5-1-2014

INTERRUPTING THE SILENCE: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF A PILOT SEMINAR ON RACISM, INTERSECTIONALITY, AND WHITE PRIVILEGE

Angela Putman

Angela Lynn Putman
Candidate

Communication and Journalism
Department

This dissertation is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication:

Approved by the Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Mary Jane Collier, Chairperson

Dr. Ilia Rodriguez

Dr. Myra Washington

Dr. Ricky Lee Allen

INTERRUPTING THE SILENCE: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

OF A PILOT SEMINAR ON RACISM, INTERSECTIONALITY,

AND WHITE PRIVILEGE

by

ANGELA LYNN PUTMAN

B.A., Organizational Communication, Western Michigan University, 1998

M.A., Organizational Communication, Western Michigan University, 2002

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Communication

The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

May 2014

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my incredible sister, Meredith (Merry) Higgins.

I know that you are smiling down on me and beaming with pride.

I miss you more than words can say.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

of your support and words of encouragement. Finally—to my partner in crime, the love

of my life, the head cheerleader for Team Putman—Matthew Jackson: I share this

success with you. Not only did you serve as my co-facilitator for this seminar, but you

were behind the scenes the entire way through this journey—you were always ready and

willing to encourage me, made sure that I was eating and sleeping, kept our household

running so that I could focus on this goal, and believed in me when I was doubting

myself. I love you with all of my heart and am forever grateful.

INTERRUPTING THE SILENCE: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

OF A PILOT SEMINAR ON RACISM, INTERSECTIONALITY,

AND WHITE PRIVILEGE

By:

Angela Lynn Putman

B.A., Organizational Communication, Western Michigan University, 1998

M.A., Organizational Communication, Western Michigan University, 2002

Ph.D., Intercultural Communication, University of New Mexico, 2014

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is based on the design and implementation of a pilot seminar for college

undergraduates on the topics of racism, intersectionality, and white privilege. Utilizing

Critical Communication Pedagogy as a theoretical and methodological approach, the

author discusses the learning competencies, activities, and achieved learning outcomes

related to the pilot seminar. Next, the author analyzes participants' discourse that

emerged through seminar surveys, recordings of seminar activities, and observations. The

author then analyzes the first research question, related to participants' negotiated

constructions of racism, intersectionality, and white privilege and examines how these

constructions did/did not reflect change throughout the seminar process. A number of

ideological discourses emerged through participants' discourse before, during, and after

the seminar and these discourses are also analyzed using a Critical Discourse Analysis

approach. The author then discusses findings from the study that include participants'

subject positioning within the discourse, the implications of ideological discourses that

perpetuate the pervasiveness of whiteness and white privilege, and how these discourses

reinforce social practices that reify hierarchies, power relations, and status positionings.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

I was taught to see racism only in individual acts of meanness, not in

invisible systems conferring dominance on my group.

— Peggy McIntosh

Whiteness is a pervasive system of oppression and domination with a long

stronghold in U.S. American culture; however, despite the pervasiveness of whiteness, it

continues to be a relatively abstract phenomenon that is challenging to identify within

everyday communicative practices (Crenshaw, 1997; Giroux, 1997; Warren, 2010).

Whiteness and white privilege are largely invisible to whites[1] throughout the United

States, and many whites continue to remain silent about issues of race, racism, privilege,

and oppression (Crenshaw, 1997; Leonardo, 2009; Warren, 2001). If discussions of race

continue to remain absent from everyday discourse, especially by many whites, the

invisibility of this privilege will only be perpetuated. By exposing white privilege, and

examining how it emerges within various contexts, scholars can better understand the

ways that white domination and privilege continue (Crenshaw, 1997; Endres & Gould,

2009; Wander, Martin, & Nakayama, 1998; Warren, 2001).

One noteworthy site in which to examine white privilege is the communication

classroom; this is a site in which adults of various ages learn how to build and apply

knowledge and communicate their views to others. White privilege is reproduced through

textbook and instructional content and authors' perspectives to the content, featuring a

---

[1] Throughout this dissertation, I do not capitalize white and black when referring to them as racial groups. I problematize the categorizing of humans into groups based upon socially constructed racial groupings, and, therefore, do not emphasize these categories with capitalization.

preponderance of white European American norms for public speaking, conflict

negotiation, communication in families, and managing organizations (Allen, 2007;

Ashcraft & Allen, 2003; Martin & Nakayama, 2006). I argue that whiteness and white

privilege are (re)produced in college classrooms through avoiding or glossing over issues

surrounding racism, whiteness, and privilege. When these topics are addressed in college

classrooms, they can be met with resistance, denial, and scapegoating by white college

students. For example, in their article on discussing racism in intercultural courses,

Johnson, Rich, and Cargile (2008) note that "when we probe deeper, assign critical

readings about racism and privilege, and ask penetrating questions, we find that

students—particularly white students—strongly resist meaningful discussion about

racism and how it influences our collective and individual lives" (p. 114). As an

intercultural scholar and educator, I have often encountered resistance and denial from

many (but not all) white students when the subject of whiteness and/or white privilege

arises. Such resistance and discomfort from those with whom I have spoken are one

impetus for this research.

Scholars such as Giroux (1997), McIntosh (1988) and Warren (2010) have

highlighted the pervasiveness of white college students' resistance to discourses on

whiteness, discourses that threaten white privilege, and discourses that attempt to

dismantle white power and domination. Warren's study highlights his journey into his

own whiteness through multiple influential readings and accounts of his experiences

teaching about whiteness in various communication courses. He specifically recalls an

experience with a white female student who frequently personalizes class discussions

about racism and whiteness. This particular student tends to make the readings and

subsequent discussions all about her feelings, until finally Warren tells the student, "It

really isn't about you." Having taught a multitude of communication courses over the

past twelve years, I have also encountered similar situations with some white college

students when discussions of race, racism, whiteness, and white privilege arise.

Discussions about racism, whiteness, and privilege must certainly continue within

college classrooms—especially in courses such as intercultural communication, where

race is an integral component of the course. Within this research, however, I argue that

intercultural scholars and educators must address white privilege in a much deeper and

more intense fashion than what can be accomplished within a typical undergraduate

intercultural communication course, or any communication course not specifically

devoted to the topic of race. In my experiences as an educator, this is not something that

can be accomplished in one or two class sessions, which is often the amount of time

allotted for such topics in an intercultural communication course. For example, in Martin

and Nakayama's *Intercultural Communication in Contexts* (2013), (the chosen text for

intercultural courses in my department), whiteness is specifically addressed for five pages

in chapter five, "Identity and Intercultural Communication," and McIntosh's invisible

knapsack is referenced in a "Point of View" inset among those five pages. Whiteness is

again briefly mentioned in chapter six, "Language and Intercultural Communication,"

when discussing labeling. Relying on six pages of a 200-page textbook to illuminate the

importance of how whiteness and white privilege operate within various cultural contexts

is not sufficient for undergraduates to grasp these complex issues.

In their discussion of preparing intercultural educators to challenge performances

of white racism, Johnson, et al. (2008) claim, "It is not enough to engage students in

conversations about diversity or assign essays on critical race theory; professors need to continually draw students' attention to the manifestations of racism in the lives of people of color" (p. 114). When considering the resistance to these topics that many students initially have, especially most white students (see Giroux, 1997; Johnson, et al., 2008; Trainor, 2005), it is unrealistic to expect that a few readings and several in-class discussions are enough to ensure a greater understanding of the potential for white privilege to exclude and subjugate and to prepare students to confront and interrupt it outside of the classroom. For this to happen, students must be allowed the time, resources, and energy needed to acknowledge, understand, and confront white privilege in their own lives.

One arena where white privilege is frequently addressed is within anti-racism training programs throughout the United States. The rise in popularity throughout the 21st century of the term "anti-racism" has shown a steadily increasing number of anti-racism organizations that offer a variety of anti-racism trainings, seminars, workshops, etc. The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, located in New Orleans, Louisiana, is the largest of such organizations, and their programs are the most well-attended. Now in its 25th year, the People's Institute has provided training, consultation, and leadership development to more than 110,000 people in organizations nationally and internationally.[2]

My intention is not to create another anti-racism training similar to those that are already readily available to those in professional contexts. Rather, my intention is to create a curriculum for college students that focuses on understanding and confronting

---

[2] This information was taken from the People's Institute official Web site (www.pisab.org), retrieved on April 22, 2013.

whiteness and intersecting levels of privilege. While I believe that the anti-racism agenda is vital in a quest to combat racism and promote social justice, I contend that college students must understand and confront complex ideological issues like whiteness and recognize how white privilege produces inequities before they can have a holistic understanding of racism that moves beyond attitudes and behaviors. With this in mind, I focus on whiteness and white privilege to inform the curriculum I develop.

Whiteness and White Privilege

According to Wildman (2005), the invisibility of white privilege strengthens the influence it creates and maintains. She argues that people cannot combat what is invisible, so privilege is allowed to perpetuate, regenerate, and reproduce. Privilege is often conceived of as invisible, and is a by-product of the hierarchical system in which we live within the United States. Since whites like myself typically live much of our lives with little to no consciousness of race in relation to our own identities (Cleaver, 1997), this lack of consciousness is what allows white privilege to maintain its invisibility. This invisibility does not come about as happenstance—whites are carefully taught not to recognize privilege through all too familiar discourses of individualism and meritocracy (DiAngelo, 2010; McIntosh, 1988). It is important to distinguish that the invisibility of white privilege should not be conflated with a lack of racial knowledge. To say that whites have little knowledge of race and racism would be inaccurate and would promote the "innocence" of whites when discussing the structures of race and racism (Leonardo, 2009). Whites most definitely have racial knowledge, although our knowledge is often about "the other" and rarely about ourselves (Cleaver, 1997; Leonardo, 2009).

Research that critically examines whiteness is important because whiteness continues to remain hidden, and those who benefit from it can avoid any recognition of the everyday social and cultural relations that continue to provide them systemic advantages based on their ability to identify, or be identified, as white (Shome, 2000). Warren (2001) points out that scholars have begun to articulate the white experience by attempting to uncover the ways that whiteness contributes to the continuation of racism, so that it can no longer maintain its influence by going unquestioned, unchallenged, and uncritiqued. Martin and Davis (2001) also argue that scholars must go beyond discursive practices of privilege, including white privilege, and "out" cultural dominance and racism as hidden issues. Avant-Mier and Hasian (2002) claim that "These various racial formations were not created in an ideological or historical vacuum, and scholars are admonished to keep track of the discursive symbols and the other units of analysis that occasionally manifest themselves when whiteness is threatened or being interrogated" (p. 395).

I contend that many whites' discourses and educational practices protect the invisibility of whiteness and white privilege. Sometimes what is produced is that we resist acknowledging its pervasiveness within our own lives and the lives of others around us and other times we remain silent about its effects. To address this silence, instructors could teach about discursive spaces where unspoken issues of race and white privilege are invoked. Instructors could also investigate how racialized discourse intersects with other locations of privilege, including class, gender, and sexuality (Crenshaw, 1997). This claim by Crenshaw is integral to this dissertation, as I argue that in order for students to get a complete understanding of white privilege, they must also

recognize that there are multiple levels of privilege that work together in concert. Any person can be privileged and marginalized simultaneously, depending on her/his multiple group identifications (Thompson & Collier, 2006).

Intersectionality is central to this argument since all whites do not experience privilege in the same way, or at similar levels. Scholars who study race, ethnicity, and gender utilize the concept of intersectionality to acknowledge that one identity position does not work without the other (i.e., Collins, 1998; Thompson & Collier, 2006). For example, a person can identify as black, Jamaican, male, and gay, and each of these identity positions works together to privilege and oppress at the same time and at varying levels. Collins (1998) contends that race, class, gender, and nation should not be examined as separate systems of oppression, but rather should be thought of as mutually constructing one another. Brah and Phoenix (2004) describe intersectionality as a complex and irreducible axis of differentiation that intersects in historically specific contexts.

A common example of intersectionality within studies about whiteness is the intersection of class and race. Roediger (1999) writes about working-class and poor whites and discusses the many "wages of whiteness" for members within these groups. Some of these wages include inadequate education, poor housing situations, unrealized political power, capitalist exploitation, and substandard health care. Roediger points out that poor and working-class whites will often invest in their whiteness since their class struggle is tied to a race struggle such that their way out of class issues is through race. For example, as a poor and often vilified group in the United States, Irish immigrants were considered to be of an inferior race than Anglo-Americans. Rather than reaching out

to and joining with African Americans of the same class status, Irish people instead

embraced white supremacy and rejected the class issues that they had in common with

free African Americans (Ignatiev, 2008).

There are myriad levels of privilege beyond race privilege in the United States.

This list includes sexuality privilege, religious privilege, gender privilege, class privilege,

and education privilege, to name a few. Therefore, it would be faulty to assume that all

who identify as white (and those identified as white by others) enjoy the same level of

privilege and are equally complicit in the perpetuation of whiteness and white privilege.

An analysis such as this one must acknowledge the complexity of privilege and be wary

of the slippery slope that can occur when one essentializes all whites and fails to

recognize the multiple identifications present for each individual. For example, poor

whites who come from generations of family poverty, lack post-secondary education, and

who do not have health care insurance do not share the same levels of privilege as upper-

class whites who come from generations of wealth and higher education, hold college or

graduate degrees, and who have health care insurance.

Wise (2008) and Allen (2008) remind us that even poor whites with no higher

education have an advantage over most people of color because of the shade of their skin,

but it is important to avoid essentializing whites into an all-encompassing category

simply because they share the same skin tone. In her article on studying the role of whites

as racial actors in an era of color-blindness, Lewis (2004) argues that whites should

continue to be considered as a social collective, but that this includes "an understanding

of the *groupness* of whites, which takes the difference between self-identification and

external ascription seriously and enables us to avoid essentializing differences or homogenizing an admittedly diverse group" (p. 624).

The perpetuation and pervasiveness of whiteness and white privilege are problematic for multiple reasons. First, and foremost, the racial ideology that is whiteness is both oppressive and destructive. Keating (1995) argues that whiteness negates any person who does not measure up to "white" standards and has, thereby, "played a central role in maintaining and naturalizing a hierarchical social system and a dominant/subordinate worldview" (p. 902). Dyer (1993) adds that by seeming to be nothing in particular, white domination thus secures its dominance. One example of this could be the common narrative told by some whites about their [white] ancestors who came to this country as immigrants and could not speak English, yet they worked hard, persevered, and were able to be successful, all because of their hard work and dedication. What is often missing from this narrative is their ancestors' ability to be identified by others as white, to share in the unearned advantages that come with this particular position and to participate in a system that privileges them and subjugates others who do not look like they do. These authors support my argument that whiteness operates as the normalized standard for being in the world, to which all other "minorities" are then held, thereby making whiteness oppressive.

Throughout history, whiteness has been a foundational ideology and positionality that has not only been oppressive, but also destructive to Others in the United States. Examples of its destructiveness include the forced removal of Native Americans from their tribal lands, the enslavement and lynching of hundreds of thousands of African Americans, the internment by the U.S. American government of Japanese Americans

during World War II, and the Tuskegee study conducted on African American men from 1932-1972. More contemporary examples of the destructiveness of whiteness, in my opinion, are the murder of James Byrd in Texas in 1998 and the unequal treatment of the young African American men referred to as the Jena 6 in Louisiana.

In his article, "The Possessive Investment in Whiteness," Lipsitz (1995) points to a long list of negative consequences that are a result of whiteness and white privilege in the United States, including (but not limited to) urban renewal, residential segregation, a growing increase in the black-white wealth gap, differences in the rate of federal home loans to blacks versus whites, and tax reform. He goes on to say that most U.S. Americans are ignorant of this possessive investment in whiteness, and it is this ignorance that causes them to continually offer cultural explanations for what are actually racialized structural societal problems.

Whites are predominantly implicated in the perpetuation and (re)production of whiteness and are the most likely to benefit from it. We are, therefore, most responsible for working toward its dismantling and destruction. Johnson et al. (2008) argue that whites, those who consider themselves liberals especially, are invested in their "inherent goodness" and, often, moral superiority. The authors go on to say that, "The claims of being a good person are synonymous with an innocent whiteness embodied by persons who date interracially or who travel to locations where few white people live. These appeals to being a 'good white' draw from white supremacist logics where whiteness is associated with benevolence and innocence" (p. 121). This association with benevolence and innocence is another reason that many whites are likely to become defensive and argumentative when the subject of whiteness and/or white privilege arises. Additionally,

defensiveness may come from a strong belief in individualism and meritocracy, whereby whites are socialized to believe that we got to where we are and/or will get to where we want to be because of our own individual efforts (DiAngelo, 2010; McIntosh, 1988).

Even though whites are socialized to remain oblivious to race and our inherent racial superiority, we are not completely oblivious to our placement within the racial hierarchy in the United States and the privileges that often come with being considered white. Otherwise, Irish immigrants may not have pushed so hard to become white in this country so many years ago, and today, whites would likely date/marry interracially more frequently and be more willing to live in mixed race neighborhoods (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Roediger, 1999). Ignatiev and Garvey (1996) describe the white race as consisting of those who partake of the privileges that having white skin affords in the United States. They claim that, "Its most wretched members share a status higher, in certain respects, than that of the most exalted persons excluded from it, in return for which they give their support to the system that degrades them" (p. 10).

However, it is important to note that Garvey (1996) reminds us that the responsibility for oppression is not dependent upon an intentionality to cause oppression. In other words, the focus in this study is not on whether or not someone intended to oppress another individual or group of individuals. Taking responsibility for participating in a system that is oppressive and destructive is not predicated upon whether the oppression and destruction were intentional or not.

Whiteness and Instructional Contexts

One place where race issues and white privilege are often not named/acknowledged is the college classroom. McIntyre (1997) defines "white talk" as the talk that whites use to avoid or resist anti-racism and also as talk that serves to insulate white people from our individual and collective role(s) in perpetuating racism. In her feminist, poststructural critique of the politics of emotion involved in anti-racism trainings, Slocum (2009) adds that when some white people talk about race in a space where they are asked to think about white privilege and the history of racial oppression in the United States, "they feel anguished, torn, scared, confused, guilty" (p. 22). These reactions by whites to discussions about racism, whiteness, and white privilege are further reasons for communication scholars and educators to address these issues within research and in communication classrooms.

Students who align with diverse racial groups and hold varied levels of privilege can benefit from readings and discussions that address and acknowledge racist structures and institutions. It is also beneficial to see how systems that reproduce whiteness and white privilege are constructed and reproduced. However, students who identify and are identified as white need this critical intervention even more so, since whiteness is most invisible to those who are positioned as white and, for those of us positioned with higher status, access to resources, and as the beneficiaries of whiteness ideologies, we are primarily responsible for its disrupting and ultimate dismantling.

Communication instructors, as well as scholars, can benefit from attention to what whiteness means, examine how it dominates public spaces, and discover the ways that individuals and communities cement the realities of white structures and privilege (Avant-Mier & Hasian, 2002; Jackson, Shin, & Wilson, 2000) through reproducing

discourses and reifying ideologies that valorize whiteness. As a country, the United States

was built on a strong foundation that is centered on individualism and meritocracy

(Bonilla-Silva, 2010; DiAngelo, 2010; Johnson, et al., 2008). From a young age, U.S.

Americans (whites, especially) are socialized to believe strongly in these ideologies

through the grand narrative of the American Dream (Johnson, et al., 2008). Discourses

such as, "If you work hard, you can be successful" and "Everyone has an equal

opportunity in this country" are foundational in educational classrooms in the United

States.

President Barack Obama continuously supports these ideals when he addresses

the U.S. American people. In his 2013 State of the Union Address, he stated, "It is our

unfinished task to restore the basic bargain that built this country—the idea that if you

work hard and meet your responsibilities, you can get ahead, no matter where you come

from, no matter what you look like, or who you love." Whites' deeply-rooted beliefs in

meritocracy and individualism are part of the foundation that supports and protects

whiteness (DiAngelo, 2010) that is reinforced by educational institutions; it is this

foundation that whites are socialized to protect because any challenge to this foundation

could result in the crumbling of the privileges that many hold on to so strongly.

According to Shome (2000), whites are also taught to view racism as something that

disadvantages *others* but not to see the other side of racism, which is white privilege

(emphasis added). In his study of white and non-white college students at "Urban

University," Gallagher (1997) found that the majority of white students he interviewed

believe that the United States is a meritocracy where non-whites have the same

advantages that whites have (and sometimes more, due to Affirmative Action) and that the United States is also an egalitarian, "color-blind" society.

College classrooms are one potential site where scholars and educators can work toward achieving social justice and emancipatory goals, including the destruction and dismantling of systemic racism and whiteness (Johnson, et al., 2008). Pederson, Walker, and Wise (2005) assert that in addition to the usefulness of theorizing, we must move beyond this toward social action. I agree that educators need to teach about social action that is guided by theorizing, so both remain intertwined and equally important in instructional contexts.

Broad Goals and Approach

Given these national and instructional contexts in the United States, this dissertation research has several goals. One goal is to gain a greater understanding of how a group of college undergraduates conceive of racism, intersectionality, and white privilege before and after participating in a seminar with curriculum on these topics. Students need to be able to identify white privilege before they can engage others in conversation and develop strategies for interrupting it in their local communities. Gaining a better understanding of how a group of students view racism, intersectionality, and white privilege before and after participating in a pilot seminar provides useful information for educators who plan to include discussions of racism and white privilege in their classrooms.

By looking more closely at whiteness and white privilege, my goal is to offer analysis of undergraduates' points of view about where white privilege can be uncovered, how ideologies and systems produce inequity, and their plans for working to change the

systems in place. More specific goals are to enable students to develop a deeper understanding of discourses surrounding whiteness and white privilege and ultimately work toward disrupting white privilege on an individual and/or institutional level (Rothenberg, 2005). When pointing out contradictions and disparities in racial hierarchies and oppressive structures, we will move beyond denial and scapegoating (Avant-Mier & Hasian, 2002) and into the critique of forms of discourses that reproduce the superiority of whiteness and the privileges that come with it.

Whiteness is especially important to acknowledge and address within college classrooms because college is a time when most young adults begin to question norms, beliefs, and values that they may have previously accepted without question. In theory, college students are exposed to literature, research, and arguments that encourage them to acknowledge and confront difficult issues that they may have avoided before entering a college classroom.

Confronting whiteness and white privilege is challenging and requires an understanding of what these concepts mean, how they function, and their social, political, and economic implications in the United States. These implications include accepted norms that determine "the way things should be/are," laws and policies that privilege those who identify or are identified as white, and political systems and structures that disadvantage and oppress people who are not considered white. More specifically, since multiple types of discourse work to reify whiteness, I concur with Martin and Davis (2001) in my design of curriculum topics. They recommend including: 1) the historical "whitening" of some U.S. immigrant groups and the role of history in understanding the social and political development of whiteness, 2) white privilege, 3) the discursive and

communicative patterns of U.S. whites, and 4) representations of whiteness in popular culture.

Bonilla-Silva (2010) contends that there should be room for critical interrogation within intellectual climates that are working toward responding to the reality of cultural pluralism, and that scholars "who are members of groups who dominate, exploit, and oppress others should be free to explore the political implications of their work without fear or guilt" (p. 124). Bonilla-Silva also argues that the production of a discourse on race that interrogates whiteness, by whites, would be a good direction for scholars, and I add, for instructors, to take. Therefore, I continue the process of confronting whiteness in my own life while also encouraging college students to acknowledge, understand, and confront whiteness as well.

History and Context of U.S. Racial Politics

Describing the historical context related to U.S. racial politics is essential to understand contemporary discourses and can be traced back to the founding of the United States of America. The propertied class sought to prescribe and give meaning to who was white through the enactment of a variety of laws. Whiteness was deployed as a mechanism to divide laborers from landowners, whites from non-whites, and to maintain control over white women through the enactment of anti-miscegenation laws (Battalora, 2013). "White" became superior to non-white and "white" became the center of patriarchal power. It was during the final quarter of the nineteenth century that states began to develop a systematic program to legally separate whites and blacks in all aspects of life (Franklin, 1956). In an effort to ensure that free blacks did not threaten the slavery regime, they were denied the full rights and privileges of citizens, such as equality in the

courts, a right to assemble, the ability to move freely, and the right to an education

(Franklin, 1956). The Alien Naturalization Act of 1790 allowed for whites to become

citizens after residing on United States soil for a period of two years. The 1790 law

provided that "any alien, being a free white person, who shall have resided within the

limits and under the jurisdiction of the United States for the term of two years, may be

admitted to become a citizen thereof" (Martin, 2011, p. 72). This law applied only to

white men and their children and remained in force until 1952.

At this time, the categories called "white" and "non-white" gained a more

concrete status with the granting of citizenship to certain people and the exclusion of

others. "The idea of a White country, given the ideological and *physical* effect by law,

has provided the basis for contemporary claims regarding the European nature of the

United States, where 'European' serves as a not-so-subtle synonym for White" (Lopez,

2006, p. 13). Then, and now, when confronted with the constructed and arbitrary nature

of a supposed white identity, whites tend not to abandon whiteness, but to embrace and

protect it. "The value of whiteness to whites almost certainly ensures the continuation of

a white self-regard predicated on racial superiority" (Lopez, 2006 p. 23).

Many political representatives in the U.S. have practiced institutionalized

indifference toward people of color during certain periods. However, the race problem in

the United States was amplified after the passing of the Emancipation Proclamation. The

immediate freedom of four million African Americans led to fear, economic loss, and

indignation from whites (Davis & Bent-Goodley, 2004). The attempts of the

Reconstructionists to bring about equality for African Americans were met with outrage

from Southern white plantation owners who viewed this period as changing their way of

life (Franklin, 1956). Many of the new civil rights laws did little to change the hierarchical structure maintained by whites. "Notably absent from the Fifteenth Amendment, was language prohibiting the states from imposing educational, residential or other qualifications for voting, thus leaving the door open for the states to impose poll taxes, literacy tests, or other devices to prevent blacks from voting." (Alexander, 2012, p. 29) In the years after Reconstruction, a period of backlash began where whites began using political, economic and social means to reverse the policies enacted during Reconstruction. Thus began the Jim Crow era of U.S. American racial politics.

The pervasive separation laws that in effect led to the creation of separate worlds also bred suspicion and hatred, fostered rumors and misunderstanding, and created conditions that made it extremely difficult to take steps toward integration (Franklin, 1956). White Southerners with an interest in maintaining the strict color line between blacks and whites worked to implement a legally sanctioned racial segregation system through Jim Crow segregation laws. These laws prohibited legal marriage between blacks and whites and necessitated the need for legal definitions of who could be considered "white" (Khanna, 2010). Despite the passing of the Civil Rights Act and the writing of the Fourteenth Amendment, blacks living in the South continued to be subjected to oppression and racial segregation (Franklin, 1956). The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s that promoted equality for all U.S. Americans and the reversal of Jim Crow subjugation brought forth a new sense of pride for black Americans (Khanna, 2010). One subsequent effect of this new sense of pride was the Black Power Movement, which began in 1966 under the leadership of Kwame Ture (formerly known as Stokely Carmichael). The 1967 Supreme Court case, *Loving vs. Virginia,* ruled that the state of

Virginia's anti-miscegenation statute violated the equal protection clause and was unconstitutional, forcing changes to anti-miscegenation laws in 16 states.

In the 1960s, the United States passed Affirmative Action laws, and legal efforts began to rectify past discriminations against non-whites. Despite these efforts, pro-white movements emerged whose proponents positioned themselves in stark opposition to those in movements that sought racial equality. According to Omi and Winant (1994), "the far right was attempting to develop a new white identity, to reassert the very meaning of whiteness, which had been rendered unstable and unclear by the minority challenges of the 1960s" (p. 120). The Reagan administration undermined most attempts to address past discriminations against people of color because, according to Reagan administrators and supporters, the United States was now adequately equipped for minorities to achieve success (Omi and Winant, 1994). It was during this period that color-blind logic became the basis of arguments made by whites against Affirmative Action policies since they claimed these policies did not promote equality, but rather enforced reverse discrimination.

Bonilla-Silva (2000) refers to this color-blind logic as a "new racism" called color-blind racism. He claims that this new racism invokes the liberal and individualist ideology of the Enlightenment, but with a twist. "The twist is that notions of equality, fairness, reward by merit, and freedom are invoked in an *abstract* and *decontextualized* manner" (p. 189). Whites in the Western world previously defended their hierarchical status and privilege over "minorities" through exclusion on the basis of inferiority; later, the defense became based on claims of fairness and equality for all people, despite the continued persistence of massive systemic racial inequalities (Bonilla-Silva, 2010).

Color-blind racism can be seen and heard in a variety of contemporary contexts

throughout the United States, such as news media, conversational dialogue, politics, and

even education (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Brewer & Heitzeg, 2008; Gallager, 2003).

In their book chapter, "Blinded by Whiteness: The Development of White College

Students' Racial Awareness," authors Chesler, Peet, and Sevig (2003) connect color-

blind racism to discourses frequently invoked in college classrooms. They discuss

students' comments, journal entries, and other forms of discourse in their own classrooms

and advocate for more innovative educational programs that address students' racial

attitudes and identities, as well as changes in departments and university environments

that will support these necessary programs. An increasing usage of color-blind logic and

the recent perpetuation of color-blind racism in what many believe to be a "post-racial"

era is relevant to education, among other institutions, and, therefore, pertinent to this

research study.

Since the students who participated in the seminar attend a university or reside in

New Mexico, and the state has a history of colonization and contentious racial politics,

this context requires elaboration. The history of New Mexico can be traced back to the

first European contact and colonization of the territory in 1540 with the arrival of

Francisco Vázquez de Coronado ahead of Spanish and Native Americans. Over the next

370 years, prior to New Mexico statehood in January 6, 1912, New Mexico was

"acquired" by the Spanish, Mexican and U.S. American authorities multiple times. New

Mexico was formed as a result of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo between the United

States and Mexico in 1848 and became a U.S. Territory in 1850.

The initial signs of racial tension arrived in the period following the Civil War, with a series of Indian raids against white settlers for seizing tribal lands. The United States government responded to the these raids by sending in 4 regiments of Buffalo Soldiers, all-black Civil War army veterans, to protect white settlers from American Indians. The ongoing pattern of land seizure continued in 1864 with the Navajo Long Walk, in which the U.S. government forced the relocation of eight to nine thousand Navajos to Bosque Redondo and subsequently seized 6000 acres of land.

After 1912, in the period post-statehood, New Mexico continued to be a state of distinct cultures—descriptions included Native, Anglo, Hispanic and Black. Clashes over rights continued through the middle of the century with the Supreme Court case Trujillo v. Garley, where the court held that states were required to give Native Americans the right to vote, a clear victory over the 14th Amendment, which did not provide that equal protection. In 1967 Rio Arriba County Courthouse was raided in an attempt to bring attention to the overthrowing of Hispanic Land Grants by the United States government and Anglo landowners (Office of the State Historian).

In 1947, university students in New Mexico successfully boycotted Oklahoma Joe's Cafe for denying service to a black student and enacted a resolution which led to the investigation of other discrimination cases (Quintard, 1998). George Long, the student denied service, along with Herbert Wright, formed a NAACP chapter at the University of New Mexico and began to campaign for a city ordinance banning discrimination (Glasrud, 2013). The city ordinance was passed in 1952 and adopted by the state in 1955, nine years prior to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Glasrud (2013) noted, "In New Mexico the black population is often overlooked because there are three other ethnic groups that are

larger - Anglo, Mexican and Native. The black population is truly under the radar: it has less power, money and political clout. Nevertheless, black experiences in New Mexico are similar to black experiences in other western states" (p. 18-19).

Overview of Study

I created a set of learning outcomes and designed a curriculum that focuses on systemic racism, intersectionality and white privilege. Achievement of the learning outcomes was accomplished through an intensive three-day seminar for college undergraduates. I co-facilitated the seminar as well as conducted pilot evaluation research over the course of the seminar. The seminar was attended by a group of undergraduate students from a public university in New Mexico. I utilized a critical communication pedagogy perspective to guide the design and instruction of the seminar and encouraged students to co-create an action plan for disrupting white privilege within small groups, in a specific context of their choice, within the campus or local community. I assessed the curriculum based upon a pre-seminar survey, mini-surveys taken during the seminar, evaluation of audio and videotaped discussions and activities, and through a post-seminar survey, conducted one month after the seminar concluded. I obtained consent from the Institutional Review Board and all participants completed an informed consent at the beginning of the pre-seminar survey (displayed in Appendix C).

Ultimately, I sought to create a curriculum for undergraduate students that could strengthen their understanding of systemic racism and white privilege and also provide them with useful strategies for confronting and disrupting white privilege in their lives, relationships, groups, and organizations. Therefore, I offer the following research questions:

1) How do participants in a pilot seminar on white privilege negotiate their constructions of racism, intersectionality, and white privilege in the United States?

2) What can be learned about the discursive forms and functions of whiteness and other ideologies offered by participants?

Benefits of the Study

This study is important to intercultural communication scholarship for several reasons. First, the research will be a resource for scholars and educators who teach, or plan to give attention to, issues of racism, whiteness, and white privilege in college classrooms. For example, Beverly Tatum asked young adult students in her Psychology of Racism class to name a nationally known white person whom they would describe as a racist. She then asked them to name a nationally known white person, whom they would consider to be an antiracist activist, involved in the struggle against racism. Students thought of many examples for the first question, but few (if any) could answer the second question. Also, when teaching well-educated adult teachers who are interested in teaching about race and racism in their classrooms, she found a similar struggle: her students had difficulty coming up with white men and women who are alive today and who have taken a public stand against racism. Tatum (1994) argues that if well-educated adult educators who plan to teach about racism in their classrooms struggle with this task, it is a reasonable assumption that our students will struggle even more to identify white antiracist activists. My research not only provides a forum for students to confront whiteness and white privilege, but also, the results can be shared with other scholars and educators.

Second, previous research cited throughout this chapter has established that racism, whiteness, and white privilege are challenging topics for students, especially white students, to come to terms with in the classroom. These topics can be met with resistance, denial, scapegoating, and avoidance. This study evaluates the utility of a range of topics related to race, intersectionality, and white privilege by examining how they impact learning outcomes including acquisition of knowledge and abilities to use behaviors.

Finally, applied research that addresses the complexities of situated understandings of whiteness and white privilege among college undergraduates and how those may change has application to broader intercultural scholarship. This study examines the extent to which a set of interrelated learning outcomes regarding whiteness and white privilege were achieved through a pilot seminar on white privilege. The research provides a view of how one group of students came to know the meaning, implications, and effects of white privilege and, therefore, contributes to the ongoing critical discussion of these topics.

Preview of Dissertation

The remaining chapters of this dissertation offer conceptual, theoretical and methodological background on whiteness and white privilege and focus specifically on these issues within the context of the college classroom. Chapter two provides a theoretical grounding for the study, acknowledges my assumptions as a researcher and my positionalities as a white, heterosexual, middle class woman. Additionally, the chapter offers an overview of (a) race, (b) racism, (c) whiteness, (d) white privilege, (e) reverse racism, (f) ideology, (g) racial ideology, (h) color-blind ideology, and (i) color-

blind racism. The chapter concludes with a discussion of critical communication pedagogy, which is a framework that was utilized in the designing of the seminar. In chapter three I discuss the participants and facilitators for the seminar, the diversity and design of the pilot seminar, the incorporation of critical communication pedagogy, and relevant research on learning competencies. I then describe each of the seven learning outcomes, along with the corresponding content and activities from the seminar, as well as how I evaluated and assessed each outcome. Finally, I discuss additional procedures for analyzing the seminar and learning outcomes in a broader capacity. Chapter four provides a critical analysis answering my first research question regarding participants' negotiated constructions of racism, intersectionality, and white privilege. In chapter five, I analyze the ideological discourses that connect to the perpetuation and pervasiveness of whiteness. Finally, chapter six offers summaries of the research process and analysis, as well as limitations, strengths, implications, and the potential for future research in this area.

CHAPTER TWO

POSITIONALITY, THEORETICAL BACKGROUND, AND RELEVANT CONCEPTS

How can we understand the power of oratory, of literature, of communication, without

understanding that our subject locations are loaded with significance?

That when we speak, we do not speak singularly; rather, we speak within a

communicative context, as signifiers embedded in history. It is this lens, this effort to see

context and history and power as significant that makes critical intercultural

communication such a unique location to theorize culture, identity, and discourse.

— John T. Warren

In this chapter, I discuss my positionality as a researcher along with my

theoretical orientations that guide my research and scholarship. I then provide an

overview of the concepts and research that are relevant to this research study. Next, I

cover whiteness as ideology, racial ideology, and color-blind ideology. Finally, I discuss

white positioning and privilege and then overview critical communication pedagogy and

the tenets of this theoretical and methodological approach that connect to my dissertation.

Positionality

Related to my positionality, as a white scholar studying whiteness, I identify as

middle- class, heterosexual, woman, Christian, able-bodied, and Irish American. These

identity positions work collectively in ways that give me unearned advantages as well as

disadvantages in various social situations and institutions. I acknowledge that my

privilege affects the way that I interact in the world, the way that I teach, and the way that

I approach my research. My location as a woman can be a disadvantage in professional

situations such as within academia and less frequently in my daily life. I also

acknowledge that my positionalities allow me to conduct research on whiteness without fear that my ability to speak on this topic will be questioned. I find myself in a constant struggle and on a long journey to deal with my own whiteness and come to terms with my identity as a white person and the privileges that come with being white. I do not foresee this journey to have an end; I believe that as a critical white scholar, I should never feel that I have completely "figured out" whiteness and no longer need to explore, dig deeper, and push myself further to make sense of my own complicit role in the perpetuation of whiteness and systems of oppression. This is one of the reasons why I do this work and why I feel called to engage in critical work on whiteness and white privilege.

I must acknowledge my own active and complicit participation within a social system that allows for oppression and also evaluate the social consequences of my own actions on those whom oppression most affects (Petrilli, 2010; Shome, 2000). My varying levels of privilege intersect especially in the context of my role as an educator. I recognize that my location as a white person affects the way students see me as the instructor and facilitator of this curriculum and affects the lens through which I experience systems of privilege and oppression. As a white person teaching about whiteness, I am typically given unearned authority on the subject simply because I am able to identify as white. My level of education is another intersecting identity position that affords me privilege as a white person and typically increases my credibility as an instructor more so than it does for people of color with the same (or more) level of education as me, due to inequitable social structures that exist within institutions like higher education.

I also recognize that there are some traps that I must work to avoid in my work, because of my intersecting identities and positionalities. As a liberal white person with a high level of education who participates in anti-racism work, I can easily fall into the trap of thinking that I am "one of the good whites" and that the work that I am doing somehow frees me of my own complicit participation on a regular basis in oppressive structures and institutions that subjugate most people of color. I believe that I must always remain aware of how my privilege has afforded me the opportunity to do this research, to stand in front of a college classroom, and know that no amount of anti-racist work will ever allow me to fully understand the subjugation and oppression that I read and write about and discuss with students and colleagues.

Theoretical Orientations

As a communication scholar and educator, the theoretical orientation that I employ is a critical intercultural one. I bring a set of assumptions and biases into my research and my teaching. Some of the tenets of critical humanism are useful for this dissertation. For example, Martin and Nakayama (2013) claim that researchers employing a critical humanist orientation acknowledge the social construction of reality and the voluntaristic characteristics of human behavior, but also recognize the effect that ideological frames, macro structures, and material conditions have on humans. Epistemologically, I believe that humans socially co-construct knowledge through symbolic interactions, but that knowledge and interaction are interrelated with, and affected by, structures and systems.

Ontologically, I assume that social and structural constructions of race, class, and gender in institutional and organizational policies and norms work to privilege certain

voices over others. From a critical intercultural perspective, I seek to uncover dominant discourses, hierarchies, and structures as a means of working toward taking steps to dismantle those structures. Additionally, I assume that racialized policies, norms, and discourses contribute to the creation of knowledge and social identifications that also emerge through interactions and experiences people have with each other, and that knowledge of identifications, as well as enactment of identifications, are shaped by histories, contexts, institutional structures, media, etc. I also assume that power relations are found within all relationships, structures, and institutions. I define power as a contextual and fluid communicative system whereby intersecting levels of privilege and disadvantage are both created and maintained in relations between institutions, groups, and individuals (Collier, 2014). I also follow Foucault (1972) here in his argument that power is based on *relationships* between groups of people, groups and institutions, and groups and systems [emphasis added]. This is what I believe makes power contextual and fluid—it is constantly moving, it varies based on contextual and environmental factors, and it is not an external force that one either "has" or does not have or can give to others if s/he chooses. Power and race are interrelated in that processes such as racism reproduce social and status hierarchies and affect access to and distribution of resources.

