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I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Ashton Ryan Cooper entitled "Not Accepting the Status Quo: Southern White Student Activists in the Civil Rights Movement." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Higher Education Administration.

Dorian L. McCoy, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Karen D. Boyd, Jud C. Laughter, Lois Presser

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Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

Not Accepting the Status Quo: Southern White Student Activists in the Civil Rights Movement

A Dissertation Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Ashton Ryan Cooper

May 2020

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Dedication

For my daughter, thanks for making me a Dad.

Acknowledgements

TO GOD BE THE GLORY!

Thank you Gordon, Gene, Jim, Fran, Ed, Brenda, and Tom to sharing your stories with me. I hope that your stories can inspire and inform the current and next generation of antiracists in the United States.

Misha, thank you for being a supportive wife and partner during the last five years. You continuously support my dreams, and I look forward to our future together. To everyone in the CCRW (crew), from Tuesday/Thursday night kickball, to sushi, to concernts, you have given me and Misha family here in Knoxville and helped to keep me sane. Hope Fellowship, you have been the church family that we have needed in Knoxville, and my story would not be what it is today without the love, support, and spiritual guidance you have provided me. Special thanks goes to Dominique, you have been more than a pastor, you have been a brother.

To my Texas friends and family, sorry that I had to come all the way to Tennessee to get this done, but alas, I made it!

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To my committee, I am slightely biased, but I am pretty positive I had the Dream Team equivilant of a committee! Dr. Karen Boyd (DKB) , you have fostered my interest in exploring the past to inform the future. I hope to inspire students as you have me someday. Dr. Jud Laughter (Jud), conversations with you helped me to sort through my ideas as well as shift my perspectives. Dr. Lois Presser (Dr. Lo), you showed me that my research was worth pursuing, and gave me space to find my voice as a scholar. Lastly, Dr. Dorian L. McCoy (Dorian), there is not much to say other than, I hope to make you proud as a professor one day. You have shown me the value to being meticoulous (I am still working on eliminating prepositional phrases), demonstrated how to be a caring father and husband, and how to “take the glasses off” from time to time. We have come a VERY long way from that first paper in Qualitative Methods!

Lastly, to Mom and Mike. Its your shoulders that I stand on. I love you.

Abstract

Historically, the study of racial identity has focused on Groups of Color (Jardina, 2019). This myopic focus has left White people and scholars deficient in White racial literacy and critical consciousness (Tatum, 1994; Wise, 2005, 2008). Moreover, there are inadequate historical accounts of White anti-racist exemplars to examine how White people develop racial literacy, and how racial identities play a role in students' decisions to engage in activism (Ayvazian, 2004; Laughter, 2007; Malott et al., 2019; O'Brien, 2001; Smith & Redington, 2010; Spanierman & Smith, 2017). This narrative inquiry collected the critical life histories of seven southern White people who identified as activists and participated in the Civil Rights Movement. Their critical life histories were collected to inform and demonstrate how southern White students came to participate in the Civil Rights Movement, despite being socialized in a society that was overtly racist (Diniz-Pereira, 2008). The narratives that the participants shared contributed to the literature by providing an understanding of how southern White people developed their anti-racist and activist identities. These narratives can aid current and future higher education administrators, educators, and researchers in understanding how White students develop anti-racist identity, and how they may become better at supporting Black and other People of Color.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

It cannot be left to people of color alone. It is wrong to ask men and women of color to bear these burdens every single day, the same fights over and over again…White women like me must bear part of this burden and commit to amplifying your voices. – U.S. Senator and Presidential Candidate Kirsten Gillibrand

After the election of Barack Obama as 44th President of the United States, the U.S. was declared a post-racial nation (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). That is, in the U.S., many people (i.e., White people) felt the racist past was finally behind the U.S. because of the election of a Black[1] man to the White House (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). In the years subsequent to his election, the U.S. has entered into a new civil rights era (Demby, 2014), with organizations such as Black Lives Matter (BLM) drawing comparisons to civil rights organizations like the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) advocating for racial and social justice for Black and other People of Color[2] (Demby, 2014). The renewed push for social justice by BLM and other organizations has focused on police brutality, increased racialized gun violence, educational discrepancies and school (re)segregation, voting rights, and fair housing in all communities, but particularly Communities of Color (Demby, 2014).

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[1] *Black* and *African American* will be used interchangeably throughout the study. My use acknowledges the diversity of the Black/African American diaspora (Cross, 1991; Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998), and reflects the varied use among authors cited in this study.

[2] I use *People of Color* to encompass all people racialized as non-White, as People of Color are all subject to systemic racism (Franklin, Boyd-Franklin, & Kelly; 2006). Moreover, I chose to capitalize *People of Color* to validate the experiences of individuals who have been excluded from the literature (Luedke, 2017).

Similar to February 1960, fall 2015 was the impetus for collective action and activism[3] on college campuses in the U.S., as a part of this new civil rights movement (Brasher, Alderman, & Inwood 2017; Trachtenberg, 2018). Higher education during the presidency of Donald J. Trump, has remained at the center of the struggle for social and racial justice, as there has been an increase in campus violence related to racism (Weida, 2018). President Trump has refused to condemn White Nationalists, Ku Klux Klan members, Neo-Nazis, and Neo-Confederates in events such as the Unite the Right Rally that led to the death of Heather Heyer and the injuries of 19 other protestors (Graham, Green, Murphy, & Richards, 2019) and told four Women of Color, U.S. House Representatives to "go back to where you came from" (Dwyer & Limbong 2019). The increase in racist violence on campuses in the U.S. is directly related to the overt racism of the 45th President of the United States (Rogers et al., 2019; Weida, 2018).

Despite Trump's assertions that his comments are not racist and that he does not possess a "racist bone" in his body, historian and race scholar Ibram X. Kendi specifically called out Trump's actions as racist, and determined that an individual cannot be "not racist" but either racist or anti-racist. As an anti-racist, an individual actively seeks to dismantle oppressive practices and examines their personal privileges as it relates to oppressed and marginalized people (Kendi, 2019). Drawing on U. S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand's remarks, it is imperative that more White people bear the burdens of a society built on Whiteness meant to protect and recreate White privilege. The aim of this study was to learn from the historical example of southern White students who, in the midst of a racist culture and society, advocated for the rights of Black people.

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[3] *Activist/Activism* in this study is defined as the active participation of people around a set of issues. This could involve political demonstrations, organizing, protests, etc. (Cloud, 2013; Urrieta, 2005)

The historical underpinnings of society are of great importance to U.S. higher education (Goodchild, 1997). Thelin (2011) noted that “historical myopia” (p. ix) created the thought that current issues are larger or more insurmountable than those in the past, when the past can create a roadmap for solving contemporary issues. Studying history promotes the understanding of the relationship of the individual and the collective, as well as the socio-historical context in which individuals lived (Stephens, 2019). Moreover, it is important to study history because it is often difficult to understand the magnitude of certain events when they occur and time offers a different perspective (Brubacher & Rudy, 2002); which allows those who choose to learn from history the opportunity to grow (Bordas, 2007). Historical studies illuminate the past and provide the ability to learn from those events. In higher education, data from historical studies inform both the present and the future (Clark, 1973; Good, Barr, & Scales, 1936; Goodchild, 1997).

The Civil Rights History Project Act of 2009 directed the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian Institution to conduct a joint project to “collect video and audio recordings of personal histories and testimonials of individuals who participated in the Civil Rights Movement” (H.R. 586, 2009). The bill acknowledged the actions of well-known leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, and Thurgood Marshall, and sought to acknowledge the contributions of other less known activists (H.R. 586, 2009). Moreover, the Civil Rights History Project Act of 2009 determined that the oral histories of individuals who participated in the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) are integral to the well-being and growth of the U.S. and its citizenry “to learn of their struggle and sacrifice” (H.R. 586, 2009). Activists included in the collection of oral histories displayed a variety of interests and occupations, participated in organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and experienced events such as the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, the Freedom Rides, and the murder of Emmett Till (Library of Congress). Missing from the collection of oral histories are the stories of southern White civil rights activists who participated with Black activists advocating for equality (Michel, 2004; Zinn, 2008).

From 2015-2018, the Higher Education Research Institute's (HERI) annual first-year survey reported increases in the political awareness of incoming first-year students and an increased belief in pluralistic values (Egan et al., 2017; HERI, 2019). In 2018, 84% of first-time students agreed that racial understanding is important, and 52% understood the importance of being culturally competent in a global society. students are coming to campus more likely to be civically engaged, involved in activist causes, and wanting to be more culturally competent (Egan et al., 2017; HERI, 2019). Students are entering higher education with the desire to learn and do more about race and racism; yet, the organizational, physical and cultural, and curricular structures of higher education are failing them. Higher education in the U.S. was built to promote, sustain, and recreate Whiteness (Bonilla-Silva 2012; Brubacher & Rudy 2002; Gusa, 2010; Spring 2007; Thelin, 2011). Organizationally, institutions of higher education (IHE) observe racialized hiring practices, that disproportionately discriminate against Black and Faculty of Color (Carter-Sowell et al., 2019; Croom, 2017; Heilig et al., 2019; Ray, 2019; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). Gusa (2010) called attention to "the embedded White cultural ideology in the cultural practices, traditions, and perceptions of knowledge…at institutions of higher education" (p. 464). It has been determined that IHE in the U.S. does not foster quality intrapersonal cross-racial relationships on campus, which lead to self-segregation and continued observance of White hegemonic norms by White students (Cabrera, 2014; Cabrera, Gusa, 2010; Watson, & Franklin, 2016a). Physically, IHE maintain structures that represent and glorify White supremacy via confederate monuments, and buildings named after White supremacists (Brasher, Alderman, & Inwood, 2017; Cabrera et al., 2016a). Curricularly, educators and administrators on college campuses are ill-equipped to discuss Whiteness and White identity due to it being embedded in U.S. higher education (Giroux, 1997; Peters, 2015; Picower, 2009; Poon, 2018) and anti-racism due to a dearth of research in these areas (Jardina, 2019). The ongoing refusal to recognize how White supremacy informs the organizational, physical and cultural, and curricular structures of higher education, allow students to continue to recreate Whiteness and racist ideology (Gusa, 2010; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Kordesh, Spanierman, & Neville, 2013). In the current socio-political moment, the need exists for White people to understand the historical implications of race and racism and how to be anti-racist, and for scholars to reexamine White identity development.

This study does not center Whiteness, but uncovers the stories and experiences southern White students who participated in the CRM. The stories of these individuals allowed me to discern aspects of their racial identity development on their path towards anti-racism, and how they navigated being anti-racists in the South. Based on how these students constructed their identity, I was able to understand their decision to participate in the CRM. These stories and analysis aided in the understanding of how White students can become anti-racist and racial justice allies.

The Social Construction of Whiteness

Whiteness is a racialized discourse that is the basis of racialization in the U.S. (Fredrickson, 2002; Goldberg, 1993; Mills, 1997; Omi & Winant, 1994, 2015). The construction of Whiteness is to possess the phenotypic characteristics that are deemed normal (DuBois, 1920; Lawrence, 1997) and to possess privilege (Cabrera, Franklin, & Watson, 2016b; Leonardo, 2004). White privilege allows White people to benefit unknowingly from structures and systems that were established by and for other White people (Hunter, 2002; Leonardo, 2004). Furthermore, White people are socialized to blindly receive the benefits of White privilege, such as ignorance to systemic issues that People of Color deal with, not having to think about race as a limiting issue, or having the expectation of being educated by People of Color concerning issues of race (Hall, 2004; Kendall, 2006).

Some People of Color and race scholars (see Anderson, 2017, DuBois 1920, Yancy 2008, DiAngelo, 2018) understand that White people are mostly oblivious to their privilege. However, when made aware of their privilege, White people can discover how they are also racialized and work to become equal partners with People of Color (Helms, 1984). Inversely, when made aware of White privilege, White people can feel threatened and choose to retreat into perceived ideological safety (DiAngelo, 2012; 2018) or enact harsh policies which further disenfranchise and oppress People of Color (Anderson, 2017). Whiteness informs the lived experiences (Clandinin, 2006) of both White people and People of Color in the U.S. While the broad focus of this study is to collect the stories and experiences of southern White students who participated in the CRM, it is of equal importance to understand the Whiteness, White privilege, and White identity of the participants to understand how they came to be involved in the Movement.

Statement of the Problem

Jardina (2019) stated, "historically, the study of identity especially as it has pertained to race or ethnicity, has often been one-sided, focusing on the concept's development and its role among subordinate or minority groups" (p. 6). Due to the lack of racial literacy and critical consciousness among White people, scholars (see Malott et al., 2015; Tatum,1994; Wise 2005, 2008) have called for the renewed focus on White identity, specifically one that focuses on historical White anti-racist exemplars that demonstrate the full complexity of White racial identity development (Malott et al., 2015). With the current rise in racially motivated violence in the U.S. (McGarrity & Shivers, 2019), combined with sustained racial ignorance, potential White allies and anti-racists need to understand how to effectively advocate for marginalized and oppressed people (Alcoff, 1998; Linder, 2015; Saenz, 2010).

In higher education, history serves as a means to inform the present, reflect on the past, and prepare for the future, especially for students (Ellsworth & Burns, 1969; Rudy & Brubacher, 2002; Thelin, 2011). Despite the extensive research on student participation in the CRM, (Altbach & Peterson, 1971; Astin, Astin, Bayer, & Bisconti, 1975; Baxter & Baxter-Magolda, 1988; Biddix, 2006; Broadhurst, 2014; Ellsworth & Burns, 1970; Turner, 2010; Presidents Commission, 1970) there remains a dearth of scholarship exploring the stories of southern White students, and that explores how racial identities play a role in students' decisions to engage in activism (e.g., Laughter, 2011). Cabrera et al. (2016b) claimed there was a need for additional role models when attempting to create more racial justice allies. Due to the lack of historical accounts of White anti-racist exemplars, specifically in southern contexts, individuals remain largely ignorant to the fact that southern White student civil rights activists exist (Ayvazian, 2004; Malott et al., 2019; O'Brien, 2001; Smith & Redington, 2010; Spanierman & Smith, 2017), and hold the belief that the South and Southerners exist as a racist monolith (Sokol, 2009). Thus, there exists a need to adequately prepare White educators with such exemplars (Bloom, Peters, Margolin & Fragnoli, 2015; Dunac & Demir, 2017; Edwards, 2006; Matias; 2016).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand how White students develop an antiracist identity, despite living in a society that is overtly racist, by collecting the stories of southern White student activists who participated in the CRM. Understanding how White students develop an anti-racist identity can aid educators and administrators in higher education, and be an exemplar for current White students in post-secondary education in the U.S. If current educators, administrators, and researchers can further understand how White students develop anti-racist identities, then they may be able to better educate future White educators and higher education administrators to become better at supporting People of Color.

Research Questions

1. What are the stories of southern White student activists who participated in the Civil Rights Movement?
    a. How did White activists develop their anti-racist identities?
    b. How did White activists develop their activist identities?
2. How might the stories of southern White student activists who participated in the CRM provide implication for anti-racism in higher education?
    a. How might role models' perspectives and experiences provide direction in overcoming racial identity regression among college students?

Theoretical Frame

The theoretical framework that guided this study was Helms's (1984) model of White Racial Identity Development (WRID). The model of White Racial Identity Development is considered one of the most influential and widely used models of White identity development (Hardiman, 2001; Parker, Moore, & Neimeyer, 1998; Ponterotto, Utsey, & Pedersen, 2006, Richardson & Silvestri, 1999; Sabnani, Ponterotto, & Borodovsky, 1991). First developed as a stepwise stage model, the current model (Helms, 1995, 1997) uses concurrent statuses to demonstrate the process that a White person undertakes when developing a positive White identity (Parker et al., 1998).

Helms (1984,1995) posited in her model that White people, going from a lower level of racial consciousness to a higher level of racial consciousness, can better understand themselves and others racially (Parker et al., 1998). Lower levels of racial consciousness are characterized by a general naivete about racial difference, and higher levels of racial consciousness are characterized by the ability to appreciate racial differences in the development towards a positive nonracist White identity (Hardiman, 2001; Helms, 1997; Parker et al., 1998).

The Helms (1984) model of White Racial Identity Development identified six developmental statuses, expanded from the original five (Hardiman, 2001; Helms, 1984, 1995), they are: *contact, disintegration, reintegration, pseudoindependence, immersion-emersion, and autonomy* (Helms, 1990). The *contact* status occurs when a White person first becomes aware of racial difference. The *disintegration* status happens when White individuals become aware of their own racialization and the privilege that comes with being White. The *reintegration* status represents the choice of the White individual to conform to White culture (Helms, 1984). The *pseudoindependence* status occurs when the White individual begins to conceptualize race and racial consciousness through an intellectual lens. The *immersion/emersion* status follows the intellectual desire with the commitment to search for meaningful information about race and personal racial development. Finally, the *autonomy* status occurs when, the White individual develops and maintains a positive White racial identity (Helms, 1984, 1995; Helms & Cook, 1999). These statuses guided in the thematic analysis of the narratives collected from the study participants.

Methodology

Narrative inquiry as a methodology was used in this study to collect and examine the stories of southern White student activists who participated in the CRM. The narrative inquiry utilized archival data analysis of materials from the Highlander Folk School and documents (e.g., letters, newspaper articles, recruitment pamphlets) released by White students during the CRM to inform in-depth critical life history interviews of seven individuals who were student activists from the South during the CRM. Narrative inquiry is useful when exploring the stories individuals tell (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016); moreover, critical life history as a type of narrative inquiry is useful when those stories are of individuals whose purpose is to promote social change (Diniz-Pereira, 2008). The study utilized purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2007); one individual was contacted for the pilot study and six were contacted for the study (Wells, 2011).

Significance of the Study

Sankofa is a symbol of a mythical bird with its feet planted forward and head turned backward. It represents the insight and knowledge acquired from the past, and the invitation to bring forth that which is meaningful and useful (Bordas, 2007). This symbol reminds individuals that the “past is a pathway to understanding the present and creating a strong future” (Bordas, 2007, p. 28). History matters. History provides a means for scholars to analyze historical data to understand “actors and their motives, and events and their consequences” (Wechsler, 1997, p. xix). History can inform and inspire students, faculty, and administrators, while also dispelling commonly held beliefs about a particular period in the past (Thelin, 2011; Wechsler, 1997).

Broadly, this study sought to provide a narrative account of southern White students who participated as activists in the CRM.

Utilizing a critical life history narrative approach highlighted the socially just aims of these students, which can empower other White students who identify similarly (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). Tatum (2007) elaborated:

> It is possible to claim both one's whiteness as a part of who one is and of one's daily experiences, and the identity of being what I like to call a "white ally." Namely, a white person who understands that it is possible to use one's privilege to create more equitable systems; that there are white people throughout history who have done exactly that; and that one can align oneself with that history. That is the identity story that we have to reflect to white children, and help them see themselves in it, in order to continue racial progress in our society. (p. 37)

Collecting the stories of southern White students who participated in the CRM in Tennessee, uncovered the existence of these individuals historically and demystified their experiences (Ayvazian, 2004; Malott et al., 2019; O'Brien, 2001; Smith & Redington, 2010; Spanierman & Smith, 2017). It is important to unveil the historic antiracist work and experiences of these students so that students in higher education spaces can emulate their actions.

