

ABSTRACT

OLSON, BARRY ALAN. *Difficult Dialogues: How White Male Graduate Students in Student Affairs Preparation Programs make Meaning of their Whiteness, White Privilege, and Multiculturalism.* (Under the direction of Audrey Jaeger).

The purpose of this narrative case study was to understand how white male graduate students in student affairs preparation programs make meaning of their whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism. Through the use of the participant's own words, the results showed that these nine participants from the Southeast had a limited understanding of whiteness as it related to any racial conception, often limited to the negative components of their racial makeup, or even an obliviousness to whiteness in general. White privilege was understood more clearly, however the participants often were in positions where they could choose to act in favor of a person of color, and instead chose not to act. Finally, the participants gained a significant amount of value from personal connections through their own informal experiences and formal activities, but the most growth seemed to occur within a classroom setting focusing on multiculturalism and diversity.

The findings indicate that white male graduate students in student affairs preparation programs could benefit from required coursework in the areas of diversity and multiculturalism, where exposure to race, culture, and difference would broaden their limited experience base. Within this study, a model for the social transformation of racial identity was proposed as a way to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Using the concepts of white privilege, multicultural competency, and emancipation, the proposed model helps to explain the components within developing those difficult dialogues among white males, but also across racial boundaries.

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Difficult Dialogues: How White Male Graduate Students in Student Affairs Preparation
Programs make Meaning of their Whiteness, White Privilege, and Multiculturalism

by
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my loving family. To my wife, Sara, who has been ever-supportive, always loving, and endlessly sarcastic. To you, I owe all of my major accomplishments. With this complete, you will finally have your husband back. To Sam, Sophie, and Lucy, my wonderful children who have followed me through this entire process. Your constant love, admiration, and inquisitiveness have kept me sane throughout the years. To my parents, David and Marilynne Olson, who never stopped asking “are you done yet?”, but have served as tremendous role models for as long as I can remember.

BIOGRAPHY

Barry Olson is a student affairs professional, currently working for North Carolina State University's University Housing department as the Associate Director for Housing Facilities. He earned his bachelor's degree in speech communication from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls in 1994. He earned his master of education from Grand Valley State University in 1997. He will earn his doctor of education degree from North Carolina State University, focusing on higher education administration. His research interests include identity and its incorporation in the collegiate experience, student affairs administration, and facilities management. He is active in professional housing organizations in higher education in the state of North Carolina, as well as regionally and nationally. He has served on the leadership team of the North Carolina Housing Officers organization, serving in a number of roles throughout his tenure. He has been a student affairs professional practitioner for over 14 years.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

College students function in diverse, multicultural environments. For example, students who live on campus are often placed with roommates who are different from themselves racially and ethnically, however, many fail to harness growth opportunities that go along with such opportunities. Students who come to college typically grow up in environments far less racially mixed than the college arena, which can cause some students to have anxiety over interactions with individuals who are different from themselves (Hurtado, et al., 1998). The diverse nature of a college environment brings students of all races and ethnicities together on one campus. This environment often requires dialogue, debate, and discourse among all students – white and black, Asian and Hispanic, male and female. This discourse is necessary, and often missing among white males (Milem and Umbach, 2003). White males typically grow up in a sort of vacuum, where a ‘learned obliviousness’ (McIntosh, 1988) sets in, and is simply not a consideration.

Students who successfully navigate racial struggles and disagreements grow to understand how difference can be good, and develop a sort of competence when discussing race and culture. Bennett and Bennett (2001) call this intercultural sensitivity, where individuals move from being ethnocentric (a focus on denial of other cultures, moving towards minimization of the importance of culture) to ethnorelative (where individuals not

only accept other cultures, but integrate different cultural worldviews into their own). Since white males are a part of the tapestry of difference, but also carry the benefits of privilege, they often ‘disconnect’ from this engagement. Many white males simply avoid the topic all together, thus remaining ethnocentric. This avoidance can be due to many factors, including guilt (Arminio, 2001; Tatum, 1994), a belief in ‘white as normalized’ (Wildmon and Davis, 1996) and thus a non-issue, and a lack of understanding of how whiteness and privilege situate them in society. By not engaging in this dialogue, they avoid the process of ‘racialization’, or understanding what it truly means to be white in America (Omi and Winant, 1994).

W. E. B. DuBois writes about this burden in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903). The question he asks in the opening sentence is this: “How does it feel to be a problem?” (p. 7). His question was directed at blacks. This same question should be asked of white males; yet, it is so often avoided. Jensen (2005) writes through his own lens, as a white male, in the last line of his book *The Heart of Whiteness*, “The world does not need white people to civilize others. The real White People’s Burden is to civilize ourselves” (Jensen, 2005, pp. 96). If white male students on campus are a problem, whether real or perceived, how do we, as white male administrators, inform and educate them?

The primary role of higher education is to educate the entire student. This occurs both in the classroom and outside of it, as students spend a significant amount of their time away from their academic pursuits. Student Affairs professionals like myself are asked to inform, educate, challenge, and support our students. Are white male Student Affairs administrators

providing the necessary role modeling that can bring about change in white male students? Are we helping them to understand their role in change? And if so, how is this change occurring?

Problem Statement

Student Affairs professionals undergo extensive training through their graduate professional preparation programs to understand the needs of college students, as well as changing demographics, trends, and attitudes. One core competency of Student Affairs professionals is, and needs to be, a commitment to multiculturalism (Talbot, 2003; Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004). According to Blimling (2001), the professional discourse of student affairs professionals should engage white (and, certainly, all) students in the realities of a changing society, and critical workforce realities that will require students to not only understand the importance of multiculturalism, but also that diversity makes for a more educated and prepared member of society.

Confronting Privilege

Why is the dialogue between white students and students of color important? Antonio, Chang, Hakuta, Kenny, Levin, and Milem (2004) set out to examine that very notion. In their study, they asked white college students to participate in small group discussions with either a white collaborator or a black collaborator. The students were asked to participate in both surveys and interviews on social issues. The experiment set out to address their integrative complexity (IC), “which refers to the degree to which cognitive style involves the differentiation and integration of multiple perspectives and dimensions”

(Suedfeld, Tetlock, & Streufert, 1992, in Antonio, et al., 2004, p. 508). Low IC individuals are considered simple in their reasoning, not seeing multiplicity of viewpoints, whereas high IC individuals recognize differences in perspectives and viewpoints.

The results of the study supported the value of diverse interactions. The researchers found that:

The presence of a Black collaborator in a group of White participants generally led to greater perceived novelty of a collaborator and a greater level of IC. . . Moreover, the finding that the racial diversity of a student's close friends and classmates was more strongly associated with IC than the racial diversity of the discussion group implies that prolonged contact with racially diverse others may have stronger effects on students' complex thinking than the more limited contact with racially diverse others that might occur in a single discussion group (p. 509).

Such contact with diverse populations while in college can create a stronger academic, cognitive experience for our white students.

Participation in a racially diverse dialogue enhances the academic experience, yet this does not mean that whites are engaging in them. Milem and Umbach (2003) noted that, while most students thought it was likely that they would interact with individuals different from themselves during their first year in college, in actuality, those same students provided different feedback on actual interactions in their study. In particular, when white students were asked about their willingness to participate in a diversity class on campus, only 38 percent intended to do so, compared to two thirds African Americans, one half Asian Pacific

Americans, and two thirds of Latino/a students. Additionally, white male students were least likely to report involvement in any diversity activities. Too often, while we speak of the necessity of embracing an increasingly diverse environment, white male students steadily remove themselves from the myriad of diversity activities available to them on campus, thus increasing the gap among students.

Privilege in all forms remains an important and meaningful component in the unpacking of our situated lives. McIntosh (2002) states that 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’ve done or failed to do” (McIntosh, 2002, in Johnson, 2006, p. 21). Simply put, dominant groups benefit from their positions in society. Johnson (2006) talks of two types of privilege: the unearned privileges, which are those elements that all people should have, such as safety, a feeling of belonging, and a sense of contribution; and conferred dominance, involving how power is bestowed upon individuals for their presumed position of power in society (in terms of race, whites hold dominance, in terms of gender, men hold dominance, in terms of sexual orientation, heterosexuals hold dominance).

Privilege is present in our everyday lives. Johnson goes a step further to provide examples of how privilege manifests itself. He shares that, for example, “whites are less likely than blacks to be arrested; once arrested, they are less likely to be convicted and, once convicted, less likely to go to prison, regardless of the crime or circumstances. . .men are more likely than women to control conversations and be allowed to get away with it and to have their ideas and contributions taken seriously, even those that were suggested previously

by a woman and dismissed or ignored. . .heterosexuals can move about in public areas without fear of being harassed or physically attacked because of their sexual orientation” (pp. 25-29). These examples are impossible to ignore, and they paint a picture of conferred dominance on a daily basis in America. White males, by sole virtue of their conferred dominance, remain in a privileged position, regardless of their desire to be there.

White male students on our college campuses reflect a society that has not properly engaged them in the discussion about race. Instead of participating in dialogues about difference, they are bombarded with imagery of ‘angry white men’ in the media, and even in their hometowns. Kimmell (2006) articulates that white men are seen as angry and defensive across the nation. The perceived ‘masculine’ traits of strength and power have gone unquestioned, unchecked, and unchallenged, creating a population who express victimhood over ownership, and anger over resolution. Tatum (1994) describes the difficulty in finding ‘allies’ in white men who are ready to listen, and to take a stand against inequality.

[O]ne consequence of addressing the issue of racism (and other forms of oppression) in the classroom is the generation of powerful emotional responses in both white students and students of color. White students, in particular, often struggle with strong feelings of guilt when they become aware of the pervasiveness of racism in our society. Even when they feel their own behavior has been nondiscriminatory, they often experience “guilt by association”. These feelings are uncomfortable and can lead white students to resist learning about race and racism (p. 463).

Instead of participating in difficult discussions that lead to self-analysis and reflection, it is common for white males to simply tune out, and turn off.

Watt (2007) offers a framework for beginning to understand the importance of the difficult discussions in student affairs practice. The Privileged Identity Exploration (PIE) model provides an explanation for this discomfort. By examining three phases, and eight behaviors for resistance, the leader of the discussion can better understand, or empathize, with where the resistance comes from. Through this model, participants move through denial, rationalization, deflection, intellectualization, false envy, principium, benevolence, and finally, minimization, under the assumptions that this exploration of privilege is ongoing, necessary, and normal. Too often, we assume that such discomfort is abnormal, and thus, avoid it entirely. Watt gives us a platform for understanding the emotions that go along with difficult discussions on campus. If white males are avoiding the difficult discussions for fear of their own (or their student's) discomfort, then this 'tuning out' process becomes exacerbated, and no role modeling occurs.

White males are lacking the necessary role models, who evade discourse on whiteness (Sleeter, 1993). So often, white male administrators will avoid these discussions as well, and racial dialogues among whites vanish (Baxter-Magolda, 1997). If there is no discussion, the feeling is that there is no problem. The discussions that do occur happen, often, accidentally. They may be confrontational, such as confronting a racial joke, or they may occur in a generalized situation, such as a presentation or workshop on diversity. These

interactions are surely important, but they do not address changing systems or individuals. Rather, they address awareness.

White males will begin to feel the effects of a changing population. The demographics of our nation are slowly, but steadily, changing (Anderson, 2003). White males, who continue to remain in control of the highest levels of our local, state, and national governments, are the minority, and yet they remain in power. We see that national demographics are changing. Higher education is not immune from the effects of change. “Higher education will continue to become more racially diverse because the rate of growth among people of color in the United States is significantly higher than for whites” (Anderson, 2003, p. 4). A changing environment will require white males to not only understand diversity, but to incorporate multiculturalism in their everyday lives.

Unfortunately, college students are less representative than we would expect. According to national statistical data on this year’s 2009 freshman class figures, whites still account for 73 percent of students, while black students account for roughly 11 percent, and Asian students account for just under nine percent (The Chronicle of Higher education, January 21, 2010). Interestingly, Hurtado et al. (1998) writes about the negative perceptions by whites that exist when more black students are enrolled, and the increased personal experiences of discrimination among Asian students (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, and Allen, 1998, p. 287). Thus, actual discrimination occurs on our campuses against students of color, yet white students on diverse campuses perceive a higher sense of racial tension. All cases reflect the need for retooling our higher education environments to become more

reflective of our nation's cultural realities. Student affairs practitioners are embedded within the problem and the solution.

Student affairs preparation programs face a dilemma. Taub and McEwen (2006) explain that among today's student affairs preparation programs, approximately two thirds of master's program students are women - approximately 80% - and primarily white - between 64.5% and 92.3% white at the eight largest master's programs in the nation (p. 206). With a high number of white students, and in particular, white males, on our college campuses, white male graduate students in student affairs preparation programs must understand what it means to be a multicultural and social being in higher education. Even though white students make up the largest percentage of most college campuses, the commitment to a multicultural society and work environment requires a commitment from the individual white students that must be modeled and mentored. Taub and McEwen's study concludes that the profile of the student affairs professional remains white and female. The absence of white men in graduate coursework for student affairs preparation programs is a growing concern. Student affairs programs need their students to mirror their campus populations, and to serve as role models for other white male students – some of which will hopefully choose to enter student affairs. This research shows this is simply not the case. Of course, changing demographics takes significant time. It may be more practical to begin by changing how we serve our students on campus every day. This will require a transformation of sorts, where graduate students in student affairs preparation programs actively draw upon their academic training – specifically, in terms of honing their own multicultural competency.

Transforming how we view race and culture is necessary for many in order to see real change on campuses. Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller (2004) discuss that awareness, knowledge, and skills to address cultural issues are critical, but just as critical is the necessary self-awareness to understand difference. This concept – multicultural competency, is necessary for real change to happen. Who will serve as the impetus for change on campus? Since the inception of higher education, white males have been positioned to receive the maximum benefits. This positioning has allowed white males to reap the rewards of white privilege – greater access and less scrutiny. Fortunately, higher education has also recognized that service to students must include diversity, both in representation and in program design and offerings. Higher education has steadily moved from a bastion of wealth and privilege, to that of a socioeconomic tapestry filled with a collage of students representing all nationalities and ethnicities. While there has been movement, our campuses remain predominantly white, and predominantly affluent. Change requires support and advocacy from the majority populations if it is to be readily and rapidly accepted as fact. White males must accept and advocate for the importance of a multicultural existence.

White male graduate students in student affairs preparation programs do have choices. They can choose to speak up for those without a voice, or without power. Sadly, they can also choose to do nothing, and participate in allowing systems of inequality to persist. These men have a tremendous opportunity – both to educate other students about the realities of college life, and the necessity of change for a higher social purpose. Are they

prepared to address these issues with the preparation of a few courses dedicated to multiculturalism and difference in their academic training?

The problem this research will address is that systems of white supremacy - political, social, and economic - and white privilege perpetuate inequality. Changing systems of power and privilege require a personal and systemic understanding of how white males serve as both perpetrators of privilege and as change agents. While white males have the ability to ignore systems of inequality, their roles in challenging and dismantling racial privilege is critical if we expect change to occur. In leadership roles and as mentors, the importance of white male involvement in diverse experiences, as well as to challenge and support other white males in the community of higher education becomes exponentially important if we expect these men to become change agents and actors within the fabric of a multicultural society.

Purpose

The purpose of this narrative inquiry is to examine how white male graduate students in student affairs preparation programs make meaning of their whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism. White males bring not only their own racial identity to the field, but they also bring their gendered identity, which carries with it a certain set of privileges and benefits, and, as McIntosh (1988) reminds us, these privileges – both white and male - are unearned, yet prevalent in their daily lives.

The voices of these future practitioners will provide narratives of the experiences of being white on campus, and of serving in dual roles as student and teacher. If we intend to

challenge and transform how student affairs professionals facilitate change, we need to understand how white male graduate students in student affairs preparation programs are articulating their professional obligation. Understanding the unique needs of a population that receives the direct benefits of white privilege will help white males to challenge and support their students, and ultimately transform these emerging graduate students into multiculturally competent professionals.

Research Questions

The research questions that guide this study are proposed to understand how white male graduate students in student affairs preparation programs learn about whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism. Arminio (2001) utilizes a phenomenological hermeneutic structure that ultimately asks white graduate students to articulate how they make meaning of their whiteness. I intend to examine privilege and whiteness through a white male graduate student perspective of those enrolled in Student Affairs preparation programs in the United States. This study addresses the following questions:

1. How do white males in student affairs preparation programs make meaning of their own whiteness?
2. How do white males in student affairs preparation programs understand white privilege, and what experiences led to that perspective?

3. How do white males in student affairs preparation programs view and utilize diverse interactions with white students and students of color, both programmatic and interpersonal, formally and informally?
4. How have white males in student affairs preparation programs incorporated their white awareness into their professional preparation?

These questions will help me further identify how these white males identify with being white in U.S. society and, more importantly, how they have come to understand whiteness and privilege through their life. By using a narrative inquiry approach, this study will represent their rich and unique experiences through personal stories aimed to cast light on their racial and gendered identities, as well as how they have used these experiences to grow and develop as cultural beings.

Significance of the Study

This study offers a number of potential significant outcomes for both racial understanding and emancipation and the practice of Student Affairs. First, this study will serve to guide practice by examining the realities of how experiences become educational components for Student Affairs practitioners, and will also help faculty members and other administrators understand how they can more effectively impact all students on campus.

White male identity and white studies is a newly emerging field of study. Much like white privilege, the foundations of critical whiteness studies are an emerging field. Critical whiteness studies emerged from Critical Race Theory (CRT) scholarship in the 1970s. The basic ideology of CRT is founded in the legal profession to give voice to those on the

margins, and to expose the problems with systems of supremacy (Taylor, 1998). There are many ways that race could be analyzed, yet this study will move scholarship in a new direction – taking the voices of practitioners in training and providing a venue for exploring how whiteness has affected their professional aspirations.

White males are rarely considered a marginalized population. White males are at the center of political systems, as well as in prominent leadership positions in our nation and on our college campuses. To say that being white is not an asset would be ludicrous, yet white males receive a problematized message, which states that their vision of their cultural self, of being white, is deficient. That is not to say that whites ought to be prideful of past wrongdoing and prejudice. Johnson (2001) speaks of this struggle:

For myself, it means I have to take the initiative to find out how privilege operates in the world, how it affects people, and what it all has to do with me. It means I have to think the unthinkable, speak the unspeakable, break the silence, acknowledge the elephant, and then take my share of the responsibility for what comes next (pp 10-11).

The acknowledgement of privilege is significant, and the impending dialogue with other white males is critical if change is expected.

There are few studies examining graduate students. The graduate student, and moreover, the Student Affairs graduate student, rarely appears in the literature. An *ISI Web of Science* search produced 17 results using keywords ‘graduate students in student affairs’; seven of these articles actually support research on this population. Recently, Taub and McEwen (2006) published a study that looked at how individuals decide to enter student

affairs. Their research yielded interesting demographical information. Most notably, 82% of student affairs graduate students are white, and 75% are women. Further, white male graduate student research in student affairs is seemingly nonexistent as a particular population. The latest figures from the American College Personnel Association's Graduate Programs in Student Personnel Programs data (2008) supports their research findings. The figures in the Southeast region of the United States are nearly identical (approximately 34% male, approximately 74% white). According to the 2006 Condition of Education survey, the trend in undergraduate male enrollment has been a decline of about one percent every decade since 1970. Their projections for the year 2015 show males representing about 41% of the undergraduate population, while female participation continues to increase. The trend is predicted to follow the same lines with graduate education. Males are on a decline. More research needs to focus on how we can increase the number of males, and the experiences of white males need to be articulated through this research. This study will advance that cause. This research gives voice to white male experience in graduate school, and in turn, this voice will reach an audience that has great potential for change by not only understanding the importance of multiculturalism and their role in it, but by arming them with the tools necessary to help other white males begin to see their role in a changing society.

Additionally, this study offers the opportunity for understanding how maleness, whiteness, white privilege, and white awareness can be incorporated into professional practice. Imagine the power of removing the stigmas of maleness, whiteness, and privilege. Understanding the baggage surrounding the topic can give white males the power to speak of

their experiences with conviction and will add vigor, volume, and authenticity to the missing dialogues on diversity. These men can then take these discussions to the white students of our campus, and they can begin the quest to challenge and support other white males within the college environment.

Earlier, I shared the powerful experience that I had at a race training workshop. This experience not only transformed me, but it led to the transformation of others with whom I have come in contact. My ultimate goal for this study is to bring about a similar change in other white males. It is imperative that white males recognize their positions of privilege and power and invest in diversity and multiculturalism. Torres, Howard-Hamilton, and Cooper (2003) discuss a model of how whites often initially anxiously anticipate discussions about diversity. From anxiety, they move to curiosity, then an epiphany or rather, the acceptance of the privilege that they own. This epiphany leads to a greater sense of self-comfort, and the movement towards a multicultural competence. Ultimately, the embracing of diversity and multiculturalism is an investment that will yield great returns, but only if we are honest with one another and acknowledge that we do not know all there is to know about being white, about being male, and about being diverse.

Racism in all its Forms

Racism is yet another critical component when we consider meaningful dialogue with others. Racism, according to Jones (1981), results from the transformation of race prejudice and/or ethnocentrism through the exercise of power against a racial group defined as inferior, by individuals and institutions with the intentional or unintentional support of the entire

culture (in Ponterotto and Pedersen, 1993, p. 11). Jones also denotes three levels of racism: individual racism, such as engaging in behavior against a single person; institutional racism, which attaches to organizations through intentional or unintentional policies that restrict other groups; and cultural racism, where subtle, and pervasive acts are carried out against entire groups of people. All three areas are worthy of consideration and are oft not spoken of. Institutional racism is the primary area of focus for this study, as it has tentacles in the individual and policy decisions that have remained engrained in institutions of higher education.

Institutional Racism

The evolution of racism has come a long way since the early days of our nation. Outright, blatant, and often horrendous examples of active racism are prevalent in the tapestries of the pursuit of freedom. The systematic disenfranchisement of persons of color helped white America treat blacks and others as second-class citizens. Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) gave active racism a ‘blank check’ during the late 1800’s. The ruling by the Supreme Court of the United States was that the interpretation of the 14th Amendment allowed for ‘separate but equal’ treatment for blacks. Thus, as long as the same services and experiences were available within communities, then separate facilities and separate access was legal. Such systems of clear and obvious division included restaurants, bathrooms, trains, buses, and schools (www.ourdocuments.gov). It took over 50 years for the Supreme Court to again address this segregation through the Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas (1954). The Brown cases examined how segregation’s toll on the nation’s black students led to poor

educational opportunities rife with lesser resources, and a lesser education for persons of color. The case addressed the unequal, and often lesser, educational access for students of color, and led to the desegregation of our nation's schools – K-12 through college. These two cases drastically affected the well-being of students of color, but also shaped our nation. The Brown case helped remedy some of the wrongs done by the 'separate but equal' doctrine, but in many ways, the damage had been done. I mention these two cases as examples of both outright inequality and the abolishment of such activities.

Examples of the impact of institutional racism are not difficult to locate. Segregation negatively and irrevocably affected students of color then, and today. Kivel (2002) discusses how such actions have enhanced the cumulative effects of racism. He notes that some of the effects include: 1) that faculty of color typically earn approximately 75 percent of their white counterparts; and 2) that public school funding for students in schools that are primarily black are underfunded by a ratio of roughly 2 to 1 compared to predominantly white schools – even with regulations of equality in place (Kivel, 2002, pp. 172-173). Jensen (2006) lists even more examples of inequality from a 2004 study by United for a Fair Economy to examine some measures where black Americans had fallen behind white Americans. He outlines that black home ownership has increased only six percent since 1970, whereas white home ownership has increased by ten percent, and that the current pace, black students will reach parity with white students graduating from high school in 2013 – some six decades after the Brown decision, but college matriculation and graduation parity is not expected until 2075 – over 200 years past the end of slavery (Jensen, 2006, pp. 5-6). Kendall (2006)

articulated examples from a study in *The Washington Post* where 13 percent of white people thought that blacks had more economic opportunity than whites, but only one percent of blacks felt they had more opportunities. Conversely, 74 percent of blacks thought they had less economic opportunity than whites, whereas only 27 percent of whites felt the same (Kendall, 2006, p. 65). These examples, while articulated through a ‘black and white’ lens, apply to all persons of color, and cut equally deep. These broad disparities in opinion show the obvious divide among races, and the differences we must overcome.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study focuses on the development of white males through a postmodern lens, and more specifically, through the use of Critical Race Theory (CRT). Critical race theory began as a discussion in the legal field, originally meant to address the wrongs of civil rights legislation. The main theorists in this area of study were legal scholars Derrick Bell, Richard Delgado, Kimberle Crenshaw, Mari Matsuda, and Charles Lawrence, Lani Guinier, and Patricia Williams (Lynn and Adams, 2002, Taylor, 1998). These scholars asserted a simple point: race matters, and racial injustice is evident in American society.

The key component to CRT is challenge. “As a form of oppressional scholarship, CRT challenges the experience of whites as the normative standard and grounds its conceptual framework in the distinctive experiences of people of color” (Taylor, 1998, p. 122). The only way to understand what oppression looks like, and how it feels to be oppressed, is to listen to the stories of those facing the experience. A white male would have

little knowledge of the effects of racial oppression, because his eyes are ‘closed’ to it. Yet, it is often the case that white people will deny that racism exists, because it guards them from the pain that is caused from discovery and the necessity to give up their privileged positions (Wise, 2008).

When looking at students, CRT plays an important role as well. Tate (1993, 1995) adapted CRT to educational communities. Racial inequality was, and continues to be, present in classrooms, school districts, and institutions of higher learning. Lynn and Adams (2002) examined the notion of intellectual property, and that “rights of property are seen to shape education in multiple ways, as in *better* schools located in *better* neighborhoods with higher property values and tax assessments” (pp. 88-89). If educational opportunities are tied to *higher* and *better* communities, then it is safe to say that communities with less *capital* will inevitably settle for a *lesser* experience. Since race and poverty align so clearly throughout U.S. society, those in poorer neighborhoods are often persons of color (Wise, 2008). CRT helps us to understand these inequities, and forces us to examine the shortcomings that are present in our U.S. society today.

Critical race theory asks us to think critically about what race means. It also forces us to confront inequality along the way. As white males grow and develop, they assume certain privileges associated with being white, or being the dominant group. The challenge for white males is to understand this power differential that exists in our well-constructed environment. Often, power seems to be the most difficult component to grasp, because it is, more often than not, an intangible element. Race is a social construct; therefore, the systems supporting

the dominant culture are also embedded within our social fabric, and not something we can pinpoint, yet it is real.

In order to make real and lasting change, a knowledge of critical consciousness is necessary. Freire (1970) discusses the concept in his groundbreaking work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. The concept of critical consciousness is embedded within education – the cornerstone to growth and development. “Education as the practice of freedom – as opposed to education as the practice of domination – denies that man is abstract, isolated, independent, and unattached to the world; it also denies that the world exists as a reality apart from people” (Freire, 1970, p. 81). Freire believed that through understanding the plight of the oppressed, and through the development of a critical consciousness – a true and authentic understanding of the situated reality of the oppressed, and a clear awareness of the surrounding environment - is but one part of the equation.

Liberation is the second step. Reflective and meaningful dialogue must be engaged in and applied. “Attempting to liberate the oppressed without their reflective participation in the act of liberation is to treat them as objects which must be saved from a burning building; it is to lead them into the populist pitfall and transform them into masses which can be manipulated” (p. 65). So, the process of liberation must first include true engagement. This, I feel, is missing in the discovery of whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism. Engagement in a critical understanding and reflection of the oppressed (students of color within the walls of our universities) will help white male graduate students better understand

the situations present, and their shift towards liberation – or rather, engagement in social justice and change – is not only ideal, but necessary.

Terminology and Definitions

This study focuses on white males. That is obvious and should be clear throughout. When referring to ‘non-white’ individuals, I use the term ‘persons of color’ as often as possible. This is done to be as inclusive as possible, and to respect the fact that all individuals are important and full of worth. Attempting to make the problem a ‘black/white’ issue simply clouds the issue. The truth of the matter is that white students and students of color both maintain a significant and important position on our college campuses. Administrators of all colors also remain an important component in the fabric of an educational institution. Know that the intention in this study was to be as inclusive as possible, knowing that the topical area is primarily focusing on the desired evolution of whiteness, white privilege, and diversity and multiculturalism for all people.

For the purposes of this study, I define race, whiteness, white privilege, white supremacy, culture, and multiculturalism. Race is defined as “a concept that is socially constructed, even though it is not biologically valid” (Henze, Katz, Norte, Sather, and Walker, 2002, p. 9). Allen (2003) inserts that race is conceptualized as varying “according to social, cultural, political, legal, economic, and historical factors” (p. 67).

Whiteness is defined by Dyer (1997) as a racial position anchored in dominance discourse. Whiteness is often seen as invisible, or normal, often discounts people of color, setting whiteness above all other racial identities. Dyer includes in his definition aspects of

whiteness, including green lighting, the phenomenon of again placing whites at the center of racial discussion as opposed to discussing the impact of white identity *on* others, me-too-ism, the concern that no one is talking about white identity, and guilt, that whites carry for past historical liabilities (pp. 24-25).

White privilege is defined as skin color serving as a beneficial component to one's experiences in social environments (McIntosh, 1989). Johnson (2001) articulates how privilege manifests itself. "If people take me more seriously when I give a speech than they would someone of color saying the same things in the same way, for example, then I'm benefiting from white privilege (pp. 23-24).

White supremacy is defined by Grillo and Wildman (1996) as how whites view the world – white as normalized and as a social illness. "Whites do not look at the world through this filter of racial awareness, even though they also constitute a race. This privilege to ignore their race gives whites a societal advantage distinct from any received from the existence of discriminatory racism" (p. 620). White supremacy can also take on an actively racist fervor, in the form of hate groups. For the purposes of this study, the term will not be used in this context.

Culture is defined as a process (Spindler and Spindler, 1990). It has predictable, bounded, and recognizable by traits, but ultimately, "[i]t is what happens as people try to make sense of their own lives and sense of the behavior of other people with whom they have to deal (p. 2) . It is a learned, and not an inherited trait (Henze, Katz, Norte, Sather, and Walker, 2002). Diversity is defined as "representing a movement advocating the

appreciation and celebration of difference” (Baez, 2002, p. 383). Diversity is not simply a focus on racial issues. It is the appreciation of all differences that make us unique.

Multicultural competency is defined as “awareness, knowledge, and skills essential for efficacious student affairs work; this category may assist student affairs practitioners in creating diverse and inclusive campuses” (Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller, 2004, p. 9).

Awareness includes the ability to recognize your situated environment and experiences related to culture. Knowledge is the acquisition of experiences through formal and informal education about culture. Skills are the cumulative effects of awareness and knowledge, and how a practitioner acts to respond to situations.

Overview of the Study

This narrative case study will examine how white male graduate students in student affairs preparation programs make meaning of their whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism. The inquiry will use stories from participants who experience this meaning-making process on a daily basis. The subsequent stories will illuminate the challenges related to individual racial and gendered identities and will help the reader understand how these graduate students transform their experiences into tools and for the profession of student affairs and program offerings for their students. I intend to utilize face-to-face interviews and online journaling with ten to twelve second-year white male graduate students from student affairs preparation programs at universities across the southeast. I will utilize Critical Race Theory (CRT) as my conceptual framework for data analysis, and will also use multicultural and intercultural theory as a backdrop for the overall importance of the study.

Summary

Higher education is becoming an environment focused on diversity and multiculturalism. White males are a part of the context of higher education, yet they have historically been a silent majority when it comes to discussing race in higher education. Many white men have led an existence of white privilege, and have been programmed to not see it. The necessary reprogramming will take time, and will take more than one diversity class or experience. The problem this research will address is that systems of white supremacy and privilege perpetuate inequality. Changing systems of power and privilege require understanding the role of white males in both. Tatum (1997) reminds us that like begets like, and that white students will inevitably associate more frequently with those who are racially similar. White male graduate students are often seen as role models within the communities they work with (through assistantships and other pre-professional preparation opportunities on college campuses). White male graduate students in student affairs preparation programs are perfectly situated to help men deal with diversity and multiculturalism, as they have direct access to these men, and are often in mentoring positions. This study will examine how white male graduate students in student affairs preparation programs make meaning of their whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism, and how they apply this meaning to their practices. In chapter two, I will discuss the literature in which this study is grounded, including: critical race theory (CRT); student development theory and identity; and multiculturalism and its role in refining and redefining student affairs practice.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The problem this research addresses is that systems of white supremacy and privilege perpetuate inequality. Changing systems of power and privilege require understanding the role of white males in both. The literature that frames this topic is discussed and critiqued in chapter two. Chapter two begins with a discussion of the conceptual framework of Critical Race Theory, which has evolved into Critical White Studies through its use in education, and ultimately spotlights white privilege and inequality. Just as student affairs practice is concerned with the development of the whole student, CRT helps to illuminate the inequality within the walls of academe. While we would like to believe that higher education is exempt from the pressures and realities of society, Critical Race theorists remind us that it simply is not. Change can only happen when white students (and administrators) understand how their racial identity affects how they are treated, and more importantly, how they can positively impact race relations on campus.

Social histories provide a framework for understanding our current environments. We cannot assess our current situation without knowledge of the paths that were followed. Henderson (2000) talks about how people came to the United States as a result of several factors, including migration, impending threats from their home land, political reasons, or events through their church. Thus, the path to America was rife with pain. With such a wide

variety of individuals from across the globe arriving on our shores, exclusionary tactics soon evolved. The stories of slavery stain the early years of our democracy, through the late 19th century. Unfortunately, the new century yielded similar results.

Beginning in the 1890s, immigrants from eastern and southern Europe were numerically dominant. That set the stage for racist statements about inferior, darker people threatening the purity of blond, blue-eyed Nordics or Aryans through miscegenation. Intermixing was perceived as a deadly plague . . . This kind of ethnocentrism prevented large numbers of other immigrants and indigenous peoples of color from becoming fully functioning citizens. And the legacy for the children of people denied equal opportunities was second-class citizenship (Henderson, 2000, p. 13).

The past must be considered when addressing the present realities of race relations in America. Simply put, they matter.

The examination of the impact of race in American history and culture requires a discussion of the impact of racism; namely, institutional racism. Institutional racism, by definition, acknowledges the cumulative impact of centuries of race-based decision-making by a culture or society. One does not need to look very hard to see these impacts – differences in how much money white professors make compared to professors of color, discrepancies in the availability of credit, and access to the simplest and most basic of services. On our college campuses, one can see the smaller numbers of faculty members of color in academia, and the smaller numbers of black students attending our institutions. No

doubt, much of the outright discrimination no longer exists in modern society, yet the impact of the decisions and actions of white people generations before have yielded significant effects of inequity and inequality. To affect change, we must not only speak of institutional racism, but attempt to devise ways to address it openly, and honestly.

At the core of understanding is the development of multicultural competence. First delineated by Sue et al. (1982), multicultural competence has been defined as the incorporation of awareness, knowledge, and skills in order to expand the depth and breadth of their understanding of multicultural issues. Beginning in the counseling field, and shifting into student affairs practice, multicultural competence holds a natural place in student affairs work. Multicultural competence aids professionals in developing an understanding of how white privilege affects interactions across all races, and spotlights an understanding of the impact of student development theory on both young administrators and their students. Multicultural competency literature spotlights not only the need for self-awareness and understanding, but also provides a platform for understanding how white male graduate students can use their training to become more enlightened, supportive, professionals. Literature discussing whiteness and white privilege provides a necessary understanding of how both serve as a lens for perpetuating inequality, and adherence to a system of white supremacy. Finally, literature surrounding student development theory and identity will highlight how multiple identities frame and define who we are. By examining student development through a psychosocial, cognitive, typological, and cultural lens, we can begin

to understand how individuals develop their complex identities. In whole, these areas represent the basis of understanding the problem that I have outlined.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) serves as the conceptual framework for this study. As stated previously, critical race theory began as a discussion in the legal field in the mid 1970s, originally meant to address the shortcomings of civil rights legislation. The main theorists in this area of study were legal scholars Derrick Bell, Richard Delgado, Kimberle Crenshaw, Mari Matsuda, and Charles Lawrence, Lani Guinier, and Patricia Williams (Lynn and Adams, 2002, Taylor, 1998). These scholars asserted a simple point: race matters, and racial injustice is evident in American society.

CRT uses storytelling as a primary means for displaying power and privilege. Delgado discusses how storytelling names one's reality through their experiences. CRT "argues that political and moral analysis is situational – 'truths only exist for this person in this predicament at this time in history'" (1991, p. 11). Like race, truth can be considered a socially constructed reality, but the stories serve as a device to help us understand inequality and reality as others perceive it.

The core tenets of CRT focus on injustice and inequality. Delgado (1995) provides a snapshot of the elements of CRT. These elements include the beliefs: that racism is normalized as a component of our society; that the stories of those who have been treated unfairly are most important in explaining inequality; that CRT insists on a critique of liberalism, believing that liberal scholarship fails to address the legal limits to social change

(that liberalism believes that change is incremental, and CRT believes that change should be broad-sweeping); and that whites have been the recipients of the benefits of the Civil Rights movement, when instead those recipients should be persons of color – those who have been oppressed (in Ladson-Billings, 1998, pp. 11-12). Crenshaw, et al. (1995) note that CRT theorists are not united on specific doctrine or methodology, but rather that they believe that white supremacy in America and the subordination of people of color is maintained, and that change in the structures of power is needed to truly see a shift in attitudes.