In addition to my assumptions about communication and research, my assumptions about education are pertinent to this dissertation. I have an axiological assumption that as an educator, I should be engaged in the lives of my students, and be available to mentor them both inside and outside of the classroom, should they seek such engagement and mentorship. This assumption is largely tied to my own education and the mentoring that I received as an undergraduate and graduate student. I place great value

and emphasis on the notion of "paying it forward" and hope to provide the type of mentorship, guidance, and engagement that was offered to me. I also assume that my research and my pedagogy are inextricably linked and work in tandem to inform the way that I approach teaching communication courses within higher education, as well as the way that that I approach conducting research.

Within this research, I incorporate my own interpretive and critical approaches to knowledge building, curriculum design, and critique of ideological discourses and systems of privilege. My critical ontological assumptions include that contexts and structures, for instance, educational institutions, are characterized by power struggles about differences in resources and levels of privilege and oppression, and this struggle is often based on differences in race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class status, sex, sexuality, gender, and positioning and relations between groups. Epistemologically, my approach to constructivism encourages me to partly see knowledge as transactional/subjectivist and value that findings are the (co)creation of the process of interaction between the inquirer and the research participants. This relates well to my interest and grounding in interpretive methodologies. However, my critical epistemological assumptions are that knowledge emerges from a study of social structures, freedom and oppression, power relations, and control, and these are never separate from interaction and experience.

I use an interpretive orientation because I seek a better understanding of how meaning is constructed through particular interactions and discourses (Collier & Thomas, 1988; Martin & Nakayama, 2013). An interpretive perspective is appropriate in this study for acknowledging participants' voices and allowing them to describe their lived communicative experiences (Thompson & Collier, 2006) through surveys and oral

discourse in the pilot seminar. An interpretive approach is also useful to this particular

study because it allows me to understand how a group of undergraduates construct

whiteness and white privilege, before and after participation in a curriculum that may

facilitate a stronger, more nuanced, discourse of white privilege. Students' study of white

privilege would be incomplete, however, if it did not acknowledge the histories, societal

structures, institutions such as higher education, and systems of oppression that

differently enable and constrain group members' agency (Collier, 1998). Here, I am

defining agency as the capacity to act that an individual possesses and/or enacts in a

particular context. Agency is always contextual and can be enabled and constrained

through policies, norms, and other structures in situated contexts (Collier, 1998).

Studying the role of racialized systems and white privilege on levels of agency is

essential in demonstrating the differential consequences of such systems (Collier, 2014).

My critical goals include working to reveal systems of power relations and

oppressive structures and institutions related to white privilege. I see whiteness and white

privilege as both oppressive and destructive. Therefore, I seek to enable students to better

understand these particular systems and how they operate within various contexts

throughout the United States, so they can ultimately engage in dialogue with others and

strategize ways to confront and disrupt white privilege. Specifically, my critical

perspective involves uncovering selected structures of domination and hierarchical

systems related to white privilege that benefit some and subjugate others (Collier, 1998;

Shome, 1996).

According to Halualani and Nakayama (2010), "Critical perspectives have

always been finely attuned to revealing great insight on the larger, hidden (beneath-the-

surface) and visible (what we see but take-for-granted given its naturalized appearance) aspects of power that constitute intercultural communication encounters and relations" (p. 5). My research focuses on identifying how students understand oppressive systems, discourses, and ideologies that work to establish the superiority of whiteness. College classrooms and textbooks are often steeped in whiteness and more critical interventions that problematize how whiteness is addressed within these contexts are needed. As Fassett and Warren (2007) argue, 'critical' does not only refer to "locating and naming the bad, the incomplete, the oppressive in a given instance, but also means considering the possibilities, hoping for and imagining something better" (p. 26). In writing this research, I seek to consider more possibilities for including an informed critique of whiteness and white privilege in intercultural communication courses and/or as a companion to intercultural communication courses at colleges and universities.

I believe that combining the assumptions and aims of interpretive and critical perspectives best supports this dissertation. I seek to critique and understand how a group of undergraduate college students conceive of racism, intersectionality, and white privilege before and after participation in a curriculum that will encourage them to have a more informed/nuanced understanding of these concepts and also gain the ability to confront and disrupt white privilege in their own communities/lives. I also hope that their participation in the curriculum will encourage them to critique discourses that perpetuate the pervasiveness of whiteness in U.S. society.

Overview of Relevant Concepts

Within my critical intercultural perspective, a number of relevant concepts emerge that connect to my goals and objectives for this research. The concepts of race,

racism, whiteness, and white privilege are all contextually framed and relevant to this particular study. James Baldwin argued that racial differences only exist among cultural groups that recognize those differences as significant and meaningful; racial categories have little significance outside of the systems of privilege and oppression that created the categories to begin with. In other words, differences are not the issue here; rather, the issue is what the differences mean (Johnson, 2001; Shome & Hegde, 2002). Anthropologists are largely credited with the creation of racial categories, and "those who defend racial taxonomies generally say they are just one way of expressing the generally recognized fact that human genetic variation is correlated with geography" (Cartmill, 1999, p. 652). Advocates of the anthropological view of race acknowledge that racial classifications are used to discriminate against certain people; they justify this by stating that "because such classifications reflect certain facts of human biology, they can also be used justly and fairly to serve benign ends" (Cartmill, 1999, p. 652).

Wise (2008) claims that many white Americans think they have had few experiences with race, but in actuality, everyone in the United States experiences race because of the racialized society in which we live, where the color of one's skin has social meaning despite its biological and genetic irrelevance. He goes on to say that race is scientific fiction, but is still social fact, no matter how little people acknowledge or speak of it. Leonardo (2009) defines race as a way of constructing group membership and as a differential system of advantage that benefits all whites no matter what their class or gender status may be. I argue that *race* is a system of classification and categorization within a hierarchy that is constructed socially and ideologically and is influenced by social, historical, and political contexts. Group members are positioned by others based

on racial ascriptions, and the social realities and consequences of living within raced bodies are experienced both materially and ideologically.

Ethnicity is also relevant to this dissertation and is often conflated with race, although the two are different. Jackson and Garner (1998) contend that defining ethnicity is a complex task because there is disagreement over whether the term includes any group that is not White Anglo-Saxon Protestant, or whether white ethnic groups like Irish and German are also included within the term. Most often, ethnicity refers to ancestral heritage, and this is the definition that I utilize for this dissertation. DeVos (1982) defines an ethnic group as a self-perceived community of people who share common traditions not shared by those with whom they interact outside of their group.

Racism is a system of oppression and subjugation in which people participate in a variety of ways and at varying levels (Crenshaw, 1997; Wander, et al., 1998). Wildman (2005) argues that many white people are more concerned with avoiding being labeled racist than worrying about systemic racism and how to work toward changing it. In her book *Talking back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black,* hooks (1989) claims that liberal whites do not see themselves as prejudiced or interested in domination through coercion—yet we are unable to recognize how our own actions support the structure/hierarchy of racist domination and oppression that we claim to wish is eradicated.

In this dissertation I define racism as a system of subjugation and oppression that is pervasive throughout U.S. structures and institutions, and that works to privilege some people based on perceived group membership. Essed (2002) adds that racism is infused within culture and is a process that is continually reinforced and reproduced through

everyday communicative practices. I do not believe that whites and people of color participate in the system of racism with the same level of influence and effect. Since whites are positioned within U.S. society in positions of higher status and authority and have unearned privileges afforded to us for simply being white, I argue that we are more heavily implicated in the dismantling of white privilege and racism.

One important distinction that should be made within discussions of racism is the difference between individual racist acts and systemic or institutional racism. Students were introduced to a systemic understanding of racism in the seminar, and we distinguished between individual attitudes and acts, and broader systems and structures that reproduce racism. Individuals reproduce racist patterns through their behaviors, and racism is reproduced systemically through structures, organizations, and institutions that are foundationally oppressive against people of color.

Whiteness as Ideology

Althusser (1971, 1984) conceives of ideology as the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence. Ideologies are discursively produced (Fairclough, 2001) and act to situate groups into relationships and hierarchies and reify standards and norms. Ideologies are used to account for individuals' success through discourses of individualism and meritocracy. I agree with Althusser (1971, 1984) in that ideology is material and manifests in material ways. One example of this could be the apparatus of the United States legal system. There are multiple ideologies that exist within the U.S. legal system, some of which are racial ideologies. These ideologies manifest in material ways through laws, policies, rules and regulations, etc. Previously in United States history, laws and policies existed that segregated the country based upon

racial categorizations and groupings, and these laws and policies were based upon ideologies about relations between racial groups. Although most of these laws no longer exist, their effects are still widely felt across the United States for groups who continue to be marginalized and oppressed.

Althusser (1971, 1984) also argues that ideology interpellates individuals as subjects. Interpellation is a form of hailing one into a subject location and status positioning. He states that individuals practice the rituals of ideological recognition, and this ensures that they are concrete, individual, distinguishable, and irreplaceable subjects. To take this a step further, Bonilla-Silva (2003) asserts that humans are interpellated as *racial* subjects and that racial ideology is the medium through which racial life is secured. This occurs through arguments that are utilized, often by whites, to account for racial inequality or the racial status quo.

Since ideology represents the imagined relations between racial groups, people are socialized and interpellated to positions justified by ideologies such as liberalism and meritocracy. The ideologies support their arguments, positioning into status hierarchies, relations, and actions, which have material consequences. For example, discourses evidencing white privilege can include "I achieved this position because of my hard work," and "They (non-whites) act like that because of their culture," and "They (non-whites) would rather live on welfare than work" (Johnson, 2001). Finally, Althusser (1971) points out that individuals deny the ideological fields in which they live, and often say that they are "outside ideology" due to an orientation of individualism and individual agency and because ideology never says 'I am ideological.' This is consistent with Bonilla-Silva's discussions of the ideology of color-blind racism.

Fairclough (2001) states that ideologies are tied to action and can be evaluated in terms of their social effects. They are located in language or discourse, are discursively constituted, and are found within structures and events. For instance, the ideological belief that everyone has an equal opportunity in the United States and has the same chance to be successful is one that supports whiteness. This ideology is reproduced through political and social discourse, through institutions like higher education policies and norms, and through organizations like local governments. Since Fairclough posits that discourse is ideological, he argues that a critical analysis of discourse is the best way to reveal ideological structures and how they are reproduced. This applies well to this dissertation where I analyze the discourse of a group of college undergraduates before, during, and after participating in a seminar in order to evaluate their understanding and knowledge of white privilege.

Hall (1996) conceives of ideology as images, concepts, and premises, which provide frameworks for representing, interpreting, and understanding aspects of social existence. He argues that ideologies do not consist of separate or isolated ideas, but rather in the articulation of ideas into intertextual chains of meanings. Additionally, ideologies produce forms of social consciousness—they are not produced by them. What this means is that ideologies are not made up of free-floating separate ideas, rather they are interconnected within a chain of meaning that is usually tied to particular social group relations or institutional contexts. As Hall (1996) argues, some ideologies, such as those related to whiteness, work effectively because people are unaware of them, are unaware of the fact that their statements are underpinned by them, and can justify their views and relations based on "individual values" such as hard work. They are reproduced widely

when statements seem to reflect 'just how things are.' This applies to my dissertation because of the vast amount of research that highlights the pervasive nature of whiteness as the un-interrogated norm by which people are judged and expected to live. My approach to ideology is in line with those of Fairclough and Hall in that I believe ideologies are located within language and discourse, are discursively constituted, are utilized by social groups to make sense of and define how society works, and are found within larger structures and events. I also believe that ideologies are widely circulated through statements about the way things are and, therefore, often go unquestioned.

Lastly, I agree with Hall's (1982) reading of and departure from Althusser, when he argues that Althusser presented the process of ideology as "too uni-accentual, too functionally adapted to the reproduction of the dominant ideology" (p. 78). In this sense, it makes the process of discerning how anything but the 'dominant ideology' could be reproduced in discourse too difficult. Therefore, Hall (1982) contends that ideology is "a function of the discourse and of the logic of social processes, rather than an intention of the agent" (p. 88). This argument is relevant to my research, as the intent behind racist actions and discourse is less important than what is reproduced by the discourses and actions, and the structure of social processes. The discourse speaks through all who implicate ideologies through their everyday talk. Hall (1982) argues that it is the speaker who becomes a support for the reproduction of "a dominant ideological discursive field" (p. 88).

Racial Ideology. The racial ideological beliefs and values that have existed within the United States for centuries provide the underpinning for how people interact socially with one another, how laws and policies are put into practice, and how economic

disparities among racial groups continue to exist. Bonilla-Silva (1997, 2000) argues that if one looks at the social system of the United States, racial ideology is one segment of the ideological structure that comprises the entire social system. The racial ideological beliefs and values that have existed within the United States for centuries provide the underpinning for how people interact socially with one another, how laws and policies are put into practice, and how economic disparities among racial groups continue to exist.

According to Bonilla-Silva (1997, 2003), racial ideology is a segment of the ideological structure of the U.S. social system that crystallizes racial notions and stereotypes. Racial ideologies such as whiteness provide rationalization for the social, economic, and political interactions among the races. Racial ideologies recruit racialized subjects who find their sense of selves, their sense of "Other," and their relationships, through them. For instance, those who are positioned as black, male, young, and dressed in hooded sweatshirts are interpellated as criminals, as in the case of Trayvon Martin, a young man who was shot and killed while walking through a neighborhood by a man who lived in the neighborhood and thought Martin was a criminal and "up to no good." Within this research, I utilize Bonilla-Silva's definition of racial ideology.

Bonilla-Silva (2000, 2003) also asserts that racial ideology consists of racially-based frameworks that people use in order to justify relations and reify dominant racial group positioning and the status quo, or challenge subordinate racial group positioning. He goes on to say that even though dominant racial ideologies crystallize the interests of the dominant race, those ideologies are not fixed, but are highly interactive. The flexibility of the dominant racial ideologies is what allows the dominant racial group to voice contradictions and exceptions, and enables the changing of the rules. In his book,

Charles Mills (1997) describes racial contracts that are implicated in discourse. Due to dominant status, he argues, whites wrote the racial contract, enforce the contract, and can change the contract at will. Overall, however, racial ideologies are often not explicit and are hidden in discourses of individualism within everyday talk or discourse. Nonetheless, public discourse, news discourse of current events, group interaction, films and video texts, and everyday conversations can be probed for ideologies and discursive chains of meaning.

Whiteness is an integral construct in this study because of its taken-for-granted status as the un-interrogated norm for U.S. Americans. It is a historical, race-based position from which some people benefit (Wander, et al., 1998). Whiteness is a racial ideology that is supported by a strong belief in individualism (DiAngelo, 2010). Foundational ideologies, institutional policies, and political discourses in the United States encourage whites to think that the world starts and ends with individuals—that everything happens because of something individuals feel, think, do and intend (Johnson, 2001). Wise (2008) argues that for those who are white, whiteness simply is; it becomes for whites the unspoken, un-interrogated norm that is often taken for granted. Whiteness is a particular racial ideology that is privileged, normalized, deified, invisible, and "raceless" (Johnson, 2001; Wildman, 2005). This means that whiteness sets the standard for what is considered normal or appropriate and that it is often invisible because of the infrequency about which it is described. Furthermore, because whiteness is supported by ideals like individualism and meritocracy, it becomes less about race and more about working hard and everyone having an equal opportunity (regardless of historic oppressions and racial inequities). Finally, Thompson and Collier (2006) refer to

whiteness as a discursive space that produces elite status and entitlement. This definition is important because it acknowledges the discursive nature of whiteness, which, I argue, should be acknowledged more often within college classroom discussions on racism and privilege.

I define whiteness here as a racial ideology that places white superiority as the standard by which all people's behaviors are judged and norms derived. Regardless of varying race, ethnic, class, and gendered locations, whiteness is an ideological field that is continually negotiated, but also perpetuated, and, therefore, pervasive.

Color-Blind Ideology. Since the election of the nation's first black president, many U.S. Americans argue that U.S. Americans now live in a post-racial society (Bonilla-Silva, 2010). With a man identified as black holding the highest status political position of influence in the United States, this supposedly signifies that we could not possibly still have a problem with racism. Bonilla-Silva (2010), Johnson, et al. (2008), and Lewis (2004) argue that since 2000 in the United States, discourses reveal that racism is perceived to be not nearly as big a problem as it was during the eras of slavery, or of segregated schools and water fountains. Many members of today's generation claim not to see race, only people. Such views point to a racial ideological discourse referred to as color-blind racism.

Leslie Carr (1997) is one of the first credited with studying color-blindness. In 2006, Eduardo Bonilla-Silva wrote a book titled *Racism without Racists*, and the book received much critical acclaim within academia and among scholars of race, politics, and the economy. In the book, now in its third edition, Bonilla-Silva theorizes color-blind racism as the predominant racial ideological discourse within the United States today.

Dominant racial ideologies normalize racial inequality by making the interests of the dominant racial group appear as universal and by assigning them moral authority over everyone else (Bonilla-Silva, 2000). Racial ideology then reinforces the racial lines and relations between groups that exist within a particular society, like the United States, and enables racial domination to continue. Bonilla-Silva's book was extremely influential in furthering my understanding of how racial ideology, in general, and color-blind racism specifically, operate within the United States and how color-blind racism has changed significantly over the past ten to fifteen years.

According to Bonilla-Silva (2010), this new type of racism is anchored in the abstract extension of egalitarian values and the belief that racial minorities are culturally deficient rather than biologically deficient. Color-blind racism is made up of four central frames that those who are not positioned as persons of color use in order to rationalize and justify their language and actions. Bonilla-Silva used data from two large-scale studies. One was a 1997 Survey of Social Attitudes of College Students that included a convenient sample of 627 college students from three universities throughout the United States. The second was a 1998 Detroit Area Study that included a survey of 400 black and white Detroit metropolitan residents, and interviews with 84 of the survey respondents.

The first frame of Bonilla-Silva's color-blind racism is *Abstract Liberalism*, which incorporates tenets associated with political and economic liberalism in an abstract and decontextualized manner. The best examples of this particular frame are individualism and meritocracy, which are two ideological beliefs often used as a form of abstract liberalism. The whites who participated in his study employed Abstract

Liberalism by stating that people should be judged on an individual basis and race should

not be a factor (negating programs like Affirmative Action), and that all individuals have

an equal opportunity to be successful if they just put forth the necessary effort. This

frame allows people to justify inequalities and disparities among racial groups by

attributing existing inequalities to a lack of effort, rather than years of oppressive laws

and practices that work to create a system of subjugation for particular racial groups.

The second frame of color-blind racism is *Naturalization*, which allows whites to

explain away racial phenomena by suggesting that they are natural occurrences, or 'just

the way things are.' Racial segregation within housing and social relationships are both

good examples of how this frame functions. Bonilla-Silva points out that whites have

been asked in multiple national surveys throughout the past century about whether they

would live in neighborhoods with high populations of nonwhites. They most often

answer that they would definitely move to a predominantly black or Latino neighborhood

if the opportunity presented itself. However, if one looks at the national statistics for

housing and neighborhoods, this is not the case. Separation by race is more common in

that whites live among other whites, blacks among blacks, etc. Naturalization is seen

when white people's response to this argument is something along the lines of 'that's just

the way things are; people like to be around other people who are like them.' Another

justification made by whites that is mentioned by Bonilla-Silva is, 'well *they* do it, too.'

The third frame is called *Biologization of Culture* and occurs when people use

culturally-based arguments such as 'Mexicans do not place much emphasis on education,'

or 'black people like to have a lot of babies' to explain Latinos' and blacks' positions

within U.S. society. In the Jim Crow era, racial ideologies were supported by much

stronger language and racialized terminology. Now that the scientific notion of race and racial superiority of whites has been so heavily refuted, this cultural frame has become more popular. The frame allows whites to "blame the victim" for their lack of success while also appearing "less racist" because differences are cultural, after all, not biological.

The final frame in Bonilla-Silva's (2010) color-blind racism is *Minimization of Racism* and it occurs when whites minimize the significance of discrimination in the United States by stating things like, 'it's not as bad as it used to be,' 'black people say racist things, too' and 'we have laws against discrimination now.' Most recently, one can see the effectiveness of this frame because it allows people to use issues like the recent case involving Paula Deen and her use of racial epithets and racist jokes to argue that those who are outraged are being hypersensitive and are 'playing the race card.' Multiple people from the legal field, entertainment industry, and news media have weighed in on various television news sources regarding this controversy and have made remarks claiming that plenty of black people use the same epithet that Paula used and it is okay for them, so why is everyone making such a big deal that Paula said it? Additionally, some have justified her actions by saying that she grew up in the deep South where racism is rampant, and it is, therefore, understandable that she would mistakenly use such language; also, she clearly regrets doing so since she tearfully apologized for her actions. During her *Today Show* interview on June 26th, 2013, Matt Lauer asked Deen if she believed she is a racist, to which she unequivocally stated "no." When pushed further on the issue, she referred to witnessing people in her kitchen using "the N-word" and that it is "distressing to her" because "for this problem to be worked on, these young people are gonna have to take control and start showing respect for each other and not throwin' that

word at each other." This is an example of the minimizing of racism by many of the people who have spoken publically about the controversy, and also by Paula Deen.

Color-blind racism is integral to this dissertation because of its prevalence in current racial ideological discourses in the United States, and more specifically, within college and university classrooms across the country. Moreover, in my experience, college students utilize many of these frames in their own logic when discussions of race, racism, and privilege arise in the classroom. Therefore, it is useful to apply the frames of color-blind racism to the design and implementation of curriculum on white privilege. Utilizing multiple examples of discourses that employ color-blind logic will prove helpful to me to encourage students to move toward a more systemic and institutionalized form of thinking about racism and white privilege.

White Positioning and Privilege

In addition to being a racial ideology, I also see whiteness as a positionality—a standpoint or space within which those who can be identified as white are able to live and operate. It is also maintained through explicit and implicit norms that privilege whiteness as an advantage. Being identified as white, depending on other identity locations, often positions individuals into a superior status position as compared with other group members. This is why, occasionally, students introduced to whiteness begin to focus on people who look and sound white, rather than the racialized systems and structures that valorize whiteness ideologies.

McIntosh (1988) theorizes *privilege* as occurring when one group has something that is denied to others simply because of group membership or role and that gives dominant groups a competitive edge that they are often unwilling to either acknowledge

or relinquish due to individualism and meritocracy. Johnson (2001) argues that race

privilege allows those who are identified as white to pay little attention to how privilege

affects them in their daily lives and that it typically emerges in the differences between

groups. He claims it is defined in relation to a group or social category and is more about

white people than white *people*. Ignatiev and Garvey (1996) add to this assertion through

their analogy of the white race as being like a private club that grants privileges to its

members in return for their obedience to its rules. It should also be noted that its members

are the ones who can make and break the rules, as well. They argue that the club is based

on one major assumption—that all who look white, regardless of their complaints or

reservations, are fundamentally loyal to it. Wildman (2005) adds that privileged group

members are able to rely on their privilege and avoid objecting to oppression, and that

privilege is rarely seen by the holder. Finally, Wise (2008) argues that other forms of

privilege mediate but do not eradicate white privilege; although whites may be poor, their

poverty does not change the fact that in relation to poor people of color, they usually have

an advantage.

In this dissertation, *white privilege* is a collection of unearned benefits that are

associated with one's ability to identify as white or be identified by others as white.

White privilege is an important component and production of the racial ideology of

whiteness, but is not synonymous with whiteness. White privilege is one example of what

whiteness produces. Benefits and privileges that come along with appearing white are

typically attributed to individual merit (Wildman, 2005) rather than to one's placement

within a racial hierarchical structure. While whites do not typically acknowledge the

privileges that come with being white on a daily basis, and it is not something we often

discuss, these privileges *do* affect our daily interactions with other whites and with nonwhites. For example, in my experience, when the topic of discussion turns to racism and/or whiteness in the college classroom, often times white students take up the most space (literally and figuratively) in these discussions by legitimizing their own actions, seeking approval from people of color for their efforts, and/or offering examples of situations where their whiteness kept them from getting a job or a scholarship (i.e. "reverse racism").

Reverse racism is a socially constructed idea created and utilized by white people who feel disenfranchised in one way or another because of their race. In his article about this growing phenomenon, Fish (1993) explains that when whites use the term "reverse racism" to describe the actions of people of color to claim special status and reserve privileges for themselves that are denied to others, just as whites did for centuries in the United States (and in some cases, continue to do), the argument being made is that one is just as bad as the other and that using a new wrong in order to right a previous wrong is unfair. On the contrary, to describe these actions as equal "racisms" is to forget history and the plight of African Americans for more than 200 years in the United States (Fish, 1993). Additionally, to claim that programs like Affirmative Action and company-wide diversity initiatives are "unfair" is to suggest that there is a system that is operating under the guise of "fairness" and "equal treatment." Systems and institutions within the United States were never set-up with fairness and equality foregrounded from the start; therefore, as Fish (1993) claimed when speaking of blacks in the United States, "the word 'unfair' is hardly a description of their experience, and the belated gift of 'fairness' in the form of

a resolution no longer to discriminate against them legally is hardly an adequate remedy for the deep disadvantages that the prior discrimination has produced" (p. 130).

Critical Communication Pedagogy

In 1993, communication scholar and educator, Jo Sprague, claimed that there were many excellent teachers of speech and communication in all areas of our discipline and at all levels of education, and that most practice the scholarship of teaching but do not write about it in academic journals. She noted that the majority of the work published in *Communication Education* at that time was about concerns of teachers in general or about communication apprehension. Her reflection at this period in time was that the gap was widening between advances in communication theory and advances in communication pedagogy.

Partly in response to Sprague's work and mentorship, Fassett and Warren (2007) wrote a book on critical communication pedagogy, largely based on the foundational work of Paulo Freire (1970) on critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy is a theoretical and interdisciplinary frame of study that has been embraced as well as sparked controversy. Many critical scholars (Cooks, 2003; Fassett & Warren, 2007; Johnson, 2010; McLaren, 2003) have relied upon this body of work to reflect on their own teaching styles, classrooms, and approaches to emancipatory education. Giroux and Giroux (2006) discuss the political nature of education and the necessity for pedagogy as a critical practice that will:

Provide the classroom conditions that provide the knowledge, skills, and culture of

questioning necessary for students to engage in critical dialogue with the past, question

authority (whether sacred or secular) and its effects, struggle with ongoing relations of

power, and prepare themselves for what it means to be critical, active citizens in the

interrelated local, national, and global public spheres. (p. 28)

Along with many other educators, I try to resist the banking style of education and agree with Freire's claim that education must address the contradiction of teacher-student by attempting to eliminate the polarized roles so that both are simultaneously teaching and learning. Freire contends that the banking approach does not encourage students to critically consider their experiences and institutional systems; my desire was for students to critically consider information that was presented to them in the seminar. Critical communication pedagogy calls for reflexivity at all times, so I strived to remain reflexive throughout this entire process. This meant reminding myself not to take up the floor for long periods of time during discussions, balancing my perspectives with those of my co-facilitator, and allowing students adequate time for raising questions and perspectives I might overlook.

Freire (1970, 2000) claims that true change is facilitated through reflection and actions that are directed toward the structures one is seeking to transform. He argues that a useful commitment to the people and to changing the structures through which they are oppressed "requires a theory of transforming action" and that "this theory cannot fail to assign the people a fundamental role in the transformation process. The leaders cannot

treat the oppressed as mere activists to be denied the opportunity of reflection and allowed merely the illusion of acting" (p. 126).

Fassett and Warren (2007) outlined a set of interconnected commitments that make up critical communication pedagogy and distinguish it from other areas of scholarly inquiry. Critical communication pedagogy, they argue, is better served by commitments instead of tenets. Tenets require a sense of duty and charge scholars and educators with a set of tasks that remind us of particular assumptions that are agreed upon and often taken-for-granted (Fassett and Warren, 2007). Some of these assumptions that can occur within college classrooms are that the instructor has all of the knowledge, the students are there to receive it, and that students do not take an active role in their own education. This is similar to Freire's (1970, 2000) discussion of "banking" in education. Below are selected commitments of critical communication pedagogy from Fassett and Warren (2007) that relate directly to this dissertation:

- Commitment 2: Critical communication educators understand power as fluid and complex.

This commitment is important to my research because it relates directly to the power relations surrounding, as well as within, the higher education classroom and also includes macro, micro, and meso contextual frames (Sorrells, 2012). As I designed and facilitated this curriculum, I named and problematized the typical hierarchical power dynamic present in most classrooms. As well, since the seminar is not for college credit, and I did not "grade" the work of the participants, the student-instructor power dynamics present in courses for credit were not present. In line with the work of Paulo Freire (1970, 2000), I resist the notion of education as a banking system whereby educators deposit knowledge

into the minds of students and create a system of passive students who do not take an active role in the production and consumption of knowledge. Fassett and Warren (2007) argue that critical communication educators "bear the responsibility of exploring power and privilege, even—and especially—if that process implicates our own work as teachers and researchers" (p. 42). One way that I accomplished this was by acknowledging my levels of privilege during the seminar and using myself to model how recognizing one's own intersecting levels of advantage and disadvantage is necessary and important to doing anti-racist work. I did this by displaying my completed Wheel of Oppression (activity discussed later in chapter three) and taking students through my varying levels of advantage and disadvantage in the context of higher education.

- Commitment 5: Critical communication educators embrace social, structural critique as it places concrete, mundane communication practices in a meaningful context.

Fassett and Warren (2007) argue for continued study of everyday communicative practices, especially given that people constitute our identities, relationships, and organizations in and through communication. Students can benefit from learning how to explore how minute, often overlooked and/or taken-for-granted performative acts create, sustain, and alter social phenomena through a variety of methodologies. For example, many communication educators utilize a variety of classroom teaching methods in order to explore the ways that ideologies are produced and perpetuated. This is important because it is through discourse, dialogue, and performance that whiteness and white privilege are (re)produced in our daily interactions with one another and through structures and institutions. To demonstrate this commitment in the seminar, we discussed

examples like the Trayvon Martin and Abigail Fisher cases to analyze the perpetuation of white privilege and its many consequences.

As a facilitator of the curriculum, I sought to work in concert with the students to co-construct many examples of ways that intersecting levels of privilege affect relationships and lives, as well as how white privilege can be identified and confronted within local communities. By helping students to recognize how white privilege operates through concrete, mundane communicative practices and events in the context of the university and local community, I wanted to equip students to question and critique the pervasiveness of privilege and oppression, rather than seeing them as isolated occurrences.

- Commitment 7: Reflexivity is an essential condition for critical communication pedagogy.

Fassett and Warren (2007) argue that "Reflexivity refers to the interrogation of the self— the locating of the authoring of self in research or teaching, working to understand how that subject comes to be and who that subject authors in return" (p. 50). In other words, this process of reflexivity includes the exploration of how I as a teacher and researcher bring positionalities and assumptions into my work and my relationships with students, along with how I am complicit and reproduce systems of oppression.

This commitment is honored in my earlier discussion of positionality and acknowledgement of how my privilege affects my teaching and research. I sought to position myself as facilitator of a journey that I took along with the students, and together we worked to build knowledge and plans for action. However, I also bring positions of being a white middle class instructor with a high level of education. Throughout the

seminar, I modeled reflexivity through such activities as one on intersecting positions and levels of privilege. I shared how I work and grapple with my own levels of privilege. I also remained reflective of how my viewpoints and biases affected students' learning. For instance, as a white, liberal educator doing anti-racism work, my biases on the seminar topic were likely to come through when I spoke during the seminar. In order to provide a check and balance to my assumptions, I utilized a co-facilitator with different racial, ethnic, and gender identity positions than those I occupy, and also made sure that students' voices were invited to contest or contradict claims that I make.

- Commitment 8: Critical communication educators embrace pedagogy and research as praxis.

This commitment is connected to Freire's (1970, 2000) definition of praxis as it calls for a collaboration between teacher and student to not only reflect, but also to act together in working to transform the world. Fassett and Warren (2007) add that this commitment to pedagogy as praxis is central to critical communication pedagogy as teachers and students must work together to decenter normative analyses of a given phenomenon, experience, or idea and locate and name the taken-for-granted assumptions present in pedagogical contexts. This is also a central move in critical pedagogy and Freire's (1970/2000) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

Utilizing pedagogy as research and praxis relates directly to my desire to collaborate with students on the journey to deconstruct racism and white privilege. I do acknowledge that my research and knowledge on the subjects of racism and white privilege acted as a guide for me to design the seminar. I not only taught students various strategies for critiquing and confronting white privilege, but also worked collectively

with them to co-create an action plan for disrupting white privilege in local communities. As Fassett and Warren (2007) claim, when instructors in the United States work with students to develop an understanding of the nature of racial, gendered, and sexual identities, critical orientations require attention to "how our most mundane and (un)intentional (in)actions make us complicit in racism, sexism, or homophobia," and we then work toward an understanding of how these oppressions "are not simply formed and given to us, but rather something we create and sustain through communication" (p. 51). Accomplishing a difficult task like this one requires that I also discover and acknowledge my own complicity in racist institutions and was willing to share these examples with students during the seminar.

- Commitment 9: Critical communication educators embrace—in their classrooms and in their writing, within their communities, and with their students, research participants, and co-investigators—a nuanced understanding of human subjectivity and agency.

Commitment nine is essential to my research because I examined how, classist, racist, and sexist discourses, act to discourage and encourage varied actions and how such ideologies and systems become normalized (Fassett and Warren, 2007). For example, during discussions about readings on whiteness and white privilege, some students argued that they do not feel any sense of constraint, and that behavior is just an individual choice. This is an example of individual agency. Others were invited to share instances where classroom norms or instructor conduct, blaming the victims of racism for not speaking up, for example, act to reinforce norms of individual meritocracy and act to

discourage students from speaking up. This, then, acts to constrain individual agency for some students.

I acknowledge the difficulty of bringing this commitment to action, especially since as an educator, I must constantly resist the temptation to "give" students some of the knowledge I have that I consider important and useful. One way to work toward accomplishing this commitment was to incorporate relevant readings into the seminar from diverse scholars, including scholars whose voices are often marginalized, and encourage students to critically analyze the arguments within those readings and apply them to our discussions of racism and white privilege. Additionally, I added activities that ask students to analyze social discourses and identify consequences of white privilege on their own and by working with each other.

Critical communication pedagogy acts as a guiding framework to this dissertation because of the aforementioned commitments. These commitments provided me with a foundation for a curriculum that allowed me to collaborate with undergraduate students in order to understand and critique whiteness and white privilege and co-create individual and group action plans that take steps to confront racism, whiteness, and/or white privilege at our university and in our lives. Moon (2010) points out a call for critical scholars, which is "how to help students 'unlearn' ways of thinking about the world that bolster the status quo and envision alternative ways of thinking about the world that challenge it. This interest in imaging the classroom as a potential site for social change is central to critical pedagogy" (p. 43).

Edgerton (1989) argues that an outstanding pedagogue recognizes the inability to teach everything, and, therefore, works to develop a deep understanding of the subject

matter so that s/he can be selective and is able to simplify, structure, and organize in a way that fosters learning. Critical communication pedagogy is the avenue I chose in order to work toward the aims and goals of anti-racism to hopefully make a difference in at least one classroom at a time.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

After all, acknowledging unfairness then calls decent people forth to correct those

injustices. And since most persons are at their core, decent folks, the need to ignore

evidence of

injustice is powerful: To do otherwise would force whites to either push for change

(which they would perceive as against their interests) or live consciously as hypocrites

who speak of freedom and opportunity but perpetuate a system of inequality.

The irony of American history is the tendency of good white Americans to presume racial

innocence. Ignorance of how we are shaped racially is the first sign of privilege.

In other words, it is a privilege to ignore the consequences of race in America.

— Tim Wise

The ultimate goal for this dissertation was to create a curriculum for

undergraduate students that strengthened their understandings of racism, intersectionality,

and white privilege and provide them with strategies for confronting and disrupting white

privilege in their local communities. With this particular goal in mind, I offered and

evaluated a pilot seminar to answer the following two research questions:

1) How do participants in a pilot seminar on white privilege negotiate their constructions

of racism, intersectionality, and white privilege in the United States?

2) What can be learned about the discursive forms and functions of whiteness and other

ideologies offered by participants?

Since most undergraduate level communication courses offer a limited amount of

time for instructors to cover white privilege in an adequate fashion, additional

intervention is needed for students to effectively identify, confront, and ultimately disrupt white privilege after leaving college classrooms. The creation of a seminar that goes in-depth into systemic racism, levels of privilege and white privilege, and strategies and actions for confronting/disrupting white privilege was warranted. In this chapter, I discuss the participants and facilitators for the pilot seminar and the need to attend to the diversity of students. I explain the design of the seminar incorporating critical communication pedagogy and relevant research on learning competencies. I then describe each of the seven learning outcomes, along with the corresponding content and activities from the seminar and what transpired during those activities, as well as how I evaluated and assessed each outcome. Finally, I discuss follow-up evaluation procedures used to analyze the impact of the seminar and learning outcomes one month after the seminar.

Methods

Participants

The participants for this pilot seminar were former students at a university in New Mexico, as well as several friends that the former students invited to participate**.** I identified the participants based upon my rosters for the three years that I taught undergraduate courses. I chose to use former students for this research project for several reasons. First, participation in the project was voluntary and required a significant time commitment on behalf of the students. I realized I was much more likely to garner interest and willingness from students with whom I had a previous relationship. Second, since the seminar has a communication focus, and students' feedback about the communication concepts could be helpful, having participants who have taken at least one undergraduate communication course before participating in the seminar was

appropriate. Third, many of the former students who took my upper-division Intercultural Communication course expressed a considerable interest in learning more about white privilege when we covered it during the course. For these reasons, I chose to use former students from the various communication courses I previously taught as my pool for potential participants. Acknowledging that the seminar took place over the summer and that I needed to expand my search beyond my own former students, I encouraged the students who agreed to participate to invite other students from the university with whom they had a relationship to participate, as well.

The total number of undergraduate students I taught over the three years is 396. I compiled the students' names and email addresses into a list and sent the entire group an email that described my dissertation project, explained the tentative timeline, and informed students that participation would require a commitment to participate in all three days of the seminar during late summer. I requested that students email me if they were interested in participating, but reminded them that they did not need to commit to anything at this time. From that email, I received twenty-four responses and, when provided with more detail, seventeen of them expressed both an interest and willingness to participate. Of those seventeen, eight made the commitment to attend the seminar and four additional friends of theirs also joined as participants, making the total number of participants in the pilot seminar twelve.

Of the twelve seminar participants, seven identified as men and five identified as women. When asked to identify their race(s) on the pre-seminar survey, I received the following responses: five people said "White," one person said "Caucasian," one person said "Human," two people said "Hispanic," one person said "Spanish," one person said

"Black," and one person said "White, black." On the question that asked participants to identify their ethnicity(ies), there were a wide variety of responses; one participant listed thirteen ethnicities and these were, "American, Asian, Russian, Swedish, Irish, German, Israeli, Jewish, Portuguese, Mexican, Hispanic, Spanish, American." Among the other eleven participants, the following ethnicities were given: Hispanic, American, European, Latino, Sailor, White, White American, Italian, Native American, African, and one person left this field blank. Participants were also asked how they would describe their socio-economic status while growing up, and their responses included poor, working poor, working class, lower class, lower-middle class, low-income farmers, and middle class. The age range of participants was from 21-61. Among the group of participants, only one had never previously taken a communication course.

An important consideration when reflecting on this particular group of participants is that they all volunteered to participate in this seminar on white privilege and were, therefore, motivated to attend, either to learn more about this topic or to assist me in my doctoral research—or both. It is also important to note that many of the participants grew up in the state of New Mexico, which has a long history of colonization and racial oppression/tensions and may also contribute to participants' discourse regarding racism and white privilege. Furthermore, participation in a seminar that involves topics of racism and white privilege and that encourages participants to self-disclose can be risky for all participants; however, the risks for participants of color are greater than the risks for white participants.