Specifically, for the field of higher education and student affairs, multicultural competence is essential (Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004) as well as developing social justice allies (Edwards, 2006). While it is common for students to think about what it means to be racist, they often do not consider what it means to be actively anti-racist (hooks, 1993; Rodriquez, 2009; Tatum, 1997). Knowing more about the experiences of southern White civil rights activists can add to the training of practitioners and educators to not only aid in their multicultural competence development but that of their students as well (Helms, 1995; Mallot et al., 2015; Smith & Reddington, 2010). Educators and practitioners alike can benefit from learning about the historic experiences of White antiracists to support students in learning about their racial identity and aid in their holistic development (Linder, 2016).

This study collected and examined the stories of southern White students that participated in the CRM. The research allowed southern White students to tell their stories from their perspective. Furthermore, through examining their stories, this study illustrated how they came to develop their antiracist identity.

Summary and Organization

In this chapter, I provided context for the research study. I first outlined the importance of historical research, especially in the context of civil rights history, and activists associated with the Civil Rights Movement (CRM). Next, I outlined the problems that this study addressed, namely the lack of historical accounts of southern White student civil rights activists. Due to the scarcity of southern White student activist historical accounts; students, educators, and administrators do not have examples of White students in the South who confront racial bias and work to end systemic oppression. Furthermore, when presented with historical accounts of White students who displayed an anti-racist identity, White people are likely to think of what it means to not be racist but to be actively anti-racist.

To collect and examine the stories of southern White students who participated in the CRM, this study employed a narrative inquiry approach. Specifically, I utilized a critical life history to examine the lives of students who were dedicated to a socially just cause. This study provides insight to students, educators, and administrators as to how the dominant narrative of White supremacy/power in the South was challenged, and how to claim identities that are not grounded in the oppression of Black people and other People of Color. In Chapter Two, I provide the historical context for the study, as well as review pertinent literature around Whiteness and White identity development. In Chapter Three, I detail the methodological approach I utilized to conduct the study and in Chapter Four I highlight the narrative profiles of the seven participants in the study. In Chapter Five I discuss the narratives of the participants within the framework of Helms's (1984) WRID model, and provide an analysis of the major themes in the study. Lastly, in chapter six I further discuss the findings, provide implications, and conclude the study.

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

The purpose of this study was to collect and examine the stories of southern White students who participated in the Civil Rights Movement (CRM). As a narrative inquiry, this will be done by first collecting the stories of southern White students who participated in the CRM, then utilizing Helms's (1984) model of White Racial Identity Development (WRID) to examine their experiences. First, I will provide an overview of student activism prior to and during the 1960s, with a focus on the student participation in the CRM. Then I will examine the research on Whiteness, Whiteness studies, and White identity that informs how scholars conceptualize what Whiteness is, why it should be studied, and how it informs the identity development of White individuals. Lastly, I review literature that has focused on activist and ally identity development specifically how it relates to antiracism.

Historical Overview of Student Activism in Higher Education

Higher education in the United States has historically existed to preserve and recreate privilege for White affluent males (Duran & Okello, 2018; Foste, 2019; Patel, 2015; Yosso, Smith, Ceja, & Solorzano, 2009). Early institutions of higher education sought to preserve the histories and traditions of Western old-world civilizations that it believed to be integral for a thriving society (Brubacher & Rudy, 2002; Thelin, 2011). These histories and traditions where translated as being civilized, Christian, and European; and therefore, adhered to paternalistic values (e.g., respect, order, etc.), sought assimilation, and valued Whiteness (Brubacher & Rudy, 2002; Goldberg, 1993; Hesse, 2007; Spring, 2007; Thelin, 2011).

Early student activists, while beneficiaries of their Whiteness, rebelled against the paternalism that was ever present in early U.S. higher education, but neglected the atrocities that were being committed against Native Americans who refused to assimilate (e.g., convert to Christianity) to their values (Spring, 2007; Thelin, 2011). While higher education in the U.S. still privileges and values Whiteness (Bonilla-Silva, 2012; Harper, 2012; Johnson, Wasserman, Yildirim, & Yonai, 2014) student activism on campus evolved to address the needs of contemporary students (Biddix, 2006; Rhoades, 2014). In the following section, I summarize periods of student activism in the U.S. from the beginning of U. S. higher education to the 1960s.

The Colonial Period and the 19th Century

Scholars have discussed student unrest since the inception of U.S. higher education at Harvard (Altbach 1973; Biddix, 2006; Earnest, 1953; Gieger 2000; Lipset & Schflaner, 1973). Student rebellion during the early stages of U.S. higher education can be summed up as a rebellion against rigid paternalism influenced by *in loco parentis,* the policy that allowed college administrators to act in place of students' parents (Broadhurst, 2014; van Alstyne, 1969). During this time, the privileged White men who were allowed to attend school rejected the strict and abhorrent conditions, inciting violent rebellions over food quality, compulsory chapel attendance, and their living quarters (Lipset & Schaflander, 1971).

During periods of war (e.g., the American Revolution and the Civil War) student activists were largely influenced by the faculty at their institutions (Earnest, 1953; Rudy, 1996). Faculty either encouraged student dissent toward colonial powers, or influenced students to rebel against strict institutional policies as a distraction from what was happening outside the walls of the institution. In particular, during the Civil War, literary societies were formed to discuss American slavery and were divided regionally – pro-slavery in the South and pro-abolition in the

North (Rudy, 1996). While preferences during this time were dichotomous; overall, it did not reflect the general sense of racial equality and justice in both the North and South (Sokol, 2006; Williamson, 1986). Instead, it reflected the attitude and reliance on an economic institution which relied on the subjugation and oppression of human bodies. While American slavery did influence racial attitudes in the South, pro-abolition in the North did not necessarily mean that Northern states and individuals were anti-racist (Hunter & Robinson, 2016).

Early student activism was largely responsive to what was happening on campus. Though at times, students were involved in protesting events that occurred nationally (Rudy, 1996). Riots during this period could result in injury and bodily harm to faculty and administrators (Earnest, 1953; Lipset, 1971; Wagoner Jr., 1986), and would often result in stricter rules for the student activists (Novak, 1977). It should be noted that during this period, affluent students were more likely to rebel than poorer students (Broadhurst, 2014).

The Early 20th Century

The focus of U.S. campus activism during the early 20th century shifted from issues on campus to issues off campus (Broadhurst, 2014). Students were no longer concerned with local disagreements, but shifted their focus to national social concerns. These concerns ranged from the threat of war, the Great Depression, ideological politics, academic freedom, and university reform (Altbach, 1973; Biddix, 2006; Brax, 1981; Lipset, 1971).

The effect of war changed the relationship between colleges and the federal government. Not only did student enrollment drop due to military training camps, but because of a stipulation of the Morrill Act of 1890, the government required all land-grant institutions to maintain military training units (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997). By the late 1920s, the number of students required to enroll in military training units (Reserve Officer Training Corps – ROTC) numbered in the thousands. Students resented compulsory military training, which led to them embracing pacifist ideology (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997). The Oxford Oath, a resolution signed by 60,000 students in the U.S., swore that students would not be a part of a war on behalf of King or Country. The oath was a part of many of the anti-ROTC actions taken by the anti-war movement (Altbach, 1973; Boren, 2001; Brubacher & Rudy, 1997; Horowitz & Friedland, 1970; Lasar, 1998).

The Great Depression left colleges and students reeling from the sudden devaluation and loss of capital in the U.S. economy (Cohen, 1989). College enrollment dropped because students were too poor to attend college, and colleges depleted their loan reserves to help students attend college (A Campus Divided, 2017, Cohen 1989). The depressed state of the U.S. economy empowered the Student Left by supporting their critique against capitalism (Cohen, 1989). The Great Depression pushed campus politics leftward and helped the Student Left grow the student movement that took shape in the 1920s. Socialism and communism provided the antithesis to capitalism for student radicals which allowed these two opposing factions to collaborate and engage in anti-war organizing (Altbach, 1973; Altbach & Peterson, 1971). Partnerships between the Communist National Student League (NSL) and the Socialist Student League for Industrial Democracy (SLID), produced two national peace strikes. The peace strikes were ineffective in convincing the U.S. government from entering World War II, but legitimized national organizing power by students (Boren, 2011; Cohen, 1989).

Academic freedom and university reform were the final issues which help define student activism during the early 20th century. The tension between student and faculty had yet to disappear, and as students became more liberal the faculty remained conservative (Altbach, 1973). Instead of the old recitation and lecture procedures, students wanted to be taught in a way that would provoke thought and encourage inquiry (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997). Discontent with the faculty and the curriculum, and disenchantment with American efforts both politically and economically drove students to begin writing their criticisms and advocating for leftist causes in student newspapers (Altbach & Peterson, 1971; Cohen, 1989). Tension between students and the faculty became worse after universities began censoring student newspapers and taking disciplinary actions against student newspaper editors (Cohen, 1989). The fight for free speech on college campuses was the first open challenge to the *in loco parentis* doctrine. Students sought to be treated as citizens with First Amendment rights instead of children in need of strict guidance (Cohen, 1989).

Advocating against racial discrimination became a student focus in the 1930s (Brax, 1981; Broadhurst, 2014). White students demanded equal accommodations for Black students during national conventions and protested local establishments that refused to serve Black students (Brax, 1981). Student activists in the 1930s celebrated several key court decisions that desegregated the law schools of the University of Maryland and Missouri (e.g., *Murray v. Pearson,* and *Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada*) and began the path toward the ending of racial segregation on college campuses (Chen, 2015; Grothaus, 1984). Black student radicals participated in the first sit-in at a segregated café of the U.S. House of Representatives as a direct rebuke and demand for anti-lynching legislation. Furthermore, by 1937 the first Black-led student radical group had formed in Richmond, Virginia (Boren, 2011; Cohen 1989).

This era was one of the most significant times for the student movement because of the proportion of students involved in student activism (Altbach & Peterson, 1971; Lipset & Schaflander, 1971). Participation in radical groups thrived, and student activists collaborated with activists off-campus and in the community (Altbach, 1973; Altbach & Peterson, 1971;

Cohen 1989; Rudy, 1996). Racial activism became a part of the student movement, and White students become some of the first advocates for desegregation and equal opportunities for Black students. Nation-wide coordinated efforts brought attention to causes important to students, and made the student protest movement a part of the national voice, for social change (Altbach & Peterson, 1971; Rudy, 1996). The interests of the student movement in the1930s informed the interests of the student movement in the 1960s, the issues of anti-war, free speech, and civil rights all were legitimized as platforms for the student movement and would be ever present until the 1960s (Altbach & Peterson, 1971). Disrupted by World War II, the student movement had to restart during the 1940s and faced political repression during the 1950s. The demonstration tactics and the organization of the student movement remained, but resentment towards the U.S. government juxtaposed against fear of growing communism left students afraid of conservative backlash.

The 1940s and 1950s

Similar to periods before, the student movement stalled during and after World War II (Altbach, 1973). American nationalism trumped student liberalism and the national mood shifted from dissent and dissatisfaction to patriotism (Boren, 2011; Cohen, 1989). Anti-war and pacifist student organizations gave way to pro-war and Allied support groups such as the Student Defenders of Democracy and the Student League of America (Boren, 2011). Following the conclusion of World War II, these groups shifted to being anti-communist organizations (Boren, 2011). The quick turnaround in student support left little room for the communist and socialist organizations of the 1930s to grow and educate, as liberal and conservative students alike disavowed any participation in such movements. Biddix (2006) summarized the 1940s stating; "pervasive conservatism and apolitical sentiments following the war kept the Left and radicals silent" (p. 53). The apolitical nature of the 1940s reduced overall student interest in campus activism, as people returning from war sought to finish school quickly (Altbach & Peterson, 1973). Combined with the growing Cold War tensions and anti-communist sentiment, student organizing became difficult and participation waned (Boren, 2011).

The late 1940s into the early 1950s are best categorized by what Cohen (1989) called Cold War nationalism. Tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union led to the Cold War. Senator Joseph McCarthy and congress passed the Smith Act, which granted the removal of suspected communist sympathizers from campuses, and ultimately left student activism devastated (Cohen, 1989). Radical student groups, faculty, and leftist speakers were banned from campuses as a result of the red scare (Cohen, 1989). Ironically, as student membership in subversive organizations declined, the number of students enrolled in higher education increased (Thelin, 2011). This was in part due to the G.I. Bill which provided returning veterans the resources to pay for college tuition (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997; Thelin, 2011).

The expansion of the undergraduate population, similar to after the Civil War, increased the diversity of people who had access to U.S. higher education. Specifically, more African American veterans now had the means to attend college (Thelin, 2011). While there were minor outbursts of activist activity during this time, many students remained discouraged and intimidated by McCarthyism (Michel, 2004). This generation of students became known nationally as the silent generation (Boren, 2011; Cohen, 1989; Lipset 1971). Exploiting the decline of student activism, the U.S. government seized the opportunity to further promote anti-communist student politics and funded the National Student Association that had previously been known as the National Student Federation of America (NSFA) (Boren 2011; Cohen 1989).

The thawing of Cold War relations along with the subsequent censure of Senator Joseph McCarthy revitalized student activists on American college campuses. Coupled with the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision, student activists were invigorated with a new sense of purpose (Cohen, 1989). Though the fight to begin desegregating colleges began well before the *Brown* decision, it paved the way for movements to advocate for desegregation in the South (Broadhurst, 2014). Desegregation victories in Montgomery, Alabama and Little Rock, Arkansas were a result of increased student participation—and demonstrated the new power of mass protest and egalitarian social change (Baxter Magolda & Magolda, 1998). The demonstrations that would take place suggested the type of rapid change that could take place through militant confrontation and protest (Ellsworth & Burns, 1970). Cultural dissent added a pulse to student activism as poets and rock and roll musicians began to emerge as the voice of the student left (Cohen, 1989). Music and the arts would play a major role during the 1960s, as it was a way for White and Black students to show solidarity, communicate meaning, and fundraise to support the needs of student activists (e.g., benefit concerts) (Library of Congress, n.d.).

Student movements and activism during the 1940s and 1950s suffered a major setback after World War II. Due to the radicalism and leftist ideology that many students adopted in prior periods of student movement, students were placed in the crosshairs of an increasingly suspicious government and general U.S. public (Ellsworth & Burns, 1970). Policies enacted during this time period would reverberate into the 21st century affecting the attitudes of many student activists and government officials (Congressional Black Caucus, 2018; Ellsworth & Burns, 1970; FBI, 2017; Michel, 2004). The worry that subversive operatives could infiltrate and influence American college students to act against the United States fueled an anxiety that forced many student activists to leave their organizations or stop demonstrating all together (Paget, 2015).

Due to this disassociation with political affiliates, students began to recruit based on non-party, non-sectarian policies. Therefore, individuals did not have to identify with a particular set of political or religious ideologies, but rather believe in the mission of a group and work to accomplish its goals (Cohen, 1989). This tactic was embraced by the New Left during the 1960s in the effort to rally students around single-issue campaigns (Carson, 1981). The movement in the late 1950s embraced civil rights and the fight for equality (Cohen, 2013). At the conclusion of the decade, Black and White students began to meet to plan more advanced sit-ins and acts of protest against the segregationist policies of the South (Carson, 1981; Cohen, 2013; Horton, 1998). Student activism was reborn at the conclusion of the 1950s, and the organizations and the issues that students cared about helped to contribute to the student movement of the 1960s (Altbach & Peterson, 1971).

1960s: The Era of Unrest

The 1960s presented a time in which the contributions to the student movement from the past collided to influence the platform and tactics of the student activists that made up the New Left (Altbach, 1974; Altbach & Peterson, 1971; Astin et al., 1975; Rhoades, 1998). Activism in the 1960s was in response to students' dissatisfaction with American society and higher education after World War II. As a result of growing tensions between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, federal funding increased drastically, including funding to U.S. higher education (Thelin, 2011). Combined with the arrival of Baby Boomers to campus, higher education experienced its largest enrollment increase to date (Broadhurst, 2014; Thelin, 2011).

Activism during the 1960s focused on students' rights on campus (i.e., challenging *in loco parentis,* input in campus governance, questioning the curriculum, and greater support for Students of Color) and civil/human rights in the community (Broadhurst, 2014; Farber, 1969; OBear, 1968; Thelin, 2011, 2018). The emergence of the New Left, saw students address foreign political issues such as Cold War liberalism and domestic social issues such as the inequalities faced by those who were not White, male, affluent, and heterosexual (Gosse, 2005). Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC) were all student organizations that comprised the New Left during the 1960s (Broadhurst, 2014; Michel, 2003, 2004).

The Student Movement

In February 1960, four Black students sat down at a lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina and asked for service. Sitting in, represented the students intent on being integrated into American society as equals and drew attention to the injustice that Black students and people experienced in being denied access (Proudfoot, 1990). This symbolic act began the sit-in movement, put students at the forefront of the CRM, and led to the establishment of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) (Broadhurst, 2014; Proudfoot, 1990; Thelin, 2018). Sit in tactics spread across the South during the early 1960s, and in 1962 an interracial group of students sat in at a Nashville lunch counter. This tactical move attempted to promote a sense of normalcy at the lunch counter by having people of different races sit together while bringing attention to the CRM with White students also participating (Turner, 2010; Thompson, 2001).

SNCC along with the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) helped to coordinate support for racial equality in the South. White students not from the South, who were interested in the

CRM, spent summers alongside Black students learning to peacefully resist through nonviolence and direct-action courses (Altbach, 1973; Biddix, 2006; Obear, 1968). CORE was mostly a northern and White organization prior to the 1960s, only becoming more integrated during the 1960s (Bell, 1968). Though CORE had been involved in direct action in desegregation efforts in the North as early as 1947, Bell (1968) noted that CORE's efforts in the South did not gain traction until the student-led movement started, and "Negro racial pride" (p. 20) became an emphasis in the movement. Due to the geographic location of the CRM, Southern activists during this period were predominantly Black. From the movement, Black students on campus began to demand Black spaces (Black Student Unions), Black studies programs, more hiring of Black faculty and staff, representation in campus governance, and greater support for nonacademic staff (Broadhurst, 2014).

White students participated in the CRM early, as several White students from Vanderbilt Seminary were present when students decided to stage a sit-in in Nashville (Clark, 2009; Houston, 2012; Turner, 2010). In 1963, Sam Sirah, a White field secretary for SNCC, reported to the SNCC coordinating committee imploring the committee to consider mobilizing southern White students as they were an untapped resource. The report reflected student attitudes on Southern campuses were in favor of integration, despite what was otherwise known due to the media influence or adult influence (Cohen, 2013; Michel, 2004; Muir & McGlamery, 1968). The Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC) was formed after this report. SSOC embraced its southern heritage as innovators and defenders of Southern honor and fought to restore that heritage by advocating for equal rights for all in the South (Michel, 2003, 2004). According to Michel (2004), the purpose of SSOC was to support the efforts of SNCC, and not to be leaders in the CRM. SSOC hoped to also gain advances in labor for Southern workers (Horton, 1998) and also protested against the Vietnam War.