Within the past 15 years, CRT has been applied to the field of education. Ladson-Billings (1998) focuses on the necessity for equal opportunity – a cornerstone of education. The idea that persons of color receive less services, less education, and are lagging behind the development of white students drives CRT in the field of education, and the focus must be in catching up. Ladson-Billings looks at curriculum, instruction, assessment, funding, and desegregation as pivotal in the fight for equality, and notes that if these areas are addressed, we can successfully move forward with the notion of equality.

White people need to be the impetus for change. Delgado and Stefancic (1997) shift the burden and responsibility to white people when they discuss the evolution of the field of Critical White Studies. By examining what it means to be white, and more importantly, what it means to have privilege, Delgado and Stefancic use narratives to support the importance of involving white voices in change. “It is in the belief that all people can move toward a more decent, more humane society by exposing ourselves to the best minds writing about vexing issues of race and by thinking about them critically” (p. xvii) that white studies is important.

Marx and Pennington (2003) describe how involving whites in anti-racism discussions through multicultural education has offered a mixed bag of success, and that often times, the issue of whiteness is so misunderstood, or not addressed at all, that participants in these discussions simply do not gain from them. The Critical White Studies field strives to change this notion. The only way to drive such change involves making privilege evident to white people. The next section exposes the truths of institutional racism, and how its cumulative impacts have affected our universities.

Critical Race Theory has long made the case for addressing the wrongs of institutional racism. The lived experiences of persons of color make it hard for whites to deny the impact of inequality. The examples listed above can certainly be interpreted in many ways. Much of the story can be construed as pure conjecture, but earning and access data cannot. The façade of equal access to education in all its forms can easily be exposed and dissected. The truth is that education is not equal, and the reality is that whites cannot, or will not, see the true impact of this situated reality for persons of color. The first step to this acknowledgement is to establish a vision of reality – a lens of privilege and power can often wipe away injustice. Multicultural competence allows white people the ability to expose, to notice, to see, and to act.

Multiculturalism and Multicultural Competency

Multiculturalism and multicultural competency among student affairs practitioners has evolved into an expectation in the development of a well-rounded professional. The core elements of student affairs focus on inclusivity and a respect for individual and group

differences. These differences lead to spirited discussions, debates, and dialogues on our campuses, yet most student affairs professionals are woefully trained to face and address multiculturalism through an authentic voice.

How do we define multiculturalism? The movement of multicultural education began among African American scholars as an interethnic movement. Woodson (1933) W.E.B. DuBois (1935) wrote critically of the state of the Black community, and offered inspiring and thought-provoking debate about the true state of both America and its people – both Black and white. Much of the focus over the course of the 20th century would be to expose the situations and conditions of persons of color to White America, and to attack prejudice in all forms.

What are the goals of multiculturalism? Banks (1995) writes that the major goal of multicultural education is reform. In his view, this reform is necessary so that students from different racial, ethnic, and socio-economic status can experience educational equality. Gender equality is also a main tenet of multiculturalism, yet race and ethnicity tend to be the dominant areas of focus. The overarching goal of reform includes an overhaul of traditional curricula, systems, and attitudes.

Multicultural competence is a burgeoning concept in student affairs. The idea of multicultural competency was first created by Sue et al. (1982) in the field of counseling. Counselors need to be culturally aware, and must be able to articulate that awareness if they expect to connect with a client who is culturally different than they are. Pope and Reynolds (1997) propose that multicultural competence includes thirty-three characteristics within

student affairs practitioners. These characteristics fall into three unique categories: multicultural awareness, multicultural knowledge, and multicultural skills. Awareness focuses on the individual's situated environment. An example might include reflection on the role of the parents, and the language they used when referring to persons of color, and how this reflection leads to the belief that I came from a racist household. Knowledge includes those elements that advance our understanding of a topic. This might include participating in a workshop on racial bias or hate speech. Skills are those opportunities where individuals practice using specific remedies for a situation they become familiar with, such as confronting an act of intolerance in a residence hall.

Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller (2004) state the importance of developing this three-part skill set in student affairs:

When Whites work with other Whites around racial issues, or when women make consciousness-raising groups available to other women, there are multicultural attitudes, knowledge, and skills required in efficaciously addressing the issues and concerns of those individuals. . .Moreover, the student affairs profession needs further clarification and discussion as to what constitutes the multicultural competencies necessary to effectively and ethically address multicultural issues (Pope & Reynolds, 1997, in Pope, Reynolds and Mueller, 2004, p. 14).

Young professionals may be receiving a certain level of awareness and knowledge in the classroom, but are they learning effective methods to work with the very students they are

studying? Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller offer a framework of ‘exemplary practices’ that will help these professionals further understand their role in multicultural development.

Torres, Howard-Hamilton, and Cooper (2003), discuss the Howard-Hamilton and Hinton Model for Diversity Awareness and Multicultural Competence model to assess how one obtains such competence - focusing on the process of acquiring knowledge and skill, and admittedly, includes discomfort during the initial phases, followed by a truer sense of personal awareness. Step one in the model focuses on the anticipatory elements of the initial interaction. The main emotion illuminated is anxiety about what is to come. With anxiety comes curiosity, which is represented in step two. Curiosity is what encourages the individual to continue to move forward with acquiring new knowledge. Step three focuses on the acceptance of the new idea – that I might have privilege, and that I accept that I may have privilege (this is seen as an epiphany, of sorts). Step four is developing a comfort with the privilege and with self. Step five is the final step in the model, and it incorporates a repetitive process into one’s life. The process of acquiring new multicultural competence is a lifelong experience, and one that is fueled with new knowledge at every turn. This process – moving from discomfort and uncertainty to positive self identity in relation to others is critical in developing multicultural competence.

This exposure is not a new concept, nor should it be. Allport (1954) developed a plan for promoting interethnic relations that is still valid today. He maintained that, in order for positive interethnic relations so occur, four conditions must be encompassed. The first condition is equal status between two groups, which is equivalent to a mutual respect for one

another. The second condition involves personal interaction including one-on-one contact, where two individuals spend time communicating who they are as cultural beings, and ultimately, what they value. The third condition is that of cooperative activities among the groups, where collective gathering occurs between ethnic groups on a regular basis. The final condition includes the establishment of social norms favoring intergroup contact, where the groups actively negotiate ways of being and doing among each other through a fluid process (in Henze et al., 2002, pp. 34-35). This development – from individual to group – establishes a true understanding of relationship building, and remains as important today as it did over fifty years ago. Additional models for such interaction abound (Allport, 1954; Fine, Weiss, Powell, and Wong, 1997; Tatum, 2001; Torres, Howard-Hamilton, and Cooper, 2003), yet all focus on the same general concept of exposure, leading to a deeper understanding.

Multiculturalism serves as a core competency in the field of student affairs. Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller (2004) show that multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills are an essential component to one's development as a professional. They remind us that, "[a]lthough not all student affairs practitioners will become experts in multicultural issues. . . every student affairs professional must have a level of multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills that allows them to competently work with diverse groups of students and colleagues" (p. 9). White male graduate students nearing the end of their educational preparation are given the tools through coursework in their curriculum, and are, as such, expected to then practice what they have been taught. Unfortunately, white students and

administrators rarely participate in dialogues on race, yet they carry the necessary tools to become thoughtful, skilled practitioners in the dialogue.

What are the realities of the incorporation of multiculturalisms in student affairs preparation programs? Gayles and Kelly (2007) studied these perceptions and experiences among student affairs practitioners and graduate students in student affairs preparation programs, and found that there is a divide between programs that require diversity courses versus those that do not. The students who were enrolled in institutions that require them saw diversity as a value for the institution, and in turn, valued the concepts more readily. Those in programs that did not require diversity were forced to search out their own experiences, through elective courses, or through assistantships or internships. The participants also discussed a difficulty in applying what they learned to their own experiences (rather, there was no formalized connection made in their classroom experiences). Hathaway (1999) also conducted a study examining the impact of required diversity coursework, and found that, while the course ultimately expanded the students' knowledge, it did little to affect their ability to reflectively respond to racial issues and personal beliefs. It does highlight that, although the development of multicultural awareness and skills may occur through coursework, the closure component – skill development – is not occurring. It is possible that the true importance of diversity-related coursework lies in how one uses the materials beyond the classroom, but clearly, coursework alone does not advance skill-building.

One way to incorporate multiculturalism is through an intensive immersion program. Hardy (2009) found that doctoral students who were involved in intensive, application-based

programs were more likely to see a linkage between theory and practice. Baldwin, Buchanan, and Rudisill (2007) found the same to be true among in-service teachers. The authors found that these in-service teachers achieved a truer sense of empathy through service immersion programs where they practiced what they were learning in the classroom. Linking theory to practice, and providing an opportunity to connect the classroom to the field are necessary components to truly encourage practitioners to use what they are learning in the classroom to address issues of misunderstandings, intolerance, and uncertainty on campus.

The truth behind whiteness blinds whites, and leaves them oblivious to the problem. White privilege gives them the opportunity to exempt themselves from these very necessary and vital, difficult discussions. Both concepts – whiteness and white privilege, add to the cumbersome weave of inequality in the fabric of education. However uncomfortable, there is great importance in understanding and addressing whiteness and white privilege if growth and change is ever to occur in modern society. Indeed, it is the responsibility of a nation rife with pain to not only acknowledge the discomfort, but to openly and honestly engage one another in the dialogues of difference.

Whiteness

Being considered white in America has a certain ‘normality’ attached to it. Being white is simply ‘being’ to many whites, as there is little to no attention paid to the discussion of whiteness as an identity characteristic. Whites know what it is not – whiteness is typically not a characteristic indicative of pride, but rather, of discontent. Frankenberg (1993) discusses the ‘normative nature’ of whiteness, as do other scholars (McIntosh, 1988;

Frankenberg, 1993; Dyer, 1997; Wildman and Davis, 1996). That which is normal is simply present – to look in the mirror and see nothing special. Rodriguez (1998) articulates this ‘generation of norms’ as “making things seem or appear natural and timeless so that people accept situations, as well as particular ideologies, without ever questioning their socially and politically constructed nature” (Rodriguez, 1998, p. 32).

There is a resistance among whites to come to terms with whiteness. Kendall (2006) writes about her struggles in addressing whiteness among white audience members at her presentations across the nation. She talks of an increasing number of whites who simply want to be considered ‘people’ - a comment she readily addresses.

I, for one, don’t want to be seen as ‘just a human being’. I want to be seen as who I am – a woman, a white person, a fifty-seven-year-old. I don’t want to be colorless or androgynous. What I do want is to live in a time when our worth is not based on our skin color or our gender, when all of who I am is important and valuable. That’s very different from lopping off pieces of myself – my race, my age, my sexual orientation, my Southernness – to make others comfortable.

This resistance is common, and is often used to stop conversations. If I am never required to address being white, then I can walk away from the negative elements of it. I can retreat back into the comfortable, and normal.

Whiteness as a racial trait has consistently been used as a sorting mechanism. Roediger (1991) discusses how the process of creating whiteness was used to give whites a place in the economy. If individuals could be convinced that whiteness equaled superiority,

then there was a natural trend towards providing whites with the benefits of the superior – better schools, better wages, better social experiences – better capital. In fact, James (2008) points out that as early as 1550, when the English voyagers first came upon African natives, the language they used to describe them – Black – provided negative connotations that were meant to display them as quite different from themselves.

Eventually, the basic White (English)/Black (African) distinction would give birth to a pair of extended chains of related equivalences: English = civilized = Christian = superior = free; African = uncivilized = heathen = inferior = unfree. The African thus became the foil against which the English defined who they wished to be (James, 2008, p. 32).

When the choice was to be White or to be Black, the obvious answer was to choose the former, if possible, and to reject the latter as ‘less than’, ‘inferior’, and bad.

Whiteness can be seen as a positive, then, as well as a negative aspect to one’s identity. Whiteness is having everything and nothing (Dyer, 1988; Rodriguez, 1998; Kendall, 2006). To have the benefits through privilege, and the baggage through oppression is whiteness. And it is virtually impossible to separate whiteness from white privilege, as you cannot have one without the other.

White Privilege

In 1988, Peggy McIntosh, associate director for the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, penned an article titled *White privilege and male privilege: A personal account of coming to see correspondences through work in women’s studies*. Her article

caused a flurry of discussion surrounding the topic of unearned privileges, and sparked a national debate in the years to come. Her central premise was that there were at least 46 ways in which white individuals can be reasonably assured that they will receive privileges through daily life. This set of 'perks' was reserved for those with white skin color, as opposed to persons of color.

White privilege asserts this elusive benefit: skin color serves as a beneficial component to one's experiences in social, political, and economic environments. "I see a pattern running through the matrix of white privilege, a pattern of assumptions that were passed on to me as a white person. *My skin color was an asset for any move I was educated to want to make*" (McIntosh, 1988, p. 295). These benefits give white people advantages over persons of color. They allow for white individuals to wander through life unphased by not having to search for people who look like they do. They *give freedom*, while oppression *takes freedom*. White privilege gives unearned advantages to those who have never searched them out. It aides white people daily in multiple, unrecognized ways.

Learned obliviousness is an overarching theme of white privilege. McIntosh (1988) writes, "I think whites are carefully taught not to recognize white privilege, as males are taught not to recognize male privilege" (p. 291). This invisibility of privilege takes the form of 'having no culture, having no race' through the eyes of white people (McIntosh, 1988; Frankenberg, 1993; Dyer, 1997; Wildman and Davis, 1996). If we have no race or culture, then we have no responsibility to act upon this 'perceived privilege', and can simply dismiss it as an outlier.

White privilege requires adherence to a system of white supremacy. This system is an invisible but prevalent component in our city, state, local, regional, and national governments (Mahoney, 1991; Dyer, 1997). Gallagher (1996) discusses how white supremacy has allowed for the destruction of an ethnic identity, and it has left in its place an identity grounded in race alone. White privilege allows white individuals to *choose* to take action. White people can make a conscious decision to help or hinder, to speak or not speak, to take action or to avoid it. This “optional participation” (O’Brien, 2001; McIntyre, 1997; Dyer, 1997) sets whites apart from persons of color, and serves to add to the power dynamics already present among racial groups. This ability to choose, albeit subconscious at times, makes white privilege a volatile benefit. McIntosh (1988) succinctly articulates this point: “We were given cultural permission not to hear voices of people of other races, or a tepid cultural tolerance for hearing or acting on such voices” (p. 295).

Critics of white privilege attack its terminology as particularly insidious. Gordon (2004) talks about how white privilege “requires condemning whites for possessing, in the concrete, features of a contemporary life that should be available to all, and if this is correct, how can whites be expected to give up such things?” (in Yancy, 2004, p. 176). His argument allows whites to dismiss privilege by disagreeing with the terminology, a process that McIntyre (1997) calls “white talk”. This talk allows whites to escape the discussion of the privileges that they share communally by discounting, colluding, and shifting topics, often taking the form of blaming persons of color, or of accusing them of over-reacting.

Victimization becomes a common theme, then, for white resistance to privilege. To be a victim allows whites to again shift blame and responsibility (Gordon, 2004; McIntyre, 1997; Wildman and Davis, 1996; Dyer, 1997; Mahoney, 1995). Such shifting takes away the responsibility that goes along with privilege. This increased consciousness of white identity has led to whites believing that they suffer a sort of 'social liability (Gallagher, 1996), in that now, whiteness is visible. Without awareness of one's whiteness, it is easy to simply avoid any discussions of or belief in white privilege.

White privilege is often difficult to come to terms with. Ancis and Szymanski (2001) discuss a process of awareness of white privilege that white counselors in graduate school go through, which has direct application to student affairs, as student affairs practitioners are often asked to serve as counselors and problem-solvers with their students. They discuss three specific themes from their research study of 34 counselors-in-training: 1) a lack of awareness and denial of privilege; 2) a demonstrated awareness of white privilege and discrimination; and, 3) a higher order awareness and commitment to action (p. 554). They see these as three distinct levels, that represent a progression of growth and development, as each participant recognized white privilege in different ways. This process is logical. The earlier order shows a student who has yet to come to an understanding of white privilege. They may have never recognized it, and thus, are blind to it. The second stage shows an acknowledgment of white privilege and racism, but the students lack the skills to address it. The final stage shows an incorporation of and commitment to action, which is ideal, and often non-existent among whites – especially white males.

Student affairs professionals are continually charged with educating the entire student, typically outside the classroom, which inevitably means addressing deeply personal issues like how one comes to understand their own racial makeup in relation to their peers. Discussions of white privilege are important because the subject, while often painful, encourages dialogue. This discomfort can lead to a new understanding of one's worldview, and it can arm the white male student with a better sense of their racial identity. In order to examine how whiteness and white privilege affect students on college campuses, we need to have an understanding of the various developmental issues that face our college-aged students.

Student Development Theory and Identity

Student development theory provides a basis for understanding how college students have been defined and redefined since the earlier days of the practice of student affairs. This literature provides a template for how the cumulative and continual process of student development has shifted from a discussion of student's psychosocial and cognitive growth to one of how students understand their racial and cultural identity. While this research analyzes white male graduate students, this material is important to consider. First, we must examine how students grow and develop to know how we can reach them 'where they are' in their developmental growth. Second, as white male graduate students begin engaging in and challenging their own (and their students') racial identity, they will, inevitably, have to face some developmental issues. The exposure to new ideas and struggles with identity can cause

people to reevaluate their own developmental path. Student development theory is a natural starting place for this discussion.

Evans (2003) writes that student development theory “provides information about how development occurs and suggests conditions that encourage development” (Evans, 2003, p. 179). Much has changed about college students since the inception of the student affairs profession. The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA, 1989) wrote that, by 1937, institutions were focused on looking at students through the Student Personnel Point of View perspective, which looked at twelve themes: the academic mission of the institution is preeminent; each student is unique, each person has worth and dignity; bigotry cannot be tolerated; feelings affect thinking and learning; out of class environments affect learning; a supportive and friendly community life helps students learn; the freedom to doubt and question must be guaranteed; effective citizenship should be taught; and that students are responsible for their own lives (Schroeder, 1999). While this model shaped how we reach students, it did little to explain their cognitive, psychosocial, and life cycle behaviors. Granted, in 1937, it was cutting edge practice to look at students as free thinkers, but it was nonetheless not a scientific quest into the minds of the student.

Student development theory is complex and cumbersome. Evans (2003) divides student development theory into three categories: psychosocial, cognitive, and typological. Blimling (1999) categorizes moral development as its own category, yet Evans draws it under cognitive development. For the purposes of this study, psychosocial and cognitive theories will be evaluated, as typological models are simply not a consideration in the context

of defining one's racial identity. That said, an additional category of cultural identity has been added to support the creation of racial identity models. Collectively, these theories represent the breadth and depth required to truly understand student behavior and development.

Psychosocial Theories

Psychosocial theories are patterned most directly from the work of Erikson (1968). These theories focus on "age-linked, sequential stages" (Evans, 2003, p. 180). Erik Erikson, often considered the founding father of identity research, "was the first psychoanalytic writer to enquire seriously into the phenomenon of identity formation during adolescence" (Kroger, 1996, p. 14). Kroger (2000) summarizes how Erikson framed the development of identity in terms of three categories: biological elements, psychological needs, interests, and defenses, and one's cultural environment. Kroger (1996) discusses Erikson's definition of identity as "partly conscious and partly unconscious; it gives one's life a feeling of sameness and continuity yet also a 'quality of unselfconscious living' and is taken for granted by those in possession" (p. 17). Identity is also dependent upon the past, but determines the future. Waterman (1999) defines identity as "having a clearly delineated self-definition, a self-definition comprised of those goals, values, and beliefs which the person finds personally expressive, and to which he or she is unequivocally committed" (1985, p. 6).

Erikson's theory of ego development is the basis for identity development. Cote and Levine (1989) write about the process of ego identity formation. The process focuses on four distinct areas: 1) the identity crisis; 2) the institutionalized moratoria; 3) the struggle between

the ego and superego for dominance of the personality; and 4) the value orientation stages. The identity crisis occurs at the end of adolescence, and is marked by the individual's readiness to change, and society's pressures for the person to change. These elements are culturally and socially defined. These crises can appear as minor or major, but have a profound effect on the person's understanding of their identity. The institutional moratoria stage is, simply put, the time that society gives, or provides an individual to work through their developmental issues. This process includes the understanding and selecting of values, as well as experimentation with what they believe might be right or desirable. The struggle between the ego and superego for dominance of the personality is seen as an internal struggle for power. This struggle is characterized as a battle between youth and adulthood, with superego being most desirable. It can be mild or severe, but in the end, it can also be seen as regressive (in that the person may slide back into a more immature, undeveloped sense of identity). The final stage, value orientation, incorporates the true components of identity – the development of a moral self, an ideological self, and an ethical self. Ultimately, this process is the true culmination of the struggle itself, where the individual must move from 'the fence' to a more exacting belief in what is truth, in their eyes (Cote and Levine, 1989, pp. 389-393).

Erikson's writings on identity leave many elements of underrepresented populations unexplored. Shotter and Gergen (1989) offer an extensive critique of Erikson. When identity is considered through his lens, a highly generalized view of the world is created. First, according to Holland and Holland (1977), the concept of selection and experimentation, or moratorium, may simply be unrealistic to some. This ideology "neglects the objective

conditions of a large segment of humankind for whom the envisaging of alternative possible futures would be a futile, self-delusory exercise” (in Shotter and Gergen, 1989, p. 37). To assume that all individuals have such choices available to them is unrealistic, and favors those with much mobility and access to all the choices society has to offer. It implies privilege, and privilege is a benefit not made available to all. Erikson (1950) virtually ignored homosexual identity in his writings, relegating sexual identity to one that “is characterized by ‘mutuality of orgasm’ . . .with a loved partner . . .of the other sex . . . to regulate the cycles of work, procreation, [and] recreation” (in Worthington, et al., 2002, p. 498). The authors examine the theoretical models of homosexual identity, and biopsychosocial influences, such as biology, gender, culture, religious orientation, prejudice, and privilege. They state that these biopsychosocial influences, collectively, influence heterosexual identity.

The main theory that has driven higher education over the past two decades has been Chickering’s vectors theory. Chickering (1969) and Chickering and Reisser (1993) developed a series of seven vectors, or developmental tasks, that follow a student from early adulthood through the mid-twenties. The vectors are: developing competence (intellectual, physical, manual, and intellectual); managing emotions (recognition and acceptance of); moving through autonomy toward interdependence (emotional independence and self-direction); developing mature interpersonal relationships (acceptance and appreciate of difference); establishing positive identity; developing purpose (goals and activity interest); and developing integrity (values and beliefs). When considered sequentially, student development appears to follow a continuum, and build from simple to more complex.

Chickering's seven vectors also follow a stage progression through adolescence into early adulthood. The first vector, developing competence, reveals the process of establishing credibility within one's self. This involves the development of the intellectual self, and serves as the true beginning of identity formation as an adult. The second vector, managing emotions, focuses on the person developing a sense of control or acknowledgment of the various emotions that he or she is facing. The third vector, developing mature interpersonal relationships, is exactly as it sounds. Entering into and nurturing relationships helps the person develop a sense of identity in relation to, and apart from, another person. The fifth vector, establishing positive identity, is where an individual sees value in who they are. It consists of pride and is the precursor to developing purpose, vector six. Developing purpose is the establishment of goals and interests, and is an evolving element that allows a person to begin charting a future. Vector seven is developing integrity. Integrity is at the core of character development, and consists of a person establishing what is right and wrong through values and beliefs. The process seems extensive, but can occur rapidly, depending upon the individual.

Chickering's vectors have been used in myriad ways since their inception. Wortman (2002) used Chickering's vectors as his framework for studying the impact of studying abroad on one's identity, and found that students who participated in study abroad opportunities were more open to the host culture and diversity in the country they were visiting, and that non-participants experienced no change, thus providing support for increased participation in study abroad programs at one institution. Most recently,

Allesandria and Nelson (2005) used his work to study the experiences of first generation college students by utilizing the Erwin Identity Scale (EIS-III), which measures students based on three scales: confidence, sexual identity, and conceptions about body and appearance. They found that first generation college students had significantly higher self-esteem scores than non-first generation college students. According to Chickering and Reisser (1993), a person's sense of culture can have a positive impact on identity, and thus, if first generation college students have a firm grasp on the notion that they are specially situated in the collegiate environment, they can and do bring that strong sense of self to their experiences. It is not uncommon to find writers who discuss Chickering from an historical reference point of view, as his work framed much of the student affairs profession. It gave student affairs practitioners the ability to reference psychosocial theory, and apply it in the residential laboratory called campus.

Is the work of Chickering and Reisser still valid? Strange (2004) writes that, in terms of the Millennial Generation, Chickering and Reisser's evolution of the vectors incorporates more interconnectedness, instead of the focus on personal autonomy that was articulated in Chickering's earlier model. Wolf-Wendel and Ruel (1999) write about how Chickering and Reisser's vectors, while being primarily focused on the traditional college student, may not provide the same support to the experiences of non-traditional students. As our campuses become more diverse and less 'traditional', this is an important critique. Chickering and Reisser's model may need to be reexamined to evaluate how fully all students can be evaluated in terms of their identity. Such examination could show us a completely new

dimension, or multiple dimensions of growth and development of a student through their college years.

The formation of one's identity provides a framework for dealing with others, understanding one's place in the world (and on a college campus), and in resolving conflicts. Marcia (1966) developed a model that incorporates this process into four distinct statuses of identity development. Marcia (1966) uses four identity statuses to define one's place in his or her identity development. Identity diffusion focuses on a lack of commitment to any specific development, or acknowledgment of any other alternative. Foreclosure focuses on commitment without alternatives to the option. Moratorium is a stage focusing on active exploration without commitment. Identity achievement focuses on the commitment to one's identity after review and examination of all options (in Meeus, Oosterwegel and Vollergergh, 2002). These statuses provide a lens for analysis of a person's identity conflicts. Marcia's identity statuses have faced critique. van Hoof (1999) has offered critique that Marcia's statuses are not grounded in Erikson's theory and underrepresent his concept of identity, that the status continuum positions are contradictory, that there is no explanation of how individuals move from adolescence to adulthood, and that the statuses do not represent significant developmental changes (in Waterman, A. S., 1999). Waterman (1999) suggests that much of the concern surrounding a failure to adequately address adulthood transition issues could be addressed through further research of college-aged populations, and less focus on adolescence as a transitional period. Also, a longitudinal focus on identity statuses will test, once and for all, if such transitions are still significant.

Cognitive Theories

Cognitive theories illuminate the thought processes of reasoning. Piaget (1952), in his groundbreaking study of children's cognitive development, evaluated the role of environment in the development of cognitive abilities. Kegan (1994), King and Kitchener (1994), Perry (1970), Kohlberg (1969, 1976, 1987), and Gilligan (1982) are the primary theorists cited in the literature.

Kegan's (1994) work focuses on orders of consciousness, or meaning-making. Again, like Chickering and Reisser, the ordering process moves from simple to complex. The five orders of consciousness are: concrete or self-centeredness; the ability to develop self-concept; abstract thinking; constructing generalizations from abstract thought; and thinking as transcending beyond the individual. The first order, concrete or self-centeredness, is roughly identified as being between the ages of birth through six years. Order two, the ability to develop self-concept, or the development of self in relation to others, is prevalent from 6 years to throughout the teens. Order three, abstract thinking, begins the process of developing and describing values, and occurs throughout the end of adolescence and into early adulthood. Order four, constructing generalizations from abstract thought, gives us the ability to construct our own theories about self and to develop strong interpersonal relationships. This order also occurs through early adulthood, and is often seen as the highest level most individuals reach. Orders three and four are often seen as the meaning-making levels. Order five thinking is seen as transcendence beyond the individual, or higher level meaning making (Taylor and Marienau, 1997; Taylor, 1999; Ignelzi, 2000). When considering how Kegan's

work relates to student affairs practitioners, the relevance is two-pronged. First, as participants in higher education and administrators in training, student affairs professionals are often put in positions that force them to call upon theory (ie, student development theory) and use bits and pieces to construct their own meaning-making scenario. One would not typically subscribe to every element of a theory of development, but if they examine the collective body of work from multiple theorists, would develop their own theoretical lens for analysis. Second, as students, it is wise to understand the cognitive level that these participants might achieve or reside in. Based on Kegan's model, we can assume that our white male graduate students are at least at level four, constructing theories about self and developing interpersonal relationships. This tells us that they ought to be armed with the necessary cognitive abilities to begin applying what they are learning in the classroom to their particular problems or circumstances.

King and Kitchener (1994) utilize a similar framework for their model of reflective judgment. King and Kitchener's Reflective Judgment Model provides rationale for how individuals defend conclusions is "intrinsically related to other assumptions the person holds about the process of knowing" (p. 44). Unlike other stage theorists (Chickering and Reisser, 1993; Kegan, 1994) who believe that there is a progressive ordering that is followed for development, King and Kitchener (1994) believe that individuals occupy different stages depending upon the cognitive processing required of them. Their model is best utilized when individuals engage in concepts involving ill-structured problem solving (ie, race). Their Reflective Judgment Model is organized into three levels, and seven stages. The first level,

pre-reflective thinking, assumes that knowledge is uncertain, and acknowledge that individuals come to situations where they do not realize that a problem exists. They also do not use evidence to reason a conclusion (an absence of logic). They move from concrete beliefs (what I see is real), to a justification that other possibilities exist. Stages four and five are denoted as the level of quasi-reflective thinking. These stages begin with a belief that one cannot know with certainty (and are situationally dependent), and move towards a belief that a subjective interpretation of evidence (relativism) may lead to knowing. The final level, reflective thinking, encompasses stages six and seven. These stages believe that, while judgments must be grounded in real data, their conclusions are open to interpretation (pp. 44-74).

Race is a perfect construct for the Reflective Judgment Model, as it involves many preconceived notions and beliefs, often shared among families and friends, but with no basis for truth. Prejudicial information is often assumed to be accurate and true. College students come to campus with a large set of preconceived notions and judgment. Student affairs administrators are often tasked with assisting students in uncovering truths, which, typically, means that misconceptions, judgments, and assumptions are challenged. This model of reasoning provides administrators with a set of stages that incorporates the accumulation of truth, and provides an opportunity for students to reject previous assumptions as ‘truth’ reveals itself.

Perry (1970) also examined schemes of cognitive development. His schemes focused on nine different stages. The first and second stages look at decisions based on dualism –

right or wrong. In these stages, resistance occurs because the new information may be seen as challenging their established beliefs. Stages three and four look at decisions based on multiplicity – that all information is subjective and that their answers are just as valid as others. Stage five looks at decisions based on relativism and reasoning. If there is a way to do things, there must be validity behind it, and a procedure or process for doing it. Stage six asks students to commit to choices and ways of life. Stages seven through nine are difficult, if not impossible, for most students to reach. These represent full commitment and constant renegotiation of commitment. According to Perry (1970), most students beginning college are projected to be around level two developmentally, and when they leave, they are near level five. A criticism of Perry's work is that he worked with an all-male sample at Harvard (Belenky et al., 1986, Zuga, 1999). Perry's model was then applied to both genders. Belenky et al. (1986) extended his theories, with the incorporation of women from the collegiate perspective, as well as through differing ages and occupations. It is critically important to understand how men and women reason and respond cognitively if we expect to move beyond male as the normalized gender, even when considering only white male perspectives. A failure to include the female perspective as both researcher and subject disconnects a research area that is inherently connected – human cognitive development.

Cognitive theories illuminate the thought processes of reasoning. A person's cultural identity frames their worldview and experiences, and is of equal importance when considering how decisions are made and values are developed. Student affairs practitioners are constantly arranging and rearranging this information when they work with students.

They not only consider the development of each student (although the process is more subconscious than conscious), but they wrestle with their own responses and expectations. Cognitive theories help to anchor student affairs professionals in the reasoning process, and help to explain how or why they might react in any given situation, and are thus an important consideration in identity development.

Our identities are learned and experienced, both through positive support and through negative reinforcement. The social mores that follow are learned and reinforced through daily interactions also (Mead, 1934, 1936, 1938). Blumer (1980) discusses Mead's viewpoint of the construction of identity through social behavior:

Mead saw the social behavior of human beings as constituted by their approaches and responses to one another as they engaged in their respective parts of their joint acts.

These approaches and responses turn on how the human beings see and define each other in their interaction - the kind of objects they make of one another in the situations in which they are placed (p. 417).

This behaviorist distinction is an important facet in this study because I believe that identity is shaped by our interactions, and not simply as an inborn trait.

White male graduate students in student affairs preparation programs learn early on that a college student's identity is quite often challenged from their early experiences on campus. White males attempt to claim themselves as individuals who worked hard to get where they did. When their peers challenge this notion, it can be uncomfortable and disorienting. Tatum (1997) writes that, with white men, being white and male serve as

‘normative’ traits. Thus, when they begin to “understand that they are viewed as members of a dominant racial group not only by other whites but also by people of color, they are sometimes troubled, even angered, to learn that simply because of their group status they are viewed with suspicion by many people of color” (Tatum, 1997, p. 104). If they actively choose to step into the dialogue, their actions can lead to deep and meaningful conversations about what is socially acceptable behavior, what is considered taboo, and most importantly, how their identity in the collegiate environment can be malleable.

Student affairs practitioners strive for the development of the whole student. Their own understanding of the importance of multicultural competency in themselves and in others is the bedrock to assisting others in growth, but also in defining who they are as a racialized being. These social behaviors act as warning lights within development. When a light begins to blink, the student sees that an issue may be brewing. Sometimes, this occurs when a white student feels threatened because of a belief or concern that they may share is challenged by others. Victimization sets in, and the white student simply retreats. Reason (2007) articulates it best: “White college students therefore are increasingly aware of race, but lack the language to make sense of it” (Reason, 2007, p. 127). Our task in student affairs is to engage them, as growth occurs within the margins of doubt. Watt (2007) calls these the ‘difficult dialogues on race’, as they push our students to the edges of what they believe (or rather, *think* they believe). This development surely happens when white students are challenged by students of color, but could be enhanced even more when other white students begin to embrace the dialogue.

Cultural Identity

Tatum (1997) explores the complexities of identity when framed through a cultural lens. In her psychology classes, she asks her students to complete the sentence “I am _____” (p. 20). What she has found is that students define themselves in a myriad of ways, from traditional racial classifications, such as Black and Puerto Rican, to ethnic titles, like Irish or Italian. Some may even title themselves as being gay or lesbian. One of the unique aspects of her classroom experience is the absence of White students remarking on their whiteness. She notes that this phenomenon also exists typically with regards to religion, and often, sexual identity. She notes that students typically categorize themselves through identities that people *notice*. Thandeka (2002) uses a similar framework for discussion when she asks her white friends to play the Race Game. The rules are simple: every time her friend speaks of their interactions with white people in their daily lives, they insert the term ‘white’. For example, “This morning, I sat down and ate breakfast with my white son”. This focus on whiteness was regularly seen as uncomfortable for her friends, but it did provide a lens for discussion.

Fortunately or not, racial, or rather, one’s cultural environment, makes a difference in our culture. Elements of race, or rather, skin color, become defining characteristics, whether we realize it or not. What is unique is the lack of conversation about the topic of cultural differences. We assume that these elements are taboo or unworthy of discussion, yet we face a continued tension along racial lines. This section will explore the various forms of racial and ethnic identity. In order to understand a person’s cultural identity, student affairs

practitioners need to have a general understanding of models of cultural identity, and more importantly, how the models apply to the students they might serve. While it can be assumed that white male student affairs practitioners learn about cultural identity models in their coursework, the reality is that application of these models is a personal choice. The best we can do as advisors and mentors is to provide the students with the tools to act; it is a personal decision as to how they apply their knowledge.

How can we examine how cultural identities form? Numerous researchers have taken the concepts of racial and ethnic identities and have not only examined the needs of individual cultures, but have defined identity models, which help to explain and define their development. This section will explore these models.

In order to examine racial and ethnic identity, one must first define the concepts. Helms (1990) adds definition to terms such as racial identity and racial consciousness. Racial identity and consciousness are used synonymously in her text, and revolve around “the awareness that (socialization due to) racial-group membership can influence one’s intrapsychic dynamics as well as interpersonal relationships” (p. 7). These models help the reader to identify the many elements that make up one’s racial identity. Helms also notes that there is a clear distinction between racial and ethnic identity, in that “one’s racial-group designation does not necessarily define one’s racial, cultural, or ethnic characteristics” (p. 7).

Black racial identity models came to light in the 1970s. Models appeared in response to civil unrest in our nation, and gave practitioners new tools to help define racial issues, as well as help to develop sensitivity among professionals for racial differences. Prior to such

models, racial characteristics fed stereotypes among the majority population, and divisions between racial groups deepened. Since historical identity theorists were of the majority, original theories aided in helping white therapists cope with their Black clientele (Grier & Cobbs, 1968; Jones & Seagull, 1977; Pinderhuges, 1973).

Early models framed racial identity through the eyes of White America. Original models framed the “Client-As-Problem”, and “the primary goal of such models seems to have been to diffuse counselor anxiety by making the occurrence of aversive Black behaviors more predictable” (Helms, 1990, p. 17). One set of such models - the “Nigrescence or Black Racial Identity Models (NRID)”, claimed that assimilation into the majority culture was the best path to development (Hale, 1980).