Participants of color may experience emotional trauma from the re-telling of stories where they have experienced oppression and subjugation. Also they take on the

risk of interacting with white participants who may expect to be taught through their personal narratives. They open themselves up to the possibility that white participants may dismiss their stories and experiences and/or reduce the stories/experiences to examples of "playing the race card" or being "too sensitive." With this said, I believe that the inclusion of a diverse group of participants in the pilot seminar is warranted because all students can benefit from a greater understanding of and ability to identify and discuss systemic racism, intersectionality, and white privilege. The participants in this seminar were voluntary and willing participants, and they knew that the composition of the seminar would include students with diverse racial positions. These participants were also somewhat more informed about the topics than typical undergraduates, having taken multiple communication courses prior to participating in the seminar. Additionally, the students of color, as well as the students who identified as white, expressed an interest in building skills to talk with others about systems of oppression and communication strategies to interrupt white privilege. Finally, a setting in which students identifying as white are asked to perform their white positions, among others, and discuss whiteness in a racially and ethnically mixed group, is also a unique opportunity for engaged learning for all those present.

Facilitators

The pilot seminar had two facilitators—I was one facilitator and Matthew Jackson was the second facilitator. There are multiple reasons for having two facilitators instead of one. First, since the seminar is three days long and has many activities and discussions, having two facilitators helped to prevent fatigue and overload for the facilitators. It also gave the students an opportunity to hear different perspectives, opinions, and experiences

so that they would not feel that they were receiving only one point of view. Thirdly, at several points during the seminar there were breakout groups in which students who identified as white and students who identified as people of color were in separate groups; each group was facilitated by a white person and person of color, respectively. Acknowledging the extent to which this kind of grouping and facilitation enables each group of students to feel more comfortable talking about controversial topics is important. I facilitated the white student breakout group, and Matthew facilitated the students of color breakout group.

Matthew Jackson is a black man who has been an independent school educator for twelve years. He has a Bachelor's degree in history and a Master's degree in educational technology. He has taught computer science and history, has served as director of the advisory program at two schools, has served as affinity group leader at the People of Color conference for independent schools three times, and currently advises the Students of Color Affinity Group at a private grade school for boys in Manhattan (which he founded). We both attended the White Privilege Conference (WPC) in 2013, a national conference in its 14th year, held annually around the country. According to the official website, the WPC is a conference that "examines challenging concepts of privilege and oppression and offers solutions and team building strategies to work toward a more equitable world" (www.whiteprivilegeconference.com). Before the official start of the conference, Matthew attended an all-day pre-conference "train the trainer" workshop about leading seminars on racism and white privilege.

I chose Matthew to co-facilitate the seminar with me for several reasons. I believe that a seminar like this one needs to be led by a white person and a person of color so that

the facilitators can model interracial conversations about whiteness and privilege and share first-hand experiences about being positioned differently. Additionally, Matthew's personality and leadership style greatly complements mine; he is introverted, more guarded in sharing personal experiences, listens more than he speaks, and is quite calm. We have been in a romantic relationship for six years, have worked together on projects before, and we balance each other very well. Matthew is also a good choice for demonstrating intersectionality of positioning to the students during activities and discussions; while he often experiences oppression because of his racial identity (and his large stature), he simultaneously experiences male privilege, class privilege, and privilege because of his higher education.

Diversity and Design of Seminar

I designed the seminar based on my experiences as an educator/scholar and having taught intercultural communication in the past. I carefully chose each reading and activity, designed the activities, and previously facilitated many of the activities in college-level courses and workshops. Having already taught most of the participants in a communication course, I have established a relationship on some level with most of them, and this hopefully made it easier/more comfortable for the group to be more open, and perhaps more vulnerable, fairly quickly into the seminar. My goal was to establish a climate of respect, safety, openness, and community during the seminar; previous student evaluations suggest that I can be successful in these goals. I am passionate about communication and the topic of white privilege, and students hopefully sensed this passion during the seminar, which may have then affected their experiences in a positive manner. I am relatively open with regard to sharing my personal experiences with racism

and white privilege and have extensive experience facilitating seminars through my time as a college instructor, residence hall director, and student leader.

The seminar is two and-a-half days long and includes readings, activities, discussions, breakout groups, and role-playing activities. A full schedule for the seminar is provided in Appendix A. Students were given opportunities to engage all three learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) throughout the seminar. Students read McIntosh's (1988) *Packing the Invisible Knapsack* paper for an overview of privilege, specifically white privilege. They also read an article by Patricia Hill Collins (1998) on intersections of gender, race, and nation. The reading from Audrey Lorde (1980), *Age, Race, Class, and Sex* offered students another in-depth explanation of intersectionality and the many different way that it functions. I chose the readings based on their applicability to the topic, their connection to the learning outcomes, and the time constraints of the pilot seminar. A reference list of the readings is found in Appendix B.

Though some seminars and training programs devoted to whiteness are primarily designed for people who identify as white, I did not design the seminar in this way. My experience is consistent with other pedagogical research that white students find discussions about white privilege more challenging than students of color (Johnson, et al., 2008; Tatum, 1992, 1994) and this interracial experience is essential for hearing first-hand experiences and establishing the potential for interracial alliances. I also believe it is necessary for those of us who can identify as white to take action on an individual and group level to confront and disrupt white privilege (Rebollo-Gil & Moras, 2006). Therefore, the material in this seminar is relevant for students of all racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Crossroads, an anti-racism training organization that started in 1986 and is located in Matteson, IL, argues that no one group has sole responsibility for working with white privilege or changing the systems that perpetuate it. Crossroads develops and facilitates anti-racism trainings for diverse audiences. In one of their working papers, "Racial Identity Caucusing," they argue that in order to "work together to dismantle individual, institutional, and cultural racism, People of Color and Whites must understand how these identity dynamics operate in specific institutional settings, and devise strategies to overcome the barriers and oppression that are created by them" (p. 1). They also recommend that during trainings, group members work together in their respective racial identity groups. The paper explains further that people of color should work as a group to "understand and confront the internalized racist oppression and to experience themselves as an anti-racist People of Color collective working together to dismantle racism," and whites should meet and work together to "deal with issues of internalized superiority and to build an anti-racist White collective working together and with People of Color to dismantle racism" (p. 1). When the two groups come back together, they are then better able to work as a team, increasing their understandings of racism and privilege and working toward confronting and disrupting racism within the team and within the institutional settings in which racism is working (Crossroads, 2013). I incorporated this recommendation into the pilot seminar.

A diverse group of participants is also appropriate for this seminar because racist and oppressive systems and structures are pervasive and impact all groups. This seminar offers an opportunity for all students to partake in self-reflection and critique, connect with potential allies, and engage in fruitful discussion with other students on campus

from varying racial backgrounds. Freire (1970, 2000) argues that, "reflection—true reflection—leads to action" (p. 66). My goals for this seminar were to increase undergraduates' understandings of systemic racism, intersectionality, and white privilege and also to enable them to potentially take action by learning strategies for identifying, confronting, and disrupting white privilege in their own lives and local communities.

People from all racial, class, and gender backgrounds benefit from a greater understanding of the institutions and structures that support systemic racism, and greater attention is required from all groups in order for these institutions and structures to be challenged and for change to occur. Tatum (1994) reminds educators that "Teaching about racism needs to shift from an exploration of the experiences of victims and victimizers to that of empowered people of color and their white allies, creating the possibility of working together as partners in the establishment of a more just society" (p. 474). Since I argued previously that oppressive structures and norms are difficult to change, any amount of change will require the efforts of diverse groups with varied positions. An interruption of exclusion, oppression, and inequitable treatment that is perpetuated by white privilege may have more potential to occur with interracial allies acting together. Therefore, for all these reasons, I chose to invite a diverse audience of students.

Incorporation of Critical Communication Pedagogy

A unique feature of this seminar is its theoretical grounding in critical communication pedagogy. During the design phase of the learning outcomes and the seminar, I kept in mind the tenets of critical pedagogy and commitments of critical communication pedagogy and made sure that they were reflected within the seminar. I

believe strongly in students taking responsibility for their education and educators

resisting the bank deposit style of education that Freire (1970, 2000) wrote about in

Pedagogy of the Oppressed. The seminar included the implementation of individual

strategies for action, as well as the design of an action plan by students, and a follow-up

assessment of individual and group actions taken.

I recognize that as facilitators, we cannot completely share control of the seminar

agenda with the students since we do bring some level of knowledge and expertise on the

topic at hand. Additionally, with this pilot seminar being part of my research and the sole

source of data collection, I sought to find a balance between allowing the community to

guide the agenda and shape the schedule based on its unique needs, while also attempting

to cover the content that past research justifies and that I am studying for my dissertation.

This proved difficult at times during the seminar, since my anticipation of how much

time participants would want/need to spend on certain topics of discussion and activities

was not accurate, which was expected.

Learning Competencies

The National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (NPEC) defines a

competency as "a combination of skills, abilities, and knowledge needed to perform a

specific task in a given context" (2002, p. 1). In taking a communication approach to this

research, my main interests were in students demonstrating what they know, what they

are able to say and do, and how they manage their emotions and orientations toward

themselves and others. In their research on intercultural communication training, Brislin

and Yoshida (1994) developed a four-step approach to assess competencies acquired that

they based on a combination of previous approaches by various scholars. Brislin and

Yoshida's (1994) approach involves four competencies or learning outcomes: awareness, knowledge, emotions (including attitudes), and skills (involving visible behaviors).

Kraiger, Ford, and Salas (1993) conducted research on theories of learning outcomes and training evaluation and discussed three categories of learning competencies (drawing from the work of Bloom, 1956, and Gagne, 1984) that they labeled cognitive, skill-based (behavioral) and affective. Cognitive competencies refer to the quantity and type of knowledge acquired by students along with the relationships among the various knowledge elements (Kraiger, et al., 1993). While there are several types of verbal knowledge that can be acquired, Kraiger, et al. assert that in the initial stages of learning, declarative knowledge, which relates to definitions, beliefs, examples of concepts and evidence for beliefs, is a good starting place. While using multiple-choice, true-false, or free-recall can assess this type of knowledge, open ended descriptions are also appropriate. Declarative knowledge acquisition is useful to assess cognitive competencies.

Behavioral competency requires the development of a particular set of skills. In training seminars, trainees are typically placed in role-play scenarios that mimic on-the-job situations and the trainees' behaviors are observed and connected with the development of a particular skill (Kraiger, et al., 1993). Throughout the seminar, students learned a variety of strategies for confronting and disrupting white privilege and demonstrated those in a role-play activity that was videotaped. The final competency is affective, referring to attitudinal, value-based and emotional outcomes that are relevant to the training seminar (Kraiger, et al., 1993). These outcomes can include changing values, attitudes and emotions. All of these affective learning competencies can be assessed through pre- and post-training evaluations or assessment forms.

In order to assess each of these learning competencies, I designed a survey that students took several weeks prior to the seminar and again one month after the conclusion of the seminar. The survey contains multiple questions of varying types (both closed- and open-ended) that assess each of the learning competencies and learning outcomes related to my seminar goals. Throughout the seminar, after the facilitators finished each major topic and learning outcome, the students took mini-surveys to obtain immediate assessment of knowledge and comprehension of those topics. The survey is included as Appendix C.

In summary, I focused on three types of competencies/learning outcomes in this project. I combined awareness and knowledge into a category of cognitions about what is known and believed prior to the seminar and learned during the seminar. Cognitive learning was assessed through the pre-training and post-training surveys as well as reflection surveys about major topics each day. The second category of learning, affect, refers to motivations and emotions that enable and constrain behavior and were assessed through the pre- and post-survey, as well as through students' topic reflection surveys. The third learning outcome category that I addressed is behaviors. These were assessed by reported behaviors in the pre- and post-surveys as well as by reviewing audio- and videotaped activities as students demonstrated strategies for confronting and interrupting white privilege.

Seminar Activities, Learning Outcomes and Evaluation

The design of the seminar was based on seven learning outcomes that correspond with the goals of this research project. I wrote the learning outcomes to correspond with my seminar goals. Each of the learning outcomes takes the form of cognitive, affective

and behavioral competencies. In this section, I outline the seven learning outcomes,

discuss the content, activities, and competencies designed to accomplish each learning

outcome, describe what took place during the activities, and offer a description of how I

evaluated each learning outcome.

Although the research questions and analysis address the discourses offered by the

seminar participants, in order to understand the content, activities, and instructional

approach that became the context in which the discourses emerged, it is essential to

outline the objectives that guided the seminar content, the seminar activities that took

place, and the results of those activities with regard to the accomplishment of the learning

outcomes. A more detailed analysis of the discourses associated with particular outcomes

follows in the next chapter.

Learning Outcome One: Knowledge about White Systems of Domination

The first outcome is for students to be able *to describe two significant events that*

contributed to the creation and perpetuation of white domination in the United States. It

is important for students to have some level of understanding of the historical contexts

that supported the creation of "white" as a racial category, and subsequently how that

creation then led to a series of events, structures, policies, and norms that have positioned

whites as dominant in the United States for centuries. This is a necessary component of

the seminar because it helps students to realize that race is a social construction and that

in the United States, the label "white" is a category that can become important in

institutional policies and practices to privilege a particular group of people and subjugate

those who are not afforded membership within that group. Historical context is a

necessary component in order to increase one's understanding of the racial formations in

the United States (Omi and Winant, 1994). Although white domination is pervasive throughout the United States, students should understand not only that policies, structures, norms, and discourses all act together to create relations of domination, but also that these relations are contextual and dynamic.

The first activity in the seminar on the creation and perpetuation of white domination gave students a brief overview of the historical events that led to "white" becoming a racial category in the United States, as well as its establishment as a position of superiority. This activity was also the first time the facilitators discussed race as a social construction about genetic or physiological components of human beings. Students paired up with one another and were asked to work together to think of as many historical events as they could in a short period of time that they believe contributed to white domination in the United States. They listed these events on a large sheet of paper taped to the wall. The facilitators then walked around the room and talked through all of the lists. After this discussion, the facilitators showed a video that features a talk by Tim Wise on the establishment of "white" as a racial category and several features of white privilege, in general. The facilitators then went through a table we created that highlights many of the important laws, policies, events, and movements that contributed to the subjugation of non-whites throughout history (Appendix D).

There was opportunity for discussion and questions throughout each of these small activities. The overall goal of this portion of the seminar was to provide students with a very basic historical foundation of racial formations in the United States before moving on to more complex issues like racism and white privilege. This outcome corresponds with students' cognitive competencies, and in order to evaluate and assess

this particular learning outcome, I compared students' abilities to provide and explain examples of such significant events on their pre-surveys, topic reflection surveys, and post-surveys. I analyzed students' open-ended responses to identify acquisition of new knowledge and/or reinforcement for what they already knew from before the seminar. The participants were able to name at least one significant event in their pre-seminar surveys, with some providing two, but all participants were able to name two events that led to the creation and perpetuation of white domination in the United States on the post-seminar survey.

Learning Outcome Two: Knowledge of Systemic Racism as More than Individual's Racist Acts

The second learning outcome requires that students *be able to distinguish between individual racist acts and systemic racism*. Many college students continue to think of racism as something that is based on certain individual acts—saying and doing things that position others as inferior, less qualified, threatening, and suspicious based on their race (Feagin, 2000; Feagin, Vera, & Batur, 2001; Rebollo-Gil & Moras, 2006) rather than as a system of historically reoccurring and institutionally pervasive policies and practices. Instances of student generated examples of racism often include pointing to a friend or family member who uses racial slurs, and/or public figures who make racist comments, such as Don Imus, Paula Dean, Mel Gibson, and Michael Richards.

Additionally, research by Bonilla-Silva (2010) indicates that an increasing number of people in the United States argue that we now live in a "post-racial society" given the election of a black president, and laws are in place to protect groups from discrimination, therefore racism is what often misguided individuals with extreme views

do (Thompson & Collier, 2006). Acknowledging these factors, it was important that students were able to understand that words and actions based on racial prejudice are different than systemic racism, which involves not only individual acts but also structural systems (historical, institutional, and discursive patterns of subjugation). Because systemic racism works to position groups in relations of dominance/subordination, these processes and their consequences are essential for students to be able to define and explain in a variety of contexts.

The second segment of the seminar, therefore, focused on defining systems of racism. It is important for students to move beyond thinking of racism as individualistic and begin to understand the systemic and structural nature of racism. Students watched a video created by the Crossroads organization called "Definition of Racism." This organization created a relevant video that walks viewers through the necessary steps to transition from a definition of individual acts of racism (acts evidencing individual attitudes of racial prejudice) toward a greater understanding of systemic racism. I chose this particular video because I believe that it is at an appropriate level for college students who may be unfamiliar with the concept of systemic racism. We used this video to spark a discussion of individual racist acts and systemic racism where students were asked to share examples of racially charged situations from their lives. We also asked for students to generate examples of institutions that perpetuate systemic racism. The list that they came up with included colleges, hospitals and clinics, banks, courts, churches, print and broadcast media representations, law enforcement, and laws and policies around immigration and land ownership.

The pre- and post-seminar surveys include a variety of questions that assessed students' knowledge about and emotions toward individual racist acts and systemic racism. These questions allowed me to evaluate how the students conceptualize racism before the seminar, during the seminar, and after the seminar. When looking at their responses to the questions on the survey where scenarios were provided and they were asked to select whether those scenarios were individual racist acts, systemic racism, or neither of these, the vast majority of participants chose individual racist acts or neither of these for many of the scenarios that were intended to be examples of systemic racism. Of these participants, most of them changed their answers on the post-seminar survey and selected systemic racism for the examples that were, in fact, systemic racism and chose individual racist acts for those that were examples of individual acts of racism. They also changed their answers from systemic racism/individual racist acts on the scenarios that involved neither individual forms of racism nor systemic racism. In sum, the participants improved greatly in their abilities to identify these scenarios correctly.

Additionally, analysis of students' reflections after watching the Crossroads video and the subsequent large group discussion was undertaken. This outcome corresponds with students' cognitive and affective competencies; I was interested in students' abilities to define and explain systemic racism and also in their attitudes and emotions about individual versus systemic racism. Participants' definitions and examples of racism changed over the course of the seminar and reflected ambivalence. An in-depth analysis of these discourses is included in chapter four.

Learning Outcome Three: Intersectionality, Privilege and White Privilege

The third learning outcome relates to students' understandings of multiple types and levels of privilege and white privilege, specifically. Students should be able to *define intersectionality and white privilege and also provide at least two examples of white privilege within various settings in the United States.* The ability to identify examples of white privilege through various forms of discourse and media is important because it encourages students to think critically about things they see and hear and then begin to link what they see and hear to systems of privilege.

The third set of activities in the seminar dealt with helping students to define and understand privilege and intersectionality. The facilitators presented students with a handout that contains quick definitions as a resource for students, including definitions of privilege, advantage and disadvantage, intersectionality, and white privilege from Patricia Hill Collins, Peggy McIntosh, Tim Wise, and Allan Johnson (Appendix E). As a group, we then went through each of these definitions and worked to make sure everyone understood the definitions and could provide examples of areas of privilege in their own lives. This led us directly into a discussion of intersectionality, since students named a variety of privileges and oppressions that they experience (gender, ability, class, etc.).

Facilitators then led a discussion of the Patricia Hill Collins's reading that highlights her conceptualization of intersectionality. After this discussion, students were presented with a handout that features McIntosh's Wheel of Oppression (Appendix F). After the facilitators displayed and went through both of our completed wheels, we then walked participants through a guided exercise where they filled out their own wheel based on their varying levels of privilege and oppression. Appendix G displays two completed Wheels of Oppression. The participants then paired up with one another and

explained their wheels to each other, as well as the emotions they experienced while filling out the wheel. This reading and activity on intersectionality are important components of the seminar because they provided students with the understanding that no one person is completely oppressed nor completely privileged. It is necessary for students to be aware that people can simultaneously experience privilege through some of their social identity categories, and oppression through others.

Participants also learned that different situations, places, events, and relationships bring certain privileges and oppressions to the surface, and individuals must constantly negotiate this process throughout their lives. For example, bell hooks (1981) describes intersecting social positions and how they work together to produce multiple levels of oppression (and sometimes, privilege). In her case, she experiences "triple jeopardy" by being black, female, and lesbian. This was used as an additional example to further students' understandings of how intersectionality functions in people's lives. Also, these multiple positions become important in that they establish relations of difference; these relations between group positions then act to produce status hierarchies, which often correspond to levels of privilege (Collier, 2104). Relations between groups and how they are positioned, therefore, were also important components of the discussion to ensure students' understandings of intersectionality.

As we continued to grapple with the concept of privilege, participants next turned their attention to the assigned reading by Audre Lorde. This reading discusses multiple levels of privilege and how these privileges can be institutionally based and act in ways that are patriarchal, oppressive, and/or dominating. This particular reading is written at a level that I felt the students should not struggle to understand; however, they had many

questions about the reading and some expressed a difficulty getting through the article. None of the participants in the pilot seminar were familiar with the term intersectionality before taking the pre-seminar survey and reading the articles provided to them one month before the seminar took place; therefore, when asked to define the concept on the pre-seminar survey, it was either left blank, or they guessed at what it might be, with little accuracy. After reading Collins (2000) and Lorde (1980), they came to the seminar with a rudimentary understanding of the concept, which was revealed through our initial discussions about the articles. Their ability to speak about intersectionality and provide examples of it within their lives increased after participating in the Wheel of Oppression activity.

After discussing the Lorde reading, students participated in an activity that I call "Standing in the Face of Privilege." This activity is similar to a privilege walk or privilege line, but is slightly more intense on an emotional level. Students sitting in a small, close circle in chairs were presented with a series of scenarios/statements. If the scenario/statement applied to them, they were asked to stand and remain standing for several seconds. Those who were standing were asked to look into the faces and eyes of others who were standing, and those who were seated were asked to do the same with others who were seated.

After the activity concluded, students were instructed to separate into breakout groups—one for students who identify as white and another for students who identify as people of color. The two facilitators lead the discussions for the groups (in separate rooms) and encouraged students to speak openly about their feelings during the activity. These discussions were not recorded in order to protect students' privacy and allow them

to feel safe to speak openly and honestly about an activity that may bring up very intense feelings. This time was also used to explore the potential sources of these feelings, the connection of these thoughts and feelings to the seminar topics, and collectively to generate productive ways to handle these types of feelings. This activity is important to include in the seminar because it not only forces students to face their own levels of privilege and oppression, but also allows them to identify with others who also experience those same privileges and/or oppressions.

Furthermore, some students found themselves standing frequently while others found themselves remaining seated for most of the activity. There was no point in the activity when only person was standing or sitting during, so students were able to look into the faces and eyes of others standing or sitting and, hopefully, did not feel alone during this emotional journey. The small and large group discussions that followed the activity were also extremely important for students so that they could de-brief and process their thoughts and feelings, which some of them chose to do during that time.

During the next part of the seminar, we moved from privilege in general to white privilege, specifically. Facilitators started by leading a discussion of the assigned McIntosh reading on white privilege. It was important here to ensure that students had a good working understanding of the definition of white privilege and the key arguments in McIntosh's frequently cited article. White privilege is the focal point of the seminar and is what separates it from other anti-racism trainings and intercultural communication courses that are tasked with a much broader spectrum than this particular seminar. This article also served to begin the discussion of the basics of white privilege and provided the content for the subsequent checklist activity.

In order to get students up and moving after a relatively long period of sitting, the checklist that McIntosh provides in the article was used as a physical activity where students stood in a large circle in the room. Each facilitator took a turn reading off one of the checklist items; if students could answer yes to that particular item, they took a step forward toward the center of the room. After every checklist item was read aloud, the students who took the most steps forward were closest to the center, thereby creating a much smaller circle. This activity is important because it demonstrated the privileges that many whites experience simply because of their positionality as white people. After this activity, students will be given quiet time to reflect individually about how they felt during the activity.

The facilitators then showed a documentary, directed by Dr. Shakti Butler and titled *Mirrors of Privilege: Making Whiteness Visible*. This video is a useful tool for educators to help their students gain a stronger understanding of white privilege and how it functions through information, stories, and narratives from leading race scholars and individuals who offer their personal experiences with white privilege and systemic racism. It facilitated students' learning at a higher level that required intellectual engagement and reflection. After watching the video, the facilitators once again led discussions in the breakout groups from earlier in the day. After the breakout group discussions, the entire group came back together to discuss the checklist activity and the video and shared our thoughts and feelings as a community.

This learning outcome relates to students' emotions about white privilege, as well as their ability to define and explain concepts; therefore, it relates specifically to both affective and cognitive competencies. The topic reflections and pre- and post-survey

questions corresponding to this outcome allowed me to assess students' emotions and knowledge about intersectionality and white privilege before, during, and after the seminar. As with the other topics and learning outcomes, both of the facilitators' observations during the seminar were also useful in contextualizing my interpretations of the written responses. A detailed description of these responses is contained in chapter four.

Learning Outcome Four: Recognizing the Pervasiveness of White Privilege

The fourth learning outcome asks students to be able to *identify at least two examples of white privilege from various forms of media and social discourse*. In other words, can students examine a variety of texts and forms of social discourse, identify examples of white privilege from the texts, and then analyze how these texts and forms of discourse work to perpetuate white privilege? Once students are able to define and explain white privilege and come up with several consequences for people within multiple social and racial categories, they need to be able to identify specific occurrences of it within their surroundings.

In order to address this particular outcome, students watched video coverage of a recent racial incident that happened on campus at the university. Students demonstrated their ability to analyze a particular text and identify how white privilege is being enacted or implicated in that text by discussing the news video on their own, with no input from the facilitators. These skills are important because they encourage students to recognize when something occurs in their environment that contributes to the perpetuation of white privilege. In order for students to be able to interrupt conversations and discourses, and

potentially affect change in policies and structures, they must be able to identify white privilege and give relevant examples of white privilege to others.

In addition to media, white privilege is often perpetuated through social discourse, so students were given examples of conversations and were asked to identify the examples of white privilege that were present within the discourse. As a means of challenging students to be able to identify examples of white privilege being enacted and/or implicated through social discourse, we showed an excerpt from the documentary *Color of Fear*, asked students to analyze the dialogue between the men in the video, and then identify statements that they believe exemplify white privilege in action. After the video concluded, students assembled in small groups and shared their findings with one another in discussion. We then came back together as a large group and discussed the examples that students found and related them to situations from their own lives. Facilitators asked questions, such as, when have they heard similar statements from others? Have they ever made statements like those they heard in the video? This was an essential component of the seminar because it challenged students to go beyond cognitive understanding and into identifying behaviors that connect to the larger issue at hand—in this case, white privilege.

This activity was one of several that students participated in to practice identifying examples of white privilege through various texts; they also practiced these skills during two additional activities that correspond with learning outcome six. This outcome relates to cognitive competencies, and I evaluated it through questions on the pre- and post-surveys. While all of the participants were able to identify examples of white privilege from various forms of media and social discourse on the pre-seminar

surveys, the strength and specificity of their examples increased significantly on the post-seminar surveys. For example, one participant gave the following response to this question on his pre-seminar survey, "In movies a group of characters will have a black character and [s/he] is usually the first one killed." On his post-seminar survey, he gave the following response: "I watched a documentary called "Cropsey" concerning a serial killer of disabled children. All the children were white except one and throughout the film they kept saying they weren't sure if the little black girl counted as a victim."

Another participant wrote the following on her pre-seminar survey: "In movies/tv, those in power are usually white," whereas, on her post-seminar survey, she wrote, "I watched a video where a politician suggested to an Asian man that "his people" should change their last names to something easier for "us" to pronounce/spell." I continued to assess their abilities to identify the various occurrences of the enactment of white privilege during these activities through facilitator observations and analysis of audio recordings of the activity. These changes, and others that were similar, in participants' examples of discourses on their post-seminar surveys demonstrate that their ability to identify discourses that perpetuate white privilege increased after participating in the seminar.

Learning Outcome Five: Differential Consequences of White Privilege

The fifth learning outcome requires that students be able to *explain at least two consequences of white privilege for various groups in at least two different settings*. Throughout the seminar, students learned that white privilege does not only affect one particular racial group—its effects are long reaching. Students should realize that white privilege has different consequences for those who are positioned into different racial and

ethnic groups such as whites, Latinos, blacks, Asians, American Indians, and for those positioned in different socioeconomic classes, genders, etc. The ability to present consequences of white privilege in relation to other positions is important because it goes beyond an understanding of what white privilege is and pushes students into thinking about how it harms and benefits different groups in differential ways. Additionally, white privilege harms and benefits different people at different levels because of varying identity positions and levels of privileges and/or oppressions. This knowledge is necessary so that students can first understand the role that intersectionality plays in white privilege and ultimately gain a richer understanding of *systems* of privilege and domination.

During this part of the seminar, students began by working in small groups to generate consequences of white privilege. They were asked to think about consequences for groups positioned racially as marginalized and for people positioned as whites. Students were then asked to come up with additional consequences together in small groups. The ability to think beyond the performance of whiteness and white privilege and move into actual consequences for groups positioned racially as marginalized and for whites is necessary so that students can understand the reality of this oppressive system and the consequences that people experience on a daily basis because of it. After the small groups generated their lists, we then came back together as a large group and had a discussion about these consequences. After this activity, the students chose a partner (we asked white students to partner with students of color) and we sent them on a walk-about outside to discuss the their reactions and feelings to the activities in the seminar thus far.

This learning outcome assessed cognitive competencies and asked students to be able to think about the consequences of white privilege for whites and groups positioned racially as marginalized at individual and group levels. The open-ended questions on the surveys asked students to provide examples of consequences of white privilege, and I assessed and evaluated students' abilities to do this before, during, and after the seminar. Most of the participants of color were able to provide consequences of white privilege for whites and people of color on their pre-and post-seminar surveys. Among the white participants, some provided consequences for whites that included examples of "reverse racism," while others could not identify any consequences of white privilege for whites (either positive or negative). They were all able to name consequences for people of color on the pre-seminar survey, although some could only name one consequence in one setting. On the post-seminar surveys, all of the participants provided consequences of white privilege for whites and people of color, in multiple settings. A more detailed analysis of these consequences is offered in chapter four.

Learning Outcome Six: Confronting White Privilege in Social Interaction

The ability to recognize the perpetuation of white privilege through actions, discourse, media, policies, etc. is important, but beyond recognition, students should also be able to confront examples of white privilege. By confront, I mean engage in dialogue with others that points to situations, comments, and policies that may support inequalities, speak out in group situations when they identify examples of white privilege working to exclude, validate oppressive policies or practices, or subjugate members of particular groups, and/or organize action in a community when they identify inequities occurring in a particular context. The sixth learning outcome, therefore, requires that students *learn*

and demonstrate two strategies for confronting examples of white privilege in a variety of settings.

Students learned how to address social discourses when they arise in personal relationships, organizations, group settings, and/or work relationships. Speaking up about comments or actions that are reifying white privilege is challenging, can produce defensiveness, and can be interpreted as a challenge to one's status positioning. It is one thing to recognize privilege when one sees it happening, but it is entirely different to speak up and/or take action during the occurrence. This level of social action requires knowledge, skills, and confidence, in addition to the ability to take action.

Therefore, this step in this learning process was for students to learn strategies for confronting white privilege. To begin this process, the facilitators showed a video of an interview with Towson University student, Matthew Heimbach, with news correspondent, Thom Hartmann. This student has received massive news coverage for his campaign to start a White Student Union on Towson's campus. This particular text offered an opportunity for students to identify beliefs, opinions, and arguments that this individual makes against the existence and pervasiveness of white privilege and systemic racism. As a group, we watched the video multiple times, with the purpose of identifying Heimbach's arguments and strategies, and then discussing ways that we could and/or would respond to and engage someone in conversation/dialogue who may offer similar opinions and arguments. This exercise is important for students to participate in because it provides them with a realistic example of the types of resistance they may come up against when engaging their peers and family members in conversations about race, racism, privilege, etc. During this activity, extreme anger from the participants directed at

Heimbach snowballed and they ultimately focused on him as an extreme racist individual and, therefore, could not turn their focus toward identifying the systemic issues, analyzing an argument, and strategizing ways to attack the argument. In future seminars, it will be important to choose a different video that can better facilitate the acquisition of these skills.

After discussing multiple options and strategies that are applicable for confronting the manifestation of white privilege in a variety of settings, students had the opportunity to demonstrate these strategies in particular scenarios so that they could practice using these strategies in the moment. The facilitators presented the students with a variety of typical scenarios, based upon their experiences as educators and scholars, and together, we role-played these scenarios.

All students had an opportunity to play a role that required them to confront white privilege in some manner, and I acted as the white antagonist in each role-play. The scenarios included one-on-one conversations, group situations, work-place situations, and a large group setting. A list of the role-play scenarios is included in Appendix H. The facilitators utilized a technique often used in acting and improvisation where either the facilitators or those in the role-play could call "time-out" and ask for help or suggestions from others in the group who were not in the role-play. This hopefully made the activity less intimidating for the participants in the beginning. Matt took the role of "coach" during this first round of the activity and facilitated discussion among all participants about how to handle each scenario. He encouraged participants to work together as a collective and offer opinions, insight, and suggestions to one another as a means of discovering multiple strategies that could work in similar situations they may encounter.

During the second half of the role-play activity, the "time-out" function was taken away and participants then had to work through the difficulties on their own. Students engaged in a different role-play scenario than the one they had previously engaged in during the first round so as to create realistic situations where on-the-spot decisions about actions needed to be made. After each participant engaged in a second role-play scenario, we then discussed as a group what went well, offered positive encouragement, and also suggested other strategies that could potentially be used in similar future situations. At the conclusion of the discussion, participants were given time for individual reflection.

The activities that correspond with learning outcome six address cognitive, affective and behavioral competencies. Students were required to utilize the knowledge they gained about white privilege in order to identify examples where it is enacted or implicated in various texts. In addition, the role-play situations required them to demonstrate behaviors for confronting white privilege and engaging in what are often challenging conversations and situations. Their emotions and motivations about confronting white privilege are also important because they can work to enable and constrain students' behaviors before, during, and after the seminar. In order to assess and evaluate these outcomes, I analyzed video recordings of the activities, along with relevant survey questions, and evaluated students' performance in the role-plays and subsequent discussions.

On the pre-seminar survey, when asked to describe a situation where they had confronted white privilege, only two of the participants offered examples of situations where this had occurred. The other ten participants indicated that they had no experience with confronting white privilege. On the post-seminar survey, six of the twelve

participants reported that they had utilized some of the strategies they learned throughout the seminar for confronting white privilege in the month that had passed since the seminar ended. One participant offered the following: "Someone referred to immigrants as "illegals" and I cut them off and spoke of the connotation of the word. I later went on to describe what an immigrant meant in this nation and they became quiet." Another participant shared an example of discussing the topic of white privilege with others: "I've noticed more examples of white privilege and have talked to some of my friends and family about what I learned. It usually sparks interesting conversations and goes reasonably well." Finally, one of the participants contacted me via email before the post-seminar survey was sent and asked me to look over something she wrote. She told me that she felt compelled to write a statement about white privilege and her experiences participating in the seminar that she planned to share with her family and friends. On the post-seminar survey, she shared the following:

> I have talked about white privilege with many people. I also used some of the strategies I learned in the seminar to educate my husband's cousin on class issues. She was saying craziness about the welfare system. She is a really sweet person, educated, highly conservative, and in 'the upper tax bracket,' a person I didn't really want to 'go up against.' She was saying that she didn't think she should have to give people a hand out just because they are popping out babies they can't take care of. I asked, 'Can I ask you what makes you think that the system works that way?' She explained she saw a YouTube video where a girl was saying that she never had to work as long she kept having babies. I asked her what she knew about the system and if she had ever talked to anyone who received welfare. She

admitted that she didn't know much and had NEVER talked to someone on the system. I told her that is how I grew up. We engaged in a very meaningful conversation. She seemed enlightened and to somewhat (not completely) change her stance on the issue.

Learning Outcome Seven: Plan of Action

The final learning outcome is for students to design an individual plan of action and then collaborate with one another to *design a group plan of action for disrupting white privilege within their local community.* Often, some of my students for whom white privilege is a new topic share feelings of anger or frustration. Also, a question I hear frequently is, "So what can I do about it now that I understand what it is?" During the seminar, students were provided the opportunity to strategize individually, and as a group, to design an action plan that could allow them to disrupt a specific situation where they believed white privilege was being perpetuated within their local communities. Some students may have felt comfortable leaving the seminar and finding ways to disrupt white privilege on their own, some expressed a desire to collaborate with others from the seminar to take action collectively, and some reported that they did not feel comfortable taking action in this way for a variety of reasons. One participant stated on her post-seminar survey, "I agree with disrupting white privilege, but don't have time to organize anything," while another stated, "While white privilege is certainly a problem in our society and we need education about it, if I am being honest, it is not what I am most passionate about. I am more than willing to help, but I am not the best person to have organizing events on this." Whatever their preferences may have been, it was important for students to think beyond the seminar and potentially leave with strategies for

disrupting white privilege on some small level, so that, if they chose to, they could practice the skills they gained from the seminar in broader settings.

We started by discussing/brainstorming ways we can all do this on an individual level, then, after some of the participants expressed interest in working collaboratively to disrupt the enactment of white privilege on their campus, we then brainstormed options for group collaboration. After the participants generated a sufficient list, they were asked to get together in groups based upon their interests and desires for taking action. The two groups were then given time to meet and come up with a plan of action that they could work toward together, should they choose to do so after the conclusion of the seminar. Facilitators offered guidance to the groups on how to proceed with developing and coordinating their plans and gave suggestions for taking action, when the groups asked for them.

This learning outcome directly relates to cognitive, affective and behavioral competencies. I was interested in how students work together to create plans for disrupting white privilege and also in their attitudes and emotions about enacting these plans. I then assessed the recordings of their group meetings and any actions that they reported on the post-seminar surveys. This was the one learning outcome that was not successful in this pilot seminar. The group of students who participated in the seminar did not know one another before the seminar and had nothing to keep them connected with one another outside of the seminar once it concluded. They all got off to a great start, separating into two groups based upon the two action plans they had generated during discussion, and each group went off and spent an hour creating their actions plans. However, I learned from the post-seminar surveys that neither group was able to

coordinate their plans beyond the seminar and interest eventually fizzled out. When asked

about the group action plans, one participant reported on her post-seminar survey:

> We started off very enthusiastic but it has fizzled out. Support fell to just two of
>
> us and then things came up and communication stopped. I was excited and
>
> hopeful but also a little worried that some people didn't see the importance - we
>
> had one person back out as soon as we got into our group because that person
>
> didn't necessarily buy into the cause. I would love to work with a group to disrupt
>
> white privilege in some way, however, I think it needs to be with other people
>
> who believe in the cause and have time, organizational skills, and resources.

This particular outcome connects to students' levels of agency; they had the agency to

work collectively as a group to confront and interrupt white privilege, to confront and

interrupt white privilege as individuals, or not to confront or interrupt white privilege in

any way.

Procedures for Pre- and Post-Seminar Evaluation

In order to answer my research questions and assess the overall effectiveness of

the pilot seminar, I collected data from the participants before, during, and after the

seminar. Two weeks before the seminar, participants received an online survey that they

were asked to complete. This survey assessed participants' knowledge, affective

orientations about the seminar topics, and reports about behavior through a variety of

closed- and open-ended questions. I used the data from the first survey to create a

baseline for each of the participants that I then used as a comparison for their

performance during the seminar, and the surveys they took throughout and after the

seminar. Some of the questions that were used in the pre-survey were also used in the

topic reflection surveys that students took throughout the seminar (as indicated on the schedule) to assess their learning of the outcomes. The post-survey was then sent to the participants one month after the seminar concludes. The post-survey also contained the same questions as the pre-survey, although the demographic questions were asked a second time. Several questions were also added regarding actions they have taken since the seminar concluded, as well as their feelings and emotions after having time to reflect further about seminar topics.