The 1960s represented the height of student activism in U.S. history (Thelin, 2011). Students learned from the previous eras of student activism, and developed new tactics that addressed the issues of the time (Altbach & Cohen, 1990; Baxter Magolda & Magolda, 1988; Biddix, 2006; Thelin, 2018). Black student activists during this time began to assert their Blackness and right to belong in all spaces because they felt they had nothing to lose (Library of Congress, n.d.). Southern White students could have chosen not to risk their lives, as Black students did to gain personal liberties during the CRM; but instead chose to risk their privilege, reputation, and lives to advance the CRM labor in the rural South (Evans, 2007; Horton, 1998; Zellner & Curry, 2008).

Whiteness

Race is a socially constructed, malleable classification strategy designed to dehumanize, subjugate and oppress people not of European decent (Fredrickson, 2002; Goldberg, 1993; Mills, 1997; Omi & Winant, 1994, 2015). Race has been and is continuously created by people with power (e.g., White men) to preserve, protect, and recreate power and privilege, especially in higher education contexts (Spring, 2007). Smedley and Smedley (2005) asserted that racial differences are socially constructed based on skin color, hair texture, nose width, lip thickness, and other phenotypic features – though these features can vary among people within the same racial categories. Moreover, Richeson and Sommers (2015) summarized race as, "dynamic, malleable, and socially constructed, shifting across time, place, perceiver and target" (p. 439). They continued, "In other words, we don't racially categorize ourselves simply based on what we see…[we] do so in concert with social norms and conventions and even laws" (p. 441).

Therefore, while race may have many definitions, it continues to transform throughout time (Goldberg, 1993; Keating, 1995; Mills, 1997, Omi & Winant, 1994). Blackness or otherness was constructed to be in opposition to normalness, which Du Bois (1999) termed as Whiteness. Therefore, a Person of Color is not defined by who they perceive themselves to be, but rather based on their ascribed proximity to Whiteness (Fanon, 2005, 2008; Yancy, 2008). The otherness of People of Color, particularly Black people, perpetuate continued racism. While it is important to understand the lived experiences of individuals who are direct targets of racism (Omi & Winant, 2015), it is equally important to explore Whiteness to better understand race and racism in the United States (Linder, 2015, Cabrerra, Franklin, & Watson 2016).

Whiteness does not denote a racial classification per se but is the discourse that makes racial categorization possible (See Table 1). Lawrence (1997) introduced three layers of Whiteness, which include description (racial classification), experience, and ideology. Whiteness as description includes the physical characteristics (e.g., a White person, White male, White female), Whiteness as experience covers the lived experience of being White, and Whiteness as ideology describes the attitudes, values, and beliefs associated with Whiteness. From the ideological perspective Cabrerra et al., (2016) wrote of five concepts which guide understanding White ideological perspectives: Whiteness as colorblindness, Whiteness as epistemologies of ignorance, Whiteness as ontological expansiveness, Whiteness as property, Whiteness as assumed racial comfort. Whiteness as ideology helps to frame the understanding of Whiteness as experience by naming aspects which help to construct the White experience (Gusa, 2010).

Table 1

Layers of Whiteness (Lawrence, 1997)

Description	**Experience**	**Ideology**
Physical Characteristics of a person.	The lived experience of being White.	The attitudes, values, and beliefs associated with being White.

White Socialization

Some children from White families are socialized to be colorblind (Katz & Kofkin, 1997; Perry, Skinner, & Abaied, 2019; Wise 2005). Though White children are exposed to people who look different and can comprehend difference, some White parents do not discuss or explicitly acknowledge difference with their children. This lack of understanding not only promotes racial ignorance and the perpetuation of colorblindness, or color-evasiveness (Annamma, Jackson, & Morrison, 2017; Bigler, Jones, & Lobliner, 1997; Hagerman, 2014), but also promotes racism and racial superiority (Feagin, 2013; Hagerman, 2014; Lesane-Brown et al., 2010; Pahlke, Bigler, & Suizzo, 2012; Perry et al., 2019; Wise, 2005). Vittrup and Holden (2007) discovered that even when prompted, White parents were reluctant to mention or discuss race with their children. White parent reluctance was due to a fear of appearing racist (Hagerman, 2014; Pahlke et al., 2012; Perry et al., 2019), but implicitly encouraged racist beliefs held by their children due to not correcting their false assumptions (Pahlke et al., 2012).

The Cycle of Socialization (Harro, 2000) describes how people's experiences are influenced by other people and institutions. Children learn norms and expectations from parents, close relatives, teachers, and faith leaders, “people [they] love and trust” (Harro, 2000, p. 17). These caregivers share norms that are informed by the larger culture and have been passed-down to ensure the safety and comfort of the child. Harro (2000) asserted that those norms are reinforced by participating in society and developing a personal lens based on what is learned in school, churches, and other institutions that transmit culture. The cycle of socialization provides a deeper understanding of how explicit and implicit norms can be transmitted to White children in understanding racial difference and practicing racial superiority.

White Privilege

Through the nature of Whiteness and White socialization, White people inherit White privilege. White privilege is the unearned merit that White people gain by being socially constructed as White (Leonardo, 2004). White people may feel as though their privileged status in society is earned; however, it is only a result of being socially constructed as White (Du Bois, 1920; Leonardo, 2004). Leonardo (2004) declared that privilege is accrued by phenotype expression, culture, and language by both White people and those who have proximity (Fanon, 2005, 2008; Hunter, 2002; Yancy, 2008) to Whiteness. Privilege is unearned and can exist without the individual's recognition or attempts to dis-identify with being White. White privilege, especially in institutional spaces (e.g., higher education), is preserved through legal, political, and social norms (Kendall, 2006; Leonardo, 2004; Spring, 2007).

McIntosh (2007) provided a framework for White people to understand and discuss White privilege. In her essay, McIntosh (2007) discussed the various privileges that White people enjoy daily but are oblivious to, and remains invisible unless pointed out by others. White privilege can exist at various levels according to the social construction of one's identity (e.g., working-class White people and middle-class White people) (Johnson, 2006; Kendall, 2006). Examples of White privilege include but are not limited to, ignoring or minimizing the experiences of People of Color, learning and teaching a false history of the United States, believing race is a non-issue, as well as having the expectation to be educated by People of Color on issues of race (Kendall, 2006).

White privilege affords White people a sense of entitlement and individualism (Cabrerra et al., 2017; Watt, 2007). Through socialization White people believe that achievement and success are a result of personal hard work, and fail to see systemic racism as the reason why People of Color fail to achieve similar success (Hall, 2004). Systemic racism is a concept that posits racial oppression as large-scale, inescapable and imbedded in all U.S. institutions. It was devised and is maintained by White people and disadvantages People of Color, primarily Black people (Feagin & Elias, 2011). Moreover, their sense of entitlement and individualism leads White people to believe that acts of racism or racist beliefs are acts of moral failure on the behalf of individual racists (e.g., bad White people) (DiAngelo, 2018) and not a system of oppression that all White people are linked to (Feagin & Elias, 2011; Scheurich, 1993). By not understanding racism as a larger systemic issue that implicates all who participate in it, White people further contribute to the system oppression and marginalization of People of Color.

Another aspect of White privilege is the universality of Whiteness—or that it is considered normal (Lipsitz, 2018; Ortiz & Rhoads, 2000). Whiteness is universal, and therefore is the standard by which all people are held to in a society built to maintain Whiteness (Kendall, 2006; Lipsitz, 2018). People of Color are exposed to and have to navigate Whiteness and their personal racialization before White people are aware of their own Whiteness and its material worth (Du Bois, 1920; Fanon, 2008). Due to the universalization of Whiteness, *all* White people have a vested interest in protecting the privilege that Whiteness provides (Lipsitz, 2018). Lipsitz (2018) named the interest in protecting Whiteness and White privilege the possessive investment in Whiteness. The possessive investment in Whiteness ties directly back to the norms, laws, and beliefs that are formed and shift constantly in order to protect Whiteness (Goldberg, 1993; Keating, 1995; Lipsitz, 2018; Mills, 1997).

When White privilege is threatened or White people are confronted with the reality of their White privilege, they can either feel a sense of guilt or anger. The sense of guilt that White people feel or White fragility (DiAngelo, 2018) is a weaponized form of White privilege designed to draw attention to the emotional anguish of White people and away from actually addressing the oppression and systemic racism that People of Color face as a result of White privilege (Applebaum, 2017; DiAngelo, 2018, 2012a, 2012b; Jones & Norwood, 2016).

White rage is that sense of anger cultivated by threats to privilege and directed against People of Color. White rage is the response to the presumed advancement of People of Color at the expense of White people. Anderson (2017) stressed:

> White rage is not about visible violence, but rather it works its way through the courts, the legislatures, and a range of government bureaucracies. It wreaks havoc subtly, almost imperceptibly. It's not the Klan. Working the halls of power, it can achieve its ends far more effectively, far more destructively. (p. 3)

White rage utilizes the systems and processes built to uphold Whiteness as the universal norm to maintain Whiteness as the status quo. White privilege allows White people to create space to protect their Whiteness, while simultaneously destroying space to protect Blackness (Anderson, 2017; DiAngelo, 2018; Kendall, 2006).

White Racial Identity Development

Leach et al. (2002) posited that underlying all racial identity theories is the need for different racial groups to adapt to environments where resources are allocated by group membership. One develops in response to their racialized group membership, for both People of

Color and White people the goal is to overcome a racist society. People of Color must overcome racist stereotypes, while White people must escape the privileges granted by their Whiteness. Hardiman (1982) was the first to develop a White racial identity model. Her literary analysis of White American authors helped to provide insight into what would become her five developmental stages.

Helms (1984) built on the work of Hardiman (1982) and introduced a five-stage model for White racial identity development. Due to the empirical nature of Helms's (1984, 1997) WRID model and subsequent creation of the WRIAS (Helms & Carter, 1990), her WRID model and WRIAS are the most influential and widely used in education scholarship (Burkard, Juarez-Huffaker, & Ajmere, 2003; Cabrerra, 2012; Cook & McCoy, 2017; Kleinman-Fleischer, 2010; Leach et al., 2002; Malott, Paone, Schaefle, Cates & Haizlip, 2015; Ortiz & Santos, 2009; Richardson & Silvestri, 1999; Rowe et al.,1994). Helms's (1984, 1997) model specifically operated within a Black-White binary, which explained how White people develop their identities in relation to Black people. Helms's (1997) model also acknowledged that White people can inhabit multiple statuses simultaneously, and similar to personalities, the more dominant status would be presented or performed.

Ponterotto (1988) and Sabnani et al. (1991) critiqued Helms's understanding of the Black/White nature of White identity development and instead proposed a White/non-White developmental theory to better understand how White counselor students developed cultural competence. Cook and McCoy (2017) acknowledged that a major contribution of this model was that it recognized that White people cannot develop the notion of racial consciousness in an all-White environment. Similarly, Sue and Sue (1990, 2015) suggested that White people must ponder their history in order to gain a sense of their identity. They must also consider their past, present, and future as determinants of their racialized identity, and how they perceive other racialized identities.

Cook and McCoy (2017) suggested that White racial identity development provides a framework for understanding how White people navigate a racialized society. Theories of White racial identity development and White racial consciousness attempt to explore the ways in which White people discover their racialized identity and then reconcile their Whiteness with the racialization of others. Many models of White racial identity development/White racial consciousness exist (see Hardiman, 1982; Helms, 1984; Rowe, Bennett, & Atkinson, 1994; Sabnani et al., 1991; Sue & Sue, 1990), though there is no one model of White racial identity development/White racial consciousness that fully explicates the process by which White people conceptualize individual- and group-level racial identities (Cook & McCoy, 2017). However, Helms' (1984) model of White Racial Identity Development (WRID) is one of the most widely used and influential theories of White racial identity (Hardiman, 2001; Parker et al, 1998; Ponterotto et al., 2006, Richardson & Silvestri, 1999; Sabnani et al., 1991).

The Helms Model of White Racial Identity Development (WRID)

Helms (1984) proposed a model of White Racial Identity Development (WRID) from a counseling psychology background. Hardiman (2001) noted that Helms's (1984) work to develop a White racial identity model not only grew out of frustration of the hyper focus on People of Color in counseling environments but independently of the WRID model. Helms (1984) wanted to demonstrate that all people go through a process in which they develop racial consciousness about themselves and toward others. According to Helms (1992), in developing a healthy White identity, White people unlearn racism and they internalize what it means to be White without racial dominance (Richardson & Silvestri, 1999). Helms's work is considered one of the most influential models of White identity development (Hardiman, 2001; Ponterotto et al., 2006; Richardson & Silvestri, 1999; Sabnani et al., 1991). The WRID contains six statuses with each status building upon the previous (See Table 2). Helms and Cook (1999) noted that individuals can exhibit qualities from multiple statuses, but one may be more dominant. The statues that Helms (1984) identified are: (1) Contact, (2) Disintegration, (3) Reintegration, (4) Pseudoindependence, (5) Immersion/Emersion, and (6) Autonomy.

Table 2

The Helms Model of White Racial Identity Development (1984)

Status	**Description**
1. Contact	1. White person is naïve to racial difference.
2. Disintegration	2. Recognition of own Whiteness and the privilege that comes with it.
3. Reintegration	3. Idealization/embrace of Whiteness and White racial identity (racist ideology).
4. Psuedoindependence	4. Approaches race through an intellectual lens and racial group similarities.
5. Immersion/Emersion	5. Commits to searching for meaningful information about race, and personal racial development, and embraces other White individuals commited to racial identity development.
6. Autonomy	6. Possession of a non-racist White identity.

Contact. Helms (1984) described the contact status as the point in life when a White person becomes aware of the existence of Black people. Similar to Hardiman's (1982) first status, the individual in the contact stage possesses a naïveté about Black people and adopts a colorblind "people are people" (Helms, 1984, p. 156) stance that ignores difference. In this stage race is cosmetic, and any discomfort about racial differences is either met with a withdrawal behavior or an approach behavior (Helms, 1984). Withdrawal is the tendency for the individual to be comfortable with the racial status quo and not interact with Black people, and the approach behavior is a curiosity which causes the individual to attempt to befriend Black people (Helms, 1984). There are two types of contact, vicarious and direct (Helms, 1997), both rely on the socialization experiences of the White person and their reaction to Black people. Helms (1997) acknowledged that White people can either be socialized to fear and devalue Black people (vicarious contact) or come to understand the differences in how both White people and Black people are treated in the U.S. by direct contact with other Black people.

Disintegration. In this stage a White person, according to Helms (1984), has to acknowledge they are White and accept their privileged place in society. Guilt and shame are feelings associated with this status, as a White person becomes aware that they are complicit in reproducing social norms that contribute to racism and the oppression of Black people (Helms, 1997). The individual faces the dilemma of continuing to deny the humanity of Black people and remain racist or appealing to a moral self and separating oneself from "White norms" (Helms, 1984, p. 156) or as Helms later wrote having to choose between humanism and own-group loyalty (Helms, 1995). To resolve the feelings in this, stage the individual can decide to either adopt Black culture, become paternalistic toward certain Black people as a means to protect them, or continue to conform to the comfortability of White culture (Helms, 1984).

Reintegration. The choice to retreat or conform back to White culture marks the beginning of the third status of the WRID—reintegration. The individual embraces White culture and increasingly becomes hostile towards Black people. Helms (1984) noted that this stage is the closest to the understanding of prejudice or as Ponterotto et al. (2006) stated “reintegration represents the purest racist status in the Helms model” (p. 95). A White person in this status could potentially treat People of Color as inferior by committing violent acts towards them and supporting segregation (Helms, 1990; Richardson & Silvestri, 1999).

The first three statuses of Helms’ model are what Jones and Carter (1996) considered racist White identities. Though White people in these stages may have contact with Black People and other People of Color, they still rely on their White socialization to guide their beliefs. The following statuses Jones and Carter (1996) deemed statuses that are “toward a nonracist white racial identity” (p. 7). White people in these latter stages are not quite anti-racist but are working toward the end goal of being nonracist.

Pseudoindependence. White people in this status approach their understanding of race and racial consciousness through an intellectual approach (Richardson & Silvestri, 1999). Helms (1984) stated that the intellectual curiosity in this status is not the same as that in the contact status, but that individuals in this status are interested in racial-group similarities. Any correspondence or interactions with Black people in this status is limited to Black people who are “special” (Helms, 1984 p. 156).

Immersion/Emersion. The immersion status of the WRID model signifies a commitment to the search for meaningful information about race and a deeper understanding about personal racial development (Hardiman, 2001; Helms, 1997). White people in this status may be involved in activism. Emersion sees the individual embrace a community of other White people who have been reeducated to be rejuvenated and empowered to continue personal identity development (Helms, 1997; Ponterotto et al., 2006). Moreover, in this status, Helms (1997) acknowledged that a White person may feel what is “akin to a religious rebirth” (p. 220) and begin to address issues of race and racism.

Autonomy. White people who advance to the autonomy status continue to develop and foster a positive racial identity. As the most advanced status in the WRID model, the “autonomous person” (Ponterotto et al., 2006, p. 96) has the ability to think through complex racial situations and is flexible, willing to avoid situations which may encourage oppression and to potentially relinquish White privilege (Helms, 1984, 1995; Helms & Cook, 1999). According to Helms (1997), the autonomous person actively seeks opportunity to learn from other groups and becomes more aware of various forms of oppression and their relation to racism. A White person in this status will work toward the elimination of racism (Helms, 1997).

Helms’s (1984, 1990, 1995) WRID model utilized a step-wise process that theorized how White individuals develop their racial identity in relation to People of Color. Constructed as a linear process, the model does not indicate of the level of importance of certain events, stages, or statuses that White people in the racial identity development process experience. Helms’s (1984, 1990, 1995) model does, however, strive toward a goal of a healthy White identity. A healthy White identity means identifying as White while denying and actively working against White supremacy and racist ideology.

White Racial Identity Attitudes Scale (WRIAS)

Helms and Carter (1990) developed a 50-item Likert scale to assess the development of White racial identity attitudes. The White Racial Identity Attitudes Scales (WRIAS) was based on the initial five constructs of Helms’ (1984) original stages of White identity development and later changed to reflect the additional statues of Helms' (1995) later models. The inclusion of the WRIAS with the theoretical model, led to scholars (e.g., Alexander, 1992; Mercer & Cunningham, 2003; Swanson, Tokar, & Davis, 1994; Tokar & Swanson, 1991) testing the validity of the psychometric constructs of the instrument.

These studies found little external validity of the instrument and criticized its reliance on a racial binary (i.e., White vs. Black) (Mercer & Cunningham, 2003). Helms (2005) defended the WRIAS as a foundational instrument for White people to understand their personal racial attitudes, and questioned whether or not the over-critique of the WRIAS was due to an emotional response by White researchers (e.g., Behrens, 1997; Behrens & Rowe, 1997). The widespread use of the WRIAS and WRID have demonstrated the ways in which White racial identity is influenced by a variety of different psychological factors despite its criticism (Wolfe, 2009).

