard, 1999). Another area that has been frequented in exploring and determining the effects of racial discrimination have been predominately White institutions (Bhor et al., 1994; Rodgers & Summers, 2008; Thompson & Fretz, 2010). The use of qualitative and quantitative methodologies have been equal in these studies. The Applied Research Center (ARC) conducted a study using qualitative methods to discern if the people between the ages of 18-30 actually agreed with the idea that their generation no longer felt race to be significant. This study explored ideas about the significance of race within the context of public housing, public education, the criminal justice system, employment, and health care (Apollon, 2011). The ARC employed both a quantitative and qualitative approach to gather information about the ideals of this generation regarding race. The study detailed that the millennial generation was not a monolith, however overall this generation did not feel that race had reached a point of insignificance.

This particular study explored the impact of post racial ideology on the professional development of millennials. This study was different from past studies that sought to explore race in that it explored the impact of race in a time period that has been deemed post racial. Many of the

past studies that investigated race were completed within a social environment that did not question if race mattered. This study aimed to gather information about the main research question as well as the three sub-research questions. This study was similar to other post racial studies (Apollon, 2011) in that it employed a qualitative methodology. Differing from the previous post racial study this study investigated the perception of racial significance within the context of professional development. The previous study completed by the Applied Research Center on this topic only spoke to the high school educational experience. In addition to this, these research questions aimed to add empirical data to the conversation regarding post racialism as most of the literature on this topic to date only theorizes about this racial project and assumes that it is a true sentiment of the millennial population.

1.7 Racial Formation Theory

The theory that was used to analyze the data gathered in this study was Racial Formation theory as presented by Omi and Winant in 1994. These sociologists' aim was to present a theory that would challenge concrete/statics conceptualizations of race as well as purely social constructionist's views of race. In the view of Omi and Winant, "race is a concept that signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies" (Omi and Winant, 1994, 55). With this functional definition of race, these theorists develop their argument further by stating that, although race is laden with contradictions and uncertainties it still plays an integral role in the way that people organize reality. Race, for Omi and Winant, must not be approached as a social anomaly, but as a congruous part of social structure. From these ideas the theory of racial formation is presented.

Omi and Winant define "racial formation as the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed" (Omi and Winant, 55, 1994). The

unfolding of racial formation theory reveals two premises that Omi and Winant use to explain the theory. The first premise is that "racial formation is a process of historically situated *projects* in which human bodies and social structures are represented and organized." The second premise is that racial formation is correlated to hegemony, "the way in which society is organized and ruled" (Omi and Winant, 1994,56). With these two premises being the foundation for the creation of a viable theory that is well suited for analyzing the place of race in American society, racial formation theory was presented. The goal of this theory was to offer a theory that "at minimum [contained] a comparative historical and political component…some sort of sociology of culture or knowledge, and an adequate microsociological account" (Winant, 2000, 170). In addition to this challenge, Winant argues that a good racial theory will "link the micro- and macro- aspects of racial signification and racialized social structure" and "will recognize newly pervasive forms of politics" (Howard, 2000, 170). In line with the requirements adumbrated for a feasible race theory, racial formation theory serves as one of the most befitting tools to perform race analysis with.

Other theories have been used to analyze the role of race in society. Most of these models fail to be an effective mode of analysis because they fail to identify the dynamic nature of race. Most race theories had been in place prior to the World War II. Historically WWII changed the way that world conceptualized race. Post WWII people deplored racism and genocide, social upheavals and revolutions were abundant, the Civil Rights Movement took place in the United States and anti-apartheid movements in South Africa, and the postcolonial world began to be very critical of colonial imperialistic ways and racial practices (Winant, 2000; Robison, 1997). The failure of a race theory to adopt to these social and political changes renders it unusable.

Ethnicity based theories claimed that interaction between ethnic groups and the eventual assimilation of minority groups would eradicate prejudicial attitudes. Once it was illegal to discriminate and all people had legal access to resources social issues of race would be no more

(Omi and Winant, 1994). The obstacle of such theories is that they take for granted the tendency of minority groups to want to retain their own customs, cultures, and identity. The only way that ethnicity theories are currently applicable is to render all people who are race conscious socially out of tune. Any racial cleavage that does still exist is the fault of the minority for not taking advantage of rights allotted through civil rights reform (Winant, 2000).

Class theories assume that racial disparities could be remedied by allowing people to have equal access to economic resources. According to these theories, interracial cooperation and race conscious programs would lead to the equal distribution of resources and the inevitable upward mobility of all racial groups. (Wilson, 1980; Omi and Winant,1994). The problem with class analyses theories is that a certain amount of intra-racial cooperation is needed. Currently in the United States, group cohesion is on the decline. Class analyses theories also underestimate the tendency of privileged groups (Whites) to fail to part with privilege. Racism is still very prevalent in US society. The end result of this affinity for privilege is that the economic redistribution of programs, like affirmative action, never completely take place (Winant, 2000).

Nation based analyses of race have been weakened by the ease of the spread of information and travel. Solid formations of national group identities are currently better defined as diasporic identities. In order for a nation of people to work to alleviate the ills of hierarchal racial classification, a strong commitment to the political and organizational need of the nationality is needed. In current times this type of organization and commitment is difficult and near impossible. The result of this ambiguity is that a shroud of mystery about who nationalistic ideals are applicable to and controversy about what social and political initiatives should be their focus. (Winant, 2000).

Racial formation theory was applicable to this study because the study wanted to gauge how the professional development was being challenged or enhanced by shifting racial meanings and significances. Racial formation theory takes into account the fact that the implications and the

ingredients of racial identities are varying and politically controversial. It acknowledges that racial formation in and of itself is the interaction of projects. Within this interaction "representational/discursive" elements are combined with "structural/institutional" elements (Winant, 2000). Lastly, but arguably most important for the interpretation of data for this study, is the fact that racial formation theory feels that the interaction of various racial projects happen because society struggles with the meanings and importance of race. Furthermore this theory recognizes that the meaning of race is contingent upon individual and local/global organizations factors. This was particularly important for this study because post raciality is posited as a new racial project. Racial formation, in name, is a racial project that has existed for the last three decades. The data gathered from this study will be generated from exploring the interaction of these two racial projects. The basic premises of racial formation theory offer a lens with a non-static understanding of race that will allow the impact of post racial ideology on the collegiate professional development of African Americans to be derived.

1.8 Definitions

1. Postraciality: "a twenty-first-century ideology that reflects a belief that due to the significant racial progress that has been made, the state need not engage in race-bases decision making or adopt race-based remedies, and that the civil society should eschew race as a central organizing principle of social action" (Cho, 2009, 1594).
2. Racialism: the act of a "society in which economic, political, social, and ideological levels are partially structured by the placement of actors in racial categories or races. Races are identified by their phenotype, but…the selection of certain human traits to designate a racial group is always socially rather than biologically based…. People [placed] in the racial categories are organized an hierarchal nature which produces definite social relations

between the race. The race placed it the superior position tends to receive greater economic remuneration ad access to better occupations and/or prospects in the labor market, occupies a primary position in the political system is granted higher social estimation" (Bonilla-Silva, 1996, 469-470).

3. Racial projects: "a simultaneously interpretive, representation, or explanation of racial dynamics, and an effort to reorganize and redistribute resources along particular racial lines" (Omi & Winant, 1994, 56).
4. Race: "a concept that signifies and symbolizes sociopolitical conflicts and interests in reference to different types of human bodies" (Winant, 2000, 172).
5. Professional Development: a skill set attained for both personal development and career advancement. It encompasses a range of learning opportunities including formal and informal opportunities. These situations are usually collaborative and intensive and have an evaluative stage. The most common approached to professional development are: consultation, coaching, communities of practice, lesson study, mentoring, reflective supervision, and technical assistance (Ducheny et al., 1997; Buysse et al., 2008).

1.9 Assumptions

My professional and personal experiences combine to create several assumptions and bias on my behalf. Because I am a member a minority group that is negatively affected by racial classification, I have committed ample time and professional efforts to studying how to make a racialized society more egalitarian. One way in which I committed my time and efforts was by seeking employment with a non-profit organization that attempted to alleviate racial barriers. The second way that I have committed time and efforts to this topic has been by dedicating my academic career to study the effects of a racially structured society. I am also a part of millennial population

and am most interested in social issues that concern this population. I believe that because the members of my study were of the millennial generation they were at higher risk of being affected by society adopted a post racial stance. Although I cannot eliminate my assumptions and biases from who I am, I attempted to minimize them by journaling and exercising reflexivity throughout this research process.

1.10 Scope, Limitations, Delimitations

The qualitative portion of the study will included men and women of all races who are between the ages of 18-30. Only people who were current students of Georgia State University were solicited for this study. This guideline was put in place in order to gather information the individuals who have been posited to most likely be exposed to the notions of post racial ideology, to gather information from the group of people who have been termed post racial, and to investigate a population that is likely to be exposed to professional development. The limitations of the study were that data is strictly contingent upon the truthful detailing of participants experiences who are involved in the study. The data gathered from this study will not be able to be generalized beyond the participants of this study.

1.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter included a discussion of the background research that lead to the necessity of this study. It presented the problem that this study addressed and the significance of the addition of this study to the literature on the topic of race and race theory. An overview was provided of the nature of the study and the methods that were used to conduct the study were discussed. The theory that was used to analyze the data collected was detailed. Essential definitions were provided for ambiguous phrases. The scope, limitations, and delimitations were also detailed. The next chapter will present a survey of the literature regarding race, racism, race theory, and postracialism.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Post racialism, as a new racial project, posits that America has arrived upon an epoch in which race is no longer a significant barrier to success. This racial project, largely via claims of the media, has been said to resonate with the millennial generation. The millennial generation includes those persons born post 1980. This study explored how post racialism impacted the professional development of millennials matriculating through an academic university. This chapter will include a review of the relevant literature that has shaped this topic as well as current empirical findings in relation to perceptions of racial discrimination and how millennials feel about the notion of a post racial America. Overall the literature has not addressed how postracial ideology impacts the experiences of the participants involved. The research that has been conducted on racial perceptions have equally used quantitative and qualitative methods, however studies that specifically focus on postracialism are sparse. The databases searched for this literature review are EbscoHost and Jstor. The key words used to find this research are colorblind diversity, post racialism, race, college experience, African American students, predominately White institutions, and the social construction of race. The main academic journals reviewed for this research are Sociological Quarterly, Sociological Perspectives, American Sociological Review, Journal of Higher Education, Journal of Black Studies, and Contemporary Sociology.

2.1 Racialization

The Origins of Race

The colonization of the "new" world was instigated with the arrival of European settlers. Although the story of the colonization of North America is often chronicled in U.S. history as the "discovery" of America, liberal historians have sought to accurately chronicle this story by asserting the fact that North America was inhabited by Native Americans prior to the arrival of European

settlers. The first colony settled, Virginia, was established purely for profit. The vehicle of choice for this profit making venture was the crop of tobacco (Fields, 1990; Robinson, 1997). The assertion of inalienable rights that would be seen as self-evident would not appear until almost two centuries later. The grunt work of the colony of Virginia was allocated to the less fortunate in colonial society, indentured servants. Indentured servants filled a position of subservience. Because of this inferior position: "indentured servants…enjoyed less dignity and less protection in law and custom. They could be bought and sold like livestock, kidnapped, stolen, [and] put up as stakes in card games…"(Fields, 1990). This system failed to be effectual for many reasons. One of the main factors for its demise was the inability of a master to make an indentured servant perpetually a slave.

Social changes, such as the change in the price of tobacco and the number of indentured servants emigrating to America, led to the rationale that another form of manual labor was needed. Prior to the mass conveyance of Africans, a small population of enslaved Africans lived in North America, however, societal changes solidified the necessity for having a larger dispensable population. Social unrest was one of the first indicators that the legal, racial, and social climate in the colony of Virginia was about to undergo major change. Bacon's Rebellion took place in 1676. This rebellion was a protest of the settlers against the governor of the colony, William Berkley. The colonists wanted the governor to harden his policies on the presence of Native Americans in the colony. (Grymes, 1998). Largely, the settlers wanted to eradicate the Native American presence (Robinson, 1997). Spurred by the protest energy of Bacon's rebellion "a group of young [White] freedman, joined by servants and slaves as well, launched the largest popular rebellion of colonial America, plundering the property of the well-to-do, burning the capital, and sending the royal governor and his cronies temporarily into hiding on Virginia's Eastern Shore"(Fields, 1990). This rebellion, which happened within Bacon's rebellion, was unrelated to the rationale for protest surrounding Bacon's rebellion. This revolt "rejected British and colonial masters alike"(Robinson,

1997). The end result of this was the enactment of laws that dictated the rights and social status of the enslaved African population. This rebellion along with a series of others throughout colonial society, (East Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia), was one of many that led to the enactment of laws that suppressed the rights of the enslaved population (Robinson, 1997). The legal stripping of rights laid the foundation for the racial divisions, racism, and discriminations that are characteristic of the United States: "As the seventeenth century came to a close, the legal rights secured for the enslaved had been suppressed empathetically: the comprehensive slave codes of South Carolina were codified in 1696, those of Virginia in 1705, New York in 1702 and 1712 and Maryland's in 1663 and 1681" (Robinson, 1997, 9). Slave codes became the legal solution to the social unrest while simultaneously placing a sector of society in perpetual servitude.

Slavery was initially posed as a guaranteed labor source for the colonies, however it emerged as a threat to the nation's ability to fight for its independence. In the 18th century the British colonies in America began to promote doctrines of liberty and natural rights. For the majority of the population these ideals may have proved to be true. However, for a smaller portion it was the exact opposite of their lived experiences. A racial ideology was adopted by the colonies that explained away these contradictions:

> "rac[ial] [ideology] from its inception was a folk idea, a culturally invented conception about human differences. It became an important mechanism for limiting and restricting access to privilege, power, and wealth. The ideology arose as a rationalization and justification for human slavery at a time when Western European societies were embracing philosophies promoting individual and human rights, liberty, democracy, justice, brotherhood, and equality…" (Smeadly, 2005, 22).

In the reality of the colonists this racial ideology made sense. Not only did this belief make sense, but it was continuously reified through the actions of the colonists. This erased the paradoxes that

slavery created for the society of libertarians. As the revolutionary war unfolded and the country showed its dedication to the ideals which had been so elaborately written in the Declaration of Independence, "slavery and the presence of Afro-Americans became increasingly minor exceptions" (Fields, 1990, 115). Libertarian ideologies could now exist in the same society where slavery thrived with this newly adopted racial ideology. The ideology allowed slavery to stand in stark opposition to the profound freedom that the "new" world asserted.

The Structuring of a Racialized Society

Omi and Winant (1986) state that racial categories are the result of the racialization process. The racial ideology used by the European settlers started the racialization process for America. Omi and Winant contend that this process entails "the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice or group" (as cited by Bonilla-Silva, 1996, 471). As in the United States the categorizing of people along racial lines is extremely political and is inextricably linked to the "practices such as conquest, colonization, enslavement, peonage, indentured servitude, and more recently colonial and neocolonial labor immigration" (Bonilla-Silva, 1996, 471). The first key characteristic of all racialized societies is the situating of people into hierarchies. Although hierarchies exist in all racialized societies, the social characteristic of a specific place results in the different variations of the racial structure witnessed throughout the world. A second characteristic of a racialized society is that each race, as a result of their hierarchal position, develops different social, economic, and political interests. Because of these conflicting interests the social and political upheavals like those of the sixties occur. (Bonilla-Silva, 1996, 470). Thirdly, race scholars are careful to convey the idea that the salience of race in the construction of a racialized society does not underscore the salience of class and gender as factors of oppression in society. A fourth key characteristic of a racially structured society is the drawing of imaginary "color lines" that ensure that racially classified peoples do not "cross the line" once classified

For members of society who are placed into the inferior group, negotiating everyday life experiences is a burdensome task. Du Bois uses the term "double consciousness" to describe the negotiation process for marginalized peoples. The racialized person who is not in power in society struggles with maintaining his/her own racial, cultural, and social identities as a member of a subjugated racial group while also attempting to acquire status as a viable member of the larger society. In the *Souls of Black Folk* Du Bois meticulously descbribes the psychological state of a racial minority living in a racialized society:

> The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife,—this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face (Du Bois, 1903, 9).

Du Bois specifically focuses on the experience of African Americans. He does not only feel that that these issues negatively impact the minority population, but the larger society as well. Scholars since Du Bois often evoke the statement "the problem of the twentieth century will be the problem of the color line" (Dubois, 1903) in order to symbolically speak to his ideologies and evoke his ideas. The basic principal behind this statement is that racial conflicts that emerged out of the racialization of society would prove to be a continued point of great tension in society.

A present day sociologist, Heather Dalmage, detailed in her book *Tripping on the Color Line* (2003) the current binding characteristic of the American color line. Echoing the sentiments of

scholar Bonilla-Silva and Omi and Winant, Dalmage states that racial categories and meanings change depending on the social climate of a place. Dalmage contends that the present day color line is "fleeting and static, universal and particular, tangible and false, apparent and imagined, clear and ambiguous" (pg. 12). Dalmage's work discusses the increasing prevalence of multicultural people in the United States that have ambiguous racial characteristics. She discussed the tendency of people to metaphorically and literally "trip" on the color line in an attempt to maintain the racial classifications that have been constructed in society. Dalmage further illustrates the fleeting nature of the color line by detailing the ways in which people would racially classify themselves beyond the parameters of the socially accepted categories of racial classification. Another common reason for this "trip" is the fact that biracial persons do not neatly fit into socially accepted categories. Because of the fleeting nature of the color line, some scholars argue that the issue of race is no longer a relevant area of discussion. In their eyes, the ease of the social construction of race is indicative of the ease of the social deconstruction of race. However, because of long standing standard of racial classification, the everyday reality of America, and the identity construction of the American population, many scholars such as Derrick Bell, Kimberlé Krenshaw, and John Jackson contend that attempting to dismiss race as a simple social construct is remiss at best in a viable conversation regarding the role of race in society.

Pervasiveness of Race

Jackson (2005) states that racially constructing reality is second nature for Americans. He contends that it is so pervasive that silence does nothing to diminish its power. Failure to talk about and consider race only makes it more powerful and compelling. He states that each time society feels it has reached a point where race is no longer salient, it reemerges. For Americans it is the way that we operate in society. Inherent in Jackson's discussion of race is the notion that race is embedded in

the prevailing thought processes of American society. Kimberlé Crenshaw expresses similar sentiments in her writings.