Seven NRID models, ranging from 1971 through 1984, all utilize a similar stage pattern in explaining this assimilation (Cross, 1971; Thomas, 1971; Jackson, 1975; Toldson and Pasteur, 1975; Milliones, 1980; Banks, 1981; and Gay, 1984, in Helms, 1990). Five stages emerged from the theorists’ models: preencounter; encounter; immersion; emersion; and internalization. The preencounter stage refers to a more dominant, White identity, in which the person does not see any other way of thinking. The encounter stage refers to a “discovery” phase, where injustice is experienced, and confusion ensues. The immersion stage is reflective of a Black identity, where one becomes a part of his or her culture, and experiences anger in light of oppression and injustice. The emersion stage refers to a new-found sense of self-worth and dignity. This is typically a stage reflective of personal growth and development. The internalization stage is indicative of a sense of pride and belonging

(Helms, 1990, pp. 20-29). These models helped counselors to develop means by which to not only understand Black racial development, but also gave them pathways to assist in their clients' development.

Throughout the same general timeframe as the NRID models, White Racial Identity Development (WRID) Models began to appear in the literature. Eight distinct models for White identity appeared (Kovel, 1970; Jones, 1972; Gaertner, 1976; Terry, 1977; Ganter, 1977; Hardiman, 1979; Carney and Kahn, 1984; and Helms, 1984, in Helms, 1990), and followed very similar frameworks. The main difference between the two sets of models was in the response to racism. The NRID models helped Blacks to understand the elements of a racist system. The WRID models helped Whites understand how their power as racists affected others, and to develop a *White consciousness* which is emblematic of a full understanding of *Whiteness* as a concept.

Helms (1990) identifies six stages that exist within the White Identity models: contact; disintegration; reintegration; pseudo-independence; immersion/emersion; and autonomy. The contact stage is defined as the first appearance of the idea of Black people. No conscious awareness exists of what it means to be "Black", but the stage often refers to naïve interactions. The disintegration stage refers to moral dilemmas that exist within the individual. This stage is a period of questioning, and leads to discomfort. The reintegration stage refers to the White person's decision to embrace his or her whiteness, and to believe that all others are inferior. Avoidance is the key to this stage. The pseudo-independent stage refers to feelings of neutrality. There is no positive feeling for being White, nor is there a

negative one per se. There can be discomfort here, but positive developmental changes are occurring. The immersion/emersion stage refers to the acquisition of truths and the dispelling of myths about Black people. There is a new-found sense of understanding and emotion, and change becomes a goal. The autonomy stage is the final stage, and is reflective of comfort in their *skin*. There is no feeling of need for oppression because there is no perceived *threat* (Helms, 1990, 55-66). The White identity models help Whites to move from a negative worldview to a positive one, and help Whites to better understand the systems of oppression that exist in our culture.

Is the White Racial Identity Development (WRID) Theory worthy of such designation? Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson (1994) are critical of WRID because they claim that the model is too closely patterned from models that respond to the dominant (white) society's influence and impact on Blacks. "We believe that the conceptualization of White racial identity development as a process parallel to minority identity development is not merited. . . White attitudes about themselves and other racial/ethnic groups are not forged under such conditions" (Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson, 1994, p. 131). The authors claim that WRID falls short of serving Whites correctly, as it incorporates the elements of oppression that forge Black models of identity development.

Thompson (1994) actively disputes this notion. Thompson looks at the theory frame by frame, and deconstructs the arguments of researchers in the field. The first claim is that the theory focuses solely on the interactions Whites have with Non-Whites, and it provides no detail about one's own racial identity. According to Helms (1990), Whites must accept

their Whiteness, along with the cultural implications, and define themselves as individuals not dependent on the superiority of their racial identity in society. While interaction with Non-Whites is important and pivotal, it is not a core element to the theory, but rather a companion to examination.

The critics also claim that WRID should not be classified as a developmental theory. Phinney (1989) and Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson (1994) argue that the linear process eluded to by Helms is arbitrary at best, and aligned with assumptions of 'goodness' or 'badness' in terms of a positive racial identity. "This arbitrary directionality, then, places the burden for showing that the potential progression indeed takes place on the supporters of the model, and no evidence for this is available" (Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson, 1994, p. 133). Thompson dismantles this notion by examining the classic elements of theory, according to Green (1989). WRID embodies a theoretical framework because it includes temporality, cumulativeness, directionality, a new mode of organization, and an increased capacity for self control (p. 646).

WRID provides an analysis of developmental change in behaviors through the understanding of a person's role in society. Forward movement within the theory is the only alternative, as "the changes are relatively irreversible and, therefore, cannot be undone" (p. 647). The new mode of organization is a fair critique, according to Thompson, because the theory does not follow traditional linear models, but the author adds that the failure "to conform to the concept of linearity appears to be insufficient cause for dismissing it as a developmental theory" (p. 648). The WRID provides individuals with new knowledge about

their own racial identity, and also provides a platform for the discussion of a pressing societal issue: racism. Knowledge may lead to proactivity and change, which answers the final characteristic of theory, that of providing an increase in self-control. By understanding one's place in the world, a person is more apt and willing to make positive developmental changes. Thompson's response to critics of the WRID theory is a practical guide to understanding the WRID theory, and dispelling the critical remarks made about it. It reinforces the need for research on racial identity and the importance of racial dialogue in our society. Racial identity situates a person within a cultural context. White male graduate students in student affairs practitioner programs must understand not only the cultural identity of their students, but also of themselves, as they can best serve others by having a firm grasp of their own identity, both positive and negative. A failure to examine self leads to an less than genuine interaction, which, if nothing else, fails to help anyone.

White Racial Identity models have continued to evolve since the creation of the first WRID models. Ponterotto's (1988) model differs from Helms, as it extends beyond the black and white binary to serve as more inclusive to all non-white interactions, and caters to a graduate student population, as his sample of graduate students in Nebraska informed his concepts. Ponterotto's model includes four stages: pre-exposure; exposure; zealot-defensive; and integration. Pre-exposure is the stage where white graduate students are not only uninformed, but also naïve in their understanding of multiculturalism. Their viewpoints on racism are quite traditional, as they view racism as an outright act, or rather, obvious. The exposure stage is reached when they first come into contact with multicultural issues. This is

where white students begin seeing the realities of racism in our society, and how individuals are treated differently because of their race. This stage brings guilt and anger, as they feel deceived that they could come so far in life and not see racism to this extent. The zealot-defensive stage is embodied as more dualistic – either they become the zealot – studying the topics extensively and advocating for minorities at every turn. The defensive posture is an active way of fighting against what they see. They often become withdrawn, and fail to accept what they are presented with. Finally, the integration stage is the final demonstrable component in the model, where white students begin to become more open to the complexities of race and racism, and begin to acknowledge their empowerment, and develop a positive racial identity (Ponterotto and Pedersen, 1993, pp. 74-75).

A collective approach to White Racial identity was developed that incorporated all WRID models to demonstrate how they might work together to better understand white identity. Sabnani, Ponterotto, and Borodovsky (1991) incorporated the works of Hardiman (1982), Helms (1990), and Ponterotto (1988) to create a more inclusive, all-encompassing model that is reflective of the research. They found five stages: Pre-exposure/pre-contact, conflict, pro-minority/antiracism, retreat into white culture, redefinition, and integration. The pre-exposure/pre-contact stage is as it sounds – a pre-cursor to experiences of awareness of self as a racial being. This stage is indicative of the acceptance of whiteness without question. The conflict stage clearly articulates an experience that forces the individual to confront race and/or racism. White students come face to face with the realities, and struggle with how to respond. The pro-minority/antiracism stage is a full immersion into supporting

minorities, and actively learning all they can about racism and other cultures. The retreat into white culture stage is a fleeing response, where whites choose to simply avoid conflict. This stage is the antithesis of the pro-minority/antiracism stage, in that the white student takes on a retreating posture, and removes themselves from any situation in which their whiteness might be challenged. Stage five, redefinition and integration, is the ‘coming to terms’ stage, where whites accept their position, their privilege, and their responsibility to act in fighting towards ending oppression (Sabnani, Ponterotto, and Borodovsky, 1991, in Ponterotto and Pedersen, 1993, pp. 76-78).

White racial identity models serve to provide some context for understanding the evolution of identity among whites. All of the theories show a fluid process, and all models also articulate stages that, for some, may be unreachable – especially if a posture of resistance is taken. The goal of this research is emancipation, so the hope is that individuals will not only come to accept their identity, and their situation in life (with regards to power and privilege), but also their obligation to end oppression, and fight racism in all its forms. In truth, one’s ethnic, or racial, identity is an important touchstone in the developmental process.

McNeill (in Tajfel, 1981) writes that ethnic identity is “that part of an individual’s self concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (p. 274). The article associates ethnic identity with language acquisition, such as using the Spanish language in the Chicano/Latino population, self-concept and esteem, and counseling

skills (pp. 274-275). Group membership requires certain characteristics. McNeill purports that ethnic identity is multidimensional, and uses a counseling technique to help practitioners fully understand how this component can be examined. If student affairs professionals expect to connect to students, which is a foundational element to the field, then understanding their students' identities, roles, and experiences can only help them to serve their students. Being a part of majority culture often means having the privilege of avoiding how one's ethnic identity might affect their collegiate experience. Privilege allows for ignorance, and ignorance is a deterrent for learning and personal growth. Young student affairs practitioners are perfectly situated to begin to understand those different from themselves, as well as to promote understanding how similar we all are.

Identity is a complex issue. When considering the identity of a student, we must consider their psychosocial development, cognitive development, and cultural development, just to name a few elements. Student affairs practitioners are well versed in the first two – psychosocial and cognitive – but less versed in cultural identity. This, I feel, is at the heart of the difficult discussions that must occur, and the primary reason why students (and administrators) fail to engage in such discussions. Whether development occurs along a rigid and defined continuum, or through a series of life-changing events, development is nonetheless ever-evolving and ever-present. Our identities shape who we are, whether it be a student, an administrator, or a teacher. If student affairs administrators ever intend to reach all students, identity exploration, both for self and of others, is critical.

Summary

The problem this research will address is that systems of white supremacy and privilege perpetuate inequality. Changing systems of power and privilege require understanding the role of white males in both. By examining the problem through a critical lens, we can begin to see how white males are uniquely situated in both the problem and solution. White privilege and male privilege allow for the perpetuation of inequality. Student development theories help us to understand the processes for establishing identity, but do not provide a complete picture of development. Thus, multiple identities shape who we are, and can ultimately shape our positions in society. Student affairs practitioners are in the unique position of aiding in the growth and development of students on a daily basis. In order to help them, they must first understand their own level of multicultural competency. White male student affairs practitioners have the benefits of privilege, but also the obligation to help others grow and develop. While the opportunities are varied, the obligation is nonetheless important. Chapter three will identify the process I will use to collect and evaluate data from white male graduate students in student affairs practitioner programs. These men are directly involved in the change process, and as such, their stories will help to illuminate their experiences in understanding their own whiteness, white privilege, and multicultural competency in the context of higher education.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Chapter three presents the structure of my study of whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism. As stated previously, the problem this research addresses is that systems of white supremacy - political, social, and economic - and white privilege perpetuate inequality. Changing systems of power and privilege require understanding how white males serve as both perpetrators of privilege and as change agents. The university environment served as a relevant backdrop to such an analysis of privilege and power, as it is indicative of the world around us, filled with the same components of white privilege and institutional racism, and contains similar players and participants. Student affairs practitioners are asked to provide educational opportunities for students outside of class, but also to challenge students to understand how they fit into the multicultural mosaic that is our world environment, and as such, serve as an effective vehicle for helping students navigate their identities. The research questions that this study addressed were: 1) How do white males in student affairs preparation programs make meaning of their own whiteness? ; 2) How do white males in student affairs preparation programs understand white privilege, and what experiences led to that perspective?; 3) How do white males in student affairs preparation programs view and utilize diverse interactions with white students and students of color, both programmatic and interpersonal, formally and informally?; and 4) How have white males in student affairs preparation programs incorporated their white awareness into their professional preparation?

Chapter three outlines the methodology of this qualitative study. Components of this chapter include a discussion of the rationale for qualitative study and for using a narrative case study approach, the setting, participant selection, data collection, data analysis, data display, the limitations of the study, researcher subjectivity, and the elements of veracity and trustworthiness built into the study.

Rationale for Qualitative Study

Qualitative research has been described as the process of making a quilt. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) discuss that the qualitative study is “a pieced-together set of representations that is fitted to the specifics of a complex situation” (p. 4). The complex situation – race and identity for this study – allows for multiple interpretations of reality. As the quilt-maker, or bricoleur, the researcher has many tools at his discretion to interpret this reality. Marshall and Rossman (2006) examine the characteristics of qualitative research and the qualitative researcher. Included in this list are: that qualitative research occurs in the natural world, and not in a laboratory; that context (in this case, the university environment) provides a framework for the study; that the data is emergent rather than prefigured; that it is interpretive; that it addresses phenomena; and that the researcher and his or her experiences are embedded in both processes and outcomes (p. 3).

Researchers are challenged to stitch together a story that not only is accurate, but also has significance and meaning. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) state, “for us, life – as we come to it and as it comes to others – is filled with narrative fragments, enacted in storied moments of time and space, and reflected upon and understood in terms of narrative unities

and discontinuities” (p. 17). The task for the researcher is to paint a portrait underscoring what is said with the very words of those who are saying it; looking through their lenses of experiences. “Just as we found our own lives embedded within a larger narrative of social science inquiry, the people, schools, and educational landscapes we study undergo day-by-day experiences that are contextualized within a longer-term historical narrative” (p. 19).

Each piece of the quilt is highly personal. Likewise, the discussions of race and identity are highly personal, and are best suited for qualitative research. Qualitative research gives voice to the participants. Higher education has a responsibility to educate students. Student Affairs practitioners have an obligation to do the same thing outside of the classroom. In my study, this voice is necessary to understand how white male graduate students in student affairs practitioner programs make meaning of their whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism.

Rationale for Narrative Case Study

Stories provide panels for the quilt I have assembled. Narrative inquiry was designed to support the telling of such stories. Polkinghorne (1988) discusses that there are two types of narrative inquiry: descriptive and explanatory. The descriptive event looks to build an accurate interpretation of events that individuals use to make meaning. The explanatory narrative looks at how the event happened, and tries to develop causal links. This study focused on the explanatory components of whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism among white male graduate students through a Critical Race lens. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) remind us that “it is crucial to be able to articulate a relationship between one’s

personal interests and sense of significance and larger social concerns expressed in the works and lives of others” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 122). Marshall and Rossman (2006) discuss further the significance of one person’s understanding of a culture through the “development of their life within it, a history told in ways that capture the person’s feelings, views, and perspectives” (Marshall and Rossman, 2006, pp. 115-116). Reissman (1993) calls this process a revelation of how “culture ‘speaks itself’ through an individual’s story” (Reissman, 1993, p. 5). Mishler (1986) relies on the interviewing framework, as opposed to observations, to collect these stories, and elicit a story from the respondent.

The second, more functional component to this study is the case study itself. The case study “is not a methodological choice, but a choice of object to be studied. . .As a form of research, case study is defined by interest in individual cases, not by the methods of inquiry used” (Stake, 1995, p. 236). Yin (2009) writes that the case study helps the researcher “understand a real-life phenomenon in depth, but such understanding encompassed important contextual conditions – because they were highly important to your phenomenon of study” (Yin, 2009, p. 18). Patton (2002) goes a step further, using a term ‘critical case’, that describes a situation that can be replicated, where logical generalizations can be made about a particular group (Patton, 2002, pp. 236-237). The study of white male graduate students in student affairs preparation programs offers a very specific phenomenon within a field that functions as an extended community of practitioners in our nation’s college and university environment. Thus, logical generalization, when paired with direct and cumulative

experiences of the researcher and participants, yields a set of experiences that are quite similar from white male to white male.

Critical Race Theory also served as an effective tool for analysis within this study. CRT exposes the presence of institutional racism and inequality. Our institutions are rife with experiences that display how the culture of higher education perpetuates racism and oppression. The stories and experiences through a critical race framework demonstrate the importance of addressing these systems of inequality. Stories drive the inquiry, and with a topic focusing on how white male graduate students make meaning of whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism, there can be no doubt that stories drive the process, and help us understand how their cultural lenses can provide us with a further sense of understanding.

Research Design: Setting

Establishing the setting of the study is a critical component in understanding where the research is being carried out. The setting of this study was institutions with student affairs graduate professional preparation programs in the Southeast Atlantic region of the United States. The programs chosen were practitioner-based in nature, focusing on practical application of theory and philosophy, as opposed to a counseling-based option. I eliminated counseling-based programs because, due to the nature of counseling, one can reasonably expect that students examine their own racial and ethnic identity before they can truly connect with clients and develop a certain authenticity. See the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) for specific counseling-based guidelines (<http://www.cacrep.org/2001Standards.html#3>). These standards specifically

outline the importance of social and cultural diversity, both in personal understanding and in practice. While such standards are an expectation for the field of student affairs, they are treated with a broad-brush application through theory presentation, rather than the development of extensive counseling skills necessary for any counseling practitioner.

There are seven programs within this geographic boundary that offer master's degrees in Higher Education Administration (sometimes referred to as college student personnel programs). These seven programs meet the American College Personnel Association's (ACPA) professional preparation commission standards, established in 2003. ACPA serves as one of two professional organizations that support the profession of student affairs on a national level. The four criteria considered were: 1) the program employs at least one full-time faculty member to provide leadership for the program, 2) the program offers at least four content courses about student services, student affairs, and development and the college student and their environment, 3) the program offers at least a two-year curriculum, and 4) the program requires at least one student affairs practicum or field experience for students. Using these four criteria helped me define which programs to contact for participation in my study.

Negotiating entry into an environment was critical for the success of a research project. Many qualitative authors discuss the importance of developing sound and genuine relationships with participants and the environments within which they live and work (Marshall and Rossman, 2006; Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Maxwell, 2005, and Bogden and Biklen, 1998). Above all, the researcher must be genuine. Marshall and Rossman (2006)

recommend that the best way to do this is to be true to your purpose and sense of self. “The energy that comes from a high level of personal interest (called *bias* in traditional research) is infectious and quite useful for gaining access” (p. 74). Bogden and Biklen (1998) pose a series of questions to help the researcher begin this process. First, what are you actually going to do? Second, will you be disruptive? Third, what are you going to do with your findings? Fourth, why do you want to talk to us? And fifth, what will we get out of this? These questions helped me put the potential participants at ease, and opened the door to participation. Maxwell (2005) discusses how the relationship with a participant “is a complex and changing entity” (p. 83). When we discuss sensitive issues such as race and privilege, it is clear that there are some stirring of emotion, as we all have stories from which to draw that highlight experiences from our past, both good and bad. This complexity does not mean that people will not participate, but acknowledgment of the complexity is crucial. Negotiation of entry must be entered into with caution and care. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) summarize this best. “What becomes apparent . . . is that not only does explaining ourselves to others help us get clear but also working with participants shapes what is interesting and possible under the field circumstances” (p. 73).

Research Design: Participants

The participants were selected with assistance from my dissertation advisor and professional colleagues in student affairs. I approached the chair of each of the academic programs described above, and ask him or her to recommend three or more white male graduate students who are in their second year of their masters program, and who might be

willing to discuss their ethnicity: whiteness and being white. For a sample of the request letter, please see Appendix B. This technique, purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002), was ideal in that I could focus on learning a great deal about whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism from an information-rich group of people. Moreover, the study participant sample was a critical case sample (Patton, 2002), in that their stories helped me to make meaning of how white males understand, or make meaning of their experiences, and how their experiences can further explain the experiences of other white males within the field of student affairs. I chose, through criterion-based selection (Lecompte and Preissle, 1993), second-year white males because they have become established in their programs and assistantships, and are thus more likely to be willing to participate, and have a broader understanding of the profession and their roles. This was a bounded sample that allowed me to draw particular boundaries around the group: white, males, student affairs, and the Southeast. This framing justified the critical case study that I have created. The men were contacted initially through electronic mail and by telephone. Once the individuals confirmed their willingness to participate, we selected a date and time to meet for the first interview. Three contact periods occurred. These contacts are outlined in the Data Collection section of this paper. Contacts occurred in the student's living environment as often as possible, so as to provide the greatest amount of comfort to the participant. Because of confidentiality, these males were assigned pseudonyms.

I conducted research through a pilot study in my previous coursework that allowed me to test my methodology. In the spring of 2005, I conducted a pilot study focused on an

examination of whiteness, from a college-aged white male student perspective. The study included three white males at an institution in the southeast, and involved one interview with each participant. Four significant findings emerged. First, experiences in the participants' lives had a significant effect on how they view whiteness. These activities include making accommodations for family members who had racist views, as well as the positive impact of parental involvement. Second, participants discussed what it meant to be white during the interviews, but their understanding of whiteness was limited. Third, when the white males in this study discussed being white, they expressed dualistic feelings of guarded pride and frustration. Fourth, the participants revealed that social contacts and discussions about race and privilege with white peers shaped who they are. All three respondents discussed how social interaction was a natural divider of races. Upon completion of the study, I was able to submit the research for IRB approval, and received permission to use the data for future study. Looking back on the experience, the process and outcome prepared me to enter into this area of study with much more confidence in my methodology and in conducting interviews, coding, and reporting the findings.

Data Collection

The process of data collection begins well before the actual personal contact involved in any study. Any good quilt maker, carpenter, or crafter knows that you need the right tools and materials in place well before the work begins. The tools and materials consist of frameworks for analysis and study. First, the structure of the method itself must be developed. My method of data collection was narrative inquiry. A collection of authors frame

this methodology as a collection of personal stories that discuss and articulate how important moments make meaning (Polkinghorne, 1988; Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Marshall and Rossman, 2006; Reissman, 1993; Mishler, 1986; and Josselson and Lieblich, 1999).

Polkinghorne (1988) states that the “data – interviews, documents, and other sources – are the traces of past events; they help uncover the events leading up to the phenomenon under investigation” (p. 174). All narratives are about stories – uncovering past experiences and weaving them into an explanatory event. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) remind us that the interviewer, or inquirer “are never there as disembodied recorders of someone’s experiences. They too are having an experience, the experience of the inquiry that entails the experience they set out to explore” (p. 81).

One key tool involved in narrative case study is the development of the story through questions. Mishler (1986) remarks that many researchers neglect to use the participant stories to push understanding beyond the mainstream. That is, they fail to answer questions of how the researcher’s participation in the process affects the discourse, or how the context of the experience can shape responses. Ultimately, the goal of any research is to further understanding of a certain issue or topic. Maxwell (2005) writes that “your research questions formulate what you want to understand; your interview questions are what you ask people in order to gain that understanding” (p. 92).

Another tool - preparation for the process - begins at the development of the method itself. Reissman (1993) uses the term ‘facilitating context’, which describes and details how the process was carried out. If depth of response is expected, then a closed question

providing a short, succinct answer is the wrong type of question to raise. In their description of narrative inquiry, Marshall and Rossman remind us that “narrative inquiry requires a great deal of openness and trust between the participant and researcher” (p. 188). The types of questions, or method of collection, can support or derail such a relationship. The tools of interviewing – developing sound and focused questions, developing a sense of openness and trust, and providing a structure as to how this relationship was carried out and nurtured - all support a process that is built on integrity.

Structure is imperative to any interviewing process, but assuring that the story is told accurately, is critical to a successful research study. Polkinghorne (1988) discusses the importance of the personal account.

A personal story that neglects or denies the events in one’s life in order to be more pleasing or coherent – that is, a fictional account of one’s self – is counter to the therapeutic commitment to truth. The commitment to a true historical narrative of oneself is a value commitment. Although facts take on meaning when they are placed in an organizing scheme, whether it be categorical or narrative, the organizing scheme must “fit the facts”. (p. 181).

As such, the framework that I used holds value, in that it strengthens the relationship with the respondent, but also gives the respondent the ability to articulate their life story and the meanings they apply to experiences in their lives. Thus, a three-pronged interview approach served this purpose best.

Data collection occurred primarily through a sequence of three interviews (Seidman, 1991). These three interviews, although not entirely anchored in the work of Seidman, began with a general overview, or life history. The second interview was an exercise in reflective meaning-making, allowing participants to answer four questions through email, using a free-write format (Goldberg, 1986). The third interview served as a final meaning-making process, where the participant was contacted by phone, and themes were discussed and clarified. The specific components are discussed further in the following section.

Interview #1

The first interview was conducted with the participants on their home campus. It is important for me to establish a comfortable rapport with the individuals. This rapport was best accomplished by meeting the participants in an environment that they found most comfortable and free from distractions. I allowed them to choose the specific location. I used audio tape-recording equipment to gather information for a full transcript to be generated. The recording was transcribed at a later date for coding purposes. This interview included a general overview of the participant's life, to this point. Arminio (2001) used three basic questions for his phenomenological interview with white graduate students that I also find compelling. She utilized the following three questions to guide the process: a) tell me your story; b) tell me what is important to you; and c) tell me your thoughts on race. These three questions served as the overall themes of my first interview. See the attached questionnaire for a detail of the structured first interview experience.

Interview #2: Reflective Meaning-Making

The second interview occurred through the use of reflective means. Baxter-Magolda (2003) discusses how our identity develops throughout our collegiate experience. She discusses the importance of developing critical thinking skills as a way to develop this identity, and more importantly, this identity is developed through three key principles: learners are validated as capable of knowing; learning is situated in students' experiences; and learning is defined as mutually constructing meaning (p. 237). This learning that occurs leads to a positive self-identity, but it has implications for multiculturalism. Part of the challenge to understanding whiteness is first understanding the value of culture. Ortiz and Rhoads (2000) use a model for multicultural education, involving a five-step approach, moving from understanding culture and learning about other cultures, to understanding your own culture, and that there is a white culture. Once this understanding is developed, we can move forward in understanding how culture shapes who we are.

This shaping happens through experiences and cognitive processing. Baxter-Magolda calls this "teaching interdisciplinary writing" (p. 243–244). It is the direct application of experiences, and it occurs through a written format. I feel that this format allowed for a different display of how race, whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism manifest in the lives of these developing practitioners.

Goldberg (1986) describes how this writing process can take a person anywhere. "Learning to write is not a linear process. . . There are many truths. To do writing practice means to deal ultimately with your whole life" (p. 3). This process frees the writer

(participant) up to 'just write'. My intention with the cognitive meaning-making phase is to simply collect responses from the participants in a raw, free-flowing format. Goldberg uses six commitments that writers need to keep in mind when free-writing. First, they need to keep their hand moving; just write and keep the thoughts flowing. Second, do not edit. She remarks that even those items you do not mean to write are important. Third, do not worry about punctuation, spelling, or grammar. Fourth, writers should lose control. Fifth, do not think, and do not get logical. Finally, she writes that the writer should go for the jugular, no matter how scary or naked. These commitments give the writer permission to allow the thoughts and words to come to them.

First thoughts are unencumbered by ego, by that mechanism that tries to be in control, tries to prove the world is permanent and solid, enduring and logical. The world is not permanent, is ever-changing and full of human suffering. So if you express something egoless, it is also full of energy because it is expressing the truth of the way things are. You are not carrying the burden of ego in your expression, but you are riding for moments the waves of human consciousness and using your personal details to express the ride. (Goldberg, N., 1986, p. 9)

This free-flowing stream of consciousness writing gave me the chance to see the participants as they really were – unscripted and raw. One of the problems with race is that people are often afraid to state what they feel honestly, as they are afraid of the consequences. The intent of this method was to allow them to simply speak; to write and allow thoughts to come to them. Once these thoughts were collected and compared to their initial responses from

interview #1, a picture of development became more clear and dynamic. While Goldberg uses a pen and notebook to collect these thoughts, the computer allowed for the same type of process, but eliminated the need for additional transcription.

Prior to the beginning of the second phase of interviewing, I utilized a thorough rubric for conducting the interviews. This structure aided me in developing and maintaining rapport with the participants, as our personal contact was limited to the first interview only. James and Busher (2006) discuss a format that briefly outlines the study, and lists the process that occurred over this one month period. See Appendix D for a sample of the rubric.

The process asked in-depth questions about how the emerging student affairs practitioner makes meaning of whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism, but it was a different type of collection method. The participant was asked to apply what he knew to situations in his life as a practitioner. The experiences were the culmination of their experiences with students, administrators, and peers in class and outside of class, but was produced and articulated through the free-write stream of consciousness process illuminated in the previous paragraphs. The expectation was that these writings would provide honest, raw, and meaningful examination of their identities as white males in student affairs, and how they not only make meaning but apply what they are learning. The four questions that were asked (at one time via SurveyMonkey) of the participants were:

1. How have you made meaning of your own whiteness? Please describe, and provide examples, how your academic or program experiences, both as an undergraduate and graduate student, have helped or hindered your understanding of being white.

2. How have you benefitted from white privilege, and how did you come to understand that experience? Tell me a story from your own personal experience of how you have been affected by white privilege.
3. How do you view and utilize multicultural (primarily racial, gendered, and ethnic) interactions, programmatic and interpersonal, in your grad program, assistantship, or through your personal life, both formally and informally? Share a story of how you have participated and used these experiences.
4. How have you incorporated your white awareness/identity into your professional preparation? Recall examples of how you incorporate your identity into your practice.

The questions outlined above directly related to my research questions, and allowed me to more clearly understand how their own academic and personal experiences have shaped their practice. Their use of the free-write process gave me a better picture of how they wrestle with conflicts, but moreover, process information relating to their sense of being. The engaging of these developing professionals in the ‘difficult discussions’ of race and multiculturalism allowed me to further weave the panels of understanding together to display a set of experiences and beliefs that are real, and also deeply personal.

Interview #3: Summary and Themes

The third interview served as a summary of the first two interviews. Just as the quilt maker stitches the panels of a quilt together, I took the coded materials and developed questions that arose from the collective interviews, thus presenting a story of their collective experiences. The narrative that I constructed after this interview answered those three

questions I posed earlier: tell me your story, tell me what is important to you, and tell me your thoughts on race. This pattern provided a framework for articulating who these men are, and it gave them a chance to understand their identity through the eyes of others - a more meaningful display of our public and private face. The participants had the opportunity to read the narrative prior to our interview, and elaborated on gaps, discuss any potential inconsistencies, and highlight areas of pride and concern.

The data that was analyzed involved the researcher's thoughts and ideas and the participants' experiences. Polkinghorne (1988) states that "the realm of meaning is structured according to linguistic forms, and one of the most important forms for creating meaning in human existence is the narrative" (p. 183). The researcher's field notes and journal provided insights and observations throughout the entire research experience, but the participants' own words were used as often as possible to personally express the outcomes of the research.

Data Analysis

Critical Race Theory tells us that the white experience is one of 'closed eyes' to the forms of privilege and oppression that exist in our society, but that the only way to truly understand how we are profoundly affected by race is through stories (Delgado, 1991). The interviews and observations that I completed in my pilot study gave me insight into the 'essence of whiteness', a core question embedded within my research (How have you made meaning of your own whiteness?). First, experiences in the participants' lives have had a significant effect on how they view whiteness. These activities included making accommodations for their family's racist views and the positive impact of parental

involvement. Second, participants discussed what it meant to be white during the interviews, but their understanding of whiteness was limited. Third, when the white males in this study discussed being white, they expressed dualistic feelings of guarded pride and frustration. Fourth, the participants revealed that social contacts and discussions about race and privilege with white peers shaped who they are. All three respondents discussed how social interaction was a natural divider of races. These findings further complete the patchwork for the quilt of understanding, but the findings have not been validated by a larger sample. This research extended the discussion to white male graduate students, with the hope of providing a more complex set of experiences and stories with which to stitch the quilt together. This study utilized multiple layers of coding, and relied on a display that included these themes through stories.

The data was initially arranged through the use of Lofland's (1971) coding family, developed to research social phenomena that occurs in environments, as one layer of coding. Lofland developed six categories that defined a social setting - a collection of people sharing a similar association. These settings "provide for those involved a similarity of circumstance of action. This similarity of circumstance of action is accessible to direct engagement by means of intensive interviewing and/or participant observation" (p. 16). The categories are defined as: Acts, or brief situations consuming small amounts of time; Activities, or actions involving more time, such as involvements with others; Meanings, or the 'verbal productions' of participants that define or direct action; Participation, or involvement in, or adaptation to, a particular situation; Relationships, or connections made with others

simultaneously; and Settings, or the environmental considerations of the situation (pp. 14-15). Although Lofland's coding family followed six thematic categories (in Miles and Huberman, 1994), I chose to utilize four: activities that shape who we are; meanings that we apply to those activities in life; our participation in the activities, or rather, how we have been embedded in the individual activities; and our relationships with multiple people or events based on those activities? I did not analyze setting because the setting is already framed as the home and college environments. Open coding allowed me to further categorize the codes into workable data. Peer review (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) was used to determine the effectiveness of the codes, as well as the reliability of my coding processes. This person was a professional in student affairs, and a person who not only understood the field of student affairs, but could also provide a critical lens for which to review my analysis.

An additional layer of coding was involved through the literature on multicultural competencies. This process, known as prior-research-driven code development (Boyatzis, 1998) provided me the opportunity to utilize pre-existing structures for code comparison. This technique, known as axial coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1990), allows the application of a model of multicultural competency, developed by Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller (2004) as a direct application to student affairs. Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller (2004) offer thirty-three characteristics of a multiculturally competent student affairs practitioner. These 'codes' are broken up into three categories: multicultural awareness, multicultural knowledge, and multicultural skills. They served as a powerful checklist for articulating if and how practitioners in training are receiving their training in multiculturalism, and how they are

applying what they are learning. Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller (2004) provide exemplars for each of the three categories, which serve as exemplars for this research as well. See Appendix E for a detailed list of these nine exemplars.

To develop the narrative themes, I categorized the codes into working themes, and narrowed the data to include rich, descriptive statements. In reporting the data, I relied primarily on the stories derived from the respondents through the transcripts of our interviews, and have displayed this information through a narrative case study format.

Data Display

The stories that were generated are the most important component of the research. Of course, as with anything in life, the path can make all the difference. Labov (1972, 1982), Riessman (1993), and Carney (1990) all utilize ordering schema with which the process of display can be carried out. Labov (1972, 1982) describes the structural ordering of the narrative as having formal properties of orientation, complicating action, evaluation, resolution, and coda (in Riessman, 1993, p. 18). Riessman (1993) describes how researchers can represent themselves in stories through a five-layer process, including: attending to the experience (reflecting, remembering, and recollecting them; telling about the experience (the personal narrative); transcribing the experience (through the previously mentioned data collection methods); analyzing the experience (by evaluating and working the existing data); and reading the experience (by sharing what was written with participants and assistants to the research) (Riessman, 1993, pp. 8-15). This structure allows the reader to follow a path of sorts, where the setting unfolds, followed by the events entailed in the discussion, the

significance of those events, what happened, and then returns the reader back to the present time. Carney (1990) uses a process that includes: summarizing and packaging the data (through a written text that is coded to find sets of information that fit); repackaging and aggregating the data (by identifying themes and trends in the data); and developing and testing propositions to construct an explanatory framework (through reduction and narrowing of categories and synthesis of the data) (in Miles and Huberman, 1994). While each ordering process can be used, I followed Riessman's representation as it moves clearly and comfortably from the lowest level of attending through sharing, or reading, the experience with others. Her process allows the researcher to steadily and methodically develop a story that is both inclusive and accurate. Her model also takes into account the work of other strong narrative researchers, including Mishler, Denzin, and Bruner, further clarifying a process by which narrative can best be represented.

The data display must follow a logical progression. My intention was to present a narrative case study that answered the research questions, but, as Riessman (1993) states, "all forms of representation of experience are limited portraits. . .we are interpreting and creating texts at every juncture, letting symbols stand for or take the place of the primary experience, to which we have no direct access" (p. 15).

A good bricoleur relies on past experience, choices, and a sense of what they wish to portray. The quiltmaker follows this process through in each quilt. Developing a framework for data display is no different. Josselson and Lieblich (1993) highlight these choices through Abma's (1993) use of situated examples of action and consequences. Bogdan and Biklen

(1998) rely on a continuum of representation, from formal, structured display to informal, nontraditional displays. Further, Miles and Huberman (1994) discuss myriad methods, loosely categorized as: partially ordered displays; time-oriented displays; role-ordered displays; and conceptually ordered displays. As my discussion was less chronological and more issue-driven, I followed a display that focused on conceptual order. Miles and Huberman (1994) discuss that this style clusters research questions “so that meaning can be generated more easily” (p. 127). This allowed for a richer, more thorough display, and also gives the reader a chance to follow a theme through to completion in one section. While I used this style to initially represent themes and clusters, my actual display in the document relied on the participants to tell the story through their own life experiences. Coffey and Atkinson (1996) refer to this process as ‘narrative as chronicle’. “As social actors, we are all involved in retelling our experiences and lives. In doing so, we chronicle our lives in terms of a series of events, happenings, influences, and decisions” (p. 68). As such, my data display incorporates conceptual ordering through the narrative chronicle.

Limitations

Limitations are present in any research study, and through all researchers. Reissman (1993) articulates that “[t]here is tension in narrative studies between generalization, on the one hand, and the ‘unpacking’ of speech and close attention to the narrative form, on the other” (p. 70). Ultimately, the goal of any study is to further expand the knowledge of a given topic. Qualitative research is rife with choices, and this study is no different. Like any good final product, careful decisions were made to include or exclude, with the expectation that the

outcome provides a strong and convincing study. The quilt that was created was carefully toiled over, with the hope that the end product is as perfect as it can be. But, in the end, there are always limitations.