Activist Identity Development

There remains a lack of research that supports a singular activist identity development model (Holeman, 2007). However, Chambers and Phelps (1993) determined that activism, from an educational perspective, is a form of leadership development. They defined activism as the "the active participation of individuals in a group behavior for the purpose of creating change—in attitudes, knowledge, behavior and/or symbols. The expected change can be directed towards individuals, groups, or systems" (Chambers & Phelps, 1993, p. 20). Similarly, Renn (2007), in her study of LGBT and Queer student activists, related activism to a form of transformational leadership. Drawing from Komives et al. (2005) she stated, "leadership is an active commitment to a personal passion" (Renn, 2007, p. 322). Based on this understanding it is acceptable to conceptualize activist identity development as leadership identity development (Chambers & Phelps, 1993; Renn, 2007).

Through a grounded theory approach, Komives et al., (2005) developed the leadership identity development (LID) model. The authors discovered that leadership identity development was a dynamic process that unfolded over six stages. The six stages are: awareness, exploration/engagement, leaders identified, leadership differentiated, generativity, and integration/synthesis. Though the stages in the model imply linear development, Komives et al., (2006) acknowledged that the model is actually cyclical and proposed a helix conceptualization of the model as “it allows for stages to be repeatedly experienced, and each return is experienced with a deeper and more complex understanding of the stage” (p. 404). Students advance through the stages by developing a deepened sense of self awareness, building self-confidence, establishing self-efficacy, and learning to apply new skills (Komives et al., 2005). Students in the study moved from viewing leadership as a static centralized role to understanding leadership as a relational collaborative process (Komives et al., 2005).

Building on the LID model, Renn (2007) asserted that her definition of activist identity rested in the identity of her study’s participants. Therefore, as transformational leaders, the students in Renn’s (2007) study did not rely on positional titles to embrace leadership, but rather the act of leading transformational change within organizations. Likewise, DeAngelo, Schuster, and Stebleton (2016) uncovered that DREAMers, students who are classified as such by the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act, derive their identity through their activism and their activism informs their identity.

Helms’s (1984) WRID model like other racial identity development models (see Cross, 1971; 1978; Downing & Roush, 1985) describes a transformational process by which individuals who are confronted with prejudice, bias, or discrimination feel compelled to act (Holeman, 2007). More specifically, Helms (1997) determined that in the last two stages of the WRID, immersion/emersion and autonomy, White people should be progressing toward a positive White identity that begins to address all forms of oppression related to racism (e.g., classism, sexism, ageism, etc.). Helms (1984) described a positive White identity, as an identity that embraces being White without the marginalization of others. Furthermore, while there remains no general model for activist identity development, the transformational aspect of Helms's (1984) WRID support its use as a model for activist identity development among White people for racial justice (Chambers & Phelps, 1993; Holeman, 2007; Renn, 2007).

Reconstruction vs. Abolition

All current models of White racial identity development suggest the same outcome—a positive White identity (Hardiman, 1982, 2001, Hardiman & Keehn, 2012; Helms, 1984). That is, an identity that fully embraces both its Whiteness and a commitment to racial justice. DiAngelo (2018) stated individuals who promote this approach believe in the possibility of reclaiming European (e.g., Polish, English, Italian, etc.) cultural pride to co-exist with Blackness/otherness without the shame of White supremacy (Malott et al., 2015; Rose, 1996). Linder (2016) and Tatum (2007) claimed that while there are not enough examples of White people with positive White identities, it should be possible for one to be both White and an ally to oppressed and marginalized people. People who believe in the positive reconstruction of the White identity, present linear progression models that feature White people being confronted with their privilege and developing into a person who embraces their Whiteness, but works toward the equitable treatment of People of Color.

Counter to the reconstruction of White identity or the positive White identity, is the complete abolition of Whiteness and White identity (Ignatiev, 1997; Roediger, 1999). DiAngelo (2018) asserted "A positive white identity is an impossible goal. White identity is inherently racist; white people do not exist outside the system of white supremacy" (p. 149). Similarly, Love (2019) acknowledged that White people cannot fully participate in remedying systemic oppression and injustice without first understanding and struggling with Whiteness and the privilege that it affords. What Love (2019) labeled as "abolitionist teaching" (p. 159) requires White people to understand that their Whiteness is problematic and will continuously undermine the freedom of People of Color.

Furthermore, White people must be willing to "take risks that dark people cannot take," and be "ready to lose something," (Love, 2019, p. 159) for the sake of justice. DiAngelo (2018), Ignatiev (1997), Love (2019), and Roediger (1999), acknowledged the impossibility of losing one's Whiteness, but the possibility to actively reject the material and non-material benefits (i.e., White privilege) that is associated with one's white skin. To be "well and White" (Love, 2019, p. 160), is to be "less white" (DiAngelo, 2018, p. 100), is to "abolish the privileges of the white skin" (racetraitor.org, n.d.). Unlike reconstructionists, (see Hardiman, 1982; Helms, 1984; Rowe et al., 1984; Sabnani et al.,1991; Sue & Sue, 1990) abolitionists do not provide a linear development model to achieve the abolition of Whiteness. Abolitionists believe the crux of abolition is the constant struggle to identify, then deny White privilege, while also supporting People of Color (DiAngelo, 2018; Ignatiev, 1997; Love, 2019; Race Traitor, 1993; Roediger, 1999).

Social Justice Ally Development

Social justice allies are members of dominant social groups that work to end the system of oppression that grants their privilege based on their group membership (Broido, 2000). Specifically, racial justice allies/anti-racists are individuals who act to subvert ideology that maintains racial inequality and oppression (O'Brien, 2001; Reason, Millar, & Scales, 2005).

White people who engage in racial justice ally work, actively work to “end racism and racial oppression” (Reason et al., 2005 p. 531). Racial justice ally work is a facet of social justice ally work and will be referred to as White anti-racism (Reason et al., 2005). Understanding how White students develop social justice ally identities, can further inform the understanding of the experiences of southern White students who participated in the CRM.

Broido (2000) provided insight into how college students developed as social justice allies; however, her focus considered the broader ways individuals conceptualize social justice and did not focus specifically on racial justice. Broido’s (2000) model determined that ally development begins pre-college and develops through college experiences, especially as students become more involved with social justice issues on college campuses. Edwards (2006) also provided a model for aspiring social justice ally identity development. His model included three statuses for individuals who may aspire to be social justice allies; self-interest, altruism, and social justice. Social justice allies for self-interest typically see the world as fair and just and are surprised when acts of oppression occur. Altruistic allies feel a sense of guilt and shame with the privileges associated with their identity, and it motivates their actions. These individuals see themselves as the hero or savior of oppressed people. Allies for social justice see themselves as a part of the systemic nature of oppression and work to challenge and change those systems (Edwards, 2006). Allyship is cyclical in nature, and allies must continuously interrogate their intentions, behaviors, and actions if they committed to the process (Edwards, 2006).

White anti-racists work to understand their Whiteness and how it affects their anti-racist work. The level of understanding that White anti-racists have about their Whiteness is reflected in the complexity of their anti-racist work; therefore, the more aware White people are about their privilege the harder they work to dismantle it (Bailey, 1998). Furthermore, anti-racists acknowledge Whiteness as an oppressive discourse, their complicity in that oppression, and work to define what it means to have a White racial identity with White privilege (Applebaum, 2007; Eichstedt, 2001; Ostrove & Brown, 2018).

Anti-racists understand racism as more than just single acts of hatred committed by bad White people, but as a system that works to suppress and oppress minoritized people (Applebaum, 2007). They comprehend that the system of racism is harmful to all and work to dismantle systems of oppression for everyone’s benefit (Eichstedt, 2001; Frankenberg, 1993; Ostrove & Brown, 2018). In college environments Reason et al. (2005) noticed that White people committed to anti-racist action had significant exposure to anti-racism and racial identity development pre-college and sought additional developmental experiences during college.

Whiteness in Higher Education

Whiteness in U.S. higher education is omnipresent (Asumah, 2014; Cabrera et al., 2016; Chesler, Lewis, & Crowfoot, 2005; Harper & Hurtado, 2007). The campus environment and climate allow to students to maintain their racial socialization and perpetuate color-blindness and racial ignorance (Cabrera, 2018; Cabrera et al., 2016; Saenz, 2010). The system of higher education allows the harmful effects of color-blind ideology and racial ignorance by protecting and recreating Whiteness through its policies and curriculum which contribute to the overall campus climate and culture (Asumah, 2014; Cabrera et al., 2016; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2005).

Whiteness on college campuses create spaces exclusive to White students (Chesler et al., 2005; Tatum, 1997). These spaces include social organizations, social programing, and classroom curriculum (Cabrera, 2018; Cabrera et al., 2016; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Peters, 2015; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Reason & Evans, 2007). White males, in particular, are more likely to be in racially homogeneous organizations and exude racial ignorance (Cabrera, 2018; Cabrera et al., 2016). However, Cabrera (2012, 2018) also discovered that White men who felt minoritized or had minoritized experiences where more likely to “engage and struggle with their Whiteness” (Cabrera, 2012, p. 394) in a manner which promoted racial cognizance and cross-racial dialogue. White faculty, students, and staff, who espouse color-blind beliefs contribute to subtle forms of racism (e.g., microaggressions) (Donovan, Galban, Grace, Bennet, & Felcie, 2013; Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000) rather than display overt racism, perpetuate the notion that individuals rather than systems are the main cause of racism. For Students of Color this intercultural immaturity (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005) contributes to “intercultural awkwardness” (Lewis, Chesler, & Forman, 2000, p. 81) and increases the need for multicultural competence (Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004) and critical consciousness (hooks, 1993; Rodriguez, 2009; Tatum, 1997).

Whiteness has been used as an analytical lens to study preservice teachers (e.g., college students) (Cabrera et al., 2016). Evans-Winters and Hoff (2011) discovered that White preservice teachers use teacher evaluations as a way to resist anti-Whiteness teaching approaches by Black professors, similarly Ladson-Billings (1996) found classroom silence was another way White students resisted racial education. Though the curriculum should aid students in understanding and developing racial cognizance, it cannot over-rely on the labor Students and Faculty of Color (Quaye, 2012; Richeson & Shelton, 2007); however, White educators remain ill-equipped to discuss anti-racist praxis, racial development, or historical examples of White anti-racists in a meaningful manner with other White students (Bloom et al., 2015; Cross, 2003; Dunac & Demir, 2017; Matias, 2016).

Student affairs as a profession and field of study, regards multicultural competence and developing social justice allies as essential to the field (ACPA, n.d.; Haizlip, 2019; Malott, Schaefle, Paone, Cates, & Linder, 2016; Smith & Redington, 2010). Mueller and Pope (2001) found that in student affairs programs, multicultural training focused primary on other groups and not enough on exploring the Whiteness and racial self-awareness of White students. The existence of White anti-racists is not present in curriculum focused on developing diverse and inclusive student affairs professionals (Ayvazian, 2004; O'Brien, 2001). Scholars (see Boutte & Jackson, 2014; Bridges & Mather, 2015; Linder, 2015; Smith & Redington, 2010) have agreed that having the stories of historical White anti-racists, who engaged in anti-racist work and confronted the emotional difficulty of addressing their personal White privilege, can aid in the preparedness of White educators and students in educating and practicing anti-racism, multicultural competence, and intercultural maturity.

Institutions of higher education serve as protector and recreator of Whiteness and White supremacy (Cabrerra et al., 2016). However, higher education is uniquely positioned to create positive and lasting change for White students through intentionally creating spaces, examining curriculum, and fostering racial awareness among White students. When White students understand their racial identity, they can develop cultural awareness and the effect of their Whiteness, and help foster an overall healthier and more inclusive campus environment (Helms, 1995; Mercer & Cunningham, 2003; Minikel-Lacocque, 2013; Sue, 2010).

Summary

In this chapter, I synthesized the literature relevant to student activism, Whiteness, White identity, and ally identity development. By providing a history of student activism, I demonstrated that while White students have been at the center of student activism since the beginning of higher education in the U.S., the extant literature does not acknowledge their racial identity as a salient part of their decision to participate in student protests. Moreover, literature concerning student activism during the CRM does acknowledge some participation of southern White students but does not fully examine their motivations or how they came to participate in the movement. By exploring the discourse of Whiteness, I highlighted the importance of understanding race as a social construction, and the privileges that are associated with being socially constructed as a White person. These privileges exist in higher education through color-blind ideology (Cabrera et al., 2016; Saenz, 2010) and spaces designed to protect Whiteness from being challenged (Cabrera, 2018; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Solorzano et al., 2000).

White racial identity development explores the process of White people understanding their own racial identity and the privileges it provides. The stages generally move from a state of unawareness of racial difference to acknowledging racial difference and working to reconcile personal Whiteness with the Blackness of others. The end goal of White racial identity development is a positive White racial identity, which is at odds with Whiteness scholars who have determined that there can be no such thing as a positive White racial identity (DiAngelo, 2018; Love, 2019). There does not exist one model of activist identity development (Holeman, 2007). However, some scholars view activist identity development as leadership development and have shown that activists develop their identity as they participate in activism (Chambers & Phelps, 1993; DeAngelo, Schuster, and Stebleton 2016; Renn, 2007). White identity abolitionists advocate for White people to actively reject the privileges of being White, rather than reconciling their Whiteness with being racially just. White racial identity follows a linear development process, and White racial abolition does not. Social justice ally identity development addresses White people who understand and actively interrogate their Whiteness, while also working to advocate on the behalf of marginalized people. Racial justice allies or anti-racists understand racism is more than just individualized acts of racism and that systems of oppression must be dismantled to benefit all people, not just People of Color (Bailey, 1998; Reason et al., 2005).

In higher education Whiteness is universalized, providing safety and comfort for White people to participate knowingly and unknowingly in White supremacy (Cabrera, 2018). However, higher education spaces can also be used strategically to subvert White supremacy and educate White people to become social justice allies (Mueller, 2001; Pope et al., 2004). This can be accomplished by sharing the stories of anti-racist White people and their experiences as social justice allies (Linder, 2016). In the next chapter, I describe the methodology and methods that I will use to collect and explore the stories of southern White student activists who participated in the CRM.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

In this chapter, I describe the methodology for this research study. I then describe the study participants, as well as discuss the data collection procedures and how I analyzed the data. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of how I ensured the trustworthiness of the study, including my reflexivity.

Narrative inquiry focuses on how people experience the world. This is done through the stories that they tell, and the ways that they communicate these stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). There are multiple forms of narrative inquiry, including life histories, life stories, oral histories, biographies, and autobiographies (DeVault, 1997; Ellis, 1997; Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995; Riessman, 1993). Narrative inquiry designed to promote social justice is called critical life history (Diniz-Pereira, 2008). Critical life history as a narrative method allowed the participants to tell their stories to document the historical significance of their participation in the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) and revealed the reasons they chose to participate (Crocco, Munro, & Weiler, 1999; Weiler, 1988). Narrative inquiry encouraged the study participants to interpret their actions in ways that are meaningful to them (Reismann, 1993), and allowed me as the researcher to further interpret the interpretation of the storytellers (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004).

Epistemological Perspective

Epistemological perspective is the philosophical assumption or worldview undertaken in a research study (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). The epistemological perspective informs how the research is done, and the data are analyzed (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). To collect the stories and examine the experiences of southern White students who participated in the CRM, this study utilized a constructivist epistemological perspective.

Constructivism posits that individuals make their own meaning and understanding from the world they live in from multiple and varied experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Scwandt (1998) asserted that constructivist knowledge and truth are shaped by individual perspective and that “reality is stretched and shaped to fit purposeful acts of intentional human agents” (p. 236). Research situated in a constructivist approach relies on the participants understanding and interpretation of their historical and social contexts in order to interpret the meaning they have about the world and themselves (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Holstein & Gubrium, 2002).

Hardy, Gregory, and Ramjeet (2009) suggested that the constructivist approach was best suited for inquiries concerned with how “stories were reconstructed in a way to convey their perspective of an event, rather than object decontextualized truths” (p. 13). Constructivism is anti-essentialist in that it rejects, objectivism, empirical realism, and objective truth (Schwandt, 1998). Constructivist research is inductive in nature and generates meaning from the data collected (Crotty, 1998). The stories of southern White student civil rights activists in Tennessee were used to fully understand what their lived experience was during the civil rights era, and generated meaning as to why they participated.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to collect and examine the stories of southern White students who participated in the Civil Rights Movement (CRM). The research questions guiding this narrative inquiry were:

1. What are the stories of southern White student activists who participated in the Civil Rights Movement?
    a. How did White activists develop their anti-racist identities?
    b. How did White activists develop their activist identities?
2. How might the stories of southern White student activists who participated in the CRM provide implication for anti-racism in higher education?
    a. How might role models' perspectives and experiences provide direction in overcoming racial identity regression among college students?

Methods

In this study, I utilized narrative inquiry as the methodology to collect and examine the experiences of southern White civil rights activists. While narrative methods can be utilized in qualitative research (interviews and ethnographies), narrative inquiry is a methodological approach to explore and explain phenomena (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). At the core of narrative inquiry and its ability to connect to and explain the self is the assertion that, as humans, people are naturally story tellers, live storied lives, and learn from stories (Brunner, 1990; Chase, 2005; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Kirby, 1991; Ricoeur, 1991; Riessman, 1993) Narrative inquiry is used to better understand how personal stories and experiences influence who people are, who they become, and how they interpret or interact with the environment and people around them (Creswell, 2012; Leavey, 2008; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Stephens, 2019;). The focus of narrative inquiry is narratives or stories and the interpretation and reinterpretation thereof. Social researchers (see Bruner, 1990; Kramp, 2003; Labov, 1972) use narratives and stories synonomously, and therefore will be used interchangeably throughout this study.

Narratives are not just stories of experiences that happened during a particular time or place, but they also contextualize how an individual understands their experience in relation to their self and time (Brunner, 1990; Fivush & Haden, 1997; Habermas & Bluck, 2000; McLean, 2008, Watson, 2009). Narratives allow for the understanding of the world that an individual inhabits culturally, collectively, and individually (Kirby, 1991; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002), and give the narrator the ability to constantly craft their selfhood through the stories they tell (Ricoeur, 1985). Though narratives can be told through a temporal sequence (Labov & Waletzky, 1997), they are not limited to sequential ordering. Stories can draw from both the past and present, be thematic, or episodic in nature (Chase, 2005). Truth, in narratives, is not objective but subjective. The stories told by individuals reveal personal truth even if they are not factual, and can provide greater insight into the narrator (Riessman, 1993).