Crenshaw (1988) credits the reification of race to the hegemonic beliefs that are present in society. She uses this to explain why it is so difficult to get beyond a racialized society and to undo the unjust result of a racial hierarchy. Crenshaw, drawing on Antonio Gramsci, an Italian neo-Marxist, states that "the concept of hegemony [is] the means by which a system of attitudes and beliefs, permeat[e] both popular culture consciousness and the ideology of elites, reinforces existing social arrangements and convinces the dominated classes that the existing order is inevitable" (1351). The racialization process has created a system of beliefs that are so embedded in the psyche of the population that people cannot imagine reality any other way. At the heart of a racialized society is the belief that society should be structured the way it is. The continued existence of a racially orchestrated reality is contingent upon the presence of hegemonic beliefs. Crenshaw contends that hegemonic racial beliefs are built into the fabric that weave American society. Unless hegemonic beliefs are countered with other beliefs race is unable to be disregarded. This ideology alluded to ideas presented by critical race theorists, Derrick Bell.

Derrick Bell (1993) argues similarly. His ideas are that Blacks have become so disillusioned by the American way of life that they are often unable to identify the ways in which they are disadvantaged. Bell's argument develops further as he explains that race is so integrated in the laws of America that it is almost impossible to use the American legal system to deconstruct racialization. If a person in the dominated group attempts to move beyond the confines that have been placed upon the group as a whole they are deemed an exception. The rest of the group is then seen in a more discouraging way because they aren't able to move beyond societal confines. In the cases where the Black population may make advances in society, the larger society readjusts in order to reestablish White dominance. In the view of Bell, many of the symbols that the dominated groups

revere as signs of racial progress are mere symbols and really indicate nothing at all. They have been put in place to pacify the marginalized populations. The main ideal of Bell's ideas is that race permeates so deep that it cannot and will not ever reach a point of insignificance. Race permeates so deep that it cannot and will not ever be escaped.

2.2 Post Racialism

The Start of the Conversation

Beliefs about the permanence of race have largely dominated the conversation regarding the place of race in American society. After the Civil Rights movement of the 60's and 70's the seeds of a new ideology were planted. Some felt that the legal end to segregation and discrimination signaled the end of an era where race mattered. Sociologist Julius Wilson published *The Declining Significance of Race* in 1980. Wilson's argument states that race was waning in how significant it was in determining life chances. Wilson felt that class was now a better determinant of access to opportunity. His argument is that although race is still a factor in society, it is not the main or most significant factor in determining life chances. Another aspect of Wilson's argument is that once members of a racial group attains a certain class level they are no longer confined by the social constraints assigned through racialization. Society, in Wilson's contention, is more stratified by class than by race.

Steven Gregory (1992) illustrates how class stratification changes the salience of race in determining the life chances of African Americans. He conducted an analyses of New York City's Corona-East Elmhurst community during the post-civil rights era. As the Black residents of Corona became more financially stable they began to migrate into other arenas of life, specifically homeownership. The Blacks who could afford homes often did so in the East Elmhurst area, leaving behind those who were not of the same economic class in the Corona community. Though both areas remained inhabited by Black residences the political interests, economic focus, and social

focus of the two neighborhoods changed. The focus of the East Elmhurst community morphed. The residents of East Elmhurst now had the mobility to work jobs outside of the Black community and were property owners: "occupational mobility interacted with state-sponsored institutional reforms to enable the [B]lack middle class of East Elmhurst to translate economic gains into political influence" (263). These new economic empowerments led to the ability to focus on the quality of life instead of basic human rights. In addition to this the civic organizations of the neighborhood turned their focus to protecting the Black community from "crime, drug abuse, and other social problems associated with poverty" (264). Many of these elements were associated with the Corona community. When a civic organization that aimed to help behaviorally challenged Black children attempted to establish its headquarters in East Elmhurst the residents refused it. The fact that the children who would be served were Black did not make the community feel obligated to allow the organization in: "The residents of 99th Street were [B]lack, but the meaning of "blackness" no longer resonated with the racial politics and discourse of the 1960's; it was instead firmly situated in their quality of life concerns as middle-class homeowners" (266). Black in this situation had shifted because economic opportunities allowed for additional resources to be made available to the Black population. Gregory's analysis of these two neighborhoods demonstrated how class status impacted the meaning and significance of a racial category.

The changing meanings and significance of race has been an ongoing phenomenon throughout American history. After the enactment of civil rights laws and affirmative action policies conversations began to emerge that racial meanings and significances hadn't only changed but were disappearing. The most extreme version of this conversation is the idea that race has literally been transcended. Perhaps the most vivid support of these sentiments occurred in 2008 with the election of the first African American president, Barack Hussien Obama. What before had been mere conversations and speculation, had become a concrete reality for media and political personalities:

"The…use of the term 'post-racial' in spaces of public sentiment (e.g. print media, cable news media, Internet articles and blogs, and sites of anonymous Internet public response) [became] an acknowledged phenomenon in the US cultural matters" (Temple, 2010, 45). Tim Rutten (2008) of the *Los Angeles Times* wrote that the newly elected president resonated with "..the post-racial America in which most of our young people now live" and that "skin color [was] no longer a physical marker for them." Rutten's full contention was that:

> …'change" is a mantra that resonates with the young but because he personifies and articulates the post-racial America in which most of our young people now live (especially the ones in multiethnic urban centers such as Los Angeles)… Anyone with children in their 20s or younger knows that they deal with race and ethnicity in ways different from their elders. Skin color is no longer a physical marker for most of them. By and large, our sons and daughters describe their friends as tall or short, funny or serious, as good students or poor athletes, but seldom—as earlier generations would have done—as a "black guy" or a "white girl." They take the sound of Spanish and the sight of Korean shop signs for granted. …What the post-racial perspective of this new generation gap may offer us is a chance to see that many of the problems we continue to regard as most intractable are rooted in issues of class rather than race. Certainly that's true in Los Angeles, where the vast majority of homicides involve brown-on-brown or black-on-black violence rather than racial antagonisms (Rutten, 2008).

The *Wall Street Journal* (2008) stated that "Obama's victory would give us a chance "to put to rest the myth of racism as a barrier to achievement." Former Secretary of Education, Bill Bennet contended that, "you don't take any more excuses from anybody who says the deck is stacked...There's so much inbuilt this and that'..." (as cited by Apollon, 2011). After the postracial idea's first public

appearance in the media, the use of the word caught on like an infectious trend. Ross MacKenzie wrote in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* that "Obama may well have carried the electorate across the threshold to a new post-racial paradigm" (McKenzie, 2008). Another article that appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* (2008) mimicked the sentiments of the former Secretary of Education stating that "the election of a black President doesn't mean that racism no longer exists. But it does make it harder to justify the claim that a racist country is the major obstacle to black advancement." In the eye of a large sector of society race and racism were now an irrelevant myth of the past.

What does Post Racial Mean?

Lawyer Sumi Cho (2009) describes postracialism as a "twenty-first-century ideology that reflects a belief that due to the significant racial progress that has been made, the state need not engage in race-based decision-making or adopt race-based remedies, and that civil society should eschew race as a central organizing principle of social action" (1594). Post racial ideology eschews any race based state remedy that considers race. This 21st century ideology stands in stark opposition to the racial ideology that America had employed for the first twenty centuries. Post racial ideology has four key characteristics:" (1) Racial Progress; (2) Race-Neutral Universalism; (3) Moral Equivalence; and (4) Distancing Move" (1600). The literature that defines post racial ideology does not necessitate that each of these characteristics be present in every post racial scenario, however, these integral characteristics are most commonly found in the ideology. Review of the literature on post racialism reveals that it is such a nebulous idea that not many other definitions exist for this ideology.

The racial progress component of the ideology echoes the sentiments that were discussed in Wilson's *Declining Significance of Race*. The racial progress element of post racialism contends that America has made great progress in the area of race relations and eliminating the ill effects of racial discrimination. Because of this progress any additional policies that seek to "fix' race relations and

eradicate racial discrimination are excessive and unnecessary. The second component, race-neutral universalism, iterates the idea that race based remedies are unnecessary. Affirmative action policies are seen as policies that foster racial division and inequality. People who argue against affirmative action policies feel that these policies benefit "special interest" groups but not the whole of society. Affirmative action opposition feels that policies should be made in the interest of all Americans. A third indicator of post racialism is moral equivalence. Moral equivalence describes the method that post racial pundit use to respond to racially motivated acts. Post racialists believe that the racially motivated actions of Jim Crow America are morally equivalent to the racially motivated actions of Civil Rights America. From a post racial stand point any racially motivated action is divisive and polarizing. The last component of post racial ideology is the tendency of scholars, political actors and the like to "distance" themselves from the "old school", outdated civil right activists. By distancing themselves, postracialists are able to move beyond the "racial obsession" of racialized America (Cho, 2009). The psychological, metaphorical, and physical distance from the "old school" racial actors send the message that progress has been made and a new perspective can now be taken on race relations.

The characteristics of post racial ideology would lead to a retreat from race on three levels: materially, socioculturally, and politically. This results in the failure to create and implement state based race remedies. Liberal America ceases to defer to the Black American normative definition of discrimination and equality and the collective political action of people along racial lines is ceased. (Cho, 2009). The retreat is viewed as appropriate because post racialists believe that racism has dwindled to "only individual acts of bigotry" (Lopez, 2011, 825). When situations occur that motivated Blacks to act from a racial standpoint in response to Whites acting from a racial standpoint, or vice versa, all people are seen as racially inappropriate. One example of this discussed in the literature was President Obama's response to the arrest of Dr. Henry Louis Gates, a Black

Harvard professor, by a White police officer in his home. Obama eased the tension by stating that both parties in the situation probably overreacted (Lopez, 2011). Congruent with post racial ideas, Obama felt that race should not be allowed to "get in the way" of focusing on the larger societal issue.

Why "Posterize"?

The word post generally conveys the idea that a certain point has been surpassed. In the case of post racialism the idea is that America has moved passed a racialized society. However an investigation of the reasons that people ascribe the label "post" reveals that it does not necessarily mean that a certain point has been transcended. Paul Taylor (2007) coined the term "posterize" to describe the tendency of people to label something as "post." He takes an art phenomenon, the tendency of artist to say that they are "postblack," to explain why posterizing is so trendy. Taylor identifies the three tasks that the use of "post" accomplishes: (1) it illustrates that "diverse progeny have emerged and diverged from a common root" (2) it clears the intellectual and social space for a new idea of what is and (3) it demonstrates suspicion and skepticism to fully understand the current status of society. In one of these three ways posterizing becomes a tool that allows new definitions and meanings to be created or a tool to distance from the uncertainty of a changing time.

When a socially contradictory group emerges from the racialized past of America, it "declare[s] a lack of uniformity with the domains of the past, but also traces the newly variegated reality to its common origins"(629). This act of posterizing pays homage to its roots or home identity; however it simultaneously asserts the right to erect a new definition of what it means to be. When intellectual and social space is the aim of posterizing, an "emerging practice or situation is still trying to establish an identity" (629). Posterizing here indicates that one is independent of antiquated identities, however the clear definition of what the new identity is, is still elusive. When the goal of posterizing is to denote skepticism and suspicion of a current epoch, then the refusal to actually

name the epoch is a way to avoid periodization. In this way people are able to relinquish the confines of the old social structure. People are also able to escape the "impulse to suppress creativity, novelty, and diversity" (629). The avoidance of periodization and labeling leaves people open to be freely creative and unconfined by the social notions that many words carry.

With this as the blueprint for why people feel the need to posterize an era, one of three reasons explains the emergence of post racialism as a new racial project: (1) the members of racial groups have diverse and divergent definitions for their racial classifications. Although these classifications originated in racialized America they no longer mean what they once did; (2) minorities and majorities alike acknowledge that the identities that used to be derived from racial categorization is absent for most members of society. What it meant to a parent to be Black, White, Native American, or Asian is no longer applicable. Members of all racial groups are now comfortable with actions and practices that past members of a racial category could not fathom. Although members of current racial group may be unable to articulate what their identity is, they know that they want it to be independent and different from that of their parents and grandparents. Current peoples in society may want the ability to construct and identity that is devoid of racial classification. Posterizing allocates the social and intellectual space for this to happen; (3)lastly, the members of current racial groups want to have an unrestricted creativity, novelty and, diversity in being who they are. If the want is to not be racially classified or to be able to be free of mental, physical and social confines, posterizing keeps this from occurring. This act of posterizing avoids classification by refusing to take on a new name (Taylor, 2007).

Taylor's explanation of posterizing adds nuances and variety to the post racial phenomenon. Instead of taking the one dimensional approach that race no longer matters, Taylor provides viable reasons for why the millennial generation may be a site for "posterizing." The post racial ideology of today largely operates on the assumption that race no longer has the definitions, uses, and

constraints it once had and therefore has been transcended. A more accurate perspective may be that old definitions have been shed, however new meanings and significances may be emerging. Some may find it more useful to avoid racial classifications. Others may find it useful to racially classify but assert new meaning. Whatever the reasoning may be, the posterizing described by Taylor allows this. It is very likely that the reasons detailed by Taylor explain why the millennial generation (people born 1980 and after) are called "post racial." Public opinion surveys have revealed that people between the ages of 18-30 are more open to dating interracially; more so than their parents' and grandparents' generation (Apollon, 2011). Perhaps a more accurate interpretation is that this generation is simply physically able to date interracially where their parents could not. This does not mean that race does not matter, but that it has not morphed to encompass this new found social ability. Sectors of society outside of the millennial generation describe them as post racial, however studies that have researched directly with this population reveal that millennials do not feel they have reached a point of racial insignificance.

2.3 Effects of the Post Racial Project

Affirmative Action

The basic idea behind post racialism renders affirmative action policies unnecessary. An example of how society responds to affirmative action policies can be viewed with the Colorado Civil Rights Initiative. This initiative, also known as Amendment 46, sought to prohibit the Colorado government from "discriminating against or granting preferential treatment to any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in the operation of public services" (Paguyo & Moses, 2011, 554). Although affirmative action policies differ from region to region in the United States, these policies typically take into account "race, ethnicity, and sex as a few of the many factors used in admitting a student" (pg. 555). When affirmative action is

used properly, only the persons who are qualified for admission or jobs are selected. Implementing affirmative action in a different way "belies the philosophical underpinnings of affirmative action and potentially position the new student or new hire on a trajectory headed for less than favorable outcomes" (Tatum, 1997). In spite of this, public opinions about affirmative action vary from claims of being quota programs to reports of reverse discrimination against Whites. What becomes very clear in the discussion of affirmative action is that two racial projects are in competition. Depending on which project is able to dominate determines the future of affirmative action policies.

The Colorado Civil Rights Initiative, Amendment 46, was opposed by an Anti-Amendment 46 group. The two sides represented differing racial projects. Amendment 46 supporters believed that the continued focus on race was the reason that race could not be transcended. They also conveyed the idea that Obama was proof of post-racialism. Education statistics were used to prove that minorities were graduating at high rates and therefore did not need any further assistance Amendment 46 supporters also felt that it was morally incorrect and unfair to continue to use affirmative action policies because all people were not given the same treatment (Paguyo & Moses, 2011). Opposing these arguments were Anti-Amendment 46 pundits. Their arguments were that there were too many racial disparities to claim post racialism. This group agreed that the election of a Black president was proof of racial progress, however this was not indicative of the experience of all people of color. Another argument presented by this group was that elite universities were declining in their minority populations. In opposition to the colorblind stance that the supporters of Amendment 46 took, this group felt that race-egalitarianism was the moral approach that should be taken to address social ills (Paguyo & Moses, 46).

Amendment 46 did not pass, however the conversations surrounding this debate were particularly telling. What race meant, what is morally correct, what is seen as racially discriminatory, and who will ultimately have access to resources are all concerns with the emergence of this new

racial project. As the racial project gains momentum, affirmative action policies across the nation will undoubtedly undergo the same introspection. What becomes most apparent in debates surrounding affirmative action is that public opinion is largely informed with misinformation and is often fueled by racially tense emotions. Affirmative action, in the context of this discourse, has a very precarious standing.

2.4 Collegiate Experience of African Americans

The cultural site that would likely be the most fruitful for the sprouting of the post racial project is college campuses. Through state mandated programs, like affirmative action, and political decisions by administrators, the college campuses of America have become increasingly more diverse over the past four decades. Most people of color who have not been exposed to other racial groups are likely to be exposed upon enrollment and matriculation through college. It is here that ideas and concepts about race are shaped, defined, destroyed, and created. Not only are ideas about race challenged and formed, but ideas about culture, spirituality, religion, politics, and life philosophy as well. The magnitude of reshaping of ideas and conceptualizations has been empirically correlated to the satisfaction, retention, and success of students of color. For these reasons students of color, specifically African Americans, have been the focus of numerous empirical investigations.

The cultural challenges faced by many African Americans who choose to attend predominately White institutions (PWIs) are usually identified as moderators of the Black collegiate experience. Psychologists Chalmer Thompson and Bruce Fretz (1991) found that five bicultural adaptive capabilities enable African American students at PWIs to obtain the equal outcomes as their White counterparts and also to achieve the intended goal that individual students had for their college experience. Thompson and Fretz state that *communal value* is the tendency of African American students to inextricably link their identity to that of the entire group of African Americans

that attend the college. This adaptive skill is used to cope and strategize through adversity when racial tensions arise. The second adaptive tool, *the willingness to learn Anglocentric stimuli while simultaneously willing to learn stimuli uniquely relevant to Black people,* was also significant in its effects on the success of Black students. Black students who tended to embrace one or the other culture thwarted their ability to develop cognitively as well as culturally. The third mechanism, *the mindset to work with (cooperate), rather than against (compete) or away from the dominate culture,* allowed for barriers to racial harmony and awareness to be removed. Lastly Thompson and Fretz state that having a *cooperative classroom strategy versus an individualistic one* serves to also tear down racial misconceptions and promote racial harmony.

Social scientists have dedicated numerous academic endeavors to attempting to explain the differences in outcome for African American students versus Caucasian Students. In addition to having the correct coping mechanism, other social scientists have identified faculty/student interaction as one of the major indicators of how pleasant the African American experience at a PWI will be. A study conducted by Cabrera (1999) found that "for African Americans, gains in quantitative skills, analytical thinking, and appreciation of fine arts are dependent upon positive interactions with faculty, beneficial experiences with students, and prior academic ability" (152). One of the most profound effects on the college experience, according to this study, is the support and encouragement from faculty. Cabrera's study revealed that faculty interaction was "compelling in [its] influence on a number of cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes" (155). With the wealth of information that is present in the literature with regard to positively shaping the collegiate experiences of African Americans at PWIs it would seem logical to expect that the graduation rates and postgraduate outcomes would be comparable to that of White Counterparts. A review of literature conducted by Douglas A. Guiffrida and Kathryn Z. Douthit (2010), of the Department of Counseling and Human Development, University of Rochester does not concur with this logic.