There are limitations to my study. The primary limitation appears to be the nature of narrative case study. Narrative case studies are limited in the meaning to the time at which they are being told. As case studies offer a bounded time and place, there is certainly room for discussion on how that particular moment in time affects a participant's worldview and experiences. While a limited number of men (nine participant) ultimately became a part of my study, this sample provided a rich and colorful set of bounded experiences that provided the necessary development of themes and ideas. While limitations are present in any study, I feel that these do not cloud the study in any way.

Researcher and Subjectivity Statement

Identification of subjectivity is critical in qualitative inquiry. As a new professional at a large research institution in the Southeast some time ago, I was confronted by my own lack of action in regards to diversity. As a new staff member, I was required to attend a two-day immersion experience dealing with race and privilege. When I arrived on the first day of the workshop, I was hesitant to be a part of such a discussion, because I felt that I truly had knowledge of what it meant to be white, and that I could not really learn any new information about race. After the first day, I felt an overwhelming sense of having been misinformed throughout my life on what it meant to be white, and the privilege that goes along with being white. Day two brought a greater awareness of my role in the process of

relearning about what it means to be white, and the feelings that are encountered when a white person discusses oppression and discrimination with a person of color.

I left the workshop with a newly discovered interest in becoming an educated *white* person regarding race and identity. I worked with colleagues to develop programs for state and regional conferences. I began to focus my academic research on the construct of race in society. I became much more attuned to racial dynamics on our college campus. I began seeing clear examples of how students engage one another, or fail to, in discussions about race, and how example after example pointed to a divide between white students and students of color.

I was profoundly affected by this diversity immersion experience earlier in my career. At that seminar, I was asked to look internally to see how my experiences as a white male on a college campus yielded privileges that were too great to ignore. Prior to that experience, my own experiences with whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism were minimal and shallow, to say the least. Upon the completion of the workshop, I entered the walls of campus with a new vision. My eyes were opened to experiences all around me, and I became, for lack of a better word, raw. I could now see ways in which my whiteness and privilege benefitted me daily. From experiences at the supermarket, to work situations, I was now able to see more clearly that I was part of the problem, as well as the solution. I saw an opportunity to pursue a focus on exposing white privilege, coming to grips with whiteness, and learning to use multiculturalism and diversity the way they were intended: as tools for growth and development.

My unique position in the university community gives me direct insight into the collegiate experience. As a middle level manager with over ten years of experience in the area of residence life, I am situated to see student development occur on a daily basis. From informal interactions, to formal discussions about conduct or roommate issues, my experiences give me insight into how students behave, and how student affairs professionals should act in responding to campus issues. This status gives me credibility and access to white male graduate students, and I establish credibility through my extensive experience as a professional.

There is still much more to learn. Even as I progress in my field, I am amazed at the amount of new knowledge I acquire each and every day. Like a student, a professional practitioner is in a state of continual development. The issues that I face are often different, but constantly evolving. This ‘lifelong learning’ process is what makes discussions about whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism so enlightening. While I certainly carry bias – as all researchers do – I can acknowledge it, address how it might color my viewpoints and experiences, and write about it through a critical lens.

Veracity and Trustworthiness

Veracity and trustworthiness are termed differently across the genre of qualitative research. Ultimately, we are asking if the researcher has presented a truthful account of what has happened, and did they follow a clear and logical path. Reissman (1993) calls this a process of validation, where the researcher utilizes persuasiveness, or ‘convincing’ arguments, or plausibility. They also rely on correspondence, a process by which the

researcher use the collected research and share the final product, or produced data, to those who are intimately familiar with it (such as the participants themselves) to verify that it is, in fact, what they said. Reissman finally incorporates coherence, by staying true to the goals of the researcher (global coherence), that the story that is presented is related in the narrative format chosen (local coherence), and that the words used are, in fact, those of the participants (thematic coherence). The process is, nonetheless, just as important as the end product. Kirk and Miller (1986) see the process of validation as one involving not only apparent validity (what appears to be the right answer), but also instrumental (do the observations match an alternate procedure?) and theoretical validity (is there evidence in the literature that supports outcomes?).

Unfortunately, or fortunately, narrative research follows a less formal path, where the research conducted in the field, which is filled with unknowns and uncertainty, is compared constantly to other field data that is being collected, thus verifying that results through replication of similar processes. All stories are, by their very nature, subjective. The best that the researcher can do is to express them through a reliable lens. Boyatzis (1998) defines reliability as “consistency of observation, labeling, or interpretation” (p. 144). He further defines reliability as consistency over time and events, and among viewers (or participants). Kirk and Miller (1986) also use the term reliability, defining it as “the extent to which a measurement procedure yields the same answer however and whenever it is carried out” (p. 19). Therefore, by presenting the stories and lived experiences of my participants in a reliable

way, their own objective meaning-making process becomes more genuine, and thus, more truthful.

There are, yet, more terms used to articulate veracity and trustworthiness. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) use the term verisimilitude, or “recognizability of the field in the research text” (p. 184). Does the end product resemble work that one would see in the field of education? Is the end product usable to further understand the field of study? Clandinin and Connelly (2000) also discuss ethics as a cornerstone of veracity and trustworthiness. Anonymity, or the promise of anonymity, is critical in providing an ethical end product. Is the researcher honestly and accurately representing themselves and their research? Are they concerned with a process of anonymity and are they actually living up to what they promised the participants? These questions help to further define what makes an ethical study. Finally, Josselson and Lieblich (1999) use the terms values and goodness to outline the same processes. To that end, the researcher is expected to present a clear, honest portrayal of their intentions, that is not only true to the goals of the study, but to the participants they are serving, with the expectation of presenting well thought-out and considered concepts of truth.

The process of true representation was the ultimate goal. To be able to explain the situated truths that my participants experienced provided the greatest value in the process. Discussions of race have the possibility of being glossed over, and not accurately or adequately examined. Being seen as genuine is necessary in gaining access, and maintaining access, to my participants. I had to be seen as someone who upheld the highest standards when it came to trust and ethics. I had an obligation through my research to provide the best

possible format for sharing one's life, and as such, I stayed true to the goals of the research, as outlined previously.

Research standards were adhered to throughout the research project. Maxwell (2005) utilizes two conceptual issues in his book that are necessary in order to collect data: the relationship between research questions and data collection, and triangulation of different methods. As a researcher, I realize that there is value in understanding how my questions worked with the participants before hand. In the spring of 2005, I conducted a pilot study with three white males on a college campus in the southeast. I was able to utilize many of the questions that I used for this research, and found them to be most helpful. This pilot study gave me the chance to test timing, as well as how questions read and are interpreted. To that end, I have broken up questions into three focus areas, and have revised the order and layout to reflect necessary changes.

The format of my study helped me to yield reliable results. I used elements of triangulation. Maxwell (2005) discusses triangulation as an important variable in data collection. Triangulation, according to Fielding and Fielding (1986) is the collection of information using a variety of sources and methods to obtain valid results. For this study, I utilized face-to-face interviewing and subsequent transcription of the data, electronic data collection, and telephone interviewing. These techniques helped me establish multiple, varied collection environments that provided insight, over time, into how the participants have changed because through their deeper understanding of whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism.

Reliability was important to me as well. To ensure reliability, I used repeated and varied interviews (Mishler, 1986, Seidman, 1991) with each participant in order to develop a truthful, accurate display of information. In addition to this method, I also incorporated member checks (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), where each participant were given an opportunity to review the information created to clarify what I captured from the interview tapes. Much of this occurred following the third interview. I also used interrater reliability (Boyatzis, 1998), where I involve a peer in student affairs who has experience with graduate student and undergraduate development, reviewed my transcripts and subsequent coding, and verified that my decisions made sense as an administrator with a similar skill set. I believe that these methods resulted in a valid final document that is accurate, clear, and appropriate to the field and what the participants actually said.

Creswell (1998) discusses eight standards for qualitative research. These include: publication standards for social researchers, honesty and authenticity in how the information is shared, serving the needs of the community the researcher serves, using the voice of the participants whenever possible, critical subjectivity, reciprocity and mutual sharing of information with the participants, respect for the sacred relationships between the researcher and participant, and the sharing of the final product with the participants (pp. 195-196). First, as this study is qualitative in nature, I followed the general guidelines for rigor. Second, as I developed my study, I actively addressed my own positionality. As I became aware of how I fit into the study, I addressed my own biases and limitations, and fought to limit these entering into my study. Third, I addressed the community of higher education, and moreover,

the field of student affairs. Fourth, in using a narrative case study approach, I directly used the words of the participants to provide a more authentic voice for the study. Fifth, I regularly analyzed my own subjectivity on a regular basis, before, during, and after my interviews, as well as throughout the study through the use of my researcher journal, field notes, and conceptual memos. Sixth, I respected the importance of developing trust among my participants. Seventh, I respected and trusted the role of my participants, and the sacred relationship that I develop with my participants. Eighth and finally, I have shared the outcomes of the study through the use of transcript verification, the development of themes, and sharing the final study with all participants. According to these standards, my study fulfilled all of these standards.

Timeline

The completion of this study occurred during the 2008-2010 academic years. Beginning in August, 2008, I began contacting institutions which I intend to utilize for my study, and have maintained contact with each program's chair to ensure access when needed. I conducted this process with the full knowledge and support of my chair, Dr. Audrey Jaeger. In November, 2008, I submitted my IRB proposal to NC State and to the two other institutions that agreed to participate. I also selected participants. During this time, I secured participants, and made initial contacts with them individually. In January, 2009, I commenced with the first interviews. In the middle of March, I began transcription from the interviews, and began the second interview contacts. I completed these contacts by the end of the spring semester, approximately April, 2009. I transcribed data as I completed each

interview, and began constant comparison between the electronic survey and the initial interview. During May, 2009, I conducted the third and final contact with participants. Once the collection was completed, I analyzed the data and completed the final chapters of my dissertation for review. I presented a final draft of the dissertation to my chair in February, 2010. Upon completion of rewrites and modifications, I scheduled my final defense with my committee in March, 2010.

Summary

The methodology of this study provides structure for the collection of data. I have outlined the design of the study, as well as data collection methods. The process ultimately involved the deep sharing of how white male graduate students make meaning of their whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism. Qualitative research provides the researcher with the vehicle of stories in discussing phenomena. This study did just that. By applying voice to those who rarely speak about their racial identity, this study significantly impacts the field of student affairs, and the outcome may drive practice within the preparation programs for student affairs practitioners.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Introduction

Chapter four presents the findings of my study of whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism. As stated previously, the problem this research addresses is that systems of white supremacy - political, social, and economic - and white privilege perpetuate inequality. Changing systems of power and privilege requires understanding how white males serve as both perpetrators of privilege and as change agents. This study incorporates the words, thoughts, and reflections of nine white males from across the southeast. This chapter includes information on the nine participants, and a detailed discussion of themes that have developed from my interviews with these men. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Interview Summary

As previously stated, nine participants were involved in the study. These nine individuals are as different as they are alike. Like the bricoleur, stitching together many panels of fabric, with the expectation of creating something beautiful from separate elements, the participants offer individual stories that provide a collection of interesting themes. All interviews with the men occurred between March, 2009 and May, 2009.

Data collection occurred through a sequence of three interviews. These three interviews began with an extended face-to-face interview consisting of three parts: a life history and explanation of their family dynamic; a discussion about what's important in their life and career, and; their thoughts on race. The second interview was an exercise in

cognitive meaning-making, allowing participants to answer four questions through SurveyMonkey, where they participated in a free-write after reading two articles on whiteness and white privilege. The third interview captured final thoughts on the process, and asked them to share responses focusing on multiculturalism and multicultural competency, as well as to answer any final questions for the participants. Following the completion of the third interview, each of the nine participants received a \$25 gift card as a token of appreciation.

Participants

The participants range in age from 23 to 28. Each are white males, and each is pursuing a master's degree from one of three institutions in the southeast. All nine are currently completing an assistantship that helps them pay for their degree. Four individuals are from North Carolina, two individuals are from Ohio, and the last three are from Louisiana, Michigan, and Missouri respectively. For the purposes of this study, and to maintain confidentiality for each of the men, their names have been changed to a pseudonym of their choice. Since all nine individuals are pursuing a career in student affairs or higher education administration, I have included their thoughts on why they have chosen the field.

Participant Description: Casey

Casey is a 24 year old white male from a small town in North Carolina. He is in the final semester of his master's degree program in higher education administration at a public research institution in North Carolina. He currently works as a residence director in the

institution's office of University Housing and Greek Life. Casey was raised by his mother, and has six siblings ranging in age from three years old to 19 years old. As an undergraduate, Casey spent time at two institutions, ultimately earning his bachelor's degree in Sociology and Political Science. He is an openly gay male, and is very proud of his identity on campus. Casey has always been an active student leader, and made the decision to enter student affairs through his work with an academic advisor. Casey is currently in the job-search process, and hopes to find a position in residence life for the upcoming year.

Participant Description: Cody James

Cody James is a 24 year-old white male from a small town in Ohio. He is in the final semester of his master's degree program in higher education administration at a mid-sized public research institution in South Carolina. Cody James' private catholic school upbringing placed him in a situation where he never really saw a lot of diversity around him. His middle-class neighborhood and surroundings were predominantly white, and exposure to individuals who were different from him did not come until college.

Cody James went to a small private Catholic liberal arts institution in Ohio, and majored in biology pre-med. His own coming out process as a gay male opened his eyes to difference, but also helped him to fully establish his identity.

Cody James' experiences as an undergraduate student RA led him to becoming a Student Affairs professional, and his story is similar to many who choose this path. When

Cody James finishes his master's program, he is pursuing a career as a residence life professional.

Participant Description: DC

DC is a 25 year-old white male from a small town in Ohio. He is in his final semester of his master's program in higher education administration at a mid-sized research institution in South Carolina. He currently works as a graduate assistant in the institution's office of Fraternity and Sorority Life. A self-described 'All-American boy', DC grew up as an only child in a predominantly white middle-class neighborhood in a family where he always felt special. From his parents to his grandparents, DC has always ascribed to big things. From an early age, he was convinced that he would in fact attend college and move on to 'big things'. He attended a mid-sized public institution in Ohio for his undergraduate experience, and majored in communications. He even was a collegiate athlete for one year, playing football and serving as the kicker. DC had a mentor who inspired him to consider a career in Student Affairs. DC intends to pursue a position in university fundraising or development upon graduation, and may even consider pursuing a doctorate in higher education.

Participant Description: Doug

Doug is a 25 year old white male from a small town in North Carolina. He is in the final semester of his master's program in higher education administration at a mid-sized research institution in South Carolina. He currently works for his institutions' department of

residence life as a hall director. Doug comes from a small 'two-stoplight town', where there are a lot of lower middle-class people, and a small number of non-white individuals. Doug's family made it clear early on that college was an expected destination, so he never really considered not attending. He went to a mid-sized liberal arts institution in North Carolina for his undergraduate experience, majoring in criminal justice.

Doug's path to student affairs began early in college, when he became an RA at his undergraduate institution. As Doug wrapped up his master's degree, he began looking for a full-time opportunity in residence life.

Participant Description: Jack

Jack is a 24 year-old white male from a small town in North Carolina. He is currently working on his master's degree in higher education administration at a large-sized public research institution in North Carolina. He completed his bachelor's degree in Business Administration with a Marketing concentration at a small public liberal arts institution in North Carolina. He currently works for his institution's Health Promotions office as a graduate assistant.

Jack grew up outside of town, in a rural part of the community. There were lots of farmers, but his parents were not. Jack more recently learned that his town was rife with racial conflict many years before, and was actually the subject of a book recently published. Jack's

experiences with diverse individuals was quite limited, and guarded by his parents. Relationships with black children were not forbidden, but hesitations were clearly evident.

Jack chose a career in student affairs after serving as a RA for three years at his undergraduate institution. Jack is interested in pursuing a position in masculinity and changing culture upon graduation, and hopes to find a position upon graduation.

Participant Description: Jeremiah

Jeremiah is a 25 year-old white male from a small town in North Carolina. He is married, and is working on completing his master's degree in higher education administration at a large research institution in the southeast. As a student, Jeremiah has always considered himself as the kind of student that really never had to study. He has always had access to money through academic scholarships, and currently is completing his final year of grad school while serving as a graduate hall director for his institution's department of residence life. Early in life, Jeremiah's parents divorced, and his mother raised him, along with the help of his grandparents. He considers himself religious, but not as religious as other members of his family.

Jeremiah chose a career in student affairs through his experiences working as a resident advisor, and subsequently as a team leader for a spring break community service trip during his undergraduate experience. When he graduated from college, he went to work in his field of textiles, and quickly realized that he was not happy. Jeremiah maintained contact

with a mentor from his institution who suggested that he could become a student affairs professional. Upon completion of his graduate program, Jeremiah hopes to get a position working with student leadership and community service programs at the college-level.

Participant Description: Jim

Jim is a 23 year-old white male from a large town in Louisiana. He is in the final semester of his master's degree program in higher education administration at a mid-sized public research institution in South Carolina. He currently works as a residence director in the institution's office of University Housing. Jim had a slightly different path than the rest of the participants. As a kid, Jim got into some trouble, and spent some time in the juvenile system in Louisiana, and at a Catholic High School. His experiences led him to change his life, to self-discipline, and ultimately, to dedicate himself to the pursuit of a degree. Jim's father was a Marine, and as such, Jim became a part of his undergraduate institutions' Reserve Officer Training Corp, ROTC. While pursuing his bachelor's degree in Applied Behavioral Science and Juvenile Justice, Jim was also a RA. Jim's experiences as a RA really helped him define what he wanted to do, and he worked with his commanding officer to get released from his military obligations so that he could pursue a career in student affairs. Jim is currently in the job-search process, and hopes to become an administrator in student conduct.

Participant Description: Steve

Steve is a 28 year-old white male from a small town in Missouri. He is married and is in his final semester at a mid-sized public liberal arts institution in North Carolina. He is a graduate hall director at his institution as well. Steve considers himself middle-class, and grew up in a town that was not all that diverse. As a child, Steve's parents divorced, and he vividly remembers how his family's financial situation changed, "from never worrying about money to worrying about money quite a bit". He spent time with both of his parents, but he spent his time living with his mother, and seeing his father on Sundays.

When Steve graduated from High School, he went to a small religiously affiliated college in Missouri, and majored in biology and Spanish, was an RA, and eventually earned his teaching certificate. He taught on the west coast for a couple of years, and considered a career change. Upon graduation, Steve intends to work in residence life for a few years, but will probably transition to a position in lifelong learning or older adult education.

Participant Description: Tom

Tom is a 24 year-old white male from a small town in Michigan. He is in the final semester of his master's program in higher education administration at a mid-sized research institution in South Carolina. Tom currently works for his institutions' office or University Housing, serving as a residence director. Tom grew up in a working-class town, with blue-collar parents, and an area of the state that was quite diverse, but also divided. He grew up in

a smaller town nearby with very little diversity, and so his exposure to diversity was limited to about four individuals in his high school. He completed his undergraduate degree at a mid-sized research institution in Michigan, majoring in Business Management. While Tom was an undergraduate, he was very active in Greek Life. Tom is currently looking for a position in Greek Life, but may also pursue Residence Life. While he prefers Greek Life, he is unsure if that will truly pan out for him.

Findings

This study incorporated four research questions that framed the development of themes. To reiterate, this study addresses the following questions:

1. How do white males in student affairs preparation programs make meaning of their own whiteness?
2. How do white males in student affairs preparation programs understand white privilege, and what experiences led to that perspective?
3. How do white males in student affairs preparation programs view and utilize diverse interactions with white students and students of color, both programmatic and interpersonal, formally and informally?
4. How have white males in student affairs preparation programs incorporated their white awareness into their professional preparation?

Throughout the course of the interviews, these questions were revisited, in different ways and through different lenses. The participants all shared significant similarities, such as their predominantly limited experiences with different races throughout their upbringing. The

predominance of whiteness in their neighborhoods, schools, and relationships made them undeniably similar. Thus, whiteness was ‘unremarkable’ to them throughout their lives. None of the participants articulated diversity as something that they value, per se, yet it has been an experience that has shaped their experiences, especially in graduate school. The participants acknowledged that their graduate school experience served as a pivotal moment for better understanding whiteness and white privilege. As many of the participants had residence life experience, the presence of diversity training, multicultural programming, and racial conflict was a commonality that was acknowledged, sometime begrudgingly. Those without residence life experience had leadership experiences which also exposed them to diversity, in one way, shape, or form.

The topic of white privilege yielded similar results. First, it became evident that white privilege is not a regularly occurring theme in graduate curriculum, other than those courses focusing on multiculturalism (which, by the way, are only a requirement in one of the three programs I examined). The participants who were best prepared to understand and address white privilege were those who had an academic background (in programs focusing on sociology, political science, justice), those who align themselves with a minority group (such as being gay or lower socio-economic status), and those who had enlightened parents who openly and actively addressed discrimination and injustice. White privilege manifested itself most actively when participants finally looked at it through another lens.

My study asked each participant to read two articles that focused on whiteness and white privilege through the eyes of two separate white males, both at different points in their

lives, and both offering a more radical explanation for white students to better understand white privilege. The authors of the articles were Tim Wise, a well-known writer on his experiences with whiteness, white privilege, and racism; and Robert Jensen, a professor of Communications at the University of Texas at Austin who writes freelance articles on privilege, power, and dominance. Both men also speak across the nation on these topics. The two articles provided the participants with two very distinct viewpoints on how whiteness has framed their life, and how white privilege has helped them get to where they are today. Part of my concern with this particular group of men was the fear that they had not experienced white privilege, much less understood fully what whiteness meant in their lives. A goal of Critical Race Theory, and of raising critical consciousness (Freire) as previously outlined, is to expose privilege and power, and to display it in personal and reflective ways.

The discussions on white privilege were insightful. First, participants articulated a limited understanding of how white privilege has affected them on a personal level. They articulated that white privilege was unearned and unfair, and that guilt, anger, and frustration were common feelings. A sense of sadness becomes painfully evident as the participant reflections are dissected.

The participants all felt some level of discomfort within discussing diversity and diverse interactions. Many participants discussed discomfort due to not fully understanding how their voice is important and valuable. They acknowledge an absence of white men leading the discussions on diversity, and their biggest concern is that they fear being wrong,

or ill-prepared to lead a discussion. Ultimately, if they lead a discussion, they want to be seen as an expert, so often times, discussions were avoided.

The most enlightened responses came from the discussions on professional preparation. First, the participants shared that multicultural competency and multiculturalism was often relegated to the 'diversity section' or diversity classes. Such classes were often elective, and, if included in the curricular path, the topic was represented through one class. This one class, while pivotal and full of insight and dialogue, was not consistent on all campuses, and exposed a gap in curriculum preparation. If a student chose to further study diversity and multiculturalism, then they could, and often did, but it was not a requirement in a field that expects multicultural competence.

When looking at the responses through the lens of multicultural competence, the participants were all underprepared in terms of knowledge and skills. They all expressed an awareness of the experiences, issues, and problems faced personally and by their students. Thus, they see that there is a problem to address, but their engagement in experiences that actively address white privilege, racism, whiteness, and discrimination are minimal. However, the experiences that were expressed most were active involvement in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender (GLBT) Advocacy Training, and the National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI). These two programs definitely cast these participants into a group of potential trainers-in-the-making. Often, the reasons they chose to not participate is their fear of being 'the only white person in the room'. They also articulated that they had 'enough

diversity training' through their undergraduate and graduate training programs – similar to their own undergraduates they are often supervising.

The organization of chapter four follows the three general themes of my study: whiteness, white privilege, and diversity and multiculturalism. The first component, whiteness, examines how the white males within the study have come to understand whiteness, both as a concept, and through lived experience. The analysis and understanding of white privilege follows the discussions on whiteness – namely, how white privilege has affected the study participants, and how they have dealt with their lived privilege. Finally, a dissection of the importance of and participation in diversity, and the subsequent professional preparation of white males in addressing multicultural competence completes the results section. On whole, the three functional areas (whiteness, white privilege, and diversity and multiculturalism) define not only how white males have come to understand these concepts, but moreover, what experiences have led them to their understanding.

Whiteness

Whiteness was examined through an analysis of the lived experiences of the nine study participants. Collectively, their understanding of whiteness was limited, and often only recently acknowledged. This new-found understanding of whiteness provided a lens that exposed new situations. Ultimately, a sense of 'nothingness' defined their collective experiences, but the awareness that occurred, often later in life, made for feelings of uncertainty and silence, both in how participants defined themselves and how they addressed whiteness.

A Lack of Exposure to Diversity

A lack of contact with different people was a common story. Doug grew up in a small town in North Carolina. “A very small town, two stoplight town. . .A lot of people that grow up there stay there and a lot of people know each other”. His town had less than a three percent minority population. Steve describes his experiences moving to a small town in Missouri. “It was fairly a white middle class suburb. . .ten to fifteen minutes from downtown but it kind of still had a bit of small town feel. It was a comfortable place to grow up but not a lot of diversity”. DC also discusses his town as being predominantly white middle-class, but his parents made the decision to immerse him in an environment that was upper-class. “I never knew that growing up so I think because of that environment that’s why I’m about to finish graduate school and I’m a first generation college student”. Tom grew up in a rural area in Michigan. His hometown was not diverse, and neither was his high school.

I grew up in a location that was fairly rural for that part of the state. A dirt road and that kind of thing. The school I went to when I graduated, I graduated with 86 students. So it was very small. My exposure to diversity in that setting was very limited. I think there were three persons of color, maybe four, my entire high school out of 320 and some students. It was very limited in that.

Tom’s experiences were clearly limited. With a small graduating class and a town that was simply not diverse, it can be difficult to see the value of multiculturalism and diversity.

Three participants had a more diverse experience growing up. Jeremiah writes about his town growing up, as well as his experiences in his school system.

It's primarily segregated like where you live is segregated by your race. There are parts of town where you know primarily white people live and primarily Mexicans. It's very segregated that way but the school systems and the school districts are all broken up to where you end up interacting with a lot of different races. My high school was probably like 50/50 white and African American.

Jim also grew up with more diversity than the other participants. The son of two Marines, he grew up near the riverfront in Louisiana. "I think one thing that sticks out in my mind is we were really close in my neighborhood like the kids in the neighborhood were very close for good and for bad. . . Growing up in the neighborhood we had Hispanic kids, we had black kids and white kids and kids from all different backgrounds".

Casey's experience is less focused on his hometown environment, and more around his own family and their embracing of diversity. Raised by his mother, his experiences were quite different than the rest of the participants. "My immediate family like my mom and sisters has I guess a very good sense of openness toward racial situations. My mother, like the past few relationships and dating experiences that she's had have been with African American men. My eldest sister is actually dating an African American man now". Clearly, Casey's family experiences, and his regular contact with diverse individuals, and their openness paints a very different picture than the other eight participants. Of course, his experiences were not always rosy and comfortable. Casey later talks about how his external family responded to his mother's dating experiences, and how he responded.

I really feel like it's very fluid for us but for the rest of my family whenever they would talk about who my mom was dating or something like that, you could tell they were kind of uncomfortable or uneasy with it just because they hadn't really had that experience . . . my mom likes to say that we're referred to as the black sheep – just because I would say as far as experiences with other races or different cultures or just an appreciation for different lifestyles in general. I feel like we have a better appreciation for it and they don't really understand that. It's very interesting.

Exposure to difference is a key factor that enables a person to address diversity. The participants in my study clearly had a wide variety of experience with diversity, however an overwhelming majority of the participants simply did not experience significant diversity in their experiences growing up.

Absence of Race

Many of my participants felt a disconnection with any definition of being white until later in their developmental process. DC did have a couple of African American friends in high school. He talks of his experience, and how his educational experiences played a role in his understanding of a racial separation:

I really don't ever remember looking at them and thinking they were of a different ethnic background than me. I had friends in the neighborhood growing up that were African American. I think because of that it was never really a culture shock to me. We were just all friends and going to school. It wasn't until – I do remember freshman year of high school when I had a sociology class. We started talking about

race and it wasn't until somebody else told us there was a divide that we started thinking there was a divide. It was almost like society told us. I feel like if I had never taken classes or watched the news talking about this racial divide that I might still today look at everything as equal. I still look at everybody as being treated equally but because of the classes I've taken I realize that they aren't by society. It wasn't my community that taught me there was a racial divide. It was my education. DC's awareness of race became prevalent in high school. For many whites, race and color are not 'noticed' until they are faced with a situation where whiteness is made visible.

Jack's experiences display a sense of the unknown.

I didn't really think about that until probably a year ago. As far as I knew I was white and I knew there were ethnicities but I didn't see myself as a race or "I'm part of the white race." So that's been kind of an interesting struggle so to speak kind of recently. Like okay I'm white and what does that mean?

Jack sees whiteness as an absence of something, or an invisible trait, instead of a characteristic he is familiar with. Casey's family experience offers a similar vein when asked to describe how his family would describe their racial makeup. He used the term 'Southern' instead of white as a racial indicator. While he acknowledged that there was a clear and definable difference, he believes the two to be interlinked within his family. Even though that's definitely not a race makeup or even a racial indicator. "You know, when you're talking about things like Southern cooking or Southern culture; they automatically tie it to white Southerners".

Growing up in Louisiana, Jim seemed to have more experiences where race became apparent. He articulated an experience where he realized the inherent inequality when it came to race.

I remember one day down in my part of the area where we grew up there was still a bit of racial tension going on there and I remember we went to this old Po' Boy shop downtown and they wouldn't serve one of my friends who was actually Hispanic. That's kind of the big tension down there. It was really interesting. I was like 'why will you serve my black friend but you won't serve my Hispanic friend?' I also remember just kind of shrugging it off at the time which now I know better but at the time it was one of those things where sorry, we'll grab you something and we'll come out and not even thinking about it. I remember this was something that stuck out in my mind too – him just standing outside looking in and now when I think about it how uncomfortable that must have been for him. I didn't give it another thought when I went in though. I was just like I'll roll with it.

Jim's experience, and his complicit participation in the systems of white privilege, is not rare. Often times, it takes much more courage to stand up and fight against white privilege, but if you lack the knowledge of such privilege (or are oblivious to it), then responding to incidents is irrelevant.

Tom's moment of clarity about race and white privilege came when he took a trip with his high school class to Hawaii. Tom paid for his own experience, and quickly realized what being a minority might feel like. Immersed in an environment where being white was

more rare, he felt a bit out of place. “That really kind of opened my eyes. It made me feel uncomfortable but at the same time it was a good thing. I guess that was probably the first time that I realized okay, there are significant amounts of other culture out there that I really need to try and explore.” While Tom’s exposure to white privilege was real, it was temporary and relatively safe, but it was impactful. The road to understanding whiteness is as wide and varied as it is long and painful. Jim summarized it quite well. “How is someone born at the top of the mountain meant to see the flaws in the hiking path up?”.

Ethnicity and Culture as Whiteness

Whiteness is often a confusing term; especially for white people. Since there is typically very little discussion about race and whiteness at home, or in their daily lives, white people tend to confuse whiteness with ethnicity. Jeremiah discussed how his family might articulate their racial makeup. “Primarily from Wales with a lot of – I’ve actually traced my family background and it’s all in North Carolina until the 1700’s. I have slight Indian blood in me but it’s primarily all white and English and Wales descendents. I’ve asked my mom about it before and that’s where she said we’re from”. Jack’s parents would offer a similar explanation. “Well, my dad would say white and somewhere along the line there’s Indian. My mom would probably say that her great grandparents were from the Scotland and Ireland area”. Cody James says “on my mom’s side of the family I’d say they would just say you are white. My dad’s side of the family would say we are Irish”. Tom thinks his parents “would talk about Irish background, and Italian. My Grandpa’s background is from Norway. I think they would talk about that a little bit but for the most part my family doesn’t hold on to that

very much. For the most part, we're American". Two participants, Casey and Doug, did say that their parents would probably define themselves as 'Southern'. While they might identify with their ethnicity (or 'Southernness') to some degree, the participants shared very little about how their ethnicity made them 'white', except that these ethnic identities tended to be more European or Caucasian than not.

Examples of Racism and Racist Language

Many of the participants discussed how racism was represented, or impacted, their families in relation to their feelings on whiteness. Cody James was raised by his parents to be respectful of all. "It was one of those things where if you said something bad about somebody else, just because that person wasn't present didn't mean you weren't going to get punished for it". That said, he shared an example of how racism (and homophobia) was displayed when he was younger. He recalls an experience where an African American lesbian couple moved into his neighborhood.

I can definitely remember that kind of as I was growing up being one of those big things where people would say very mean things. Some of the people that lived around me were like "the value of my house just dropped" and things along those lines. At the time I didn't completely get it. It was one of those things that it wasn't something I understood. Looking back on it now, it's one of those things where I was just like there are still a lot of people that have issues with things. Why does it even matter? How is it really going to impact anything in the big picture? I can specifically remember that.

While it was not directed at him or his family, it was a poignant moment for him growing up. Jeremiah shared a story about his father's experiences growing up in a newly desegregated South:

My dad grew up in the times where schools were just becoming desegregated and so my dad did tell me about an experience when he was younger where he went to the same high school, and the day they desegregated the schools there was this unspoken battle that was going to happen at the football field between the blacks and the whites. All of the students had brought wooden boards and hoses and things to fight each other with. The cops had to come and break it up before it ever happened. Apparently somehow they found out about it . . . That was about the biggest extent of racism I ever heard from him.

Racist activities are powerful moments for anyone experiencing them, as they provide a more tangible link to a relatively intangible concept. These participants were definitely affected, even though the experiences were not directly involving them. Unfortunately, racism occurs on a regular basis. Active examples are typically what is most recognizable.

Language is an impactful tool, both positive and negative. Jack's father's use of the term 'colored' really rubbed him the wrong way, but he never confronted it.

My dad has used the word colored way too many times and I try to defend its appropriateness compared to using black. What's the accepted vernacular? He still gets uncomfortable with that. . . . It's just beliefs and jokes that are racist and ways and it's just really uncomfortable. I think it's changed a little bit.

Jack's vivid recollection of the term 'colored' definitely exposed a sensitivity towards derogatory or outdated terms. For Jack, his recollection stirred more questions than answers.

Something that I'm thinking about is why do we feel so entitled as white men? My dad is just a laborer and didn't even go to college. He didn't even graduate from high school. So when he sees people that are of a different race, Hispanic or blacks coming into the workplace. And not having as hard a work ethic as him it solidifies those beliefs that all black people or all Hispanic/Latino people, they're unskilled laborers and they're messing up and they're screwing up their materials in this particular factory. Just not respecting their jobs and they're lazy, things that relate to these popular racial prejudices. It just makes me cringe. I think it's changed a little bit because he's made a lot of good friends with the Hispanic community members he says that he works with. . .He's a friendly guy but I know he still has those beliefs. I think it's changed but I think a lot is so internalized that it will just be there forever. It's hard to challenge that and still feel some tension. I kind of just accept that he won't change completely.

Growth and development comes from situations where one is confronted with the harsh realities of our experiences. Jack's thoughtful recounting of his experiences opened doors of understanding for him, as well as a questioning of his own white privilege and power. This growth can be powerful, and sometimes overwhelming.

Language deeply affects us in different ways. Often, whites are unwilling to confront it. DC takes shares his frustration with language, as well as embarrassment, and how he deals with it at home:

It's not uncommon for one of my uncles or aunts to drop the "N" word at Christmas time or some of my cousins who are older and in their 30's to say this and that. You don't really think – because of my education it sinks in now that he shouldn't be saying that. In high school you just laughed at it. You're like oh – that's their word for an African American. Their views on race have changed a little because I was a Barack supporter and I also played Devil's advocate really hard with my parents because my mom likes to send me emails about blacks or Hispanics kind of taking from the government and not paying taxes and getting on welfare. Having kids and getting on welfare. It's weird because sometimes unfortunately I still sometimes feel the same way. I'll [think] something negative and put it to race. . . I'll challenge my mom or dad and say 'you do know there's a large majority of white people on welfare. How come every time a Hispanic woman goes to the doctor and she's not a legal immigrant in America, you say oh those Mexicans, they don't pay taxes. But how many times do white people have tax evasion? Even on a larger scale, if you're a businessman and you tax evade \$100 million dollars, it's because you were greedy and selfish. But if you're African American or Hispanic and you tax evade a doctor's appointment it's because you're Mexican' . . . You've got to challenge yourself sometimes to really look outside the box and stop always comparing race to certain

he's good at or he's bad at because of his race. Nobody ever does that because he's white.

Not all whites are willing to confront their families like DC does. Confronting your family is often deeper than just challenging language – it can feel like you are challenging the person, and criticizing the people who raised you. This can be a prime reason for avoiding the confrontation all-together. Jeremiah shared how his family views race, and how we can often dismiss what is said, or avoid it entirely.

I feel that primarily my family feels that whites are dominant in terms of racial background. I would classify my grandparents and my mother as mildly racist. My dad I don't really – he never really talked to me about it and he doesn't really hang out with any African Americans. He's worked with a lot of them at work through his jobs and he's never said anything that's gone, wow you really think that? But my mom and my grandparents, I've heard them say things like that. . I feel like they come from a very conservative background that tends to lean towards the fact that whites are the dominant race and we should be in charge of things. I don't know – I think that instead of influencing me to be that way it's kind of influenced me to be the opposite because I don't necessarily agree with a lot of things they say. Like I said I want to avoid that confrontation at times and I don't want to have to worry about dealing with the argument so I don't say anything to them when I probably should. I definitely see it.

Tom shared a similar situation with his extended family, and how he is torn between confrontation and avoidance:

My extended family – my grandparents, my grandfather, my uncle, the older of them on my dad’s side use the N word on occasion and I cringe every time that they say it. I can see my dad and others don’t really appreciate it but it’s your grandfather, it’s your dad and your uncle and those kinds of things. It’s somewhat of a struggle there but I don’t know really where they’re coming from with their life experiences. I could have those conversations with them but I just haven’t.