Narrative inquiry has many forms. It can consist of oral histories, life histories, life stories, autobiographies, and biographies (Apple, 1996; Casey, 1993; DeVault, 1997; Ellis, 1997; Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Goodson & Sikes, 2001; Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995; Riessman, 1993). The specific type of narrative inquiry that helped guide this study was critical life history (Diniz-Pereira, 2008). Critical life history is suited for “studies of those who have [been] actively involved in progressive social and cultural movements and have developed an identity as activist[s]” (Diniz-Pereira, 2008, p. 381). This type of narrative inquiry was useful in not only collecting the stories and experiences of southern White civil rights student activists but examining their experiences in ways that are currently not present in extant research on White student activists in higher education.

Specific to this study, narrative inquiry provided a methodological framework to collect and examine the stories of southern White student civil rights activists. The methodology highlights the experiences of historically understudied populations by exploring what led these students to participate in anti-racist activism. By asking these individuals to share their stories, and then analyzing the connections in their stories, I worked with the participants to make meaning from these connections to aid in a deeper understanding of southern White civil rights activists and White identity (Chase, 2005; Creswell 2007).

Data Collection

Narratives in research can be used for understanding experiences, biographies, and the socio-historical context of an individual's lived experience (Stephens, 2019). The narrative interview is a method for collecting data to create that understanding (Flick, 2005). The narrative method of data collection employs a biographical approach, where participants are asked to remember and recount their experiences. Stories derived from this method not only focus on the narratives themselves but the experiences of the event or the time being narrated (Flick, 2005).

Context and Archival Data Sources

Combining historical research with narrative inquiry methods is useful because it provides context to the narratives that the participants tell (Wilson, 2007). Even if the anti-racist identity development of southern White student activists had been explored previously, the combination of historical research and narrative inquiry can aid in the development of new perspectives, and new shared meaning of the narratives told (Wilson, 2007).

I identified several key sites to collect primary and archival data regarding southern White student activism during the CRM. The Highlander Folk School (now known as the Highlander Research and Educational Center) was an important site for organizing and teaching activists during the civil rights era (Evans, 2007; Thayer-Bacon, 2004). The Highlander Research and Educational Center has two archival sites, one in New Market, Tennessee at its facility, and the other in Madison, Wisconsin at the Wisconsin State Archives. On March 29, 2019, the main Highlander Research and Educational Center administration building burned. A White power symbol was found spray painted in the parking lot of the destroyed building, and it is suspected that this was an act of hate (Highlander Research and Educational Center, 2019). The building contained important historical data that is now lost; therefore, I was unable to conduct archival research at that site, however, it did not affect the outcome of the study. The arson investigation at Highlander is ongoing, and it is currently unknown when access to Highlander's archives in Tennessee will be available again.

Data at the Wisconsin state archives informed whether the participants in the study were present at Highlander workshops, their level of participation at the workshops, and the content covered at the workshops. The Civil Rights Movement Veterans archival website, maintained by Tougaloo College, was utilized to retrieve artifacts such as personal, popular culture, and visual documents. Personal documents included diaries, letters, and travel logs. Popular culture documents included newspapers and cartoons, and visual documents were film, video, and photography (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). Moreover, the Mississippi Sovereignty Commission at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History provided insights to documents collected by the State of Mississippi on the activists in this study.

Participants

In narrative inquiry, the people who are a part of the study are of critical importance because they are seen as "embodiments of lived stories…that shape and are shaped by social and cultural narratives" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 43). For that reason, it was important for the participants selected to produce information to achieve the study's aim, but not imperative to have a large sample size (Wells, 2011). Wells (2011) explained that while many narrative studies have a sample size of one participant, most complex narrative studies have a sample size of no more than five.

For this study I collected the narratives of seven individuals (Gordon Gibson, Gene Guerrerro, Jim Sessions, Brenda Bell, Fran Ansley, Ed Hamlett, and Tom Gardner) who identify as southern and White, and participated in the CRM. Purposeful sampling is most appropriate for studies with small research populations (Merriam, 2009). Criterion sampling, in particular, was used because each participant in the study met specific criteria (e.g., southern, White, college student, participated in the CRM) (Patton, 2002).

The participants whose stories were collected, were identified initially through a thorough literature review of student activism during the civil rights era specific to participation in the Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC) and Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) partner organizations (Houston, 2012; Michel, 1999, 2004; Turner, 2010). Through a conversation with Bob Zellner, a southern White student activist from Alabama who served as the first White field secretary of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) (Zellner & Curry, 2008), their participation in the CRM as students from Tennessee was verified and contact information secured**.**

Narrative Interview

In social research using narratives, most data are collected via interviews (Riessman, 2008). Merriam (2009) asserted that, “Interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them. It is also important when we are interested in past events that are impossible to replicate” (p. 88). The purpose of this study was to collect and examine the stories of southern White student activists who participated in the CRM, and the most appropriate interview format to collect that data is the critical life history interview (Diniz-Pereira, 2008). Narrative interviews are biographical in nature and allow the participant to share their knowledge and their experiences as they were experienced (Flick, 2005).

The narrative interview begins with a generative narrative question that is designed to "stimulate the interviewee's main narrative" (Flick, 2005, p. 177). Follow-up interviews in narrative inquiry are useful to clarify one's story, or to further investigate a particular event (Holloway & Jefferson, 1997). Life history interviews, in particular, are time-intensive, and share characteristics with semi-structured and unstructured interviews (Flick, 2005; Fielding, 2011). As a narrative interviewer, I was also a part of the narrative that was being constructed by the participant, and it was important for me to remain an active participant in the interview by demonstrating that I was actively listening and asking probing questions that further revealed their experience (Adler et al., 2017; Fielding, 2011; Flick, 2005; Merriam, 2009).

Narrative interviews can be collected in oral or written form (Adler et al., 2017). Oral interviews allow for follow-up questions and can produce more robust data; whereas, written interviews allow for more succinct and coherent responses (Adler et al., 2017). During oral interviews, it is important that the interviewer establish rapport with the interviewee, by maintaining professionalism, maintaining positive body language, and engaging in active listening during the interview (Bavelas, Coates, & Johnson, 2000). Obtaining written narratives are less time intensive than conducting oral interviews, but do not allow for follow-up questions (during the interview) and must be produced in a setting that is conducive to effective writing (Adler et al., 2017). Oral interviews were conducted for this study as they yielded the most in-depth data; however, written follow-up questions (via email) were also used.

Data Analysis

Narrative data analysis allows for the in-depth analysis of the lives of the participants, and how they construct their identities based on their life experiences (Guerrero, 2011). The goal of data analysis is to understand and interpret the data in a way that provides meaning to the study (Merriam, 2009). In the instance of narrative research, the process of data analysis is the process of interpreting the experiences of the individuals and constructing a story based on emergent themes in the data that answer the research questions (Creswell, 2012; Flick, 2005). A pilot study was conducted with Gordon Gibson, who is a southern White person who was not a student during the CRM, but actively participated as an activist. Once the generative narrative prompt was honed to collect data that spoke to the research questions, I conducted narrative interviews with the study participants. Their narratives were presented as profiles, which represented the events, experiences, and perspectives that were meaningful to the participants (Reismann, 1993). The narratives represented the collaborative effort between myself and the participants to reveal their narratives accurately and in their truest form (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004; Diniz-Pereira, 2008; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). This method allowed the data to speak directly to the experiences and perspectives of the participants (Solorzano & Yasso, 2002). Trustworthiness was built into the study by the rigor and quality by which the data were collected and analyzed (Loh, 2013).

Pilot Study

A pilot study with Gordon Gibson, who participated in the CRM was conducted to test the generative narrative prompt. This allowed me to test my data collection method and to test the ability of the prompt to collect data that were grounded in the central question of the study (Adler et al., 2017; Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). Furthermore, pilot studies ensure that the participants have a full understanding of the intentions of the researcher, and that prompts will be answered properly and elicit data that can be coded (Adler et al., 2017).

Coding

Coding is an interpretive act of assigning a word or short phrase that summarizes or captures the "essence" of the data (Saldana, 2009, p. 3). The process of coding provides the first step into further understanding the nature of the data and the ideas, concepts, themes, and categories that emerge from it (Saldana, 2009). Rather than transcribing the data, I utilized NVivo software to code the audio/visual data. NVivo is a qualitative data analysis software program, designed to aid researchers in analyzing qualitative data (NVivo). While coding, I created a system of categories and concepts that were refined through the iterative processes of coding. Recoding and categorizing allowed me to pay close attention to the data, and deeply reflect on the emergent ideas and meanings that were produced (Saldana, 2009). According to Saldana (2009), coding is cyclical.

The first cycle involved the initial analysis of the data, and utilized Helms's (1984) White Racial Identity Development (WRID) model to frame the participants' stories and racial identity development. The six statuses in the WRID model represent the progression of a White person from a racist identity toward a positive anti-racist White identity (Helms, 1997; Jones & Carter, 1996). Focusing on the six statuses, contact, disintegration, reintegration, pseudoindependence, immersion/emersion, and autonomy, I coded each interview, using the statuses as "pre-established codes" (Saldana, 2013, p. 62), for stories that related to each status. Using pre-established codes are important for studies concerning identity, because of the complexity of identity (Saldana, 2013).

To produce narratives that examined the experiences of southern White student activists, I utilized holistic coding to gain an overall understanding of the data (Saldana, 2009). Holistic coding allowed the data to be broken into basic themes based on its totality, rather than by analyzing a transcript line-by-line (Dey, 1993; Saldana, 2009). Holistic coding aided in understanding the participants' life stories, and provided a deeper understanding of the data (Saldana, 2009).

In the second cycle of coding, I began to code for themes related to activist identity development. Saldana (2009) argued that researchers should not "code for themes" but understand that themes are an outcome of coding (p. 13). The method of theming the data was appropriate for this study because it included interviews and some participant-generated documents and artifacts (Saldana, 2009). Themes began to emerge after careful consideration and reflection on the codes that were developed (Saldana, 2009). Some themes were both manifest (i.e., immediately identifiable) while some were latent (i.e., underlying the data), but overall allowed for the understanding of how an activist identity emerged (Boyatzis, 1998, Ezzy, 2002). Saldana (2009) acknowledged that theming the data is just as intensive as coding, and should reflect a strategic choice in the research design.

Trustworthiness

Merriam (2009) asserted that "all research is concerned with producing valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner" (p. 209). Conducting a study that is trustworthy entails including data that are authentic and collected with careful consideration to the participants and the generalizability of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, 2000; Merriam, 2009; Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). Due to the various types of qualitative research, Creswell (2007) and Merriam (2009) acknowledged that differences exist in trustworthiness. Loh (2013) specifically acknowledged questions regarding the rigor and quality of narrative research. He asserted that it is essential that a narrative researcher ask the following questions:

> How valid is this narrative approach? How valid is the analysis of the data? How valid and reliable is the collection of these “stories,” and how can a story be valid as analysis? If the data is collected through the participants’ telling of their “storied experiences,” how do I know if they are being truthful? What if they made up a story or embellish the retelling? Will the research be valid then? (Loh, 2013, p. 2)

The lack of clear guidelines and dearth of specific literature to guide trustworthiness within narrative research (Loh, 2013) is a limitation to conducting a valid and reliable study. Therefore, I utilized several different strategies suggested (i.e., member-checking, triangulation, adequate engagement in data collection, audit trail, rich, thick descriptions,peer review, and reflexivity) by Merriam and Tisdale (2016) and Merriam (2009) to ensure the rigor and quality of this narrative study.

Member-checking

The process of member-checking is taking the data gathered, back to the research participants for their confirmation (Charmaz, 2006; Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). Lincoln and Guba (1985) described it as a method to further establish credibility of the research data. Member-checking allows participants to be engaged in the data collection process, and helps to refine the data that has been collected (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). Once I collected the data from the participant interviews, I wrote a profile (see Clandinin & Connelly, 2004; Diniz-Pereira, 2008; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002), for each participant. When the profile was completed, I emailed each participant and solicited their feedback to determine if their profile captured the essence of their interview (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016).

Triangulation

Triangulation is the use of multiple data sources to ensure and confirm emergent findings (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). Documents and archival data were used to provide contextual understanding to the interviews that I conducted during the study. Context is the setting (environment, experience, social factors, and political factors) that has the potential to influence the individuals under study (Stephens, 2019). It is important to note that they were not used to verify the *truthfulness* of each participants' interview, because in narrative research even untruths reveal the participants' interpretation of the experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Riessman, 1993).

Once interviews were complete, I returned to the archival data to uncover any data that could have been missed during the first review, and to situate (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016) the participants stories in the historical context of the study. This form of triangulation increased the trustworthiness of the study because multiple sources were used, rather than just the narratives of the study participants.

Adequate Engagement in Data Collection

Merriam (2009) noted that adequate engagement in data collection is most useful when a researcher is attempting to get "as close as possible to participants' understanding of a phenomenon" (p. 219). There is not a time requirement for how long one should be engaged with and in the data; however, Merriam (2009) suggested that enough time should be spent to obtain data saturation, or when the researcher begins to see the same themes repeatedly. I spent time in multiple archives collecting primary source data before interviewing the study participants. Through interviewing the participants, I gained adequate knowledge of certain events that occurred during the CRM and some of their contributions. After interviewing the participants, I returned to the archival data to verify and better understand what was told to me. I solicited follow up questions with the participants to further understand any new findings or interpretations of their experience (Holloway & Jefferson, 1997). This was an iterative process. Srivastava and Hopwood (2009) described iteration as less concerned with the repetitive nature of a task, and more concerned with "sparking insight and developing meaning" (p. 76). This process ultimately invoked a deep understanding of the data being collected (Berkowitz, 1997).

Audit Trail

Audit trails in qualitative research detail how data are collected, how categories and themes are constructed, and the decisions made by the researcher through the research inquiry (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). Additionally, audit trails help others understand how the researcher arrived at their conclusions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This was done by recording my research process in a research journal. I followed Merriam and Tisdale (2016) recommendations, in recording questions that arose during the research process, the decisions that I made in regard to how to best interpret data, and any issues that occurred during the data collection process.

Rich, Thick Descriptions

Trustworthiness was reinforced by the use of rich, thick descriptions (Creswell, 2009). Rich, thick descriptions provided a highly descriptive account of the context of the study—the setting, the participants, as well as the findings which included quotes from the participant interviews (Geertz,1973; Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). Rich, thick description may assist readers in connecting to the context of the study and link shared experiences, while also offering insight into the study's themes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Additionally, the use of rich thick description helped to make sense of the cultural factors present in the participants' narrated lives (Geertz, 1973). Lincoln and Guba (1985) asserted that the best way to ensure transferability, or the ability for the study to be used in different settings, is to ensure rich, thick description is present in the study so that similarities can be assessed by the reader.

Peer Review

Merriam and Tisdale (2016) stated that peer review is a process that is inherently a part of the dissertation process by nature of having a dissertation committee. Peer review is the process by which an individual or individuals read and comment on the study findings (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). Aside from engaging my dissertation committee for constructive feedback, I worked with my dissertation chair to ensure that the research connected to the larger body of scholarship in higher education. Creswell and Creswell (2018) recommended this process involves interpretation beyond the researcher, and further adds trustworthiness to the research.

Using an external auditor also helps to provide an outside perspective to the study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that this process is similar to that of a fiscal auditor who may ask questions that are specific to auditors. Likewise, external auditors may ask questions pertaining to the accuracy of transcription and the relationship between the research questions and the data which enhance the overall clarity and trustworthiness of a study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). By participating in writing groups I was able to utilize various external auditors to aid in the trustworthiness and understanding of my study.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity, also known as researcher's positionality (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016) is how the researcher is affected and affects the research process. Merriam and Tisdale (2016) asserted that researchers need to clarify their "biases, dispositions, and dispositions" (p. 249) to allow the reader to understand how the data in the research were interpreted. Maxwell (2013) claimed that the reason for declaring one’s reflexivity was to explain how one’s values and expectations influenced the study (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016).

I am a Black man. It is an identity that I cannot take off, nor can I hide, particularly when interviewing White individuals about their participation in the CRM. My interest in this topic is undoubtedly influenced by my relationships with White people. I grew up in a matriarchal family, with a mother determined to provide educational opportunities for me that she did not have. This reality meant that I was either in private school or bussed to schools with gifted and talented programs with majority White peers. Ultimately, I was confronted with my Blackness through the cruelty of playground politics and the justification of Black male exceptionalism (Butler, 2013). Being called a “nigger” as a child by another child is indeed life altering; however, to have the justification be that I was not like other little Black boys is hardly life affirming. Yet, my reality was that this was true.

Looking around my classes I was the only Black male, in a sea of White faces (Gusa, 2010), and the only defense of my presence in the space was that I was not like the other Black males. It has been my life experience, with whom I believed to be well-intentioned White folks, that their argument against the racist actions of other White folks was not a recognition of my racialized self, but an assumption that I was special based on my ability to perform in the classroom. In their eyes, I was not quite Black but also not White, though my intellect and socialized manner of speech seemingly eased any tension caused by the appearance of my Black skin. Well-intentioned racists (White people who identify as non-racist) often cause more harm than good due to their subtle microaggressions structured as affirmations (DiAngelo, 2012b). For this reason, my research is influenced by critical race theory; that is, that race is a social construct. Race is also pervasive and systemic in the United States, yet to fight for equity and justice is both a worthy and noble endeavor (Bell, 1995; Dixon, 2017).

Undertaking this research project, collecting and examining White stories, I am aware of the role that truth plays in stories—it is subjective. The constructivist epistemological perspective of narrative inquiry requires that I also have a voice and am an active participant in the construction of the stories being told (Reissman, 1993). Unlike some Whiteness researchers, I am not White, nor can I pass as White, so I must be aware that the "truth" that is told to me could be told to me as a Black man and not as a researcher (Cabrera, 2015). However, Yancy (2012) claimed that as a Black man, I am better equipped to do Whiteness research; because as a Person of Color, I am directly influenced by and can readily identify Whiteness.

During the research project, especially the data collection phase, I maintained a research journal to capture my thoughts and emotions about the participants and their interviews. At the end of every interview I asked myself the following four questions:

- How do I feel about the interview?
- Was there anything during the interview that stood out for me as the researcher?
- Did this interview answer the research questions?
- Is there anything that was not addressed during the interview that needs to be added to the interview protocol?

This first question sought to address any thoughts or feelings that may have come up during the data collection phase. During the study I became hyper-aware of the language used by the participants, especially when the racial slur "Nigger" was used in multiple interviews. Initially I felt uneasy by what I perceived as the liberal use of the word; however, I came to interpret the use of the word as a sign of trust in me as a researcher. I wrote:

> *I believe the use of the word Nigra/Nigger in the fourth consecutive interview indicates a comfortability with me as a researcher, at least that is my interpretation of the use. It signals that they trust me with their story and that they appreciate what I am doing, so they will be as forth right and as vulnerable as possible in their answers and perspectives.*

Moreover, the first question allowed me to validate myself as a Whiteness researcher. I recalled feeling uneasy about my being a Black man collecting the stories of southern White people, especially because as I contacted the participants by phone, I perceived that they thought I was a White man doing this research. This feeling was validated when I interviewed Ed in Nashville.