During the analysis stage of the research process, I used the surveys, field observations from Matt and myself, and transcripts of the video and audiotaped activities to assess each participant's achievement of the learning competencies and outcomes. While I was not grading students' performance, I used my assessment of their comments and actions to support the data from the surveys, to provide a broader analysis of the achievement of learning outcomes, and to assist me in answering my research questions. My intent was to analyze and evaluate each student's achievement of the learning outcomes individually, however, I also used the demographic information on the pre-survey to identify any patterns of responses that may have emerged for particular groups. Because students who are positioned differently reported more/less ease with performing behaviors and/or reported more/less previous knowledge about structural and institutional processes and whiteness, for instance, I have data for a future analysis that can examine both indicators of individual change (if any) and indicators for "patterns" across positions (if any).

Coding and Interpretation of Discourses

The research questions posed are: 1) How do participants in a pilot seminar on white privilege negotiate their constructions of racism, intersectionality, and white privilege in the United States? 2) What can be learned about the discursive forms and functions of whiteness and other ideologies offered by participants? To answer these research questions I employed tenets of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to guide a thematic analysis of the participants' discourses from the pre-seminar surveys, the audio-recorded session during the seminar, and the post-seminar surveys. I include observations from Matt and myself in order to provide a clearer context. The main goal of Fairclough's (1992) method of CDA is to investigate and analyze power relations within society and social structures and offer critique as a means of working toward social change. The aim and focus of the method is explanatory critique—to explain and critique a social problem as a means of rectifying injustice and inequality. It also has a focus on discursive practices that construct representations of the world, social subjects and social power relations and the role that these practices play in furthering the interests of particular social groups.

His approach involves various steps. First, to answer the first research question, I focused on the ideational level of discourse and looked for negotiated constructions of racism, intersectionality and white privilege. Next, to analyze discursive practice, I looked at the subject positioning of participants and who was speaking about whom and what, including describing contextual and structural factors such as histories or current events that were mentioned or implicated. Looking at subject positions and status hierarchies that were being constructed gave me the opportunity to point to what was being accomplished by the discourses. The second research question related to ideologies

was answered by building on the analysis in the first research question and turning my

attention to what Fairclough (1992) calls social practice. I looked for ideologies that were

explicit and consistent with past research such as individual meritocracy. I also looked for

implicated ideologies in that I reviewed who was speaking, what status hierarchies had

been constituted, and what claims or relations were being advanced, to point to ideologies

such as whiteness. Finally, I looked across the discourses to identify interdiscursivity, to

understand how histories, changing laws, media events, and the participants' discourses

worked together and in contradiction to reify or contest the ideologies I identified.

Understanding how interdiscursivity reproduced and questioned the current social order

(i.e., whiteness as pervasive and white privilege producing inequities and unjust treatment

for particular groups) was a final goal.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' EVOLVING DISCOURSES OF RACISM,

INTERSECTIONALITY, AND WHITE PRIVILEGE

The first step to changing these relationships is recognizing white privilege. Whether in a

grocery store, school, the newspaper, or on television, we as a society need to begin to

recognize white privilege in all its forms. Then, we need to take a step back to understand

how white privilege is systemic. Privilege transcends the interpersonal stories we share

with neighbors, family, friends and co-workers. Institutionalized power shapes and

controls access to resources. Understanding requires that white people explore their

stories in light of history, culture, power and economics in order to create a more

equitable and just society.

— Shakti Butler

In this chapter, I analyze participants' constructions of racism, intersectionality,

and white privilege. These particular constructs were integral components of the pilot

seminar and are interconnected with one's abilities to understand, contextualize, and

problematize the nature of systemic racism and the pervasiveness of whiteness in the

United States. Here, I answer my first research question, "How do participants in a pilot

seminar on white privilege negotiate their constructions of racism, intersectionality, and

white privilege in the United States?" I examine participants' pre-seminar survey

responses, their mini-survey responses given during the seminar, their post-seminar

survey responses, transcripts from the seminar activities that related to these constructs,

and the field notes that I took during the seminar as well as those of my co-facilitator.

Within the section analyzing each construct, I also offer a critical analysis of the broader

context, discursive forms evidencing the construct, accomplishments, and implications.

In order to protect the confidentiality of participants, but also allow for an

understanding of the relevance of identity positions and patterns among groups of people,

I gave each of the participants a pseudonym. I also created a chart that displays each

participant's pseudonym, along with her/his identity positions, as identified on the pre-

seminar survey (Appendix I).

<center>Critical Analysis of Evolving Discourses</center>

Constructions of Racism

On the pre-seminar survey, participants were asked to define racism, provide two

examples of racism, name two systems or institutions that perpetuate racism, and explain

how they believe these systems/institutions perpetuate racism. Taking into consideration

the many discussions I have had in college classrooms with undergraduates about racism,

I expected the majority of the participants to view racism in an individualistic way, or as

something that an individual either "is, or is not;" these constructions are often based on

avowed or ascribed beliefs and views of actions, what an individual says or does. This

particular view of racism is consistent with view of the majority of undergraduates I have

taught throughout the past twelve years. It is also consistent with Bonilla-Silva's (2010)

theory of color-blind racism, specifically the Abstract Liberalism frame, which refers to

whites' beliefs about the United States being a land of opportunity for individuals. This

individualistic view enables individuals to justify inequalities and disparities between

racial groups by attributing existing inequalities to a lack of effort, rather than years of

oppressive laws and practices that work to create a system of subjugation for particular

racial groups. In other words, this frame allows for racism to be attributed to individual characteristics and individuals reproducing cultural deficiencies rather than a longstanding system of oppression and subjugation. McIntyre (1997), exploring how white teachers constructed racial identity, claimed that participants' understandings of racism "were more about prejudice and discrimination than they were about the institutionalization of racism" (p. 48).

An analysis of the pre-seminar responses related to racism confirmed the findings of previous research and my classroom experiences. Eleven of the twelve participants defined racism using words such as pre-judgment, stereotype, belief, attitude, prejudices, and bias. Each one of these definitions of racism was constructed around individuals in regard to individual beliefs and actions. A few of these pre-seminar definitions of racism are as follows: "When people view others that are different than themselves in a negative light," "Any act which presents members of a particular race as inferior," "A person feeling that their race is superior than another or all others," and "The belief that one culture is better than another." One participant, Samuel, a man in the 36-50 age category and the only participant who identified as black, gave a definition of racism in the pre-seminar survey that went beyond individual beliefs and actions. He offered the following:

> Early in my life I thought of racism as only a color issue. Complex misunderstandings based on complexion. Now I understand where it can be used to foster an 'us versus them' reference of thinking and is institutionalized where active participation is no longer necessary to oppress another individual or group.

His nuanced definition of racism, which included the role of institutions, was consistent with his other contributions during the seminar such as sharing challenging life experiences that related to his race and other cultural positions.

The manner in which participants defined racism and identified examples of it in practice is important to this study and to the seminar. When racism is linked to individual conduct alone, and/or when racism can be explained away as actions taken by "certain individuals" whose actions imply that they believe they are superior to other groups and act on their individual prejudices, (and the views and actions of these individuals are few and far between) correspondingly it would not be considered such an insurmountable problem to eradicate racism. What is needed is to change these certain individuals' beliefs, through diversity training workshops for instance, and then their actions will also change. Or, in the case of extremists, arrest them, fire them, silence them, or discipline them, and make an example of them. This emphasis on changing attitudes and beliefs or punishing racists is a limited way of addressing the complex nature of racism because both approaches fail to acknowledge the systemic nature of racism and how ingrained it is within U.S. institutions. These approaches also allow some whites to distance themselves from other "worse" whites and deny any individual involvement in perpetuating the system of racism through daily behaviors and actions.

On the first night of the seminar, we laid the groundwork for the entire weekend by defining and discussing concepts with the participants that were essential to having an understanding of whiteness and white privilege—one of which is racism. Having read their pre-seminar surveys, I was aware of how participants constructed the term racism at this particular point in their lives. Before constructing a definition of racism, I asked

participants to complete the phrase, "the first time I remember being conscious of my own race was…" Responses to this phrase were quite varied, with many of the participants of color citing a very early time in their lives when they experienced race consciousness, and most of the white participants citing later points in life. For example, one white male participant in the 51 & up age category, Steven, first remembered being aware of his race when he joined the military—for others it was high school or college. Another participant, Frank, who wrote "Spanish" as his race on the survey, wrote "white" as his ethnicity, and who identified as a person of color, said he first became aware of his race when he was an adult and his manager told him to change his name because no one would hire a bass player to be in a rock band with a Mexican last name.

After everyone had completed this phrase, we then began to discuss the concepts of racism, prejudice, and discrimination. Early on in this discussion, I asked the group if they thought that both Matt and I could both be racist, and if so, would it have the same effect? Most of the participants thought that yes, we could both be racist and that there was very little, if any, difference in the effect that it would have on others. Luis said, "We are all in power over someone. Matt has power over his students' grades, so yes I think Matt can be racist." I found this comment to be particularly interesting because the concept of power was mentioned, but this participant understood power to be the ability to influence others and something we can all have over someone else, and that it is this subject positioning relative to others that offers us the potential to be racist. Later in the discussion, however, this same participant shared an example of growing up in New Mexico and how his dad explained racism to him by showing him examples of it. The one he remembered most is when his dad pointed out to him that the football team in his

town would let the players of color run the ball all the way to the five-yard line but would then take those players out and put in a white player (whose dad was in the Quarterback's Club) so that he could make the touchdown. This participant, who identified as a person of color, clearly received messages about the systemic nature of racism, but yet he was the first one to nod and say yes, he did think Matt could be racist just like me. Throughout this discussion, multiple participants agreed with this particular participant that Matt and I could both be racist in the same way, with the same effect.

This particular example displays several things. It shows a construction of racism as if it is what an individual says/does based on individual prejudices or beliefs, without acknowledgement of the important role of systems and institutions. It also shows that this orientation is not limited to people who identify as white and any individual can potentially be racist. It may also demonstrate that even when presented with examples of racism from an authority figure, in that people of color do the work of moving the ball down the entire field but then white players get to make the score and take credit for the score, this view of racism can be overwhelmed by other discourses championing individual meritocracy. These discourses evident in the examples above show ambivalence as well as competing discourses. This individualist view reinforces the idea that whites and blacks can be equally racist. In the scenario given above, the participant who shared the story from his father may see this situation as the actions of a racist coach, whereas others might interpret the situation as evidence of the systemic nature of racism because it fits into a larger pattern that is evident in many organizations, institutions, and settings. This distinction is important because a more individualist perspective is what

works to perpetuate ideologies of individualism and meritocracy, which as argued earlier,

support the pervasiveness and perpetuation of whiteness in the United States.

After allowing participants to discuss this question/dilemma for a period of time,

one asked for our perspectives as facilitators on this same question. Matt shared his

perspective first, and said that he believes that he can have racial prejudices and commit

individual racist acts, however, according to the definition that we would be using for

racism throughout this seminar, he is less likely to reproduce systemic racism because

systemic racism, and multiple discourses, positions him in subjugated ways as a person of

color. He lacks some of the necessary resources and institutional access to advantages to

support his racist beliefs and/or actions. I added to this perspective by stating that the

racist beliefs or prejudices that I may have, as a white person, are supported by the

influence and reach of systems and institutions in the United States. Therefore, my

whiteness allows me to benefit from a history of systemic advantage, and my racism is

reproduced by and reproduces many public discourses, media representations,

institutional policies, and social norms. This interdiscursivity reifies racism and

reinforces status hierarchies and current social order.

As a group, we then discussed the differences between the words prejudice,

discrimination, and racism, as defined in *Intercultural Communication in Contexts* by

Martin and Nakayama (2013). Prejudices were defined as attitudes that individuals hold

about cultural groups that are based on little or no evidence. Discrimination was defined

as behaviors or actions that result from stereotypes or prejudices that cause some people

to be denied equal participation or rights based on cultural group membership (like race).

As a group, we then came up with examples for each of these terms and discussed how

prejudices and acts of discrimination can both contribute to the perpetuation of systemic racism, but are not synonymous with individual's racist beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors. In the video that was made by the anti-racism organization Crossroads, the definition of racism put forth was: "race prejudice plus the power of systems and institutions."

McIntyre (1997) found similar results in her research when undergraduates were asked to define racism—they often gave definitions that interwove racism with discrimination, prejudice, and individual attitudes rather than the institutionalization of racism. Wildman and Davis (2005) discuss the importance of the vocabulary that we use when discussing oppression and subjugation so as to not hide the mechanism that makes oppression possible and efficient, which often happens when racism is relegated to racist actions committed by others. Thus, during the seminar, we placed much emphasis on an understanding of systemic racism as reflected in institutional policies and practices, historical patterns, societal systems, and social norms that position groups into majority-minority relations and hierarchy statuses.

A considerable amount of time and discussion was necessary in order for participants to expand from the individual action-based definitions that many of them offered. From the perspectives of both facilitators, participants seemed to comprehend the difference between individual racist acts and a systemic and institutional definition of racism. This was evidenced by their ability to construct comprehensive lists of events throughout history in the United States that led to the creation and perpetuation of white domination, as well as their discussion of various systems/institutions in the United States that perpetuate racism described below.

On the pre-seminar survey, participants were asked to provide examples of systems and/or institutions that perpetuate racism in the United States. The responses were varied, although many pointed toward extremist groups and/or individuals. One participant who identified as white responded, "I don't know for a fact that any do, but I would guess that the Ku Klux Klan and the Nazis were racist." Another white participant listed "Caste systems and Affirmative Action programs," another said "KKK and Nazis," and yet another said "KKK and the New Black Panther Party." Elizabeth, the youngest participant, a white female, added, "Certain scholarship and university institutions." Nancy, who identified her race as white and her ethnicity as Hispanic, but chose to join the breakout group for "those who identify as white" during the seminar wrote "KKK and white supremacist groups" as her answer to this question.

Many of these examples represent individuals and/or groups who take extremist positions; these are easy targets that most whites can point out as being "more racist" than they are. Additionally, claiming that "certain scholarships and universities" are systems that perpetuate racism implies evidence of "reverse racism," that Affirmative Action policies and scholarships reserved for people of color or other minority groups are preferential treatment. However, every one of these participants altered their descriptions of systems perpetuating racism on further surveys and listed education, banking, government, and legal systems, thereby moving beyond the individualist examples they had given previously. On the post-seminar surveys, there was no mention of the KKK or other extremist groups anywhere on the surveys. This may demonstrate the potential effects that extensive readings, discussions, and reinforcement can have on college undergraduates' constructions of racism. In this case, their later constructions included

the influence of systems and institutions and movement beyond describing "certain" individuals and extremist groups.

Of note, all of the participants who identified as people of color described larger institutions on the pre-survey, the survey that they took during the seminar, and the post-survey, with very little change. The institutions listed by participants of color were, the criminal justice system, banking industry, government, education system, the media, and law enforcement. It is noteworthy that all of the white participants described extremist individuals and/or groups, or "reverse racism" in educational institutions, as noted above, and all of the participants of color described larger systems operating within the United States as those that are perpetuating racism. Persons of color are affected by institutional policies such as police norms requiring stopping non-whites in upscale white neighborhoods, media representations that reinforce criminality, and news reports identifying the race of black or Latin@ criminals. However, many of these participants of color are also the same participants who provided definitions of racism that included individual prejudices, beliefs of superiority, and actions committed by individuals against other individuals on the pre-seminar survey. They clearly have knowledge of systems that perpetuate racism, yet did not describe these same systems in their constructions of the term racism in their pre-seminar surveys. I believe this may be another indicator of the pervasiveness of ideologies valorizing individualism, meritocracy, and liberalism; the fact that these ideologies were also reproduced by participants of color shows that there are competing ideologies at work. This corresponds with Hall's (1996) argument that ideologies do not consist of separate or isolated ideas, but rather in the articulation of ideas into intertextual chains of meanings.

After looking at the surveys that participants took first thing Saturday morning, I was able to confirm my observations during the previous day's activities. When asked to define racism, ten of the twelve participants added the words system, institution, and/or power to their definitions. One of the two participants who did not use any of these words was not present during the discussion on the first night when we defined these terms and watched the Crossroads video. Obviously, a recency effect can be used to partially explain participants' changes in definitions, considering we had just discussed systemic racism the previous night. It is also possible that during the seminar some participants may have written responses on the surveys that they thought I wanted to hear, despite my request that they answer honestly. However, the frequency with which they disagreed with points or offered countered examples during discussions suggests that there was not a positive response bias.

From the discussion we had after watching the Crossroads video, it appeared that many of the things they heard in the video resonated in a personal way. After having a night at home to reflect on what they learned the first day of the seminar, participants returned the next morning describing a broader view of racism describing the influence of systems and institutions. Many of the participants remembered the definition of racism verbatim from the Crossroads video and wrote this definition on their morning surveys. Others formed their own definitions of racism; some of these new personalized definitions were, "Institutionalized/systemic oppression of a culture or racial group to unfairly benefit the group causing the oppression," "Racism is an act of discrimination based on race committed by the majority group holding power," and "Racism is the connection between racial prejudice and systematic power and the ability to act on this

connection." Regardless of whether participants used the Crossroads definition verbatim or wrote their own definition, the important aspect is that their definitions now accounted for systemic and institutional factors or power relations and no longer attributed racism to a belief of superiority or action committed by one individual against another individual based upon racial group affiliation.

Taking a step further and comparing their new definitions to the examples of racism they gave, these changed, as well. Participants transitioned from examples that were typically based on actions by individuals and extremist groups to those that acknowledged policies and norms of systems and institutions. Examples of racism written in on the Saturday morning surveys included "public school districts with a higher concentration of white students receive more funding than 'black' school districts," "our criminal justice system and educational system," "a white cop stopping a person of color for no apparent reason," and "a black person not getting a job based solely on their color." Each of these examples acknowledges a systemic type of racism and/or the effects of systemic racism. Funding for school districts, seemingly "random" stops by the police, the criminal justice system, and a denial of employment based upon race, can all be linked to larger systemic issues and/or the influence of institutions, rather than to a few "bad" individuals committing acts of racism.

Throughout the seminar, there were multiple moments during discussions when participants mentioned racism and recalled comments made by facilitators and other participants. In analyzing these moments, it became clear that the participants seemed to be utilizing the definition of racism that facilitators put forth on the first night. For example, near the end of the group's discussion of the movie *Color of Fear*, Elizabeth, a

participant who had a very individual/action-based definition of racism before the seminar stated:

> I don't know if we have time, but I wrote down a question during the film. I noticed how they said racism among people of color can exist, but I felt like that kind of went against our definition that we came up with yesterday, and so I thought that wasn't… I didn't know if the term was wrong, because people of color don't have institutional power.

This example displays an inconsistency that this particular participant noticed in how others were using the term racism with how she now constructed the term, and her attempt to then make sense of this inconsistency.

Kate brought up something similar during the role-play activity, when attempting to help another participant who was engaged in a role-play:

> I think in that case I would want to bring up the fact that um yes we all can be racially prejudiced, but racism implies that there is this power dynamic also that is available to us, so that's what makes it more possible for white people to actually be racist is because they also have the systemic power to back up their racial prejudices.

And finally, also during the role-play activity, Nancy stated, "But in those situations with the Stand your Ground law, there have been cases where African Americans used it and they were found guilty where George Zimmerman used it and was innocent. So there's still, in a sense, this institutional racism going on." These examples show that some of the students were articulating more contextualized examples and problematizing the nature of racism, which is noteworthy.

During the role-play activity, when participants were faced with a variety of difficult situations and had to confront racism and/or white privilege in particular situations, participants continued to draw from what they were learning from the readings and discussions and incorporated this knowledge into their own comments and actions. For example, during a role-play between Danielle and me, where I was acting as a white antagonist, the following interaction occurred:

> Angela: I just gotta say that I get the readings that we've been doing and I read them, but I have heard from a lot of people and this discussion seems like a giant attack against white people. I didn't own slaves, and I feel really bad about what happened to black people, but I really don't feel like it's white people's fault. We weren't even alive then!
> Danielle: Angela, what you don't see is that we're actually part of the system. I'm also a white female just like you and I realize that just being part of the system we're part of the problem.
> Angela: What do you mean by system?
> Danielle: The overall, like, government, everything that perpetuates white privilege, meaning we get advantages that minorities do not get. And even though we may not have owned slaves, we kind of gloss over that history, and we don't even… [she pauses and then continues]. We don't take time to even acknowledge our history.
> Angela: I get that, but it seems like everyone has been attacking us
> Danielle: This is our history, we need to learn how to accept it. I don't think it's an attack. I don't think that we have to be alive for it to be a part of our history and realize that people were oppressed and we play a role in that.
> Angela: Yea, but it's over
> Danielle: It may be over, but there's still things happening that perpetuate that.
> Angela: Like what?
> Danielle: There's a lot of things, just like redlining in neighborhoods, keeping minorities out of good school districts…

This example displays how Danielle explained the systemic nature of racism to another person and pointed out that, as whites, we contribute to racism through our complicit participation in the system. The activity occurred on day three of the seminar, and this participant was recalling information discussed on days one and two, and then

incorporated that information and knowledge into the role-play scenario where she was asked to confront racism and white privilege.

During another role-play scenario, a different participant who identified as a man of color who grew up poor (and was acting as a college student) utilized his newer construction of racism and explained it to me this way:

> Angela: No, I was just saying that everybody acts like white people are the only people who can be racist and I was just saying that minorities can be racist too.
> Frank: Well, I was in agreement with you thinking that well, minorities can be racist. But, what are we talking about when you say racist? Let's just go ahead and define this term, to be clear between the two of us, so we can communicate.
> Angela: I just think it means like when you think you're better than somebody else because of your race and you make some comment or whatever…
> Frank: That sounds like prejudice.
> Angela: What do you mean?
> Frank: Well, that sounds like a prejudicial statement, but what do you call racism?
> Angela: That's what I call it. The belief that someone else is superior to someone because of their racial group. How do you define it?
> Frank: I'm looking at racism as a social structure. As a group that has been endowed with given privileges that are unearned. Okay? And then powering that over others. So there's prejudice, the feelings or beliefs. Then there's the system, the power system, the institutions that are set up.
> Angela: Okay, like what?
> Frank: Oh my gosh, there's a lot of them. Governments, the banking system, we could probably pull everything into it. When we combine those, and put them together, we're ending up with a nasty thing called racism.

These two examples are consistent with many of the role-play interactions. They illustrate how participants discursively construct definitions of systemic racism. Many participants, like the two above, argued that such individual acts and beliefs definitely can work to *perpetuate* systemic racism, but do not *constitute* systemic racism. The survey responses given during the seminar and the comments made throughout the seminar about racism, therefore, point toward a movement away from equating racism with individual actions and beliefs of superiority and more toward a recognition of racism

as a system of subjugation and oppression perpetuated by institutions with systemic influence.

As was previously mentioned, participants were sent a post-seminar survey one month after the seminar ended. This survey contained many of the same questions as the pre-seminar survey, with the addition of some new questions that asked participants to reflect on their experience and report any changes in behaviors since the seminar ended. Here, I analyze their responses to the questions on racism. Once again, participants were asked to define racism, provide two examples of racism, name two systems or institutions that perpetuate racism, and explain how those systems/institutions perpetuate racism. Two of the participants who did not acknowledge the power of systems or institutions in their pre-seminar definitions of racism and were absent from the first night's discussion of systemic racism gave examples of racism that were based in individual actions or beliefs on the pre, during, and post-seminar surveys.

For those whose definitions evolved, I was interested to see if participants mentioned systems, institutions, and/or power in their definitions of racism on their post-seminar surveys. Of the ten participants who defined racism during the seminar from a systemic and institutional viewpoint, offered a more individual-based definition that equates racism with the actions and intent of individual people. The other five participants continued to use terms like systems/systemic, institutions, and power in their definitions.

Deborah defined racism during the seminar as "Institutional differences on how to treat people of different races/color" and altered her definition after the seminar to "Prejudging someone based on their race/color. Making assumptions about behavior that

is generalized or stereotyped." This post-seminar definition was much more similar to her pre-seminar definition of racism: "The pre-judgment and general categorization of a racial stereotype. Assuming all are the same negatively and passing judgment." Luis moved from a pre-seminar definition of racism as "The belief that one culture is better than another" to a definition during the seminar of "Power of institutions to control other groups" and then finally to a post-seminar definition of "Any action or belief that divides people and categorizes them." Both of these participants identified as Hispanic and are thirty-plus years apart in age.

Nancy defined racism during the seminar as "When discrimination is able to be carried out by institutions in a systemic way," to a post-seminar definition of "Negatively judging a group that is different from your group." Similarly, Elizabeth changed her definition of racism that she gave during the seminar of "Racism is the connection between racial prejudice and systematic power and the ability to act on this connection," to a definition after the seminar of "A negative thought or action toward one specific, underprivileged race." These two women are forty years apart from one another in age; Deborah identified her ethnicity as Hispanic while Elizabeth did not fill in her ethnicity and admitted during the seminar to knowing very little about her ancestors' ethnic history. She considered herself to be "American." Deborah reported that she grew up lower middle class and Elizabeth reported growing up middle class. All of the above varied identity positions reveal that there were no identifiable patterns across age, racial identity, socioeconomic class status, and/or gender when examining the definitions that referenced attitudes and behaviors of individuals.

The question that lingered in my mind throughout the coding and analysis process was "What is the significance of the changes of their definitions of racism?" Some definitions offered after the seminar seem to ignore systemic aspects in that they do not include explicit naming of systems, institutions, or power relations between groups. Based on their responses before, during, and after the seminar regarding institutions that perpetuate racism, they all could give examples of how institutions in the United States work to perpetuate racism. After the seminar, some participants who identified as white and some as people of color gave definitions of racism that featured individual attitudes, beliefs, and/or actions against people of different races. Some scholars attribute the tendency of individualizing constructions of racism to a protection mechanism and form of denial for whites. It is easier to think of others as racist than to accept one's own participation, whether complicit or explicit, in a racist system that continuously subjugates and oppresses others. Johnson, et al., (2008) argue that "students typically present themselves as moral and responsible social actors who would rather not be identified as racist and subsequently attempt to persuade others that they support equality and justice" (p. 114). When whites are forced to face their own participation in this system, this often brings about feelings of guilt, anger, and shame (Simpson, Causey, & Williams, 2007; Slocum, 2009). All of these emotions, as well as frustration and sadness, were given on the post-seminar surveys when participants were asked to describe their emotions after reflecting on the consequences of white privilege and after their participation in the seminar. Therefore, it would make sense that participants would offer constructions of racism that reflect wider ideologies of individualism and perhaps distance themselves from the extreme behavior of "other" racists.

This may help to explain the actions of the white participants in my seminar, but it does not explain why the definitions of racism from participants of color reverted away from and back to individual-based definitions. I argue that one explanation of this reversion is the valorizing of individualism, which is reproduced by whiteness ideologies as well as meritocracy and abstract liberalism. These are ideologies are perpetuated even when they have negative implications for one's racial/cultural group affiliations. Individualism and meritocracy, in particular, are two ideologies that are strongly ingrained within the fabric of the United States and are strong contributors individualistic views of racism as well as whiteness (DiAngelo, 2010).

On the other hand, the majority of the participants offered examples of racism that were largely systemic in nature. Some of these examples include: "the number of blacks and browns in prisons in the U.S.," "the Stop and Frisk policy in New York City," "the media coverage of Katrina," "an individual being profiled as a likely perpetrator of a crime as a result of his race," "social services for the poor," "stricter sentences for criminals of color versus white criminals who committed the same crimes," and "country clubs."

Again, it bears noting that the participants who defined racism as equivalent to racist acts by individuals also offered examples of systems and institutions that perpetuate racism in the United States, and added thoughtful arguments as to why they feel that these systems/institutions perpetuate racism, including: "The governmental system is designed to keep people of color from prospering," "Education system only focuses on white history and in some cases, minority students are not getting the same quality education or attention as white students," and "Social services often perpetuate poverty

and perpetuate a stereotype of the people who receive services." The presence of

ambivalence or contradictions related to race and positioning of others is common,

especially when discussing topics that are especially ideological in nature (Billig,

Condor, Edwards, Gane, Middleton, & Radley, 1988; Burke, 2012). For instance,

institutional representatives such as judges and politicians may strongly deny holding

racist views and later note the tendency of blacks toward criminality or immigrants to be

undocumented. Participants' views of racist acts and systemic racism could reflect

ambivalence, and could also reveal the ability to recognize both as simultaneous forms of

racism,

Two participants offered a particularly detailed definition of the systemic nature

of racism that displayed a strong level of reflection and critique. When asked how he

defines racism, Frank wrote:

> Racism is a doctrine or teaching, without scientific support, that does three things.
>
> First, it claims to find racial differences in things like character and intelligence.
>
> Second, racism asserts the superiority of one race over another or others. Finally,
>
> it seeks to maintain that dominance through a complex system of beliefs,
>
> behaviors, use of language and policies. Racism ranges from the individual to the
>
> institutional level and reflects and enforces a pervasive view, in white dominated
>
> U.S. culture that people of color are inferior to whites.

This post-seminar definition changed significantly from his pre-seminar definition of

racism, which was, "Bias and stereotyped beliefs in others due to their color or culture."

The other participant who displayed a complex personalized definition of racism is

Danielle. She wrote on the post-seminar survey, "I would now define that there is

systemic racism and racist acts. A racist act is discrimination based on that person's race. Systemic racism is racism in our systems that gives privilege to whites while oppressing non-whites." Before the seminar, Danielle defined racism as "Attitudes and beliefs about race, which are prominently negative."

The participants' descriptions of the systemic nature of racism and links to institutions and power relations illustrate connections between racial prejudices, racist acts, and the larger context of systems and institutions. On the other hand, after the seminar, many returned to their previous individualistic definitions. Ignoring the systemic nature of racism may prevent individuals, specifically white individuals, from acknowledging and understanding their own participation in those systems of racism. This is an important consideration when moving forward with this research and with the seminar; the need for some individuals to construct racism in such a way that features individuals and their attitudes and actions is consistent with previous research (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Johnson, et al., 2008; Lipsitz, 1995; Trainor, 2005). Therefore, more attention needs to be paid to the best methods that will encourage students to 'unlearn' these "ways of thinking about the world that bolster the status quo and envision alternative ways of thinking about the world that challenge it." (Moon, 2010, p. 43).

Constructions of Intersectionality

On the pre-, during, and post-seminar surveys, participants were asked to define intersectionality. They were also presented with the following scenario on the pre- and post-surveys: Think of a professional setting and a person working there who has different identities than yours. List the identities. Then, given that list, describe how their

intersecting identities interact to position that person with advantages and disadvantages. On the second day of the seminar, we discussed the Patricia Hill Collins and Audrey Lorde articles that were assigned to and read by participants before the seminar to help them gain a better understanding of intersectionality. After these discussions, participants were presented with the Wheel of Oppression activity (Appendix F), and after the facilitators showed their completed wheels and gave some basic explanation of the activity, the participants were then given time to complete their own wheels. Once they had all completed their wheels, they were then asked to pair up with another participant and show/explain their wheels to one another, while also discussing what it felt like to fill in their wheels. We then ended the segment on intersectionality with a large group discussion of how the wheel of oppression connects to intersectionality and, on a larger level, to whiteness and white privilege.

A brief perusal of the pre-seminar surveys confirmed my expectation that most participants would not be familiar with the term intersectionality, or if they had heard of it, would probably be unable to accurately define it. From my experiences in higher education, intersectionality is often not addressed in many introductory communication courses; it is more often a term one would find in an upper-level course that deals with race, ethnicity, sexuality, and/or gender. Five of the twelve participants wrote on their survey that they were unfamiliar with the term, had no previous exposure to this term, or simply wrote, "I don't know." The rest of the participants attempted to define the term, but it was obvious that some of them were making educated guesses at what it might mean. Some of these educated guesses included: "The polarization of people," "Having heard the term once before I believe it involves a form of gender bias, but can't

remember if it pertained to males or females," and "Two parts overlapping, engaging, or interacting."

Seven participants reported that they had taken more than one communication course before taking part in the seminar, and four reported that they had previously taken a class with a focus specifically on race, gender, and/or sexuality. It is possible that these participants had been exposed to the term intersectionality in one of these prior courses, and as a result, their definitions were much closer to the meaning of the term as intercultural scholars define it: "Studying the intersection between the 'privileged' and 'non-privileged' or how the groups function together," "As having to understand the complexity of race and social inequality and the categorization applied to each," and "Different concepts of oppression come together to form multiple forms of discrimination." While these initial definitions are missing one or two key components, they do address the importance of inequality, oppression, and privilege in conceptualizations of intersectionality.

After the discussion of the two articles, where we spent some time deconstructing Patricia Hill Collins' definition of intersectionality, and subsequent completion of the Wheel of Oppression Activity, participants seemed to have a better grasp of this somewhat complex term and were beginning to demonstrate an understanding of not only what intersectionality means, but its relationship to whiteness and white privilege. Deborah noted, during the discussion of the wheel activity that age was missing from the wheel. She then shared that as an older woman, she feels that the intersection of her age with her race, class, ability, etc. has a big effect on how others perceive her and how she is treated in certain situations, like classroom discussions and at her job. Other

participants agreed with her that age was an important part of identity that they felt was missing from the wheel. It was evident to me throughout this discussion that participants were connecting what they read from Collins and Lorde to the wheel activity, and were then able to identify larger implications that intersectionality has on their interactions with others.

When Matt presented his wheel, several students expressed surprise at how much privilege he has as a highly educated black man who is Christian, heterosexual, upper-middle class, and able-bodied. Sensing their surprise, Matt then engaged participants in discussion about potential situations when these levels of privilege work in his favor and position him as a voice of authority over white women with similar levels of privilege—in his case, during a faculty meeting at a male-dominated private institution where the majority of administrators present in the meeting are also males. The participants used this example to then explore situations in their own lives where their various identifications both privilege and oppress them simultaneously through interactions with other individuals with similar or dissimilar levels of privilege and oppression.

Later in the afternoon, participants took a mini-survey and were again asked to define intersectionality. The participants who had previously been unfamiliar with the term were able to offer their new constructions of intersectionality, "All of the aspects of one's own identities working together to give you advantages and disadvantages. Also, how you interact with others and their combinations of identities," "Layers of class, race, age, sexual orientation that make up our level of privilege," and "All the identities that a person has all coexist and intersect." Participants who struggled to define it on the pre-seminar survey also provided their new constructions of this term: "Different layers of

identities that overlap in order to propel privilege and/or oppression," "System where race, class, gender meet and re-shape and influence or affect each other," "Different layers of prejudice/discrimination and where they combine."

When asked again to define intersectionality on the post-seminar survey one month after the completion of the seminar, the definitions took a simpler form for most of the participants: "Where different types of oppression/discrimination intersect," "Where your own identities intersect and where your identities intersect with others' identities," and "Intersectionality is the intersecting of identities."

Two participants' definitions after the seminar remained multi-faceted and reflected some of the key points made in the discussion that occurred during the seminar. Danielle offered, "Intersectionality is the working together of the different parts of a person's identity both for that person alone and in relation to other people." Frank's construction of intersectionality was the most complex definition given on the post-seminar survey:

> Intersectionality is built around the fact that those who experience multiple forms of oppression are always left behind by single-subject movements. This is because single-subject movements inevitably absorb every form of discrimination which they do not examine, and also because single-subject movements are inherently blind to the ways in which multiple forms of discrimination interlock and reinforce each other.

When comparing responses to the scenario presented to them on the pre- and post-survey, I began to see how the constructions of intersectionality changed. When responding to the provided scenario (Think of a professional setting and a person

working there who has different identities than yours. List the identities. Then, given that list, describe how their intersecting identities interact to position that person with advantages and disadvantages) on the pre-seminar surveys, the responses from a majority of participants did not display an understanding of how intersectionality functions in the situations they offered. For example, Steven responded: "High end sales meeting where a prospective manufacturer is pitching his product line to the board of directors and the person is say from the deep south. He is often looked upon differently than a person from New York. The southern sales manager would have a slight disadvantage I believe with societies [sic] view on the slower less educated south." Frank responded with, "Office manager, Native American, undergraduate, single, lives with parent. I see his continuing education as essential to his progress in our community. I love the fact that he has his mother at home and does so much to help her."

In comparison to their pre-seminar examples, the same two participants gave much different responses to the same question one month after the seminar. Steven discussed the advantages that white males have over males of color when searching for jobs in larger cities, but that in the city where this participant lives, where Hispanic males who speak Spanish are the majority, these same advantages would not exist for many white males. Frank presented a scenario involving a female mentor who is white and comes from an upper-middle class family with a high level of education who works in higher education. He pointed to the privileges that his mentor has in the higher education system, whereas the intersection of his identities as a Hispanic male with a lower level of education from a working class background tends to oppress him in this same system.

The change and increased detail in the post-seminar responses are representative of others who had not been familiar with the concept.

Justin, who had previous exposure to the term intersectionality gave the following response to the scenario prompt on his pre-seminar survey, "Intersecting identities create a clash. In the positive, they can offer different perspectives. They can also negatively further separate the people within the professional environment." This response is more of an opinion/argument and does not actually display an application of intersectionality to any specific situation. He gave a much different response to the same question one month after the seminar, "My identity as a Christian male gives [me] advantages in a professional setting over a person of my same race, abilities, and physique who identifies as a female and Muslim." A response such as this one displays an ability on the part of this participant to apply the term intersectionality to his own identities and the identities of another person, and then make a connection to how those identities intersect to privilege and oppress both people in the context of a professional setting.

Danielle showed a similar level of understanding of how intersectionality functions in her post-seminar response: "I think of a friend of mine that is a black Muslim woman. I know that in most American companies, I would have an easier time being heard, promoted, and that people would expect me to agree with them if they said something negative about her race or her hijab." And finally, Kate gave this response to the same post-seminar scenario: "My intersecting identities may interact with another person by giving me an advantage due to the color of my skin or my social class distinction. On the other hand, identifying as a woman may give me a disadvantage if I am interacting with a powerful white male." These examples are representative of seven

of the twelve participants' responses on the post-seminar survey and display the level of

knowledge and critical thought that met the objectives of the seminar. The ability to

generate detailed examples suggests that their understanding of intersectionality could

also be transferred to other scenarios and settings.

During various points throughout the seminar, there were occasions where

participants' discourse showed that they understood that intersectionality illustrated how

individuals are positioned differently as subjects based on their combined cultural

locations. For example, when talking about the "Color of Fear" video in a small group,

the following exchange occurred:

> Luis: Well, even within the white culture, what we were talking about yesterday, there are levels. Cuz you've got white and then you've got the super powerful white.
> Elizabeth: And then you have the dirt poor white [laughs].
> Luis: Right? And then white people call them trash. I mean the same thing exists in every culture. In Hispanics, you have the well-to-do and then you have the bottom of the barrel that I think some people, Hispanic people would say 'I don't even claim them.' Right? And whites, everybody has that. We all have layers and… there's not even agreement within themselves.

In this example, participants are referring to our prior discussion of differing levels of

privilege and oppression and how even among the same racial group, differences occur

with regard to class, sexuality, gender, etc. On the post-seminar survey, very few

participants presented scenarios that captured the meaning of intersectionality and the

effects that it has on interactions between individuals and groups within U.S. society.

Two responses, the first by Kate and the second by Justin, display a basic level of

understanding of how intersectionality functions in communicative interactions: "If I

were to think of a straight man of color who practices a religion other than Christian, he

and I would almost be equally advantaged and disadvantaged. But, because I appear

white and he does not, he is more likely to be disadvantaged because of the color of his skin. While I am a woman and that carries disadvantages with it, I would still likely be more advantaged than him." "My identity as a Christian male gives [me] advantages in a professional setting over a person of my same race, abilities, and physique who identifies as female and Muslim."

Reviewing participants' constructions as a whole, I noticed many did not capture the importance of how one's own intersecting identities always emerge in relation to other groups' positions. I noted that many of the participants focused on the intersections of their own identity positions only, which could show an individualist orientation to examining intersectionality and a lack of appreciation of how subject positions are constructed in relation to others subject positions. This move then privileges one's own identities and fails to acknowledge the importance of intersectionality in positioning one's own groups in relation to the positioning of others' groups, which establishes hierarchies. When looking at all of the discourse regarding intersectionality or any reference to intersecting identity positions, there were no discernible patterns with regard to participants' identifications and who displayed a stronger grasp of this concept than others. These particular findings point to a call for educators and scholars to place more emphasis on intersectionality within class readings, discussions, and activities, if a goal is for students to grasp the impact that intersectionality has on issues of race, class, and privilege.