Guiffrida and Douthit admit that substantial progress has been made in closing the educational gap between Blacks and Whites, however, Blacks "continue to be far less likely than Whites to earn college degrees. Proof of this is found in the "continued disparity between the educational attainments of Blacks and Whites…reflected in the significantly higher attrition rates experienced by Black college students" (311). This same sentiment is found in a 2008 study conducted by MaryBeth Walpole of Rowan University. She found that "although the percentage of African Americans who have obtained a Bachelor's degree and the percentage of bachelor's degrees awarded to Black students have risen in the decades following desegregation, Black students continue to be underrepresented in 4-year colleges and universities, and that underrepresentation continues in graduate and professional degree programs as well" (238). Walpole states that isolation was the main factor of the college experience which negatively affected the number of Blacks who finished their matriculation with graduating from college. She contended that this isolation is a self-inflicted phenomenon. Walpole also argued that Blacks at PWI's have been shown to have higher career and educational aspirations than Blacks who attend historically Black universities and that PWI attendees have proven (over a ten year period) to have higher incomes and access to valuable networks. Walpole's study stated that the isolation that Blacks experienced was largely a result of feelings of disconnect from White counterparts and faculty. The general motivation behind this failure to connect is the perception that White faculty will not have an appreciation for the Black experience and will not be able to mentor or advise a Black student (Walpole, 2008; Gufiffrida & Douthit 2010). Because the conversation of postraciality has only significantly developed in the last three years, the exploration of the collegiate experience within the context of this racial project is largely unchartered intellectual territory.

2.5 Other Empirical Findings/Gaps in the Literature

Postracial

Margaret M Zamudio and Francisco Rios (2006) of the University of Wyoming conducted a qualitative study to gauge the occurrence of racism in a "colorblind" society. The study entailed a class of students of all races journaling about their experiences with race and racism. What the study uncovered was that the students perceived that there were numerous instances of racial discrimination. The students involved in this study attempted to make sense of the instances of the acts of racial discrimination because society was operating under the auspice of colorblind ideology. The authors described colorblind ideology as a racial project as described by Omi and Winant (1994). The study revealed that under the auspice of a liberal ideology, colorblindness, four types of racism still were highly identifiable: no doubt racism, traditional racism, revisionist racist narratives, and equal opportunity racism. The most interesting finding from this study was the revisionist racist narratives and equal opportunity racism. In instances of blatant racism, people would excuse the racism or attribute the comments or actions to something other than a racial act. In some instances where a minority perceived racism, they would reflect upon themselves to see what was wrong internally because they were being told that racism was a "thing" of the past. In equal opportunity racism, people felt that Blacks had been given an unfair advantage because of affirmative action policies. This thought process undergirded the tendency of people to act in racially discriminatory ways toward African American people. Overall the study revealed that colorblind ideology created the space for an act of racism to continue because people accepted the idea that race was no longer a factor. The authors felt that the racial project of colorblindness led to the shift from conservative racism to liberal racism.

This study sought to look at the collegiate experience of American students, however it did not specifically focus on the student/faculty interaction. The journal entries often reported incidents

that they noticed. Many of the situations chronicled did not involve the person journaling. They were observations made from afar. Because the students had been influenced by colorblind ideology it is very likely that instances and incidents of racial discrimination were higher, however they could've gone largely unnoticed because the student explained them away. In general this study provided evidence that racial discrimination still existed, however it did not provide information on how this affected the college experience.

Dominique Apollon (2011), of the Applied Research Center, conducted a study in Los Angeles to explore millennials' (people born post 1980, between the ages of 18-30) perception of racism and how significant they felt race to be. Part of the reason that the Applied Research Center conducted the research was because they felt it erroneous to assume that millennials were post racial simply because they were more prone to date interracially. This study applied a mixed methods approach (quantitative and qualitative) to gauge if this generation still felt that race was significant. A scale that measured how salient the "American Dream" was to each participant was the quantitative portion of the study. In general the study revealed that millennials who had a high belief in the American dream also had lower perceptions of race than those who had a mid to low belief in the American dream. The research also uncovered that race is elusive if talked about in an abstract context, however, when it was placed in a specific context (criminal justice system, housing, public school system, employment, health care system, immigration system) 18-30 year olds could easily delineate situations of discrimination. Overall the study revealed that though millennials are not a monolith when it comes to perceptions of the significant of race, overall they did not feel that America had reached a time when race was irrelevant. Other findings from the study showed that most of the participants always described interpersonal acts of racism; whites felt that in order for there to be an act of racism it had to be intentional; lastly, the study revealed that Blacks had no problem labeling an entire system as racist. In the context of public education the study revealed

that Whites usually described racism abstractly. People of color in the study described racism in tangible experiences.

Though this particular study included people who had attended college and were currently in college it did not discuss the collegiate experience of the participants. Despite the fact that past literature has pinpointed faculty/student relationships as a major factor in the education experience of minority students, the study failed to focus on how insidious racial discrimination or blatant racial discrimination may have been noticed in faculty/student interaction on a high school level. This study simply sought to display that millennials did think that race was significant. There was no additional investigation into how the assumption that race is no longer significant affected the everyday experiences of this group or how it affected their ability to perceive racism.

Perception of Race and Racism

Most of the studies that have sought to investigate people's perception of race and the significance of race have been done in response to Julius Wilson's class stratification theory. Wilson contends that race has declined in significance and in affecting the life chances of Black Americans. Sociologist Arthur Sakamoto conducted a study in 1999, framed by the theory of Wilson, to determine if race had declined in significance in impacting the wage earnings of African Americans. This study investigated a fifty year timeframe. Using a database of reports of weekly earnings, the study compared the earning of Whites to Blacks. The findings revealed that Blacks, though significantly different from Whites, were earning significantly more in wages. From these findings Sakamoto concluded that race was declining in significance in determining life chances. The study also found other factors that seemed to be a better determinant, than race, of wage earning capacity: education seemed to be a better determinant of job earnings; and that class was more important than race in determining job earnings. A very similar study was done by Sakamoto and colleagues, which

included Americans of all races. The study had very similar findings. It also concluded that education and class were a better determinate on the wage earning capacity of American men.

Though both of these studies sought to prove that race was becoming less and less significant, they both failed to consider the many ways that their data proved that race was still very salient. The presentation of the data alludes to the idea that America is moving toward a time where race will no longer be a factor. However in both studies, White American men still made more in comparison to their Black, Latino, or Asian counterparts. There were significant differences in the educational attainment in the people of color included in the study. The theory of Julius Wilson does not allow for inferences or conclusions to be drawn to explain if these differences are explainable by race. The studies draw the conclusion that race, indirectly racial discrimination, is declining in significance but they do not consider the ways that racial discrimination outside of the economic sector could be affecting the ability to attain the education needed or the ability to reach a certain class level which would then affect, per the studies, job earnings. These studies were also quantitative in method. This only allowed for conclusions to be drawn about the human experience that did not include the voice of the participants to support these conclusions.

In 1992 Sociologists Charlotte Steeth and Howard Shuman conducted a quantitative study to determine of racial attitudes had changed in the 1980's . The overall goal of this study was to see if race relations had gotten better after the civil right movements. The study employed a measure that sought to explore how White Americans felt about Black Americans. The expected outcome was that racial attitudes would change as people progressed in age. What this study uncovered is that racial attitudes in the 60's, 70's and 80's were consistent. Racial attitudes did not change with age. In 2002, Mara Cohen-Marks of the Leavy Center for the Study of Los Angeles and Jim Faught of Loyola Marymount University also conducted a study regarding the racial attitudes of Americans. In this study they hypothesized that the diversity of the neighborhood would affect people's attitudes

about the different racial groups of America. The study attempted to decipher if being a member of a particular age group would affect the racial attitude of a person. This study revealed that most people's racial attitudes were shaped by the way they felt their neighborhood was progressing. The study also revealed that people in this study were less likely to want to live in a neighborhood that Black Americans lived in. Another significant finding of the study was that Black and Hispanic Americans tended to have the most negative racial attitude. The expected outcome was that the composition of the neighborhood would determine the racial attitude of a person. This hypothesis would prove the theory that interracial contact amongst the racial groups would lead to better race relations. This study revealed that racial attitudes were not correlated to the racial make-up of a neighborhood.

In all of these studies a quantitative approach was employed. The method for determining the racial attitudes did not report how the people in the study felt about the race relations of the city. They simply drew correlations between variables like the make-up of the neighborhood and the racial attitude of the participant or variables like age and the racial attitude. Overall there was no way to decipher if the participants felt that race was relevant or not or how they actually felt about race relations. The studies assume that race is an important factor for the participants and report the findings as such. In both studies the evidence shows that the race was not the most salient factor in determining the racial attitudes, however the design of the studies could not speak to what was the most salient factor in the formation of racial attitudes. Although the topic of these studies dealt with the way in which people perceive racism, it could not thoroughly speak to this phenomenon.

In 2010 a study published in the *Journal of Social Sciences* employed a quantitative approach to investigate how person to person contact impacted the perception of racial discrimination in post-apartheid South Africa. The overall finding of the study suggests that positive experiences with White South Africans led to lessened reports of instances of discrimination. The study sought to

investigate the theory that interracial interaction would lead to less discrimination (Dixon et al, 2010). Because this study was also quantitative in nature it did not speak to the kinds of acts of racial discrimination that people encountered. The study looked at factors such as racial attitudes and contact with people of other races and correlated these variables to racial discrimination. There could be no causal information drawn from this data. The data, however, did pinpoint positive interaction amongst people as the main indicator of how people will perceive racism.

2.6 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter reflects a review of the relevant literature concerning this topic. Overall the literature revealed that perception of racial discrimination still exists but it does not address how this perception is negotiated in the context of the post racialism racial project. Colorblind studies that have been done revealed that despite public discourse that race was irrelevant, empirical data disagree. Overall liberal ideologies like colorblind diversity create the social space for racism and discrimination to go unchallenged. Largely the research on racial perceptions has been shaped through quantitative methods and has rarely included the voice of the participants. The next chapter will present the method that will be used to conduct this particular study to answer to some of the areas that the literature has yet to address.

3 METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore how post racial ideology impacts the professional development of college students between the ages of 18-30. The research questions guiding this study were as follows:

1. How does post racial ideology impact the professional development of college students between the ages of 18-30?
2. Is race and racial categorization important to this age group?
3. Are people in this age group able to recognize instances of racial discrimination?
4. Are people in this age group able to recognize instances of post racial influence?

This chapter addresses the characteristics a case study qualitative research design. This chapter explains why a case study research design is useful in exploring the professional development of students between the ages of 18-30. Secondly, the chapter provides a discussion of how the sample was selected, criteria for participants, and the recruitment for participants. Next, a discussion of the data collection strategy for this study, semi-structured interviews, will be provided. A detailed explanation will be given for the utility of the data collection method used for this study. Lastly, this chapter addresses validity and reliability, as well as researcher bias and assumptions.

3.1 Design of the Study

This study will specifically seek to address gaps in the literature by exploring how the professional development experience of the millennial generation is being impacted by post racialism. Professional development was chosen as a variable to be measured because it has been shown in the literature as something that occurs within a collegiate context. Professional development is a particularly informing variable to explore because it is an aspect of the collegiate experience that prepares students to be successful in future academic and professional endeavors.

The professional development or non-development of a student has implications for the life chances of a student. The case study qualitative methodology used in this study reviewed cases of professional development, within the bounded site of Georgia State University, to gain insight about the impact of post racial ideology on the professional development of millennial students. A case study approach was also appropriate because several cases of professional development were examined in order to gain understanding of an issue (Creswell, 2007). In addition to this , qualitative methods were used in order to use the voice of the millennial population to inform how post racialism impacted the professional development of students between the ages of 18-30.

Literature and empirical research that has sought to uncover the details of the academic and college experience of student's perceptions about race or the significance of race have equally used quantitative and qualitative methods (Sakamoto et. al, 2000; Lewis et. al 2000; Zamudio & Rios; 2006 Grodsky & Kalogrides 2008 Cohen-Marks & Faught, 2010; Apollon, 2011;). Quantitative data often looked to compare the outcomes in specific situations to determine if outcomes were different by race. Some of the situations that have been investigated were wage earning and job placement. In these studies the participants actual experiences were not reported, however conclusions were drawn about the everyday experiences of people based on the findings quantitative studies revealed. Qualitative studies use the reports of the populations being studied in order to inform the research question being posed. The major difference between the quantitative and qualitative approaches has been the findings. Qualitative approaches have revealed that racial significance did not appear to be declining. The quantitative studies seeking to explore the same things have found proof that race was less significant in certain arenas. Though there are numerous studies that have investigated race within the context of colorblind ideology, few studies have investigated race in the context of post racial ideology. The majority of the literature about post racialism theorizes about it possible effects. Empirical research about post racial ideology is largely unchartered territory. Review of the

literature did produce one study that sought to determine if people between the ages of 18-30 felt that society was post racial. This particular study employed quantitative and qualitative methods in order to gather this data (Apollon, 2011). Although there was not a monolithic idea about how much race mattered, the study did reveal that people between the ages of 18-30 disagreed with the idea that they were post racial. The conversation regarding post racialism has largely excluded the voice of the millennial population which has been posited as the site of post racial ideology. The study conducted used a qualitative, focus group methodology in order to include the voice of the millennial generation in the conversation. This study was informative in producing data that showed that people between the ages of 18-30 did not agree that they were post racial, however it did not investigate how the presence of this ideology impacted the lived experiences of this age group. Creswell (2007) states that qualitative research is appropriate under certain circumstances. The scenarios that are conducive to qualitative research are as follows:

1. Qualitative research is conducted when a problem or issue needs to be explored. The exploration is needed, in turn because of a need to study a group or population, identify variables that can be measured, or hear silenced voices.
2. Qualitative research is conducted because we need a complex detailed understanding of the issue. This detail can only be established by talking directly with people, going to their homes or places of work, and allowing them to tell stories unencumbered by what we expect to find or what we have read in the literature.
3. Qualitative research is conducted when we want to empower individuals to share their story, hear their voices, and minimize power relationships that often exist between researcher and participants in the story.

4. Qualitative research is conducted when we want to write in a literary, flexible style that conveys stories or theater, or poems, without restrictions of formal academic structures of writing.
5. Qualitative research is conducted because we want to understand the contexts or settings in which participants in a study address a problem or issue.
6. Qualitative research is used to follow up quantitative research and help explain the mechanisms or linkages in casual theories or models.
7. Qualitative research is employed to develop theories when partial or inadequate theories exist for certain populations and samples or existing theories do not adequately capture the complexity of the problem being examined.
8. Lastly, qualitative research is used when quantitative measures and the statistical analyses simply do not fit the problem (pg. 40).

After reviewing the appropriate conditions under which qualitative research should take place, qualitative research was determined to be an adequate venue to explore how post racial ideology impacts the professional development of college students between the ages of 18-30.

In addition to qualitative research being an appropriate vehicle by which to conduct this study, the nature of the study also fit squarely within the realm of when qualitative research is useful according to Creswell. First and foremost this study interviewed participants in natural settings. Interviews took place where participants were most comfortable. Secondly, the researcher was the key instrument in the research. Although a protocol was formulated to garner information, the researcher verbally administered the protocol questions in order to gather information. The protocols used to gather information were organic to this study and were not protocols formulated by other researchers. A third way that this study fit within the realm of qualitative research was that the data was analyzed in an inductive way. The data was "organized in an increasingly more abstract

unit of information. Transcripts of the data was reviewed "back and forth between themes and the database until a comprehensive set of themes were established." A fourth way that this study was appropriate for qualitative inquiry was that the meanings that participants held about the problem or issue were sought out. The meanings that the researcher had or that the literature revealed were not used. The fifth area of congruency with qualitative research was that the researcher relied on an emergent design. Research was conducted with the awareness that research could shift after entering the field and collecting data. The sixth way that this research was a clear instance of qualitative research was the use of an theoretical lens, racial formation theory, to analyze the data. This research also employed an interpretive inquiry in order to decipher what was seen, heard, and understood from the data collection process. This was an eighth are of compliancy with qualitative research. Lastly this study fit the description of qualitative research in that it sought to give a holistic account. The aim of this study was to paint a complex picture of how post racialism impacted professional development (Creswell, 200, 37-39).

Through use of qualitative methods in this study provided a comprehensive and complex perspective of how post racial ideology impacted the professional development of millennials. By examining the role of race in this context , this study was able to gain insight about the significance of race for this generation, current meanings associated with race, and if people between the ages of 18-30 agreed that they were post racial. The design of the study was a direct response to the theory framing the study, racial formation theory. Through the use of qualitative method, the data gathered allowed information to be collected that garnered information that aided in determining the nature of professional development for students, the current ideas surrounding race and its significance, and opinions surrounding post racialism.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The population targeted for this research was ten college students between the ages of 18-30. This population was used because the research on post racialism states that this generation would be most likely site for postracial ideology to take root. Media personalities and politicians alike have expressed this idea. John Zogby, president and CEO of Zogby international, one of the most popular polling companies, stated after Obama's election that: **"**I anticipate the race issue will diminish as the nation gets more comfortable with [President Obama] as its leader, and as the First Globals [millennial generation] are followed by the next wave of young adults, who will be even more accustomed to a multi-racial society**"** (as cited by Apollon, 2011, 32).

Ten male and female students of all races were in order to gather information about the impact of race from all racial perspectives. The gathered information from Black and White students. Students were recruited through the use of a recruitment flyer that was placed at the front desk of departments that offered at least a terminal level masters degree. The recruitment flyer contained contact information for the researcher. Students who volunteered to participate were also asked to provide the contact information for other persons who would be willing to participate. Gathering information from all students allowed data to be collected directly from participants about their professional development experiences in order to compare and contrast experiences. Collecting information from the age group posited as the most likely site for post racial influences informed this study from the standpoint of an affected population. Exploring the significance of race within the context of professional development for this age group added valuable information to the literature and discourse about the validity and application of post racial ideology.

The site for this study was Georgia State University. This site was chosen in one part because of the availability of a millennial population. The most important aspect of this site was the fact that Georgia State has been deemed a diverse university and an institution that graduates a high

number of students of color. In 2010 "Georgia State University [was] touted as a national model for graduating minority and low-income students... GSU boosted its minority graduation rate by 18.4 percentage points in last five years" (Klipp, 2010). Because of this GSU was a uniquely qualified site to explore if postracial characteristics could be noticed or measured. Not only was it good site to see if post racial ideology has taken root, but also a great site to explore if students were adequately being prepared, regardless of race, for life after graduation. Lastly, this site was ideal for this study because empirical research on the topic of post racialism has not explored the prevalence of this ideology within the context of the college experience. The GSU student body was a great site to examine the professional development experience of collegiate millennials.