> *The interview today with Ed went well! I was actually relieved that we decided to drive around Nashville as he told me his stories. There is just one thing that I can't shake, when he opened my car door—he was surprised, shocked that I was a Black person. He literally said, "Holy cow! You're an African American!" He seemed more enthusiastic about the interview from that point on, but it was still weird. I felt like I was a novelty.*

As the research went on, I felt more comfortable being a Black man researching Whiteness.

> *I feel very fortunate to have done and completed this portion of the research project. After the first few interviews, I began to dread finishing the collection, but they have been a delight to do—partially because I believe I know what I'm doing, and they believe in my project. This is a good sign. I can do this.*

The second question (Was there anything during the interview that stood out for me as the researcher?) helped me identify commonalities across the seven narratives early. In doing so, I began analyzing the narrative data as I was collecting it. This method is recommended by Merriam (2009) to avoid being overwhelmed with the data and to make decisions about the study, such as the types of questions that I needed to or did not need to ask. Moreover, this question assisted me in exploring the emotional dimensions of the narratives. If I understood that a participant was somber or remorseful about a particular story in their life as they narrated it to me, I could then better communicate that emotion in the study (Diniz-Pereira, 2008; Solorzano & Yasso, 2002).

The third question (Did this interview answer the research questions?) encouraged me to revisit my interview protocol after each interview session. Because the interview protocol was semi-structured, and the study was focused on collecting critical life histories, some participants needed more prompting than others. As interviews progressed, I better understood where I needed to ask probing questions and when I needed to allow the participant time to process their thoughts to respond (Merriam, 2009).

The fourth question (Is there anything that was not addressed during the interview that needs to be added to the interview protocol?) was in response to the third question and reminded me to address any follow up questions that I may have had after the interview. Moreover, it reminded me to potentially probe for a clarification when a theme presented itself across multiple narratives. In many ways, the fourth question assisted me in identifying reoccurring themes, which were necessary when coding the data.

Maintaining a journal during this study allowed me to understand who I was as a part of the participants’ narratives (Riessman, 1993). Furthermore, it allowed me to tell the stories of the participants completely and truthfully (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004; Diniz-Pereira, 2008; Solorzano & Yasso, 2002).

Methodological Limitations

This study was grounded in a critical perspective and therefore was concerned with social justice and critiquing various forms of power (Flick, 2017). Therefore, critiquing a critical study can only serve to delegitimize the findings of the study (Flick, 2017). Pasque, Carducci, Gildersleeve, and Kuntz (2012) advocated that stating the method and providing the results will not yield a worthy research process. They asserted that critical research instead is about operationalizing “methodologies and methods that are reflective of a social justice perspective” (Pasque, Carducci, Gildersleeve & Kuntz, 2012, p. 24). I avoided “sloppy research” (Pasque et al., 2012, p. 24) by being aware of the methodological limitations of narrative inquiry. Chase (2011) acknowledged that narrative inquiry was “still a field in the making [and] still evolving” (p. 55). Though it is agreed upon that narrative inquiry revolves around interest in life experiences and a narrative is defined as a distinct form of discourse, there still exist many forms of narrative inquiry (Chase, 2011). Riessman (1993) asserted that there is “no canon” (p. 68), in narrative studies and therefore narrative inquiries cannot be reduced to “standardized technical procedures” (p. 68). The loose parameters of narrative research allow for flexibility and creativity during the research process, but call for more stringent validation techniques. Though the uniqueness of my study limits its immediate transferability, Creswell and Creswell (2018) argued that the particularity of narrative inquiries is useful in overcoming that limitation. Riessman (1993) also noted that narrative studies are not useful for studying large populations, and therefore are not useful for “investigators who seek an easy and unobstructed view of subjects’ lives” (p. 69). Observations from small sample populations are often not enough to produce generalizable theories; however, these observations are often the start of impactful theories (Riessman,1993).

Summary

This study was a narrative inquiry that utilized critical life history interviews. The purpose of the study was to collect and examine the experiences of southern White students who participated in the CRM. It was guided by a constructivist approach, but also utilized Helms' (1984) White Racial Identity Theory to provide greater understanding to the stories told by the participants. I collected data from archival sources to inform the interviews I conducted with individuals who identify as southern and White, and participated in the CRM. To ensure the trustworthiness of the study I utilized several techniques such as member checking, triangulation, adequate engagement with the data, audit trails, rich, thick descriptions, peer review, and acknowledgement of my reflexivity as a researcher. The methodological limitations to this type of study were that there is no one way to conduct narrative analysis and that studies with small sample sizes lack generalizability; however, those limitations were overcome by having a comprehensive and rigorous trustworthiness protocol.

CHAPTER IV

Profiles of Southern White Student Activists

> *If life in America were reasonably satisfactory for most of the inhabitants of the country, if the life of the world were not threatened by aspects of American culture and its self-imposed limitations of directions of change, then maybe I would not attach so much importance to what I think I saw and felt afoot in the southern movement. I would not be so anguished because what was there is seldom expressed now, would not feel this compulsion to go back in memory and time and old, spent notebooks trying to find what was there in precise terms, coherent abstraction, trying, I guess to find salvation. And that, after all, on the most forthright level, was what the movement offered. And America missed. – Pat Watters, Down to now: Reflections on the southern Civil Rights Movement*

The purpose of this study was to understand how southern White students develop antiracist identities. I accomplished this by collecting the stories of southern White students who participated in the Civil Rights Movement (CRM). In the previous chapters, I introduced the study and made the case for needing to further understand how White students develop anti-racist, activist identities through stories. I also provided an overview of the literature concerning activism in U.S. higher education and Whiteness and provided an overview of the methods that were used to collect the stories from the study participants.

This chapter presents the narratives of the seven participants as profiles. These profiles represent the participant's experiences and my active role in interpreting each individual's life story (Diniz-Pereira, 2008). Constructing each profile was a collaborative experience, as it involved writing the narrative and then checking with each participant to ensure that the narrative accurately captured the experiences and feelings that the participant wanted to express.

As I described in Chapter Three, this study utilized a criterion sampling method, by which I identified potential participants through archival research who are White and southern, and participated in organizations related to the CRM. While I had the contact information of five of the participants, through my interviews with Fran and Jim, I was able to collect the contact information of Tom and Gene. The seven participants in this study all identify as southern and were born in states across the South, including Texas. The participants were between 70 and 81 years old, five were male and two were female.

The retelling of these stories is important because it is important for White people to have stories in which White people use their privilege to create equitable and inclusive spaces for Black people and other People of Color (Tatum, 2007). In retelling the stories of these individuals, I aim to honor and respect their truth, while also providing the context to understand and frame the discussion in the next chapter.

Participant Profiles

Gordon Gibson, 80 – Louisville, Kentucky

Born in segregated Louisville, Kentucky; "a city on the Ohio River, that can barely define itself as [regionally] southern," Gordon Gibson recalled driving around the state with his father and seeing numerous monuments to the Confederacy and none dedicated to the Union. Kentucky's commitment to the Confederacy was so strong, in fact, he would later learn in college that Kentucky was the only state to secede from the Union after the Civil War. Like most White families in his neighborhood, Gordon's family had a Black housekeeper. Melissa was Gordon's first personal exposure to Black people:

> *We had maids. Our maid during most of the time I was growing up was someone we got very close to. I knew her by her first name. I—I didn't address White adults by their first name, but Melissa was a part of the household. And we would have been willing for her to come in the front door [but] she preferred the back door. That's just the way things were done. If my mother was not home, Melissa was in charge and I had to pay attention.*

Gordon attributed his musical education to being raised in a house with Melissa and her musical talent and being introduced to his first all-Black space:

> *And I traced part of my music education to [Melissa]. There was one point I was probably 10 or 12 years old and she was really anxious for us to attend the concert her choir was putting on. My father and I attended, and I remember our picture was taken. We sort of stuck out—I'm not sure but I think we may have been the only White people in the audience.*

Gordon's father was an important figure in his life. He described him as a socialist, insurance salesman, who was more liberal and interested in activism than his mother. Though his parents did not actively push desegregation they did accept that it should happen. In a similar fashion, Gordon did not mention whether his father worked towards racial justice but that he was involved in interracial organizations. However significant or insignificant his father's work was in promoting racial justice at the time, Gordon believed that it impacted his trajectory:

> *He was involved in some interracial things. The socialist activities were not segregated, so we had some connections. And I think that shaped me more than I realized at the time. He had the outlook that 'if you see a problem you have to figure [out] how to change it.*

Remembering his father, Gordon was quite fond of him—remarking that he had not quite achieved his physical stature in height, but also proudly recalling that his father was in favor of the local school system becoming coeducational. Even sacrificing relationships with neighbors to support the change. Gordon followed in his father's footsteps and attended Yale University where his class had about "four to six" Black students. As Gordon became acquainted with some Black students, he remembered one classmate who sat next to him at a football game and taught him about the game stating, "It was probably the first sort of conversation with someone who was my peer and had greater knowledge than I did…" Moreover, as an active Unitarian Universalist[4], Gordon was befriended by Joe Cooper, a Black man, who was a senior member of the church in Connecticut. Joe Cooper was the first person who treated Gordon like an adult in his role as a youth advisor in the church and considered their relationship a treasured friendship for over 50 plus years.

During his undergraduate years when demonstrations and non-violent protests began to occur in the South, Gordon was still reluctant to join any type of demonstration related to social or racial justice. He remarked, "there [was] sympathetic picketing by Yale students of Woolworths, and I didn't quite see my way clear to join them." Moreover, as other individuals around him were moved to act, Gordon was motivated to wait until there was a "cooling off" period. Reflecting on what he called his "un-engagement" as an undergraduate student, Gordon realized that he needed a "much deeper analysis than [he] was capable of then."

In graduate school, Gordon began to "take a much harder look at what collaborations…" were happening in regard to what was being done around racial justice. A project that he took on was sending questionnaires to White Unitarian Universalist congregations and asking what they were doing in regard to race. He found that there was nothing being done amongst the congregations, aside from the occasional sermon about race. Also, while in graduate school, Gordon began to read James Baldwin and attended a lecture given by Baldwin. He was, in his mind, "starting to get there." Before leaving graduate school, Gordon participated with the local National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) chapter to stage a boycott of Boston Public schools. In volunteering with the NAACP, Gordon became acquainted with a Black student from Atlanta, Georgia who attended Harvard. They bonded over their experiences as Southerners in the North, "We're both Southerners, and we're both fighting for the same things, I find that weird and fascinating."

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[4] "Unitarian Universalism is a liberal religious tradition that was formed from the consolidation of Unitarianism and Universalism in 1961…Unitarian Universalism has nurtured its Unitarian and Universalist heritages to provide a strong voice for social justice and liberal religion." (Unitarian Universalist Association, 2020).

Gordon went into his vocation as a Unitarian Universalist minister in Boston after completing graduate school. In 1964, on his first ministry call, the denomination sent out a request for ministers to volunteer in Mississippi with the National Council of Churches Delta Ministry for seven to ten days. After receiving permission from his church board, the assignment changed for him to instead go to Selma, Alabama "to check out" the voting rights campaign that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was starting. While in Selma, Gordon again acknowledged his "un-engagement," this time framing it as the "observer mentality." He planned on observing what was happening in Selma for a few days and then returning to his congregation to report what was going on.

> *I went very much with observer mentality. That's what we'd been asked to do. So, I observed the daylights out of Selma. I had become well acquainted with the Black neighborhood we were living in, and I questioned what was White Selma like? My colleague was ready to take part of the demonstration and I wasn't. I tagged along with my camera, took photographs of the demonstration, of their arrest, and then stopped by the Chamber of Commerce to pick up a map of Selma, and headed out to the White residential area.*

While he was in the White neighborhoods of Selma taking picture of houses, observing, a White woman offered to take him on a tour of the city in her car. To show him 'real' Selma.

> *It was crazy for me to get into a car with somebody I didn't know, she could have taken me anywhere, you know? This crazy man who admits that he's involved with the civil rights people…but it was informative, because she wasn't seeing the same Selma I was seeing. But by the following week I figured out, the observer thing is a real cop out. Selma natives aren't observing, they go down to the courthouse, [Risking] their physical well-being, their employment, their housing, the well-being of their family or more. I—I had my ticket back to Boston in my pocket. Time to stop the cop out.*

After that "utterly life changing experience," Gordon put down his camera and became a part of the demonstrators practicing civil disobedience at the local courthouse, he was arrested, jailed, and appeared before a judge. It was not until that moment that Gordon considered himself an activist. He now divides his life into two halves: life before Selma, and life after Selma.

Reflecting on the experiences that led him to become an actual participant in the CRM and not just an observer, Gordon recalled what he learned from his father.

> *Clearly, my experience in Selma reinforces my father's tendency to make things better than they were found. The movement wasn't simply about civil rights, it was about a different vision, a broader vision of America, a broader vision of humanity. To recreate society in an image of justice that was clearly needed.*

Based on this understanding of what was needed in America during this time, and his perspective of it all now, Gordon defined activism as "noticing when there's a problem and working toward a solution." However, he expressed, for "White folks" and students in particular that it is essential that potential allies first listen to the needs of the oppressed, and present ideas in a way which supports the goals and efforts of the people leading. Moreover, Gordon expressed the need for White allies to avoid group think amongst themselves, and to increase learning opportunities.

Gordon concluded his recommendations for White people interested in supporting racial justice to "just be people." He believed that its more valuable to be helpful with the work toward justice that is already being done, rather than putting forth plans that do not take into consideration the communities and people who are being marginalized and oppressed. Thinking further about this notion, Gordon recalled being asked to take a picture with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., after being released from prison in Selma. He thought it was unfair that he and another White minister were getting credit for being there, though there had been hundreds of people, almost all Black, who had been arrested before them but never photographed with Dr. King. He acknowledged that only because of White supremacy is a White man needed to justify and legitimize a movement for racial justice.

> *One of the people we'd been jailed with was doing PR for Dr. King, and when he'd realized that we were out, he told us that Dr. King was at the courthouse observing people in line at the courthouse. He wanted us down there to have our picture with Dr. King. It dawned on me recently this picture of two White ministers from Boston standing on either side of Dr. King, makes sense only in a society created by White supremacy. At this point in the Selma campaign, hundreds of people, probably close to thousands of people have been arrested, most of them had not had their pictures taken alone, or with Dr. King—but two White ministers from Boston. That's worth the AP sending out as an AP wire photo. It just hit me the last couple of years, it's taken a lifetime to understand that…*

Joaquin Eugene (Gene) Guerrero, Jr., 76[5] - Dallas, Texas

Born to a Mexican father and Southern Baptist mother in Houston, Texas, Joaquin Eugene Guerrero, Jr. (Gene) identified as a White southerner and attended segregated schools in both Dallas and Atlanta. Despite cultural differences between his two parents, those dynamics were not much discussed in their household growing up. He stated, "I don't know, I think I must have felt a bit different about being part Mexican as I grew up, but I don't remember being overly conscious of it." When Gene spoke of this family dynamic, he chose to highlight the colonial past of Mexico in conjunction with the Southern ancestry of his mother, but stressed that he was a White southerner.

Gene did not recall his parents ever talking about desegregation or anything pertaining to civil rights, nor did they talk about race. The few times that race did come up with his mother she encouraged Gene to be nice to people.

> *My mother told me, you know, people shouldn't be mean to Black people because they couldn't help being born Black, and you ought to be nice to people. She would have never called someone, nor would her mother, call someone a nigger, you don't do that. 'You don't treat Nigras bad because it's not their fault [they are Black],' that's the way she would have put it.*

Joaquin, Sr., Gene's father, was a bit more progressive Gene recalled. He remembered him having a copy of Das Kapital by Karl Marx, and his interactions with Black people in the South.

> *One of my early memories from when I was 12 or 13, we were driving back from Arkansas, visiting my [maternal] grandmother in Arkansas, and we stopped at a filling*

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[5] As a part of our interview, Gene shared a draft of his unpublished memoir.

> *station. An old Black man came to fill up the car, and my father said 'Sir' to him. And it struck me even though I was young, that he was kind of making a statement by being respectful to this older Black man, and that was an unusual thing to occur.*

In the neighborhoods he lived in while he was growing up, Gene did not recall many interactions with Black people, other than noticing that they were the people who came to work in the neighborhood, and talking with a Black laborer working on his street about his service in the Merchant Marine during World War II. Gene did, however, have Jewish friends in high school in both Dallas and Atlanta, and a lot of his interest was in the treatment of Jewish people during the World War II. He credited having studied about the treatment of Jewish people as a marginalized group in Germany during the Holocaust helped him to understand the CRM was a big deal, especially when he moved to Atlanta.

Once he graduated high school Gene decided to stay in Atlanta and attend Emory University. During this time, he also started to question his faith from the standpoint of being raised as a Southern Baptist. Through the required religion course at Emory, which he described as a course in "smashing fundamentalism," Gene started to attend Unitarian Universalist meetings where he met Howard Zinn, a White professor who served as the Student Non Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) advisor, but also other Black students whom he started to build relationships with. He stated, "That was the very first time I really felt, you know, one-to-one with Black people as equals." Through the relationships that he began to build with Black students in Atlanta's University Center he would come to meet Vincent Harding, a Black Mennonite who wrote speeches for Martin Luther King, Jr. It was Vincent who was important for Gene, encouraging him to be a person of principle and to be committed to living out those principles. Gene credited Vincent and his wife with "deepening" his mind.

As Gene grew closer to becoming involved in the Movement, he recalled key events that led to his participation. In Spring 1963, he recalled listening to a White preacher, Ashton Jones, who drove around the South with “Black and White Together” written on his car. Though Jones claimed to be doing “God’s Work,” it resonated with Gene, though he no longer identified as Christian. He felt as if he should be doing the work that Reverend Jones was doing, because he felt like it was right. Then Reverend Jones was arrested and jailed for trying to go to a segregated church with Black theology students in Atlanta.

> *I was not a member of First Baptist, but I played basketball in their church gym and I finally I had to do something. And so, I read in the paper, that there was a picket line every Sunday in front of the church. And so, I went in and joined that picket line and it was, as I said, I think it was the most courageous thing I ever did because I was acting completely on my own.*

While in the demonstration at the church, Gene met someone who invited him to meetings that planned demonstrations and protests. Attending these meetings Gordon spontaneously came upon a demonstration at a Krystal hamburger stand. Witnessing this demonstration further changed his perception of the Movement, and the treatment of people who participated in the Movement.

> *I was not planning to get involved in the demonstration at all. I wanted to see if it was true - the civil rights people would claim that the police would mistreat people, because I found that kind of hard to believe that police would do that. As I was getting closer and peering over people to see what was happening, and the arrests started, I felt this hand on my shoulder and someone said ‘get this one too’ then boom! I was in a paddy wagon and taken to jail.*

His experience in jail further motivated him, and he met key individuals such as John Lewis, Jim Forman and a southern White SNCC worker, Sam Shirah, who would get him involved in the student movement.