As well, a focus on one's own identities ignores how levels of privilege and oppression form mutually constructing networks of social organization, and the social order. Intersectionality was defined as networks of privilege and oppression based on the

definition offered by Collins (2000); this was provided to participants (see Appendix E).

However, this orientation was overshadowed by more of an individualistic orientation for

several participants. Discourses of individualism, color-blindness, and meritocracy are

ingrained within multiple contexts, structures, and institutions throughout the United

States; thus, it is not surprising that participants struggled to represent multiple identity

positions and intersecting groups within their own discourse. Nonetheless, a beginning

understanding of the term was beneficial for participants when we turned our focus

toward whiteness and white privilege, since not all whites are positioned with equal

levels of class, religion, sexuality, ability, and ethnic group privileges.

Constructions of White Privilege

On the pre-seminar survey, participants were asked multiple questions about the

construct of white privilege. First, they were asked to define white privilege and then they

were asked to describe two examples of white privilege, each in a different setting. The

next two questions on this topic asked participants to describe two consequences of white

privilege, each in a different setting, for whites and for people of color. Finally, they were

asked what emotions arise for them when thinking about these consequences. During the

seminar, we spent significant time on the subject of white privilege, as it was the main

focal point of the seminar. There were multiple activities devoted to this construct where

participants were asked to identify examples of white privilege in interpersonal/small

group discourse and local news coverage, and also to confront/disrupt white privilege

through role-play scenarios. In the following section, I present an analysis of the

participants' constructions of white privilege. I organized the discourse in terms of pre-,

during, and post-constructions of the term white privilege, examples of white privilege,

consequences of white privilege, and participants' display of emotions regarding these constructions.

Pre-Seminar Discursive Constructions. When asked to define white privilege on the pre-seminar surveys, participants offered a wide variety of definitions that touched upon concepts like advantage, unearned advantage, society as producer of privilege, identity, and superiority. These definitions provided a baseline for how participants viewed this construct before taking part in any seminar activities. Many of these definitions are consistent with the literature on white privilege. Some of the definitions focused on unearned advantages related to a particular skin color: "An unearned advantage given to a specific demographic possessing white skin," "Actions or ideas that seem to favor people of white descent rather than others," "People who ascribe to the white identity are given advantage in life over those who do not," "The common everyday advantages and life advantages one receives based on being white," "Pure advantage on sight due to previous conditions set to benefit whites over all others; not based on the person at all," and "A white person is afforded certain benefits or has inherent advantages based on assumptions of his/her race." More than half of the participants had previously taken my Intercultural Communication course where we spent a week discussing white privilege, so it was not surprising that many of these participants defined white privilege as unearned advantages given to those who can be considered white.

Other examples positioned whites as victims or contested the existence of white privilege. "White privilege is when whites who have never been in a situation where they feel prejudice are so unaware of their privilege because they have not been the victims of

discrimination" and "White privilege is the false and sometimes factual impression that certain Anglo Americans based on their skin color have an advantage over other races." By claiming that "actions or ideas that seem to favor people of white descent rather than others," Elizabeth, a white woman, leaves room for the possibility that there is no actual favoring of whites and that it just seems that way to others. The participant's definition that refers to the impression that certain Anglo Americans have advantage over others based on their skin color as "false and sometimes factual" is also quite interesting. First, it begs the question how something can be both false and sometimes factual at the same time. Second, this definition given by Benjamin, similar to the previous one given by Elizabeth, also works to leave room for the possibility that these supposed advantages that whites may have might just be a figment of people's imaginations and in actuality do not really exist. This type of hedging by whites when prompted to define and/or discuss white privilege is consistent with previous literature by Bonilla-Silva (2010) and Wildman (2005).

Discursive Constructions During the Seminar. After the discussion of the Lorde reading, completing the Standing in the Face of Privilege activity, meeting in breakout groups, discussing the McIntosh article, completing the Knapsack Checklist activity, watching *Mirrors of Privilege*, another breakout session, and completing the *Color of Fear* activity, participants were asked once again to define white privilege on a mini-survey. Some of the participants' definitions changed slightly from their pre-seminar definitions by adding the words unearned and/or advantages if they had not previously used those terms.

Elizabeth, who defined white privilege as actions or benefits that seem to favor whites, changed her definition to "The automatic (often unknown) relationship of white people to connect with the many systems within the United States." This example includes "automatic", "often unknown" connections with systems implying that white privilege is unrecognized and systems are used but the outcome of that use is undetermined. Finally, Benjamin, who referred to white privilege initially as a false and sometimes factual impression that "certain" Anglo Americans have an advantage over other races, wrote the following definition on the mini-survey: "The disadvantage of being blind sighted or narrow sighted on how a person of Anglo descent views the world around him." This definition replaces white with Anglo, a term that refers to ethnicity and race that is used in the Southwest. It could demonstrate a standpoint of a "non-Anglo" having a narrow view of Anglos or it could refer to Anglo views of the world. It does not include any mention of systemic advantage or disadvantage.

Post-Seminar Discursive Constructions. One month after the seminar, participants were once again asked to define white privilege. Several of the definitions on this survey showed additional change. Samuel started by defining white privilege as "An unearned advantage given to a specific demographic possessing white skin" and then defined it with an experiential component on his post-seminar survey as "The ability to pass through a day and never be suspect in any part of that day." Frank gave McIntosh's definition of white privilege that was provided to participants in a handout verbatim on his post-seminar survey, when his pre-seminar definition was "Whites getting ahead simply by being white." Nancy, whose pre-seminar definition included whites who have never experienced discrimination or prejudice and are thus unaware of their privileges

gave the following definition on her post-seminar survey: "Institutional or societal forces to provide unearned privilege to whites." This definition includes many of the systems and concepts that were frequently discussed during the seminar—institutional, societal, forces, and unearned [advantage]. These responses were consistent with the majority of those of other participants, which displays how some participants incorporated concepts discussed in the seminar into their own definitions one month after the conclusion of the seminar.

Some of the other definitions given on this post-seminar survey were: "Power that is given the white race in this country whether they know they have it or not," "Advantages that white people have because they are white," and "Advantages conferred to white people by society." Elizabeth, whose definition before the seminar included the words "seem to," altered her definition significantly on her post-seminar survey: "White privilege is the ability for white people to have greater social ability [mobility?] than those of other races." These responses demonstrate the inclusion of systems and institutions. When participants who operate from racially privileged positions acknowledge systems and institutions that confer benefits to those who appear white, these constructions position them in relation to non-whites as those who benefit from these unearned advantages and subsequently moves these participants closer to a greater understanding of how the system of white privilege works.

Examples of White Privilege. The majority of the participants provided two examples of white privilege in two different settings, as was asked on the pre-, during, and post-seminar surveys. Some of the pre-seminar examples given by participants included, "Being able to walk around stores without being watched or followed," "The

majority of magazines and stores cater to the looks of white people," "Being able to walk down the streets without being stopped/questioned by the police," "The jails seems to have less white inmates than any other race," and "White people don't usually bring about fears for personal safety in public spaces, where people of color might."

Three white participants, in particular, displayed change in their discourse regarding examples of white privilege from before the seminar to one month after the seminar. Elizabeth, a young white woman in her early twenties, gave the following two examples on her pre-seminar survey: "In the past, only white men holding important government roles" and "The assumption that white people make more money than those of other races." These two examples are worthy of examination because of the words "in the past" and "the assumption." Her claim is that male dominance in important governmental roles is a thing of the past. However, according to data provided by the Congressional Data Service about the 113th Congress, white men still greatly outnumber white women, women of color, and men of color. Women's membership is at a record high, but at only 18.7% of the total membership, and people of color represent 17.6% total membership of the 113th Congress (Congressional Research Service, 2013).

Elizabeth also offered a second example of white privilege, "the assumption" that white people make more money than members of other races. In a study released by the Center for American Progress in 2012, the wealth gap between whites and nonwhites was shown to have widened significantly in the last three years with a median household income for nonwhites and Latinos of $23,300 and a median household income for whites of $149,900. These examples (and others that were similar) demonstrate a stronger need for historical context and current data to be included in seminars like this one, since the

lack of this information can enable color-blindness to continue and views that inequities are in the past may perpetuate systemic racism.

On her post-seminar survey, Elizabeth gave the following examples of white privilege: "White privilege exists in the school setting because those of higher importance tend to be white males" and "White privilege also exists in everyday stereotypical life, meaning that people will automatically view white people, and white people will view themselves, as better than others." These examples contain descriptions of school and everyday settings and acknowledge the manifestation of white privilege.

Benjamin displayed a change in his discourse regarding examples of white privilege; he offered the following examples on his pre-seminar survey: "It is falsely believed that all Anglo Americans are provided financial support through their ancestors financial inheritance and falsely passed that fortune" and "The true belief that certain conditions of public education buildings found on tribal land are condemnable conditions by Anglo American standards." Here, this white male participant focuses on descriptions about Anglos and what he views as both false views or privilege through inheritance and true claims that tribal buildings, and hence tribal peoples, are subjugated and educated in "condemnable conditions" based on Anglo standards. On the post-seminar survey, Benjamin gave two very different examples of white privilege: "Driving through the city of Paris, Texas and not worrying you will be pulled over for exceeding the speed limit because you are Anglo American" and "The ability to get paid a higher salary based on two employees having the same educational background." His examples refer to institutional systems of police/criminal justice and corporate policies. He also contributed

two examples that were specifically brought up by other participants during the previous activity on the consequences of white privilege during the second day of the seminar.

Responses from Paul, a white man in the 31-35 age group also altered over the course of the seminar. On the pre-seminar survey, when asked to provide two examples of white privilege in different settings, he responded with the following: "***This is not necessarily from personal experience*** From a law enforcement perspective, a white person is privileged not to be profiled for a 'stop and frisk' by the police. I don't know another example." This participant started his response with a caveat, ensuring that the reader knows that he was not necessarily speaking from his own experience, which is something none of the other participants did on this survey. Additionally, he gave a very good example that involved stop and frisk policies, but did not provide a second example of white privilege. On his post-seminar survey, this same participant listed the following two examples of white privilege: "A white person is given the benefit of the doubt in a store and not closely monitored as a possible criminal" and "A white person is able to say what they want without fear."

What this discourse does is reflect the participants' varied subject positions and the implied relations between skin tone and perceived advantages or disadvantages. People of color have written extensively about white privilege and white domination as systems of unearned advantage and racial domination (Roediger, 1998); those who are positioned with higher status and racial privileges are compelled to acknowledge and speak of these systems and institutions, as well as their complicit participation within them. Missing from their discourse is an acknowledgement of how white privilege works in comparison to other types of privilege, or intersectionality. This could indicate that

participants were placing privileges within a hierarchical system, with race privileges at the top. This prevents them from seeing how identity positions work in relation to one another and in relation to other groups and can change depending on the context of each situation.

Consequences of White Privilege. Participants were asked to describe two consequences of white privilege, each in a different setting, for people who can be identified as white, and for people positioned racially as marginalized on the pre- and post-seminar surveys. They also participated in an activity in small groups during the seminar where they were asked to come up with lists of consequences of white privilege for whites and people of color, and then post their lists on the walls of the room. I recorded and transcribed the large group discussion at the conclusion of this activity as we surveyed their lists on the walls of the room.

On their pre-seminar surveys, some of the participants listed consequences of white privilege for those who can be identified as white that are consistent with research findings overviewed earlier. These include, "I believe those individuals who describe themselves as white enjoy a courtesy that's not afforded to nonwhites, reasonable doubt is also afforded to individuals who identify as white," "A white person would be offered the benefit of the doubt (innocent until proven guilty). It's expected that they're good," "White people don't believe it exists because they can't see it. They expect others to conform to their way of thinking," and "Whites, especially men, are more likely to get fair pay for employment." Both white and nonwhite participants provided the above examples. Some of these examples display a basic recognition of how white privilege

positions whites and nonwhites into status hierarchies with whites typically receiving more advantages.

Other participants listed consequences of white privilege for whites that positioned them as the victims of white privilege or contested the existence of white privilege on their pre-seminar surveys: "One effect of white privilege is the continued animosity toward whites for not having to work as hard as everyone else," "Whites not being admitted into a college due to Affirmative Action," "White contractor not receiving a federal contract due to not being a minority," "An overcompensation to avoid white privilege, even in settings that it does not exist, thus denying white people equal opportunity as well," and "The assumption that every single white person has taken advantage of white privilege." Both white and nonwhite participants gave each of these responses. Paul wrote, "I don't have personal experience with this and do not feel I can adequately comment on the consequences," despite being able to offer a fairly well-informed definition of white privilege earlier on the survey.

The consequences listed by participants above work to position whites in such a way that *they* are actually the *victims* of white privilege rather than the benefactors, or position whites as the victims of "reverse racism," or as disadvantaged compared with "minorities." This type of discursive move may work to assuage whites of any potential guilt that they may have over unearned benefits they receive from simply being white (Frankenberg, 1993; Leonardo, 2009). These examples also include language that calls into question the validity of white privilege and examples of how whites are denied equal opportunity to succeed. Finally, this discourse contests the claim that whites in general benefit from a privileged location.

Participants were also asked to list consequences of white privilege for people who are positioned as racially marginalized. The majority of both whites and people of color listed detailed examples. Some of the consequences listed for people of color included: "Having to endure unmitigated suspicion most of the time," "Lower or inadequate access to nutritional foods and higher access to empty calorie foods, sugary beverages, and/or alcohol plus multiple fast food choices," "I see the sentencing of whites vs. all other races as unfair and perpetuating the divide in communities," "Hispanics are not used as clothing models because they do not represent the 'general public,'" and "Racially marginalized students not being admitted into college because the quota has been met." It is especially interesting that the participants who provided consequences that positioned whites as the victim, or described "reverse racism," also gave detailed examples of consequences for people of color. If white privilege is described as having negative effects on people of color, but also having negative effects on whites, then it is the system of privileging any group that is being contested. This may be a form of individual meritocracy and imply that rewarding individual effort, rather than providing advantages to any group, is preferred.

During the consequences of white privilege activity, the facilitators read aloud some of the consequences that each of the mixed race groups listed for whites and for people of color and we asked the group members to explain and justify these consequences. After discussing white privilege for quite some time on Saturday and reading an article about the subject, the consequences that were posted on the wall for whites were mostly positive in nature; they represented the benefits that whites experience because of white privilege.

One group wrote down as a consequence for whites that "respect is expected" and we asked them to explain their reasoning for that response. Kate shared:

I think when I wrote down "respect is expected" I meant that mostly as a positive consequence because it's an unearned respect, kind of like, I'm white so you should respect me. Kind of like what we were talking about how when you're in a room full of your peers, that are of mixed races, the white people will be listened to more than the people of color will be listened to, that's kind of how I saw that.

Two of the groups wrote similar responses that addressed the benefits of living in predominantly white, upper-class neighborhoods and the consequences of living in poorer neighborhoods that are paid less attention by city officials. In her explanation of this choice, Danielle shared:

We wrote down 'city planners focus on richer/white communities' and were talking about how parks and even sidewalks, they are more maintained in the richer white neighborhoods, also, um, we put it on [as] a consequence for people of color, the supermarket desert issue. That's when fresher foods are not available within a certain radius in more ghetto or poorer neighborhoods, and that has to do with city planning.

These types of consequences that highlight benefits received by whites through white privilege were a significant departure for those participants who had listed negative consequences for whites on the pre-seminar survey that essentially positioned whites as victims of white privilege. As I watched the groups work on this activity and negotiate what would be written down on the large pieces of paper taped to the walls, I witnessed Elizabeth offer a consequence for whites that she had put on her pre-seminar survey—

"reverse racism." This was the first time during the seminar that this concept had specifically been named aloud. Some participants had danced around it a few other times during discussions, by referencing situations where whites are at a disadvantage or are excluded from things because they are white, but it had not been explicitly named. After this participant suggested "reverse racism" as a negative consequence of white privilege for whites, the rest of the group members (who were all men of color) asked her to explain what she meant by this statement. She gave a rather tentative response about scholarships she had recently attempted to apply for, but subsequently realized that since she was not a member of a marginalized group, she could not apply for these particular scholarships. She named this as "reverse racism" and wanted it to be added to their group list of consequences for whites.

During the large group discussion, we asked the group to explain how "reverse racism" can be considered a consequence of white privilege for whites. Frank started by referring to the Abigail Fisher case in Texas, but then struggled to explain how this is a consequence for whites, until the group ultimately looked to the one white participant to provide an explanation. A more detailed analysis of this discourse is provided in chapter five.

The above examples of the consequences of white privilege for whites and people of color prompted a lively discussion. During the discussion, participants of color described the various consequences that they face on a regular basis, as well as the pain that these consequences engender. Our goal as facilitators at this point was to enable all participants to move from talking about consequences in a purely abstract way and to create a space in which personal narratives could be shared. The discourse surrounding

examples of white privilege worked, at times, to position whites as the unintended victims of this system of privilege. This type of discourse does several things. One, it focuses whites' attention on Affirmative Action policies as quota-like procedures that effect their own access to educational institutions and employment, which they may view as a threat to their resources (Haley & Sidanius, 2006). It also places focus and attention on individuals, rather than on groups in relation to each other. This emphasis on individuals and the assertion that all individuals should be treated equally and fairly is a by-product of individualism and meritocracy. In essence, to consider only the individual and remove all individual differences that position individuals in varying relations to one another has serious consequences. Fish (1993) describes this process of valorizing the individual and dismissing individual differences as "the mechanism by which imbalances and inequities suffered by millions of people through no fault of their own can be sanitized and even celebrated as the natural workings of unfettered democracy" (p. 136).

Overall Display of Emotions

It was at this point in the seminar, after participating in the Standing in the Face of Privilege activity and watching *Mirrors of Privilege*, that emotions began to run high for many of the participants. During the large group discussion following these activities, Danielle shared that it is hard for her to think of herself in this system of racism and as someone who benefits from the system because she grew up in poverty, in a neighborhood where blacks and whites were the poorest and the numerical minority and Hispanics were the majority and they often said racist things to her and her black friends. She then said that this is one of the things that makes it hard for her to then place herself in our discussions of whiteness.

This example is consistent with what I have heard from other students when discussions turn to whiteness and white privilege—"What about poor white people?" I took this moment to share an article with participants that Ricky Lee Allen wrote posing this very question. One point that Allen (2008) makes in this article is that poor whites "are *in a relational sense* oppressed people who do face institutional and everyday forms of dehumanization" (p. 214). In this case, the person who brought up the experiences of poor white people is a woman who shared her experiences growing up in poverty and living on welfare. In Allen's article, he argues that it is often non-poor whites who ask the question about poor whites.

As a group, we then talked about how poor whites have to deal with discrimination and prejudice that non-poor whites do not experience, and the participants who grew up poor or working class shared examples from their own lives of experiencing this type of discrimination and struggle. These examples also clearly show the need for recognizing intersectionality when talking about white privilege. I then utilized this discussion as an opportunity to point out a larger argument that Allen (2008) and various other scholars have similarly made in their writings:

> Poor White students need to learn about how the White hegemonic alliance functions, what their role in it has been, and what they can do to end it. They need to talk with one another about how to break away from nonpoor Whites and how to form solidary relations with people of color. The need to figure out how to muster the courage to confront both the racism and classism of nonpoor Whites (p. 224).

There was a long silence and then several participants commented that they had never thought before about what would happen if poor whites attempted to work in tandem with people of color to attack white privilege and dismantle whiteness. They also recalled Tim Wise speaking about this topic in the video we watched where he discussed the events that transpired during hurricane Katrina. Participants then added points from the readings by Collins and Lorde on intersectionality, as well as the video they had watched earlier called *Mirrors of Privilege*.

Emotions ran high for participants during the discussion described above, but also came to the surface frequently during the breakout groups. After the Standing in the Face of Privilege activity, a variety of emotions were shared by the white participants in their breakout discussion, facilitated by me. Danielle began to get teary-eyed when she talked about what it felt like to be sitting through a lot of the activity because of the class-based items. She shared a similar activity that she did in a Sociology class, where they were given a list and had to either give themselves a point or subtract a point based on the items on the list. She remembered thinking to herself before the activity, "at least I won't be the lowest score" because she looked around and saw black students in the class. She said that she felt guilty for thinking that, and as it turned out, she had one of the lowest scores in the class, mostly because she grew up in poverty. Then, she said she felt even more guilt and shame because she had made that initial comment to herself, but was also angry because she felt like as a non-traditional student, there is a specific reason that most non-traditional students have had to wait so long to come to college, and that the eighteen year old black kids don't have to deal with that—"they are in college because something or someone helped them get there."

There was also discussion during the same breakout group where two participants indicated that they did not want to feel like they (whites) should be ashamed of the privileges they experienced and stood for during the activity. Elizabeth said she noticed very few people stood for the one about taking regular vacations as a family, and she thought to herself, "Why should I feel guilty that I got to go to Disneyland? I know a lot of people who got to go to Disney. It's not something I feel like I should be ashamed of." This participant said that it was helpful for her to hear through our discussion and in the *Mirrors of Privilege* video that other whites feel the same emotions.

The emotions that participants reported in both breakout groups, throughout the seminar, and also through their pre- and post-seminar surveys relate to my affective learning objectives for the seminar. Since expressing views about white privilege have an affective component, and broadening individuals' options for responses includes attending to emotions, asking participants to reflect on their own and note others' emotions was useful. The seminar breakout groups and large group discussions were apparently safe enough spaces to enable students to share their feelings.

In addition to noting when emotions were expressed during seminar activities, I also tracked any change in emotions and attitudes about racism and white privilege in the post-seminar survey after participants had time to reflect on the seminar. In reviewing the post-seminar surveys, Danielle, the participant who shared her experiences growing up in poverty, reported that although she still felt angry and disappointed when she thinks about the consequences of white privilege, she also felt a sense of hope, a readiness for change, and that her confidence was building in regard to speaking to others about these topics.

Elizabeth, the participant who talked about not wanting to feel guilty for going to Disneyland, said before the seminar that she felt "sorrowful for the extreme cases that do exist, and question what the motive is to enhance inequality in general." Before the seminar, this participant said she was angry about not qualifying for scholarships that are "reserved for people in underrepresented groups" and believed that since she worked hard and gets good grades, she should be able to write an essay and compete for these scholarships, as well. After the seminar, she said that she felt "angry because the majority of people think that problems with race are far in the past and do not occur in this current time." When asked how she feels now about discussing topics like racism and white privilege with others, she responded:

> I feel very comfortable discussing these topics. Before the seminar, if these topics were being discussed, I was always very quiet because professors had made me feel that I had a unhelpful viewpoint as a well-off white woman. So, I was always terrified that if I spoke up, someone would say that I was privileged. Now the word privileged is something I somewhat own and admit that there is most likely some truth in it, but as an individual white woman, I am willing to interrupt.

Discursive constructions of affect relate to motivations and emotions that enable and constrain behavior. My analysis of the post-seminar surveys revealed that participants' emotions about seminar topics and potential future actions were still at a high level for many participants. Elizabeth stated, "I feel as though I still need some personal time to think about everything that was discussed and move past obstacles of sensitivity." However, several participants expressed their desire to use these emotions as a motivation for enacting change and/or taking action. Paul responded to the question about

how he feels now about racism and white privilege by stating, "I feel prepared to confront racism/discrimination. I am shy and non-confrontational, but I feel that I must address it where necessary. I am more afraid that if I do nothing, nothing will ever change."

Conclusions

Throughout the seminar and through the use of pre- and post-seminar surveys, participants offered discursive constructions of racism, intersectionality, and white privilege for themselves. This included offering responses to (1) define the three constructs, (2) identify examples of each construct in their own lives, the lives of others around them, and through social discourse, (3) discuss the consequences of these constructs on their own and other groups, and (4) share their emotions regarding each construct. In this chapter, I analyzed survey responses, transcripts from seminar activities, and field notes taken during the seminar in order to answer my first research question, "How do participants in a pilot seminar on white privilege negotiate their constructions of racism, intersectionality, and white privilege in the United States?"

Initially, the vast majority of participants defined racism in a way that privileged individual beliefs, attitudes, and actions. After multiple activities and discussions on the topic of systemic racism, ten of the twelve participants altered their definitions to include systems, institutions and/or power (the other two participants missed this portion of the seminar). However, in the post-seminar surveys, five of the participants offered definitions of racism that privileged individuals and were more similar to initial definitions. This move may reflect the pervasiveness of ideologies of individualism, meritocracy, and abstract liberalism. At varying points, most of the participants' discourse did reflect examples of systemic racism, systems/institutions that perpetuate

racism, and explanations of how the perpetuation occurs. All of the participants did confront examples of racism during the role-play activity. This begs the question of how important is a person's definition of racism if that person displays an acknowledgment and understanding of its' pervasiveness throughout the United States? Most of the participants who returned to individualistic definitions of racism also switched their responses on the survey to the scenarios they had previously determined were "individual racist acts" or "neither of these" to "systemic racism."

However, these participants, who all grew up in the United States have been bombarded with messages of individualism and meritocracy from their parents and other authority figures, from their history textbooks, from the media, and from the President of the United States. We are taught early on that if you are willing to work hard, your hard work will be rewarded and you will achieve success in this country. Like Horatio Alger, anyone who works hard can be successful. That is indeed the American Dream, is it not? This is one of the ways that ideologies like meritocracy and discourse around racism and white privilege are interrelated and work in interdiscursive networks and chains to perpetuate each other.

The participants' discourses reproduced larger societal and institutional discourses, what Fairclough (1992) calls social practice. Some responses revealed a return to more widely circulating messages about the importance of individual effort reinforced in school, churches, educational institutions, and print and broadcast media. When we presented information to them from articles, videos, news stories, or personal experience that contradicted these larger societal discourses (meritocracy, colorblindness, equality,

etc.) they expressed resistance and were eager to present examples that supported these discourses, even when the examples themselves were of outliers.

Later in the seminar and in the post-seminar surveys, however, I did discover many examples of the participants incorporating new knowledge they had gained from some aspect of the seminar into their own discourse. This was an important discovery because it reinforces the significance of readings, activities, videos, discussions, and role-play activities like those found within this pilot seminar on white privilege.

Overall, the discursive constructions of racism, intersectionality and white privilege offered by participants who identified as white and those who identified as persons of color differed in that many of the white participants constructed the terms in such a way that privileged individual agency and reinforced ideals connected to individualism and abstract liberalism. They also were similar in that both white participants and participants of color featured racial positioning in their constructions and lacked recognition of intersectionality and relations between groups. While descriptions of systemic racism were expressed during the seminar, more often by those identifying as persons of color, discourses around racism one month after the seminar included multiple references to individual attitudes and acts, implicating the reach of individual ideological systems at work. A discursive pattern that became evident was that persons of color generally positioned whites with privilege and advantages and whites generally positioned persons of color as disadvantaged. This binary in subject positioning explicitly reified or implied a status hierarchy. While discursive constructions of intersectionality during the seminar complicated this binary, discourses a month later were lacking in terms of participants' acknowledgement that varying levels of privilege and disadvantage

among individuals, between individuals, and between groups complicates status

positioning and relations between and among groups. The ways that ideological

discourses, such as whiteness, work alongside racism to reproduce and resist white

privilege and other outcomes is the subject of the next chapter of this dissertation.

CHAPTER FIVE

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF IDEOLOGICAL DISCOURSES

The nature of racism is that it is beyond the individual control of any one student,

any particular person. Surely, if racism is a system that builds upon

and maintains racism as an ideological ideal,

then as members of this system, we are all implicated.

— John T. Warren

Throughout the process of analyzing my various forms of data, I conducted a

critical discourse analysis of the pre-seminar surveys, mini-surveys taken during the

seminar, post-seminar surveys, transcripts of the recorded activities, and field notes. This

thematic analysis revealed a distinct set of ideological discourses that were both

reproduced and contested by the participants. These ideological discourses are:

individualism and meritocracy, "post-racialism/color-blindness, and "reverse racism." In

this chapter, I analyze and discuss each of these ideological discourses and argue that, in

combination, they work to perpetuate the pervasiveness of whiteness and reveal its

stronghold within larger U.S. American discourses. This particular analysis allows me to

answer my second research question: What can be learned about the discursive forms and

functions of whiteness and other ideologies offered by participants?

To summarize my approach to ideology and how I enter into the conversation on

ideological discourses, I situate myself within the approaches to ideology of Althusser,

Hall, and Fairclough. Althusser (1971) pointed out that individuals deny the ideological

fields in which they live, and often say that they are "outside ideology" due to an

orientation of individualism and individual agency and because discourse forms do not

often declare 'I am ideological.' In other words, individualism and individual agency socialize individuals to believe that occurrences in our lives are because of our actions and behaviors, rather than acknowledging that we are actors operating within structures and systems who are enabled and constrained by those structures and systems. Thus, many ideologies are able to remain hidden because they do not present themselves as 'ideological.'

Hall (1996) argued that ideologies do not exist as separate or isolated ideas, but rather in the articulation of ideas into an intertextual chain of meanings. Additionally, ideologies produce forms of social consciousness; they are not produced by them. What this means is that ideologies are not made up of free-floating separate ideas, rather they are interconnected within a chain of meaning that is usually tied to particular social group relations or institutional contexts, such as whiteness and laws/legislation/educational practices/labor policies connected to racial segregation. A predominant ideology that allowed Jim Crow laws to be created and enforced is that whites are superior to all other races. As Hall (1996) stated, some ideologies, such as those related to whiteness, work effectively because people are unaware of them, are unaware of the fact that their statements are underpinned by them, and can justify their views and relations based on "individual values" such as hard work and/or individual choices. Ideologies are reproduced widely when statements seem to reflect 'just how things are.' Fairclough (2001) stated that ideologies are tied to action and are evaluated in terms of their social effects. They are located in language or discourse, are discursively constituted, and are found within structures and events. For example, since Fairclough believes that discourse

is ideological, he argues that a critical analysis of discourse is the best way to reveal ideological structures and how they are reproduced.

Finally, drawing from the work of Althusser, Bonilla-Silva (2003) asserted that humans are interpellated as *racial* subjects and that racial ideology is the medium through which racial life is secured. This occurs through arguments that are utilized, often by whites, to account for racial inequality or the racial status quo. Since ideology represents the imagined relations between the races, people are socialized and interpellated to believe in the ideals of liberalism, meritocracy, and individualism and then subsequently use those ideologies to support or contest arguments, actions, and beliefs. Therefore, I approach ideologies as located within discourse, as discursively constituted or implicated, as utilized by social groups to make sense of and define how society works, and as found within larger structures and events, such as education, politics, and criminal justice discourses, policies, and practices. I also believe that some ideologies become naturalized, are circulated through statements about the way things are and, therefore, often go unquestioned and unnamed.

Ideological Discourses

Individualism and Meritocracy

The origin of the United States as a nation was built on a strong foundation that is centered on individualism and meritocracy (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; DiAngelo, 2010; Kinder, 1985). From a young age, U.S. Americans (whites, especially) are socialized to believe strongly in these ideologies through the grand narrative of the American Dream (Johnson, et al., 2008). Discourses such as, "If one works hard, s/he can achieve success" (also known as the Horatio Alger myth) and "Everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed in

this country" (liberal pluralism) are foundational premises across a multitude of contexts throughout the United States. Whites' deeply rooted beliefs in individual meritocracy and individualism are part of the foundation that supports and protects whiteness (DiAngelo, 2010). It is this foundation that whites are socialized to value and protect through the perpetuation of discourses found in institutional systems like education, law, politics, and the media, as well as in the home.

In the book *Habits of the Heart*, Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, and Tipton (1985) wrote about "American individualism," arguing that it is the first language that U.S. Americans use to think about their lives and that individualism values independence and self-reliance over everything else. They assert that this ideology is utilized by U.S. Americans in times of economic prosperity as a guide for self-sufficient morals and politics and also in times of adversity as evidence that individuals must look out for their own self-interests. Bellah, et al. (1985) also discuss how individualist ideology is used to maintain boundaries between the elite and the "underclass[3]." Accordingly, the conditions faced by the "underclass" (who are most deprived and segregated) are not because of the systematic withdrawal of economic and political support, but, rather, they only have themselves to blame because of their resistance to all efforts to help them (Bellah, et al., 1985).

McIntosh (1988) claims that the notion of meritocracy is a myth. Warren (2013) argues that "The myth of meritocracy, an illusion that assumes that what we get in life we get because we earn it, is like magic, spinning a tale that works to reproduce the status of

---

[3] Although I do not advocate the use of the term "underclass" and recognize that it has been widely criticized and contested by scholars, (and even revoked by Wilson) it is the term used in the book by Bellah, et al. (1985), thus, I use it here but place it in quotation marks to denote my level of discomfort in using this pejorative term.

power, rather than remark on how we actually get to where we are in life" (p. 453). The myth is powerful because this description of the way things work is the way people would like the world to be—that what people have or do not have, their success or lack thereof, is a result of their work ethic, not because of some system that advantages some and disadvantages others (Warren, 2013). In the United States, the myth of meritocracy is something we are socialized to believe in and it is reproduced through multiple discourses such that we can become convinced that it is just how things work for everyone throughout the country.

In this analysis chapter, I link individualism and meritocracy together because they both contain a focus on the merits of individuals and an emphasis on the values of independence and self-reliance that can lead to success in the United States. Both of these ideologies are frequently utilized to explain the successes and failures of individuals and social groups and are foundational to whiteness and white privilege. Individualism is the broader of the two ideologies, in that it is the ontological foundation for being in the world, for orienting to others and their subject positions, and forming the foundation for relations, policies and practices. Meritocracy is a bit more specific in that the focus is on how individualism is linked with the allocation of rewards/punishments and who should receive them.

There were very few instances in participants' discourse during the seminar where the ideologies of individualism and meritocracy were explicitly utilized to make an argument or to defend a participant's position. This might be expected, given that these ideologies are naturalized and taken-for-granted. However, the examples of participants making statements that contested these ideologies were prominent. In the few

occurrences where individualism and meritocracy were endorsed through discourse, other

participants quickly spoke up to challenge these comments and contest the ideologies.

One example occurred when two participants offered broad generalizations about people

on welfare—utilizing the ideology of meritocracy—as evidence that some people do not

want to work hard, would rather live off the government, and were "taking advantage" of

this system. This time, Danielle, a participant who grew up on welfare, spoke up and

challenged the claims made by Deborah and Nancy:

> Deborah: Yea, there's the people on welfare that just say, 'why should I work, why should I improve myself when I get free money?'
> Danielle: And can I just say that people who say that people on welfare just go and get on welfare because they don't want to work—they've probably never been on welfare, because that is not how it works. You don't have enough to cover yourself for a month, you're trying to sell food to make enough money for rent, you have to go beg for utilities. It's not a great program, it's not like 'oh I'm just gonna sit on my couch and watch TV'
> Nancy: But to be honest, but, maybe it's just where I live, I came from the east coast. I know a lot of Hispanic families, that they have 3, 4, 5 kids because the more kids they have, the more services they get.
> Matt: But what's the structure for Hispanic families?
> Nancy: No, but a lot of them have boyfriends that live with them but they are not claiming them. Because people learn how to…
> [People jump in, start talking over each other, and challenge Nancy]
> Nancy: But it is one of the consequences because it creates a multigenerational problem sometimes, not in every situation, because we do need to have these social networks to help people, but… if you find an open back door, you're going to go through that door, you're not going to go through the front door.

Several other participants continued to challenge Nancy's claims about welfare

and those who utilize welfare. She did not alter her point of view and kept repeating her

claims regardless of the counter examples others provided. She was the only participant

who explicitly expressed a strong belief in meritocracy during the seminar, and when I

asked her why she was so certain that meritocracy exists, she stated, "Because it happens.

It happens all the time for immigrants who came to this country with nothing and are

achieving and successful." When Nancy utilized an example that pointed to the ideology of meritocracy, she called upon an example of "someone she knows" to support her claim—a family member who came to this country as an immigrant and achieved success on her/his own. Since ideologies are chains of meanings and are reinforced through histories and discourses, it is not surprising that Nancy did not display a willingness to acquiesce in this particular moment.

Identity negotiation is a complex process that is ideologically driven, especially when race and ethnicity are concerned; I noticed times when Nancy positioned herself as white in discussions as well as the times when she positioned herself as a woman of color who faces discrimination as a Cuban American. Nancy's parents immigrated to the United States from Cuba and she is a first-generation Cuban American. She chose to participate in the breakout group for people who identify as white, but several times during the weekend she made comments in which she positioned herself as a person of color. For example, during her group's discussion about *Color of Fear*, while speaking about the problems that David (one of the white men) had in recognizing systemic racism and oppression, she made the following comment:

> And I saw that with David, too, that since I guess in the middle of the privilege, and the institutional racism, and how it is set up, you kind of have an amnesia toward that, so it makes it easy for white people to say 'hey why can't these people just lift themselves up by their bootstraps? What's wrong with them? This country is made so that the self-made man can make something of themselves,' so they get this amnesia.

In this example, Nancy first aligns herself with whites, by saying "you kind of have an amnesia," and then she distances herself from whites, by saying it's "easy for white people" to talk about pulling themselves up by the bootstraps, "so they get this amnesia." Yet, on her pre-seminar survey, when asked to identify two consequences of white privilege for those who can be identified as white, she answered: "Whites not being admitted into a college due to Affirmative Action. A white contractor not receiving a federal contract due to not being a minority." These examples could illustrate a level of ambivalence that Billig, et al. (1985) discuss as prevalent when one is referencing viewpoints that are ideological in nature. At one point in her comment, Nancy aligns herself with whites who have historical amnesia regarding institutional racism and privilege, but then in the next sentence uses "they" to distance herself from these very same people. She describes examples of "reverse racism" as impacting whites negatively on the one hand, and also negative judgment about whites' use of the bootstraps, an individual meritocracy claim, on the other. This is an example of such ambivalence and illustrates that ideological endorsements are not always distinct and are related to subject positions and relations between groups.

Another example of participants contesting discourses of individualism and meritocracy occurred during a small group discussion after they had watched an excerpt from *Color of Fear*. Here, Elizabeth, who identified as white, recalled how difficult it was for David (one of the white men in the documentary) to empathize with the experiences of the men of color and Luis, who identified as Hispanic, responded to her comment:

Elizabeth: A lot of white people have the mentality like 'every man for himself' and so like the fact that something bad is happening to someone else doesn't mean that I have any reason to care. You know what I mean?

Luis: It's almost like the killer instinct is built in. I mean as a society, it's every man for himself. And maybe with cultures, with ethnic groups, they have the idea or the ideology that they are more a part of a collective. The collectivism. Like it's not just me, it's my family or it's bigger than that. And that perhaps may be a little bit the way of thinking.

In this example, Elizabeth acknowledges how individualism played a role in David's reaction during the clip; however, she attributes this to a mentality that "a lot of white people" have, which distances her from other whites. Then, Luis refers to this mentality of "every man for himself" as "almost like a killer instinct," but asserted that ethnic groups may instead operate from an ideology of collectivism and the need to attend to the collective. The participants seem to be in agreement that whites more frequently subscribe to an individualistic perspective and people of color a collectivistic one and their comments imply critique of this as an isolated orientation. At one point during the seminar, during a small group discussion, meritocracy was brought up in the conversation and was specifically named:

Danielle: I wanted to bring up something that we talked about yesterday, that word meritocracy. That's like the belief in the American dream and we talked yesterday about how it's kind of an illusion, especially for minorities…

Paul: Meritocracy?

Danielle: Mmm hmmm… especially for minorities because it's not acknowledging the power that the system holds over minority groups by whites.

Paul: So the white privilege is…

Deborah: The belief in meritocracy, pretty much. That anybody can be anything…

Paul: Or that meritocracy actually works for whites…?

Danielle: That whites believe that meritocracy works for everyone equally. That's a white privilege.