3.3 Consent

Each participant was included in this study on a voluntary basis only. Prior to inclusion in the study each participant was given a written and verbal explanation of the study and its purpose, was allowed to ask any questions that they had about the study, and then signed written consent documents. Participants were given a copy of all consent documents. All students were informed that participation was completely voluntary and that they could leave the study at any time without penalty. All students were informed that study numbers would be assigned to them in order to keep all information confidential. No key or guide was made to connect participant's identities to the study number assigned. Students were also informed that only the researcher and persons who ensured that the study was being conducted properly had access to the information.

3.4 Data Collection

There was one form of data collection for this study: semi-structured interviews. Interviews times were scheduled after screening questioned were asked to make sure that volunteers were students of Georgia State University and that they were between the ages of 18-30. Mutually

agreeable interview times were scheduled at locations that were comfortable to the participants. All interviews were audio recorded in order to be transcribed later. Interviews varied in length from 30-60 minutes. The interviews were moderated by the researcher who administered a set of pre-determined questions verbally. Follow up questions were asked when necessary. The questions aimed to measure aspects of professional development and elements of post racial influences. The questions asked information about the mentoring relationships, the nature of professional development within the academic departments, and how often students had professional development situations made available to them. Students were also asked to explain scenarios when they felt that race had made a difference in interactions with mentors, completing assigned tasks, and at professional conferences. In addition to information regarding professional development students were asked if they felt that race based policies like affirmative action were necessary. The importance that students assigned to race was also discussed and if race was an integral part of how students racially identified. Students were also asked directly if they felt that American society was post racial. Questions were formed within parameters of the theory framing this study, racial formation theory. Racial formation theory purports the idea that racial categories and meaning are in a constant state of transition. The questions asked sought to uncover information of this nature about race. Within the parameters of qualitative research, this study used organic measures that were constructed by the researcher. Reliability was addressed in the research protocols by asking similar questions in various ways in order to verify that answers were consistent.

3.5 Data Analysis

The audio tapes from the interviews were transcribed and analyzed using two levels of thematic coding described in Rubin & Rubin's (2005) qualitative interviewing guide. Transcripts were coded using coding software that allowed codes and sub-codes. Transcripts were reviewed in

an iterative manner in order to find consistent codes in each theme. Codes were created using the two level method of analysis described in Rubin's (2008) qualitative research manual. The first level of codes was created to generally describe sections of data. In the second level of analysis these codes were organized into major themes. Similar codes were placed in the same category.

3.6 Summary

This chapter covered the methodology of this study. The study was conducted using a case study qualitative methodology. Qualitative methodology was appropriate because it provided the data to illustrate a complex and comprehensive picture of how ideas of post racialism impacted the professional development of the participants of the study. The population for this study included ten participants between the ages of 18-30. Although students of all races where targeted for this study, only Black and White students. The data analysis was analyzed using a two levels of thematic coding. The next chapter will discuss the results gathered from this study.

4 RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to explore how post racial ideology impacts the professional development of college students between the ages of 18-30. The research questions guiding this study were as follows:

1. How does post racial ideology impact the professional development of college students between the ages of 18-30?
2. Is race and racial categorization important to this age group?
3. Are people in this age group able to recognize instances of racial discrimination?
4. Are people in this age group able to recognize post racial influence?

This study employed a qualitative case study design and was conducted during the month of March 2012. During this time students attending Georgia State University were recruited via fliers and snowball sampling to participate in semi-structured interviews. Fliers were posted in departments at Georgia State University that offered, at least, master's level terminal degree. From the pool of volunteers recruited, ten students participated in interviews that lasted thirty minutes to an hour. The semi-structured face to face interviews took place in a variety of settings on Georgia State University's campus. The meetings were held in locations selected by the participants. All of the interviews were audio recorded and transcribed.

This chapter has three sections. The first presents the individual profiles of participants in the order in which they were interviewed. The participants were labeled with a study number in order to keep their true identities confidential. For the purposes of reporting the findings a pseudonym has been assigned to each study number. The second section presents the data from the interviews to support the themes reported. Lastly, the final section provides a summary of the chapter. A summary of the overall findings from this study can be found in table 1 below:

Research Question	Main Idea/Theme

How does post racial ideology impact the professional development of students between the ages of 18-30?	• GENERAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
	  ○ They see themselves in Me
	  ○ I feel prepared
	  ○ Don't Push Me Through
	  ○ Walking on Eggshells
	  ○ Race free professional development
	  ○ Missing a certain foundation
	  ○ Do It on your own
	• MENTORING
	  ○ Race make a difference
	  ○ Social equals
	  ○ Sounding board
	  ○ Every step is harder
	  ○ They have to take the time
	  ○ Common denominator

Is race and racial categorization important to this age group?	• RACE SALIENCE
	  ○ It's always there
	  ○ Race as a door opener
	  ○ Its meaningful to me
	• RACIALLY IN-SALIENT
	  ○ Never thought about it
	  ○ I am an individual
	• DISTANCING MOVE
	  ○ Ideas are the same
	  ○ It needed to mean something back then

Are people in this age group able to recognize instance of racial discrimination?	• RACIAL PROGRESS
	  ○ People perceive it as unfair
	• ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT
	  ○ They don't focus on it as they should
	• BLACK NEGLIGENCE
	  ○ They don't expect much of you
	  ○ Work harder for same goal
	• WHITE PRIVILEGE
	  ○ Critical white privilege
	  ○ Uncritical white privilege

Are people in this age group able to recognize post racial influence?	• I DON'T AGREE WITH THAT
	  ○ Harder to combat
	• NOT DOING IT INTENTIONALLY
	  ○ I have no idea

4.1 The Participants

Ten students, male and female, who were currently enrolled at Georgia State University, participated in this study. All participants participated in one semi-structured interview. The participants were diverse in terms of age and place of birth. Their ages ranged from 24-30. All students identified as being either Black or White. Nine students reported being born in the U.S. One student reported being born in Canada. A table in Appendix E provides a summary of the participants. Below is a detailed description of each participant.

Rhonda. Rhonda is a 30 year-old Black female matriculating through the joint Master and Doctoral Sociology program. She is in the first year of her doctoral program. She was born in Inglewood, California and has never lived abroad. She has also lived over five years in the District of Columbia and New Jersey. Her program does not formally provide her a mentor, but she has created an informal relationship with a mentor of a different race within her department.

Julia. Julia is a 28 year-old White female matriculating through the Master of Arts in English Literary Studies. She is in the first year of her program. She was born in Vallejo, California and has never lived abroad. Her program does formally provide her a mentor, but she has created an informal relationship with a mentor of the same race within her department.

Reginald. Reginald is a 25 year-old Black male senior in the African American Studies Program. He is a senior in his program. He was born in Hampton, Virginia and has never lived abroad. His program does not formally provide him a mentor but he has created an informal relationship with a mentor of the same race outside of his department.

Stacey. Stacey is a 27 year-old Black female matriculating through the Doctorial Political Science Program. She is in her 4th year of her doctoral program. She was born in Maryland and has lived for three months abroad in Oxford, England. Her program does not formally provide a

mentor but she has created an informal relationship with a mentor of a different race within her academic department.

Jackie. Jackie is a 24 year old Black female matriculating through the Masters African American Studies Program. She is in the first year of her program. She was born in Gainesville, Georgia and has never lived abroad. Her program does not formally provide her with a mentor and she has not created an informal relationship with a mentor within or outside of her department. .

Victoria. Victoria is a 26 year old Black female matriculating through the Doctoral Sociology Program. She is in the fifth year of her program. She was born in Toronto/Ontario, Canada. She has lived for seven years in Michigan. Her program does not formally provide her a mentor and she has not created an informal relationship with a mentor within or outside of her department.

Tonya. Tonya is a 30 year-old Black female matriculating through the Doctoral Sociology Program. She is in the third year of her program. She was born in Fontana, California and has lived for two and a half months in Tanzania. Her program does not formally provide her a mentor and she has not created an informal relationship with a mentor within or outside of her department.

Steven. Steven is a 28 year old White male matriculating through the Doctoral Psychology Program. He is in the third year of his program. He was born in Kannapolis, North Carolina and has never lived abroad. His program does formally provide him a mentor and his mentor is of the same race.

Neil. Neil is a 27 year old White male matriculating through the Doctoral Psychology Program. He is in the third year of his program. He was born in New York and has lived abroad in Trinidad and Tobago. His program does formally provide him a mentor and his mentor is of the same race.

Patrick. Patrick is a 27 year old White male matriculating through the Doctoral Political Science Program. He is in the third year of his program. He was born in Columbus, Georgia and has

never lived abroad. His program does formally provide him a mentor but he has created an informal relationship with a mentor of the same race within his department.

Throughout the presentation of the findings participants will be discussed by stating their name and a statement of how they racially identify when race is integral in presenting the findings reported. In situations where students of all races reported the same findings, the race of the student is not mentioned. In other situations when race has been deemed unimpressionable for the findings race is not mentioned. A table detailing a summary of the participants' demographics can be found in Appendix E.

4.2 General Professional Development

Every participant had ideas about and experience with professional development. The majority of the participants had exposure to professional development within in their academic departments. The majority of the Black students overwhelmingly expressed that there was a need for more professional development. All of the White students, with the exception of one, reported that professional development was adequate and there was little room for improvement. The majority of the participants felt that race had an impact in some capacity on the professional development experience of college students between the ages of 18-30. One of the main ideas that surfaced in discussing the overall idea of general professional development and how race affected it was the idea that shared characteristics made for an ideal mentor/mentee relationship. Shared characteristics were also reported to have an impact on how prepared students felt they would be for future endeavors and how accountable mentors and superiors held students to excel academically.

They See Themselves in Me

Sharing the same race or the same race and gender was discussed repeatedly as students expressed professional development scenarios. The like characteristics caused professional

development to thrive and be beneficial to the mentee, and in some scenarios, the mentor as well. This idea was expressed most by Black female students who had the opportunity to work with Black female mentors. Stacey, a Black female stated:

> I think it helps...my relationship because, because… we are the same in that we are both African American females. So that…helps me to be able to go [to her] and get her perspective on certain situations. If I feel like maybe I was treated unfairly I can tell her this situation and she can kind of check me and say….well no that would happen to everybody or I kind of see how you would feel this way, but let me tell you what you should do or let me tell you to just brush this off or brush that off. So I think the fact that we share both of those characteristics helps us because I don't know that I would talk to a Black male mentor in the same way that I talk to my black female mentor.

Participants expressed the idea that shared characteristics not only benefitted the mentee, but was also a social area of relief for the mentors involved in the relationship as well: "I can talk to her about things but also she can kind of not feel like she's sort of out there and alone in this department even though she is a professor and trying to get tenure and I'm a student… we're still able to sort of connect on that level." In addition to being mutually beneficial, students expressed that a certain comfort level was experienced with race and gender were similar. Comfort was consistently discussed by the participants as something to be highly valued in professional development situations. Absent of the gender aspect, participants reported favorable outcomes when race alone was a point of commonality. Overall students wanted to feel as if they were in professional development situations were the superior or mentor and they could easily identify areas of familiarity and ideological congruency. Tonya, a Black female, felt that "with my mentor race

impacts our interactions positively because I feel like we're on the same page, you know." Rhonda, a Black female, expounded on why being able to identify areas of familiarity was so effective:

> I think that he reached out to me because he recognized me as a Black student struggling… I know it's because, I think he felt some type of responsibility and then also I have another mentor and I have, I have several mentors who..[I have] a more very professional relationship with each other but because they are already professors they… give me feedback and I know it's because they see me as another Black academic or Black. They see themselves in me.

Rhonda felt that because other Black mentors could recognize some aspect of themselves in Black mentees, Black mentors were more prone to reach out and offer professional development. Students who were in professional development scenarios where superiors could recognize themselves in the mentee or could identify shared characteristics consistently reported favorable outcomes and also reported that these experiences would have a positive impact on their future career and academic goals.

I Feel Prepared

Students who shared like characteristics with mentors and superiors discussed a professional preparedness that was directly connected to the favorable professional development situations. Students expressed that they felt that future career and academic goals would be attainable because of the professional development that they received. Additionally students felt that same race professors and superiors had a certain degree of accountability for students of the same race. They felt that they were critiqued in ways that improved skills. Students expressed that they often felt as if they received minimal to no professional development in scenarios where shared characteristics were not present. Race was most often cited as the characteristic that most impacted the preparation and

accountability that professors exerted. Student of both races that were in same race professional development scenarios generally reported feeling that they were prepared for future endeavors. Tonya, a Black female and Neil, a White male, both of whom have a mentor of the same race echoed each other in their statements about their professional preparedness: "I feel prepared. That I will be able to figure it out…I feel very prepared."

Don't Push Me Through

A common idea that was expressed by Black students was that same race mentors often expected higher academic performances from them than mentors of different races. Students felt they had a higher degree of professional accountability from same race mentors. Jackie, a black female, matriculating through an department with an all-Black faculty: :

> I do feel like they expect more and…and I do feel like they listen more to ideas [and] that they are accepted. I… think that they expect more just because most of the professors that I have now are African American and I guess it's always said that the African American students are not working hard. Especially being in the African American studies program they think that it's just a "you're African American studying African American studies" like how hard can it be? But if they only knew our professors expect a lot…They expect the highest of high.

Stacey, a Black female matriculating through a department with a predominately White faculty expressed the difference between the treatment she received from same race professors and professors of a different race: "Don't push me through! I don't need you to push me through. You know, whereas like the Black professor, they're not going to accept that from me. Like I went to a HBCU." Stacey expression was congruent with other statements made by Black participants. White professors, in their opinion, seemed to expect less from their Black students whereas Black professors did not.

Walking on Eggshells

The professional development of the participants extended beyond their experiences and overall preparedness for the future. For most of the participants, Black and White, there were instances where race influenced how freely they were able to discuss professional development deficits as well as research topics. Many students reported feeling as if they were walking on "eggshells" when discussing certain things. Students also reported being very mindful of their academic and professional performance because they didn't want to project negative ideas about their racial group. These participants exercised professional caution when they found themselves in racially tense situations. Rhonda, a black female reported that "you feel that, you know… like you are walking on eggshells when you are discussing what your research topics are and they are trying to make it more scientific." Rhonda felt that ideas and research topics that were too racially focused were shunned in her department for not being "scientific" enough. She found herself attempting to discuss her topics with less fervor so that she wouldn't seem too emotionally attached to her work and thereby not scientific enough. Neil, a White male, discussed how race impacted his research as well. Because Neil was a White male interested in Black female HIV prevention he was careful to make sure his Black colleagues didn't feel he was approaching his topic of interest in a way that was non-beneficial to his research population:

> I guess…I guess it's tough I think with my professors more so we talk about doing research um and there is like a racial difference between me and a professor and we're talking about you know a particular group… maybe you know I feel like there's always gonna be a personal connection that either of us are gonna have and so you know it's like you don't want to offend someone you don't want to step on their toes you don't want to offend.. by kinda like making suggestions…I'm trying to thin. It's a tough. I don't think it really comes up as much as I imagine but I thinks it's

> something that you have in the back of your mind almost… you know…here we are talking about you know African Americans and you know my professor is African American I'm not….. what does that mean to her to hear me talk about this group in a certain way or to talk about taking different perspectives or working with them as a researcher? Does she think that it's appropriate for a male researcher researching African American females with HIV? Which is my study of…does she think it's bad that I'm doing it?…Not bad?... I don't know if it changes the actual dynamic's but it's something that maybe I think about I don't know if they think about.

Racial motivation for exerting professional caution had various nuances. Reginald, a Black male, and Rhonda, a Black female, described the general nuances that participants mentioned. Reginald stated that he was practiced professional caution to keep racial tensions down: "So you know… you don't want to talk about race cause then you are racist… and you don't want to… make other people uncomfortable because you are pro-black all the time." Rhonda stated that she was cautious to make sure she conveyed positive messages about her racial group: "Some professors I am less like, in general… to let down because I am a Black woman and there are some professors…because they are of a different race… I don't want them to expect less of me."

Racially motivated professional caution was a barrier to some students being able to fully get what they need in professional development scenarios. For other students, race was the equivalent of an unspoken presence in every conversation. Most participants who exercised racially motivated professional caution felt that every professional development experience could potentially be retarded by the caution they felt necessary to exert, however the dedication and emotional connection to their research interests was the motivation that allowed their professional development to continue regardless of external and sometime internal factors. Although this was

the race was a constant factor in many professional development cases, interviewees did report scenarios where race did not impact their experiences.

Race Free Professional Development

Student reported that they were able to received feedback that was not hindered by people's racial biases. Conferences were reported as a space where all participants felt that they had been able to received feedback and critique regarding their work and research interests that was unbiased and unprejudiced by race factors. Though all participants who participated in a professional conference reported similar experiences with the kind of feedback they received, Stacey's, statements expressed the main ideas conveyed by the participants:

> I think that because we're so...trained to be so quantitative they just look at the statistics to see if they are valid and then it's like ok, good we accept it… I probably say for the one Black panel that I did I was the only Black female on the panel it was full of men and I kind of felt then, to be honest, that my ideas weren't necessarily accepted. So I would probably say in that scenario it was more gender based…, but in general typically no. You tend to find…it's so quantitative that once your model is ok and it's legit they will take about anything."

Other participants who were in more qualitative focused disciplines also felt that a valid research methodology was often the only point of contention at professional conferences. No one had experienced ideas or critique biased because of race. One participant reported seeing a fellow White male discussing a racially sensitive topic be heavily questioned and ultimately disregarded because of racial issues but that was "uncommon" according to Steven. In juxtaposition to those students who reported that they were receiving professional development were the students who felt that they received inadequate professional development.

Missing A Certain Foundation

All students in this study were receiving some degree of professional development, however, there were scenarios when students expressed the need for improvement ranging from minor fixes to major overhaul. The need for improvement, in some capacity, was expressed by all participants. Stacey, a Black female and Reginald, a Black male, reported areas that could use a little revamping in order to be more effective for students. Stacey's department needed: "….more diverse faculty. Like so that students of color can relate[to] some other people" Reginald felt that he was faring well whereas professional development was concerned, however he felt it was remiss for professors to become hands off when they too acknowledged a student was "ok" in a certain area:

> Everybody says [Reginald's] got it. And I be like no I don't . It's a good front you know. I'm out, I have a good, like if you see this person like if I can just get him from there to here. Somebody don't want to do that, but naw he straight he walk accurate. No, no, no I need to run, help me. I can't ride a bike, help me out.