Confronting language and racist behaviors is not typically a common occurrence for many whites, especially among my white male participants.

All of these experiences have helped shape what whiteness means to these participants. While whiteness is often referred to as ‘non-existent’, or ‘raceless’, it becomes more clear that whiteness is hard to articulate, especially if you never recognize it. As young men, these participants spent very little time exploring the construct, much less experiencing the negative affects of whiteness. The next question focuses more on the baggage associated with whiteness: white privilege.

White Privilege

White privilege is a primary focus in this study. White privilege is important to understand if white males ever expect to truly address inequality. Within the concept of white privilege, the respondents focused on three areas: how they define white privilege; emotions

that are uncovered while coming to understand their privileged states; and personal stories of white privilege.

Personal Definitions of White Privilege

The participants were asked about their definition of white privilege in their own words. Steve provided the most definitive definition. White privilege is “not having to worry when going into stores, when driving into new towns, when going on vacation, when applying for jobs, when doing something crazy or flashy or unique, when meeting new people, when doing anything that will be perceived at negative or pre-conceived because of my race”. DC defined white privilege, as well as provided insight into his own experiences as a white male.

White privilege is essentially the benefits that come with having Caucasian skin. I never thought about it until I wrote a paper on “whiteness theory”. I realize that being white allowed me to join a popular fraternity, feel a part of the “in-crowd” in college, and I was able to associate myself with others who looked like me.

Once a white person is exposed to the concepts of white privilege, it opens up a new lens of examination, as it did for DC. Doug provided a simple, yet similar, definition. “I believe that white privilege has given me an advantage in life. Being white is typically described as being privileged in our society”. He also remarked that “being at a university that has a large white population on campus, I don’t know how I can avoid [white privilege]”. Casey realized that “I probably got to where I am so easily because of my whiteness and privilege”. Tom remarked that “due to hundreds of years of white men holding power, it provides me with a

‘seat at the table’. This takes place more often in other areas of society than higher education”. Jim captured white privilege succinctly: “Being a white man, I am on top. I am at the top of the privilege chart and it is often hard to see the forest through the trees at times”. Jeremiah provided a description of what white privilege meant to him

I would consider it privileged being white - a Caucasian, however you term it. You notice you don’t get – like if you’re walking down the street and you see someone across the street that may be African American, and some people tend to be afraid of that. You don’t get that when you’re Caucasian. . . I feel like society’s view of who you are as the white person is definitely much more positive than it is if you are Mexican or African American or any of those. Unfortunately I receive benefits from those that I don’t necessarily choose to receive or want to receive but it happens just because I’m white.

Jeremiah acknowledged the privileges that he received, and expressed that, regardless of desires, or how white privilege affects others, his privilege is always present.

Doug discussed how he began noticing race (and hence, privilege) in college. His experiences are similar to other white men in the study, but his recognition of how diversity can be viewed from alternate viewpoints is important to note:

[W]e had a black student union at my undergraduate. They would have certain events that were for that particular population. I remember going down the hill and seeing this big field of minority students, predominantly black students, and it was for them. I could only imagine if I had a white only cookout what problems this would cause.

That's whenever I started to struggle with what does it mean to be diverse, what does it mean to be white and black and those kinds of things. While it's an appreciation thing to some degree, I think it can cause some issues. . . I felt like I couldn't appreciate myself for being white because I couldn't do those same things.

While Doug most likely could have joined in at the union cookout without incident, as a white person, he felt that he was not welcome as a white student.

White privilege, simply put, is a series of advantages. Accepting the unearned realities of whiteness as privilege is challenging and difficult, but it opens many doors of understanding our place in society, and what our role in addressing white privilege might be on our campuses. The next finding within white privilege explores the participants' emotions with regard to the role that it plays in their lives.

Emotional Impact of White Privilege

White privilege elicits a broad range of emotions. They run the spectrum from appreciation to fear. Frustration was the most represented emotion. Doug shared his frustration with an experience where he noticed a cookout for the Black Student Union, and remarked at how, at the time, he was frustrated that he could not hold an 'all-white' event without ramifications, and shared his struggles with knowing that what he was feeling was clearly wrong, but that he always struggled with it. He also articulates another example of this frustration.

I think there's some tension that I always felt like has come from another race's side towards me or other white people in general that "you don't understand what I've

been through” kind of thing and “you can’t relate to those kinds of things”. I think I’ve always felt that there was maybe some tension in that. Not that I owe them something necessarily but I don’t think that’s anything new. I think that’s something I’ve heard a lot of people say that they were underprivileged and I’m privileged just because I am white. That may be true. I’ve not ever been that aware of it because again I didn’t grow up in the big house and my family didn’t have the money. I would say there’s some tension there because there’s an assumption that because I’m white I was privileged. . . I think black students are minority students and they think automatically because they’re minority that I have assumptions about them. That may be true but I also think there are some assumptions coming from their side that because I’m white, I’m privileged. I think I’ve felt tensions there growing up and especially in college where it becomes more apparent that those tensions are there.

Doug wrestles with how his white privilege is viewed by black students, and how he feels a sense of helplessness in being accepted. He shared his feelings of being caught between two opposing forces:

There is a lot of discrimination that continues and I have always wanted to be a part of the solution, but it seems that the more I try to educate myself, others, and make understanding of it all I am less accepted by both sides. Minorities will never accept me because no matter how understanding and culturally aware I am still a white guy who can never fully understand. And the more I preach diversity and acceptance to whites the more they don't understand me and why I am not able to take pride in my

own heritage and background. All of these things have made my understanding of white privilege, and how these relate to me very confusing because either way you cannot win. I think this is a large part of why we cannot get anywhere in our society with the past is that we sit around talking about it, blaming others, and masking our feelings in order to be politically correct and in turn do nothing about it.

While the frustration may appear on surface to be unrealistic, the feeling of a double-standard was considerable through Doug's lens. The double-bind experience often paralyzes, and leads to inaction or no participation, which is the least desirable outcome. Avoiding the experiences has brought us to where we are today – a society that is afraid to interact, and that refuses to participate for fear of not fitting in.

Other participants shared a deep sense of frustration, as well as other emotions. The highest level of frustration and guarded guilt was shared by Jim.

I own that maybe I am not as understanding of the privilege of whiteness that I am often expected to have. Indeed, I feel at times that I when I read things, there is that "guilt" that you think of with being white. I definitely felt that guilt come to the front when reading and do know that what followed was the eye rolling of what I interpreted as someone aggrandizing what they were speaking about; that being said, I am reflecting a bit more and think that I identify my whiteness in just thinking about my history and where I have been.. .Yet, here I sit in a place that is so white washed that it over sensitizes people. I see that some white folks around here wait to be

offended and raise a stink rather than look to the black students on campus and process their needs.

It is not surprising to see that Jim has a high degree of frustration, seeing how he interprets his experiences. His feelings are raw, and they showcase just how frustrated many white males can feel. Guilt clouds their judgment, and they are left feeling defensive and angry.

A newfound sense of understanding white privilege can lead to frustration as well. Jack articulates such a frustration.

I have on recently made real meaning about my own whiteness. Much of my life I have been taught about the importance of equality and the stories of intense racism here in the south of the United States. I have never been challenged to think about the real white supremacy that is taking place and how I am blind to it. . . I understand white privilege to be unearned and unfair. It has been around for a long time. I sometimes struggle with how it got started. Were whites innately treated unfair and needing to establish dominance? It is more clear to me of the privilege associated with my whiteness.

When white privilege is revealed, it can raise more questions once we start to more deeply understand who we are and how we are treated. Jack is just beginning to understand what his privilege looks like.

Conflicting emotions are also present among white individuals. Casey seems to be the most conflicted of all the participants. Being a gay male, he is more aware of oppression, yet he also shares feelings of pride, frustration, and fear.

I feel very comfortable being a white male. I definitely see the privilege and feel the privilege of having the opportunity. I don't know if it's doled out or how those things work. I'm definitely appreciative of the fact that when I apply for a job I don't have to worry about being discriminated against. Or if I walk into a store and I'm not helped I don't have to worry if it's because I'm black or Hispanic. I'm definitely appreciative of that fact and I definitely notice that I don't have to notice if that makes sense. Sometimes depending on the group makeup I can feel a little uncomfortable just because in my undergraduate education knowing that I'm in the privileged race and I'm the one who has the power to do the oppressing and things like that, it can make me uncomfortable.

As far as the students of color, students of other backgrounds, being a gay male, I kind of have that invisible oppressed identity . . . Everything that can be seen says privileged, power, and prestige. But having that identifying factor kind of gives me some sort of empathy or some kind of outlet to sympathize with other groups when they're being oppressed. But at the same time I have worked through that development of that identity and I'm a very confident secure person for the most part.

However, Casey also articulated fear of being singled out. "Understanding my privilege as a white person, I am terrified of being hired or chosen because I am a gay male. I avoid any situation where I can be labeled as a 'token'".

Sharing the discovery of white privilege can expose many insecurities and fears. However unjust or unreal these emotions may seem, they are real for the participants, and as such, must be acknowledged and addressed in order to move beyond fear. Stories provide a lens for exploring these fears and feelings.

Stories of White Privilege

White privilege, as witnessed in the words of the participants, conjures very strong feelings. For these participants, their tales of experiencing, or better understanding white privilege fall into four categories: white privilege as the normative, or expected experience; white privilege tales of inaction, obliviousness to white privilege, and experiencing the reverse effects of white privilege: discrimination.

White Privilege as the Normative Experience

The research on white privilege (McIntosh, 1988; Frankenberg, 1993; Dyer, 1997; Wildman and Davis, 1996) often talks of ‘white as normal’, or expected. Cody James had an experience where his theater program actively inserted white characters into their high school drama performances into roles that should have been filled by a diverse cast.

I think back to my theater days (triggered by the article) in which all of the productions that we did were all ones that contained all white characters. I think back to our casts-again all white. It really is a shame that this happened. I do remember in one script my senior year we did Children of Eden the musical for our spring production. The book specifically said that in order to be effective a racially diverse cast was suggested. Pretty much failed there except for the fact that our school hired a

professional African American actor to play "Father" in the show. Other than that again - all white. I don't know if this was intentional-in some ways I would say it was just playing to what we had.

While it may have been difficult to fill these roles in a nearly all-white school, he believed that by avoiding it, the program failed to meet the intent of the production. Jeremiah's experience occurred during his classes, when group leadership was to be decided.

That kind of stems just to experiences I've had in classes where there are four or five white males in the class or whatever. Every single time we would break up into groups, for some reason those white males would be deemed the leaders of their groups. I don't want to be the leader of a group every time I'm in a group. I presume it's because they're white males they'd be given that leadership position and the role even though they might not necessarily want it. . . I think they [whites] definitely need to be the ones to speak up about how they feel about this and let other people know as a white male that there are white males out there who don't necessarily feel that racism is white. Without someone speaking up and saying that that is part of a group that's supposedly being the racist group, are you ever going to dispel that myth that we're all racists because we're white? Or that we really want this privilege we have.

While white males were clearly in the minority when it came to overall group size, yet their selection as leaders was apparent to Jeremiah. The real question that is often asked with

experiences involving white privilege is “what did you do to address it?” As previously stated, more often than not, the answer is nothing.

Tales of Inaction and Opportunities Missed

White privilege often means having the luxury of not acting, or not speaking up to say something is wrong. Six stories of inaction were highlighted in the interviews. DC shared an experience with a fraternity brother that really opened his eyes to how hurtful white privilege can be.

One example is when I was president of my fraternity, we had a new member [who] was an African American from Ohio. He was very friendly and outgoing and everyone loved to be around him. However, he always joked that he was the "token black guy" or he'd say things like "it's because I'm black..." These comments made me think that although he said these things out of humor, he was probably covering up some insecurity about living with a group of guys who didn't look like him. I also had a fraternity brother who came here from Ethiopia when he was a young boy. He speaks perfect English and enjoys the same things everyone else does. However, because of his name and his ethnic background he was also stereotyped many times and when people found out he was from Ethiopia they would joke to him about not eating or talking with a "click clack" as portrayed on a South Park episode that unfortunately caught on. These things helped me see that I was part of the hegemonic crowd and I never experienced being scapegoated because of my skin.

Being a witness to the pain that is inflicted through white privilege definitely assists in developing perspective. Jim shared two experiences where he was a witness to white privilege and did nothing to stop it. The first experience was cited earlier, where Jim failed to act when a Hispanic friend of his was not allowed to dine at a sandwich shop with the rest of his friends. He also shared a similar experience from his undergraduate days.

We went downtown to this dive bar and myself and another white student walked in like it was nothing. However, the black students (there were only 5 of us in a class and the other three were black) were stopped and asked for ID. After a moment of not giving it any thought, it hit me odd and I walked up to the bouncer and showed him my ID as well. He reluctantly glanced over it and nodded and shrugged me on. I think this was the time where I really came to see that while I was waived on without even a second thought, my fellow classmates had their ID's scrutinized. As we talked the rest of that evening, I asked them about it. It didn't seem to phase them, and I was a bit indignant about it. Yet, I also know I didn't do anything about. I walked out accepting it for what it was. I saw the privilege of being able to walk in anywhere without getting a second look.

Jim's experiences left him feeling a certain level of guarded guilt, which often comes with experiencing white privilege. Jack had an experience where white privilege was clearly displayed – that of sweeping an issue 'under the rug' – an example of how institutional racism can manifest itself:

It was late junior year of college and we were having student government elections. There were VP and President candidates and the other staff and one was two white females and the other one was a black male and a black female. The black female I believe is actually here now in the student affairs program. During the election and voting processes or right afterwards, someone had written something on her car. I can't remember the phrase but it had the "N" word. It was such a hard situation for me because she was such a good friend of mine and I worked with her at the Substance Abuse Prevention Center and we had mutual friends. . . That one stands out because I remember that one being pretty terrible. I was like 'oh this is great, this represents the university and I know she was really hurt by it'. . . I don't think they even mentioned it in our student newspaper, which came out once or twice a month as compared to daily here. I think there was a letter from the Chancellor maybe. . . I think that our African American Center on campus had a few open forum discussions about it so people could get stuff off of their chest. That's about all I remember. I don't think anything escalated from that. Nothing worse came of it.

Jack saw white privilege manifest itself through the experiences of his friends, and saw how such an incident was simply shrugged off by the campus administration. Such examples can enrage a community, but leave lasting scars on race relations across our universities and campuses, especially if it is not properly addressed by the administration.

Diverse interactions, programs, and trainings often yield levels of frustration and challenge that result from misunderstandings or ignorance. It is often common for white

males to look back on experiences involving ignorance or discrimination and remark that they should have done something to affect change. Jim feels like he missed an opportunity to work with a student staff member to address intolerance during a program in his building.

I have had couple of good conversations with another one of my black RA's of what it means to be a black man on my campus. I really am still processing through a lot of what we have talked about as he experienced a specifically grotesque form of racism when he was trying to show the movie Freedom Writers and a resident told him he wasn't going to watch a movie about "spicks and niggers." Well, unfortunately for that resident, I was standing there as well. Though I wanted the RA to take him apart, I figured it would be best for me to meet with this student. I proceeded to have a very loud and direct conversation with this student about how big of a fool he looked like and how he should know better than to act that way. In reflection, I never had the RA sit down and talk to the student. I probably should have done that.

Doug had an experience in one of his classes where he missed an opportunity to really educate himself and others. He and another classmate were asked to do a presentation on counseling African Americans. His fear of offending his professor – an African American female, and the rest of their class, made them avoid the potential for discomfort.

I think the presentation itself wasn't terrible but I stuck to the textbook. It was me and another individual and she was also white. We talked about it for quite a while. This professor shared a lot of experiences of racism as she grew up which made me very uncomfortable because I knew that I had none of those experiences. . . I

couldn't relate. We stuck very much to the textbook on the counseling of African Americans. I think our presentation was really out of the book almost. Whereas we tried to look up some videos on *You Tube* and everything we found, even cartoons, early cartoons from the 80's and 70's and things like that, how many stereotypes were worked into even Bugs Bunny cartoons. . .While we were trying to talk about here's where some of these individuals may be coming from – here's what they've experienced, how is that going to affect me counseling them as a white male. We wouldn't share them with the class. We didn't play the videos. We were so concerned that it might be taken offensively if someone in the class were to laugh at that. I think it was our presentation lacked some creativity. That we had ideas about it but we were so scared to offend that we didn't. We didn't do everything that I think – we would have had a positive reason to be doing it but depending on how the class would react to it...we went by the book. That was one of [our professor's] comments was, I could have read the textbook and gotten this. At the same time, if I had of played the Bugs Bunny cartoon and half the class would have laughed, would you have been offended by it? We just played it safe, therefore I don't think the presentation was as good as it could have been.

Playing it safe limits growth and interaction. While Doug certainly would not want to offend, he missed an opportunity to spark discussion. In a graduate level course, such opportunity can really enhance learning.

Obliviousness to White Privilege

White privilege is often seen as something that is invisible to whites (McIntosh, 1988). This causes a sense of ‘obliviousness’ to occur among whites that can leave lasting effects. Jack had an experience with his former RA from his undergraduate institution that showcased such obliviousness.

A terrible but really interesting situation happened this past weekend when I had a reunion, it was homecoming weekend at my undergraduate university. I saw my first RA when I was a freshman. He’s a 6’2 African American man and he goes to a local university now for law school. I see him and he’s got a toboggan with an eagle on it like a mascot. And I’m like oh, Hancock. . . There was this movie with Will Smith and he’s an African American man. He wears a toboggan with an eagle on it. That was just because when I saw when you buy the movie it comes with the toboggan with an eagle on it. It wasn’t but twenty minutes later and I was looking at him and it was a different eagle and I was like oh man, I’m so sorry. I thought it was from the DVD and he was like oh yeah, I saw that DVD with the black man, toboggan. Tall, handsome. He kind of joked about it and I said I’m sorry I just wanted to point that out, I wasn’t trying to do anything. He was like ‘I figured that wasn’t it’. He said he thought it was kind of weird for a minute. I felt terrible.

Jack also talked about how he attempted to redirect the conversation, in order to break the tension.

At some point we even mentioned white privilege and joked about Chris Rock. Chris Rock has this little ditty about white privilege and how he's rich and famous but if you're white you wouldn't trade places with him. He's like I wouldn't. So we joked about it and everything was okay. But I know at some point in the past I would be even more so uncomfortable I guess. I would have just backed away. I think now I can definitely dive into those conversations a little more and be more comfortable with that.

While the conversation was uncomfortable for Jack at the time, it definitely gave him a direct experience where he could see how his words affected another. Steve had an experience with a friend before he was married:

I do remember, I got married and I had my friends over for the day before with the bachelor party. We just hung out in this town and one of my friends is black and he came down with me. Well one is from Kenya and he's black but the other was African American. The Kenyan, I remember we took a picture of a sign and there was a police officer over there and the Kenyan came out with me and we took the picture. The other guy might have just been kidding but he was like, "I'm not getting out of the car, there's a policeman over there, I don't know what's going to happen." He was a funny guy so he might just have been being funny. He didn't get out of the car. So maybe he had some experiences. He knew it was a small town. I remember walking around the town at night and we were definitely – it was definitely a little different group than normal. That might have been my impression. Again the town

was ten or fifteen thousand and there was more diversity than I gave it credit for. I remember thinking 'I bet this doesn't happen every day'.

When asked how his educational program prepared him to address white privilege, Steve articulated the reflection processes that came from learning about his own experiences with white privilege.

It helped me reflect on the privilege I had and the benefits I had. I think a black student, they have the time where they're discriminated against or something negative happens to them solely because of their race and then it makes them rethink their identity and they kind of grow and evolve through that. Besides movies and talking with my parents, I just always feel like I've known I was white and in our country black people have been discriminated against and continue to be discriminated against. That was always wrong. It was wrong then and it was wrong when my grandparents would say something about it. It made me mad and I wanted to change it. So I always remember that but I didn't always reflect on the fact that I was white and whether or not I wanted it, I had advantages because of that. Until then, it made me think oh yeah, wow, I've never had to worry about some things.

Sometimes, it takes seeing an experience first-hand to truly understand it. This was the case for Steve.

Sometimes, obliviousness and bad decision-making can create a situation that quickly turns volatile. DC was the president of his fraternity as an undergraduate. During this experience, he and his fraternity brothers decided to have a party:

One time our fraternity – I’m a little bit embarrassed to look back and say now that we had a Ghetto Party theme. We hired some local guys that were rappers to come and sing. Everybody wore baggy pants and FuBu or Tommy Hilfiger or what you would associate with the Ghetto or Hood or whatever. It ended up that night some of the guys got in trouble for something in town and we got called in and found out that we had a Ghetto theme and it really offended the NPHC fraternity and sororities. I had to write an apology letter when I was 21. This white kid from [a small town in] Ohio had walked into a room of sixty African American students from the NPHC chapters and apologize for having a Ghetto Theme. We talked about why we did it and what the implications were.

When asked about his apology, DC shared that he had to respond for his entire fraternity, and state that there was no racist intent, but the damage was done. He shared the experience of having to talk to campus administrators about what they had done.

They grilled me. ‘What were you thinking? Why would you do that? What do you mean it wasn’t toward African Americans? You guys all tried to dress like them’. I was like I’m sorry. You don’t think about that. You’re in college and you should be grown and have those discussions beforehand. But somebody says let’s do a Ghetto theme and you’re like ‘I’m in’.

DC had to face the university’s administration and the black students on campus over the incident. In truth, DC and his fraternity initially saw nothing wrong with their actions, which is at the core of the problem. In short, they did not ‘get it’, and, many times, such actions

occur without ramifications. Unfortunately, Doug could not even articulate a specific example of how white privilege had affected his experiences. Once he thought about it a bit more, he articulated some discrimination based on religion, and even through his academic program.

I would say not really. I think especially when you look at this field of student affairs, I think sometimes you can feel discriminated against. And like I said, it's not just because I'm white but you're from the South, you're a straight white Baptist Southern male. I'm something in student affairs that you don't typically hear this field of diversity would want. I don't feel discriminated against necessarily but I'm very conscious of that. Whenever I don't get a certain position or I don't get selected to be on a certain committee, you have to wonder if that played a role in it because they wanted visual diversity. Or they wanted someone not from the South interviewing people from the North coming in. . . I think it's always in the back of my head whenever it's something student affairs related and I'm going to a conference or I'm interviewing for job. Is this affecting it or are they looking at me going, this white Southerner wants...I don't know that it ever has but it is always in the back of my head.

White privilege is difficult to pinpoint if you are a part of the majority group. Doug had to dig deep to begin seeing how white privilege might have affected his experiences. I would suspect this is more common than not. Stories of discrimination were also difficult to identify, and rare among the participants.

White Privilege and Discrimination

Three participants shared stories where they experienced discrimination and oppression. Casey shared a story that helped him better understand how oppression can feel. It helped him gain some empathy and insight into life:

I remember one specific conversation about my believing I wasn't hired or chosen for something because of my weight and it ended up provoking a conversation about my friend explaining how it was difficult to be chosen or hired as a person of color as well because it seemed like no matter how hard she worked or how much better her credentials were, it appears to come down to whether or not they need to "diversify". I had this pink elephant staring me down in the room when she started talking about issues related to affirmative action and I can only imagine how awful it must feel to be perceived as an "affirmative action" hire or choice.

Thankfully, he listened, and in turn, grew to understand oppression just a bit more. While it was not a situation involving race, it did help him better understand how discrimination and oppression can feel. Tom described a situation where he was treated differently; assumedly because of his race, while attending a music festival.

I had my car battery die and it was one of those instances where it was over a four-day period. I went to one of the closest places to go and it was an auto center or something. [Company Name]. . . There were a significant number of folks that came in after me but he helped them prior to [me]. I had to wait around for about 20 minutes to a half-hour before I would even be served. It was very interesting because

that was the first time that I could really experience what somebody else might experience in a similar situation. I very much felt discriminated against although I think it's something that he may have experienced much more frequently than I did. I was upset but I couldn't really be mad at him because I didn't really know where he was coming from.

As a white male, Tom had the ability to exit the situation, and 'regain' his white privilege through his regular life. DC shared a story about discrimination that illuminated stereotypes.

I would go back to high school gym class and say that if there were ever any African Americans in my class, they were always picked first for sports. I remember we used to go to the local park and play basketball. I definitely am not that good at basketball and admit it but I remember even if it was kids you didn't know and you just wanted to get a pickup game going, because I was white I would always joke to my friends – watch we'll be picked last. I would go with my white friends to the courts and they'd be picking people and they'd always pick the African American guys first. I was like, how do you know we're not good and not the next Larry Bird? We weren't. But it's sad to joke and say I know we're not going to get picked.

DC also shared how he feels discriminated against during the job search process:

Recently I've been leaving my ethnicity and race off of my job applications because one of the first question on every application I get is what is your race? I'm starting to think, do they look at my thing and see white and put in a stack of six hundred other white kids. What if they look at it and it doesn't have a race and they think oh

he may be of color, let's take a second look? I applied at some jobs at some Ivy League schools just on a whim to put my name in the hat and the first question on the application was "we are an affirmative action school. Equal opportunity, etc." . . . I don't want to be viewed as the next white kid. I want to be looked at for my skills and experience. . . I'm put in a pile of a hundred other white kids versus someone with an African American or Asian background that gets a second look simply because of their race. I feel discriminated against now and I've joked with some of my friends that we should write a book about how hard it is to be a middle class white male in America. Everyone says that's the person with all the opportunities. We can do anything we want. But it's like there's so much competition because of it. . . Sometimes I feel like it's a hindrance being white because people are looking to diversify. There's numerous times we're putting together an organization or some type of meeting and committee and someone says let's get a black kid on here. It's like do you want to get them on here just because you want to be able to say this is a diverse group? That's the best way to put it. Visual diversity. That way our office or committee can say look we have two African Americans and an Asian kid. Look at us. We're so inclusive. We're the end all, be all of diversity. I can promise no one has ever said let's get a white kid on here.

DC provided some direct examples of how discrimination affected him, and the anger he feels. White males are typically unwilling or unable to identify examples of discrimination. Again, when you are part of the majority, such examples tend to be few and far between.

How Education Influences Understanding

Each of the participants acknowledged how their understanding of white privilege was deepened and broadened by their educational experiences. Three of the participants shared how their undergraduate experiences helped to shape their understanding. DC had an experience in his Communications curriculum. “As a communications major I took a few classes with professors of color who made us really think about what it means to be white. I even did a large research paper on "whiteness theory" and the invisible power that comes with being white”. Casey talked about his experience as a Sociology and Political Science major, and how his growth and understanding has continued into his graduate preparation.

In college, I believe being a Sociology major and Political Science major has helped me to acknowledge whiteness in terms of privilege and played up history. I never realized things like the lack of black figures and role models in my education in U.S. and world history, but I started to acknowledge my lack of exposure and understanding when we discussed race in Sociology courses. To be honest, race has always made me a little uncomfortable because I have lived my life trying to make others happy and I tend to own the emotions and problems of others. Knowing that black people and other races and cultures are so oppressed and that I can do nothing to change the past is very unsettling to me. I know I can do nothing to change the development of race relations in the past and I feel uncomfortable knowing that blacks and others of minority groups likely do not trust me and may not even respect my efforts or compassion for the events of the past. I feel like I am at a crossroads in

my whiteness. I am becoming more confident as a graduate student in a higher education program, but I still have a hard time accepting that I will not be welcomed by all minority members with open arms and a willingness to make amends. I understand that for some it may be too painful or awkward, or maybe, like me, a little too uncomfortable.

Steve shared how his current educational experiences, along with his living on campus in a small town during his undergraduate days further enlightened him.

I took some college student developmental theory and talked about it and I hadn't really thought about it that much. . . Just living in a small town where my college was I think it was easier for me to go around and do whatever I wanted in a way and not worry about walking into some of these shops and not worrying about it. It's a small town but still if it was an African American person they hadn't seen I don't know how they would have accepted it as much as a white person they hadn't seen. Taking classes, I think the professors were very progressive and I think that wouldn't have been hard at all. I remember in the residence halls I'd see some friends – it was the first time I lived really close with African American students except for the apartment - and hanging out with them was really fun.

His positive experiences helped to further shape his outlook when he became a resident assistant. Ultimately, being white was not a negative experience for Steve, but rather a 'non-issue'.

College was hard because it was new and I wasn't as confident about how well I could do. I did well but it wasn't as hard as it might have been if I were a different race. I didn't have some other concerns that maybe would have made it more difficult. Otherwise college was hard just because it was new and it was harder because I was trying to figure out what to do with my life, but not because of my race, not at all.

For Steve, as with other participants, being white did not negatively paint their experiences. In fact, typically, their experiences were positive because of their whiteness and white privilege.

Seeing the responses of non-white individuals provides an opportunity for white males to begin noticing and experiencing the power of white privilege. Most of the exposure to white privilege happened during the graduate school curriculum. Steve articulated an example of how coursework on white identity and white privilege have affected him.

In graduate school, when we first read about white identity and white privilege did I realized that wow, I never had to worry about that. I wanted to be who I was and always was to a certain extent without having to worry about the repercussions of what I was doing based on my skin color.

Steve articulated the importance of his graduate school experiences in helping him understand the complexities of race and white privilege. Reading about white privilege opens eyes, and exposes the realities of racism and discrimination.

Many of the participants shared that they experienced the most growth during their multicultural courses. While not a requirement for all programs, the individuals who experienced such courses articulate a much clearer sense of understanding. First, two participants acknowledged that being a white male in student affairs today is becoming a rarity. Doug talked about his cohort being overwhelmingly white and overwhelmingly male. Jeremiah also shared an example of how being a white male in a student affairs program is more rare these days.

I think in graduate school, I think being white was a help in getting in. Being a white male was a help in getting in. At the time I don't think a lot of white males applied to be in student affairs. You don't really see a whole lot in the field. I think at the time, also my engineering background helped out because it was a different background than a lot of students going into student affairs. I feel like for graduate school it helped me get into the program but not for the typical reasons why white race helps you get into the program.

Jeremiah saw the opportunity to benefit from his race and gender through the admissions process at his institution. Being part of an underrepresented group in student affairs certainly can open doors and provide access that others may not have.

Graduate programs can provide a personal transformation from undergraduate the graduate student, and from graduate student to student affairs professional. Jim was able to share specifically how his transformation can be measured through his graduate program.

I think it's one of those things through my experience and especially in grad school that I've come to appreciate that it is a "race" but it's also a social paradigm. What it means to be white is very different from what I used to think it was. . . I know that it's something you have to work on even as a white person and go through college going I know I have the same socio economic background as my friend who is in a traditionally African American fraternity, but he's getting treated differently than I'm getting treated. So really thinking about the white development and the development model and thinking where am I at in all of that. . . . My perception of whiteness is one that I'm still learning what it means to be white.

Jim's development as a white male is continually evolving, and his experiences as a graduate student and student affairs practitioner are helping him to better understand who he is. Jim also talks about how his multiculturalism course has helped him grow, as well as how his professor has helped him redefine who he is.

Within the class we have to look at privilege and what it means to be white, and present on our own heritage. It's interesting, you know, that a black woman teaches it. I wonder if a white professor tried to teach it, how it would be received. Nonetheless, I think that class made me appreciate the concepts of heritage (both good and bad), where we had to present the good and bad of our families. I had to get up there and talk about how some of my family heritage (specifically the Cajun) was responsible for hunting down runaway slaves. That's pretty hard to admit that in some way you are part of a group that willingly restricted the freedom of others.

Jim's responses represent a much more introspective and evolving sense of self than most of the participants. This enlightened sense of self, while regularly occurring, is not something that most white men articulate.

Self-exploration can stir up strong emotions. White males often do not take the time to explore or fully understand just how much development is still uncovered. Jack talks about how his experiences served to help his understanding in a positive way.

I think I always had the idea about diversity and multiculturalism and being racist and learning because of my white and male privilege that I've received a lot of benefits that I might not even want but I get them because that's just how it's been. How do I share that power? A lot of the thoughts are coming from a counseling class I took called Cross-Cultural Counseling. That class became more of a class about diversity than actually how to counsel the culturally diverse. It's amazing. I had to say a lot of things that we talked about. We had a thing about micro aggression. I didn't understand what that was about. . . You mean well and you think you're meaning well but you're not really giving other people that are non-white the chance and the ability to really celebrate that race and that culture. You're just trying to say hey be more like me, be more white.

I feel like the wool has been pulled off of my eyes. It's unveiled me or something. Just not noticing a lot of these things that people go through and a lot of that came through panel discussions we had with people from different communities. Latino,

Hispanic-Americans, Arab-Americans, African-Americans, American-Indian, all of them were talking about their experiences and like I said I think it became a struggle a little bit thinking of myself as a person of a white race and how there was very little good about it in relation to how we've been. I still feel kind of bad. That went hand in hand thinking about male privilege and some of the stuff I do here. It's affected me in a good way.

Jack also shared an experience in his Cross-Cultural Counseling course that opened his eyes to white privilege. "It started to become clear to me that I was still participating [in] and accepting the privileges that I haven't earned because I am white. I think that it is important to realize that much of what we hear as we grow up from teachers and other educators regarding race and racism is important".

Stories of oppression and social activism open eyes. Cody James had a very similar experience in a similar class.

The class did bring me to some new understanding on the topic of white privilege, but not to the point where it really made me think of all the things I take for granted. It was more of a...I do have benefits that I have not had to work as hard for, but it was kind of just left at that. There were also training activities for being a RD that made me think of privilege, but again they were all very surface level and never really made me consider the deep underlying things that I was benefiting from with out my awareness.

Cody James' experiences were not atypical, and it appears that such courses add members to 'the choir'. Classroom experiences and exposure to diversity opens the eyes of the participants, and shows them that their worldview, or rather, their experiences as white men help to shape how they understand and relate to white privilege. The participants who took these classes simply had more to share, and they had a deeper understanding of how white privilege has affected them, and how being white in America affects others. Unfortunately, such curricular requirements are not present in most student affairs programs that do not have a counseling background. Yet, we expect our student affairs practitioners to not only be familiar with multiculturalism, but also to teach others of the importance of diversity.

Diverse Interactions and Multiculturalism

The third area of research focuses on how white males in student affairs preparation programs view and utilize diverse interactions with white students and students of color, both programmatic and interpersonal, formally and informally. Contained within this area of study is how they come to utilize their understanding of diversity through a multicultural competence model. The shift from awareness to action is mediated by the secondary event – education. This data is best organized through Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller's (2004) multicultural competence model, focusing on awareness, knowledge, and skills, however, the concept of Freire's (1970) critical consciousness, and King and Kitchener's (1994) reflective judgment model drives such development.

A Critical Consciousness

Critical consciousness is necessary in order to make sense of the change that is needed in the world. Friere (1970) believed that “people develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation” (p. 83). King and Kitchener (1994) believe that the reflective judgment process begins with an uncertainty of what is knowledge, and move from a situation where a problem is not witnessed, to a more subjective belief that problems may exist, and finally, to a situation where conclusions, albeit founded in data, are open to interpretation. In short, the feeling that I believe a situation to be true, but I am open to discussing possibilities. Together, Freire and King and Kitchener provide a powerful lens of analysis; a precursor to multicultural competence.

The understanding of critical consciousness emerged during the final interview with the participants. When asked about how they have developed cultural sensitivity, the concepts of learning and development begin to unfold. Cody James stated that “it's a constant learning process and as I learn those things and as you know I have discussions with people that realize how things I say or things that I do that are insensitive that I try to challenge myself and make those changes”. He also articulated that his reflection on the two articles that were presented as reading material opened his eyes to even more examples of oppression and white privilege.

Casey and Jack focused on the ideas of listening and engagement. Casey focused on the value of listening to the stories of those different from him to gain perspective and to identify where he might be able to assist others, especially following the racial incident identified earlier in this chapter. “I took the time to listen to those feelings and concerns, and that I didn't just overlook it, and when I saw them in the community I thought [I would] ask them how they were doing. It wasn't just, pass by each other, ‘hey how's it going’”. Casey saw the importance of reaching out, and of developing a relationship with his African American residents. Because of that, they felt more comfort in interacting with him, and Casey also felt that level of comfort to have more interactions in the future.

Jack sees the value of engagement through facilitation as a way to begin dialogues across racial lines. As the lead facilitator of a men’s group talking about violence against women and masculinity, he has a great opportunity to spark discussion with men from all racial groups. “I think for me it's just engaging in conversations and creating safe spaces, and acknowledging people's culturally diverse background because I think one of the worse things you can do is not acknowledge it”. Jack is using his position to inspire dialogue, and to listen to the stories of the men around him.

Mutual respect has provided opportunities for engaging in dialogue with students. Jim articulated how respect has aided in his development of cultural sensitivity.

I definitely have tried to be very intentional with that and really get to know about them so that I can work with them more effectively and those one on one times are

just so irreplaceable to me just because I am able to sit with them for 30 minutes to 45 minutes and just talk to them about what is going on in their life.

Jim's experiences of leading a diverse staff, and getting to know each and every one of them has enhanced the richness of dialogue that can come from student engagement, and can help bring about social change, even if it is one person at a time.

Doug articulated the importance of listening and being non-judgmental with his students.

Just being supportive even when you don't agree and even when you don't completely understand, but just seeking out and having a true desire to understand. . . They see you as being genuine, and they show that you support them. Even if you are open and say 'I don't agree with that' or maybe 'I don't completely believe that, but I do see where you come from' and so and they see that you are genuine in that.