Paul: Oh, okay for everyone? Okay…

In this example, the participants recalled our earlier discussion about what meritocracy is and how it often works to support and perpetuate whiteness and white privilege. To

provide context, Paul had been questioning whether a belief in meritocracy could be an example of white privilege, as his other group members claimed. He spent much of the small group discussion on *Color of Fear* negating or questioning what other participants were saying and defending David, because he said that David was unfairly attacked for something he did not understand (racism). At one point Paul stated, "But that's why I say, go back to the white privilege, whites aren't exposed to racism. So when you hear a story like that, [David] really is like, 'Really? That happens?' Cuz he has no clue."

Paul, a white man, and Elizabeth, a white woman, both demonstrated strong beliefs in meritocracy and the presence of equality for all races at this point in United States' history through their pre-seminar surveys and their comments throughout the beginning of the seminar. Analysis of their post-seminar surveys showed movement in their discourse and an acknowledgement of their own participation in the circulation and perpetuation of individualistic and meritocratic views. For example, when participants were asked what was the most important information they gained through participating in the seminar, each offered the following responses:

> Paul: I am now concerned with how much of my life that I know was helped by/resulted from white privilege. I feel like I earned my way and was not given any special advantage. After this seminar, however, I now question that and I am disturbed by the possible answers. I almost feel cheated, which is ridiculous but true. So I now find myself in a very weird place and I have not adjusted to my new awareness.

> Elizabeth: I feel as though I still need some personal time to think about everything that was discussed and move past in obstacles of sensitivity. I learned to be self-aware. I learned that my sad story might not be equivalent to other people's life histories, and even though every human being has dealt with struggles, it will be greatly beneficial for me to be humble toward those that start off in a different position than I do. I feel very comfortable discussing these topics. Before the seminar, if these topics were being discussed I was always very quiet because professors had made me feel that I had an unhelpful viewpoint as a well-off, white woman. So, I was always terrified that if I spoke up, someone would

> say that I was privileged. Now the word privileged is something I somewhat own and admit that there is most likely some truth in it, but as an individual white woman, I am willing to interrupt. I still question how I am supposed to feel at this point. A lot of the conversation made me feel guilty and unhappy about myself which I don't believe is something any human being should feel regardless if they are privileged or not.

The above responses demonstrate the possibility that if college students are repetitively exposed to readings, films, discussions, and activities that contain evidence that meritocracy and individualism work to perpetuate whiteness and the privileges that are afforded mostly to whites, they may start to question the validity of these ideologies and begin to examine their own complicit participation in the perpetuation of ideologies like individualism and meritocracy. In other words, the comments from the participants above, and others that were similar, display the potential for seminars like this one to interrupt, even slightly, the pervasiveness of whiteness by pushing students to examine ideologies that are often unspoken and taken for granted.

One final example from participants' discourse speaks to their realization that ideologies like individualism and meritocracy are widely circulated and often go unquestioned:

> Luis: Because every system is modeled this way. Even this higher education system that we're under, I mean it's modeled that way—and for a reason. And even if those in power don't even realize they're in power, or why they have the power, they just think it's because they're the most qualified. They have been brainwashed to believe that. That they are the most qualified, that they deserve to be there because they did the best. And that's not always the case. Sometimes, it's that they are there because that's what people want. People feel comfortable with that.
>
> Elizabeth: But you don't even notice it if you're one of those people, or if you fall into that category. Like that's what I've been doing this whole time is like questioning everything that I've ever gotten, every job I've ever gotten, like anything I've ever been given, like, did I get it because I'm a girl? Did I get it because I'm actually qualified? Did I get it because I'm white? But if you're in that category, where maybe stuff was given to me, you don't notice it.

Individualism and meritocracy are central components of the grand narrative of the American Dream (Johnson, et al., 2008). In the case of this dissertation research, participants in the white privilege seminar reinforced and contested these ideologies as a means of making sense of white privilege and life in the United States. Elizabeth gives clear examples of her own subject positioning as white as well as other intersecting subject positions and how these operate within broader systems of employment. At times, participants made comments that perpetuated individualism and meritocracy, but these comments rarely went unchallenged by other participants. The vast majority of the participants contested the assumptions and articulated beliefs that are central to individualism and meritocracy in their attempts to understand systemic racism and whiteness.

"Post-Racialism"/Color-blindness

The election of the first black President in the United States brought about a flurry of claims that U.S. Americans are now living in a post-racial society. One need not look any further than *Wall Street Journal, Boston Globe, The Atlantic, The New Yorker, New York Times,* or Lou Dobbs on CNN for arguments that a post-racial era has indeed arrived. For example, one *New York Times* article published by Whitehead on November 3, 2009 opened with the claim "One year ago today, we officially became a postracial society."

Dawson and Bobo (2009) call this notion a myth that the majority of white Americans have held since the start of the 21st century. I continue to hear comments from students in my classrooms that the effects of racism have declined in the 21st century and that we are much closer to equality than we were twenty or thirty years ago (a major tenet of post-racialism). Shelby Steele wrote an article in *The Los Angeles Times* directly

following Obama's election in November, 2008, in which he argued that when whites—

especially those of the younger generation—"proudly support Obama for his post-

racialism, they unwittingly embrace race as their primary motivation. They think and act

racially, not post-racially" (p. A6). Steele argued that to live in a post-racial society

means not only that we have moved beyond racism as it was during the Jim Crow era and

it is no longer a major issue, but also that, as a society, supposedly U.S. Americans no

longer think and behave racially. In other words, people no longer think and/or talk about

race because it has become a non-factor.

Analysis of participants' discourse revealed that, for the most part, they

acknowledge that the United States as a post-racial society is a myth, but illustrating

ambivalence, some expressed a desire to live in a society that is, indeed, color-blind.

Participants discussed their beliefs that the United States has not yet entered a time period

where race is no longer reflected in individuals' thoughts and behaviors and that racism is

still an issue that needs to be addressed; however, some of them expressed that, for them,

an ideal world would be one where everyone is treated as a person, not as a raced person

(which is one of the many tenets of color-blindness). On the other hand, their discourse

often displayed their tendency to act racially, which is contradictory to a post-racial

society and to the ideology of color-blindness. The following discussion occurred during

a small group discussion when participants were analyzing the clip from *Color of Fear*:

> Frank: It's in the individual's perception of another individual. And that brings in
> our own prejudice and our own determination, however much we want to pretend
> that we don't have it, we sure do.
> Danielle: Something else that brought up for me is that just because there are
> worse people out there, doesn't mean I'm not part of the system, do you know
> what I mean?
> Deborah: A big part of it, because going there is justifying. Going there is
> justifying. Like 'if there's worse than me, don't even look at me.' You know.

Another point is his terminology. *You* coloreds. Right there. And the Asian brought that up.
Paul: So you don't think that's as bad as everybody else saying 'you whites?'
Deborah: No, it is!
Frank: Yea, because whites don't even recognize themselves as a race, so it's just completely…
Paul: But they were saying that in the film they were calling him white!
Deborah: They were saying 'you whites?'
Paul: Yea, they were saying 'white people,' 'white privilege…'
Danielle: But that's different cuz what they said was… he was saying 'YOU COLORED PEOPLE' instead of saying [in a quieter voice] 'colored people.'
Paul: He said that one time. But he did say colored other times.
Danielle: He said that a LOT of times.
Deborah: Yes, he did.
Paul: But they still got on him and said 'I don't like that term.' But what is… It's okay for you to call me white, but I can't call you black?
Danielle: No, that's not what they were saying.
Deborah: No, the Asian explained it.
Danielle: You could say, 'Asian person.'

In this exchange, the participants are embroiled in a heated discussion over the terminology that was used by David within the film clip when he referred to the men of color as "colored" or "you coloreds." The discussion then turned into an argument over referring to people by their racial identities, and using the word "you" before a racial marker. Deborah kept saying "the Asian" during her comments, until Danielle finally told her she could say "Asian person" instead of "the Asian." These are the same participants who offered comments like: "Racial Progress has been made, but race is still present in a negative way in people's minds" and "While I think that people should be considered as individuals apart from their race, I also think we need to make sure we give everyone equal opportunities." This is an ambivalent call for color-blindness and, simultaneously, for considering race and equal opportunity.

Discourses like these between participants over when race matters, contesting the placement of individuals into racial groups, and the ambivalent views about consideration

of racial versus individual positioning demonstrate a space of competing ideologies. The discussion above also shows that racial ascriptions are both problematized and utilized; Deborah referred to one of the men as "the Asian," for instance, and examples of discourse cited previously demonstrate that participants also named and described positioning of Anglos, whites, and blacks. This discourse is certainly not "post-racial."

Billig, et al. (1988) and Fairclough (1995) discuss the prevalence of contradictions within discourse when ideologies are implicated. Fairclough (1995) points to the ambivalence and contradictions that become evident in calls for traditional and new gender relations:

> The immediate origins and motivations of change lie in contradictions which may problematise conventions in a variety of ways. For example, contradictions which occur in the positioning of subjects, such as those involving gender relations, where gender-linked discourse and other practices have been problematised and changed under the impact of contradictions between traditional gendered subject positions which many of us were socialised into, and new gender relations. (p. 64)

Billig, et al. (1988) refer to these as "ideological dilemmas." In other words, some (or all) of the participants may have been socialized that they should not treat people any differently based on their race, which is a tenet of "color-blindness." However, racial categories, often linked with racism, are pervasive within public media discourse in the United States (local nightly news) and institutions and systems (educational, legal, prisons). Therefore, contradictions within participants' discourse regarding their perspectives about post-racialism and color-blindness are not surprising. Many of the examples cited by participants referenced their own individual narratives, or pointed to

David's struggle as an individual who had not experienced racism, which demonstrates the pervasiveness of individualism. While these examples might be consistent with color-blindness, these participants utilized racial identity positions in their discourse about others (the men in *Color of Fear*), and sometimes in their positioning of themselves in relation to others. It remains important for undergraduates and educators to consider how these contradictions within people's discourse function within larger ideological discourses like whiteness and racism.

For the most part, the participants recognized that U.S. Americans do not live in a post-racial society, as can be seen from the following comment, from Kate: "But I think, to me, it is like you want people to be aware of the problems that do exist, and they still exist, even though we want to pretend they're over." Elizabeth also said in jest, "In modern examples, you know, now it's like 'everything's perfect, we elected Barack.'"

Cho (2009) argues that one consequence of believing in the myth that U.S. Americans live in a post-racial society is that racist incidents tend to be ignored or get brushed under the rug, and more focus is placed on sexism, heterosexism, and ableism. Later in the weekend, while discussing a local news story about a recent racist incident that happened on campus, the participants expressed outrage and/or frustration that most of them had not heard about the incident, and that the story was not more publicized. One reason they said it was not as widely publicized as the recent campus-wide boycotting of Chick-Fil-A was because LGBT issues are more "current" and receive more attention:

> Luis: Yea, but they made a bigger issue about Chick-Fil-A than they did about this. That's stupid. Chick-Fil-A got more attention, they got picketing, they were just pissed off, it made the news more times, over a comment that the CEO made over gay marriage, and it made a big deal here. And it wasn't even a local story! Nancy: But I guess that's because the LGBT community here is stronger than the African American like student body…

Samuel: I don't think it's that. I think because that's all new, it's new. You see great strides being taken inside the LGBT community, whereas racism is old hat. And then basically we all think this is the last few people here and eventually they'll all be generationed out.
Kate: And that is also the privilege of assuming that it's over, if you're not…
Danielle: Yea, some young college student did this! It's not over, there's still racism, that proves it. It didn't leave in the 60s or the 70s.

The following dialogue between Kate, Luis, and Elizabeth, exemplifies views expressed by participants contesting that a black or brown president (of the United States or of the university) can result in major change, and that sexism continues to be a persistent issue. Their claims show that while "racial change" is still needed, female attorneys argue that sexism might even "trump" racism in importance:

Kate: I don't think that a person of color is automatically gonna fix the issue. I don't think that having a brown or black president of the school is gonna… it will change the way people perceive and it will also, how do I put it…
Elizabeth: Well I think that people like notice that that's the truth now that Obama's been in office. I think people thought that if we had a black president, like, the world was just gonna be fabulous, you know what I mean? But I don't think there's necessarily any major racial change.
Luis: It seems like there's more fighting than anything else because of that. Because now you have the Senate, the Congress, you have all these problems that exist, and even another layer that I have found is misogyny that has not even been addressed. I mean misogyny is huge and in some people's minds, it's worse off than racism. Cuz you know, I work with a lot of women who are attorneys and they'll tell you they think racism is light years ahead of misogyny cuz look at Obama, they look at all these people of color that run for office, yet you get Hillary Clinton who gets in there and she wears pants and it's a big deal. She gets emotional, oh man, she's a wreck. But, yet, Boehner, a representative for the Republicans, and he's crying! He's crying and it's just cuz he's a sincere man. But if a woman were to do that it wouldn't be looked at in the same light. I mean there are so many problems, just saying race is it, is not there. I think that speaks to what you were saying, you know, misogyny is huge and it has not been addressed.

These comments feature a single cultural identity, rather than intersecting ones, and the participants' focus seems to be placed upon race or sex, rather than on how these and other multiple positions interact in relation to one another and in relation to other groups.

The discourse above also demonstrates that these participants do not believe that much has changed in the racial landscape of the country with the election of the first black President; however, it also reveals the potential assertion by some individuals that misogyny and heterosexism are larger issues than racism. Rather than seeing these "isms" as interconnected and the crux of intersectionality, the discursive tendency is to examine them individually, and as existing within a hierarchy related to which one is "worse." This is an excellent example of one of the effects of post-racialism that Cho (2009) discussed regarding the danger of this ideology, even when practiced by progressives of color:

> First, post-racialism obscures the centrality of race and racism in society. Second, it more effectively achieves what the Racial Backlash movement sought to do over two decades ago—forge a national consensus around the retreat from race-based remedies on the basis that the racial eras of the past have been and should be transcended. Third, post-racialism as an ideology serves to reinstate an unchallenged white normativity. (p. 1593)

The circulation and reproduction of ideologies like post-racialism is evidenced through the participants' shifting focus away from race-based issues and placing focus on other identity positions like gender and sexual orientation. When the focus is drawn away from the centrality of racism, white normativity continues to go unchallenged, as Cho (2009) argued. In other words, the claim is that racism is a problem, but misogyny is a bigger problem. Therefore, valorizing individualism and positioning sexism and heterosexism as having higher priority than racism, all work to advance whiteness.

Despite the participants' comments contesting "post-racial" ideology, the allure of what it might be like to live in a "post-racial" color-blind society is found within the discourse of several participants on their post-seminar surveys. One participant said that one lingering question for her is, "What will it take to live in a society that is color-blind?" Another participant wrote, "You would think that in 2013 we would be able to look past the color of one's skin or their gender and see people as just that—people. People should be treated as people, regardless of race or any other differences." When asked what emotions participants now feel when thinking about whiteness and white privilege (one month after the seminar), Elizabeth said, "I feel an anxiousness to not travel the same path as my race and a sadness that life isn't as simple as just being a person." Comments like these demonstrate that a month after participating in a weekend seminar devoted to discussions of racism, intersectionality, whiteness, and white privilege, color-blindness ideologies were valorized by some. Color-blindness is an ideology that works and makes sense for many people, otherwise it would not be considered the "dominant racial ideology of our time" (Haney Lopez, 2011, p. 808).

Some of the participants' calls for color-blindness implicated Bonilla-Silva's (2010) frames of Abstract Liberalism and Biologization of Culture. Similar to some of the responses on the post-seminar surveys, Abstract Liberalism was evident by Bonilla-Silva's participant discourses with views that people should be judged on an individual basis and race should not be a factor (negating programs like Affirmative Action), and that all individuals have an equal opportunity to be successful if they just put forth the necessary effort. This frame functions to justify inequalities and disparities among racial groups by attributing existing inequalities to a lack of effort, rather than to years of

oppressive laws and practices that work to create a system of subjugation for particular

racial groups. Biologization of Culture is evident in culturally-based arguments such as

'Mexicans do not place much emphasis on education,' or 'black people like to have a lot

of babies' to explain Latinos' and blacks' positions within U.S. society. Some of the

earlier referenced comments made by my seminar participants that referred to people

living on welfare, Hispanic neighbors having three and four babies in order to collect

more money from the state, and immigrants who came to this country and achieved

success as proof of meritocracy connect to these particular frames of color-blind ideology.

Overall, participants seem to be claiming that a "post racial" society doesn't exist,

racism is, indeed, prevalent, and, wouldn't it "be nice" if race just wasn't a consideration.

The ambivalence comes up in that they use race to categorize others in their own

discourse and yet some also call for an ideal world where only individuals matter.

Scholars like Cho and Haney Lopez argue that post-racialism is the more predominant

ideology in the 21st century. Participants' comments, such as those above, both contested

this ideology as characterizing social relations and conditions in the United States, and,

for some, also called for an ideology of color-blindness as their preference or ideal.

Bonilla-Silva (2010) discussed the dangers of color-blind ideology and found that the

contradiction between whites' professed life philosophies and their actual practices and

behaviors is not visible to them; they do not interpret "their hypersegregation and

isolation from minorities (in particular blacks) as a *racial* outcome. For most whites, this

is just 'the way things are' or something that has nothing to do with race" (p. 263).

Ultimately, Bonilla-Silva (2010) argues that color-blindness perpetuates racism

through whites' abilities to state racial views without appearing to be racist, to avoid

absolutes ("most blacks" instead of "all blacks"), to employ a wide variety of emotional

tones and descriptions ("darned lazy blacks" or "poor blacks trapped in the cycle of

poverty and inferior schools"), and to use the language of liberalism as a means of

justifying inequities ("I am all for equal opportunity; that's why I oppose Affirmative

Action!"). For the participants whose discourse valorized color-blindness and

individualism, earlier examples of discourse also showed avoidance of absolutes in

references to some people on welfare, arguing that tone of voice was important in talking

about "COLORED PEOPLE" versus "colored people" and saying that categorizations of

racial groups should be replaced with orientations to the "person."

"Reverse Racism"

Another ideological discourse that emerged at various points throughout the

seminar is that of "reverse racism." I use quotation marks when referring to this ideology

because, like "post-racial" ideology, it is a socially constructed and highly contested

ideology. Norton and Sommers (2011) discuss in their research a growing belief among

whites that whites have replaced blacks as the principal victims of discrimination. They

refer to this belief in the prevalence of anti-white bias as a "zero sum game" where "less

against you means more against me" (p. 215). McIntyre (1997) describes this zero sum

game as "If they gain, we lose;" in other words, many whites state that if things were to

become more equitable for people of color, then whites would have to "lose something"

(p. 57). Analysis of participants' discourse revealed similar concerns among some of the

white participants that programs like Affirmative Action and an increasing emphasis on

diversity by multiple organizations may also translate into discrimination against whites,

or one group "having" and the other group "not having." This creates an us versus them

type of logic that positions the interests of groups in opposition or competition with one another.

One of the first times this ideology came to light was on the pre-seminar survey when participants were asked to name two consequences of white privilege for those who are identified as white. Elizabeth gave the response: "The assumption that every single white person has taken advantage of white privilege. An overcompensation to avoid white privilege, even in settings that it does not exist, thus denying white people equal opportunity as well." While "reverse racism" was not explicitly named in this example, it is implied.

There are several implications within discourse like that mentioned above. First, emphasis is placed upon "the assumption" that whites can "take advantage" of white privilege, and the implied assumption that many do not. As Johnson (2001) points out, privileges are afforded to whites whether they desire those privileges or not, so there is no choice involved; all whites are advantaged by white privilege. This advantage can be compounded with other unearned advantages when other forms of privilege are also present such as sex, heterosexuality, European American ethnicity, and middle or upper class position. Second, Elizabeth describes "overcompensating to avoid white privilege— even in settings that it does not exist"—which functions to "deny whites equal opportunity." This discourse includes a reference to "overcompensating to avoid white privilege" which could refer to Affirmative Action and its use in situations where the participant asserts "white privilege does not exist." It also asserts that this unwarranted overcompensation functions to deny equal opportunity for whites. This is the crux of "reverse racism." When whites argue that their rights have somehow been trampled upon,

or that someone else is being given a leg up on us, for some, the reaction is to claim that this is an example of "reverse racism" and to point out how unfair the situation is (Bonilla-Silva, 2010). This emphasis on fairness is a foundational principle of meritocracy, as well.

Making similar claims when asked to name systems in the United States that perpetuate racism on the pre-seminar survey, Kate listed Affirmative Action as one such system. The explanation given by this participant was:

> While these types of programs are meant to reduce racism, they can have the opposite effect and instead make white people more bitter towards marginalized races. I've heard many white males especially call this reverse discrimination, which has made them seem to be even more prejudiced against members of other races, thus perpetuating racism.

It is important to note that Kate talks about how programs designed to reduce racism can encourage whites to be "even more prejudiced" (and by implication, name reverse discrimination against whites as problematic). Thus, the programs act to encourage racism to continue. The comments seem to problematize the ineffectiveness of the programs, as well as the reactions of whites, and to critique the outcome of more racism.

First, this discourse reflects a common pattern in which white participants talk about their race group. They often refer to "whites" and use the referent of "they" or "them," not including themselves in their descriptions. This distancing of the speaker from other whites, at times when there was a negative judgment voiced about other whites, was a frequent phenomenon within participants' discourse. Warren (2010) refers to this as a "trap" that white students who begin to understand white privilege often fall

into. Their discourse often demonstrates attempts to position themselves as "getting white privilege" and to position themselves as more enlightened or liberal than other whites. The trap is that they speak as individuals and speak as if they are outside of, rather than complicit with, the institutional systems from which they benefit. Even though Kate used "reverse discrimination" in the response, the ideology of "reverse racism" is still invoked, but, in this case, attributed to others, "many white males." The unanswered question posed is whether Affirmative Action programs can act as an impetus for whites to invoke "reverse racism," and, thus, the circulation of this ideology, in turn, perpetuates racism.

An additional example of "reverse racism" from participants' discourse also came from a pre-seminar survey. When asked "What are your general feelings about confronting and/or interrupting racism and/or white privilege in conversations with others?" Paul, who identified as white, gave the following response:

Generally, I feel like confronting racism is something that can only create improvements in the United States. Personally though, I have only experienced the side of racism that is often overlooked. Specifically, the act of assuming that since I identify as white, I am racist, I use white privilege to get ahead in life, and I will automatically be successful because I am white. So, I feel racism needs to be tackled from both ends of the spectrum and not just a way to point the finger at one group of people.

The above comments include qualifiers as Bonilla-Silva (2010) described. His reference to the side of racism "that is often overlooked" is a discursive move that brings the focus back to white individuals by asserting that we are being discriminated against as automatically racist because we are white, that we use our privileges to get ahead, and

that we will automatically be successful, as this participant noted. These assumptions could certainly be described as discriminatory, but to equate them with racism is more likely a means of deflecting attention away from the consequences of a long history of systemic racism in the United States against people of color, and an attempt to place focus on what some whites assert is legitimate mistreatment and exclusion that they experience because they are white.

Another time that "reverse racism" came up was during the consequences of white privilege activity. The participants had organized themselves into small groups and were working together to come up with lists of consequences of white privilege for whites and for people of color. They wrote these consequences on large sheets of paper that were taped to the walls. At one point during the activity, I looked over at one of the sheets of paper and saw "reverse racism" written under consequences for whites, but then a line was drawn through the word racism and next to it was "discrimination." This particular group was comprised of three men of color and one white woman. I was immediately intrigued by how the concept of "reverse racism" had made its' way to their paper, but also why it was crossed out and re-written as "reverse discrimination." I waited until the large group discussion to ask the group to explain their reasoning behind this consequence of white privilege for whites.

We began the large group discussion and the facilitators went around the room looking at the papers and asking the groups to explain some of the consequences they had listed. Once we made our way to the last group, we realized that they were the only group to bring up "reverse racism" during the activity, so I asked them to explain this

consequence and also to tell us why they crossed out the word racism and changed it to

read "reverse discrimination." The following is their response:

> Frank: We looked at our definition in this setting, in this seminar, our definition of racism, um, and it didn't fit, so we had to flip it over to discrimination, so that's why the line is through it, for the purpose of this, but everywhere else I'm pretty sure that you can say the reverse racism thing and it would be understood as to what we're talking about with this being put here. I don't want to bring up the case in Texas right now, but we all know where the white kid, because they had a quota of Hispanic students that they had to have in their program, was not accepted, even though they had all the criteria met, it had to go to an underrepresented student, rather than the white guy that had everything.
> Elizabeth: Well I'm kind of the one that brought that up and I wasn't necessarily thinking of that case. In my life, I strive to have the mindset where you be happy for everyone, regardless of what they're getting and what you're not getting. But I think that what comes to my mind when I mention [reverse racism] is when I go on the university website and there's a long, long page of scholarships that you can apply to, but you have to be Hispanic, so I wish that like, when I think of that I think of like the application process, like whether you receive something or not isn't the issue, it's whether you can apply or not is the point. Like there's just a long, long list of stuff that whites can't apply to. When I bring this up, there's no part of me that thinks this should necessarily change, it's just a feeling I get. But like I'm the person who would sit there and write like a million essays just to apply to stuff, but it sucks that you can't. But there's no part of me that thinks it should necessarily change.

After making these statements to the entire group, including Elizabeth's softening of her

claims by saying "there's a long, long page of scholarships that you can apply to, but you

have to be Hispanic" and "I'm the person who would sit there and write like a million

essays…it sucks that you [I] can't" and "there's no part of me that thinks this should

necessarily change," there was a brief moment of silence. Before Matt or I could ask a

follow-up question, or respond in any way, Luis and Danielle, who were not in this

particular small group, jumped in to the discussion:

> Luis: I'm a big proponent of the other side of that argument. Like, with Hispanics and stuff, we have a few scholarships, but there are so many of us here that… there's so much competition. And in addition guys, you gotta remember too, when you go to graduate school, they're only taking in 20% Hispanic and the rest 50% white, and this is here in New Mexico. The law school. Why is that the case?

I mean you can be mad about that. And then you go to the meetings and I've been to two of their meetings and they say 'we want underprivileged, Hispanic kids coming to this school from little towns who are gonna give back to their community.' And then you meet all the people they bring in, and they're white kids from out of state who plan on coming here because this was the cheapest place they could get into, and they're gone! And they don't give a damn about this state, they don't care about giving back to the local community, and it drives you up a wall. And you get so frustrated with it and you don't even want to apply here anymore.
Danielle: And kind of what you're talking about too, Affirmative Action requires 20% of this make-up and that's all they're gonna give you. I was talking to a friend who works at [local private school] and they've got their one black girl and they're like 'We're keeping her here!' because they don't want to go out and have to find another one.

These comments represent the conflicting viewpoints that participants who spoke of "reverse racism" have about this ideology. The white individuals who argued that "reverse racism" is indeed a form of discrimination against whites often did not view programs like Affirmative Action as an attempt to level the playing field, or as a means of getting everyone to start from the same starting line; instead, the argument was made that "two wrongs do not make a right," so punishing whites today for discrimination that happened in the past is not fair to white people. Fish (1993) argues that "reverse racism" is only a cogent description of Affirmative Action "if one considers the cancer of racism to be morally and medically indistinguishable from the therapy we apply to it" (p. 13). In other words, to refer to Affirmative Action programs as reverse racism is to view chemotherapy as equally destructive as is cancer. As evidenced by the other two participants who joined the discussion about "reverse racism," the ideology is also one that was contested, by participants of color and by other white participants in the seminar.

The use of the term "reverse racism" to describe the denial of admittance into a university, or not receiving a job over a "less qualified" person of color, or the inability to apply for scholarships that are reserved for underrepresented groups is working to equate

a system of oppression and subjugation that resulted, in the case of black people, in blacks being owned as property, bought and sold, beaten, shot, lynched, raped, prevented from owning property or voting, and being refused entry or service in public establishments. Clearly, these horrific actions that occurred for hundreds of years should not be compared to not getting a job or being unable to apply for a scholarship, yet every time the ideology of "reverse racism" is invoked, the comparison is being drawn. This is the nature of ideologies; they are perpetuated through discourse and actions and are often accepted as the standard or norm. When white participants used the term "reverse racism," there is an implication of co-opting racism and reframing it as applicable to their own subject positions. Hence, the comparison between the system of racism that has been present in the United States for centuries that subjugated and oppressed people of color, and the perceived mistreatment or exclusion of whites from jobs, schools, and/or scholarships should be problematized and contextualized.

Through a variety of readings, activities, and small and large group discussions, "reverse racism" was discussed, scrutinized, and contested. "Reverse racism" was not mentioned explicitly or implicitly by any of the participants on the post-seminar surveys. A general goal for the seminar participants was to increase their options for talking about, uncovering, and critiquing ideologies such as "reverse racism." While the role-play activity was designed for that very purpose—to equip participants with confidence from practicing skills of defining, confronting, and interrupting discourse and behaviors that they believe perpetuate racism and white privilege—the broader context and prevalence of dominant discourses reproducing whiteness, individualism and meritocracy, and color-blindness make it challenging to engage those practices.

Ideological and Interdiscursive Accomplishments

As described earlier, ideologies emerge and are reinforced through inter-textual chains and interdiscursivity as well as contexts that include material conditions, embodied performances of race and other subject positions, and structures such as institutional policies and media representations. What is accomplished by the ideologies and overall systems is the analytical move that is addressed in the remainder of the chapter.

When looking across all three of the ideological discourses, other patterns emerged in relation to participants' subject positions. These patterns indicated a tendency for white participants who grew up poor or working class to invoke individualism and meritocracy more frequently than other participants, and for white participants who grew up middle class to invoke "reverse racism" more frequently than others. Additionally, the participants who were over forty tended to hold more strongly to their assertion of "this is the way things are" through their discourse than did the younger participants. Finally, as referenced above, white participants were more likely to remain silent during discussions where the "invisibility" of whiteness and/or racial identity were specifically invoked/named and were also the only participants who expressed their desires to live in a color-blind society.

One important focus here is the fine line that exists between examining responses from individual participants with multiple identity positions, and examining responses from groups, such as white participants and participants of color. Just as I asked participants to become aware of the impact of intersectionality on issues involving race, class, gender, etc., I must also remain conscious of the role of intersectionality within my

own analysis. The participants were frequently asked to separate themselves into two identity groups—whites and people of color—but this choice may not have been easy for every participant to make. Additionally, when analyzing the discourse of white participants and participants of color, there are many different subject positionings within both of these groups that, as a researcher, I must acknowledge within my analysis. All of the white participants do not have the same levels of privilege and oppression, just as the same applies to the participants of color. Patterns did emerge within the white participants group and the participants of color group, which further justifies the importance of having a mixed group of participants in a seminar like this one, especially considering that everyone plays a role in the production and perpetuation of ideological discourses. Therefore, while I do discuss these two particular group positions within my analysis, I recognize that generalizing can become problematic if one does not include a discussion of intersectionality within the analysis.

Those of us who are members of the dominant groups, or those of us who can be identified as white European American, heterosexual, middle and upper class, hence, positioned with majority status in the United States currently, have the ability to ignore how race and other social and cultural categories shape our lives (Wise, 2008). On the other hand, people of color are reminded every day throughout their lives that they live within raced bodies; they are unable to ignore how race shapes their lives (Collins, 2000; Tatum, 1992).

Whiteness as an ideology and positionality of dominant status is reproduced widely in a range of discourses and structures. However, Whiteness is the unspoken, uninterrogated norm that whites often take for granted (Wise, 2008). Multiple discourses,

from multiple institutions, throughout history, act together to reify whiteness as a

dominant ideology and establish white subject positions as advantaged. While

intersecting positions also establish other levels of advantage and disadvantage, the

difference between living in a white body versus living in a body that is raced is to

distinguish between being marked and unmarked. As Chambers (1997) describes,

unmarkedness denotes privileges of normalcy and unexaminedness, and markedness

denotes characteristics of derivedness, deviation, secondariness, and examinability. These

discourses take various forms, such as silence around naming one's own racial identity;

ignoring how racism affects subject positions, relations and material effects; and/or

statements that position groups into status hierarchies and use of us vs. them binaries. The

combinations of markedness in relation to unmarkedness, which emerge in

interdiscursive systems, function to produce disempowerment (Chambers, 1997).

During the small group activity where participants were asked to identify

examples of white privilege within *Color of Fear*, the discussion turned to issues of

identity and subject positioning. The following discussion occurred within one of the

small groups:

> Justin: Just going off what you were saying before, white people don't necessarily
> have to acknowledge that they're white and I think that was the biggest privilege I
> saw in there was that generally white people don't have to struggle with identity,
> which is a huge thing for people who are in the minority because you know, I am
> this, in white society, white people don't have to do that. That's what they told
> him [David], you know, you never have to worry about who you are in society
> because you already know. That is something that really stuck out to me. I'd say
> out of all the stuff I wrote down, that was the one with the most impact. Cuz
> identity does a whole lot to a man, well, to people.
> Benjamin: It does impact me. My grandfather never knew who his father was. I
> mean, I'm mostly white but I look Hispanic and I mean you wouldn't know it
> unless you talk to me. And I do struggle with my identity.

There were several moments like this one throughout the seminar where participants of

color referred to the "invisibility" of whiteness. In analyzing all of these types of

comments, none were made by white participants—all references to identity, struggling

with identity, or not having to think about how one fits in society, were made by

participants of color of varying ages and genders. This was true even in the examples that

the participants of color gravitated toward while discussing the videos that were shown

throughout the weekend. For example:

> Justin: Getting back to the video, I remember one of the Asian gentlemen saying
> even at a restaurant white people being served before him and how you kind of
> feel invisible and the way he was saying it, I'm interpreting it, but when he was
> saying that he felt invisible, it was almost like a hopeless sound in his voice, kind
> of. And I would say it was probably something that he didn't necessarily speak
> out about—it was more like he hated it, he hated the feeling, but he accepted it,
> you know what I mean?

> Luis: One big one that we talked about that I kind of heard toward the end was
> that white people don't have to struggle with identity. They don't have to
> constantly reflect on how they fit in society. It's not like I am a black man, where
> do I fit, what do I do? It's just like, I am here, this is my society. And they don't
> have to think about it, they are just there and it is just open for them to take the
> opportunities that they can.

When considering this pattern, it was not surprising that the participants of color

were the primary ones to identify the ways that whiteness remains invisible and pointed it

out in the readings, videos, and activities throughout the weekend. Each time this

"invisibility" was brought to light in the conversation amongst the participants or as a

large group with the facilitators, the only participants who responded to the comments

were other participants of color. The white participants did not agree with the statements

or disagree with them—they remained silent during these particular discussions. The

implications of white participants' silence during discussions about the invisibility of

whiteness are noteworthy—especially considering the argument mentioned in chapter

one that whiteness and white privilege are largely invisible to whites throughout the

United States, and many whites continue to remain silent about issues of race, racism,

privilege, and oppression (Crenshaw, 1997; Leonardo, 2009; Warren, 2001). The

invisibility of whiteness and the prominence of individualism enables those positioned as

white to presume individual agency and orient toward a future in which they can aspire to

become what they want and achieve the American Dream (Johnson, 2001).

Agency was also recognized and implicated when some of the participants voiced

their realization that whites have the ability to walk away from racial experiences that

make them uncomfortable and can turn a blind eye to systemic racism if they choose,

whereas people of color do not have this option. This was evidenced when they were

watching the group of men in *Color of Fear* trying to get David to realize that systemic

racism exists, despite all of his comments to the contrary. The following exchange

occurred during a small group discussion after they had watched the film:

> Danielle: How bout this one, when they told him, I don't know what the other
> white guy's name was, but when the group told him 'Don't give up on the
> David's of the world cuz that's what happens.' I think that's kind of what this
> class is about…
> Frank: That was the most brilliant part of that whole thing.
> Danielle: Yea, because it's easy for us to be like 'Ugh that person is so racist' and
> walk away, but someone who is a minority can't walk away from that. It's like
> they're not doing that against me, so it's easy for me to get up and be like 'Screw
> you, you're a [expletive] idiot,' and get away.
> Frank: But the beauty of it was, is the white dude said 'Wait. We can't stop.' He
> knew that we were this close, although I would say it still looked like there was
> miles between them.
> Deborah: It's about continually educating, educating. And trying to make them
> see, when you say 'How would you feel if this happened to you?' and finally it
> got through where he said 'Well that would be horrible.' FINALLY. But it took a
> LOT of work and repetition to open his eyes to it.

In the case of one of the white participants who grew up working class and often

expressed her struggles with admitting that she benefits from white privilege, when asked

on the post-seminar survey what feelings she now has about confronting white privilege and racism in conversations with others, she replied, "I feel that by not saying anything, I am allowing this mentality to continue, so I feel empowered to say something." These particular comments indicate the implication of agency in discussions and actions related to whiteness and white privilege.

Agency was also implicated when participants of color referenced the fact that whites do not have to think about racial identity, whereas people of color do not have that luxury. Throughout these particular discussions, white participants largely remained silent and did not contribute to the discussions. This in and of itself is an implication of whiteness in that whites can make the decision to remain silent during discussions about whiteness and/or racism, and that this silence is one way that the ideology remains pervasive. The white participants were the only ones to report feelings of guilt and shame on their post-seminar surveys as emotions that this seminar brought up for them, which could be a contributing factor to their silence.

One of the social functions of ideologies, according to van Dijk (1995), is to sustain the interests of particular groups. In order to do this, it is integral for whiteness to remain invisible and continue to be accepted as the norm, or the yardstick by which everything else is measured; therefore, it is not surprising that very few white participants spoke up when the discussions turned toward white racial identity and the ability to go through life without questioning one's place in society. One way that whiteness is able to remain invisible is when race-based discussions or analyses turn into class-based discussions or analyses, which happened several times during the seminar. We discussed

how race and class are inextricably linked, but also how poor whites still receive privileges that people of color, regardless of class status, do not receive (Wise, 2008).

Conclusions

A thorough analysis of the surveys and transcripts from the pilot seminar revealed three ideological discourses that I argue are foundational to whiteness. Those discourses were: individualism and meritocracy, "post-racialism"/color-blindness, and "reverse racism." Individually, each of these discourses has implications that connect them to whiteness. Individualism and meritocracy both place emphasis on the achievements and failures of individuals in terms of hard work and equal opportunities. These ideologies perpetuate the notions that everyone has an equal chance in the United States and that hard work will/should lead to success. In the case of the pilot seminar, individualism was both supported and contested through several comments by participants, whereas most of the participants contested meritocracy.

"Post-racialism"/color-blindness featured two contemporary ideologies that are, in many ways, both similar and different. Post-racialism obscures the centrality of race and racism, it encourages a retreat from race-based remedies, and it reinstates an unchallenged white normativity (Cho, 2009). Analysis of participants' discourse revealed that participants largely contested this particular ideology and made multiple comments to the contrary—that the United States is not a post-racial society and that there is much work to be done with regard to racism and white privilege. There were several times where participants moved the focus away from racism and argued that heterosexism and sexism may be larger issues that do not receive enough attention because of the emphasis on racism. Additionally, a few participants made comments in their post-seminar surveys

that demonstrated a desire to live in a color-blind society, and their discourse during the seminar also connected to Bonilla-Silva's (2010) frames of Abstract Liberalism and Biologization of Culture.

Ultimately, I see these ideologies as being much more similar than different. If any difference were to be highlighted, I would argue that post-racialism is more of a political location about race and the decline of the pervasiveness of racism in the United States, whereas, color-blindness is more of a positioning of racial groups that draws from discourses like individualism, meritocracy, and abstract liberalism. When these ideologies are implied within discourse, they have far more similarities than differences.

"Reverse racism" was frequently the topic of conversation throughout the seminar and was mentioned multiple times in pre-seminar surveys and seminar discourse. This particular ideology has multiple implications with regard to whiteness. This ideology was reproduced by white participants as a critique for being disenfranchised in some way came up during conversations surrounding Affirmative Action policies at universities and organizations. It operates under the guise of "two wrongs don't make a right" (Fish, 1993) and works to unite whites through their shared feelings of being discriminated against and being unfairly disenfranchised. Participants did invoke this ideology through pre-seminar surveys and discourse throughout the seminar, however, it was also contested by other participants and was the ideology that received the most scrutiny, critical analysis, and discussion. Pilot seminar discourse was consistent with my experiences in classrooms over the last ten years, demonstrating the prevalence and influence of this particular ideology among college undergraduates, and the conflicting

opinions that exist when someone claims "reverse racism" during conversations and classroom discussions.