In the opinion of Reginald, ceasing professional development when someone could perform in a certain way was not proper. Professional development's aim should be to continually develop.

Differing greatly from Stacey and Reginald, other participants felt that their professional development needed a major improvements and was missing a certain foundation that made it effectual. Rhonda felt that her department had underdeveloped her professionally from the beginning of her matriculation. Though she had been exposed to some professional development, she identified areas where it was inadequate:

> To this day, I feel like one of the major classes that should be offered when you first enter our program is how to write in the scientific…social science…discipline. You come in, you take… theory, we have to take statistics, and we have to take...electives. And of course there is the assumption that some of us have either a sociology background or we have taken the prerequisites, but…there's this specific way to

> write for the social sciences... I think there is… a certain foundation that is missing that I think a lot of us need so that we can be successful, you know.

Steven, on the most extreme end of inadequate professional development, detailed his experience in this way:

> No I don't think so. Maybe I [am] being unfair, but I don't think that… there's been much mentoring…[…] I feel like I'm a chore to my advisor now. I feel like she was excited about me at first and when the excitement wore off or when I didn't' turn out to be what she expected I kind of, I don't know. I actually had some really bad experiences with it.

Closely related to the feeling of being inadequately professionally developed was the idea that one had to be the person to propel their own professional development.

Do It on Your Own

Self-propelled professional development was mainly described by students who were in programs that did not offer what they felt was necessary for them to proceed beyond graduation. Victoria, after thinking on her situation replied:

> I think just being more proactive in terms of seeking the type of assistance I need. I think I needed to have done it earlier. But now I'm kind of on a path where I'm really trying to create those experiences for myself. The expectation I had was that they would be made available to me, but seeing that that's not the case I'm doing what I can to make that experience happen for me.

Students who expressed the idea that they would have to take control of their own professional development all came to the conclusion after having the expectation that it would be provided by their departments. While some students came to this conclusion because their research interests were incongruent with their academic departments, the majority of students felt that they would

have to acquire professional development on their own because they simply were not being given what they needed. Professional development was discussed in different aspects within this study, however mentoring emerged as a major area of professional development aside from the idea of general professional development.

4.3 Mentoring

Most students were privy to various areas of professional development, however they identified mentoring as the crux of professional development. Many students felt that mentoring was the doorway to all other areas of professional development. Within mentor/mentee relationships, as with general professional development, race emerged as a significant factor. Some participants were able to report that they felt that race had no impact. The students who were able to report this were in a same race mentor/mentee situation and admitted that they had no real way of knowing that race had no impact. The first major idea that emerged in the interviews regarding mentoring was related to race.

Race Makes a Difference

Participants who were in racially diverse mentoring relationship described the ways in which this was an obstacle to obtaining what they needed from the relationship. Students who found themselves in mentorships with mentors of different races generally felt that race made a difference in how effectual the mentorships were. Rhonda, a black female, explained:

> It does hinder in a little bit because of the race dynamic. Like I recently had a meeting with…one of my other committee members who is of the same race, and the way that we connected...the way that he held me accountable…the other professor didn't…[…] Part of was definitely because of race…race does make a big difference. Particularly being African American.

Steven, a white male, reported what he had observed from matriculating through his department:

> When there's a mismatch…but I think they tend to really have a rough time. The students that…have like a white advisor with an African American students..[…] their advisor is… harder on them, they don't seem to understand like their experiences of what they are going through… and they also seem to like discount them and be disappointed by them more often and to be more harsh in their criticism. They don't take what they have to say seriously.

Although the idea of conflict arising from racially mixed interactions, the majority of the participants had same race mentor/mentee relationships and were able to report how that had served to produce a favorable mentorship in spite of unfavorable situations. For some this relationship thrived in an overall department that was racially harsh.

Social Equals

Of the ten participants, seven were able to experience same race mentorships. Overall they described good relationships with their mentors**.** Julia explained that she and her mentor had a good relationship by stating that: "We have a really good relationship…it's not anything beyond professional, but… I am comfortable enough to approach him with any questions that I may have regarding my program. Like I was able to approach him and ask him for a recommendation for a position in the department. A teaching position and he was willing to do it." The report of having a good relationship with mentors was expressed by Black and White participants. Some expressed that the relationships were gradual in their formation but overall they had reached a level of comfort that was a good mentor/mentee environment Patrick explained that his mentor demonstrated to him how a good mentor/mentee relationship should operate:

> It's something that built up over time because…he's very approachable but at the same time I was raised with a very defined notions of what was acceptable and

> unacceptable behaviors to superiors or perceived superiors and it took me a while to a figure out that my advisor, while he's certainly superior to me in academic rank is, is the first person in academia who should be your social equal…

A good relationship with a mentor also led participants to discuss other aspects of mentorships that created good relationships. Mentors filled a number or roles and served a myriad of purposes for mentees, however two ways were discussed repeatedly by participants. Mentors being serving as a listening ear was invaluable to students.

Sounding Board

Having a mentor who was open to race specific research ideas and racial experiences was something that was very important to students. Some students reported that they felt as if their research topics would not have been accepted if they did not have a mentor who was willing to listen to their ideas and then explain to them the ways in which to present it so that it could be accepted. Overall students expressed that a major asset to any mentor was that they served as a sounding board for ideas ranging from professional to personal experiences. Stacey, a Black female, stated:

> If I did not have her there would be… a lot more things that I would kind of have to keep inside and keep to myself which kind of makes things a little more stressful. So she kind of helps to diffuse my stress in many ways…I feel like having her has been a great, I don't want to say that she is like my stress reliever, but having that person that you can talk to really does help you to get things off your chest so you can move on more quickly…[…] I just feel like she's helped me just as a sounding board.

In contrast to the good relationships that students discussed were unfavorable mentoring relationships. Students were very expressive in describing what it was like to navigate through bad mentoring relationships.

Every Step is Harder

The sense that every step of a graduate or undergraduate program was made difficult by bad mentoring relationships was expressed by students who found themselves in these situations. Students would question their decision to enroll in school or question their ability to do the work that they had been presented with because they felt as if they had no venue to receive professional advice for the stress and frustrations that was the result of matriculating through school. Steven, a White male, described his relationship with his mentor when his appearance did not meet her expectations with these words:

> When I came to school I was extremely heavy… I was obese, like very obese. Since then I've like lost a ton of weight but when I first met my advisor… when I first went into her lab she had only spoken to me over the phone and she like looked at me, like with wide eyes, like surprised and then she like looked me like up and down and she was like clearly…surprised at how I appeared because of how big I was…It became pretty clear... when I went to sit down so we could be… intimate. When I was sitting down she became nervous…and like offered me her chair and asked if I wouldn't more comfortable in like the chair she was sitting in which was like her desk chair and she would take the other one. That's what was on her mind. She was thinking about my weight and how heavy I was. She was visibly like struck and then even like kind of made a comment about it, because she was so shocked. She didn't have composure…

In this particular situation, race was not the appearance that was the point of contention, however Steven felt that it illustrated how something as superficial as appearance could make a mentoring relationship work or not work. Steven continued this statement by explaining that if the advisor that you have been assigned to dislikes you it "definitely increases your chances of dropping out. Every

step of the way is like harder." Mentoring relationships were either made difficult because of negligence or after relationship became strained mentees began to experience neglect.

They Have to Take the Initiative

Having mentors who did not take the initiative to work with students or to foster professional development was reported as the main reason for bad mentoring situations. One of the main ways that mentoring and/or advising negligence occurred was the failure of professors to acknowledge that a unique experience was experienced by students of color. Victoria, a Black female, explained:

> There are so few Black professors, that professors of other races need to be able to learn how to understand that the students who come in are going to gravitate toward Black professors but see that and kind of step in and say can I help you with this. This is my area of expertise can I do this for you. Instead of everybody trying to gravitate toward the one black professor that they kind of gel with. There are so many opportunities for learning and growing that other professors can provide…. But they have to take the initiative…and say how can I help you, what can I provide for you.

The students who consistently reported areas where they had been neglected also reported that the main areas was the failure to either be acknowledged or to not be acknowledged as a student with a distinct matriculation experience. However some students identified other areas where neglect was shown that was not racially founded. Neil, a White male, described neglect from a differing aspect. In his case, mentoring was ineffectual because his mentor didn't personally benefit from investing time and energy into him:

> I came under an advisor who already had tenure so… the way it was arranged actually hurt a little bit because he… had a lot more leeway in what he could do and

> so he didn't have to really push me as much or not necessarily push me but… provide me with a lot of opportunities for…publishing or getting like more experiences…He kind of let me do my own thing because it didn't really matter to him as much for his own career."

In many of the scenarios students were able to pinpoint the catalyst for unhappy relations or mentor/advisor negligent. The different cases of professional development revealed that being able to select your mentor on your own, in many cases made a significant difference in a positive or negative outcome. Although formal arrangements guaranteed that a mentor would be provided to a student, most student agreed that being able to select a mentor on their own insured that mentors would provide the assistance they needed and that it diminished the probability of neglect.

Common Denominator

Participants expressed what they felt mentors were lacking in varying ways, what became clear is that all students wanted a mentor who provided their basic needs as a student. Although this varied from person to person, students felt that they should be able to communicate what they needed and then be able to be matched with a mentor who could provide those things. Students expressed the idea that race did not matter if they could get what they needed. Students felt that if mentor and mentees had a common ground or common denominator that was the foundation of the relationship, then the mentoring relationship was effectual: Reginald explained it best:

> At the end of the day I feel it's always about the ability to relate…. Other races can't relate to what you going through. There are certain things that we go through as a culture that other people don't go through in their culture the same… I feel like with any professor or mentor …they will try to find that link of , that common denominator and just build on those, so I may have a mentor that… I 'm talking

> some business stuff [to] and he's done[it] before and that's where we have that common link and that's what we talk about.

For Reginald, and for all of the participants, a mentor simply needed to be able to provide what is needed for the mentee.

In the context of professional development race was reported to have a major difference. In instances where departments or mentors attempted to ignore that there was a distinct racial experience students failed to get what they needed from the situation and felt some degree of neglect. In these situations participants felt compelled to cultivate their own professional development and also experienced and overall feeling of not being prepared for future endeavors. . The failure to recognize that race was significant had a negative impact on the professional development of participants in this study. The negative impact was experienced because the majority of the participants, Black and White, felt that experience and need differed by race. To attempt to enter a mentor/mentee relationship or a professional development relationship where this was not acknowledged generated a less than desirable outcome.

4.4 Race Salience

A major idea that emerged within the context of post racial rhetoric is that race is no longer significant in American society and that people between the ages of 18-30, millennials, were beginning to be less and less race focused. Within this study Black students were able to theorize a psychological independence from race, but their everyday experiences within the context of professional development rendered this impossible to do physically or mentally. In addition to this, for Black students race was such an important part of their conceptualization of the world, they could not truly detach from it. Black students reported that their race was very salient to them. Jackie stated that "I think that my race,...holds a personal meaning to me because first of all it's who

I am and then it's knowing what my ancestors and people before me have fought…" Tonya was more succinct but effectual in her statement: "I like being...I'm proud of my race. I like being Black." When asked to describe how she perceived "Black" as a race she stated it was "beautiful, strong, resilient....yeah." Reginald stated that he could not fathom a situation where he could divorce or detach from his race: "if you have to divorce you, your, your culture and heritage I think somebody, you probably going into the wrong direction." Victoria went into a more in depth explanation of why race was so salient to her:

> It holds a number of meanings it's very important and salient to me it kind of…colors everything that I do really. Umm even professionally…to a point …[that] the jobs [I had in college] …were like a racial like student aid. That's something that I did and it's something that helps minorities students get through the process in that big of a school and a lot of my jobs have come out of that experience.

Other participants expressed that their complete perception was framed around the fact that they were African American. They felt that this perception impacted interaction with other people and the way that other people interacting with them. Black participants felt that race was something that was impossible to disregard or to escape. Race was described as being embedded in all aspects of life.

It's Always There

For most participants, the everyday conceptualization of life was through a perspective that understood race to be a constant. For many participants race was imminent in all everyday life situations. Whether race was dealt with directly or if it was unspoken of it was always there: a certain imminence in every life situation. Patrick, a white male stated:

> It's difficult for me to disentangle my race or.. to disentangle my race from almost anything because… I, make it a point to be aware of my race and how it may or may

> not be affecting my persistence in graduate school….I say all of that because, you know I'm a white man so I…know when I walk into a room nobody looks at me strangely….because I'm white. It must be.

Differing slightly in how she has to be aware of her race, Stacey , a Black female, stated: "So I'm always conscious that race really is a defining feature particularly here in the US. So I think it's important to, not necessarily represent the entire race, but to make sure that I, as a Black woman am holding myself to an appropriate light and to an appropriate standard." Rhonda, a Black female, made it distinctly clear that, for her, race was inescapable: "In terms of race, I mean it's like it's one of those things that always there. You know. Whether I think it's hindering me or whether I think it's pushing me to do more. You know it's always there." Although students expressed that race was inescapable, none of them ascribed any negative feeling associated with being unable to escape race. The imminent nature of race resulted in racially salient participants including race in every aspect of their professional and personal work. For some, race was directly related to positive academic and professional experiences.

Race as a Door Opener

Race serving as an opportunity was an idea that was expressed in some way by all participants Black or White . Tonya, a Black female, stated that she was able to fund her academic career because of her race: "I was able to apply for a fellowship that was for minorities because I'm a minority. I was able to get my PhD funded… through an external mechanism." Stacey, a Black female, shared a similar experience: "I definitely think race has helped me, uh...gain access to certain programs because of my minority status…I feel that in some instances race has been a door opener for me." Reginald, a Black male, expressed a different idea about how his race was an opportunity for him:

> I came to Georgia State …at a great time where …student life needed Black leaders. You know when I came into Georgia State we had…[a]Black SGA president for the majority of the time I have been here. I was in charge of two organizations of Black males… Black organization [were] really like getting hype… I came at time Georgia State [when there really was] an opening that Black males were able to…we saw that door open and we ran through it. I think I came at a time when there was…for Black males like myself and others to come and really, not shine but do some good work.

In addition to having race serve as an opportunity, many people discussed race as their motivation to do their work and achieve professionally.

It's Meaningful To Me

Having personal a personal connection to their work was something that racially salient students expressed. Race was often the motivation for some students to engage in certain professional endeavors. Participant explained that they could not detach race from their work because it was a point of inspiration for members of their racial community. Students discussed that they did not wish to exhibit the emotional detachment that some scholars in their field was able to exhibit because their aim for doing their research was to speak to and for certain communities. Students also expressed that race made their work meaningful because they were able to destroy stereotypes that existed about marginalized groups. Stacey, a Black female, explained that her race was a motivation professionally to break stereotypes:

> I think the most positive aspect of being black here is the fact that...you get to break stereotypes. It's the fact that people… may think that black people may act one way or think a certain way unless they know you and get to meet you and see. That's when you become the individual…You get to shatter previous stereotypes and you

> get to instill in people that you are an individual . So I think that's one of the best aspects being in a collegiate environment.

Victoria, a Black female, expounded on these sentiments by explaining that not only was she professionally motivated but also found motivation to do her work because of the pride she associated with her race:

> There's a lot of pride I think associated with it just being there. Being a student and being black I think is meaningful in a I guess in a historical sense so you kind of feel that in a collegiate setting. I think being an example to other people coming before is kind of in the same bank. And I think developing a culture, particularly a culture of Black scholarship specifically is meaningful to me.

For individuals who were aware of race many benefits could be observed about being a member of their racial group. Although some benefits were noticed more in a particular racial group, all participants reported positive aspects of being either Black or White. Racial salience was not experienced by all of participants in this study some students reported the exact opposite.

4.5 Racially In-Salient

In juxtaposition to those participants who were racially salient were individuals who were racially in-salient**.** Participants who generated ideas that resulted in this theme described no conceptualization of race and ascribed no importance or value to their race. All participants who reported information of this nature were White. Neil stated that he had no real conceptualization of being white he explained: "other than superficial ones.. you know light skinned I can't think of uh little deep uh deep you know deeper adjectives other than that." Patrick stated that he "[had] no particular connection to whiteness." Steven replied, when asked what his race meant to him that:

"I think that my whiteness is fairly invisible so I wouldn't call it part of my identity. But as, like adjectives I would ascribe to it. I recognize that it is important so I know that I experience a lot of privilege and that my experiences in life is going to be different than a lot of people. but umm adjectives. not sure....maybe just privileged." Most participants in this category reported that they never really focus on being White beyond acknowledging that there may be some degree of privilege attached. For some of the other participants race was hard to conceptualize as something that needed heavy mental consideration.

Never Thought About It

Some participants described a degree of uncertainty about the importance of racial categorization and race. They could not definitively say that racial categorization was not important, however they could not definitively say that it wasn't. These participants seemed to be racially ambiguous. Julia, a White female, explained how she thought about race: "I don't actually think it is [important]…I…never really been aware of it until I moved down South" Neil had similar sentiments when asked about how important race was to him: "Other than privilege, not really… I'd say…It's not something I think about…I think it is starting to come out more since I started graduate school and started doing my own research and living in different areas of the country its becoming more something that's part of my identity than it was previously." For Julia, the only time that she was able to reference when race was potentially important was through racial confrontations. In this situation Julia explained that she was forced to respond because it was so racially tense:

> I think it was the Harlem Renaissance… and I had a fellow student who was …African American and she just started ripping into white people. Like she just was just going you know, white people this, white people that. We were all terrible, we were all evil and you know, all of her points weren't exactly…[untrue]. I did agree

> with some. I didn't disagree with her, but I, I actually tried to tell her I … don't disagree with you but I think your approach is flawed. I think you … tone it down a bit… I just think your approach is wrong. I think you need to temper it down a bit, make it a little more palatable because what you are saying to me is turning me off…She just went nuts… Telling me that I'm worse than the KKK. I'm worse, you know, I'm Nazi. And I'm like I didn't disagree with you…[…] I think no matter what I said to her she probably was going to get mad at me because of my color.

Racial confrontations were not a common experience for the participants who were racially in-salient but were reported as the only time that race was something that needed to be focused on.