Simple engagement, reflection, and dialogue can help conversations involving race become more comfortable, and can help our students begin feeling that race is a safe topic to discuss, regardless of your own racial makeup.

Jeremiah articulated his experiences in understanding student development theory as a way of beginning to critically examine and reflect upon situations.

Having the training of the different progressions of student development models and understanding where students might be, a big one is the Nigrescence model. I used that with my RA, I did a research study with the Nigrescence model with one of my RA's. . . [I have] been able to identify where students are developmentally and

meeting them there, assigning them tasks that meet them in the specific stations that they're currently in.

Jeremiah incorporated his classroom experiences, and applied direct knowledge to better gauge identity development in one of his RAs. Jeremiah also commented that being a part of this study opened him up to engage with others about topics such as race. "I think it's really definitely helped, you know, being able to think about it and process through my own personal experience and being able to share that with him and help him see how his words are necessarily can be viewed by people". Simple engagement in the topic of race has provided an opening for Jeremiah to begin the discussion, and to engage others in addressing race.

DC appreciated the chance to have his voice as a white male heard and appreciated, and grew from the exposure to our discussions. "I kind of always joked with my friends everyone says being a white male you are in the majority but when you go onto graduate school and especially in student affairs you kind of feel like you are in the minority because people don't really care what white males say or have to think. There is not a lot of studies on white males these days". While DC may feel that his experiences are not discussed, change within the student affairs community, and among white men, begins with white men engaging in dialogues about race and identity.

The importance of critical consciousness, reflective judgment, and engagement add to the importance of multicultural competence. The examination of what exists, how do these realities affect others and ourselves, and our ability to critically examine what we can do to

make positive changes in our environment are at the base of the development of this competence. You cannot be aware if you are not open to seeing what is in front of and around you. You cannot develop knowledge if you fail to see the importance of being a part of the change, and you cannot begin to build skills if you fail to see how one person can make a difference.

Awareness

An awareness of campus environment is important when we consider how we make an impact on diversity. Awareness is understanding what your environment yields, and what your experiences have been. This is at the core of multicultural competence. Doug discussed the experiences and feelings he has had on the predominantly white campus he is a part of.

I think my university definitely is predominantly white and especially where we're at in the region, we are stereotyped as being a white university. I've heard whitewash and we're whitewashed here at my university. I've heard the whole "oh we let students in to meet our quota" and we have all white students after that which I don't necessarily believe. I think that has a lot to do with whether minorities are wanting to move down to the Southeast probably affects it a lot too.

Doug gives voice to the stereotypes of a white university in the South. Of course, it is a complex environment, but one that is often rife with racial tensions, however understated. Cody James talks about one issue that surprises him on his campus.

Coming down and seeing the Confederate flag waving, that was quite a culture shock as well. Trying to understand how there are still people that that is still very much a

part of their history and it's something they are very proud of and they still think they won the Civil War. Just kind of trying to address that and get that under my mind is something that has kind of been that thought process as well.

The Confederate flag is a very visible symbol for the Civil War, and the racial discord that has occurred for so many years. Addressing its presence in the residence hall environment is a battle that most student affairs practitioners in the South have to address at some point in their career. Cody James had to face this experience earlier than most.

Jack talked about how his life experiences have helped him grow as a white male. "I'm much more aware of my whiteness and seeing it as a race now. So when I interact with people and students it's much different. I try to observe their interactions concerning diversity from all angles and just be aware of what's going on". Jeremiah shared how his knowledge of white privilege has shaped his vocational choice. "I think my understanding of white privilege has really led me to focus on community service as a profession as opposed to a hobby. I have truly become passionate about helping others and providing my assistance where it is needed". His experiences with community service helped him to understand his own identity and development, and how he wants to help students during his career.

Being able to afford to and being able to go overseas and meet other people and work with other cultures and understand more about other countries but also learning about themselves. Reflecting on their experiences there and also kind of gaining an understanding of why – getting an understanding about their privilege and then understanding why it's not necessarily our responsibility but why we should enjoy

going over and helping other people. And just being able to interact with other cultures. I think that was the biggest thing for me. The interaction with the other cultures was the reason I really learned a lot about who I was and the things that I valued. So I think that being able to give people that opportunity is a key for me. Jeremiah has grown through his life experiences. His self-awareness has helped to shape his career aspirations, and has given him a road map towards his goals. Tom discusses how his campus experiences and a professor on campus have shaped his development.

I think on a campus with a makeup like ours, they can try and prepare you as much as possible but unless you're in those situations on a constant basis, I really don't think you can be fully prepared for it. I had a great professor, a teacher of a multicultural class talk about various issues within race and color and class and any other spectrum. I don't think there's anything that's as significant as being exposed to those different situations. He's done a fairly good job but at the same time every morning when I wake up and I go to my office I'm passing somebody who looks like me and not somebody else.

The Importance of Diverse Connections

Exposure to diversity yields a greater sense of understanding. The participants in this study articulated the value of diversity through interactions. First and foremost, all participants expressed the importance of connections with a diverse group of individuals, and how this breaks down barriers and enhances understanding. Jack shared his perspective on the benefits of diverse interactions:

It gives me the time and place to really have those interactions without the fear of being viewed as an oppressor. Much of that has to do with the class I took to make me feel more comfortable with those interactions. When I talk with people from other diverse cultures about race and culture it is usually within classroom settings, meetings about the topic, and forums.

Jack's experiences in his class helped guide him through diverse interactions, which has enhanced his own understanding of others. Steve articulated how his undergraduate experience enhanced his desire to meet others.

When I went to college I wanted to befriend people from other cultures, met black friends and talked about them to my friends back home because I thought that it was cool, being around diversity, living with people from other countries and races and backgrounds, some I took home with me for breaks and I hung out with during the school year but I never really considered how being white gave me privilege until graduate school.

In his current role as a residence director, and within his graduate program, Steve also sees the importance of diverse connections.

In the hall we have the hall council president and some of the executive board members are African American and so I work with them in that way. I think it's the same if I'm working with whatever race. I suppose that's some multicultural – some work in a multicultural sense. Just in the hall and some students are black and some students are white and some students are Latino. Then with my colleagues, the same

way. We're not super diverse but there is some diversity. I think the fun thing is it feels the same no matter who I am talking to, I learn different things from different people. I feel like we all get along pretty well.

Residence halls and college campuses provide one of the best environments to explore difference and multiculturalism. Steve's experiences show the potential for growth through understanding and dialogue. DC shared similar opportunities for developing connections during his educational experiences. They "have given me the opportunity to meet and interact with a very diverse population of students and professors who I have learned from and come to both appreciate their culture but also realize what it means for me to be white".

Cody James articulated how his interactions with diverse staff members have not only been enjoyable, but that they have taught him the value of diversity.

I have directly supervised a variety of students on campus, both those from different areas of the country, different races, and from families of different socioeconomic status. I have loved interacting with all of them and getting to know them for who they are, what they are passionate about, and what drives their academic endeavors and leadership experiences outside of the classroom. I have also worked with different African American female residents of mine throughout the course of this year who have had conflicts with their roommates. None of them were racially motivated ones (seeing as by chance their roommates were also of the same race). They were all for a variety of reasons, most of which were able to be worked out or

for those that were not-I gave the resources and power to the student to select a new assignments encouraging responsibility.

He also talked about an experience he had in his Multicultural Counseling course that really impacted him.

The last major diverse interaction that comes to mind was in Multicultural counseling course...mostly because we were able to provide heritage quilts to the class and show more of who we are than what is seen on the outside. I learned more about individual's backgrounds, families, and experiences growing up. It was always great listening to people's stories and being able to ask them questions. I loved the experience because it opened my eyes to so much more than what I knew or thought of the person. All of them ended up showing people in an even more positive light and provided even deeper understanding of interactions that I had with them throughout my time here.

Cody James's positive experiences in class really helped him to better understand difference.

Jim uses his RA staff to learn more about their culture and experiences.

Diverse interactions are often a bit harder to define. I supervise four black RA's and two DA's. For the most part, race is something we don't necessarily talk about a lot. One of my RA's is in a NPHC fraternity and I feel I pester him a lot about it. I am really fascinated with NPHC groups and want to learn so much more about them. I feel almost every one on one I ask him about his fraternity involvement and what

activities they are currently sponsoring. God love him, he bares with me and explains everything to someone so ignorant of the NPHC system.

He also uses his military experiences to help his staff develop as a team.

I think that my actual practice is one in which I maintain a certain level of mutual respect for people. Working with my staff, I have used some of the experience I had gained from my military experiences and attempted to have them define themselves a cohesive group rather than a staff of individuals. I feel that the staff ran with this a bit and saw how they are part of a larger whole. I wonder if I am doing a disservice to these men by not appreciating the individual more.

Mutual respect is a core tenet in race relations and understanding differences. Doug follows along the same lines, and sees tremendous value in connecting with staff.

Talking with staff members and co-workers, asking their thoughts and perceptions, and speaking with friends and families about their views. Not trying to teach them anything, but to share with them my thoughts and have them share theirs. Good or bad. Learning to understand your experiences, prejudices, biases, etc gets the thought process going. Once this happens you can share this and other will be realistic and share theirs with you. Hearing real perspectives and thoughts will get you thinking. . . My experiences with gaining knowledge, making connections and learning with others, and being REAL have resulted in some of the best educational and diverse interactions I have had.

Even though Doug values these diverse interactions, he still sees whiteness more than anything else. “I have continued to become more involved with different cultures and student populations that assist me in understanding others but feel that I continue to be involved with and surrounded by more white students than any other race”.

Jeremiah sees connections a bit differently, but is honest about how he interacts with others. He explains, “[w]hile I may require my RAs to provide programs that are diverse in nature, I don't actively seek out diverse interactions to say that I have had them. With this being said, the interactions that I do have are ones that I do not back down from”. His response highlights more of an enforcement of expectations for diversity programming than a true passion for it. Casey, on the other hand, believes that much of his growth and understanding of white privilege comes from friendships with people of color.

I really am having a good time learning about how others grow up and how it affects their present perspective. I am trying to blend the unique perspectives to help me develop a values and belief system of my own with regard to diversity. I believe learning from and hearing others' stories has allowed me to put a face on diversity and issues surrounding the topic.

Diversity has become something that is very personal to me because I see how it affects those I love and care about on a continual basis. . . I honestly have grown past caring what acquaintances and strangers think about things like that. I am a grown adult and so are my other family members. As such, we have the right to choose our

and path and it is the choice of others' how they react. In the end, it is our decision to make and we will accept the consequences of those decisions. I have seen joy in my family members' eyes when they build personal and intimate relationships with people of color and I have found joy in those relationships as well. I admit that those relationships always start a little awkwardly, but they have enriched my own life so much that I cannot turn away from the possibility of me or my family being happy with a multiculturally-related life.

Casey articulates a true ideal situation. Diversity and diverse interactions are often viewed as less than rosy, and often times, avoided by white males.

White males have a luxury that comes with white privilege: the ability to simply avoid addressing diversity and interactions. On a predominantly white campus, the 'normative experience' is white, so an avoidance of diverse interactions does not seem out of place. A white male can become very comfortable, and not have to experience multicultural interactions. It is therefore not surprising that our campuses remain divided, and our students of color feel out of place. The truth is, the only time that race is discussed is during times of discord. When a student, faculty, or administrator says or does something that is offensive or insensitive, we react, but otherwise, predominantly white campuses have the luxury of simply 'being', and not challenging the status quo.

Knowledge

Student affairs practitioners, and really all individuals, use knowledge, such as experiences in life, in courses, or through events, to better understand their place in the

world. The participants discussed how their experiences on campus have shaped what they know, or do not know. Jim talked about how his Multicultural Counseling course framed his understanding and appreciation of diversity.

It was really good kind of from two different levels. One, it made me appreciate my own culture a little bit better. One of the first assignments we had to do in the class was a heritage quilt so you get up in front of the class and they do all the confidentiality stuff so you can share as much stuff as you want. And you get up there and you basically talk about your life and your experiences and where you're from and your heritage and why you are what you are today. It was fascinating because one, I felt really tied to that class. . . Then I guess from another level, the professor that taught it was outstanding. She was really understanding not only of where everybody was at but the culture of our university and also where we need to be.

Jim's experience in his Multicultural Counseling class exposed him to his peers and their varied and diverse experiences, but his professor also helped him to understand how diversity should be viewed on a college campus.

Casey's classroom experience in Cross-Cultural Counseling and Fostering Diversity in Higher Education also positively affected his understanding of multiculturalism.

[Those classes] alone really helped me to kind of be more collaborative and be more compromising in the way that I approach things. And understanding that even if I do make that good faith effort to help other groups stand up or stand up with them

against discrimination and slurs and whatever negativity they kind of receive in the community they're in - I have to realize even if I stand up with them, they are not always going to like me. It goes back to the "oh I really want to be liked." . . . [J]ust facing the facts that taking that stand against oppression and discrimination is good enough for me. I've kind of come to terms with you know, I have to be satisfied with my effort even if other people won't be satisfied with my effort. For some people you can do so much. You can give so much of yourself but it's never enough.

Jeremiah also had the same course, Fostering Diversity, but his experiences through the balance of his program highlighted some shortcomings in addressing multiculturalism.

It really helped in understanding student development from a racial and ethnic and sexuality standpoint. We looked at all the "isms" that go along with prejudice. . . . I don't feel that if we weren't willing to take the steps - because the Fostering Diversity class was an elective - if we weren't willing to take the steps to take that as an elective that we were necessarily getting the exposure to it that we should. There's a cross cultural counseling class that I didn't take but that's not on here. That's two out of how many classes that were offered through this two years that you're in the master's program. Or however many years you are in the program. I don't know that my university's program is adequately designed to broach that topic with students.

DC has seen that his program's coursework has been helpful, but that the true growth comes from individual experiences and not the course curriculum.

I think we talk about it a lot. I don't know if we practice. The thing I find in student affairs and some people will agree and not say it and some people will disagree and whatever. I think that in student affairs and Higher Ed that there's a lot of talk and a lot of smoke blowing and there's a lot of 'let's be inclusive and diverse' and all this stuff. It's just people trying to sound like they're at a higher Ed institution. Everyone throwing out the buzz words. Let's assess our diversity and talk about the learning outcomes of our inclusivity. What does that mean? Are we just going to write a paper about this and say that we are an inclusive campus? Does that mean that we're going to try to make sure there are different ethnic groups in every class? What does it mean to be inclusive really? You have to want to learn. I don't care where you go to school. If you're going to seclude yourself from diversity and not want it, it doesn't matter what the program is.

Knowledge helps us develop and frame our own identity. Courses in the graduate curriculum help individuals define what they know, what they do not know, and how they might serve others. The skill-building that occurs from awareness and knowledge is the true value of multicultural competence, as it empowers individuals to act, based on what they know to be true, and what they know to be false. Ultimately, it comes down to an honest assessment of your own abilities and shortcomings.

Diversity Programs and Trainings

Often times, trainings and programs are often seen as being attended and most appreciated by those in 'the choir' – individuals who already advocate for others or who

appreciate diversity. DC talked about this through his experience with NCBI. It “was good, but I feel like they are always preaching to the choir. The people who need diversity training the most are the ones who don’t attend NCBI training”. Jeremiah talks about how diversity programming might limit diverse participation. “Seeing programs around campus that are geared towards minority groups really only seem to attract those of that group, which really limits the amount of learning that takes place at a function of that sort”. Tom shared his fear of being seen as less than credible.

I think part of [my discomfort] is with folks that are of different races or different ethnic backgrounds. That’s because if I talk to them about that I don’t feel as though they view me as a credible resource, which is very frustrating. I think that’s where my ‘uncomfortableness’ comes from is just the frustration out of it.

Jeremiah is concerned that a commitment to diversity, in his experience on his campus, is designed to make us ‘feel good’, but that it has not had the impact that administrators desire.

It’s like we were forced to have it. I’m not sure if we were forced to have it but to some extent someone said you need to have a commitment for diversity. . . I just don’t know that beyond this is what you have to have, what steps will be taken beyond that to really get that message out there to the students that live in the buildings. You probably can go through this building and not a single one of them can tell you we have a commitment to diversity statement.

Jeremiah clearly expressed frustration over how his department implemented their commitment to diversity. Training helps staff better understand a department's commitments and values. Jim discussed how diversity training is typically viewed through his experiences.

I think that initially you hear the "D" word and you think 'gosh not another diversity training'. I think that package diversity and kind of sometimes what we try to sell whether it's in the residence hall or multicultural center is very challenging for me to get into to be very honest with you. We have the National Coalition Building Institute here – NCBI. I tried to get into it and I went to one of the sessions and I was like I don't really feel like I'm getting anything out of this. I feel that I gain a lot more out of my less intentional experiences at times.

It's really easy to smell what's real and what's not. . .If it's something that's a presentation it drains me. It's one of those things where you sit in there and you hear about all the horrible things that especially white folks do and you sit in there and go 'man, I'm awful'. I'm associated with an awful group but I feel that if I'm able to sit with somebody that says look what white folks have done and it's us talking in a group or whatever and saying I also have a background in American Indian history so let's talk about that too. And everybody plays a part in that whether you're black or white or Asian or Hispanic. Whatever, how does that lead to that paradigm of not only oppression but of supporting one another?

Jim's honest assessment of how he feels during trainings and diversity experiences is seemingly more common than surprising. Training in areas outside of your comfort zone leaves you a bit disoriented, so it is not a surprise to hear his hesitations.

Being the only representative of your race in the room causes discomfort. These participants shared this concern for discomfort from a few different perspectives. Casey shared how participating in events or programs where he is the minority could feel uncomfortable, even though he is sharing an experience through one his peers' experiences.

[I]f I went to an African American event and was the only white person there, there would be some level of comfort but a level of discomfort as well just because I'm hearing other master's students and my cohort talk about when they did the ethnography for student characteristics, they went to the black student board meetings or they went to the NPHC meetings. They are looked at as the outsiders so I can only imagine how that would feel. I know there would definitely be a level of discomfort. Doug is also concerned about feeling out of place at diversity events, and how he views most diversity events as being provided for minority students.

[I]n my experience and my perception, when a diversity event happens, it's to appreciate the minorities and give them a place to meet and appreciate who they are racially and ethnically and touch base with other minorities. Whereas maybe white students aren't really included in that sometimes. Or at least if they it's not as well known. I think for me personally that's the reason I wouldn't go. I have gone and I haven't gone but I could see where I would feel out of place if I were the only white

student there. It's not because I don't want to celebrate diversity but because I'm feeling that when they look at me, why is he here? Because he's just a white guy. What is he celebrating exactly? He's not diverse. He's a white Southerner. So maybe that feeling I have no diversity to celebrate because that's the stereotype I'm given based on the way I look or based on where I'm from.

Feeling out of place provides a rationalization for white men to simply avoid programs and events. However, he also shared that, in situations where he is the only white person in the room, he could become self-conscious. "If an African American student comes to my office to talk I am totally comfortable, but if I had to go speak to a room of African American students I would be uncomfortable and think they were looking at me as the "token white guy" or that I didn't know what I was talking about". DC's concerns highlight the challenge of getting white men to participate in diverse interactions.

Growth can, and does, occur from diverse interactions and education. Doug shared how his own diversity education has helped him grow, personally and professionally.

I think for me where I can say okay I came out of high school and I came from a small town that was predominantly white, I feel like I wasn't racist and I wasn't this. It has still helped me to understand it while I wasn't maybe racist or any of those kinds of things. I felt like I wasn't. Where I am now and where I was then are two completely different places. I want to understand it and maybe share that experience with others whereas before I didn't really comprehend it and didn't recognize what it was to come from a town that was predominantly white. I guess I've matured a lot in

the ways that I look at diversity so I think diversity, while it may not be everyone's favorite topic, you can definitely benefit from it. I think that in college especially it's really helped me grow. I think from the individuals, even from the RA's that have been through the class they may not have gotten everything out of it that we wanted them to get but they grew in some capacity and they learned something from it. I think over time it's a very positive thing for the individuals and I've seen that.

Doug has had the opportunity to reflect on his own experiences and find value in them.

Being in a situation where you are the minority, if only for a short time, can feel awkward. Steve looked at this 'temporary minority status' as an opportunity to capitalize on. As an undergraduate student, Steve attended some black churches in his college town, and found them to be welcoming, warm places to visit. "I learned a lot from that. I don't know about a lot but it was a helpful experience for me in an African American church. I don't think I was ever discriminated against because of my whiteness". These positive examples help to break down barriers and encourage more interaction between racial groups.

Student affairs practitioners spend a significant amount of time training students in multiculturalism. Cody James talks about mandated training, and how it can be viewed in a negative light by many – especially staff members who feel they've 'heard it all before'.

Our RA's, if you look at them when you're doing the diversity training during RA training, it's definitely not something they look forward to. I think some of them do but overall it's one of those things – it's like counseling and diversity training always get the worst marks whenever you do any kind of satisfaction assessment. I'd say it's

one of those things they probably don't enjoy but I'd say there are definitely a few that do enjoy it as they go along.

Diversity programming and training is often viewed as a burden, no matter the environment. He also talks about how participants view the trainings as an opportunity to 'be preached at', but enjoys the challenge as a trainer these days.

I would say in my undergrad it was one of those things where multicultural diversity was the buzzword that was like 'oh do we have to talk about this again?' . . . It's a very challenging experience so I think it was always that kind of thing of not wanting to be preached at necessarily. . . I'm in a different place now where I enjoy diversity and talking about it a lot more. . . I think that's something I enjoy challenging our students on the things that I hated being challenged on when I was there. It's one of those things where I'd have to go back and ask my mentors how they viewed all this kind of stuff in training me throughout it because it's one of those things that it's something I never thought that I would be that big into.

Diversity training, however presented, provides tremendous opportunities for growth and development. Whether mandated or encouraged, training brings new concepts and ideas to students and staff. These new ideas and experiences help broaden the scope of personal development. Students and staff, however, typically view these experiences as 'just another diversity presentation', which affects what they are open to experiencing.

Skills

Skills include knowing how you can help others, and your own areas of weakness. Recognizing one's strengths and weaknesses, in regards to diversity, makes for a more multiculturally competent professional. Cody James sees a need to develop his understanding of other parts of the world.

In terms of diversity, looking at what people are experiencing in different parts of the world, I would say that there is a lot of growth that I need to do there. I know about specific areas, but that makes me uncomfortable trying to talk about things that I am just not educated about or that I haven't gained knowledge about. [My program] has also brought me to the realization that I may not be able to reach out and be impactful to all students- I need to know my limits and be able to understand if a student would rather work with someone else as opposed to myself.

The true value of being multiculturally competent is the recognition that I have strengths and weaknesses. Cody James has a good understanding of these concepts.

Doug shared how he intends to use what he has learned in his program.

I think as I prepare as a professional I have been seeking to understand my experiences, my family, and how the system I was brought up in has shaped who I am affects my ability to work with and understand others. I have been much more open to share this as I am interviewing and applying to jobs that I would have been even a couple of years ago.

Doug's willingness to learn from others, and his intentions to share a more genuine side of what he has and has not experienced makes him well-prepared to enter the workforce, but the challenge exists for him to truly do what he says he will do.

Skill building is the one area within the study that was underrepresented. While there are examples of how the participants expect to use their experiences from their graduate programs, there were minimal examples within the interview setting – a telling tale for white males entering the field of student affairs.

Racial Incidents: Campuses React to Intolerance

Campuses deal with a variety of incidents on any given day. Unfortunately, campuses are not immune to intolerance and hate. Three specific incidents evolved during the course of my study discussed by the participants. Each situation, while unique, highlighted the emotions felt following these incidents, and their respective campus responses.

Racial Incident: The Presidential Election

A unique dynamic occurred during the completion of my study. In November, 2008, Barack Obama became the 44th President of the United States. He also became the first African-American President. This election sparked a variety of incidents across our nation, and specifically on two of the three campuses that are represented in the study. On November 4, 2009, the evening the election results were finally announced, one of the campuses had an incident involving resident violence. Doug shared what occurred in his community:

We had a white student that went right to the football players' door and banged on the door and two or three football players were in there and they just – here come the

racial slurs. I think it was because – I understand – I don't agree with it but I understand what probably made that situation happen. When Obama winning the presidency really gave African Americans and black people a reason to celebrate. This was a milestone. I don't care who you voted for. You have to appreciate it's a historical event. So that was the reason for them to celebrate. Maybe a white individual – it might have not been racial at all – it might have been he was upset his candidate didn't win it and it very well could have been racial. But we had a lot of students outside celebrating. They're outside yelling and celebrating that finally in history we have a black president. I think some of the white students were really upset by that. Maybe that's something they haven't dealt with before and we haven't had a black president so they may not have known how to deal with that. It could have been because their candidate didn't win. It could have been they were upset. Maybe there were some racial issues going on but one student in particular was upset by the celebrating and the hollering and everything that was going on so he walked right up to the football players and just kind of let them have it, which in hindsight for him I hope he realizes it wasn't smart because for one they're football players and they're bigger than you. You're yelling at one and there's another twenty of them that you hear are going to back him up, so not the smartest move. They beat him up pretty good. He went to the hospital. I have no doubt that it was racially tied and that was just one thing I had to deal with because we had to call EMS. He had to come back and live here so that made it awkward for the community like "that kid that went into

the hospital, he's back." And hoping that they didn't kill him the next time. That's one thing I dealt with.

Through Doug's description, it becomes apparent that, while detailed, he discounts that the student who perpetrated the violence was committing a hate crime. This lack of acknowledgment shows how white men often fail to see the individual act as hateful or discriminatory, but rather as a display of power. Thankfully, Doug's campus responded by working with the Housing staff and students, and the administration sent out emails condemning the incident. They also offered counseling for any students who needed to talk.

It's one of those things where you don't know if it's politically driven or racially driven. You can't assume so just trying to hit on all the areas. I know we went through some education and ways to process that with our staff and in turn during our staff meetings we did that in hopes that they would take that back to the residents. I think it really came from the top level administration trying to talk with the residents and just give them opportunities to express their frustration and here's how we are going to end it positively. I think that's kind of how it went on our campus.

Acts of intolerance need to be addressed on campuses. This campus responded to the incident, and offered students outlets to address their pain. Sadly, this is only one example from the Presidential Election.

On November 5, 2009, on Casey's campus, a group of white students spray-painted racial slurs, as well as a death threat to the newly-elected President, in a tunnel known to be a haven for free-speech. The action was quickly condemned by the campus community, but

students, faculty, and staff felt strong emotions about what had happened. Casey discussed what occurred in his community following the incident.

I saw the residents that were African American that were very angry and frustrated with the situation. Especially because they characterized the reaction from administration and now my own. I think a lot of that had to do with the NAACP coming on campus from our state and demanding the students that had done that be expelled and then that didn't happen. The students were frustrated with that.

So after all that had happened and seeing all that kind of general animosity and feeling of unease on campus, my assistant director and my co-resident director and I started to have a Town Hall. We met with students. There weren't a lot of students that showed up but the ones that did definitely expressed their frustration with how it was handled and the fact that it happened in the past but it was smaller things that weren't really publicized in the media as much as this incident.

A lot of it had direct ties to the election and those happenings so it got more coverage and more media. They had seen that it was a systematic cover up the way that they kind of viewed it. And being able to facilitate that and say here's steps that the university is trying to take and we want to take your feedback and offer that to other people and reinforce the fact that we're committed to making sure that everyone feels valued and safe and included. At least in our community.

Casey's community was deeply affected by the tunnel incident. As part of the Housing community, Casey and their entire staff team held a town hall meeting to address the issues, concerns, and emotions that students were feeling. Casey discussed how things turned out in his community.

I think they felt like they were part of the conversation. One of the things we discussed was the diversity course that all freshmen will be required to take in the future and helping them to realize that it wasn't going to be something that was going to be a quick fix and that it's going to take years. And helping them to realize that next fall will be the first class that freshmen will be introduced to this and they aren't going to be seniors for four years.

So the students that I'm working with in my community will graduate before they see the fruits of that course. So helping them to realize that we have to make their experience while they're here the best possible but it's not going to be the fix that they want to see but they can help fix things for students in the future. And helping them kind of share the ownership of making sure that things get better I think was really helpful because there's no....the Chancellor of Vice Chancellor weren't going to be able to come over to my area and say "things are going to be fine, we're going to do this," and lay out their plan of action.

But having them take ownership and kind of brainstorm the things they wanted to see happen and how we were going to make that happen and be mentors to the younger students in helping them to release that animosity in a productive way. And not just retaliate against anyone who they felt negativity from is kind of how we handled it I guess.

The students who perpetrated the act of intolerance were never publicly named, and the campus returned back to 'normal' shortly thereafter, but the incident itself reiterates the importance of addressing an incident through a campus-wide response, and empower students to come together and discuss openly and honestly what had occurred.

Racial Incident: The Noose

One campus, during the course of my study, had a racial situation involving a noose in a classroom. Steve shared what happened:

The campus isn't extremely diverse. Again I'm white and I'm trying to think how it would be for an African American black student to come here. I think it would be a challenge in some ways if they were from an urban area with much more diversity. I think the campus tries really hard. There was an incident last year with a professor who had a noose in their classroom. . . From what I understood and they kept it all under wraps, what it sounded like is they had it kind of hidden and somebody had given it to them. It was a sociology professor – to remind them of the work they had done to prevent those kinds of things. I believe it was a white professor. I think people knew about it but you couldn't see it very well. This is what nobody ever said

for sure but this is what it sounded like from the paper – somebody got a bad grade and they were an African American student so they broke into this office, took a picture of it, circulated that and then the professor got into trouble. The person didn't get into trouble so that was a little bit racial there. That made me think about that. I was more like well thinking that he probably shouldn't have broken into somebody's room and I felt like that was kind of an issue but at the same time not maybe – there's definitely connotations that would be very uncomfortable for an African American person to see. Whether or not the context the professor was keeping it in, I guess it made me think that well...initially I was like that's not – for me that wasn't the issue. But after I started thinking about it I thought you know - if it causes one person discomfort then it shouldn't be there at all. Whether or not it reminds them of what they're doing, if it's causing any of your students discomfort, then it should be put away. I guess that was helpful for me in a way to think about it. There might have been a little bit of tension. African American students might have been like I can't believe that. It might have made them feel very uncomfortable but I didn't hear or see a lot of it.

These three incidents displayed, in dynamic fashion, the volatility of racial relations on our campuses. While isolated, the actions on both campuses were widely documented, and offered each campus the opportunity, however undesired, to confront race.

Diverse interactions can be seen from a variety of different angles and experiences as positive and negative. Overwhelmingly, the participants in this study saw value in diverse

interactions, but were somewhat divided on the importance or value of programming and training. Often times, the white experience is not discussed, but rather assumed. However, clearly, the majority experiences are the norm, and are, in most cases, best made visible through the eyes of the minority experience.

Summary

Understanding how white male graduate students in student affairs preparation make meaning of their whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism is a long process that begins with the experiences one learns as a child. The interactions with family, friends, colleagues, and students have helped the white men in this study further define who they are as white men, as student affairs practitioners, and as global citizens. The results indicate that understanding whiteness is challenging for most white men - because they tend to come from non-diverse areas, and have few diverse interactions until much later in life. Their understanding of white privilege occurs mostly through higher education, but they often experience an understanding of white privilege by seeing what types of emotions and feelings are evoked by people of color. Feelings of frustration, guilt, anger, and fear tend to limit their experiences, yet they value 'the process'. Each participant understood that he has a role in the discussions on whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism. While they each have a different sense of responsibility, the experiences that they have shared through their graduate programs have, no doubt, affected their development.

Student affairs preparation programs have a key role in enhancing understanding. Programs that require courses on multiculturalism and diversity provide students the ability

to better understand how similarities and differences manifest themselves in our daily worlds, and they give students the tools needed to begin engaging in discussions on difference. White males are often missing from the discussions of multiculturalism and diversity. Many of the participants reflected on the lack of representation, and how that often restricts participation by other white males.

As previously shared, this study examines how white male graduate students in student affairs preparation programs make meaning of their whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism. White males bring not only their own racial identity to the field, but they also bring their gendered identity, which carries with it a certain set of privileges and benefits, and, as McIntosh (1988) reminds us, these privileges – both white and male - are unearned, yet prevalent in their daily lives. Changing systems of power and privilege require understanding how white males serve as both perpetrators of privilege and as change agents. Chapter five focuses on how connecting the responses of each individual to the literature, and more importantly, how we begin to make sense of what was said.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Introduction

Chapter five presents the discussion of my study of whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism. As stated previously, the problem this research addresses is that systems of white supremacy - political, social, and economic - and white privilege perpetuate inequality. Changing systems of power and privilege require understanding how white males serve as both perpetrators of privilege and agents of change. This study incorporates the words, thoughts, and reflections of nine white males from across the southeast. This chapter explores how the literature connects to the findings presented in chapter four, and provides a framework towards not only understanding how white males affect the systems of supremacy, but also how white males in student affairs preparation programs are poised to engage and confront white privilege.

The findings in chapter four summarize the results into three distinct categories: whiteness; white privilege, and diversity and multicultural competence. Throughout the study, my focus has been on the following four research questions:

1. How do white males in student affairs preparation programs make meaning of their own whiteness?
2. How do white males in student affairs preparation programs understand white privilege, and what experiences led to that perspective?

3. How do white males in student affairs preparation programs view and utilize diverse interactions with white students and students of color, both programmatic and interpersonal, formally and informally?
4. How have white males in student affairs preparation programs incorporated their white awareness into their professional preparation?

These questions, through a lens of critical narrative and critical reflection, have provided a way to make sense of the data. The intent of this chapter is to begin constructing the broad and diverse quilt of experiences that have been exposed and explored. The quilt of experiences is expansive and luminous, but also rife with more questions than answers. As a student affairs practitioner, my job is, first and foremost, to understand and support our students through understanding their development and experiences. The ultimate desire is to positively affect the world and the inhabitants within it. Education does this, to a point, but the people within society hold the greatest potential for change.

The incorporation of critical consciousness (Freire, 1970) and reflective judgment (King and Kitchener, 1994) aids us in understanding problems, and developing scenarios for change. Critical Race Theory teaches us that the lived stories of oppression are fundamental to change, and that higher education is not exempt from the pressures and realities of society. Using the systems that are in place (white supremacy and white privilege) in order to affect change is not only ideal, but necessary. White men must understand their role in this change, and how they can use their power and privilege in to create change. Freire (1970) empowers

us to critically examine how oppression affects us all, and how we can serve as liberators through critical consciousness.

Weaving together ideas and concepts helps us further develop our solutions. It may appear, on surface, to be an optimistic goal, but change of a system as embedded as white privilege and white supremacy requires actions small and large. This research aims to provide the development of pathways towards reflective change, critical awareness, and understanding of the problems that exist within our environments. The best place to start is within.

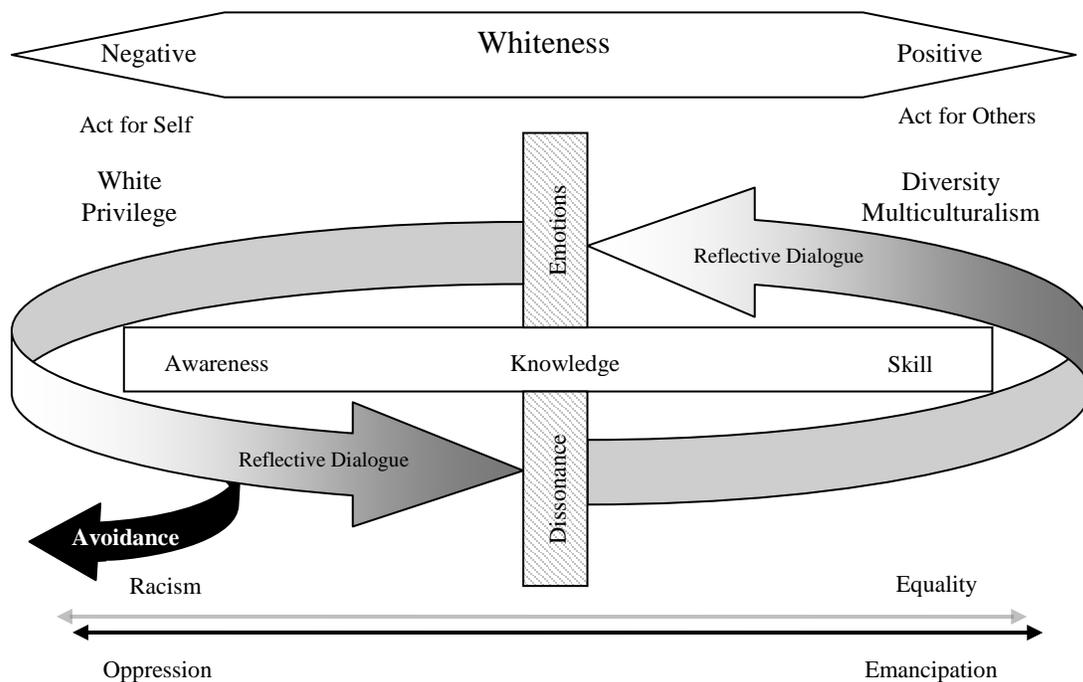


Figure 1: Personal transformation and racial self-identity (Olson, 2010)

The path toward reflective change is a process in and of itself. The participants within this study articulated a vacillation between the positive and negative effects of whiteness, similar to the results that Reason (2007) found in his study on whiteness. This process is best articulated through a model of personal transformation, as shown in figure 1. This process of change begins with the understanding and acceptance of the aspects of whiteness – both positive and negative. This discovery can take a significant amount of time, but, according to the participants, is aided by their development as graduate students and student affairs professionals-in-the-making.