These ideologies work in relation to one another to perpetuate the pervasiveness of whiteness. Individualism and meritocracy promote the belief that if I work hard, I can be successful, and that my successes and failures are a result of my own individual actions. Therefore, if I have worked as hard as I possibly can, and I am not allowed to apply for a scholarship or get hired for a job, then that is unfair treatment and evidence of "reverse racism." Some argue that we live in a post-racial society, and that it is desirable to be color-blind and see people only as people, not as belonging to any particular racial identity group. This belief system is necessary in order to remain convinced that racism is a thing of the past and that while there may still be racist individuals or groups, like the Ku Klux Klan, they are the minority. As a whole, the systems of racism like Jim Crow laws and segregation are gone, thus, racism is declining and individuals can and should be judged on their individual merit. This is how these ideologies have the potential to work together (utilizing examples from participants' discourse) and when they function interdiscursively, they enable whiteness to remain prevalent within the United States.

Together, these ideologies ultimately reify the pervasiveness and perpetuation of whiteness and further support existing hierarchies, higher status positioning of whites, validations of resource inequities, and higher levels of individual agency. The ideology of whiteness can be found within a variety of social practices in the United States. Nakayama and Krizek (1995) claim that discourses on whiteness "are relatively hidden in everyday interaction, but when whites are confronted, when they are asked directly about whiteness, a multiplicity of discourses become visible. It is this multiplicity that drives

the dynamic nature of its power relations or forces, always resecuring the hegemonic position of whiteness" (p. 298).

One example of social practice, or a strategic rhetoric of whiteness, that the authors offered and was subsequently found within this study is that of confusing whiteness with nationality. This means that "white" is often discursively equated with "American," which was the case for several white participants who referred to their ethnicity as American on their surveys or in their discourse during the seminar. This social practice has cultural and political implications, especially in regard to citizenship and immigration policies/laws in a nation of immigrants. Harris (1995) makes a similar argument when she states that "Even though the law is neither uniform nor explicit in all instances, in protecting settled expectations based on white privilege, American law has recognized a property interest in whiteness that, although unacknowledged, now forms the background against which legal disputes are framed, argued, and adjudicated" (p. 277).

Crenshaw (1997) points to another social practice where the ideology of whiteness is present within the United States. She argues that when implications of whiteness and white privilege go beyond social construction, race is then made to be a powerful ideology that has an impact on the meaning of everyday occurrences and practices. Two specific examples of larger ideological discourses that implicate whiteness that Crenshaw (1997) offered are the multiple meanings of the Confederate Flag for blacks and whites in the United States and the debate between Senators Carol Moseley Braun and Jesse Helms over the continued funding of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commission, which are both racial discourses. She uses these examples to argue that

ideological criticism should be used in research and in teaching as a means of revealing the dimensions of whiteness.

One final social practice that is implicated in the perpetuation of whiteness is that when participants call upon discourses of "reverse racism," welfare, individualism, meritocracy, and color-blindness, for example, they are participating in the reproduction of systemic racism and the pervasive nature of whiteness. Although whiteness itself is not named, it is implicated through participants' characterizations of what is positioned as dominant and what should be natural, the "way things are." Thus, the order of discourse shapes and is shaped by the social order.

This pilot seminar that focused on whiteness and white privilege was meant to reveal these ideologies through readings, activities, and discussions with the intent to enable participants to interrupt the pervasiveness of whiteness and to equip them with pertinent knowledge and skills that could help them to confront whiteness in their own lives, should they choose to do so. When ideologies are left unquestioned and unchallenged, they become more pervasive within discourse and actions, and thus become the accepted norm. These ideologies were supported and contested through participants' discourse. It remains important, then, to shed light on these ideologies within undergraduate curriculum so that the pervasiveness of whiteness and how it works to include/exclude, reproduce different levels of agency, and determine in/equitable policies and practices, can ultimately be interrupted.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

There must exist a paradigm, a practical model for social change,

that includes an understanding of ways to transform consciousness

that are linked to efforts to transform structures.

— bell hooks

Whiteness and white privilege are largely invisible to whites throughout the

United States, and many whites continue to remain silent about issues of race, racism,

privilege, and oppression (Crenshaw, 1997; Leonardo, 2009; Warren, 2001). This

dissertation sought to challenge this silence through the design and implementation of a

pilot seminar for college undergraduates on racism and white privilege. In this chapter, I

summarize the research process utilized for this dissertation and return to my research

questions in order to summarize my analysis and findings. I then discuss the implications

of this type of research for educators and for communication scholars. Finally, I discuss

the limitations and strengths of this study, along with opportunities for future research.

Summary of Research

The purpose of this research was to create a curriculum for undergraduate

students that would strengthen their understanding of systemic racism and white privilege

and also provide them with useful strategies for confronting and disrupting white

privilege in their lives, relationships, groups, and organizations. In order to accomplish

my goals of gaining a better understanding of how a group of students view racism and

white privilege before and after participating in a pilot seminar and looking more closely

at whiteness and white privilege to gain a better understanding of undergraduates' points

of view about where white privilege can be uncovered, how ideologies and systems produce inequity, and their experiences as they work to change the systems in place, I offered the following two research questions: 1) How do participants in a pilot seminar on white privilege negotiate their constructions of racism, intersectionality, and white privilege in the United States? 2) What can be learned about the discursive forms and functions of whiteness and other ideologies offered by participants?

As a means of answering these research questions, I designed a three-day seminar for college undergraduates guided by seven learning outcomes to examine the discourse of college undergraduates when they are presented with readings, discussions, and activities centered on whiteness and white privilege. This research provided greater understanding of how participants came to know the meaning, implications, and effects of white privilege. I utilized critical communication pedagogy as my theoretical and methodological framework in the design and implementation of the seminar. I subsequently designed a pre-and post-seminar survey that was administered to twelve student participants one month before and one month after the seminar. I video and audio recorded five of the seminar activities and transcribed them for analysis. I then conducted a critical discourse analysis of the surveys, transcripts, and field notes and used this data to answer my two research questions.

Summary of Research Goals

My first research goal was to gain a greater understanding of how a group of college undergraduates conceive of racism, intersectionality, and white privilege before and after participating in a seminar with curriculum on these topics. I accomplished this goal through the analysis of participants' discourse surrounding these constructs and

provided an examination of how participants' constructions changed or did not change throughout the entire seminar process, including before, during, and after the seminar. As a future study in the critical pedagogy arena, I can further analyze the responses, examine them related to each learning objective, and better understand which seminar activities were more and less appropriate in facilitating student learning. This knowledge can be useful for educators who plan to incorporate these topics into their own curriculum, as it offers insight into how this group of diverse college undergraduates responded to them.

Another research goal was for students to critique forms of discourses that reproduce the superiority of whiteness and the privileges that come with it. I accomplished this goal by asking participants to critique discourse between the men featured in *Color of Fear*, discourse from local television news coverage of a recent event that occurred on their university campus, and discourse from a televised interview between Matthew Heimbach and Thom Hartmann. They were also asked to provide examples on the pre- and post-seminar survey of messages that illustrate white privilege in a variety of contexts.

More specifically, my goals were to enable students to develop a deeper understanding of discourses surrounding whiteness and white privilege, learn and practice strategies for confronting and interrupting white privilege in a variety of contexts, and discuss disrupting white privilege on an individual and institutional level. I was able to accomplish these goals through the pilot seminar, and my analysis of participants' discourse revealed multiple examples of their overall increased understanding and increased confidence and abilities to confront whiteness in a variety of contexts.

I incorporated and expanded upon recommendations of Martin and Davis (2001) related to instruction about white privilege into the seminar. 1) I included material on the historical "whitening" of some U.S. immigrant groups and the role of history in understanding the social and political development of whiteness. I added material on race and racism (as individual and systemic) and the history of race in the United States, since whiteness as a racial identifier must be understood in relation to other racial categories, as well as how groups are positioned in relation to each other. I added orientations to whiteness as both positionality and ideology, which points to the distinctions between an interrelated nature of "being white" and viewing "white as the standard or what is right." I constructed and co-facilitated discussions and activities surrounding white domination, uncovering the naturalization of white standards, discussed conflation of being white with being "American" or having a subject position that can be un-named and "invisible," in the United States. 2) As recommended, I included material on white privilege and also distinguished between whiteness and white privilege by clarifying that white privilege can be approached as unearned advantages that are produced by whiteness. I constructed and co-facilitated discussion of multiple readings, videos, discussions, and activities to accomplish this recommendation. 3) As recommended, I included examples of the discursive and communicative patterns of U.S. whites, and added the role of intersecting identifications, to guard against essentializing and over-generalizing and to counter tendencies for white positionalities to remain invisible. I also included videos, readings, and discussions to accomplish this recommendation. 4) As recommended, I also included representations of whiteness in popular culture, and added into discussions and activities the role of intersecting representations to uncover essentialization and over-generalization.

One of my initial goals was also for students to work together to create a group action plan for confronting and/or interrupting white privilege in their local university community. The group action plans did not end up coming to fruition after the seminar, for a variety of reasons. First, the timing of the activity was late in the seminar when students, who had volunteered a significant amount of time, were tired, the activity goals were ambitious, and there was not sufficient time for them to work together and plan. In their post-seminar surveys about actions taken, however, they did report a commitment to take action and reported confident about their skills to interrupt racist discourse and name and critique white privilege. As evidence of this commitment, at various times throughout the seminar, when students were confronted with examples of the perpetuation and pervasiveness of systemic racism and whiteness, their discourse revealed multiple examples of a call to action and/or a desire for greater social justice and equity on a systemic level. For example, when the students were discussing the local news story of a racist incident that occurred on their campus (after watching a video facilitators provided of the news coverage), one participant stated during the discussion, "Something more important than [discussing what the university has or has not done] is that instead of looking at what the institutions can do, I think we need to look at what we can do. Cuz, you know, they said security is being brought up and they made these mandatory groups to talk about race and racial tension, when really, we shouldn't have to rely on other people to put that together for us."

During another discussion, participants were talking about the desire to do something, but that it is difficult to know what actions they should take, and one of the participants stated:

I mean I think that's the frustrating part for everybody, I feel like that's a

recurring theme for people that are like, 'okay I see this problem now, and we've

talked about it, and I'm frustrated with talking about it so much, now how do we

fix it?' And that's definitely a harder thing, cuz the first step is definitely

addressing it and saying, yes it exists. But like I'm totally on the same page, like

how do we make a change about this now, like how do we actually change the

system? Because that's what needs to happen.

Finally, during the group action plan meetings, one of the participants commented, "I'm

convinced that in every aspect of every one of our lives, we are affected and under the

thumb of this white privilege thing, and without the awareness and articulation of it, that

nothing is ever going to change. The awareness begins an opportunity to affect the

change." These comments demonstrate that students recognized the need for moving

beyond awareness to point out examples of individual and systemic racism, describe

ideologies including whiteness, name and critique white privilege, describe consequences

for these systems, and to call for whiteness and systemic racism to be disrupted.

Summary of Analysis of Research Questions

My first research question sought to examine how students negotiate their

constructions of racism, intersectionality, and white privilege before, during, and after

participating in a pilot seminar on white privilege. In chapter four, I analyzed the

participants' discourse surrounding each of these terms and discussed their negotiated

constructions of these terms. Overall, I discovered that some of the students' initial

orientations to racism included emphasis on individual attitudes and behaviors. After

discussions about the nature and influence of systemic racism, most were able to identify

systems and institutions that perpetuate racism within the United States. Their post-seminar definitions of racism included more examples of individual than systemic racism. This finding reveals the strength of ideologies like individualism and meritocracy that emerge in numerous institutional policies and public discourses throughout the United States. The finding also indicates that more attention is required in communication courses on uncovering these ideologies, discussing the consequences of these ideologies, and critiquing discourses that perpetuate individualism, meritocracy, "reverse racism," color-blindness, and the role of societal systems perpetuating individualism.

Intersectionality was a new concept for most participants. While they were able to give examples during and after the seminar and note the need for understanding intersectional positioning of race, ethnicity, sex and class in their discussions of *Color of Fear*, more emphasis on asking them to generate examples might have been useful. The participants' pre-seminar, during seminar, and post-seminar discourses illustrated that they were developing a more detailed and complex orientation to white privilege, its systemic and interdiscursive nature, and its impact on U.S. Americans.

In order to answer my second research question, I analyzed the survey and seminar discourse to uncover ideologies that appeared within the discourse. It took multiple readings of the data to uncover the ideological implications within the discourse. According to van Dijk (1995), ideologies serve multiple functions, some of which are, to allow members of a group to organize (admission to) their group, coordinate their social actions and goals, and to protect their (privileged) resources. As Fairclough (1992) notes, ideologies are discursively produced, contextually framed, and function to reproduce power relations between groups and establish guidelines for social practice.

The three ideologies that emerged within participants' discourses (individualism and meritocracy, "post-racialism"/color-blindness, and "reverse racism") were both utilized and contested by participants at various points throughout the seminar and in the surveys. Individualism and meritocracy were implicated frequently and widely by participants aligning with different race, ethnic, and age groups, throughout the seminar. Ultimately, participants' discourse worked to perpetuate individualism in a variety of contexts, while their discourse surrounding meritocracy demonstrated ambivalence and contradictions. Participants' comments showed that the ideology of "post-racialism" was linked mostly with discourse related to politics and the current president, while color-blindness was linked with social interaction. While "post-racialism" as a description of the current era in U.S. politics was highly contested, some participants described a yearning for color-blindness in their post-seminar responses. As has been argued earlier, color-blindness is part of the system in which individual meritocracy, abstract liberalism and whiteness reproduce individualism and white privilege. Meritocracy and "reverse racism" became more visible when some of the white participants sensed that their resources and status, hence, privileges, were being called into question (i.e. scholarships and tax money that goes toward social services). On the other hand, the same participants also contested these ideologies at other points during discussions when their privileges and/or resources were not under threat, again displaying evidence of ambivalence and contradictions.

It is also important to examine the interdiscursivity between the survey responses and the seminar discourse and connect them to broader discourses found within the United States. Within the context of the seminar, a comparison of the seminar discourse

to the pre- and post-seminar surveys revealed a level of ambivalence and contradiction in some of the participants' comments regarding racism and whiteness, which is common when ideologies are enacted through discourse (Billig, 1982; Billig, et al., 1988). Throughout the seminar, and through the surveys, participants both utilized and contested each of the three ideologies discussed in chapter five. "Post-racialism" was largely contested, while color-blindness was often endorsed. Individualism, meritocracy, and "reverse racism" were also endorsed by multiple participants, but their endorsements were often challenged by other participants (most frequently, participants of color). When looking across all of the ideologies, the broader implications are that they reinforce power relations among individuals and institutions as well as status hierarchies, they perpetuate processes like systemic racism, and they contribute to the pervasiveness of whiteness throughout multiple contexts in the United States, such as the legal system, academia, local and national politics, and norms and policies. The wide circulation through broadcast and print media, as well as public discourse, of Abigail Fisher's case against University of Texas, founded on her claim of "reverse racism," is one example of how ideological discourses that also include individualism and meritocracy can work to reify whiteness.

Each of the ideologies discussed in chapter five connect to broader discourses such as whiteness and systemic racism in that they reproduce hierarchies and social norms that allow whites to remain in positions of privilege and status. Moreover, these ideologies work in such a way that whiteness and racism are reproduced and perpetuated through discourse and actions, over and over again. Looking at the larger picture, it is important to not only include clear examples from political, institutional, local campus

and community, and mediated and everyday talk, but also to plan learning activities that offer students the opportunity to apply concepts and processes multiple times, and exercises in which they do more than talk about and talk with others, in order to interrupt such widely endorsed and naturalized patterns of social practice.

Reflections and Pedagogical Insights

A significant component of this dissertation research was the design and implementation of the pilot seminar that focused on racism, intersectionality, and white privilege. The seminar was the dynamic context in which participants' discourse emerged. The seminar was designed to act as an intervention that would contribute to students' knowledge about and potential for talking about the aforementioned constructs and interrupting discourses reproducing whiteness and other ideologies. When reflecting on the students discourse before, during, and after participation in the seminar, in many cases, participants' post-seminar discourse largely resembled their pre-seminar discourse in many facets. This observation is important to discuss in more detail.

In her study of white teachers exploring racial identity, McIntryre (1997) described very similar findings. She found that her participants reified whiteness by (re)circulating discourses that supported and perpetuated whiteness ideologies. Participants in McIntyre's (1997) study often referenced their anger and disappointment regarding the historical treatment of blacks, yet, she describes that they could not seem to gather up enough rage about present-day white racism to de-center their own privileged racial locations. Instead, McIntyre (1997) found that when participants "entered into the discussion of racial inequities in the United States, they oftentimes shifted to a hallmark

of U.S. culture—the individualistic myth that, no matter what your color, if you work hard and stick to your goals, you, too, can achieve the American Dream" (p. 135).

In several ways, my findings are similar to those described by McIntyre, therefore it is important to address the lack of change in participants' discourse. My seminar was only 2 ½ days long and contained a large amount of complex information, multiple activities that elicited strong emotions, and contained both interracial and intra-racial discussions. The short duration of the seminar was a major factor. Also the post-seminar surveys, by design occurred one month after the seminar. Individualism, color-blindness, and meritocracy are extremely prevalent ideologies and are (re)circulated through discourses in education, at home, in the workplace, in the media, and through casual conversations. Therefore, it was not surprising to discover that many participants reverted back to individualistic definitions of racism and discourses that reflected these prevalent ideologies, such as a desire for a "color-blind" society.

Another factor worth noting is the apparent connection between participants' emotions and their lack of movement in discourses and in actions planned. Most of the participants of color responded to the seminar questions that asked about emotions with words like anger, disgust, and frustration; whereas, most of the white participants responded to these same questions with references to shame, guilt, and disappointment. I argue that their emotions are connected to the larger structures and ideologies upon which the seminar worked to shed light, and that the types of emotions that participants reported experiencing are also connected to their identity positions. In his article on emotions in and around social movements, Jasper (1998) argued that it is impossible to imagine mobilization around a social issue without the presence of strong emotions regarding that

particular social issue. One of the participant's comments on the post-seminar survey regarding the group action plans specifically ties to the argument made by Jasper (1998). When asked about her emotions regarding the planning and implementing of the plan, Danielle responded, "I was excited and hopeful but also a little worried that some people didn't see the importance - we had one person back out as soon as we got into our group because that person didn't necessarily buy into the cause."

After analyzing the post-seminar surveys and discovering that the participants did not move forward with their group action plans, and that some participants had not utilized any of the strategies learned during the role-play activity, I re-visited the questions on the post-seminar survey that referenced emotions. When comparing the responses to the questions that asked about emotions/feelings, I immediately noticed similarities among the white participants' responses in comparison to the responses from the participants of color. Examples of responses from white participants included: "I felt ashamed and upset that this is still a condition we are dealing with," "I feel unfortunate for those that have greater disadvantages than I do," "My emotions were also very torn because while developing our plan, it started to become very realistic just how small of a group we were and how big of a change we were attempting to make," and "While white privilege is certainly a problem in our society and we need education about it, if I am being honest, it is not what I am most passionate about."

The responses from participants of color were as follows: "Often times I use humor to deflect my true feelings. When I truly think about it, it is hurtful and frustrating," "I am numb to the feeling of anger and sadness associated with white privilege," "Helplessness," and "I feel like it is necessary but frustrating. The majority of people I

have confronted do not want to tackle this difficult issue. They prefer to maintain the status quo because it is easy." The emotions expressed by people of color reflect an overwhelming sense of resignation and the assumption that whites will ultimately continue to maintain the status quo. The feelings portrayed by whites reflect that while they see the situation as "unfortunate," there is view that the problems are too big for such a small group to undertake. Additionally, many of the white participants did not express strong emotions or passion about the need to take action on the issue of white privilege; thus, as Jasper (1998) argued the lack of strong emotions on the part of white participants connects to their difficulties in mobilizing. Additionally the emotions described provide further evidence of difference in ontological experiences of their positions in relation to others, as well as evidence of differences in agency. White students, especially those positioned with other locations of systemic advantage based on class, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and age for example, who are also rewarded for speaking as individuals, may not see the personal benefit in the hard work necessary to address systems of white privilege, and can more easily choose to spend their time on "other passions."

Ultimately, as a white critical scholar, I argue that the responsibility for disrupting white privilege lies predominately with those of us who have greater access to resources and who maintain positions of greater privilege and higher status. Therefore, I believe it is my moral responsibility to conduct research with social justice aims and incorporate elements of social justice into my pedagogy. This study is one avenue through which I can work towards achieving these goals as a white critical intercultural scholar. Further, it is essential to call out white privilege, along with other intersecting forms of privilege, as

systems that reproduce unearned advantage and disadvantage and have material effects and social consequences. The systemic reproduction of dominance, marginalization, unequal access, inequitable resource distribution, and differential levels of agency, must be named and problematized over and over again. I intend to continue to teach about these topics at every opportunity, to develop and offer an expanded and longer seminar, and to continue to answer the call to disrupt white privilege and ultimately dismantle at least local policies, norms or institutional practices where it is present.

Implications

This dissertation research has several implications for educators and for communication scholars. Consistent with previous research on teaching undergraduates about racism and whiteness, this study revealed that some white participants voiced individualistic notions of racism, were resistant to acknowledge white privilege, and continued to implicate individualism and meritocracy in their discourse. The findings revealed that most participants of color also voiced individualistic notions of racism but reproduced examples of systemic racism during and after the seminar. Discourse also revealed that white participants' responses were more likely to include examples of intentions, and whether one actually intended to cause oppression and subjugation. Focusing on intent enables these participants to concentrate on individuals rather than systemic processes and the impact of racism, for instance, on group members' lives and material conditions. According to Garvey (1996), the responsibility for oppression is not dependent upon an intentionality to cause oppression. In other words, the focus should not be on whether or not someone intended to oppress another individual or group of individuals or specifically sought to cause oppression.

The implications here for educators are that when discussions and teaching are centered on racism and whiteness, first and foremost, it is important to ascertain how students construct these terms and how they are using them in the context. Time and consideration should be given not only to defining these terms, but also to providing evidence of how racism and whiteness function in various contexts, the influence of systems and institutions, and their pervasiveness within the United States. Perhaps, once students have the opportunity to create stronger and more nuanced constructions of these important concepts, they can then better identify examples, consequences, and manifestations of racism and whiteness within U.S. institutions and systems.

Another implication of this research for educators is the usefulness of role-play scenarios where students have opportunities to practice skills and strategies for confronting and interrupting racism and whiteness. Analysis of participants' discourse before the final day of the seminar revealed frequent references to a desire for change and an uncertainty for next steps. When students are equipped with both knowledge *and* skills that they have had the opportunity to practice in a safe environment, they may be more likely to become change agents in their families, communities, organizations, etc. It is also important to give more emphasis to discussions about responsibility for change and the role of interracial and intercultural alliances in social change initiatives. More emphasis on how agency is both constrained and enabled for students who are positioned in different subject locations would be useful, and help to counter the tendencies for white students, as Warren (2010) argues, to "check-out" or to think "they get it [how whiteness works and reproduces privilege]" and forget their complicity and continuing benefits from systems and institutions.

This dissertation research also extends knowledge and understanding of critical communication pedagogy and the utilization of this theoretical framework as a methodological approach for designing and implementing curriculum that addresses racism, intersectionality, and whiteness. I sought to help students recognize how white privilege operates through concrete, mundane communicative practices and events in the context of the university and local community so they could be more likely and better equipped to question and critique the pervasiveness of privilege and oppression, rather than seeing them as isolated occurrences.

Since it is through discourse, dialogue, and performance that whiteness and white privilege are (re)produced in daily interactions with one another and through wide ranging structures and institutions, the inclusion of critical pedagogical approaches to teaching about racism and whiteness is important.

Given my critical pedagogy foundations, reflexivity was important in the design, facilitation and analysis of student responses. In order to acknowledge my own whiteness and white privilege, and to ensure consideration of alternative ideologies and experiences, it was essential to continually question my assumptions and biases. I utilized dialogic reflexivity (Collier, 2014) throughout the planning and implementation of the seminar as well as the research process. For instance, I sought out resources such as videos and training materials on white privilege and discussed these with diverse colleagues and students. I co-facilitated the seminar with someone who not only brings different subject positions related to race, sex and class than mine, but who also has expertise on the history and systems that reproduce racism in the United States and depth of experience as an educator and trainer. This co-facilitation was well received by all of the students, and

the periodic "checking-in" during the seminar to share views of what was going well and what needed to be adapted helped to make the content and activities more relevant to students.

Instructors who teach undergraduate intercultural communication courses may find themselves constrained by limited time, textbook content, and/or uneasiness when considering how they will cover racism and whiteness within their courses. This research contributes to communication scholarship by offering a potential companion course to intercultural communication, a possible seminar that could be offered at colleges and universities across the United States, and/or arguments for increasing the attention paid to these concepts in current intercultural communication textbooks. Discourse from this pilot seminar confirmed much of the existing research on how students react when discussions turn to racism and white privilege; therefore, change needs to occur in how these issues are addressed in pedagogy, curriculum, textbooks, course offerings, etc. This study offers one opportunity for growth in communication scholarship and curriculum.

Limitations and Strengths

As is the nature with any pilot study, there were several limitations to this research. The size for the seminar—twelve participants—was appropriate for this type of intense discussion and role-play activities. However, time and cost were constraints that did not allow for the opportunity to conduct multiple seminars and increase the number of students who took part in the seminar. The cultural demographic diversity among the participants was varied; the age span was 21 through 61, students described their racial identifications as: white, Caucasian, black, Spanish, Hispanic, white/black and human, and their ethnic identifications had variations including European, white American,

Latino, Hispanic, Native American, African, and Sailor, and eleven designations by one individual. The slippage in orientations to race and ethnicity is evident as well as some resistance to offering "traditional" labels. These responses point to the value of inviting participants to name their own identifications in that any sort of forced choice "check-the-box" measures would not have captured the complexities of their subjectivities.

Additionally, three participants reported growing up in poverty, with others reporting working class, lower middle class, and middle class positions; seven identified as male and five identified as female. The difficulty some students may have had choosing to join the group for "whites" or "persons of color" also demonstrates that although individuals are positioned into subject locations by others often based on appearance, when individuals choose their own locations, the choices become more complex. The way individuals negotiated and positioned their identifications on the surveys and throughout the seminar demonstrated that race and ethnicity were both involved in stepping into a "persons of color" location themselves. These moves also call for more attention to biracial and hybrid subjectivities (such as Blasian, see Washington, 2012) in seminars and research about race and privilege. Nonetheless, the level of diversity in the seminar ensured that a wide range of perspectives and positionalities were heard throughout the seminar.

Conducting the entire three-day seminar in one weekend may also not have been ideal after further reflection and analysis of the surveys. The material covered during the first two days contained challenging content and sparked some intense emotions. Emotional intensity was expected, since the topics of whiteness and white privilege can raise defensiveness, anger and confusion. Because of the time constraints, however, the

participants did not have a lot of time for reflection and we had to move on to the third

day of strategies for confronting and interrupting white privilege when participants may

have benefitted from time to reflect on the information from the first two days. When

asked about recommended changes that I could make to the seminar on the post-seminar

surveys, one participant said the following:

> If it were possible, I would make it a two-part seminar, with a couple month gap
>
> between parts. As a white male with little factual knowledge about the topics, I
>
> needed a lot of time to really understand and see the totality of it all. I think the
>
> first part would just be a big knowledge drop to make the person aware of it all.
>
> Then the gap would allow for it to really sink in. It would allow the person to live
>
> life for a while with the new knowledge and see the world without the white
>
> privilege veil obscuring the reality of it. Then the second part would be all about
>
> confronting skills and role-playing. I think something like that would be the best
>
> approach. Not the easiest, I understand.

Ideally, I would have spread the seminar across three separate weekends so that I could

split apart the readings and given participants more time to reflect and gather their

thoughts and reactions to each part of the seminar, and also allow them the chance to talk

through their feelings and reactions with friends or family members, perhaps.

Another limitation of the pilot seminar was that since students were participating

on a voluntary basis and did not receive course credit or compensation for participating (a

requirement for IRB approval to limit coercion or undue bias) they had no incentive to

remain connected in order to work on action plans. One of the goals of the seminar was

for participants to create a group action plan for confronting/interrupting white privilege

in their local communities. At the end of the third day, after creating two general action plans through a brainstorming session, the participants split into two groups of six. They each chose a group based on the action plan they were most interested in working on, then spent an hour discussing and developing the plan, with the established goal of carrying out the plan after leaving the seminar.

The limitation with this particular seminar component is that when the participants are strangers to one another, have no connection outside the seminar, and are busy college undergraduates, it is much more difficult for them to remain in contact and carry out their group action plans once the seminar is over and their busy lives take over. Their comments from the post-seminar surveys regarding these action plans included, "We got off to a great start. I set up meetings and found little response to them," "I agree with disrupting white privilege, but don't have time to organize anything," "While white privilege is certainly a problem in our society and we need education about it, if I am being honest, it is not what I am most passionate about. I am more than willing to help, but I am not the best person to have organizing events on this," "I would love to work with a group to disrupt white privilege in some way however I think it needs to be with other people who believe in the cause and have time, organizational skills, resources. I am not personally prepared to lead a group," and finally:

> My emotions were very torn because while developing our plan, it started to become very realistic just how small of a group we were and how big of a change we were attempting to make. I also felt that I came from a very different viewpoint than many other people in my group which made it difficult for them to see my struggle.

The group action plan process discussions can be better understood by examining different levels of agency. The comments evidence the students' recognition of their own struggles that were not shared, thus limiting the potential for alliances, some individuals having the capacity to "walk away" because they were interested in other things, and of the challenging context in which structural changes are attempted by a small collective. Several of the participants did report on their post-seminar surveys that they had taken actions individually, however. One participant reported the following: "I wrote a statement about white privilege, posted it to my Facebook and sent it to a few people via email. I am working up the courage to send it to some of the people I anticipate being less receptive. I have had several personal conversations with people including strangers about the subject."

There were several strengths of this research project, as well. One strength was that I was able to assess participants' knowledge and views before, during, and one month after the seminar, with a 100% return rate on all surveys. This type of knowledge allowed me to get a good sense of the participants' definitions, examples, experiences, and emotions about the topics of the seminar before they were exposed to any readings or discussions. The surveys that they took throughout the seminar provided me with an idea of how their constructions of racism, intersectionality, and white privilege were evolving throughout the process, if at all. And finally, the post-seminar surveys allowed me the opportunity to see how responses revealed retention, expansion, or change in concepts, definitions, and examples. This type of knowledge is not frequently found within research on anti-racism trainings and seminars, as follow-up data is not easily collected. While one month afterward is not necessarily long-term follow-up, it did provide me with a good

sense of where participants were related to the learning outcomes I set after they had time to digest the information, take action if they so chose, and process their emotions and reactions to the entire seminar.

Another strength of this research was the utilization of critical communication pedagogy throughout the design stage and the entirety of the seminar. The process was designed to be collaborative between the facilitators and participants and this was discussed on the first night of the seminar. As facilitators, we presented participants with a description of all of our roles and sought their feedback on how they see our roles, as well. The role-play activities gave the participants opportunities to practice their skills in a collaborative environment, whereby we paused each role-play and asked for coaching and suggestions from everyone in the room so that we could collectively design the best strategies to employ in each of the role-play scenarios. This type of theoretical and methodological framework is a different approach to social justice and anti-racism work than is predominantly represented in current scholarship.

A final strength of this study is that it was designed to be an accompaniment to communication courses like Intercultural Communication and/or courses that feature race/ethnicity, gender, and intersectionality in some fashion. The readings and activities in this seminar are meant for undergraduates who already have some exposure to issues of racism, classism, and a variety of other isms, so that the focus is less on teaching participants and more on transformative learning, collaboration, and social justice. The use of two co-facilitators who have different identity positions was also a strength that allowed for multiple viewpoints to be presented to participants, as well as facilitators

leading the breakout groups for those who identify as white and those who identify as people of color.

Future Research

In the future, I hope to continue doing social justice and equity work surrounding the topics of whiteness and systemic racism. This pilot seminar provided me the opportunity to design and offer curriculum for college undergraduates to equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary to confront and interrupt racism and white privilege in their lives. Keeping in mind the strengths and limitations outlined above, there are several opportunities for future research in this area. The video recordings of the role-play activity could potentially be used in future research to discuss the performative aspect of participants' discourse and actions during the scenarios where they were confronting racism and white privilege. Their embodied engagement could provide rich data for a paper on the performance aspect of confronting and disrupting white privilege.

The data that I collected from participants will also allow me to revise the seminar and make minor changes to the format before conducting it a second time with a new group of college undergraduates. For example, the extremely personal responses to Matthew Heimbach that positioned him as a racist and uninformed individual showed that either the video needed more contextualization or another interview might have been more appropriate. On the other hand, the recording of student responses to this interview could provide more data on the ease with which views of racism feature individual orientations and enable views of racism to be focused on the attitudes and behaviors of extreme individuals with extreme positions rather than on institutions and systems.

Utilizing the knowledge that I gained by piloting the seminar on this first group of participants will continue to be helpful as I re-work the seminar for future students. Additionally, using a group of students who have a level of familiarity with one another before the seminar could increase the collaborative nature of the discussions and activities, as well as enhance the level of trust required when discussing topics like racism and privilege publicly.

Other studies that will fill gaps in the literature are to examine interdiscursivity and ideologies in more detail, and compare histories, public discourses and institutional policies and practices with discourses of seminar participants. As well, examining intersectionality in more detail would be useful. Uncovering the examples used by participants would suggest important information about subject positioning and where participants did contest or could contest essentialist generalizations.

Future work that encourages people to confront, disrupt, and interrupt whiteness and systemic racism is necessary and important if progress is to be made toward greater equity and inclusion for all people living in the United States. While studies like this one have the potential to reach only a small number of people who may enact change, other educators and practitioners who are doing similar work have the potential to reach an even greater number of people and, thus, increase the number of change agents who will continue to confront, disrupt, and interrupt whiteness and white privilege.

References

Alexander, M. (2012). *The new Jim Crow: Mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness*. New York: The New Press.

Allen, B. J. (2007). Theorizing communication and race. *Communication Monographs, 74*(2), 259-264.

Allen, R. L. (2008). What about poor white people? In W. Ayers, T. Quinn, & D. Stovall (Eds.), *The handbook of social justice in education* (pp. 209-230). New York: Routledge.

Althusser, L. (1971). *Lenin and philosophy and other essays.* (B. Brewster, Trans.). London New

Left Books.

Althusser, L. (1984). *Essays on ideology*. London: Verso.

Ashcraft, K. L., & Allen, B. J. (2003). The racial foundation of organizational communication. *Communication Theory, 13*(1), 5-38.

Avant-Mier, R., & Hasian, M. (2002). In search of the power of Whiteness: A genealogical exploration of negotiated racial identities in America's ethnic past. *Communication Quarterly, 50*(3), 391-409.

Battalora, J. (2013). *Birth of a white nation: The invention of white people and its relevance today*. Houston, TX: Strategic Book Publishing and Rights Co.

Bellah, R. N., Madsen, R., Sullivan, W. M., Swidler, A., & Tipton, S. M. (1985). *Habits of the heart: Individualism and commitment in American life.* Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

Billig, M. (1982). *Ideology and social psychology: Extremism, moderation, and contradiction.* New York: St. Martin's Press.

Billig, M., Condor, S., Edwards, D., Gane, M., Middleton, D., & Radley, A. (1988). *Ideological dilemmas: A social psychology of everyday thinking.* London: Sage Publications.

Bonilla-Silva, E. (1997). Rethinking racism: Toward a structural interpretation. *American Sociological Review, 62*(3), 465-480.

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2000). "This is a white country": The racial ideology of the western nations of the world-system. *Sociological Inquiry, 70*(2), 188-214.

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2003). Racial attitudes or racial ideology? An alternative paradigm for examining actors' racial views. *Journal of Political Ideologies, 8*(1), 63-82.

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2010). *Racism without racists: Color-blind racism & racial inequality in contemporary America.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Brah, A., & Phoenix, A. (2004). Ain't I a woman? Revisiting intersectionality. *Journal of International Women's Studies, 5,* 75-86.

Brewer, R. M., & Heitzeg, N. A. (2008). The racialization of crime and punishment: Criminal justice, color-blind racism, and the political economy of the prison industrial complex. *American Behavioral Scientist, 51,* 625-644.

Brislin, R., & Yoshida, T. (1994). *Intercultural communication training: An introduction.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Burke, M. A. (2012). *Racial ambivalence in diverse communities: Whiteness and the power of*

    color-blind ideologies. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Cartmill, M. (1999). The status of the race concept in physical anthropology. *American*

    Anthropologist, 100(3), 651-660.

Center for American Progress. (2012). *The state of communities of color in the U.S. economy:*

    Still feeling the pain three years into the recovery. Washington, D.C.: Weller, C.

E.,   Ajinkya, J., & Farrell, J.

Chambers, R. (1997). The unexamined. In M. Hill (Ed.), *Whiteness: A critical reader* (pp. 187-

    203). New York: New York University Press.

Chesler, M. A., Peet, M., & Sevig, T. (2003). Blinded by whiteness: The development of white

    college students' racial awareness. In Doane, A. W., & Bonilla-Silva, E. (Eds.),

White out: The continuing significance of racism (pp. 215-232). New York: Routledge.

Cho, S. (2009). Post-racialism. *Iowa Law Review, 94*(5), 1598-1645.

Cleaver, K. N. (1997). The antidemocratic power of whiteness. In R. Delgado and J.

    Stefancic (Eds.), *Critical white studies: Looking behind the mirror,* (pp. 157-163).

    Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Collier, M. J. (1998). Researching cultural identity: Reconciling interpretive and postcolonial

 approaches. In D. V. Tanno & A. Gonzalez (Eds.), *Intercultural and international*

 communication annual. Communication and identity across cultures (pp. 122–

 147). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Collier, M. J., & Thomas, M. (1988). Identity in intercultural communication: An interpretive

 perspective. In Y. Y. Kim & W. Gudykunst (Eds.), *Theories of intercultural*

 communication (pp. 99-121). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Collier, M. J. (2013). *Community engagement and intercultural praxis: Dancing with*

 difference in diverse contexts. Critical Intercultural Communication Book Series,

T. Nakayama, Series Editor. New York: Peter Lang.

Collins, P. H. (1998). It's all in the family: Intersections of gender, race, and nation. *Hypatia,*

 13(3), 62-82.

Collins, P. H. (2000). *Black feminist thought, knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of*

 empowerment. New York: Routledge.

Congressional Research Service. (2013). *Membership of the 113th Congress: A profile.*

 Washington, D.C.: Manning, J. E.

Cooks, L. M. (2003). Critical pedagogy as communication education: Researching the

 possibilities. Columbus, OH: Ohio University Press.

Crenshaw, C. (1997). Resisting whiteness' rhetorical silence. *Western Journal of Communication, 61*(3), 253-278.

Crossroads Anti-Racism Organization and Training. (2013). *Racial identity caucusing: A strategy for building anti-racist collectives.* Matteson, IL.

Davis, K. E., & Bent-Goodley, T. B. (2004). *The color of social policy*. Wasington, D.C.: NASW Press.

Dawson, M. C., & Bobo, L. D. (2009). One year later and the myth of a post-racial society. *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race, 6*(2), 247-249.

DeVos, G. (1982) Ethnic pluralism: Conflict and accommodation. In G. DeVos, & L. Romanucci-Ross, (Eds.), *Cultural Continuities and Change*, (pp. 5-21). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

DiAngelo, R. J. (2010). Why can't we all just be individuals?: Countering the Discourse of Individualism in anti-racism education. *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies, 6*(1).

Dyer, R. (1993). *The matter of images: Essays on representations.* New York: Routledge.

Edgerton, R. (1989, June). Report from the President. *AAHA Bulletin*, pp. 14-17.

Endres, D., & Gould, M. (2009). "I am also in the position to use my whiteness to help them out": The communication of whiteness in service learning. *Western Journal of Communication, 73*(4), 418-436.