I am an Individual

The majority of participants reported that they felt race to be very salient and that it was a major part of their everyday conceptualization, they also reported some degree of being able to mentally conceptualize that they were individuals aside from their race despite the fact that they could not do so physically. Psychological independence describes the mental ability to see oneself as an individual despite finding it necessary to physically and sometimes mentally connect to a racial group. Jackie, a Black female, when asked if she viewed herself as an individual or as a member of her race: "I would have to say individually. I hate saying that!" Stacey reported that "I like to think of myself as an individual but I think other people view me in terms of my race." Unanimously all of the white participants reported that they felt it to be more beneficial to be viewed as an individual. Neil stated that "I think it's more important to identify as an individual definitely, yeah." Patrick stated that "I find it much more helpful to talk about myself as an individual." Steven replied "as an individual for sure." Some participants in the study felt it very important to racially identify while other felt that it was not important to do so. Another idea that was discussed with regard to racial

categorization was the meanings that are associated with race. Some participants deemed it necessary to remove distance themselves from racially charged situations.

4.6 Distancing Move

Participants were asked if they felt that the ideas that they held about race were similar or different from the ideas that their parents may have held. Interviewees were equal in either agreeing yes, the meanings were the same or no the meanings had changed. Most of the participants agreed that viewing themselves as an individual was an idea that was different from how their parents viewed race. Another idea that emerged that was indicative of changing racial meanings and a shifting importance of race was the distancing move that some participants described. In some racially focused situations students described the tendency to detach themselves from other members of their race or to detach themselves from race issues. Tonya, a Black female stated that:

> I don't, like I don't always like to play the race card…but being in this program has made me very aware of racialized things…(…) I mean I don't know I guess because people are to a certain degree like not everything is about race. You know. I think I just feel like sometime maybe I am over thinking or over analyzing a situation from a racial perspective and it might not be you know, maybe I'm just second guessing myself but maybe it really is a racial experience and just maybe I just don't' want to pay attention to it. I don't know.

In racially awkward situations participants reported a hesitancy to identify race as being a factor. Reginald, a Black male, described a situation when a White professor seemed particularly surprised that he had done well on an assignment: "she was like this was really good! I was like, yeah, you know I write, I can write you know. And she was like oh I got to submit this to like a scholarship or something. You know I mean, it's like I mean I don't if she was excited because, I don't want to be

like racial man." Similar sentiments where described by White participants when they perceived that a member of their race harbored less than favorable racially specific ideas. When asked if his ideas about race were similar or different from his parents, Steven delineated a distinction between his and his parent's ideas: "I think they might consider it to be a point of pride potentially. I don't want to like throw them under the bus but I, I think for them they might have seen it as positive thing maybe where I see it as being not like shameful and negative necessarily but like, I don't know a little problematic." Participants wanted to be able to make their own statements about race that was void of older conceptions.

Ideas are the Same

In contrast to the tendency to distance themselves from the ideas that previous generations held, were the participants who had racial ideas that were the same as previous generations. These participants reported having ideas that were duplications or very similar to the ideas that their parents held. Stacey reported that her parents had socialized her very well because her ideas about race hadn't changed very much since leaving home:

> I never really thought about that but just thinking about it now I would probably say no I actually think that my parents and I have very consistent beliefs or should I say they have socialized me very well and that I haven't strayed too far from the things that they have taught me… or lessons that they have tried to instill in me growing up. So I think that we still have pretty much consistent views on race and the importance of race.

Neil, a White male, felt that he had similar ideas to his parents but couldn't be exactly sure because it had never really been discussed in his home: "Uh I don't think it's any different I don't think it's...I don't think my parents have even discussed race with me um or their own race or white race in general." Steven simply assumed that his parent's ideas and his were the same.

It Needed to Mean Something Back Then

The idea that racial meanings were stagnant was contrasted to the idea that racial meanings were evolving into something different in present day society. Though some participants could not quite articulate what the new meanings were, it was clear that ideas about race and meanings that had been attached to race generations prior were transforming. Jackie, a Black female stated that:

> Well my father grew up during… civil rights and segregations time era and so I think his idea of race then was just making it, like surviving during that time…you know making it happen doing what he can do to make ends meet just surviving that era without brutality and everything. And for me....I just see it more as just carrying on their legacy continuing to do good to stand out and...

Tonya, a Black female, expressed a similar idea that race meant something different for her parents than it did currently: "I think maybe [to] them they may have had a stronger sense… of community with being Black, as opposed to my generation. I mean it's there but I think it was stronger in their generation." Reginald, a Black male, in attempting to conceptualize how it may be different replied:

> Black needed to mean something back then…. it's almost as if we've moved away from the race to an extent. It's almost like socioeconomic or they try to make it seem that way, you know socioeconomic still means most, majority of Blacks and, no, no, no, no it's moved to socioeconomic like we can't, we can't use the race card no more.

Other students felt that racial meanings were beginning to be more encompassing to include Blacks throughout the diaspora. Victoria, a Black female, stated that "I kind of had a pan-Caribbean experience. Then moving to the United States it just kind of broaden from there but they, yeah they consider themselves Black in a general sense." Most of the participants were unable to really articulate what Black had evolved into in this current time but the majority stated that it was different from the past. Some participants wanted to make it clear that they were connected to the

ideas and experiences of their parents but that there was something slightly different in their current experience.

4.7 Racial Progress

In some cases of professional development the interviewee seemed hesitant to ascribe the word racist to an individual, however if the participant was allowed to generally discuss fair treatment and discrimination, they were able to identify situations that were discriminatory. In spite of this all people were able to easily identify areas of racial progress in the midst of the unfair practices. In almost all cases of identified racial progress, participants felt that governmental policies, specifically affirmative action, were partially responsible for the progress that had been achieved. Participants who discussed racial progress expressed the idea that improvements had been made from what they knew of past racial situations. Participants generally agreed that affirmative action was not considered to be special treatment. Instead affirmative action was seen as a policy that forced institutions to equally give access to all persons who may apply for a job or admittance to a college. It was integral in racial progress. Stacey explained that she had been able to witness diversity in the university setting because of what she felt to be the results of affirmative action:

> …Because some institutions firmly believe in diversity and affirmative action now … you have White students working together with Black students. Black students working together with Latinos, Latinos working with Asians. So it fosters that environment that allows different groups to be able to work together and I think that there are some institutions that you would not be able to see that.

In general all interviewees felt that affirmative action was necessary, however some felt that it was a problematic solution to racial discrimination and racial progress.

People Perceive It As Unfair

Affirmative action was discussed as a key ingredient to racial progress, however it was discussed as both helpful and hindering. Some participants expressed the idea that affirmative action had an enigmatic nature because it attempted to fix one social ill but simultaneously caused another because of how the general public perceived it. Jackie explained:

> I think it helps I think we still need it. Some people will… argue that it's a hindrance because , I mean in some cases…I'm a little torn on that. Because … people [of other races] are thinking just got in off of affirmative action then they're not just going to look at your intelligence they're gonna be like you just got in, you['re] a quota you're a number.

Steven was firm in his idea that affirmative action both helped and hindered racial progress. In his opinion it was not about whether affirmative action actually caused racial disharmony or not it was about the perception of it:

> I think both. It helps that affirmative action is probably going to lead to more people of color being able to even be in this setting to begin with which is probably helpful. But if people perceive it as being … then it hinders. So I think it needs to be done in a way that its perceived as not being unfair potentially or the argument for why it's still … necessary needs to be made more clear.. I don't know what can be done but I think it's, its' both. I don't whether it's more one or the other.

Of all of the participants who discussed if affirmative action was positive or negative, only two could discuss it in a way that that express all positive ideas about it. In most scenarios participants felt that more progress was needed in American Society when it came to race.

4.8 Room For Improvement

The idea that there was room for racial improvement was founded on the fact that progress has been made, however there were still some major obstacles that stood in the way of people of color being able to translate full equality from theory into actuality. Stacey felt that policies like affirmative action were only part of the solution because so many people were still at a disadvantage in society:

> Yes I do feel that affirmative action is still necessary I obviously don't have a problem either [with] affirmative action. I firm, my belief is that for any person, you may be granted access but you have to prove yourself while you are there…[…]I think is needed because still here in the United States African Americans…are at a significant disadvantage so that shouldn't be counted against them. If you are at a disadvantage and you're willing to do the work why should that be counted against you?

Similar to Stacey, Tonya expressed her concern for the progress of disadvantaged populations and the areas that she identified as needing improvement:

> I think that people are falling through the cracks especially getting into PhD programs and you know PhD programs basing your acceptance on GRE scores. I think, I just think it's still necessary because …if we look at Black males in graduate school… they're not there… there should be more of an effort….

Neil added a different perspective to why there was room for racial improvement. His idea dealt with the necessity to have diversity in places of power. Where other participants focused on the fact that more people needed to be able to take advantage of resources, Neil felt that there needed to be more people of diversity who controlled the resources:

> I feel that there's still not the kind of diversity that we need at levels of … influence in power and research especially in academia where a lot of our professors are… not people of color and their doing research with underserved communities. So there's like this imbalance there and so I think it's a good idea to try to correct that

Participants all agreed that the ideal goal of racial harmony had not been met in America, however there were many who reported that there existed ideas and people who felt that racial progress had been achieved and further work was unnecessary.

They Just Don't Focus on It As They Should

Perceived racial progress was discussed as the tendency of people to feel that racial discrimination had reached such a low point of occurrence that it was now unnecessary to focus on race heavily. None of the participants in the study shared this idea, but they were all able to describe situations or people that displayed this idea. Jackie described this sentiment in this way:

> I just think we, they've gotten away from it because I think they feel like we're getting these… opportunities to you know to go to college and you know express themselves or do certain things and I think they just don't focus on the …that people have been through to get them where they are today. I feel like they think ok so we're able to go to college and you know get some decent jobs or whatever I just don't think they focus on it… as they should.

Although no one in this particular study shared this feeling, they were all able to identify people that had the characteristic that Jackie described above.

4.9 Black Negligence

One of the main arenas that allowed participants to identify instances of racial discrimination was the differential treatment that was done to Black students versus what was done to White

students. Black and White participants consistently reported that black students seemed to be being neglected. In some instances students felt that this was done intentionally. In other instances students felt that professors did not intentionally focus on Black students and by default this meant that they neglected Black students. In many scenarios students were not able to definitively say that this was racial discrimination. Most interviewees reported engaging in a mental conversation where they attempted to deduce if there was racial discrimination involved or if they were being overly sensitive. Stacey, a Black female, explained how she had been neglected in her particular department with regard to the distribution of professional development resources:

> When I compare what other students are doing in terms of co-authoring with professors. In terms of helping them with their research…in terms of like programs and things that we have....I feel like they are offered more and I have to ask more. Which to me is a major difference and a major distinction between the experience of a Black student and the experience of a white student. Whereas students will be asked by professors like, hey I think we should co-author this paper, I think we should do this, I think we should do that. I feel like Black students or minority students have to really seek out. Like [do you want] to co-author with me? But I have seen scenarios or situations where my white counterparts have been offered those things…Then they say that you should … be aggressive and talk to professors and form relationships but what I've found is that…these professors are picking the students that they want to work with and a lot of times they happen not to be the Black students.

Rhonda, a Black female, struggled with the way to describe what she was experiencing in terms of Black neglect. She described on numerous occasions engaging in a mental discourse to make sure

that it really was race. She explained that she would try to find other explanations but she would most of the time come back to race:

> In terms of experiencing the same thing...it's like you are trying to run with horses you know and...and you, you haven't, you've been, you've had a donkey the whole time. You know. And you see it, but you don't really understand, you know, just, you don't understand it until you are in the midst of it. So umm, that's one of the main things, it's like there's this article, you know "Am I Crazy", you know, and it's like, you don't want to always, you don't always want to say it race. You don't, but when you are seeing the same people who look like you struggle and having the same problems you are having...

The inability to identify the cause of the discriminatory treatment was reported as being exacerbated by participants' reports of feeling that professors had low academic and professional expectations of them.

They Don't Expect Much of You

There was a preponderance of reports from the majority of Black participants that they felt as if professors had degraded expectations or that professors did not expect much from them. This meant that professors either expected them not to perform or to perform very poorly. Oftentimes students felt that they were not given what they needed in order to perform or that their high performances were met with great surprise because it was not expected. Jackie, a Black female explained: "I think because my professors that I have had of other races, it's almost like a shocker. It's like a shock to them when you do know stuff. Or you're intelligence, it's always like "wow" I don't think that they, I think that they expect worse and when you give them the best to excel they, it's it's a shock to them. Rhonda, a Black female, explained that she often would perform the same

as other student, but would be given little to no feedback on how to make the paper better. Feedback for Rhonda was the key ingredient to becoming a better student:

> ...They don't expect much of you. I had a professor where… me and three other Black students compared our papers. We didn't have a lot of comments on our paper and we had a decent grade and we look at our white cohort and they have a bunch of comments on their paper. That's going to make them a better student. So basically you are saying that you don't expect much from me and that I'm only, you know, like this idea that they are pushing us through.

In addition to feeling as if they were expected to perform less, Black students continuously expressed that they felt that they had to work harder in order to get the same results that their White counterparts had. Echoing the sentiments of their Black counterparts, White students agreed that racial taxation was a part of the Black experience.

Work Harder for the Same Goal

Black students reported feeling as if they had to work harder to achieve the same outcome. Many black students reported feeling racially taxed or feeling that their race caused them to work more. Rhonda, a Black female, explained it in this way:

> But I think that we differ in the fact that…on face value African American students have to work just a little bit harder because there have been times or instances when you maybe feel like the work that you're doing is of the same caliber as your White counterpart but yet you receive lower grades or the teacher gives you a harder time. So I think the experience of getting through school is the same for everybody you know late nights, studying until you can't study anymore, writing a dissertation, thinking about quitting, wondering if you should be here and what did I do to myself. Those experiences are the same, but when it comes to the actual getting

> grades, getting into programs, hearing about programs, hearing about scholarships, hearing about awards...you have to work as a black student harder.

Reginald, a Black male, explained that Black students never get the opportunity to take a break. In Reginald's opinion, taking a break would convey the erroneous idea that you were being unproductive and that you did not deserve to be in college:

> …You are really not allowed to chill, cause when you are chilling you are like a bunch of Negros taking up space. And that's how they feel about Black folks in the Plaza right now, you know how when we go during the break and we have music and we're just hanging out…Are we not allowed to chill on campus? They don't want us to do that… when you're just relaxing …when you are not studying in the Library, you know then they just feel like these Negros are just taking up space.

Working harder to achieve the same thing was something that was particularly interesting for participants when they discussed it in relation to students who did not experience the strain of working harder to receive the same outcome as a colleague.

4.10 White Privilege

White privilege was an idea that was alluded to by Black students but was talked about directly by White students. This concept was generally described as not having to determine if your race was ever a barrier to resources or professional respect. Most White students could not identify if white privilege was much more than this and could not be definitively sure that race had ever actually positively benefitted them although they were quite sure it had not negatively impacted them. Patrick stated it this way:

> Look bottom line is, men, particularly, and definitely white men they been getting you know, they run the joint. They've always had their way so it's not from just habit,

> so yes I think that negatively, there is the off chance I might apply for a job or maybe I applied to a graduate school and didn't get in because I was a white man and they already had a bunch of white guys anyway so why we need another one. But the odds of that are very, very low. But it could happen, like that possibility exists I don't know, but positively. Like I said when I walk into a classroom to teach or when I walk into a meeting with a professor or when I go to give a job talk with another university no one is going to question me, based on, I will never have a question based on my race, not ever. And that's , that, but they don't know me they just know I'm a white man and because of that fact alone they will say, ok well this guy is probably competent. Why? Who knows but that's what happens.

In discussing White privilege, White students were able to illustrate two themes that were characteristic of white privilege: critical white privilege and uncritical white privilege**.** People who conveyed ideas that were characteristic of critical white privilege were able to identify some instances where race had afforded them more opportunity. Students who expressed uncritical white privilege expressed the idea that white privilege was probably present but they had never really devoted much mental energy to the idea.

Critical White Privilege

Critical white privilege was discussed by most of the White participants of the study. Julia stated that "personally....I acknowledge that there are probably a lot more opportunities afforded to me because of my race and I, I guess, I could self-identify as kind of a self-hater because of that. (laugh) I don't like the fact, that you know, that may offer me a better opportunity than somebody who you know, is equally if not more… qualified." Steven explained his response to his perceived white privilege by stating that:

> Well I guess there's less pressure that I don't have to worry when someone does disregard me or like criticize me I don't have maybe this inkling or this nagging suspicion that it could be for this other reason that it could be because I guess they would argue because of my race. I guess there's a lot less pressure also, I don't know when I speak out I don't have to worry about, whether, what I say isn't going to be taken to represent all White people. Whereas I feel like people of color at our school when they speak in class they are speaking for an entire group. That must weigh on them I think.

Most students who reported instances of critical White privilege also had instances when they were oblivious or uncritical of White privilege.

Uncritical White Privilege

Uncritical White privilege was illustrated by Julia when she explained the positives of being White in a collegiate setting:

> I think it gives me a lot of mobility, you know because if somebody comes up to me and assumes I'm one way and I don't necessary correct them, I find that you know a relationship can certainly bud as far as that's concerned, but.... I think that, has it possibly affected me when people assume that I am White? It probably has but I haven't noticed it.

Neil expressed a similar idea when asked the same question. He replied that " I probably take for granted…having a lot of people that are probably role models that are also white that are around me that you know…it's not something that I notice uh overtly but it's something probably that is resonating inside me." Patrick expressed that in many cases it was impossible for him to know if he was receiving favor because he was White because he had no way of knowing if he would not be receiving the same resources as another race:

> I can't, I don't know that its. All I know about it is that it certainly has not been a hindrance. But I don't know that it's helped or not. I can't know that but I do, you know, like I said when I go to talk to a professor, you know, I, it is , you know, I, I like I said I have never been anything other than a white person, a white man. But I don't know it doesn't, I, I, I certainly have gotten...let me put it this way...I have never under any circumstances felt that I was in any way disenfranchised on any level from the rights that I felt were due to me as a student. and I can only attribute that to the fact that I'm a white man and that I am treated as that so you know and whether they would treat anybody differently I don't know.

For Patrick as with other participants, attempting to identify racially entangled situations was particularly difficult.

In most of the cases of identified discrimination as well as the cases where participants were unsure or racial discrimination, the definitions of what race means in present day society was grappled with. In some cases participants were unable to give concrete answers about discrimination because they questioned if race should be the focal point. Questions regarding the importance of race were often considered in the minds of participants. Depending only if they felt they should still focus on race or not often determined what their reaction or decision would be about a racially discriminatory situation. Although many people reported hesitancy in identifying race, they were generally able to notice and successfully recognize instances of racial discrimination.