The negative aspects of racial identity are, as expected, more difficult to not only comprehend, but to undo. The model reflects a level of self-importance, as related to white privilege. White privilege is often left unchecked, unnoticed, and unchallenged. Thus, white privilege is a self-serving aspect of white identity that can easily be construed as a negative, and one that must be challenged for a social transformation to occur.

The positive aspects of racial identity are equally difficult to comprehend. Through cursory examination, and through the exposure of whites to the negative aspects (white privilege, racist behaviors, and the like), it is challenging to locate the positive elements enveloped within racial identity, thus, the identification of whiteness can float along a continuum between negative and positive self-image. The valuing of diversity and multiculturalism, as well as the embracing of one's ethnicity as a trait of whiteness, are inherently positive attributes, as they expose whites to the greater mosaic of identity. This

recognition can be seen as a shift towards acting for others, in that whites not only acknowledge, but come to appreciate difference, diversity, and multiculturalism.

Embedded in the center of the model is the framework for multicultural competence (Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller, 2004). Awareness, knowledge, and skill are the pillars of multicultural competence, and can be seen as a process that requires some level of reflective dialogue. This reflective dialogue occurs at every level – from a person’s own self-discovery of their white privilege, to the acquisition of knowledge about other cultures, to the skills needed to confront intolerance; the reflective dialogue process unearths emotional responses, and discomfort. This process is seen as cyclical, in that we continue to pass through the negative and positive aspects at each new discovery of self-identity. The center line – dissonance, or discomfort, and emotion – can be seen as overwhelming, and thus, avoided. If avoided, then growth in that particular area is stifled. If whites fail to confront this dissonance and the emotional baggage of feelings like guilt, anger, or frustration, then a social transformation stops. Like anything, continued participation in dialogues, engagement, and self-discovery leads to a reduction in these barriers to change.

The end-goal to the process of personal transformation is a shift toward emancipation. This emancipation of self – and others – is necessary if we are to critically examine our social systems, and the inequality that exists within the construct of race. Whites are situated in such a way that they can either further the process, or impede it. This is at the heart of the insidiousness of white privilege, of racism, and of doing nothing. The following pages

highlight the findings located within whiteness, white privilege, and diversity and multiculturalism.

Whiteness

Understanding whiteness means understanding the historical context that is behind the development of the social construct race. Whiteness is defined by Dyer (1997) as a racial position anchored in dominance discourse. Whiteness is often seen as invisible, or normal, often discounts people of color, setting whiteness above all other racial identities. Tatum (1997) writes about how whites view their race as a ‘normative’ trait. The literature supports the findings within my study. First and foremost, the participants all agreed, to a wide extent, their subsequent lack of exposure to diversity. Thus, ‘white is what I see’, and ‘white is what I know’, making it unremarkable as a trait. Of course, the inherent power dynamics that accompany white privilege and the benefits bestowed upon white males is remarkable, and worth exploration.

Dyer (1997) talks about how this power manifests itself in a concept called ‘green lighting’. The phenomenon places whites at the center of racial discussions instead of highlighting the impact of whiteness *on* others – thus, shifting the focus away from action, and as such, avoiding discussing whiteness entirely. The participants overwhelmingly remarked that their development as a white male happened much later in life – typically in their later adolescence – late in high school and during college. For some, the concept of whiteness was even more recent.

“I’m white and what does that mean?”

White is a characteristic that is lacking substance. Tatum (1997) discusses the process of identifying with a particular racial group as very individual, and often times, varied. Students in her classes would define themselves in many ways when she would ask them to complete the sentence “I am _____” (p. 20). Of course, the responses included racial descriptions (black, Puerto Rican), but would also include ethnic titles like Irish or Italian. Sexual identities might be identified as well. White is a category that often is not defined, or mentioned, as it not seen as an important characteristic. The participants acknowledged much of the same attitudes and feelings. Instead, when discussing how their families might define their race, they cling to ethnicities, such as Irish, Indian, English, or Scottish. ‘White’ is something that is assumed, and as such, not seen as necessary to use as a descriptor. In fact, I believe that one of the main reasons my participants used the term frequently was due to the fact that my study specifically called out ‘whiteness’ as a factor of study. ‘White’ is the great unspoken.

This ‘unspoken’ is not a surprise. Gallagher (2008) writes of an experience where there is no need to discuss whiteness because whiteness is what we see everyday.

A majority of whites occupy a social location that is characterized by racial isolation, a distorted and fanciful view about America’s opportunity structure, and the cognitive dissonance that accompanies holding a deep belief that the United States is a meritocracy on one hand and the in-your-face racism demonstrated by Hurricane Katrina (to name just one example) on the other (pp. 164-165).

Much of their lived experience includes being located among people who are virtually ‘the same’. There is, amazingly enough, still a belief that whites can be, and are, color-blind (Kendall, 2006; Gallagher, 2008). Dyer puts it more bluntly: “Other people are raced, we are just people” (Dyer, 1997, p. 1).

However, using racial identifiers for people of color is not only common, but expected. Thandeka (2002) talks about how she helps whites understand how often they use a racial identifier when she engages them in an activity where they are asked to use the term ‘white’ when they talk of their interactions with white people throughout their day. Having used this same activity in student groups, it quickly points to the absurdity, yet prevalence, of how often whites use such labels when describing persons of color. It is unfortunate that it is so embedded in our systems of power and privilege, yet appears to be unworthy of discussion on the surface.

To be white is to desire to be seen as an individual, and not as a part of the ‘group’. Kendall (2006) is often asked “Why can’t I simply identify myself as a person and move on? . . . I don’t understand. I’m a good person. Why does it matter what color my skin is?” (p. 45). The desire to remove a portion of who we are – to discard that which is less desirable, difficult, or cumbersome remains the goal, but that does nothing for truly defining who and what we are. The resistance to being seen or recognized as white, she asserts, stems from: 1) not wanting to appear to be a bigot; 2) not being used to being singled out for our skin color; and, 3) not being seen as important (i.e., no one pays any attention to what it means to be white) (pp. 45-46). Often times, the discussion about white people and whiteness occurs

through the eyes of the oppressed, and through the lens of people of color. It is a relatively recent phenomenon to see white people engaged in discussing positive aspects of being white (since approximately 1988, to be precise). The task for whites is to understand their role, and to dismantle the systems of white supremacy (note that the discussion rests on white supremacy, not as active hate – that battle has already begun – but to dismantle the systems that give power and privilege within our society; to attack components like institutional racism, and truly racism in all its forms). In order to eradicate racism and white supremacy, we must name it, we must understand what forms racism takes, and how it affects each of us.

Racism and Racist Language

An important element in the study of whiteness, especially through a critical lens, is to explore how acts of racism have affected white people. In my study, I asked participants to share examples of racism to gauge just how much they have recognized intolerance. The best way to highlight this was by having the participants share stories from their past. Often times, examples involved family members. Not surprisingly, there were few direct examples of blatant racism expressed. Examples that were shared included an experience shared by Cody James where neighbors had remarked that having a black family in the neighborhood would affect their property values, and a story about how a fight nearly occurred over the desegregation of Jeremiah's father's high school.

There were other examples that were highlighted through a situation of inaction, which are discussed in the preceding pages, but the situations that were shared were not seen as directly affecting the participants or their families.

The exposure to racism is dependent upon your place in the system. Whites fail to see racism as an issue because of the benefits and privileges that they experience daily. Seeing that whiteness is not discussed, it is no surprise that acts of racism are not seen as regularly. Tatum (1997) reminds us that people tend to associate with those who look most like them, so whites tend to spend time with whites, and blacks tend to spend time with blacks. Levine (2003) explains that “[t]o grow up white is to be at ground zero from which everyone else differs, the thin line around which racial plots thicken, gaining density and intensity” (in Kimmel and Ferber (Eds.), 2003, p. 189). White people have learned, through involvement in their own daily lives, oblivious to racism in its many forms, what it means to be white, but the problem itself is rarely, if ever, named.

Racist language at home was quite prevalent, although rarely was it articulated as coming from immediate family members. Grandparents and extended family members were typically the perpetrators of racist language, and were rarely challenged on anything they said. Jack recalled that his father’s use of the term ‘colored’ always bothered him, but he never confronted it. He talked about how this use of language caused some intense frustration internally, which caused him to become conflicted between knowing who his father really is, yet making sense of the terms he used. DC talked about how members of his extended family would use the ‘N’ word at holiday events, but again, confrontation did not occur. Jeremiah admitted that avoiding the conversation was his way of coping. Watt (2007) would label their behaviors as ‘principium’, or avoiding a response based on a personal principle, such as claiming that ‘my grandfather will never change’, or ‘they’re just set in their ways’.

Moreover, it is a matter of showing respect, so as to not embarrass or offend them. Make no mistake about it, though, failure to challenge is an action, and one that speaks volumes.

It is easy for whites to deflect addressing racism. There are many opportunities to avoid it. Rains (1998) discusses how racism appears through the lens of whiteness as: entitlement; exceptionality; distancing; guilt; and dismissal. Entitlement provides an explanation of merit – “everything I have, I have earned”. Exceptionality provides examples of persons of color who have overcome, or transcend, race. Distancing allows whites to say “I can’t speak for other white people, but...”, thus pushing the discussion away. Guilt gives a way out by adding an emotional ‘block’, where discussions cease. Dismissal creates an environment of racial harmony, “I don’t see color”. Jim’s responses seem the most telling of the nature of addressing racism through a white lens, as he articulated the struggles, the guarded guilt, and the tension that brews within when addressing issues of race, yet he wrestles with the nature of education being ‘the great equalizer’. He spent considerable time struggling with the notions of equality (or rather, the distancing of self within the argument) and the obvious examples of racism right in front of his eyes. Thankfully, he could articulate both sides. Each of these types of responses gives whites an excuse, or a way out of the dialogue, yet none of these responses propels the opportunity for discussion forward.

Racism, itself, has begun to evolve. Wise (2008) discusses this concept as moving from ‘Racism 1.0’ to ‘Racism 2.0’, where whites “hold the larger black community in low regard and adhere, for instance, to any number of racist stereotypes about African Americans – yet carve out acceptable space for individuals such as President Obama who strike them as

different, as exceptions who are not like the rest” (Wise, 2008. P. 23). This updated version allows whites, in particular, to support those persons of color who are less threatening, and who ‘transcend race’, but still rail against acceptance and embracing of all.

The election of President Obama was articulated as significant to all participants. Each told, through their own lens, how the election was a turning point for our nation, and for their own life. Some significance was articulated through the intolerance that happened within the walls of their campuses (Casey, Doug, Steve, and Jeremiah, in particular). Each reflected how members within their community were hurt by, and rallied against intolerance. DC talked about his parents, and their conservative roots, yet his support of Barack Obama’s candidacy and the discussions he had with his own parents about the matter. There was, and is, a sense that our nation has acknowledged that race is not an issue of consideration anymore. For some, it was the election that convinced them that we were beyond race. I did not hear this viewpoint articulated through my nine participants, which illuminates the hope that President Obama’s campaign inspired, and the hope that is present within student affairs.

We have also heard, more recently, the term ‘post-racial’ (Wise, 2008; Lum, 2009; Warmington, 2009), defining what our society must be like now that we have supported a black candidate for our President. So, using these convenient terms and generally feeling good about ourselves, whites again evade the dialogue. Of course, this new version of racism slides direct, active racism, under the table, and assumes that it no longer exists because our nation ‘is beyond that’. The presence of racism, though, is alive and well. One clear example that the findings point out in this study is that, thankfully, and at least among my nine

participants, an awareness that racism still exists is prevalent on their campuses, and that something must be done. The retelling of three different stories of racism and intolerance on three different campuses shows us that student affairs professionals can not simply steel away and avoid such incidents – they are, unfortunately, all around us, and require a responsive group of professionals to identify, confront, and educate. Doug reflected this charge well:

Where I am now and where I was then are two completely different places. I want to understand it and maybe share that experience with others whereas before I didn't really comprehend it and didn't recognize what it was to come from a town that was predominantly white. I guess I've matured a lot in the ways that I look at diversity so I think diversity, while it may not be everyone's favorite topic, you can definitely benefit from it.

It is no surprise that the participants in this study had little sense of whiteness. White begets white, and communities that contain whites are, more often than not, white themselves. It is difficult to understand what we do not experience. The stories from the participants were extremely telling. Steve had no negative experiences with the Police, yet his African American friend did. Jim saw active racism occur with two of his friends in public places, and chose to do nothing. Yet, looking back on the situations, through reflection, both white men experienced, just for a moment, what discrimination and racism might feel like. White male graduate students, albeit slightly more enlightened because of their career vocation, are nonetheless asked to confront a concept that is foreign – to become

'raced' (Omi and Winant, 1994). Of course, when discussing whiteness, and being white, one needs to address the baggage that comes along with the construct. As Kendall (2006) puts it so plainly, "[s]eparating whiteness and white privilege is a bit like trying to unscramble an egg – pulling apart the yolk and the albumen. Although different from one another, they are mixed together, inseparable" (p. 41). The next section examines how white privilege is interlaced into the lives of the participants, and how white privilege has affected their life experiences.

White Privilege

White privilege is intertwined into the quilt of knowing and understanding. You cannot understand whiteness without understanding the privilege that comes from it. McIntosh (1988) was the first researcher to coin the term, but obviously, white privilege has been a part of white America for generations. The participants in this study generally had a strong understanding of white privilege, both from an emotional and experiential perspective. The concepts intertwined within white privilege – learned obliviousness (McIntosh, 1988), a sense of being 'raceless' (McIntosh, 1988; Frankenberg, 1993; Dyer, 1997; Wildman and Davis, 1996), and a blind adherence to a system of white supremacy (Mahoney, 1991; Dyer, 1997; Gallagher, 1996) are all represented in the participants' words and experiences.

Defining white privilege focused most squarely on advantages. Steve grew up in a small town in Missouri, and went to a small, religiously affiliated college. He focused on how white privilege allows him the ability to simply not have to worry that his race might be a consideration when he applies for jobs, meeting people, or simply living his life. DC

attended a mid-sized public university in Ohio, and saw it as a set of opportunities that were afforded him based on his skin color. Casey grew up in the rural part of North Carolina, and shared that he probably got to where he is today because of the privileges that opened doors for him. Tom grew up and went to school in Michigan, and captured the historical significance of being white, and how being white ‘gave him a seat at the table’. Regardless of their location and upbringing, these white men all shared common understanding of white privilege.

All of the participants came from quite different socioeconomic situations, yet all received, and understood, the benefits attributed to skin color. The one element that was not discussed directly was that it is unearned. No one wishes to believe that they might have received ‘something for nothing’ when it comes to advancement in our lives. The participants clearly understand how white privilege is defined, but wrestle with having to carry the burden that their predecessors bestowed upon them. Acknowledging white privilege means accepting the baggage, or rather, wearing the label. This acceptance, often represented by the participants through reluctant description, was displayed, not through boastful pride, but through reflective observation. Like a scarlet letter, white privilege becomes a shameful set of benefits that cannot be shed. Steve’s understanding of privilege seems most telling. “In graduate school, when we first read about white identity and white privilege did I realized that wow, I never had to worry about that. I wanted to be who I was and always was to a certain extent without having to worry about the repercussions of what I was doing based on my skin color”.

Emotional Impact

Emotions run high when discussions of white privilege occur among whites. The white male participants shared these same feelings of frustration, guarded guilt, anger, fear, and pride. Frustration occurred most frequently through the concept of a double-bind situation – when the alternative appears to be a choice that is no better than the first option. Doug discussed that, in order to embrace and understand white privilege, he has to, in part, become an outsider to white culture, but as he learns more about it and understands how white privilege affects his life, he may never be embraced by non-whites. There is also a feeling that recognizing white privilege means that there is a chance that I am losing out on something. Occasionally on college campuses, you hear white students remark that they do not see the need for a Black Student Union or Asian Student Union without also having a White Student Union. The seething reality of white privilege is that white students DO have their own student union, their own set of programs and experiences, and their own sets of opportunities. The fact is, the rest of the campus is- in fact - theirs. There is only one month to celebrate Black History, yet the history of whites is quite expansive and deep. Doug shared his concern early on, where he looked out and saw the Black Student Union cookout and wondered why there couldn't be a white student cookout. These examples are less rare, but rarely articulated.

Guilt is another emotion that ran high among the participants. Jim articulated that he definitely felt guilt, but really had no sense of how to address it. Dyer (1996) explains that “[a]ccepting ourselves as white and knowing that history, we are likely to feel overwhelmed

with guilt at what we have done and are still doing” (p. 11). This guilt paralyzes and encourages inaction. Guilt, while shameful, is safe because it allows for inaction. The guilt is rarely named directly. Instead, it is couched in feelings of the unknown, and in reactions to readings, programs, and events.

Guilt builds. Kendall (2006) discusses the cumulative effect of guilt, and how it builds over time.

My belief about guilt, in general, is that it is not terribly useful. It often keeps us from taking action, or if we do act we respond because we feel we have to rather than out of a generous spirit. White guilt, in particular, can become a quagmire of “Oh, I wish I hadn’t done that” or “If only I had said something” or “I never know what to say” or “I’m so disappointed in myself” (p. 103).

The power embedded within guilt stems from expectations. Guilt screams for someone to say “you did not know”, or “that is okay”, but it fails to serve as a productive emotion. Jack’s example of his awkward exchange with his former RA, where he exposed his white privilege and was practically screaming for his friend to let him off the hook, exposed this reality. While his friend eventually verbally ‘released him’ from responsibility, the tension and awkwardness remained.

Student affairs practitioners are often in situations where guilty feelings are possible. Guarding that guilt acknowledges that you feel the emotion, but it also recognizes that it is not all that useful. I believe that this type of response was quite common, and showed a glimmer of hope. The understanding of, or rather, recognition that the guilt does not help

gives us hope that a critical consciousness is ‘under development’. Thus, a glimmer of ‘responsibility’ begins to show through.

Fear is rarely discussed, but should be acknowledged. Fear was represented as a concern over feeling isolated or ‘tokenized’. Jeremiah talked about how, as a white male, he was always the assumed leader in his class group work. DC discussed his concerns within the job process, and how articulating being a white male in a job process will not allow his application to receive a second look. As we know, tokenism occurs often in classroom settings for students of color, women, and other underrepresented groups. To be a token means being singled out. Being singled out is not a comfortable status for anyone, yet it is rare for whites to experience. Other fears are present, too. One fear, as acknowledged by Jensen (2003) is that whites fear that they might not deserve their place in society, or that their place in society has not been earned, but rather, bestowed. Gillespie, Ashbaugh, and DeFiore (2002) frame this fear as feeling vulnerable – by exposing white privilege, I open the door to unsafe interactions. Their study looks at women teachers teaching other white women about white privilege, but it is aptly suitable. We all fear unsafe situations. Situations involving our physical safety appear, on face, to be the most obvious and clear-cut, but our emotional safety is just as important. Each emotion – frustration, guilt, anger, fear and pride – all expose the potential for a reduced level of safety. Our white environment is safe. Our white campus is safe. Our white friends and family are, again, safe. The unknown, however, offers an unsafe proposition. By exposing and being exposed, we open ourselves up to the

unknown and all of its potential dilemma, problems, and opportunities. The unfortunate side effect of these emotions is paralysis because of the emotion.

Pride is an awkward and challenging emotion when relating it to white privilege. Pride was articulated by one participant – Casey. Casey’s pride, though, is sheltered in his knowledge that he has privilege and can fight against it. There is the desire to flee whiteness and white privilege. But there is also the desire to feel good about yourself as a racial being. Systems of power and privilege have created a situation where there is the inability – outside of hate groups – to acknowledge and appreciate being white. Of course, white privilege, on some level, is appreciated as it further enhances the lives of white people.

The pride is also part of the great unspoken – if you say you are proud to be white, you are inextricably linked to hate and the ‘White Power’ movement – a label that the great majority would rail against. DC expressed a pride that he truly wanted to share. His heightened sense of awareness that being white might be a negative consideration holds him back from expressing it outwardly, but, through his reflections, it was apparent that he held a sense of pride towards his whiteness, his heritage, and what he has accomplished as a white male. The struggle is to figure out a way to share that without being labeled a racist. There needs to be a space for expression that allows for white men to exclaim their identity, to acknowledge their white privilege, and to critically examine how they can actively help others (as a collective group) overcome oppression, racism, and intolerance. Ponterotto’s (1988) white identity model provides the best example of unpacking this sense of pride. In the final stage of development – integration – whites begin to not only accept the

complexities of racism and privilege, but they also find value in their ethnic roots. They learn to look at whiteness through a lens of doing more, and of providing a true advocacy for people of color. Seeing that all white racial identity models examine whiteness as compared to other races, this is the best we can hope for in addressing the issue of pride. The opportunity to redefine what whiteness is, what it looks like in relation to others, and the ultimate goal of emancipation becomes more realistic if whites can, on some level, take pride in their racial makeup.

Stories of White Privilege

The lived experiences of white male graduate students in student affairs preparation programs are central to this study. The nine participants all had clear examples of how white privilege has affected their lives. As Freire (1970) reminds us, our obligation as critical thinkers and actors is to uncover the realities, first and foremost, then look for ways to correct them. This emancipator style is one that is well suited for discussing white privilege, as it exposes the harsh, sometimes deeply sad realities of how white privilege affects others. The participants shared experiences where their eyes were opened. Being white often means wearing a figurative veil – a device that strips away the bad, disallows the negative to penetrate, and allows for a ‘rosy’ view of society, where nothing is wrong, and everything is ‘normal’, or as it should be. In reality, we know this is not the case.

The participants in this study had to recall events in their past over the course of three interviews. Each contact yielded another layer of understanding – a building of knowledge and awareness that added to their own multicultural toolkit. The experience of ‘looking back’

displayed the truths that they had experienced in life. The reflective lens displayed experiences where white characters were assigned to theatrical performances that were meant for individuals of color. Group leaders were seen as white males, and not as any member within a classroom group. The quiet examples of white privilege screamed loudly to the participants – but well beyond the period of time when they could actually do something about it. More often, the tales of inaction were displayed.

Examples of inaction highlight the avoidance that occurs among whites. Four examples of inaction were shared during the interviews. DC faced a situation where his fraternity brothers regularly mocked a fellow brother for being of Ethiopian descent. As fraternity President, he had the voice of authority, and as a white male, he had the power to confront the situation. He never did. Jim shared an experience where a Hispanic friend was refused service at a restaurant. The group of men he was with decided to eat there anyway. Jim followed suit and joined them. Jim also shared an example where he was given special treatment at a bar (and not carded) because he was white, yet his black friends were carded and heavily scrutinized. While it frustrated him the rest of the night - and he spoke about the frustration to the group – he did nothing to confront the situation. Jack shared an example of a black friend who was running for a student government position and who was targeted for being black by writing racial slurs on her car. Jack felt bad, but did nothing to actively assist.

Each of these situations highlighted experiences where the participants were faced with a situation where they might be able to say something, do something, or respond to the inappropriateness of the action. In each case, the response was silence. White people, when

faced with the chance to confront a situation, often do not. There are many reasons for this, including the fear of alienation, a refusal of their own white privilege (in short, becoming an agitator, or race traitor), or a general feeling of helplessness. Ultimately, the situations presented were not life-threatening, but they sent a message to those who were not stood up for: this person is 'just another white person with privilege'.

Learned obliviousness is a characteristic of white privilege. McIntosh (1988) explains that whites are simply taught not to recognize white privilege, as it is 'normal'. Thus, it remains easy, safe, to ignore examples of intolerance or ignorance. The cumulative effects of dealing with racial comments on a regular basis make blacks and persons of color completely aware of and sensitive to such ignorance or intolerance. Whites fail to understand the disparate impacts of such inaction and obliviousness. Even in the face of obvious concern, whites fail to see it. But, by minimizing the incident, they minimize the situation and experience for those around them.

One example of this obliviousness shined the light on white privilege more clearly than others. DC shared an experience where his fraternity held a 'Ghetto Party' themed event with a local sorority. This event encouraged their Greek brothers and sisters to dress up like they were 'from the Ghetto or the Hood'. Of course, when it was discovered what had taken place on their campus, he and the other organization president were called in to explain their actions. While the experience provided an extremely uncomfortable confrontation by the University administration, the truly sad result was that the men and women in these organizations failed to see anything wrong with the event. They apologized to the

administration and to black students for their portrayal, but the organizations suffered no real ‘punishment’, other than some personal shame. In student affairs, we might term this a ‘learning opportunity’ gone astray. Jim shared an experience about one of his RA’s, and how the RA held a program using a famous movie to highlight race and racism. His RA shared with him that a resident told him he would not attend a program for ‘spics and niggers’. While Jim encouraged the RA to confront the situation, he failed to personally confront the student – a true learning opportunity missed. White men are at the forefront for confrontation quite often, yet, as white men, they have the luxury of doing nothing, or rather, seeing nothing.

Discrimination is the antithesis of white privilege. The participants in this study were asked to articulate examples of when they were discrimination against. It should come as no surprise that examples were often hard to come by. The examples that were shared discussed situations where white males were denied (or assumed to be denied) access to a particular interaction or experience. These were very temporary, and caused little long-term effect. White people – and white males in particular, experience little direct discrimination in life. While numerous talk-show pundits would have you believe that white male discrimination is rampant, the fact is that it is virtually non-existent. In my experience, discrimination against white men for being white simply has not occurred. The study participants could only highlight four examples. Casey shared a situation where he felt he was overlooked for a job, but not because of race (he felt it was due to weight). Tom had a situation when he was a temporary minority in a community where he was attending a music festival, and was not

served in a timely manner at a car parts store, and he was obviously being forced to wait or to leave. DC shared a story about not being picked for a basketball game because he was white, and it was assumed that white guys could not play basketball. DC also experienced discrimination – he felt – during his job search process because he was a white applicant. This could not be verified, but he expressed concern about it, and felt he was not receiving interviews because of his race. These examples have not caused significant emotional pain, but they can be held up as examples where white men might have been mistreated. In truth, four examples does not a problem make.

Wise (2008) lists the numerous examples of how whites are more situationally advantaged than people of color to receive better jobs (and better pay), be afforded better educational opportunities, find affordable, safe housing, have access to health care, and have a better chance of not spending time in prison. In short, examples of discrimination are rare because the systems of privilege support such a state. Institutional racism is ever-present, and insidious. White people can ignore it without consequence, yet it remains a critical force in the lives of people of color. Michael Eric Dyson (2006) explains how ever-present racism is. “In a sense, if one conceives of racism as a cell phone, then active malice is the ring tone on its highest volume, while passive indifference is the ring tone on vibrate. In either case, whether loudly or silently, the consequence is the same: a call is transmitted, a racial message is communicated (Dyson, 2006, in Wise, 2008, p. 21). Whites can ignore the affects and impact of racism, but it is becoming increasingly more difficult to refuse that it does not exist.

Education can be seen as answer to the questions surrounding whiteness and white privilege. The participants in this study all found value in their educational experiences. If for nothing else, they exposed them to the ideas of privilege and power. The most growth was seen in those who had a background in courses focusing on sociology, political science, or education. Examples were shared that reflected the realities of our environments. They focused on the understanding that comes from exploration. Exposure to whiteness and white privilege opens eyes and expands the realities that whites witness on a regular basis. From experiences at a store where white people are helped first, to stories of racial profiling by Police in local neighborhoods, to black professors being judged differently by white students in classroom evaluations, examples abound.

Multicultural education courses seem to provide the most growth among white male graduate students. These courses explore issues of identity, equality (or lack thereof), and social justice. They also arm their students with tools to engage in dialogue with others about these social issues. Courses that illuminate white privilege were the most impactful, as they explored an area that is virtually unexplored in fields and majors outside of those listed above. These courses provide a personal transformation for their participants. Unfortunately, such courses are often optional, and not a part of a mandated curriculum for graduate programs missing a counseling component.

The participants in this study all had the ability to participate in multicultural education or counseling courses at their institutions. For five of the men, a course in multicultural counseling was required. All five of these men found value in the course, and

appreciated learning about different cultures, as well as their own cultures and identity. Three of the four remaining men all took elective courses in multiculturalism, and found value as well. One participant, Jeremiah, did not take any formal coursework through his program. He expressed a desire, on some level, that he wished he had, but he simply had no ability to schedule it. Of the three programs that were included in this study, only one mandated multicultural coursework.

The struggle for understanding comes from listening to, and sharing experiences about how white males can become part of the dialogue on race, and what white males can do to address inequality. These interactions, while uncomfortable and difficult, are necessary for the growth and perpetuation of a movement. Watt (2007) provides a framework for engagement, as well as indicators to explain discomfort among whites when discussing issues such as race. Through the model, participants move through a variety of rationalizations and feelings, but, in the end, reach a point where they address their own privileged identity. This growth allows the student to not only understand his realities, but also opens up honest and genuine dialogue about race, whiteness, and white privilege. Jim articulated it well: “I think that [multicultural counseling] class made me appreciate the concepts of heritage (both good and bad), where we had to present the good and bad of our families. . .It’s pretty hard to admit that in some way you are part of a group that willingly restricted the freedom of others”.

There is a need for such exploration among white men in student affairs. Carter, et al. (2007) explores the discussions of whiteness among four white doctoral students, found that

the dialogue on whiteness and privilege must be central to the discussion if growth is to occur. They list five ways that student affairs practitioners can engage students in this dialogue: 1) examine how white privilege functions in the lives of students; 2) create and expect an environment of mutual respect and reflection; 3) develop an environment of mutual accountability through questioning and challenging; 4) find comfort in discomfort – help students get used to the feelings; and, 5) listen and engage in the discussion and silence. (p. 159). Allowing white students, and in particular white males, to experience the full dynamic of discomfort and resolution provides strong and clear role modeling for future engagement outside of class, and hopefully, with students in their environment. Through the coursework (mandated and elective), the participants who took courses in multiculturalism and diversity were engaged in these types of experiences. The required course participants all shared how their course required exploration of self, of white privilege and whiteness, and discomfort. The discomfort was articulated through Doug’s experience presenting on issues for African Americans in counseling. His presentation – conducted with a white female – was very safe, and failed to provide any in-depth, or ‘new’ knowledge for his classmates or his professor. His professor challenged him on using only textbook material, and it made Doug obviously uncomfortable. Thankfully, he reflected on his experience, and saw the inherent value in examining and addressing race, and in finding ways to fight through the discomfort.

Diversity and multicultural competency

Diversity and multicultural competency have, for some time, been seen as important on our college campuses. As you walk through a campus, you notice signs of the importance

of diversity to student organizations – posters and flyers announcing ethnic, religious, spiritual events, dialogue and discussion invitations, and the like. Diverse programming remains a critical element. Milem and Umbach (2003) note that, while such opportunities are relevant and recognizable, they tend to be poorly attended by white people. The participants in this study support that finding, and show that white male graduate students in student affairs programs tend to avoid these programs, unless there is a requirement through their employer or role on campus as an administrator. Jim shared that the programs he has attended are often filled with ‘the choir’, and that he often chooses not to attend because he feels like many programs paint a negative picture of whiteness. Jeremiah sees diversity initiatives as pleasing the administrators, but not really reaching the students. He also felt that, when he attends, he is afraid to speak because he does not want people to assume that, just because he is white, he is somehow a less credible source than a person of color. Doug sees diversity events as an opportunity to appreciate the minorities, and as such, the program is not for him. DC fears being seen as ‘the token white guy’. It is no wonder that white males fail to support such programs if there is an impression that they are not wanted there, that they will learn nothing new, that they might be considered less than credible, or they may be seen as the ‘token’. Unfortunately, these impressions are often unfounded, and serve to further assumptions instead of realities.

White males reflect a concern that, by hearing the message, they may have to internalize the issues being presented – or, to put it more bluntly: change. Ultimately, the baggage reappears, and fears of discomfort creep in once again. Whiteness and white

privilege offer a protective coating, where discomfort can be avoided and simply disregarded as unimportant. Of course, the desired outcome for participation is a better understanding of other cultures. Bennett and Bennett (2001) call this the development of intercultural sensitivity, where the student moves from being ethnocentric to ethnorelative, where they shift their focus from self to the acceptance of other's cultures and worldviews. Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller (2004) would define this as developing knowledge within the structure of multicultural competency. Knowledge is important because it helps us reframe our experiences, and develop a new understanding of a group, experience, or event. Student affairs practitioners are expected to remain committed to the educational mission of the institution of higher learning, and as such, need to consistently remain engaged in developing new knowledge.

Multicultural competence is the vehicle for change. Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller (2004) highlight the development of awareness, knowledge, and skills within their model for multicultural competence. In order to be effective multicultural practitioners, student affairs professionals must have a solid understanding of their environment and the realities of their experiences, a willingness to build a knowledge base that can help them address these realities, and a skill set that helps them recognize their own strengths and weaknesses in addressing issues related to multiculturalism. Unfortunately, my study participants, while growing, are not engaging in the full benefits of multicultural competence. While their level of awareness of their environments appears to be high, their limited participation in formal opportunities where knowledge can be acquired, and their struggle to articulate solutions and

participate in confrontations of racial inequality or intolerance shows they have some work to do. The barriers of discomfort and emotional uncertainty limit their capacity to become multiculturally competent. The ultimate goal is genuine reflective practice and competence. Torres, Howard-Hamilton, and Cooper (2003) provide a model that moves individuals through this process; moving from discomfort and uncertainty to positive self-identity. The key to any type of multicultural growth, though, is engagement and participation – two components which white males often fail to confront.

Cody James provided one of the best stories for articulating engagement and participation. Cody James is an openly gay male and also participates extensively in trainings through the National Coalition Building Institute, or NCBI. He is passionate about presenting diversity programs that are engaging, as he had too many experiences to the contrary while being a RA. His experiences as a gay male may set him apart, as he has experienced more direct discrimination on the basis of his sexual identity, but he understands the value of participation and reflection. He is much more self-actualized, in terms of his own multicultural competence than most white men. His academic experiences have shown him that “I might not be able to reach out and be impactful to all students – I need to know my limits and be able to understand if a student would rather work with someone else as opposed to myself”. Multicultural competence is not the acquisition of complete knowledge, or having an infinite awareness of self and others, or providing flawless, near-perfect skill to every situation. It is, at the core, a way of engaging in dialogue about what we know and do not know. Cody James understands this most clearly through my study.

How is multicultural competence incorporated into the coursework of white male graduate students in student affairs? The truth is that it is often a personal quest that yields knowledge of multicultural competence. One of the three programs that were included in this study required coursework in multiculturalism. This program provided it as a basis for counselor education throughout their curriculum. The other two programs offered multicultural courses as part of their elective offerings. The participants who did engage in these classes – whether elective or mandated – experienced growth and development. The courses offered the men the chance to reflect on their own experiences, as well as to be exposed to cultural identity, privileged statuses, and racism. More importantly, they provided a foundation for confronting their own states of privilege and power. Jeremiah articulated how his experiences have helped him engage others. “ I think it's really definitely helped, you know, being able to think about [whiteness and white privilege] and process through my own personal experience and being able to share that with him and help him see how his words are necessarily can be viewed by people”.

Multicultural competency arms student affairs practitioners with the ability to confront white privilege and acts of intolerance. While the awareness, knowledge, and skills are, in a way, self-taught, they aid practitioners in responding to intolerance and difficult dialogues on campus. In my study, acts of racism and intolerance were exposed. Two situations on two separate campuses surrounded the election of our first black President – Barack Obama. The third act involved what could be referred to as a debate between hate symbolism and free speech. Clearly, these incidents affected students of color on these

campuses. I purport that they affected all students on campus. Multicultural competence simply gives practitioners tools to confront and respond. It does not give practitioners – especially white practitioners – the impetus for response. All the awareness, knowledge, and skills in the world do not guarantee that white males will respond and confront. This highlights true white privilege – the ability to sit back and do nothing, and for that response to be seen as normal (Wildmon and Davis, 1996).

This failure to respond was prevalent in my study. I previously identified examples of how some of the white male participants failed to act when confronted by racism or intolerance. There were other examples that involved white male inaction, such as Jim's failure to confront a blatant racist statement on his campus within his living area. Doug had an opportunity to engage his classmates in true growth and development through a presentation he and another white colleague were to give in their class. Both men provided very safe, 'avoiding' responses. Safety is a retreat mechanism engaged when fear is present. Watt (2007) would call this fear and entitlement – to have the ability to provide a response through a privileged lens and to fail to do anything. Again, this discomfort, while normal, is avoided frequently.

One way to overcome feelings of discomfort is to engage with students and peers of color. Thankfully, the participants articulated value in these informal connections. All participants articulated the importance of 'getting to know' their friends, students, and colleagues of color. These were seen as the most important component within discovering their own multicultural competence. Jack shared examples of how his friends of color helped

him to understand the value of diversity, just by spending time with them and getting to know them as human beings. Jeremiah articulated his experiences through his travels on Alternative Spring Break trips to the Dominican Republic as being important in teaching him the value of diverse friends. The important interactions that all of the participants experiences helped them grow to understand their own identity more, as well as to develop an appreciation for difference. The lens of seeing value in diversity becomes more clear when you engage in diverse experiences. Antonio et al. (2004) looked at the value of this cross-cultural dialogue and found that individuals with the highest levels of integrative complexity (IC) were those who engaged in such relationships. In short, the engagement with those who are culturally different from self enhances our own complexity, and helps us recognize a greater diversity of viewpoints and worldviews. One of the concerns, though, is the chasm that exists between seeing importance and actual participation. While there was the articulation of importance, the actual engagement was still minimal.