Essed, P. (2002). Everyday racism: A new approach to the study of racism. In P. Essed & D. T. Goldberg (Eds.), *Race Critical Theories* (pp. 176-194). MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Fairclough, N. (2001). *Language and power* (2nd edition). London: Longman.

Fairclough, N. (2009). A dialectical-relational approach to critical discourse analysis in

    social research. In R. Wodak and M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of critical discourse*

    analysis (pp. 162-186). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Fassett, D. L., & Warren, J. T. (2007). *Critical communication pedagogy.* Thousand

Oaks, CA:

    Sage Publications.

Feagin, J. (2000). *Racist America: Roots, current realities, and future reparations*. New

York:

    Routledge.

Feagin, J., Vera, H., & Batur, P. (2001). *White racism: The basics*. New York: Routledge.

Fish, S. (1993). Reverse racism or how the pot got to call the kettle black. *Atlantic*

Monthly, 272,

    128-130.

Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge and the discourse on language*. New

York:

    Pantheon Books.

Frankenberg, R. (1993). *The social construction of whiteness: White women, race*

matters.

    Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Freire, P. (1970, 2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* London: Continuum International

Publishing

Group.

Franklin, J. H. (1956). History of racial segregation in the United States. *Annals of the American*

    Academy of Political and Social Science, 304, 1-9.

Gallagher, C. A. (1997). White racial formation: Into the Twenty-First century. In R. Delgado &

    J. Stefancic (Eds.), *Critical white studies: Looking behind the mirror* (pp. 6-11).

    Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Gallagher, C. A. (2003). Color-Blind privilege: The social and political functions of erasing the

    color line in post race America. *Race, Gender & Class, 10*(4), 1-17.

Garvey, J. (1996). Panic, rage, and reason on the Long Island Railroad. In N. Ignatiev, & J.

    Garvey (Eds.), *Race Traitor,* (pp. 123-134). New York: Routledge.

Giroux, H. (1997). Rewriting the discourse of racial identity: Towards a pedagogy and politics of

    whiteness. *Harvard Educational Review, 67*(2)*,* 285-320.

Giroux, H. A., & Giroux H. S. (2006). Challenging neoliberalism's new world order: The

    promise of critical pedagogy. *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies, 6*(1), 21-32.

Glasrud, B. (2013). Under the radar: Blacks in New Mexico history in B. Glasrud (Ed.).

    African American history in New Mexico: Portraits from five hundred years (pp.

    1-20). New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press.

Haley, H., & Sidanius, J. (2006). The positive and negative framing of affirmative action: A

    group dominance perspective. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 32*, 656–668.

Hall, S. (1982). The rediscovery of ideology: Return to the repressed in media studies. In

M.   Gurevitch, T. Bennett, J. Curon, and J. Woolacott (Eds.), *Culture, Society, and the*

Media,   (pp. 56-90). New York: Methuen.

Hall, S. (1996). The problem with ideology: Marxism without guarantees. In D. Morley and K. H.

    Chen (Eds.), *Stuart Hall: Critical dialogues in cultural studies,* (pp. 24-45). NY:

    Routledge.

Halualani, R. T., & Nakayama T. K. (2010). Critical intercultural communication studies:

    At a crossroads. In Nakayama, T. K, & Halualani, R. T. (Eds.), *The Handbook of*

    Critical Intercultural Communication (pp. 1-16). Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

hooks, b. (1981). *Ain't I a woman: Black women and feminism.* Boston, MA: South End.

hooks, b. (1989). *Talking back: Thinking feminist, thinking black.* Cambridge, MA: South

    End Press.

Ignatiev, N. (2008). *How the Irish became white.* New York: Routledge.

Ignatiev, N., & Garvey, J. (1996). Abolish the white race. In N. Ignatiev, & J. Garvey (Eds.),

    Race Traitor, (pp. 9-14). New York: Routledge.

Jackson, R. L., & Garner, T. (1998). Tracing the evolution of "race," "ethnicity," and "culture"in

Communication Studies. *Howard Journal of Communications, 9,* 41-55.

Jackson, R. L., Shin, C. I., & Wilson, K. B. (2000). The meaning of Whiteness: Critical

implications of communicating and negotiating race. *World Communication,*

29(1), 69-86.

Johnson, A. G. (2001). *Power, privilege and difference.* New York: McGraw Hill

Companies.

Jasper, J. M. (1998). The emotions of protest: Affective and reactive emotions in and

around   social movements. *Sociological Forum, 13*(3), 397-424.

Johnson, J. R. (2010). Universal instructional design and critical (communication)

pedagogy:

Strategies for voice, inclusion, and social justice/change. *Equity and Excellence in*

Education, 37, 145-153.

Johnson, J. R., Rich, M., & Cargile, A. C. (2008). "Why are you shoving this stuff down

our

throats?": Preparing intercultural educators to challenge performances of white

racism.   *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication, 1*(2), 113-135.

Keating, A. L. (1995). Interrogating "whiteness," (de)constructing "race." *College*

English, 57(8), 901-918.

Khanna, N. (2010). "If you're half black, you're just black": Reflected appraisals and the

persistence of the one-drop rule. *The Sociological Quarterly, 51*, 96-121.

Kraiger, K., Ford, J. K., & Salas, E. (1993). Application of cognitive, skill-based, and

affective theories of learning outcomes to new methods of training evaluations.

Journal of Applied Psychology, 78(2), 311-328.

Leonardo, Z. (2009). *Race, whiteness, and education.* New York: Routledge.

Lewis, A. E. (2004). "What group?" Studying whites and whiteness in the era of "color-blindness." *Sociological Theory, 22*(4), 623-646.

Lipsitz, G. (1995). The possessive investment in whiteness: Racialized social democracy and the "white" problem in American Studies. *American Quarterly, 47*(3), 369-387.

Lopez, I. H. (2006). *White by law: The legal construction of race.* New York: New York University Press.

Lorde, A. (1980). Age, race, class, and sex: Women redefining difference. In A. Kesselman, L McNair, and N Schniedewind (Eds.), *Women images and realities: A multicultural anthology* (pp. 267-272). Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company.

Martin, S. F. (2011). *A nation of immigrants.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Martin, J. N., & Davis, O. I. (2001). Conceptual foundations for teaching about whiteness in intercultural communication courses. *Communication Education, 50*(4), 298-313.

Martin, J. N., & Nakayama, T. K. (2006). Communication as raced. In G. Shepard, J. St John, & T. Striphas (Eds.), *Communication as…: Perspectives on theory* (pp. 75-83). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Martin, J. N., & Nakayama, T. K. (2013). *Intercultural communication in contexts.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

McIntosh, P. (1988). White privilege and male privilege: A personal account of coming to see correspondences through work in women's studies. Center for Research on Women: Working Paper Series. Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA.

McIntyre, A. (1997). *Making meaning of whiteness: Exploring racial identity with white teachers.* New York: Suny Press.

McLaren, P. (2003). *Life in schools: An introduction to critical pedagogy in the foundation of education.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Mills, C. W. (1997). *The racial contract.* New York: Cornell University Press.

Moon, D. G. (2010). Critical reflections on culture and critical intercultural communication. In Nakayama, T. K, & Halualani, R. T. (Eds.), *The Handbook of Critical Intercultural Communication* (pp. 34-52). Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Norton, M. I., & Sommers, S. R. (2011). Whites see racism as a zero-sum game that they are losing. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 6*(3), 215-218.

Office of the State Historian. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.newmexicohistory.org.

Omi, M., & Winant, H. (1994). *Racial formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s.* New York: Routledge.

Pedersen, A., Walker, I., & Wise, M. (2005). "Talk does not cook rice": Beyond anti-racism rhetoric to strategies for social action. *Australian Psychologist, 40*(1), 20-30.

Petrilli, S. (2010). Whiteness matters: What lies in the future? *Semiotica, 180*(1), 147-163.

Rebollo-Gil, G., & Moras, A. (2006). Defining an 'anti' stance: Key pedagogical questions about engaging anti-racism in college classrooms. *Race, Ethnicity and Education, 9*(4), 381-394.

Roediger, D. R. (1998). *Black on white: Black writers on what it means to be white.* D. R. Roediger (Ed.). New York: Schocken Books, Inc.

Roediger, D. R. (1999). *The wages of whiteness: Race and the making of the American working class.* New York: Verso.

Rothenberg (2005) *White privilege: Essential readings on the other side of racism.* New York: Worth Publishers.

Shome, R. (1996). Postcolonial interventions in the rhetorical canon: An "Other" view. *Communication Theory, 6*(1), 40-59.

Shome, R. (2000). Outing whiteness. *Critical Studies in Media Communication, 17*, 366-371.

Shome, R., & Hegde, R. S. (2002). Postcolonial approaches to communication: Charting the terrain, engaging the intersections. *Communication Theory, 12*, 249-270.

Simpson, J. S., Causey, A., & Williams, L. (2007). ''I would want you to understand it'': Students' perspectives on addressing race in the classroom. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research, 36*, 33-50.

Slocum, R. (2009). The embodied politics of pain in US anti-racism. *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies, 8*(1), 18-45.

Sorrells, K. (2012). *Intercultural communication: Globalization and social justice.* Thousand

　　　Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Sprague, J. (1993). Retrieving the research agenda for communication education: Asking the

　　　pedagogical questions that are "embarrassments to theory." *Communication Education,　42,* 106-122.

Steele, S. (2008) Obama's post-racial promise: Barack Obama seduced whites with a vision of

　　　their racial innocence precisely to coerce them into acting out of a racial motivation. *Los　Angeles Times.* P. A6.

Tatum. B. D. (1992). Talking about race, learning about racism: The application of Racial

　　　Identity Development Theory in the classroom. *Harvard Educational Review, 62*(1), 1-24.

Tatum, B. D. (1994). Teaching white students about racism: The search for white allies and the

　　　restoration of hope. *Teachers College Record, 95*(4), 462-476.

Taylor, Q. (1998). In search of the racial frontier: African Americans in the west 1528-

　　　1990. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Thompson, J., & Collier, M. J. (2006). Toward contingent understandings of intersecting

　　　identifications among selected U.S. interracial couples: Integrating interpretive

　　　and critical views. *Communication Quarterly, 54*(4), 487-506.

Trainor, J. S. (2005). "My ancestors didn't own slaves": Understanding white talk about race.

  Research in the Teaching of English, 40(2), 140-167.

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2002). *Defining and*

  assessing learning: Exploring competency-based initiatives, NCES 2002-159,

prepared by Elizabeth A. Jones and Richard A. Voorhees, with Karen Paulson, for

the Council of the National Postsecondary Education Cooperative Working Group on

Competency- Based Initiatives. Washington, DC.

Wander, P. C., Martin, J., N., & Nakayama, T. K. (1998). Whiteness and beyond:

  Sociohistorical foundations of whiteness and contemporary challenges. In T. K.

  Nakayama & J. N. Martin (Eds.), *Whiteness: The communication of social*

  identity (pp. 13-26). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Warren, J. T. (2001). Doing whiteness: On the performative dimensions of race in the

  classroom. *Communication Education, 50*(2), 91-108.

Warren, J. T. (2010). It really isn't about you: Whiteness and the dangers of thinking you got it.

  In T. K. Nakayama & R. T. Halualani (Eds.), *The handbook of critical*

intercultural communication (pp. 446-460). Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing.

Washington, M. (2012). *Branding Blasians: mixed race Black/Asian Americans in the celebrity*

industrial complex (Doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign).

Whitehead, C. (2009, November 9). The year of living postracially. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com.

Wildman, S. M. (2005). The persistence of white privilege. *Washington University Journal of Law and Policy, 18,* 245-265.

Wise, T. (2008). *White like me: Reflections on race from a privileged son.* Berkley, CA: Soft Skull Press.

Appendix A

Seminar Schedule

Day	Time	Activity	Learning Objective
Friday	5:30pm	**Co-facilitator introductions** Both facilitators read "Where I'm from" poems	
Friday	5:50pm	**Participant introductions** Name, where you're from, complete the following sentence: "the first time I remember being aware of my race was _____"	
Friday	6:20pm	**Overview of seminar** Pass out packets, schedule, etc. What to expect Your role as participants Our role as facilitators Basic tenets of critical communication pedagogy and what it means for us to be a community Create community norms Explain video taping, break-out groups, opting out of sharing Questions and concerns?	
Friday	7:00pm	**Break**	
Friday	7:05pm	**Creation/perpetuation of white domination** (Matt) Partner activity Race as a social construction Tim Wise video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3Xe1kX7Wsc (9½ minutes) Go through/explain table Discussion/Questions?	L.O. 1
Friday	7:50pm	**Break**	
Friday	8:00pm (end at 9pm)	**Defining racism** (Angela) Watch video by Crossroads (definition of racism) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_P4tct7SYKQ (6 minutes) Discussion of systemic racism vs. individual racist acts Share examples of racism from our own lives Questions?	L.O. 2
Saturday	9:00am	De-brief Friday's activities, address questions or concerns before we begin Survey completion	L.O. 1&2
Saturday	9:30am	**Defining privilege** (Matt and Angela)	L.O. 3

		Present definitions handout
		Patricia Hill Collins reading (discussion)
		    Matrix of domination (pp 221-238 from Black
		    Feminist Thought)
		McIntosh wheel of oppression (activity)
		Large group discussion	

Saturday	11:00am	**Break**	

Saturday	11:10am	**Defining privilege** (Matt and Angela) continued
		Audrey Lorde reading (discussion)
		    Age, Race, Class, Sex from Women: Images and
		    Realities, a Multicultural Anthology
		Standing in the face of privilege (activity)
		Breakout groups (students of color and white
		students)
			L.O. 3

Saturday	12:45pm	**Lunch**	
Saturday	1:30pm	**Defining white privilege** (Matt and Angela) McIntosh Knapsack reading (discussion) Knapsack checklist (activity) Individual reflection *Mirrors of Privilege: Making Whiteness Visible* (50 minutes) Breakout groups (students of color and white students) Large group discussion	L.O. 3
Saturday	3:45pm	**Break**	
Saturday	4:00pm	Color of Fear excerpt—identifying examples of white privilege (activity) Watch an excerpt from Color of Fear and work to identify examples of white privilege in the discourse Work in small groups and share/compare examples Discuss as a large group	L.O. 4
Saturday	5:15pm	Survey completion	L.O. 3&4
Saturday	5:30pm	Large group de-briefing and preview of day 3	
Sunday	9:00am	Address any questions/issues from day 2	
Sunday	9:15am	Group activity—what are the consequences of white privilege? Work in small groups to come up with consequences of white privilege for whites and people of color Large group discussion	L.O. 5
Sunday	10:15am	Partner walk-about	
Sunday	10:45am	**Strategies for confronting white privilege** Watch interview with Matthew Heimbach Identify and discuss his arguments How could we respond to someone with his	L.O. 4&6

		perspective? Strategize possible responses and questions to ask someone with his perspective if engaged in a discussion/debate	
Sunday	11:30am	Role-play Present scenarios (one-on-one, at work, in social situations, at a PTA meeting, etc.) Have students participate in scenarios through role-play activity (in pairs) **get through at least ½ the group	L.O. 6
Sunday	12:30pm	**Lunch**	
Sunday	1:15pm	Finish role-play activity	L.O. 6
Sunday	2:00pm	Individual reflection	
Sunday	2:15pm	**Current events** Read news articles, watch video clips of recent events Identify white privilege within the events and strategize ways to confront privilege in each of the examples	L.O. 5&6
Sunday	2:45pm	Survey completion	L.O. 5&6
Sunday	3:00pm	**Break**	
Sunday	3:05pm	**Design a plan to disrupt white privilege** Discuss ways to do this individually Brainstorm ideas for disrupting white privilege as a group	L.O. 7
Sunday	3:50pm	Meet in groups based on interest in the ideas generated from brainstorm session Each group devises a plan of action Present plans to the larger group and get feedback, suggestions, etc.	L.O. 7
Sunday	5:05pm	**Break**	
Sunday	5:15pm	Closing discussion Final survey Thank you to participants	

Appendix B

Seminar Reading List

Collins, P. H. (2000). *Black feminist thought, knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of*

empowerment. (pp. 221-238). New York: Routledge.

Lorde, A. (1980). Age, race, class, and sex: Women redefining difference. In A.

Kesselman, L McNair, and N Schniedewind (Eds.), *Women images and realities: A multicultural anthology* (pp. 267-272). Mountain View, CA: Mayfield

Publishing Company.

McIntosh, P. (1988). White privilege and male privilege: A personal account of coming

to see correspondences through work in women's studies. Center for Research on

Women: Working Paper Series. Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA.

Appendix C

Pre-Seminar Survey

Consent Form

1. The University of New Mexico
Consent to Participate in Research

Understanding White Privilege
07/14/2013

Introduction
You are being asked to participate in a research study that is being done by Angela Putman, who is the Principal Investigator, and Dr. Mary Jane Collier, who is the supervising faculty member from the Department of Communication and Journalism. This research is studying white privilege. You are being asked to participate in a 2 1/2 day seminar on understanding white privilege that Angela Putman has created for the purposes of her dissertation research. This research is a pilot of the seminar and the data collected will be used by Angela Putman to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the seminar in her dissertation.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you have previously taken a communication course with Ms. Putman. Approximately 14-20 people will take part in this study at the University of New Mexico. This form will explain the research study, and will also explain the possible risks as well as the possible benefits to you. We encourage you to talk with your family and friends before you decide to take part in this research study. If you have any questions, please ask one of the study investigators.

What will happen if I decide to participate?
If you agree to participate, the following things will happen:
• The seminar will last 2 1/2 days over a weekend.
• You will be given a schedule of events on the first day of the seminar and will be asked to follow this schedule.
• During the seminar, there will be discussions, group activities, and role-plays in which you will be asked to participate.
• Three of the activities during the seminar will be audio or video recorded. The researcher will transcribe these recordings without revealing any names or other identifying information of the participants.
• You will also be asked to complete a survey two weeks before the seminar, several mini-surveys during the seminar, and a final survey one month after the seminar concludes.
• The information collected during the study will be written in Angela Putman's dissertation

Pre-Seminar Survey

and may be submitted for conferences or publication.

How long will I be in this study?

Participation in the seminar will take a total of 20.5 hours over a period of 2 1/2 days. Two weeks prior to the seminar you'll be asked to complete an online survey, and one month after the seminar you'll be asked to complete another online survey. Your total time commitment will be 23 hours.

What are the risks or side effects of being in this study?

• A minimal risk exists that you may be identified by quoted responses in conference papers or publications. However, the researcher will take every measure to ensure that all information is written in such a way that individuals cannot be identified by what they say.

• There is also a risk that other participants in the seminar will share your personal information with someone outside the seminar. However, the researcher will explain this to all participants and ask that they keep all information discussed confidential.

There are risks of stress, emotional distress, inconvenience and possible loss of privacy and confidentiality associated with participating in a research study.

For more information about risks and side effects, ask the investigator.

What are the benefits to being in this study?

• One benefit of participating in this study is that you will have the chance to talk about your experiences with racism and white privilege with others.

• You may also learn more about yourself through hearing about other students' experiences.

• The potential societal benefits of this study are that participants will create an action plan for disrupting white privilege in your local communities and may also talk about some of the knowledge and skills that you learned through the seminar with others.

What other choices do I have if I do not want to be in this

○ Continue

Pre-Seminar Survey

*2. How will my information be kept confidential?

We will take measures to protect the security of all your personal information, but we cannot guarantee confidentiality of all study data.

The University of New Mexico Institutional Review Board (IRB) that oversees human subject research and/or other entities may be permitted to access your records. There may be times when we are required by law to share your information. However, your name will not be used in any published reports about this study.

Information collected as part of the study will be labeled with a confidential code that will be emailed to you with the link to the survey; information (without your name) will be entered into a computer database/locked file cabinet in the Principal Investigator's home office. Angela Putman and her research assistant will have access to your study information. Data will be stored until the dissertation has been defended and will then be destroyed.

What are the costs of taking part in this study?

There are no costs for participating in this study; however, participants must transport themselves to campus all three days of the seminar.

Will I be paid for taking part in this study?

There is no compensation for participating in this study.

How will I know if you learn something new that may change my mind about participating?

You will be informed of any significant new findings that become available during the course of the study, such as changes in the risks or benefits resulting from participating in the research or new alternatives to participation that might change your mind about participating.

Can I stop being in the study once I begin?

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to choose not to participate or to withdraw your participation at any point in this study without affecting your future health care or other services to which you are entitled.

The researcher does not foresee any circumstances where a participant would be withdrawn from the study.

Whom can I call with questions or complaints about this study?

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints at any time about the research study, Angela Putman, or her associates will be glad to answer them at 972-523-4083.

If you need to contact someone after business hours or on weekends, please call the

Pre-Seminar Survey

same number.

If you would like to speak with someone other than the research team, you may call the UNMHSC HRPO at (505) 272-1129.

Whom can I call with questions about my rights as a research participant?

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may call the UNMHSC HRPO at (505) 272-1129. The HRPO is a group of people from UNM and the community who provide independent oversight of safety and ethical issues related to research involving human participants. For more information, you may also access the IRB website at http://hsc.unm.edu/som/research/hrrc/irbhome.shtml.

CONSENT

You are making a decision whether to participate (or to have your child participate) in this study. Your signature below indicates that you/your child read the information provided (or the information was read to you/your child). By signing this consent form, you are not waiving any of your (your child's) legal rights as a research participant.

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and all questions have been answered to my satisfaction. By clicking "Yes," I agree to participate in this study. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you at the seminar.

By clicking "No," I do not agree o participate in this study.

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

*3. Text

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

This survey is to assess your knowledge about a variety of topics that are related to the seminar. Please answer each question without using any outside resources; I am interested in assessing what you know at this moment and what you think/believe at this moment. If you do not have a response to a question, it is okay to answer, "I do not know." If you do not understand a question, please write in "question is unclear." This information will be used for my dissertation and all information will be kept confidential. In the name box, please write in the confidential code you were provided in your email.

Pre-Seminar Survey

This survey is to assess your knowledge about a variety of topics that are related to the seminar. Please answer each question without using any outside resources; I am interested in assessing what you know at this moment and what you think/believe at this moment. If you do not have a response to a question, it is okay to answer, "I do not know." If you do not understand a question, please write in "question is unclear." This information will be used for my dissertation and all information will be kept confidential. In the name box, please write in the confidential code you were provided in your email.

1. How do you define racism?

2. Please describe an example of racism.

3. Please define intersectionality and describe your intersecting identities.

4. Think of someone you know with a different racial identity and describe her/his intersecting identities.

5. Looking at the list of identities described in #3 and #4, in a professional setting, which of these identities are positioned in higher or lower status in relation to one another?

6. After reflecting about these advantages and disadvantages, what emotions, if any, arise for you?

Pre-Seminar Survey

7. Please define white privilege.

8. Please describe two examples of white privilege in two different settings.

9. Please describe two consequences of white privilege, each in a different setting, for people who can be identified as white.

10. Please describe two consequences of white privilege, each in a different setting, for people who can be positioned racially as marginalized.

11. In thinking about these consequences, what emotions arise for you?

For the following scenarios, indicate whether you believe each scenario is an example of an individual racist act, an example of systemic racism, or neither of these options.

12. A black male is pulled over by a police officer for no apparent reason

○ Individual racist act   ○ Systemic racism   ○ Neither of these

13. There is currently a very small number of Fortune 500 CEO's who are people of color

○ Individual racist act   ○ Systemic racism   ○ Neither of these

14. A person of color uses a racial epithet toward another person of color

○ Individual racist act   ○ Systemic racism   ○ Neither of these

15. A very large number of black males are incarcerated for drug-related crimes

○ Individual racist act   ○ Systemic racism   ○ Neither of these

Pre-Seminar Survey

16. A company hires a person of color because of her/his race over a white person due to company-wide diversity policy

   ○ Individual racist act   ○ Systemic racism   ○ Neither of these

17. A white person uses a racial epithet toward a person of color

   ○ Individual racist act   ○ Systemic racism   ○ Neither of these

18. A significant gap exists in accumulated wealth between whites and people of color

   ○ Individual racist act   ○ Systemic racism   ○ Neither of these

19. A white male is pulled over by a Latino police officer for no apparent reason

   ○ Individual racist act   ○ Systemic racism   ○ Neither of these

20. A white high school student is denied entry into a university over a student of color due to a university-wide affirmative action policy

   ○ Individual racist act   ○ Systemic racism   ○ Neither of these

21. A significant number of university scholarships are available to students of color that are not available to white students

   ○ Individual racist act   ○ Systemic racism   ○ Neither of these

22. Please name two institutional or societal systems that produce and perpetuate racism.

23. Please name two events throughout the history of the United States that have led to whites' position of superiority and domination.

24. Share an example of a time you spoke up and effectively engaged someone whose comment demonstrated white privilege. Describe the situation. What did you both do/say? How did you feel in that moment?

Pre-Seminar Survey

25. What are some of your feelings about confronting or interrupting racism and/or white privilege in a conversation with others?

26. Please provide two examples of texts and/or communicative acts that illustrate white privilege (these can be from politics, movies, social media, news discourse, organizations, conversations, etc.).

27. Please describe a situation where you created an individual plan to disrupt white privilege in your local community. What was the outcome, if any?

28. Please describe a situation where you worked within a group to create a plan to disrupt white privilege in your local community. What was the outcome, if any?

29. What emotions did you feel during the developing and/or implementing of the plan? Please describe.

30. Name (Confidential Code)

For the following questions, use the labels that you use to describe yourself.

31. Race(s)

32. Gender(s)

33. Age

Pre-Seminar Survey

34. Ethnicity(ies)

35. Sexuality(ies)?

36. How would you describe the socioeconomic status of your family growing up?

37. How has your socioeconomic status changed since childhood, if at all?

38. What communication courses have you previously taken?

39. Have you taken any courses on race, gender, and/or sexuality? If so, please list.

40. Are you a member of a community or student organization related to race, gender, and/or sexuality? If so, please list.

Appendix D

Establishment of White Domination

Law and Policy[1]	Background	Immediate Effect	Lasting Effects
Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1790	Any alien, being a free white person, may be admitted to become a citizen of the United States	Anyone who is not white, Christian or male (African American, Asian American, Latina/os, Native Americans/American Indians)	Immigration issues – Visas, children born in California with undocumented parents, AZ drivers license issues, Dream Act
Homestead Act of 1862	Granted adult heads of families 160 acres of surveyed public land for a minimal filing fee and 5 years of continuous residence on that land.	Accelerated the settlement of the western territory. Anyone who is not white, needed to be a freedman and not Native American, 1 year before Emancipation Proclamation – no blacks	Beginning of wealth disparity between African Americans and Whites. 90% of homestead land was appropriated from Native American/American Indian Tribes.
Civil Rights Act of 1863 Overturned by Supreme Court in 1875	In 1883, The Supreme Court ruled that the Civil Rights Act of 1875, forbidding discrimination in hotels, trains, and other public spaces, was unconstitutional.	Allows the imposition of separate discriminatory practices to be deemed legal in public accommodations, unions and employment	Paved the way for the Jim Crow Laws of the late 19th & early 20th century. Not overturned until the Civil Rights Act of 1964
Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882	Made it illegal for Chinese laborers to enter the United States for a period of 90 days after the passage of the act, lasting for a period of at least 10 years.	Anyone who is not white, Christian or male (Asian American). Increased mining opportunities for white prospectors, exploitation of Chinese men and women, did	Wasn't repealed until 1943, as China was a critical ally against the Axis powers during WII. Paved the way for other "detention" centers – Japanese Internment

---

[1] Laws and Policies information from National Archives and Records Administration – http://www.ourdocuments.gov

Law and Policy[1]	Background	Immediate Effect	Lasting Effects
		little to slow importation and use of Chinese prostitutes during the Gold Rush (male only).	camps during WII, Guantanamo Bay 2002-present. United States reputation as inhumane, racist, and exclusionary society continued to fester deep-seated resentment.
Japanese Internment Camps – Executive Order 9066	On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt authorized the exclusion and removal of persons of Japanese descent from the west coast, both foreign born (issei–"first generation" of Japanese in the U.S.) and American citizens (nisei– second generation of Japanese in America, U.S. citizens by birthright.)	125,000 men, women & children (70,000 were American Citizens) were rounded up from their homes, stripped of their possessions and property and transported to detention (internment) camps around the Western United States in Idaho, California, Colorado, Texas and Arizona.	"In the detention centers, families lived in substandard housing, had inadequate nutrition and health care, and had their livelihoods destroyed: many continued to suffer psychologically long after their release"[2]

---

[2] Personal Justice Denied: Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians – httpo://www.pbs.org/childofcamp/history/

Appendix E

Quick Definitions

Privilege

Unearned benefits conferred upon members of mainstream or dominant groups (in the U.S., these include male, white, heterosexual, affluent, young, able-bodied and/or Christian) at the expense of others. Privilege exists when one group has something of value that is denied to others simply because of the groups they belong to, rather than because of anything they have done or failed to do. It gives dominant groups a competitive edge that they are unwilling to either acknowledge or relinquish. (Peggy McIntosh, 1988)

Any advantage that is unearned, exclusive, and socially conferred. (Allan Johnson, www.agjohnson.com)

White Privilege

White privilege refers to any advantage, opportunity, benefit, head start, or general protection from negative societal mistreatment, which persons deemed white will typically enjoy, but which others will generally not enjoy. These benefits can be material (such as greater opportunity in the labor market, or greater net worth, due to a history in which whites had the ability to accumulate wealth to a greater extent than persons of color), social (such as presumptions of competence, creditworthiness, law-abidingness, intelligence, etc.) or psychological (such as not having to worry about triggering negative stereotypes, rarely having to feel out of place, not having to worry about racial profiling, etc.). (Tim Wise, www.timwise.org)

A system of white privilege, for example, is white-dominated, which means the default is for white people to occupy positions of power. White-dominance doesn't mean that all white people are powerful, only that the powerful tend almost always to be white, and when a person of color occupies a position of power, that will be noted as an exception to the rule (as when Barack Obama is routinely identified as a black President and not just 'the President'). (Allan Johnson, www.agjohnson.com)

Intersectionality

Analysis claiming that systems of race, social class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, and age form mutually constructing features of social organization, which shape Black women's experiences and, in turn, are shaped by Black women. (Patricia Hill Collins, 2000)
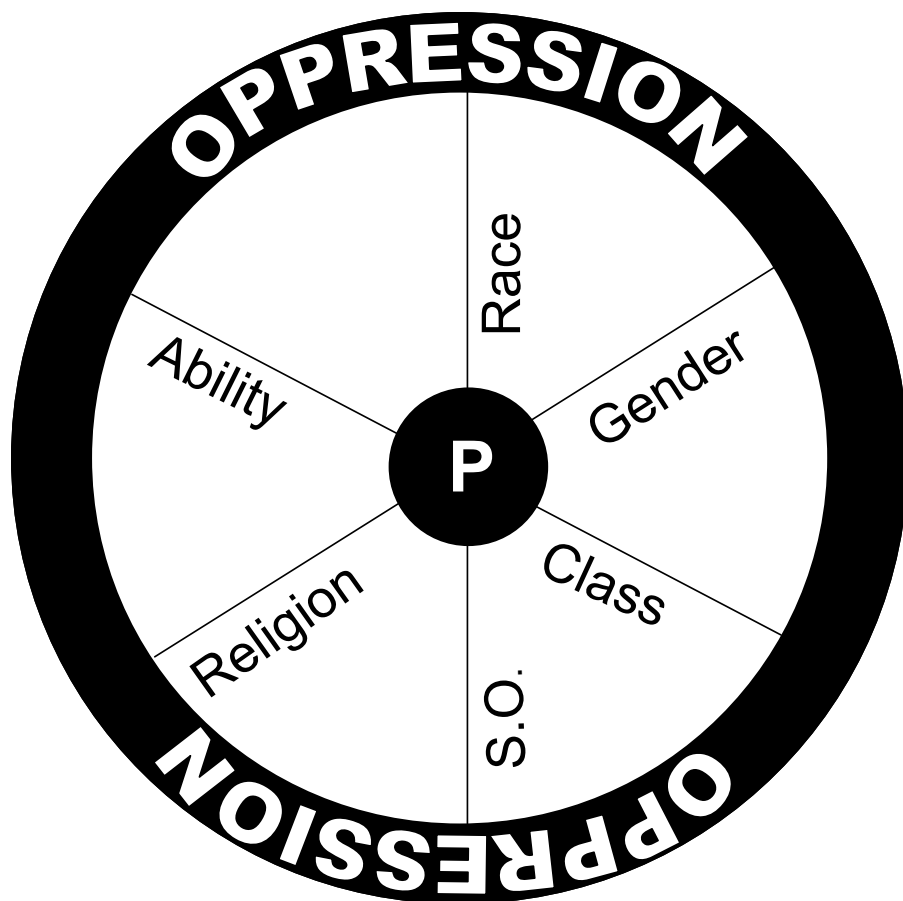
Matrix of Domination

The overall organization of hierarchical power relations for any society. Any specific matrix of domination has (1) a particular arrangement of intersecting systems of oppression, e.g., race, social class, gender, sexuality, citizenship status, ethnicity and age; and (2) a particular organization of its domains of power, e.g., structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal. (Patricia Hill Collins, 2000)

An important note:

We need to be clear that there is no such thing as giving up one's privilege to be "outside" the system. One is always in the system. The only question is whether one is part of the system in a way that challenges or strengthens the status quo. Privilege is not something I take and which I therefore have the option of not taking. It is something that society gives me, and unless I change the institutions that give it to me, they will continue to give it, and I will continue to have it, however noble and egalitarian my intentions (Harry Brod).
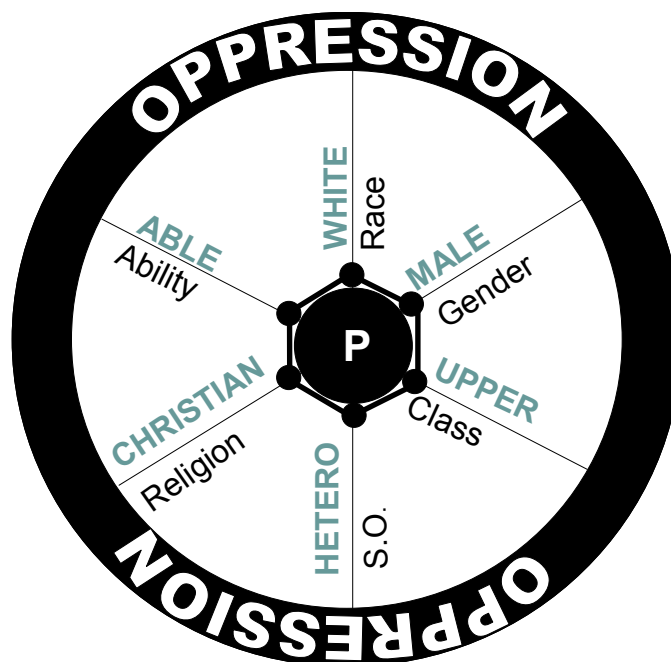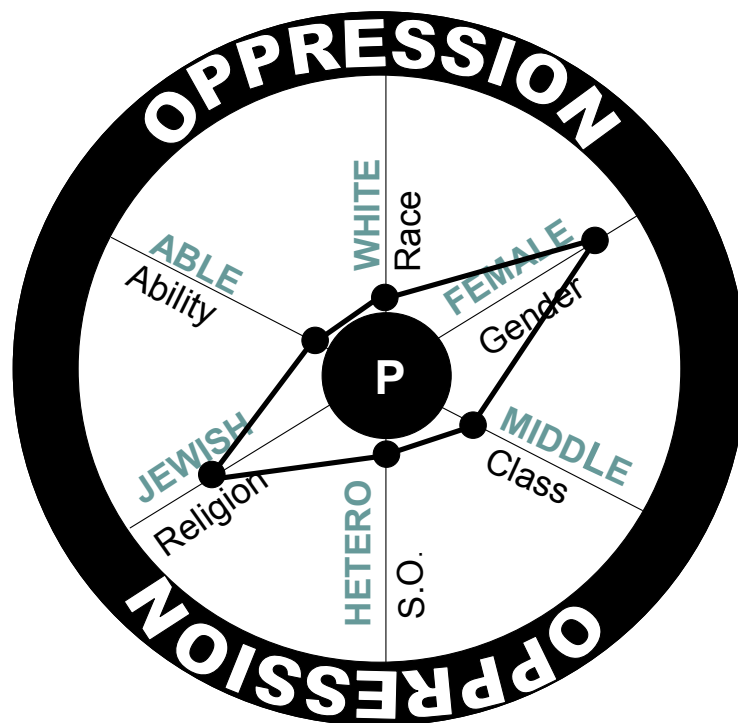
Appendix F

McIntosh's Wheel of Oppression

Appendix G

Completed Wheels of Oppression

Appendix H

Role-Play Scenarios

1. During a conversation with another student, s/he makes a comment that "we live in a different time now and there is no need anymore for policies like Affirmative Action."
2. A student in class makes a comment during discussion about neighborhoods that are "ghetto."
3. At a family gathering, a family member brings up the Paula Deen incident and says, "Black people say the N-word all time, so I don't see why everyone is making such a big deal about Paula saying it. She apologized and people should get over it."
4. "Where are you from?" "I'm from San Diego (or another city)." "No, where are you FROM?"
5. In the break room at work, you hear a co-worker say that she is applying to go back to school and is fed up with all of the scholarships available that are only for minorities. She then asks, "where are the scholarships for white people?"
6. During a small-group discussion in class, a student in your group says, "well you know how *those* people can be."
7. At a student organization meeting, a group of white students are talking about how frustrating it is that the university has an office/organization for minorities, LGBTQ, women, but what about an organization just for white people? One student says, "don't we need a place to go to talk about our issues, too?"
8. While standing in line at the grocery store, you hear the grocery clerk belittling the patron in front of you by saying loudly and slowly, "I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE SAYING. Perhaps if you learned some English, I could understand you better."
9. During a class discussion about racism, a white student claims defensively, "I didn't own any slaves, so I'm tired of being blamed for this problem."
10. At the student union, while talking in a group of people, you are listening to someone recounting a story about recently losing out on a job. They claim to be *sure* that they lost the job to a minority who was probably less qualified than s/he is because of some "diversity policy, which is really just a form of reverse racism against whites."
11. During a PTA meeting, a parent stands up and makes a comment about an incident that occurred at the school that s/he believes to be discriminatory and would like to know what the board plans to do about the incident and preventing future similar incidents from occurring. The board member states that this is not really a board issue and is something that should be handled between the parents or the children. Basically, "kids will be kids."
12. After class one day, you are standing with a couple of students in the hallway and one of them says, "I don't get why we are still talking about racism for the third day in a row. It's not the same for our generation as it was for our parents. Segregation is over. If black people are still segregated, it's because they choose to be."
13. You overhear two of your family members talking about how they feel our country is a lot less racist than the Jim Crow days, because, "we have laws now against discrimination."

14. During a discussion in class about racism, a student says, "I am tired of everyone talking about how racist white people are. Minorities can be racist, too!"
15. After class one day, a friend of yours says to you, "I don't get our discussion today about racism. The teacher said it's a system and that it's different from prejudice because it involves power or something, but there are plenty of minorities with power. Look at the President of the United States!"

Appendix I

Table of Participant Demographics

Pseudonym	Race*	Ethnicity*	Age Range	Socio-Economic Status*	Chosen Breakout Group
Benjamin	Human	American, Asian, Russian, Swedish, Irish, German, Israeli, Jewish, Portuguese, Mexican, Hispanic, Spanish, American	26-30	Middle class	White
Danielle	Caucasian	European	26-30	Lower class (below working class)	White
Deborah	Hispanic	Latino	51 & up	Lower middle class	People of Color
Elizabeth	White	Left blank	20-25	Middle class	White
Frank	Spanish	White	36-50	Poor	People of Color
Justin	Hispanic	Hispanic	20-25	Lower middle class	People of Color
Kate	White, black	White American	20-25	Middle class	White
Luis	White	Hispanic	31-35	Middle income	People of Color
Nancy	White	Hispanic	51 & up	Working class	White
Paul	White	American	31-35	Middle class	White
Samuel	Black	Italian, Native American (Blackfoot), and African	36-50	Working poor	People of Color
Steven	White	Sailor	51 & up	Low-income farmers	White

* Indicates self-identified identity positions