4.11 I Don't Agree With That!

All participants of this study, with the exception of one, had been introduced to the idea of a post racial society. Many admitted that they had never really given the idea much thought because they generally disagreed with the idea. The most obvious idea that emerged in relation to a post

racial society was the idea that participant did not agree with it. No participant of this study agreed with the notion of a post racial America. While there were differing views on how much race still mattered, no one accepted the idea that race was irrelevant. Julia, a White female, laughed at the idea: "(laugh) I don't believe that (laugh), I think it's very very significant in society despite what people think (laugh)." Victoria, A Black female, expressed that it was also laughable to think that race no longer mattered: "I think it's silly in the least… it's obvious that it is, as a sociologist I feel like race is and, it's an institution. It's institutionalized in this country everything is about race it has a racial component to it. I just think it's silly." A direct response was not explained by all participants. For other students it was hard to reply.

Neil, a White male, did not know exactly how to respond to the idea of being in a society where race did not matter. He expressed his sentiments in this way: "I don't think its.. I think it's a weird idea I mean…I'm not sure why people would say this because it's like all over the place…it's still like a huge issue and it's not going away. It's changed probably a little bit and the discussion has changed … its ongoing…" Patrick, a White male, also rejected the idea of the existence of a post racial society: " Oh that's ridiculous. That just, that's just a unfounded statement. That's a wish. I should say it's more of an affirmation? No. It's more of an aspiration. It's an aspirational statement." Rhonda, a Black female, was the most verbal in stating her disagreement with this idea: "That's some...ok, I gave up cursing for Lent….but that's some bullshit, ok, that's some bull....bullshit (laugh)."

Harder to Combat

Connected to the idea that a post racial America was unfounded and silly, was the idea that acting upon this idea posed a threat to society. Participants discussed the danger with assuming that society was pot racial. Generally students stated that racism would be harder to combat because of

this idea was present. Stacey, a Black female, expressed her concern for future generations because of the erroneous ideas of post racialism:

> I don't know that I necessarily think that it has impacted my career but I see that for future students it will impact them because, one because I believe it's false, I believe, I think that other people are buying into this and because they are buying into this it allows them to ...engage in things that are biased in terms of race and not look at it that way. Basically it allows…it's even more dangerous because now you don't have that overt racism you have that subversive or what we will say symbolic racism which is even worse. You don't think that it's racist, to me because people are buying into this it make it even more dangerous because it allows for that subversive or what we call under cover racism.

One of the main reasons that participants identified as the danger of post racial ideology was the fact that race was universally relevant in society. The fact that race was relevant in society, by default, made it dangerous to attempt to eschew in the opinions of participants. This opinion was expressed by several participants. In some cases student reported that professors and superiors failed to see race because they had accepted liberal ideologies about the irrelevancy of race. I other situations students felt that professors and superiors simply did not challenge post racial ideas because it was easier to not pay attention to the ways that race was still relevant.

4.12 Not Doing It Intentionally

The inability of a professor or a superior to see how race was still relevant because they had accepted ideas about a post racial society emerged in the interviews. Generally participants felt that professors were not acting in a racially discriminatory way intentionally. Rhonda, a Black female, depicted this unintentional behavior in this way:

> I think that some of them, a good majority of them are not doing it intentionally, and that's why I state that a good majority of them buy into postracialism that's why I say it's so dangerous because if you really would sit down and talk to …and say why did you pick him over her and you get down to the root of the root there's no real difference except you know, racial characteristics or even gender for that matter. So I don't think that a good majority of them are doing it intentionally…

Victoria, a Black female, stated that:

> I think it hasn't been acknowledge that there is a particular experience that we have that makes it difficult to matriculate … it's not acknowledged and it's not addressed. I think....like I said it's a general issue mentoring in the department but I feel like specifically with the Black students it's clear that Black students have a difficult time getting through the department in a timely fashion. I think they just don't acknowledge. Maybe they don't see but I feel like as a sociologists you know these things for a fact empirically.

Both Rhonda and Victoria expressed the idea that people in their department should be able to recognize that race was significant, however they both agreed that many in their department had expressed acceptance of the idea that race was no longer significant.

I Have No Idea

Two participants reported apprehension when being asked if race was still a source of great contention in society. While they had expressed ideas that conveyed that they thought it was significant, when asked this question directly they were slightly unsure of a direct yes or no answer. These participants were racially aware but there was a sense that of uncertainty about the level of importance race had in society: Neil was unsure if race was a major factor in determining if people would be admitted into colleges and universities:

> I don', I have no idea. I would like to say yes of course but part of me would say no because it's just people there are just certain social cues just socialization processes that take place where uh, you know, without affirmative action as a stated policy, you know, I have to think that minorities and women in some cases would be less likely to have access to colleges and universities that they have access to today. so yeah. I don't know. I'm not sure.

Patrick expressed that he did not feel that race was problematic in his department. Although he did not say definitively that it was not an issue, he was expressed that it wasn't really an issue: I'm really not sure I don't know , our department is quite diverse and I mean I don't know. "I'm almost certain that race as a predictor of success or failure after graduate school is insignificant. In our department. I don't know that it's a problematic thing, race but I, I am not sure. I don't think so." Similar to Neil, Patrick was aware that racial issues were present, however he did not see them in his immediate surroundings.

Participants felt that they were able to identify when professors and superiors were acting as if post racial ideology was a true statement. In those situations students felt that racism went unnoticed because professors, mentors, and general superiors had determined, to some degree, that race was no longer something that needed to be noticed. Post racial ideology was the main ideology pinpointed as the reason that certain resources were not made available to Black students. No student felt that blatant discrimination was the cause. Consistent with racial formation theory, post racialism appeared to pose itself as a new racial project. Because it is such a nebulous idea it is impossible for people to accept it as a fully developed ideology, however participants felt that people were accepting of it enough that it impacted the distribution of resources in society. The main resource that has been impacted for the students of this study was professional development. In most cases students were able to easily identify instances where post racial ideas had an influence.

4.13 Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore how post racial ideology impacts the professional development of college students the between the ages of 18-30. The research questions guiding this study were as follows:

1. How does post racial ideology impact the professional development of college students between the ages of 18-30?
2. Is race and racial categorization important to this age group?
3. Are people in this age group able to recognize instances of racial discrimination?
4. Are people in this age group able to recognize the post racial influence?

In order to understand the how the professional development of students was impacted by this ideology this study focused on various kinds of professional development, and how race may or may not have affected those situations, differential treatment by race, current racial meanings of race, and the importance people ascribed to race. These factors were presented in detail within this chapter and are discussed in summary below.

Post racial ideology largely affected the effectiveness of the mentor/mentee relationship. When students found themselves in racially mixed situations with professors who did not recognize the unique racial experience of black students, mentoring relationships were not effective. Racial categorization and race were reported as being especially important to Black students who participated in this study. White students reported no real conceptualization of racial importance. Although participants could recognize instances of racial discrimination, these situations were often recognized with much skepticism. Lastly, students were able to identify instances where post racial influence affected the distribution of resources. The major difference revealed by race was that White participants largely saw no value in their whiteness. Black students felt that their race was particularly significant and could not fathom divorcing form it.

5 DISCUSSIONS, LIMITATIONS, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore how post racial ideology impacts the professional development of students between the ages of 18-30. The research questions guiding this study were as follows:

1. How does post racial ideology impact the professional development of college students between the ages of 18-30?
2. Is race and racial categorization important to this age group?
3. Are people in this age group able to recognize instances of racial discrimination?
4. Are people in this age group able to recognize post racial influence?

Ten Black and White students between the ages of 18-30 were purposefully selected to be interviewed. All of the volunteers participated in semi-structured face to face interviews. All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. These interviews served as the sole source of data for this study. A qualitative case study design was used to explore the factors that impacted the professional development for these participants. Data was analyzed using the thematic, two levels of coding method (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Participants were targeted in all programs at Georgia State that offered, at least, a masters level terminal degree. The majority of participants were recruited from the Sociology, Psychology, and Political Science departments at Georgia State University.

An analysis of the data revealed two main categories related to the ways in which professional development was impacted by post racial ideology. The overall professional development was positively impacted by being in a situation where the professors/students or mentor/mentees were of the same race and that mentoring when race wasn't an issue was the main area of professional development for all students. Two categories emerged from data analysis related to the importance of race and racial categorization. Participants either ascribed a high degree of

importance or ascribed very little importance to their race. Data analysis revealed that two main areas of racial discrimination were able to be noticed: Black negligence and white privilege. The review of the data also revealed that two main categories concerning the ability to recognize post racial influences. Largely participants had either and disagreed heavily with post racial ideas or they noticed where other people had accepted post racial ideas and no longer seemed to cognitively consider race. This chapter includes a detailed discussion regarding the general conclusions of the study, limitations of this study, implications of this study and recommendations for future research.

5.1 Conclusions and Discussions

Based on the analysis of the data, three general conclusions were drawn from the findings. The conclusions are:

1. Post racial influences negatively impacted the professional development of students because professors, mentors, and general superiors who accepted this ideology fail to consider race when professionally developing students.
2. Although Black and White students felt that race remained to be very important, only Black students felt racial categorization to be important.
3. Students were generally able to recognize discrimination and instances of post racial influence, however, it was difficult for students to definitively label a situation as racially discriminatory.

Post racial influences negatively impacted the professional development of students because professors, mentors, and general superiors who accepted this ideology fail to consider race when professionally developing students.

One of the main ideas about post racialism is that it poses as a new vehicle to move society from conservative instances of racism to liberal instances of racism (Zamudio & Rios, 2006). Generally the literature states that people do not consciously challenge post racial rhetoric or they

make a conscious decision to accept it and act upon it. Because members of society feel that they have adopted a liberal ideology posed to foster racial progress they no longer feel it necessary to actively be un-racist or to challenge racial practices. After post racial ideas are accepted racially charged situations are usually analyzed, revised, and rationalized into being non-race related. Another idea that is usually associated with post racial rhetoric is that all peoples in society have an equal opportunity to achieve in life (Zamudio & Rios, 2006). In the context of professional development this was particularly problematic. When students of color found themselves in a mentoring relationship or general professional development scenario with mentors or superiors of different races, it often went unacknowledged that a distinct matriculation experience existed for students of color. Students reported inadequate professional development when race was not considered in professional development. If professional development failed to be administered in a way that considered race, the correct professional development resources were often not made available to students.

The availability of resources is directly affected by the emergence of new racial projects. Omi and Winant (1994) introduce the idea of a racial projects in order to describe how racial meanings, and significance changes. These changes and shifts ultimately how that affects the distribution of resources in society. Within the context of professional development, post racialism posed to alter the view of what race meant and how significant it was in society. As this racial project gained more momentum, students consistently felt that they could only get what they needed professionally in contexts where the ideas about race and its significance were not being challenged. The failure to provide what students needed did not steam from the inherent want to disregard certain students, instead it originated from the idea that all students should be treated the same. The problem with adopting universal policies is that the outcome is usually different for students of color. In addition to this universal approaches adopt practices that work for the standard person in society (Powell,

2009). In the case of profession development in a college context, the needs of a White male student would be provided to all students. When society takes on a post racial context, the standard that is adhered to is that of majoritarian society (Cho, 2009). Students, therefore, found it more beneficial to find mentors like themselves, who could remember what it was like to matriculate through college in order to get the professional development that they needed. In addition to this, mentoring was identified as the main tool for garnering professional development..

Although Black and White students felt that race remained to be very important, only Black students felt racial categorization to be important.

Race scholars typically agree that the meanings and the importance socially assigned to race continually shifts. Most contemporary raciologists agree that discussing race in a manner that does not render it dynamic and problematic is failure to adequately discuss race (Omi & Winant, 1994;Dalmage, 2000; Omi, 2001; Jackson, 2005). Students were not able to concretely articulate what race meant in present day society. The majority of Black students could confidently say that race did not mean what it meant for their parents, however there was unclear answers about what it meant presently. The inability to be able to effectively convey racial meanings is a possible explanation for the label "post" being assigned to this age group. This phenomenon, the inability to label, is discussed Taylor (2007) in an article discussing the reasons that people ascribe the adjective post. None of the Black students in this study felt that they were in at time in history where they were ready to divorce their racial identities. Although they didn't want to divorce their racial identities student were very clear in that present day racial meanings and identities were different from those of previous generations. What this alludes to is that post may in fact have a different definition than what the media and political pundits are acknowledging. Instead of post meaning a disregard of racial importance and racial categorization, post may merely be an indication of the ideas that participant reported. "Posterizing" is possibly being connected to people between the

ages of 18-30 because they have a sense of being connected to the past, however, they agreed that racial meanings were different in present day society. This reasoning was described in the literature in Taylor's work *Post-Black, Old Black*. Of the four reasons that were explained by Taylor as reasons that people "posterize," the data here suggest that people between the ages of 18-30 want to connect themselves to the common origin of their parents but also want to show that Black is evolving to mean a variety of things that Black could not have meant before. What was very clear in the data was that the tendency to racially categorize was still present. This tendency did not manifest with the White participants. Although, some of the White participants felt that racial meanings had changed since their parent's generations they reported to rarely ever focus on race or to identify racially.

The ideas presented by the participants with regard to race importance and racial categorization echoes sentiments from the literature presented by Steven Gregory (1992). The significance of race has not declined but has shifted (Gregory, 1992). Black and White has to mean something different in 2012 because Black and White people can now exist together in spaces that they were once unable to. From a symbolic interactionist standpoint, identities exist in relation to other identities inside of a specific situation (Hewitt & Stokes, 1975; Blumer, 1979). Many people's parents have no conceptualization of what Black means in a collegiate professional development situation because Black was not observed and negotiated in that context for them. Consistent with ideas that were discussed in the Gregory (1992) article, as Black people continue to gain access to opportunities and resources the racial focus changes. This does not in any way suggest that race will fail to be significant. What it does suggest is that race's significance is found in different areas in society than in previous epochs. An equal argument can be presented regarding the White students in the study. Most racial meanings in society exist in relation to the meanings that exist for other groups (Hewitt & Stokes, 1979; Gordon, 2008). If the meaning for one racial group is shifting in society, then it will surely shift for other groups in society. Racial formation theory explains what the

students in this study described. New political occurrences, changes in socioeconomic factors, and policy changes dictate the ways in which racial categorization happens. The information gathered in this study illustrates that a shift is currently taking place with regard to racial meanings and importance.

The importance of racial categorization aligned with the findings from previous studies regarding the attitudes that people between the ages of 18-30 have about race. The current discourse on post racialism only considers the idea that "post" means that society has moved beyond a point where race matters. In the study entitled *Don't Call Them Post-Racial: Millennials' Attitudes on Race, Racism, and Key Systems in Our Society* (Apollon, 2011) the findings overwhelmingly showed that people between the ages of 18-30 did not feel that society was post racial. This study was careful to note that the participants did have diverse ideas and thoughts about the significance of race, however, they all agreed that it was very important. Similar findings were revealed here. All of the participants felt that it was erroneous to draw the conclusion that race no longer mattered in society. Participants described their disagreement with this idea by responding directly to questions that asked if they agreed with the idea as well as by detailing how important race was in their everyday conceptualization. In professional development situations students also illustrated how race was integral and could not be eschewed. Failure for professors, mentors, and superiors to recognize that race was important resulted in students being inadequately professionally developed.

Students were generally able to recognize discrimination and instances of post racial influence, however, it was difficult for students to definitively label a situation as racially discriminatory.

The literature discussing the impact of post racial ideology identified liberal acts of racism as one of the most dangerous aspects of post racial ideology. Practices that are still present in society that perpetuate racism are defined as symbolic racist entities. These forms of racism are more difficult to identify because they are not overtly racist. In these situations, public polices or

corporations take a universal standard approach in order to ensure that they are not being racially insensitive. When the end result is different for different sectors of society, the explanation is often that those who performed better than everyone else were inherently more equipped. A critical look is not taken to uncover why all of the people who so happened to underperform where members of a particular racial group. Because government agencies, corporations, and colleges did not intend to racially discriminate, no racial discrimination can be identified. (Selmi, 2011). In the cases of professional development when racially discriminatory acts were witnessed students often struggled with identifying if it was race was actually a factor or not. Students reported that they did not want to always be the person to identify racial issues because they had been exposed to ideas and statements that conveyed the message that it was not always about race. Oftentimes before a student could safely say that a situation was a racially negative situation they would describe going through a mental checklist of other possible explanations. Consistent with the literature, racially discriminatory acts were not as easily identified because they were often subtle occurrences that left students questioning if there was an issue.

Students were generally able to discuss instances where they felt that post racial influences caused the racially discriminatory acts that they witnessed. Some students felt that professors in particular departments should be able to recognize racism because of the kind of topics that were discussed in that department, however race seemed to be an area of little focus. This idea aligns with two of the three ways that the literature outlined as reasons that race would be retreated from. The information presented by these students depict a sociocultural and material retreat from racism. A material retreat from racism describes the lack of racially focused policies and remedies. The sociocultural retreat from racism describes the tendency of society to move away from the definitions of racism described by peoples of color (Cho, 2009). Students reported that departments did not have certain policies in place that would cultivate the professional development needed by

students of color. The main policies that students felt should be in place were policies that mandated mentoring. Students also felt that their feelings and ideas about what discriminations was, were not seen as valid. This resulted in students not speaking out about racism or attempting to find a familiar person to discuss race with. The main way that students felt that issues of racism and discrimination were addressed was through governmental policies.

Race based policies and remedies, such as affirmative action had a particularly precarious place in society in relation to the post racial conversation. Conversations about the meaning of race usually happen on the state level and then policies are either created or destroyed in alignment with the meanings that the state constructs. This idea explains Omi and Winant's racial project theory (Paguyo & Moses, 2011). Post racialism emerging as a new racial project has the potential to cause affirmative action to be deemed unnecessary. Participants in this study all agreed that society had not reached the point of progress where affirmative action could be done away with. Though the participants in this study agree that affirmative action is problematic because of the way that it is perceived, it was something that participants agreed should be kept in place. An idea that emerged in the literature was that people had varying ideas about how affirmative action worked. This idea is also a major reason that was cited in the literature as one of rationales for the destruction of affirmative action (Paguyo & Moses, 2011). Participants, although skeptical at times, felt that affirmative action was still needed because racism was still present, however many agreed that affirmative action was problematic.