These shortcomings can be explained developmentally. Perry (1970) would show that individuals who are more dualistic (which would tend to be our younger college students) tend to deem these encounters as stressful. Situations involving no right answer (ie, race) would certainly cause stress. Our foundations for development through concrete experiences only take us so far; we need to enable the relative traits within ourselves and further our own responsibility for action. Remember that Reason (2007) articulated that “[w]hite college students therefore are increasingly aware of race, but lack the language to make sense of it”

(Reason, 2007, p. 127). Our task in student affairs continues to be engagement in the formal and informal tasks and experiences, and to help them develop the language for dialogue.

Summary

The process of understanding whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism is a complex weave of experiences, feelings, and beliefs. To assume that we can simply dissect these components and resolve the issues of race would be difficult, but the intention of this study was to begin doing just that. The study illuminated just how unaware white male graduate students are of what it means to be white. Whiteness is ‘the great unspoken’ among white people. White is often intertwined with ethnicity, but even ethnic understanding is limited. This is due to the systems of white supremacy, and the ability for whites to simply not engage in discussions and experiences involving race. White privilege manifests itself in the unearned privileges that whites receive solely based on their skin color.

Stories of white privilege often involve stories of inaction. The white male participants shared a number of powerful emotions, such as frustration, fear, guilt, anger, and pride. Yet these emotions, however real, were often not enough to force action. Inaction makes a clear statement about what we are willing to do to confront (or not) racism. Institutional racism is clearly present at nearly every turn on our campuses, and white privilege and systems of white supremacy tarnish the values of advancement and uplift that higher education is supposed to uphold. One way to begin moving forward is through the incorporation of multicultural competence.

Multicultural competence involves the development of awareness, knowledge, and skills. The participants developed awareness through reflection on their own experiences as white people throughout their lives. They engage in knowledge on a regular basis, participating in trainings to develop their own professional skill set. The skills they have developed are rooted in honest and genuine reflection of what they are capable of confronting, and what they are less not. Ultimately, the expectation is that white male graduate students in student affairs develop the ability to become reflective practitioners. The reality is that, through a lack of action and engagement, they come to the table limited. Through a lack of awareness to race and privilege, they are ill-prepared to address the realities of racism. Through a lens of whiteness, they see little, and when reality is exposed, their emotional baggage restricts involvement. Developmentally, white males in student affairs need help in overcoming these issues. Freire (1970) asked us to become aware of the realities of the oppressed, and to provide opportunities for addressing oppression. Student affairs practitioners are suited well for this engagement, and white males are centered within the dialogue, regardless of their discomfort. The final chapter, chapter six, addresses the implications and recommendations for further study in the quest to define how white male graduate students in student affairs preparation programs come to make meaning of whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism.

CHAPTER 6: RECOMMENDATIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

Chapter six presents the final chapter in my study in addressing how white male graduate students in student affairs preparation programs come to make meaning of their whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism. This chapter brings together the findings of this research, and draws out recommendations, implications for practice, and conclusions to this study. As previously stated, changing systems of power and privilege require understanding how white males serve as both perpetrators of privilege and as change agents.

The previous chapter, chapter five, focused on what it means to be white, and to confront white privilege through the lens of a white male in student affairs. Whiteness is an oft underexplored phenomenon that bears significance in the depths of how rarely it is discussed among white people. The privileges surrounding white people are so engrained in societal norms and in a system of white supremacy, that it becomes difficult to tease out where it begins, and where it ends. This research sought to further that dialogue, and intended to draw white males in student affairs into the difficult and uncomfortable dialogue on race, privilege, and power.

Recommendations

The study of whiteness, white privilege, and multicultural competence requires an emancipatory posture. Freire (1970) asked us to understand the oppressed, and become part of the change that is needed. To understand the situated realities of persons of color, we must

take some risks, but the reward is great. Reflective Judgment (King and Kitchener (1994) give us tools to better understand our realities and our role in developing solutions. These solutions are created through a series of dialogue on whiteness and white privilege (awareness), an enhancement of the academic requirements in our graduate programs (knowledge), and a commitment to continued developmental reflection as a profession through confrontation of white privilege, acts of intolerance, and equality for all students.

Dialogue on Whiteness and White Privilege - Awareness

First and foremost, in order to engage in dialogue, white male graduate students must have the necessary understanding of what it means to be white and have white privilege. My first and second research questions (how do white males in student affairs preparation programs make meaning of their own whiteness?; and, how do white males in student affairs preparation programs understand white privilege, and what experiences led to that perspective?) expose very little knowledge of what it means to be white, and a limited set of experiences in addressing white privilege.

Engagement with the literature on whiteness and privilege serves as a springboard for this personal preparation. The work of Tim Wise (2002) and Robert Jensen (2005) serve as entry points to the complex tapestry of writings on whiteness. These authors ease the reader slowly but steadily into the concepts at work – the feelings of frustration, guilt, and anger are exposed as real, but also feelings that can, and must, be overcome. Critical reflection on works of whiteness by other, more scholarly writers (Francis Kendall, Ruth Frankenberg, and Charles Gallagher, to name a few) can enhance the critical consciousness that Freire

discusses so eloquently. Peggy McIntosh's work on white privilege is a logical first step towards understanding privilege, and, for white males, a first exposure to the realities of white privilege. Student affairs preparation programs certainly have a role in incorporating readings that expose white males to the realities of racism, whiteness, and white privilege. These readings can accompany course readings within the history of higher education, as well as courses focusing predominantly on diversity and multiculturalism. In truth, these readings can be incorporated into trainings among assistantship programs, and within assistantships through their supervisory roles of student leaders on campus.

Critical Race Theory provides a framework for analysis. CRT exposes the plight of the oppressed through storytelling (Delgado, 1995), and displays, through many forms, the power and complexity of institutional racism (Crenshaw, et al., 1995) – especially within higher education (Tate, 1993; Tate, 1995; Lynn and Adams, 2002). While CRT tends to focus on the issues of the oppressed, the vehicle can be adapted for examining white privilege. To utilize stories of the oppressed, as well as stories that reflect the complexity of white privilege from white authors and white experiences can open eyes, and lay a firm, sturdy foundation for reflection on privilege and power. It has long been noted that white males hold the key to confronting privilege and power. The conversation, though, must be genuine, reflective, and full of thoughtful engagement and action.

Critical reflection and dialogue lead whites to one place – challenging the system. It is not enough to simply read and reflect. White student affairs professionals need to be empowered to challenge how systems of privilege and inequality not only exist on campuses,

but erode the fabric of our campuses. Student affairs practitioners work with an audience that, on a daily basis, wrestles with their own identity, morality, ethics, and reasoning. The students they work with are developing values, but they are examining these values through their work with others. To challenge the system means more than simply saying something is not right – it means identifying ways to challenge the system collectively, with whites and with persons of color. Part of the dialogue must be to first know what systems are in place (and the lenses of persons of color will aid in this identification). The larger, and more difficult part, is for practitioners to develop tangible acts that actively challenge the status quo. Since this philosophy might be seen as insubordinate, the collective actions of students AND administrators make this a more plausible reality, and one worth pursuing.

Personal engagement in this dialogue is not easy. White males must be ready for discomfort and confronting the unknown, as well as the known experiences of whiteness and white privilege from the oppressed and from other whites. A reeducation must occur that pushes the discussion from problem to solution. Watt (2007) provides a series of reflections through her Privileged Identity Exploration (PIE) model which can prove helpful for those engaging in, and leading these dialogues. Overcoming the guilt and emotional baggage that comes from personal reflection and ownership is a slow, arduous task. Within this study participants, such as Jim, articulated this guilt and baggage. He discussed how these feelings are ever-present, and that he is trying to overcome them, but struggles to see how one person can make a difference. DC discussed his fear of being seen as the token white guy at programs and event. Doug wrestled with the fear that students of color may not see him as a

credible source for discussions on race. Watt provides a structure to explain these feelings, which includes emotions such as fear and entitlement. The next layer of dialogue must occur through the white male perspective.

White males in student affairs preparation programs certainly have a seat at the table for diverse interactions and reflection. Their unique position among college-aged students – white and students of color – situate them in the heart of the discussion. They have the ability to not only witness discussions and experiences regarding whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism, but also have the opportunity to act in addressing misinformation, intolerance, and outright discrimination. Engagement of the oppressor (whites) helps to not only assume a collective responsibility for our realities, but also casts a new light on the discussions surrounding race and white privilege. As I stated earlier, the discussions on race and white privilege currently, and primarily, happen through facilitators of color. They do a fantastic job of exposing these realities, but often fail to capture the buy-in from whites. Whites need to be reeducated by knowledgeable whites as well, as their voice provides a familiarity that can open new doors for dialogue.

Academic Requirements - Knowledge

The academy must examine curricular concerns surrounding the incorporation of multiculturalism and diversity. Student Affairs is a field with ample opportunities for exposure to diverse people, experiences, and interactions. To ascribe this importance to a one-week analysis of racial identity theories fails to do justice to the situation. Academic programs that are practitioner-based and counselor-based also need to arm their students with

the tools to confront and educate about race, identity, privilege, and power. This responsibility enhances the academic reputation of institutions, but moreover, produces more multiculturally-competent professionals. If student affairs truly embraces the concept of multicultural competence proposed by Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller (2004), then we need to reconsider the academic foundation and how the information is articulated in the classroom.

An important component in the development of academic requirements is the examination of required coursework in diversity and multiculturalism. Gayles and Kelly (2007) studied student affairs practitioners and graduate students to examine their perceptions and experiences with a diverse curriculum during their degree programs in student affairs preparation programs. They found a divide between programs that make diversity courses a requirement and those that do not. The students from programs that did not require diversity programs often searched out diversity and multiculturalism courses or connections to complete their own search for diversity. The students in programs that required diversity coursework articulated that the requirement showed that the institution valued diversity, and that might have even been a choice for attending that particular program.

Application remains a struggle. The participants in Gayles and Kelly's (2007) study overwhelmingly concluded that application of diversity and multiculturalism was difficult and challenging. This application challenge remains a struggle for all students, as there is often little focus beyond the core foundations. Hathaway (1999) also conducted a study examining the impact of required diversity coursework, and found that, while the course

ultimately expanded the students' knowledge, it did little to affect their ability to reflectively respond to racial issues and personal beliefs. This application challenge remains a struggle for all students, as there is often little focus beyond the core foundations. There is value in future examination of compulsory versus elective multicultural academic work.

Course design is key. The courses that appear to be the most beneficial are courses that take an integrated approach, where the lived experiences of each individual are shared, as well as an expansive review of the literature on identity models, and reflection on how white privilege and power play out on our college campuses. The moment that my participants eyes were opened to white privilege and power, they became much more aware of how their own privilege affects their environment and experiences. A strong facilitation of these experiences also benefits academia. While a traditional approach (teacher-centered) can prove useful, a learner-as-teacher model enhances the learning experience even more. The participants in my study consistently articulated – both through spoken word and reflective writing, that their discussions, reflections, and experiences within the classroom that required them to share their experiences, as well as teach and learn from their peers, helped expand their understanding of diversity and multiculturalism, as well as their own whiteness and white privilege. By having students engage in their own learning processes, they own their education, and incorporate their experiences into their reflective practice. Students desire engagement. Courses and experiences addressing diversity and multiculturalism often force students to expand their own sense of what is right, what is known, and what is unknown. This critical reflection helps them to become a more learned professional, and moreover, it

helps them draw from their own experiences when addressing issues among their students. Strong facilitation and the willingness and ability to challenge student viewpoints, to encourage spirited and emotional discussion, and ultimately true reflection produces an experience that is similar to those experiences highlighted by these participants.

Continued Developmental Reflection - Skills

It is often assumed that, once a student completes their program, there is little need to revisit the material. This was true of my own experiences as a young student affairs professional. I was regularly asked to participate in diversity programs and trainings. Early on, I often felt that the courses were presenting nothing new, and that I basically acquired all I needed to know from my classes and limited experiences. Of course, from a lifelong learning perspective, this is extremely short-sighted, yet it is a posture that many white practitioners take once they complete their programs. It took roughly ten years as a professional to finally see how limited my own understanding was, and at that time, I chose to begin learning more about my own whiteness and white privilege. While painful, it helped me to provide a stronger response to students who were struggling to find their own identities and to make meaning of their identity as a racialized being. Professional development is an important component to most student affairs opportunities, whether it be through conferences, workshops, memberships, or subscriptions. Often times, these opportunities give practitioners the chance to demonstrate their commitment through the presentation of programs or 'best practices'. A focus on continued professional development remains at the

foundation of strong student affairs programs. A practical, programmatic focus on multicultural development ought to be the case for all student affairs programs.

Informal dialogue with colleagues is one way to further enhance discussions on race and white privilege. These dialogues can be organized through a mentor/mentee format - a lunch-and-learn format, where colleagues are brought together to discuss articles; discussions on local, state, and federal legislation or experiences can also open doors for understanding differences and commonalities.

Formal training and professional development opportunities through outside speakers, departmental assessments, and ‘curriculums’ that provide materials for review for all show a department’s commitment to the dialogue and development. Of course, speakers, assessments and curriculums only go so far – the organization has to truly ‘walk the talk’, and encourage discussion and debate around these topics regularly, and provide safe places for understanding. Study circles hosted within communities have also proven to be helpful in opening discussions. These circles bring together individuals who are passionate about particular topics, and provide a regular forum for talking to each other openly, without fear of judgment. They are often led by individuals with a strong facilitation background, and can lead to insightful discussions and lasting collaborations among like-minded colleagues.

Implications for Policy

The greatest implication for policy that my study calls for is the creation of academic requirements for multiculturalism. The participants within this study stated time and again that their coursework in multiculturalism was helpful in developing an understanding of race,

white privilege, and multiculturalism. Yet, such courses were not a compulsory requirement in all programs. If student affairs has any intention of truly embracing multiculturalism and multicultural competency, then courses need to be incorporated into all programs.

Hardy (2009) articulated a design through which participants are immersed in experiential activities meant to elicit emotions, but also direct contact with particular multicultural populations. This immersion, paired with journaling and critical reflection would provide the student with the opportunity to reflect on what they appreciated, what made them uncomfortable, and moreover, how they might apply their experiences to future practice. These experiences instill a sense of empathy, which enables understanding. A similar outcome is identified by Baldwin, Buchanan, and Rudisill (2007) when they studied the effects of a service learning immersion experience among undergraduate teacher candidates. The experiences provided these teacher candidates the chance to truly understand the population they were serving through direct participation, observation, and reflection. Hardy also recommended readings and video materials to further articulate the concepts of multiculturalism and multicultural competence. Like the participants in this study, Hardy found that certain readings where participants learned about injustice and inequality stirred deep emotions, but it also spurred a deeper reflection on practice.

Implications for Practice

The format of this study provides a methodological approach for beginning the dialogue on race and white privilege. By using a three-shot approach (personal interview, electronic meaning-making, and final reflection) gave me the opportunity to continue the

dialogue with the nine participants over a two to three month period. Such extended contact keeps the learning process moving forward. I found that, after extensive discussions with each participant, I was able to spend time getting to understand their own experiences. Too often, we limit our contacts with our students to an electronic format. Using multiple modalities for getting to know one another furthers the chances for deeper understanding, and provides yet another tool for practitioners to reach out to students. It is critical, though, that personal, face-to-face engagement remain front and center as the primary means for communicating.

Engaging white males in a dialogue on race and white privilege is a critical and important practical consideration for furthering discussions on campus. Predominantly white campuses need more soldiers and fewer bystanders. Engaging whites in the dialogue pushes the discussions on race into the experiences of white staff and students. For too long, campuses have relied on their multicultural affairs colleagues to lead the dialogue on race. It is time for whites to become engaged en masse, and provide an open and honest sharing of genuine experiences. Freire's (1970) work carried the torch for such discussions and advocacy. Student affairs must continue to provide critical discussions in residence halls, student unions, and classrooms across campus. An important component within this process is the refinement of an understanding of the complex realities of a campus. All campuses function a bit differently. As such, an astute practitioner quickly learns how change happens on campus. Navigating these realities, and aiding students and mentoring young professionals will further expand the realities of change. White males do wield a certain

amount of power on campus, simply through their existence. Truly talented, multiculturally competent practitioners can help lead the dialogues that aid in personal transformation, as well as forwarding an agenda of growth and change. Exploring change from all angles – students, staff, and faculty – will be the best way to inspire change, and will lead to an evolving campus climate that is inclusive, forward-thinking, and actively engaged in promoting an agenda of justice.

Implications for Theory

This study has direct implications for theoretical development. First and foremost, the model, social transformation and racial self-identity, connects the work of multiple theorists; namely Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller's (2004) multicultural competence in student affairs, Watt's (2007) Privileged Identity Exploration model, the concepts of whiteness (McIntosh, 1988; Frankenberg, 1993; Dyer, 1997; Wildman and Davis, 1996), and the concepts of white privilege (McIntosh, 1988; Gordon, 2004; McIntyre, 1997; Wildman and Davis, 1996; Dyer, 1997; Mahoney, 1995) – namely, the victimization process, which often leads to inaction. Reason (2007) also articulated, in great detail, the need for a model on articulating whiteness as more of a continuum of experiences between the negative and positive aspects. Collectively, this model addresses the continuum of emotions and experiences that can address the struggles of making sense of the racialized self. White Racial Identity Development (WRID) models (Kovel, 1970; Jones, 1972; Gaertner, 1976; Terry, 1977; Ganter, 1977; Hardiman, 1979; Carney and Kahn, 1984; and Helms, 1984, in Helms, 1990) addresses the process of understanding one's race through the lens of racism, and as such,

does not address the multicultural competence components necessary to develop a student affairs practitioner. It is through this melding, or interweaving, that the model for social transformation and racial self-identity was developed.

Certainly more work on defining how this process works is needed. Additional understanding of why the process of understanding whiteness leads to a more prescriptive approach to dealing with and addressing the negative aspects AND the positive aspects collectively. The emancipation of self and others that comes through a development of the critical conscience and reflective judgment needs further exploration. Freire's (1970) work opened the doors of understanding, and pushed individuals to understand the oppressed, and work to eliminate oppression. These concepts, represented theoretically, are lofty and nearly impossible to fully resolve. Analyzing theory helps us to better understand how the patchwork better comes together.

Recommendations for Future Research

The areas of whiteness and white privilege provide extensive opportunities for further research. One of the largest areas appears to be in evaluating academic curriculum as it relates to the incorporation of multicultural coursework for student affairs preparation programs. Program development and evaluation remain areas that enhance the learning opportunities for white males and white students. Second, it would be interesting to compare and contrast the experiences of our white participants with nine black participants. The lived experiences are quite helpful in furthering the understanding of how white privilege manifests itself, and the best way to assess that is through multiple, varied voices. Certainly,

the two experiences are quite different, but the research may cast light on how administrators and faculty can better address issues of race, power, and privilege on campuses.

Enhanced student development theory is another area for future study. While there are numerous models and theories to represent students and their development, there are opportunities for studying how white males develop as racialized beings. Helms (1990) provides a model for development, but, according to Thompson (1994), it is less focused on their own identity, and more focused on their identity in relation to the experiences of minorities. Thus, whites are not truly researched through their own development among their white environments. While Helms' theory is an important tool, it may not provide the extensive dissection of white identity that could yield significant results in terms of how they address racial situations and make meaning of their own privileged identities.

A third area of focus appears to be the importance of the graduate assistantship and how it connects and relates to an enhanced understanding of whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism. While the assistantship component has been a long-standing component of many programs, its value has not been extensively studied. It would be helpful to see the impact of theory, and how it relates to 'on-the-job' practice. Graduate assistants are often charged with leadership and management roles. Each of the participants within my study maintained an assistantship, and articulated applicable connections to the subject matter. It could prove to be a more worthwhile connection than we have previously understood – especially knowing how institutions continue to examine diversity and multiculturalism.

A final area for future study would be to share stories of advocacy through the eyes of white males in student affairs. A 'best practices' approach could highlight for younger practitioners ways in which they can become agents for change. The field of student affairs continues to evolve and develop, and white males continue to participate in higher education. Whites need to be engaged, and it will take a movement to bring about full engagement. Studying how these engagements are happening on campuses would further highlight, through example, the fight towards equality that should be led by those with white privilege.

Conclusion

In order to understand whiteness, you must understand white privilege. The two are inextricably linked. This study put a voice to the struggle for understanding what it means to be white, what privilege means, and what white males are learning to bring about change in their environments. What is known is that there is a broad set of unknowns at play every day when it comes to white people and race. Discussions of race bring about unease and discomfort for many reasons. Fear and guilt limit our understanding, as they provide a paralyzing experience. It is simpler to do nothing, and so we avoid conflict, and continue to pursue the status quo. The status quo is not working, and the blinders that are worn to avoid confronting privilege continue to wear thin.

Our college campuses are a rich tapestry of colors, experiences, and stories. The stories, woven together, provide a background for a collective set of experiences, both positive and negative. What is known is that white privilege exists, and that white supremacy is alive and well. The voices of white people must become a part of the solution if we can

expect or affect change. This work requires a deeper understanding of what it means to be white, what privilege means to white people, and how they can, through multicultural competence, affect change on our college campuses.

A critical reflection of the experiences of the oppressed, as well as the privileged, leads us to see that, where there is pain, there is also progress. Where there is sadness, there can also be joy. Higher education provides us a wide range of experience to examine and reflect upon. Opportunities for growth will not cease. We will continue to see acts of racism and intolerance on our campuses. This is a harsh, but true, reality. The best we can do as administrators, as white people, and as change agents, is to become well-versed in how institutional racism affects us all, how white privilege and systems of supremacy work, and to provide genuine support for our students. To do this, we need to become advocates for change. Jensen (2005) writes:

That is the new White People's Burden, to understand that we are the problem, come to terms with what that really means, and act based on our understanding. Our burden is to do something that doesn't seem to come naturally to people in positions of unearned power and privilege: Look in the mirror honestly and concede that we live in an unjust society and have no right to some of what we have. We should not affirm ourselves. We should negate our whiteness. Strip ourselves of the illusion that we are special because we are white. Steel ourselves so that we can walk in the world fully conscious and try to see what is usually invisible to us white people. We should learn to ask ourselves, "How does it feel to be the problem?" (Jensen, 2005, p. 93).

Jensen offers us a significant challenge - to negate our whiteness, and to remove the 'specialness' of whiteness. This will prove to be a great challenge, as it requires whites to consider the loss of the privileges that have been so deeply engrained in their lives. The natural question is, can one person make a difference? Are we willing to abandon privilege, and embrace change, at all costs? I suspect that some would readily take up the gauntlet and pursue change. Others will not. The true struggle is to locate those who can make a change, and pair them with those who want to change.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

North Carolina State University INFORMED CONSENT FORM for RESEARCH

Title of Study: How does it feel to be a problem? How white male graduate students in student affairs preparation programs make meaning of their whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism

Principal Investigator: Barry Alan Olson

Faculty Sponsor (if applicable): Dr. Audrey Jaeger

I am asking you to participate in a research study. The purpose of this narrative inquiry is to examine how white male graduate students in student affairs preparation programs make meaning of their whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism.

INFORMATION

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to spend time with the researcher through three separate experiences. The first experience will be a one and one half hour interview with the researcher discussing the following subject areas: your parental background (your parent's ages, ethnicities, and general values); your siblings (if you have them), their views, beliefs, and attitudes; your own personal views and attitudes towards your own racial makeup and identity; and how these attitudes and values affect your collegiate and pre-professional experiences. We will explore areas such as how you define whiteness, how you have come to understand what it means to be white, what you have learned about and experienced due to your own whiteness, and how you view multiculturalism. The second experience will be a *cognitive meaning-making process*. The cognitive meaning-making process will ask in-depth questions about how the young student affairs practitioner makes meaning of whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism, but it will be a more in-depth discussion. The participant will also be asked to apply what he knows to situations in his life as a practitioner. The third experience will be a discussion with the researcher about themes in the first two experiences, as well as an elongating of their ideas and experiences for final interpretation. The process for this interview will be open-ended, based on the outcomes produced during the first two experiences.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN THIS STUDY: Twelve to fifteen (12-15) white males, ages 22 and over, at seven (7) institutions in the Eastern Atlantic states of the United States.

RISKS

The study does yield some possible personal risks. As with any self-analysis, you may uncover elements about your own family background that cause you to reexamine who you are and what you have been exposed to in your past. Because of this exposure, you will have the opportunity to discuss these feelings with the researcher both during and after the interview. You will also be given a list of resources and contacts from the internet and from your home campus. Your counseling center may also serve as a place for solace and comfort. After this interview, you may also feel the need to discuss whiteness and racial identity with your family and friends. You will be provided with a brief description of terms, and a list of questions that may provoke discussion. You will also be given a list of strategies used to help guide difficult discussions with your family and friends. Unfortunately, there may also be unforeseen risks that can arise when a person discloses personal information. The researcher assures the participant that if any additional risks become obvious, the researcher will share those risks as soon as they arise.

BENEFITS

The researcher’s hope is that knowledge can be gained about how whiteness is both described and lived through the eyes of persons who are white. The benefits include: a deeper understanding of racial identity development, the role of family contacts in identity construction and maintenance, and how one’s upbringing, racial makeup, and personal experiences affect their profession in a college setting. By participating, we can better understand how to create and design campus programs, services, and curriculums that will meet the needs of all students, and that will enhance the inclusive nature of our campus climate.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The information in the study records will be kept strictly confidential. Data will be stored securely in the researcher’s personal office, located on 3725 Randell Road, Garner, NC, under lock and key in a filing cabinet. No reference will be made in oral or written reports that could link you to the study.

COMPENSATION

For participating in this study you will receive no financial compensation.

CONTACT

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Barry Alan Olson at 3725 Randell Road, Garner, NC 27529 , or by telephone at (919) 946-7885. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Matthew Zingraff, Chair of the NCSU IRB for the Use of Human Subjects in Research Committee, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/513-1834) or Mr. Matthew Ronning, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Research Administration, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/513-2148)

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed at your request.

CONSENT

“I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may withdraw at any time.”

Subject's signature _____ Date _____

Investigator's signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

How does it feel to be a problem?

Interview Questions

Barry A. Olson – Doctoral student

I will thank the participant for agreeing to be a part of my research. I will share that we will spend the next hour and a half to two hours engaged in a discussion of their life story and history. It is imperative that they know that I will treat their responses with the utmost respect and dignity as possible, and that confidentiality will be strictly enforced. We will discuss pseudonyms, and I will allow them to ask any initial questions. We will also discuss that the interview will be digitally recorded.

Part I: TELL ME YOUR STORY?

General discussion about personal background. I will thank the participant, and ask him to tell the researcher about their racial background and makeup. The participants will also be asked to identify their gender, their race, and educational experience.

Main questions:

Describe the community you grew up in?

Discuss your experiences growing up?

How would you describe your gender?

How would you describe your racial makeup?

Describe your educational experiences up to this point?

Followup questions:

Share a story with me about any memories you had of your experiences growing up?

Share any experiences you had discovering your gender?

Description of family an/or siblings.

I will ask the participant to tell him about their family background (such as their racial makeup, their attitudes, experiences, and beliefs about whiteness or white privilege, their understanding of what it means to feel oppression and discrimination). The participant's siblings, if applicable, will also be discussed at length.

Main questions:

Tell me the story of your family?

Do you have any siblings? Do you share and discuss information with them? If so, how?

Followup questions:

Describe how your family discusses issues that are important?

Tell me a story about how you remember your family communicated when you were young?

Tell me a story about how you and your family communicate today?

Part II: TELL ME WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO YOU?

An examination of personal values. I will ask questions about what the participant values for a number of reasons. First, as a researcher, it will be helpful to understand what is central in the life of the participant so that we can find common ground. Second, it is important to know what might be considered triggers, or hot button topics for discussion. This is not for avoidance, but rather to establish a path towards gathering data. Third, the questions might elicit why the participant has chosen student affairs as his career vocation, and what he hopes to accomplish as a student affairs practitioner and professional.

Main questions:

Can you tell me about some of the things you value in your life?

Can you share a story with me about an experience that resulted in clarifying your values?

Talk about what makes you uncomfortable. How does this discomfort alter your discussions and experiences?

Why did you choose to become a student affairs professional?

Followup questions:

What would you like to be known for in the field of student affairs?

What do you hope to become or accomplish in the field of student affairs?

Part III: TELL ME YOUR THOUGHTS ON RACE?

An examination of personal experiences with race and whiteness

The researcher will ask the participant to discuss what it means to be white, through his eyes and experiences. The intent is to elicit a deep and meaningful discussion about how whiteness has framed and developed his experiences, both as a young adult and as a young college male.

Main questions:

Describe the racial makeup of your neighborhood?

Talk about any racial tensions that might have occurred while you were living at home?

What would you say your family's attitudes are regarding race and whiteness?

How would your family describe your racial makeup?

How do you feel about whiteness? When did you first become aware of being white?

What are some of the ways being white has affected your college experience?

What types of experiences did you have with persons of a different racial background than yourself?

How has your student affairs program prepared you to address whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism?

Tell me about experiences where you received benefits because of your race?

What concerns do you have about the subject of whiteness?

How much do you think you know about whiteness and white privilege?

Followup questions:

Tell me about experiences when you felt discriminated against?

Discuss how you interpreted diversity as a high school student?

Did you have a roommate in college? Can you share with me your living experiences while in college?

Discuss your roommate in college. How similar or dissimilar was he to you?

What has your general feeling been about diversity experiences in college?

Describe any racial incidents that you have witnessed or experienced in college?

Tell me about your level of involvement in diversity experiences while in college?

How open do you feel you are about participating in diversity experiences?

Why might you choose not to participate in a diversity program or event on campus?

How does being white affect your experiences in graduate school?

Part IV: General review of resources for further discussion

I will thank the participant, and will review supporting materials meant to provide further information about whiteness, racism, social justice, and counseling. The participant will be asked if there are any direct needs he has at this point, and will be informed of the process from this point forward. He will be given an outline of the rest of the study, and will be informed that he will receive more information about the results of the study once completed. He will also be informed of the remaining interview formats, and encouraged to keep the researcher informed of any questions, concerns, or comments.

Main questions:

What type of information would be helpful for you now?

What information would you like me to provide about whiteness, social justice, or racial identity?

Do you feel the need to discuss this subject further with me, or with a counselor?

V: Next Steps

I will explain the next steps of the interview process. This will remind the participants of their expected obligation, and will provide timelines for future contacts.

- *I will send you an invitation for a SurveyMonkey survey within the next three days. Please set aside about an hour or so to complete it.*
- *Hand out rubric, discuss format and expectations.*
- *Complete survey within the next two weeks. Contact me if you have questions.*
- *Following the completion of the online survey, I will arrange for one more contact to discuss the transcripts and possible themes from our discussion and the survey. We will clarify meanings, discuss any clarifying questions, and close the interview process.*
- *I will share my email, phone contacts, and potential for free ACPA registration.*
- *Thank participant for participating!*

APPENDIX C: REQUEST LETTER SAMPLE

DATE

Dr. XXXXXX,

I hope this finds you well. My name is Barry Olson, and I am a doctoral student at NC State University. I am nearing the end of course work this semester, and have already begun work on my dissertation proposal. I have worked closely with my chair, Dr. Audrey Jaeger, as well as my methodologist, Dr. Colleen Wiessner, to develop my research plan. While I am still drafting and developing my research, I feel that I am making headway.

I am examining white male graduate students (who are in their second year of their CSP program). This narrative inquiry will examine how white male graduate students in student affairs preparation programs make meaning of their whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism. White males bring not only their own racial identity to the field, but they also bring their gendered identity, which carries with it a certain set of privileges and benefits, and, as McIntosh (1989) reminds us, these privileges are unearned, yet prevalent in their daily lives.

The voices of these future practitioners will provide narratives of the experiences of being white on campus, and of serving in a dual role as student and teacher. If we intend to challenge and transform how Student Affairs facilitates change, we need to understand how white male graduate students in student affairs preparation programs are articulating their professional obligation. This study will serve to guide practice by examining the realities of how experiences become educational components for Student Affairs practitioners, and will also help faculty members and other administrators understand how they can more effectively impact all students on campus.

I am looking for programs that would support me talking to white male students in their second year. Of course, I intend to follow all IRB requirements, and would not compromise any of the rigorous research standards required of doctoral work. Ultimately, I would love to involve students at the University of Maryland. Does this sound like a study that you would be interested in and willing to support? My intended timeline at this point would be to defend my proposal with my committee by the first week of September, and complete my IRB submissions near that time, for an intended start date of approximately November 15, 2008. I would then take approximately one month to conduct my first series of interviews. The second set of interviews will occur by electronic means following Thanksgiving, and should complete around mid-January, 2009. The final phase of interviewing would occur between mid-January, 2009 and the end of February, 2009. While I intend to have all interviewing completed by then, my schedule could ultimately change.

In closing, I am eager to know if this sounds like a study that your higher education program could endorse. Please let me know if you need more information from me. I know that this is an early discussion, but I am hoping to be able to frame up my methodology (including participant selection) in the early part of June.

I appreciate any help you might be able to provide. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Barry Olson
Doctoral Student
NC State University
(919) 515-3703 office
(919) 946-7885 cell

APPENDIX D: RUBRIC FOR ELECTRONIC INTERVIEW

Rubric for E-Mail Interview

Thanks again for participating in my research study! The purpose of this narrative inquiry is to examine how white male graduate students in student affairs preparation programs make meaning of their whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism.

As you will recall from our first interview, you have agreed to participate in this study, and will be asked to spend time with the researcher through three separate experiences. The first experience asked you many specific questions about your life, your background, and your experiences. This interview will be a cognitive meaning-making process, conducted through SurveyMonkey. This interview will ask in-depth questions about how the developing student affairs practitioner makes meaning of whiteness, white privilege, and multiculturalism, but I ask you to use a free-writing format to answer each question. I want to better understand how you have used your student affairs training to interact with students you come into contact with, and moreover, how well your experiences have prepared you for these interactions, but I want this to be spontaneous. There is great value in just writing. That said, when you sit down to answer the four questions I will pose to you, follow this format:

- Keep writing. I am very interested in hearing everything you have to say, unscripted. Think of this as a chance to spill all of what you know, and you are the expert. Write until you are done, but don't analyze it, just keep moving and when you're done, you're done!
- Don't edit. I am not looking for a perfectly crafted manuscript. Save that for your thesis! Instead, I want to see everything you write, regardless of how meaningless or minor you think it might be.
- Don't worry about spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Again, this is a free-write, and a chance for you to not have to worry about this.
- Lose control. Write whatever comes to mind. This is when the magic happens, so let it all come out. Don't concern yourself with what others will think. First, it's an anonymous record between you and me, but moreover, it's a chance to say what you really feel.
- Don't overthink it, and don't think logically. Again, just write!
- Write anything and everything. If something comes to mind, write it down – dive in and share it. The purpose of this activity is to get your true and honest thoughts. Share anything!

Using SurveyMonkey, I will have the opportunity to see how your responses evolve through this medium.

- Because I cannot spend significant time on your campus to conduct additional interviews, email interviewing will be a more accessible format for all of us.
- If you are willing to continue in this process, please respond to this email right away, confirming your willingness to participate, and the best email address to send correspondence to.
- Again, I assure you that your responses will be held in the strictest of confidence, and your name will not be revealed in any of the documentation or articles generated thereafter. A pseudonym will be assigned to you early on to remove any chance of association.
- You will be asked four questions at one time through SurveyMonkey. The total amount of time you will need to spend answering these questions will vary, but shouldn't take much longer than about an hour or so. Each question may have additional followup questions as needed to clarify your responses during our third interview together. I ask that you thoroughly read each question, and thoughtfully respond, using examples to help illustrate your point. Again, I WANT YOU TO JUST WRITE. Don't overthink your response.
- Please do not delete any part of the email dialogue. It will serve as your (and my) record of our conversation.
- Please reply within three days of receipt of the message.
- My intention is to complete the SurveyMonkey survey within four weeks.
- Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research!

**APPENDIX E: EXEMPLARY APPROACHES TO MULTICULTURAL
AWARENESS, KNOWLEDGE, AND SKILL BUILDING**

Exemplary Approaches to Multicultural Awareness, Knowledge, and Skill Building			
Awareness	Student affairs professional becomes aware that his or her knowledge is limited.	Student affairs professional needs some awareness of his or her own cultural heritage and how it affects worldviews, values, and assumptions.	Student affairs professional realizes that despite his or her longstanding personal commitment to multicultural issues and combating oppression, his/her life continues to center around relationships with people mostly like him/her.
Knowledge	Student affairs professional working with activities recognizes limitations in knowledge about many groups, and how it is now affecting his/her advisement of students who he/she works with.	Recognition that one's membership in a cultural group has meaning in a person's life, but is not an exclusive set of values, attitudes, and beliefs (ie, everyone is different).	Exposure to antiracism conference shows person how little knowledge they actually have about oppression and prejudice.
Skill	Recognition that student affairs professional communicates differently with women than men. His lack of cross-cultural awareness is now causing problems in his relationships, but he does not know what to do.	Student affairs professional is uncomfortable when individuals make comments and stereotypical remarks/jokes. She wants to challenge them, but is worried about offending or making the situation worse.	Accurate assessment of his or her own skills and comfort levels in order to develop multicultural competence. A skilled professional understands his or her strengths and weaknesses, and can articulate them.

Pope, R. L., Reynolds, A. L., and Mueller, J. A. (2004). *Multicultural competency in student affairs*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.