> *When we first came into the holding area, Jim Forman and John Lewis and other people who were arrested were all sitting around, and Jim Forman started talking about the importance of demonstration and what it meant. When we were booked, all of the Blacks went to a cell block on one floor and I went, as far as I knew, by myself to a White cell block. And I was pretty afraid, and it was actually [also] moving because I could hear the Blacks singing freedom songs all night long and it was really quite overwhelming.*

Gene admitted that before being arrested he was just "sticking his toe in," and that he was not fully committed to the Civil Rights Movement. However, after his experience in jail he became more active in planning demonstrations. Gene also credited the growing international interest in inequality in America for his reasons to deepen his involvement. He along with other White students from Atlanta area colleges (Emory, Georgia Tech, Agnus Scott, and Kennesaw) started an organization called Georgia Students for Human Rights to aid SNCC with their demonstrations against local business establishments that remained segregated.

Gene would go on to become a member of the Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC) that focused on reaching out to and recruiting southern White students. Through SSOC, Gene coordinated with individuals from the University of Texas to the University of Florida to start local chapters and attend SSOC conferences about achieving justice in the South. As chairman of the organization, Gene made sure to reach out to White individuals in other cities also organizing and demonstrating to make them a part of the network that was being built.

When Gene thought about his development as an activist and someone who participated in the movement, he expressed gratitude for the Black community and the opportunity to be "immersed in it for brief periods of time." A sentiment which he regrets his children not having.

> *That to me was something very special, and something that I'm sorry that my kids haven't had. In that sense they live in a very different world in which they can't conceive of things like segregation or people being treated differently because of their skin color. But you know they missed that, they don't have that sort of full recognition of what the Black community has contributed, what they have contributed to the world, but to this country in particular, and I think I have some sense of that because I've been close in various times.*

He also recognized what he believed to be two important influences in the movement, the Church and the Left. Gene acknowledged the White historical figures who used the church's teachings to justify their identity as Leftists and advocates for social justice. He spoke of individuals such as Jim Dombrowski and Myles Horton, who attended Union Theological Seminary and studied under Reinhold Niebuhr. For Gene, he understood that these individuals used Christian teachings to justify radical leftist beliefs, similar to what Reverend Jones was doing, what he experienced with Vincent Harding, and what he learned by attending lectures in religion courses at Emory. Gene recommended that White students needed, "to know and understand their history." He continued, "I think it's important that all of us try to recognize, that we all don't just come out of nowhere. We come from what people have done before us." When he defined activism, Gene shared the importance of actually bringing about a change as opposed to just making a statement. In bringing about a tangible change, Gene also encouraged White students to develop a plan for that change and to not "go off the deep-end" and embrace violence as a means to create change.

> *A lot of people went into various revolutionary groups and tried to get active that way. And for some reason that never made much sense to me, and it just didn't seem like that was going to work. We were all trying to figure out—we wanted to see ourselves as radicals, as revolutionaries, as people who were serious about bringing change, and we really wanted to do that. The question is, what does that mean? How do you do that? For me it was trying to figure out the ways I could make a difference.*

As a White activist he also emphasized the importance of working with White people to support the needs of Black activists.

> *We in SSOC felt this responsibility to try to reach out to White people, the whole Black power thing was not a big issue for us. In fact, Stokely Carmichael had come and spoken at one of our conferences, where he talked about how SNCC was moving into Black consciousness, why that was important, and why it was important for Whites to reach out to White people and for us there was nothing controversial about that.*

Gene concluded that we collectively should acknowledge the work that communities did together, especially the "courageous local people" in Black communities, in pursuit of justice during the CRM. Furthermore, he also acknowledged the privilege to actively engage and participate or not that he and other activists not in the Black community possessed.

Jim Sessions, Central and West Texas

Jim Sessions grew up in the Jim Crow Era South, moving between Central and West Texas. His father was a Methodist minister, therefore they spent time at different Methodist congregations across Texas. The schools that Jim attended in Texas were segregated as were the churches. However, growing up, Jim's father would take him and his brother to Black churches and preach at those churches, which Jim acknowledged as "pretty remarkable at the time." Jim's father would also go on to officiate what Jim believed to be the first interracial marriage of the period, this led Jim to claim his father "was not great [on race], but he was trying." Despite the progressive actions of his father Jim expressed that he and his brother did not find it strange at all that they were attending Black churches and witnessing their father lead integrated congregations in the South. In junior high school, Jim recalled a time that he and his family felt what it was like to be Black.

> *We traveled from wherever we were living at the time to Dallas for the State Fair, that would have been on a Saturday, and it turns out it was Negro day. We had another minister and his wife with us, but there we were our one day at the fair, and we were some of the only White people at the fair because it was the day for African Americans. And I remember the other minister saying, "Well I guess this is the way they feel all the time." It really struck me, I've never forgotten him saying that because here we were these few very, very, very few White people in a large African American gathering and feeling awkward about that, and him pointing out this is the way they feel every day.*

Jim admitted that he did not have any personal interaction with any Black people for "way too long," until he matriculated into seminary. He would also become involved in student movements while an undergraduate, but mostly for issues concerning private enterprise and federalization; although his participation in these groups would pave the way for him to become involved in groups that were racial justice oriented as well.

> *My first involvement at all, [was] very small [but] united though, was at a Woolworths. You know the department stores, the little five and dimes, or whatever you call those*

> *things. We participated as seminary students in picket lines in front of Woolworths in Dallas. So that was my first little step like that.*

Segregation was such a stark reality in Dallas that Jim never had a hard time understanding he was White, and the place that White people took in the social order as the "lines were so clearly drawn." He recalled a time when he was a pledge for a fraternity to illustrate how White supremacy worked in Dallas, and his awakening to its problematic nature.

> *When it came time to invite pledges to become members of the fraternity, there's this ritual where a box is passed around and black balls are literally cast. My friend was rejected and I was dumbfounded as to why that happened, and it turns out that he was Jewish. We had a fight about it and I was expelled from the fraternity with my brother. And they had a trial, can you believe it? A trial! And the Mayor of Dallas was the judge because he was also a member of the fraternity and he found me and my brother guilty. And that's racial in terms of [being] Jewish, but not Black and White. But it was—it was really an awakening to me. That's the kind of town Dallas was.*

In graduate school at Drew Seminary, Jim expressed that seeing desegregated spaces was not that shocking, or "earth shattering." While at Drew, Jim organized a community program that took undergraduates, primarily White, into Newark, New Jersey every week. The purpose was to for students to begin to see what he described as "tough" areas of New Jersey, while also working to tutor kids in the area. Jim still spent time in the South, but wanted to make the point to people in the North that racism was not just a Southern problem.

> *So, we organized this scene with three African American students, another seminary student, and myself to go to the barber shop. They went in first and I went in last, but when the barber chair came open the barber said it was my turn. I refused because I*

> *said, "these guys came before me," and he said, "no it's your turn," I then said, "no no its not my turn." So finally he said that if we weren't going to get our hair cut, we should leave. But it was a public barber shop, so we weren't leaving. So, we were all arrested, and it caused a stir. And the university stood up for us, and they had a little trial and we were found innocent. Our main point was that Madison, New Jersey and say Madison, Alabama, were not that different.*

While in the North, Jim was a part of and helped to advise the Northern Student Movement, a northern affiliate of SNCC. Through the Northern Student Movement, Jim was able to take students from places such as New York City and New Jersey down into the South to participate in the movement. Moreover, Jim and other students were learning nonviolent tactics from SNCC workshops and implementing them in northern areas as well. He recalls what was a particular life altering experience for students that he had taken to Jackson, Mississippi when several students did not make a phone call to check in at midnight.

> *Louise called me from Jackson and said "we've got three people who haven't checked in." You know at midnight in rural Mississippi? So I told her to start calling hospitals, sheriff's offices, Claude Sitton at the New York Times—call the FBI. When I went back, they had found some shoes on the road nearby to see if they were his shoes—they weren't. Later their three bodies were found. That was a tough, tough time but those students; White students, their lives were changed in huge ways.*

When thinking about his role as an activist, Jim recalled being socially engaged in high school. He said, "Race was a distant concept in high school because we were so segregated, but we were socially conscious about political issues in the White community." As he developed as an activist and began to become more racially conscious, Jim acknowledged that he had become aware of his privilege as a White person, that he could afford to be kicked out of organizations, being in the wrong place at the wrong time, or even to travel to different sites where demonstrations were taking place and "inject himself" into the movement.

> *I think I've always considered, not so much maybe a duty to get arrested or not, but I knew that I could always afford to be, and I knew I could always get out of it. Which wasn't true for other people.*

As a Southerner at "Yankee elitist schools" Jim felt he had a certain knowledge about race and racism that he could speak from and not only influence other students to act by participating in demonstrations across the South, but also identifying racism that occurred everywhere.

Defining activism, Jim declared that it was a vocation. Through every position that he has held, or organization that he has been a part of, he was using his platform to advocate for the marginalized. Especially while embracing chaplain roles. It was his duty to help students get a "real education" by exposing them to real life scenarios. Jim thought it is vital for individuals to gain practical experience especially when it comes to activism and learning about racial difference.

> *What is that practice like? I think that practice is in the world, in the community, in the neighborhood…undergraduate students need to learn how to practice what their life is going to be like outside those four or five years, they have to learn that as a part and parcel of their education.*

Francis (Fran) Ansley, 74 – Atlanta, Georgia

Fran Ansley was born in Atlanta, Georgia to "deep, deeply southern parents." Most of her family was from the Atlanta area and both sides of her family fought for the Confederacy. Her father worked as the Director of Development for Emory University and they lived in a segregated neighborhood in the Atlanta suburbs. Similar to most middle-class White families during the time, the only interactions with Black people that Fran had were with their maid or "yard man." Though her parents did not intentionally expose her to radical or justice-oriented ideology, Fran recalled that there was something "there" early on.

> *Frankly, I don't know where these feelings [about social justice] come from. I've certainly thought about it, and I had very formative and opening up experiences related to a particular family that exposed me to a lot of things, but there was something there very early on. I think my parents are very wonderful people, they raised me, I would say, and I think both of them were the more liberal in their families, but they were not activists in any way and that was growing up.*

She went on to describe the importance of understanding race in the context of southern history:

> *But we would have never used a word like nigger in our house. We could say nigra, that was really different from saying nigger, and Negro just sounded bizarre, like it would come from a White yankee. But certainly, certainly no racist jokes. And I was brought up to think that Robert E. Lee was a really wonderful person, because he actually sort of wished he hadn't had to fight for the* South *and then he treated his slaves really well and would have been a force for reconciliation had he not died.*

Through a "Yankee Expat" family, Fran found a role model in the wife of an Emory professor, Kay Hocking. Fran recalled that she was from a Chicago family that had a history of abolitionists but were also wealthy industrialists.

> *She kind of moved in those circles. And she invited me, their family always did this, invited me to come with them and go to the annual Christmas concert at Atlanta University. So, Spelman and Morehouse choirs are there. It's a huge room filled with*

> *Black people. So, here I am, this little White speck or one the few little White specks in here. What an interesting—what a mind-blowing feeling.*

Kay also created a theatre program that Fran was a part of in high school that would bring both Black and White students together to perform plays for community audiences near Emory. Fran recalled important and lasting friendships that formed among the young White people in the group, all of whom were from the Emory side of town and would socialize together outside of theater rehearsals. That was a very different experience for the Black kids, due to the fact that the two groups only saw each other during formal rehearsals, performances, or social gatherings immediately afterward, and never hung out with each other beyond those settings.

> *They didn't invite us to their house, and we didn't invite them to our house. So, there was a still very different dynamic, but it was quite wonderful to get to do it. Some of them were amazing people and really good people and were very generous with us. You know, looking back I'm sure they were all way more racially sophisticated than we were, and for them it was not a totally weird experience being with White people. For us it was weird and wonderful.*

During this same period in her early high school years, Fran also had opportunities to attend "international student parties" that the Hocking family hosted at their home. These gatherings were designed to provide an opportunity for interracial social mingling at a time when few such spaces existed in Atlanta. Through the Hockings family, Fran also became acquainted with the Quaker Atlanta Friends Meeting (AFM) which was influential in advocating for desegregation of public schools in Atlanta in the years after the *Brown* decision. To get ahead of desegregation and better prepare families for the experience of desegregation, the AFM hosted creative writing workshops that were desegregated. Fran remembers sitting around a table discussing creative writing with Black students and recognizing the opportunity that she was being provided.

When Fran was 14, her father accepted a job with Royal Crown Cola, and the family moved to Columbus, Georgia where she attended high school her sophomore year.
Moving away from Atlanta meant that she moved away from her mentor, the theatre troupe, and the other relationships that she had begun to build. She attended a high school where her peers were a far cry, both culturally and politically, from her friends in Atlanta. Overall, she felt very lonely and isolated. Her parents allowed her to go to boarding school in Vermont for her junior and senior years in high school. Moreover, seeing the way that Fran was drawn to issues of racial justice in Atlanta Fran's parents were inspired to join the Georgia Council on Human Relations and began attending local meetings in Columbus to discuss desegregation and racial justice.

Fran decided to stay in the Northeast for college. She acknowledged that race and racism were different in the Northeast, and that as a White Southerner she was able to identify the forms of racism that existed where she lived. The summer after her first year in college, Fran returned to Atlanta to volunteer with young children served by a Quaker-sponsored community-organizing project in Vine City, a neighborhood in Atlanta near Georgia Tech. She stated that she was "profoundly affected" by her encounters with racialized poverty in that setting, and by witnessing the treatment of community members who tried to win simple neighborhood improvements from an unresponsive city government.

> *The change is a little hard to describe, but I think it basically had to do with a break in the level of trust I felt for authorities, including government. This was the summer between my freshman and sophomore years in college, and I remember as a freshman I was reluctant to interact with groups that were agitating about things—groups that*

> *wanted to hand me a leaflet that took a strident tone about the war in Vietnam for instance. I would kind of shrink from that. I didn't want to be pushed. I did not feel like I knew how to make my mind up about things, and I was leery of troublemakers who might want to make up my mind for me. That summer in Atlanta, I was living in a neighborhood that was both Black and poor, and I met people who were enduring great deprivation and discrimination but were unbowed.*

Fran recalled meeting a staff person of the program that she was working with who gave her and her group a lecture that she deemed as "callous and clueless," but ignited her resolve to be a part of greater change.

> *Suddenly, I no longer felt that I could assume I was not being lied to by authority figures. Soon I was trying to figure out what to do when I got back to campus. How could I find other people who felt the [same] urgency and indignation I did? I was ready to seek out the writers of those flyers that had earlier seemed too intimidating to me.*

Moreover, that summer, Fran became acquainted with other people who were involved in "the more visible pieces," of the CRM in the South. She dated a man who worked for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and was an assistant to Al Lingo[6], and was a part of informal meetings that were being had to discuss movement tactics and strategy. One person that she remembers fondly is Jim Bevel. Upon her return to college, Fran searched for like-minded people and joined Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). She later took a year off from school and worked with organizing projects that attempted to bring White Southerners into an interracial movement of the poor in predominately White, “hillbilly diaspora,” communities in Chicago and Cleveland.

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[6] This is not the same Albert J. (Al) Lingo that served as an Alabama Highway Patrolman and Klu Klux Klan sympathizer, but Al Lingo who was arrested at a "Swim-In" at the Monsoon Motel in St. Augustine Florida.

Reflecting on her journey, Fran observed that in her case, organized religion had not played a role in her move to join the student movement during college. However, she observed that for herself and for many other White students in the South, the experience of growing up in the church had at least played a role in laying a foundation from which commitment to the CRM would eventually grow. Fran explained that Christianity’s teaching on matters like loving one’s neighbor, abiding by the Golden Rule, and concern for “the least of these,” could influence radical behavior not accepted by White Conservative Christians. Moreover, she stated, “the experience of growing up in the church often carried moments of rebellion and critique when children reached adolescence and began to feel restive at what they saw as hypocrisy and moral cowardice in their elders.” Her impression was that many young White people in the South did have experiences within the church and church youth groups that helped to propel their participation in the Movement. In her own case, Fran credited the adults in her life who “created a space” in secular settings for her and other White students to have meaningful interracial encounters. She also acknowledged the Black women in her life who either sparked something inside of her to think about being White, or the Black women organizers in the movement that mentored and educated young White organizers and “kept them honest.” More so, there were other role models in Fran’s life that helped to guide her to being more involved in the movement - people such as Kay Hocking, Carl and Anne Braden, and many others.

When thinking about activism and allyship, Fran addressed the need to be a part of a movement that stands for something and the need to possess a personal interest in racial issues.

> *It's a dilemma for White people trying to work in rainbow kinds of situations or coalitional situations. I think it's not easy. That there's never one right answer. It's contextual, Because here is the other thing, if you try to build a movement that is based on nothing but "I am going to stand with these oppressed people because I can't give up my privilege or donate my privilege because they are so oppressed and I am so privileged…" —I mean that is a terrible way to build, it's weak. People will know, it's a weird inverted form of charity.*

Fran instead insisted that activists need to try to build movements and invite people into them in a way that combines both self-interest and altruistic solidarity. In regard to racial justice activism, Fran noted that White people need to understand and reckon with two factors simultaneously. First, the system we live under is unfair and rigged against People of Color, whom it severely and asymmetrically harms. Second, this same system is radically bad for poor and working-class White people as well. In her view, White, poor, working-class people benefit from White supremacy in important ways, but they pay a material price for it that greatly outweighs the gain. Fran continued to assert that potential allies should understand "the number of intersecting variables," that are associated with social justice broadly. She stressed the importance of challenging people's beliefs as a vehicle for growth and development, but also reported that in her experience, too great a concentration on "putting people on the spot" can backfire. She shared, "I think people take cover and want to go away from the unpleasantness, and as a White person, there's so many places you can take cover." In her opinion, White organizers who want to engage with other White people on questions of racial justice need to "try to find some space where people can feel like they can talk and breathe and try and talk about things." Fran acknowledged that White people should avoid the need for approval from other White people because of the suspicion that it creates when working in interracial coalitions.

Robert Edwin (Ed) Hamlett, 81 – Fulton, Kentucky

Robert Edwin (Ed) Hamlett grew up the only child of a Southern Baptist preacher from South Fulton, Tennessee and his wife who was from Dublin, Kentucky. According to Ed, he is deeply Southern and has always identified as such. Ed grew up going to segregated churches in segregated towns and did not have any meaningful interactions with Black people his age growing up. He did, however, have an experience with a Black janitor at a church his father worked at growing up that was meaningful.

> *As I've tried to understand why I'm different from a lot of kids I grew up with, was something that I remembered that happened when I was probably about four years old. I remember leaving the house which was across the street from the church and going to the back door and down the stairs into the furnace room. There, a kind man, whom we called Porter who was the janitor at the church was sitting next to the furnace and I remember squatting next to his legs and feeling safe. I think my parents were having an argument and I didn't like being there when they had an argument.*

Ed remembered his dad liberally using the "N-Word" and his grandparents threatening him that "Nigger Annie was going to flush [him] down her toilet," if he did not behave appropriately. He called it "pretty, pretty heavy psychological warfare." The first time that Ed could vote in a presidential election, he recalled that his father voted for a segregationist and would not vote for a Republican because he was a Democrat. His mother voted for Nixon, and he voted for Kennedy. However, he did mention that his father taught him the importance of always voting.