Racism being present was an idea that was not challenged by the students in this study. Students did, however, report that they felt alone in feeling that racism was a problem. The mental checklist in which students would engage in in order to make sure that a situation was racially charged was fueled by the idea that no one else noticed the situation. This idea aligned with ideas from the literature regarding the future of race relations in America. Sociologists Esposito and Finley

(2009) felt that future generations would first have to convince superiors and society as a whole that racism still existed and then work on solutions to the problem. The authors here felt that many of these ideas originated from erroneous conclusions being drawn because of the election of a Black president (Esposito & Finley, 2009). None of the students in this study discussed how the election of the first African American president may or may not impact the experiences they reported. Despite this small difference, students did agree with other ideas presented by these sociologists. In the opinion of Esposito and Finley, the new racism that people have to combat is racial apathy (pg. 170). Although this idea was not expressed directly, it was alluded to that mentors and professors did not care to focus on racial issues. Some students also reported that they felt that other people in their age group did not focus on race as much as they, themselves, did.

5.2 Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study are a result of the methods employed to conduct this study. Although flyers were posted in order to recruit participants, the majority of participants were recruited via snowball sampling. These findings may have been affected by the fact that most of the participants knew each other and shared similar ideas, by the fact that students had to be currently enrolled as a Georgia State student, by the fact that some participants were of a different race than the researcher, and by the fact that the participants may not have been comfortable in the semi-structured interviews to speak freely about their professional development and racial experiences.

The small number of participants and the fact that all students were students of Georgia State University makes these finding unable to be generalized. In addition to this, the design of this study limited the age group that could participate in this study. Limiting the age range in this way disallowed the exploration of the ways that people in earlier generations may conceptualize race. This age limitation further limits the generalizability of the study.

The successful completion of this study may have also been hindered by the participants' lack of candor and ability to speak freely. Race has been posed as a very sensitive topic in American Society. The ability to speak candidly about race is likely more difficult when the conversation is comprised of people of differing races. This study included both Black and White participants, however I identify as a Black/African American. I only interviewed participants who volunteered to participate after engaging in a detailed explanation of what would be discussed during the interview. It was my hope that this would ensure that participants were comfortable discussing the topic.

The questions asked in this study did not cover the element of culture and how it may be suppressed in a post racial society. If students felt that culture was something that was affected by the idea of a post racial America the design of the interview protocol did not allow for information of this nature to be uncovered.

Lastly, another limitation of this study as that there is no way to discern how truthful the participants were in their answers. If participants were reluctant to discuss race, were conscious of being offensive, gave socially desirable answers, or did not want to detail personal information about mentors, the results may have been skewed. Attempts were made to minimize this limitation by emphasizing confidentiality and the use of a study number. However, this may not have been enough to ensure entirely truthful and candid answers.

5.3 Implications

Previous studies that have focused on colorblind ideology (Zamudio & Rios, 2006; Lewis et.al, 2000) discuss how race impacted certain systems in a particular context. The goal of most of these studies was to illustrate that ideologies that sought to disregard race were erroneous and dangerous. Post racialism has been posed as a different ideology than colorblind ideology. In many of the past studies there were theories of how much racial progress had taken place in society. This

study differed because post racial ideology largely erupted out of a major indication of racial progress, the election of the first African American president. The amount of energy surrounding this ideology has been exacerbated because of this major political happening. This study aimed to explore, in light of the energy surrounding the validity of this ideology, how post racialism impacted the way students were being prepared for the next stage of their academic and professional careers. Differing from previous studies, this study was able to produce results that indicated that racial meanings were changing. This study was also the first of very few empirical studies concerning post racial ideology. Empirical findings are particularly important in the post racial conversation because it has largely been a media sensation. In addition, this study applied the racial formation theoretical framework in its design. The one study that has investigated post racialism did not necessarily apply a theoretical framework; its concern was solely reporting what participants said about post racialism. Other studies who investigated colorblind ideologies did not come from a stand point of race having a dynamic, changing nature. Racial formation theory is framed around the concept of race being ever changing.

This study situates racial formation theory as a valid theory for understanding the current ways in which race is changing in society. Racial formation pinpoints where to look in society to see how racial meanings are being constructed and deconstructed. In addition to this racial formation theory, acknowledges that resources are made available and not available based on the meanings that are assigned. The findings of this research show the usefulness of this theory in comparison to other theories that treat race in a static nature.

Arguably the most important implication of this study is the information it presents for government policies and media personalities. Largely the idea of a post racial society has been accepted and used as a strategy for policy making. What the results of this study show is that attempting to make policies in which race is not considered fails to adequately meet the needs of the

U.S. populations. Instead of policymakers accepting this ideology as a valid policy making strategy , this study provides the empirical research to accurately inform the conversation.

In spite of the information that this study presents regarding the continued necessity for affirmative action, the attitudes and perceptions that participants expressed about the positive aspects of affirmative action. Aside from post racial ideology presenting the idea that race based remedies are unnecessary, this study illustrated how people's perceptions about post racialism render it unnecessary. Many of the current college students are the future policy makers of American Society. If the overall perception about affirmative action policies is that they cause social divisions, it is very likely that future policy makers could determine that affirmative action is too divisive. Participants of this study expressed this idea repeatedly. Similar to the conversations about affirmative action that emerged in the Amendment 46 court cases stand to be the scene of the continued social battle about the continued necessity of affirmative action.

5.4 Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to explore how post racial ideology impacts the professional development of college students between the ages of 18-30. A qualitative case study methodology was used to facilitate the exploration. Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are proposed for future research:

1. Explore the relationship between post racial ideology and Black identity formation
2. Explore the relationship between post racial ideology and the policy making strategies in collegiate academic departments.
3. Repeat this study with a larger number of participants with a more diverse population.

4. Formulate a study that focuses specifically on what the current racial meanings are in society.

A discussion of these recommendations is included below:

Explore the relationship between post racial ideology and Black identity formation

The students of color who participated reported that race was a very significant part of their identity. Post racialism is posed as an ideology that negates the importance of race. These conflicting ideas necessitate an exploration into how these conflicting ideas impact the healthy identity formation for people who place a high degree of importance on race. In many cases students reported an inability to conceptualize an identity without race. In a society where race is being posed as insignificant, positive identity formation could pose to be particularly difficult. Research must be conducted to explore how racial identities continue to thrive in this environment.

Explore the relationship between post racial ideology and the policy making strategies in collegiate academic departments.

The literature discussing post racial ideology posits policy making as one of the main site where people have adopted post racial strategies. Students in this study felt that race specific policies were not in place with regard to mentoring and professional development because departments failed to adequately consider race. Research must explore if departments have adopted policies that attempt to treat all students equally. Attempting to treat persons of different races in this way, has been empirically shown to produce differing results. This is an area of that could have major implications for the life chances and post-graduate professional success of students.

Repeat this study with a larger number of participants with a more diverse population.

The findings of this study produced very compelling ideas about the accuracy of post racial ideology. The ability of this study to be generalized renders these findings easily disregarded because of the small population size. In order for findings of this nature to make a significant impact on the

public opinion regarding the accuracy of post racial ideology, studies of this nature will have to include a representative number of participants in order to reflect public opinion.

Formulate a study that focused specifically on what the current racial meanings are in society.

This study revealed that racial meanings were in a transitioning stage. The literature on racial formation acknowledges that racial meanings shift and change contingent upon differing factors in society. Students in this study were unable to successfully articulate what race meant in current times. Exploring what race does mean is integral in policy making and understanding the current racial dynamics in present day society. Because participants reported race as an integral part of society , research must explore in what ways race is integral and ultimately how that connects to other integral aspects in society.

5.5 Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore how post racial ideology impacts the professional development of students between the ages of 18-30. The research questions guiding this study were as follows:

1. How does post racial ideology impact the professional development of college students between the ages of 18-30?
2. Is race and racial categorization important to this age group?
3. Are people in this age group able to recognize instances of racial discrimination?
4. Are people in this age group able to recognize post racial influence?

This study adds to the existing body of literature regarding racial formation and post racialism. It investigated the ways in which race and its significance impacted the ways that collegiate department professional developed students. Three general conclusions were derived based on the analysis: (1) Post racial influences negatively impacted the professional development of students because

professors, mentors, and general superiors who accepted this ideology fail to consider race when professionally developing students. (2) Although Black and White students felt that race remained to be very important, only Black students felt racial categorization to be important. (3)Students were generally able to recognize discrimination and instances of post racial influence, however, it was difficult for students to definitively label a situation as racially discriminatory. These conclusions, along with the implications of this study in relationship to theory, as well as recommendations for future research were provided.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Recruitment Flyer

Racial Formation in a Post Racial Society:

How are College Students being prepared for tomorrow?

My name is Kinyatta Trice, and I am a master's candidate at Georgia State University Department of African American Studies. I am interested in talking to you about the way in which your race impacts the way in which your program of study prepares you for the next stage of higher education or career and your ideas about the role of race in your college experience. The purpose of this study is to explore how the idea of post racial society affects the professional development of people between the ages of 18-30. Students will be asked to openly discuss the relationships with their mentor, professional development experiences, and their ideas about race in society. Each participant will engage in one on one interviews lasting no longer than 60 minutes. I am hoping that the results of this study will help to assess the validity of post racial ideology in describing the millennial generation (people born 1980 and after) mind frame about race, and to provide important information about how race impacts a student's readiness to progress beyond graduation.

In order to be a participant in this study you must:

- Be between 18 and 30 years of age
- Be a GSU student

If you are interested in participating in this study you have two ways to contact me:

- Call me at 229-938-7739 or
- Email me at ktrice2@student.gsu.edu
- Please include your name, daytime and evening phone, best time to call and, email address.

Thank you for your interest in this study.

I look forward to discussing it further with you.

Appendix B: Demographic Form

1. **Age?** _____

2. **Where were you born**?_____

3. **What other state in the US have you lived (5 years or more)?**_____

   How long_____

4. **Have you ever lived abroad**?_____

   How long_____

   Where_____

   5. **What race/ethnicity are you?**

   ☐ African American/Black ☐ American Indian

   ☐ Asian ☐ Hispanic/Latino

   ☐ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

   ☐ White ☐ Other/Multiracial

6. **What is your highest level of educational attainment?**

   ☐ Freshman ☐ Sophomore ☐ Junior

   ☐ Senior ☐ 1st year MA ☐ 2nd year MA more

   ☐ 1st-2nd year doctoral program ☐ 3rd-4th year doctoral program

   ☐ 5th year doctoral program or more

7. **What program are you matriculating through?**

- ☐ African American Studies
- ☐ Sociology
- ☐ Business School
- ☐ Other (please specify)

8. **Does your program of study afford you a mentor or academic advisement?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

9. **Is your mentor the same race?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

Thank You For Your Time

Appendix C: Consent Form

Georgia State University

Department of African American Studies

Informed Consent

Title: Racial Formation In A Post Racial Society: How Are Students Being Prepared For Tomorrow?

Principal Investigator: Dr. Sarita Davis

Student Investigator: Kinyatta N. Trice

I. Purpose:

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to explore how race impacts the professional development of students. The questions may describe ideas regarding race. The questions may also describe relationships with advisors and mentors. You are invited to participate because you are a student between the ages of 18-30 enrolled in a program that that offers a terminal level degree at Georgia State University. Approximately fifteen to twenty participants will be recruited for this study. Participation will require approximately 60 minutes of your time one day only.

II . Procedures:

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to fill out a screening form and to participate in an audio recorded semi-structured interview. You will be interviewed by the student researcher at a location that is mutually agreeable (e.g. GSU library study room or a private office at GSU). We will not ask you for information that may reveal your identity or the identity of people that you know.

III. Risks:

There are no known physical risks. During the interview, it is possible that information may come out that could cause you to feel uncomfortable. If questions are asked that you do not wish to answer you may skip the question. If you wish to end the interview for any reason you may do so at any time during the interview.

IV. Benefits:

Participation in this study may not benefit you personally. The researcher is hopeful that your participation in the study will in some way help department chairs, student admission personnel, program directors, and students understand the current meanings of race and to explore the preparedness of students to progress post-graduation.

V. Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal:

Participation in research is voluntary. You do not have to participate in this study. If you decide to be in the study and change your mind, you have the right to drop out at any time. You may skip questions or stop participating at any time. Whatever you decide, you will not lose any benefits.

VI. Confidentiality:

We will keep your records private to the extent allowed by law. The study's main researcher, Kinyatta Trice, will have access to the information you provide. Information may also be shared with those who make sure the study is done correctly. This includes Georgia State University's Institutional Review Board, the Office for Human Research Protection, Dr. Sarita Davis and Dr. Makungu Akinyela. We will use a study number rather than your name on study records. No key will be created to associate participants with a specific study number. The information you provide will be stored in a locked cabinet. We will save electronic files on password and firewall protected computers. After we make written notes, we will destroy the audiotapes. We will not use any information that could identify you in presentations or written reports about this study.

VII. Contact Persons:

Contact Dr. Sarita Davis (member of thesis committee) at 404-413-5134; saritadavis@gsu.edu or Dr. Makungu Akinyela (chair of thesis committee) at 404-413-5141 , makinyela@gsu.edu or Kinyatta Trice (student investigator) at 404 413- 5134, ktrice2@student.gsu.edu if you have questions about this study. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this research study, you may contact Susan Vogtner in the Office of Research Integrity at 404-413-3513 or svogtner1@gsu.edu.

VIII. Copy of Consent Form to Subject:

We will give you a copy of this consent form to keep. If you are willing to volunteer for this research and agree to be audio recorded please sign below.

_____ _____

Participant Date

_____ _____

Principal Investigator or Researcher Obtaining Consent Date

Appendix D: Interview Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this semi-structured interview looking at the impact of post racial ideology on the professional development of college students. Again, I want to remind you that your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. You can refuse to answer any questions or stop the interview at any time. Also, please know that your responses to the interview questions will be kept confidential and your name will never be reported with any of your answers. Throughout your discussion, I'll ask you to speak generally rather than specifically. In other words, please refrain from referring to specific people by name, so that I don't inadvertently violate the confidentiality of those who aren't present. I am audio-taping this interview so that we can accurately record your answers to open-ended questions. Once the audiotape is transcribed, it will be destroyed and any identifying information about you will be removed from the transcript. This interview should last about an hour. Do you have questions before we get started?

During the interview, we would like to understand more about your professional development experience and how it may be impacted by race.

1. **Is race a significant aspect of your identity?**
    - **a.** What personal meaning does your race hold for you?
    - **b.** Do you think that these meanings are different or similar to the meanings your parents held? How so?
    - **c.** Do you feel it more important to identify racially or as an individual?

2. **In what way(s) has your career as a student been affected by race?**
    - **a.** What is the most positive aspect of being (Black, White, Asian..etc.) in a collegiate setting? Negative?
    - **b.** How do you feel the collegiate experience of other races is different or similar to yours?
3. **Do you have a mentor or an advisor?**

   a. How did this relationship come to be?
   b. In what way do you feel that the formation of this relationship helps or hinders your relationship with your mentor?
   c. Is your mentor of the same race as you?
   d. Do you feel that this enhances or hinders your relationship with your mentor?

4. **How integral do you feel your mentor is in progressing your academic career?**
   a. In what way do you feel that obtaining your degree would be affected without the presence of a mentor?

5. **How would you describe your relationship with your mentor?**
   a. What do you consider the span of acceptable topics of discussion between you and your mentor?
   b. Are personal conversations, outside of the those regarding your career, important for you to have a meaningful experience with your mentor?
   c. What, if anything, do you feel could enrich your experience with your mentor?

6. **Describe a scenario when you have gone to your mentor (or professor) for direction or guidance on a specific endeavor or project?**
   a. How do you feel that the instructions or guidance spoke to your specific needs?
      i. Tell me what it is like to speak with your mentor in this way?
      ii. Are you comfortable in these situations?

7. **Tell me about a situation when your mentor (or professor) asked you to give your rationale for a course of action you decided to take to complete a task**.
   a. How often do situations like this take place?
   b. Do you feel that your rationale was accepted? If not do you feel that you were given the proper information to correct it?
      i. What do you feel influenced the feedback that you got?

8. **How do you feel race affects the dynamics of the interaction with your mentor or professors?**
   a. Do you feel that a better experience is gained when the mentor and mentee are of the same race?

9. **Has your department ever afforded you the opportunity to participate in professional conferences, workshops or seminars related to your areas of research or career interests?**
   a. How do you feel that these situations have been helpful?

Do you feel that race has ever impacted how effective these scenarios have been for you?

10. **Describe a scenario where you have been asked to respond to a task related to your field of study and then been given feedback on how well your responded to the task.**
    - **a.** What was the task?
    - b. Do you feel that you had been given enough prior information to perform at the task?

11. **Overall do you feel that you have had adequate advisement and/or mentoring provided by your department?**
    - a. Why or why not?

12. **How do you feel about the idea that race is no longer significant in American society?**
    - **a.** In what way do you feel that this idea has affected your collegiate experience?
    - **b.** Do you feel that people see you as a (Black, White, Asian etc) student or as a student?
    - **c.** In what way do you feel that your race has negatively/positively impacted your academic experience?
    - **d.** Do you feel that people in your age group feel race to be important.

13. **Is affirmative action still necessary?**
    - **a.** Why or why not?
    - **b.** Does it help or hinder racial progress?
    - **c.** Are minorities capable of getting into college in equal numbers without affirmative action?

14. **How prepared do you feel to move to your next stage of your career after graduation?**
    - **a.** Do you feel that students of other races are more prepared? Why?
    - **b.** What do you feel you could do differently to change this?
    - **c.** What do you feel your mentor could do differently to change this?
    - **d.** Do you anticipate other things you will need to do to prepare for your next level of advancement in college or your career?

APPENDIX E: DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

Name	Race	Sex	Age	Birth Place	Program Provide Mentor	Mentor	Same Race	Program	Degree	Year	Live Abroad
Rhonda	Black	Female	30	Inglewood, CA	Yes	Yes	No	Sociology	PhD	1	No
Stacey	Black	Female	27	Maryland	No	Yes	No	Political Science	PhD	3	Yes
Julia	White	Female	28	Vallejo, CA	Yes	Yes	Yes	English	MA	1	No
Jackie	Black	Female	24	Gainesville, GA	No	No	N/A	African American Studies	MA	1	No
Victoria	Black	Female	26	Toronto, Ontario, Canda	No	Yes	N/A	Sociology	PhD	5	No
Reginald	Black	Male	25	Hampton, VA	No	Yes	Yes	African American Studies	BA	7	No
Tonya	Black	Female	30	Fontana, CA	No	Yes	N/A	Sociology	PhD	3	Yes
Neil	White	Male	28	New York	Yes	Yes	Yes	Psychology	PhD	3	Yes
Steven	White	Male	27	Kannapolis, NC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Psychology	PhD	3	No
Patrick	White	Male	27	Columbus, GA	No	Yes	Yes	Political Science	Phd	3	No