Ed attended college at Union University, a Southern Baptist, predominantly White private institution in Jackson, Tennessee. After the first semester of his sophomore year, he began to question his identity as a southerner and as a southern Baptist and dropped out to move to Washington D.C.

> *I was starting to have some problems with being a southerner and what that represented to me and I think—I think part of it had to do with race, I think it also had to do with culture, I think it had to do with maybe not being aware, I wasn't sure that I had any business being a Southern Baptist.*

In Washington D.C., Ed worked various jobs and attended night classes at George Washington University (GW). While at GW, Ed made friends with other Black students "as equals," something that he had not done before. During his time in Washington D.C., Ed remembered reading an article in the Washington Post about Black families in West Tennessee losing their land[7] because they were trying to register to vote. Reflecting on the value of voting that his father modeled and his own personal feelings, Ed felt that "he had run away from the South" and that "he needed to go back to face what it was that he had run away from." When he returned to the South, Ed moved to Knoxville, Tennessee and enrolled in the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK). At UTK Ed began learning about the treatment of Black people historically and was recruited to join a group that dialogued about race relations in the South.

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[7] Ed was referring to Tent City, Tennessee in Fayette County, Tennessee. African American share croppers who were attempting to register to vote, were evicted from their homes and black listed from buying essentials. See The University of Memphis (n.d.) Tent City: Stories of Civil Rights in Fayette County, Tennessee. Retrieved from https://www.memphis.edu/tentcity/.

> *I was really interested in sociology because sociology did most of the work on minority*[8] (sic) *groups. And so, I was really interested in Black people as a minority* (sic) *group and read books and stuff that fit my growing concern about the way Black people were treated. As I learned more about how Black people had been treated and still were being treated in the U.S… the sociology course I took was called Minority Groups and I guess I was quite vocal in the course and I don't think there might have been a Black person or two in the class, but somebody said I needed to come to the Jefferson Club, a Unitarian student group.*

Through the Jefferson Club, Ed became friends with Marion Barry, who was very influential in Ed becoming involved in racial justice-oriented activities on campus and introducing him to Black culture in Knoxville. In 1962 Marion and Ed became the co-chairs of an interracial student group called Students for Equal Treatment (SET), and Ed attended his first SNCC meeting at Fisk University in the summer of 1962. Ed was proud that SET was the first group of its kind, at the time, in the Southeast. The first demonstration that Ed became involved in was in Knoxville through SET where he picketed local restaurants and lunch counters.

Ed attended graduate school at Southern Illinois University (SIU). At SIU, Ed became more involved with the campus SNCC chapter, and collaborated with individuals such as John O'Neil, Dick Gregory, James Baldwin, Fannie Lou Hammer, and Bayard Rustin. At a SNCC meeting, he remembered the challenge being issued for "White people to be organizing in the White community." From that challenge, Ed asked Marion to nominate him for the White

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[8] See Killian, L. (1996). What or who is "minority"? *Michigan Sociological Review,* (10), 18-31., American Psychological Assocation. (2020). Bias-free language guidelines. In *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (7th ed.).*, pp 131-149.

Southern Student Project with SNCC, and in 1964 he joined SNCC as a full-time field secretary. Also while at SIU, Ed met Minnijean Brown. For Ed, she was influential because unlike the other Black people that he had met and worked with and called mentors, she was more like a peer to him.

> *Another student at SIU was Minnijean Brown, one of the Little Rock Nine, and she and I were good friends…she was an important person in my metamorphosis. I liked her, she was almost the same age—she was the first African American person of my age that I felt close to, that personally felt more like a peer.*

As Ed reflected on his relationship with Minnijean, he also contemplated his White identity. He lamented a time that he asked her a question out of his "Whiteness and White skin privilege," that he remembered as stupid and "a question he had no business asking her." He recalled questioning why she still cried when she spoke about her experience as a Black woman desegregating Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. He reflected on privilege:

> *I'm still learning about White skin privilege; I think all White people are subconsciously aware of White skin privilege. People will argue up one side and down the other about they never did anything bad to Black people and there's nothing about Whiteness that they're proud of, while at the same time having a better style of life because they're White.*

Ed also processed his relationship with religion particularly with his belief in Jesus and how it drove him to be more radical. He said that he began to "connect more with the things that Jesus said and did" and he admired how "he just went about the work he did…liberating the captives [and] freeing the enslaved." That model of Jesus helped him embrace his role as a "freedom fighter."

Ed believed that as an activist, a person should seek to "do something, not extraordinary, but something that is different from your neighbors with respect to bringing about progressive change in your neighborhood, your community, your town, your state." Ed defined "neighbors" as the White people who looked like him and choose to ignore the need for social justice in the South. Furthermore, he believed that as an activist a person needed to believe in the power of democracy and the power of people to change things adding:

> *Ideally you believe that democracy is possible for people to take power, and to change things. I think one of the reasons why, when I applied to SNCC, I said I don't know about racial discrimination, but I know about economic discrimination. And I know that there won't be changes in the South until White working [class] people and Black working [class] people get together and make changes that need to happen. White people can't do it alone. Black people can't do it alone. They need to have a coalition built to make changes.*

He encouraged today's White students who "get on board for democracy and justice," directly criticizing President Donald J. Trump, his administration, and its motto of "Make America Great Again." He pointed to the treatment of marginalized communities, especially Black people in the U.S. as one of the reasons why the country has never been great. He felt that he would challenge White students who believed that they were on the side of democracy and justice by asking them what they were doing in their communities, churches, and towns to advocate on behalf of the marginalized. Ed ended his story with remorse for what White people have done in regard to the "imperialist" nature of the U.S. He lamented that he "has great guilt for what White people have done, mainly to Black people, but to poor people around the world." Yet he remained hopeful that he will be regarded as being on the "right side of the arc of justice," and can continue to support the efforts of individuals fighting for social justice.

Brenda Bell, 74 – Kentucky

Brenda Bell grew up in a "minister's family" and moved across the South. She remembered moving from Kentucky, where she was born, to Richmond, Virginia until the age of 15, and then moving to Nashville, Tennessee. She recognized that she was heavily influenced by the events surrounding the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, due to memories of her father and the Richmond Ministerial Association taking a strong public stance in favor of the decision. Her father and the Richmond Ministerial Association spoke out against the Governor of Virginia who was against the decision. Due to their actions, Brenda remembered receiving threatening phone calls that were intended for her father.

> *You know, I didn't even know enough to be proud of him at that point, but I just knew that he was involved in stuff that was serious, and the he was sticking his neck out. And that's where my interest in and my commitment to racial justice started.*

Because Brenda grew up in a non-fundamentalist, progressive church tradition, she recalled having a commitment to social justice early in her life. She believed that as "Christians they should do the right thing, they should follow the word."

Many of the schools that Brenda attended and neighborhoods that she lived in growing up where segregated; however, she did attend church camps and was a part of church youth groups that were interracial. One of those youth groups, the United Christian Youth Movement, met at a church camp called Bethany Hills outside of Nashville. Brenda attended camp there in the summers when she was a teenager and remembered feeling "energized" by being with "young people who were wanting to do something," including some of the students who integrated

Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. Encouraged by her beliefs, she remembered integrating the swimming pool at camp and "getting in trouble" doing so.

> *One of the first actions I personally took was I broke the rules of that camp, or the state denomination by integrating the swimming pool. One of my good friends was a Black guy, who had a job just like the rest of us and couldn't go swimming when we did. Bullshit, I just jumped in the pool because this [was] non-sense. We're all swimming together. And we got into trouble, and had to go before the board, and we used that as an organizing tool across the state to say, "this is not right!" These as supposedly Christian denominations, you know? How can they do this? We were incensed, that wonderful righteous indignation of 16-year olds.*

Brenda acknowledged that the church inspired her to be involved in racial justice initiatives because of what she believed the church was teaching her, however, she admitted that contradictions to her beliefs existed in her church and Christianity at large.

> *I just knew it wasn't right. This whole moral thing. I didn't have the vocabulary or nobody was helping me think about the structures that were in place then. There were other things going on that I was really upset about, not just race, but I have this vivid memory of sitting in the church basement, sitting on a table, just crying because there were these bigots in the church who not only were racist, but they were real xenophobic people.*

When she attended college, Brenda felt that she grew into her identity as an activist. She credited the changing environment around her and her continued willingness to impulsively take actions that she thought were just.

> *When I got to college, I was known as an activist on other issues. I was the person who broke the dress code of what you're supposed to wear for dinner. The times were changing. The movements where growing. Young people were getting more and more outspoken, and the roles of women were changing, you know? No, we're not going to put on the dress to go to dinner. No we're not going to wear a trench coat over our shorts to go to gym class. And I can't separate all of those things from how I started seeing myself as an activist.*

While in college she began organizing in rural Eastern Kentucky communities and her close friend, who was Black, would go and organize in South Carolina communities. Together they talked about their experiences in both communities, and Brenda began to understand why it was important to organize in places where she was going to have the most influence. In 1964, she became one of the founding members of the Appalachian Volunteers, who organized in Black and White communities in Appalachia. She became directly involved in the CRM through her connections with friends from Nashville, and as a result of her organizing experiences in Kentucky.

As she reflected on her journey as an activist, Brenda again recalled the relationship with her father. She realized that she was against his diplomatic and measured approach to achieving justice.

> *Dad was a very progressive person, but he was also incredibly committed to trying not to alienate people. He thought he could bring people along. So, when I was in my late teenage years and then in my 20s I had big conflicts with him because I thought you can't tread that fine line all the time of not pissing people off.*

In this realization, Brenda recognized that her way of impulsively doing things helped to quickly break down barriers, but did not take into considerations how her actions affected other people. She acknowledged that most of her commitment toward racial justice came from a deep mistrust of institutions and organizations she felt were supposed to be working for good and were doing a poor job of protecting those who were "doing the best work." In her impulsivity, she did not acknowledge how the systems she felt needed to change also affected the people trying to change them, including her father.

> *Now, I look back on the time period with this more nuanced understanding of how institutions work, especially religious institutions, and how they are made up of individuals and how individuals just can't shake off what you come from. There's a relationship between racial justice and economic justice and understanding the structural underpinnings of what we all deal with in our daily lives every day. So, I think I reacted in certain ways that were not quite as mature.*

Brenda recommended that White people understand the structures which marginalize and oppress all people, and advocated for education as the introduction to organizing for activism rather than immediate action. She stressed the importance of having shared interests and common goals as important factors in recruiting White people to racial justice causes. Furthermore, she expressed the importance of correctly identifying the moral dilemmas that exist in the community context. When she defined activism, Brenda proposed a systematic definition which she called a "cycle." Stating there are "small things that you do to build relationships with others, and those relationships create change." She continued:

> *Sometimes activism is like picking up the phone and calling the governor. Or sometimes activism is organizing 300 people to go to a demonstration. Sometimes activism is getting*

> *arrested, of which I have been. Activism is acting on your best instincts and impulses for the greater good. Yes, we need to organize huge mass movements and small mass movements. But[also] just being a calm and thoughtful progressive presence for other people. It's sometimes one of the deeper things that you can do.*

She concluded by expressing the importance of solidarity and the sense of belonging that the movement created for her and others like her.

> *I want people to know is the incredible solidarity and sense of belonging that came from parts of the movement. And you can't manufacture that. You can try to put in place the environment in which something like that can happen but you cannot force it. You cannot create something that's not there. But when it's real and comes out of people struggling together over something, it's very, very powerful. And that's an experience that I would wish for young people to have to know the power of really working hard together with people, and being committed so much that you're willing to get arrested for something or do something that's going to get you in trouble.*

Thomas Neville (Tom) Gardener, 73 – New Orleans, Louisiana

Raised as a Navy Junior[9], Tom Gardner was born in New Orleans, Louisiana but proceeded to live across the world and several states in the U.S. Both of Tom's parents were born in Western Kentucky, and his father joined the Navy during World War II. Reflecting on his family's dynamics growing up, Tom recognized that his mother and father saw issues of race differently.

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[9] During our interview, I incorrectly referred to Tom as a "military brat," he corrected me and said that only "army kids are Army Brats, my dad was in the Navy – I was a Navy Junior."

> *I also had difficulties around [race] with my mother whose family, a poor White family in Western Kentucky, definitely had more problems around racism and racial bias than my father's family. Father's father was a dentist, small town, took care of everybody, you know without regard to race, etc. In fact, when the Klan tried to organize in his town, he and the judge and the sheriff rounded up the people who would come in from out of town to organize for the Klan and told them that if they come back they would ride them out of town on a rail. Whereas, my mother's family, she and her sisters were in the church choir, and whenever a public event was going on, they wanted the choir to perform. So, they would actually go and sing at Klan rallies and their parents didn't have a problem with that.*

Tom told a story of using the "N-Word" with some friends at his home and his father over heard him. He remembered his father "coming down on him like a ton of bricks," and admonishing him to never use that word again. Despite Tom's parents having different perspectives on race relations, Tom could not remember his mother ever contradicting his father to which he named "gender relations of the time," as the contributing factor.

Being in a military family, Tom had exposure to Black children on military bases that were "essentially desegregated" and made friends with them even though they went to different schools. Moreover, due to the military, Tom had to change schools often; and therefore, had to learn how to make friends quickly. He found it easier to make friends with the Black students, especially in New Jersey, where Tom attended a school that was integrated and had a large population of Black students. Through his relationships with Black students from an early age, Tom stated his eyes were opened to the "pain of racism" at an early age.

> *I think it was personal relationships that opened my eyes to that pain of racism being suffered by friends of mine. I also learned that racism was not purely a Southern phenomenon. I would have parties, and I would invite friends over for parties and when my White friends would find out that I invited some of my Black friends over, they had to tell me that their parents said they couldn't come because of my Black friends, and of course I also had difficulties around that with my mother…*

Tom expounded on his experiences telling another story about a school dance.

> *So, there's this dance. It was really ridiculous, you know 1950s style thing—girls on one side, the boys on the other and the chaperones are making arrangements. They do this thing where they pass out numbers and that's who you're gonna dance with. I sort of lucked out and there was one girl I really wanted to dance with and I had her number, and another guy I knew drew a number for a girl that I knew who was Black. Well they weren't used to being in integrated situations, and I could tell. I think there was some perception on the other side of the hall that there was something going on, and I was just really worried that he was going to really hurt her feelings. So, I quickly went over to him and switched cards with him.*

Based on this experience, Tom referred to himself as a "race traitor," acknowledging that he did things that were not necessarily accepted as norms among other White students at an early age.

Tom attended the University of Virginia (UVA), and considered himself the typical White UVA student and did what was "afforded to him" by his Whiteness. He was a collegiate athlete, joined the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), and rushed a fraternity. However, it was not until he found out about and started to attend meetings for the Students for Social Action did Tom feel that he found his "home" and other students that shared his values.

> *My swimming probably helped to get me into UVA, so I was on the swimming team., I was being rushed by the athletic fraternity. I was in ROTC and never was totally comfortable in necessarily any of those situations. But this, these folks really seemed to be addressing something that I felt needed to be addressed in terms of racism and particular in terms of the university's composition.*

Students for Social Action became a part of the Virginia Student Civil Rights Committee, which took inspiration from Freedom Summer in Mississippi. Tom and other students in colleges across Virginia wanted to work together to increase Black voter turnout in the state. Tom remembered organizing a statewide meeting for the Virginia Student Civil Rights Committee and meeting John Lewis. John had just come from the Bloody Sunday March in Selma, Alabama, and Tom recalled that he showed up with bloody bandages "still wrapped around his head." Inspired by John and the meeting, Tom felt compelled to organize people in Charlottesville to participate in the "Freedom Train," to Montgomery, Alabama. The Freedom Train was a train that started in Boston, and took donations, supplies, and movement sympathizers into Montgomery, Alabama. He recalled marching into Montgomery was a "big step" for him because it was "the first time [he] felt like a bigger part of the movement."

> *It was probably a little bit like how it felt to march in, in a liberating army or something. I mean people were just so excited and to see this many people and all the ministers and rabbis in their robes. So it was, just seeing the looks on their faces. It sort of raised the expectation level, I guess, and the commitment level for me. I felt like I was part of that movement. And I went back really committed. That whole next year, I was a full-time activist and a part time student.*

Tom eventually dropped out of school to pursue activism full-time. By dropping out of school, Tom risked losing his student deferment for the war in Vietnam. He stated, “So I decided I could take the risk, it was just one of those risks that everybody was taking to join this movement.”

Eventually, Tom was confronted with the emergence of the Black Power movement and the push for organizers to focus on their respective communities (i.e., Black organizers in Black communities and White organizers in White communities). A SNCC worker in Mississippi explained that it was more difficult for Black organizers to talk to the “White guys at the gas station,” and that was the work that needed to be done by White organizers in the South. Tom did not want to leave the communities that he worked in, yet he saw the value in being a White southerner who organized in southern White communities.

> *We went from shame to value. It was like—a different way of using White skin privilege, right? We actually have the privilege of being White southerners in organizing against racism. I remind people who want to leave the country because of what America is doing around the world, you have the privilege of being in the belly of the beast. It’s a privilege and a responsibility to use the position you’re in to make change.*

As Tom reflected on his views of what defines activism, he responded that it is “doing what you can where you are.”

> *You know to make the world a better place, I think we’re bombarded every day with crises. I mean it’s just so easy to feel overwhelmed, or not know where to start. It doesn’t matter where you start, just start. And you can start by getting to know people different than yourself. That sometimes gives you a perspective on things, and you can sort of pick an area and dig more deeply into it and see how you can plug into the organizations working on these things…*

Tom emphasized the importance of "doing" activism, asserting that it was "working with people to make a positive change in the world." He said the most important aspect is "just getting started." Tom viewed himself as always having been a "race traitor," with respect to his activism. From his choosing to step in during junior high dances to the work that he did while at UVA, because he felt like he was "betraying the path" that his Whiteness provided. He insisted that his goal in being an activist was liberation of not just Black people, but of himself and other White people as well.

> *I've always felt like ending racism is liberation. Not just of people who are directly oppressed, but of White folks as well, who are oppressed by their own racism in many ways, more so on a class basis. There are just so many ways in which White folks fool themselves into doing things contrary to their interest because of the racism and the way this racism has captivated many White folks in this country into endorsing their own oppression.*

Tom expressed gratitude to his father for being "open-minded" and encouraging him to value knowledge. He also thanked his "Movement parents." People such as Carl Braden, Virginia Door, Ed Nixon, and the other people that he worked with in Virginia communities who "both guided and gave permission," to him when he decided to be an activist and advocate for the rights of others.

Summary

In this chapter, the findings from the study of collecting and examining the stories of southern White student activists during the CRM were presented as profiles. Each profile represents a collaborative effort between the participants and myself to construct a narrative that highlights their experiences on the path to becoming antiracist activists during the civil rights era. In the next chapter, I provide a discussion of the findings in relation to the research questions and the literature. I also provide implications for higher education, recommendations for future research, and conclusions.

CHAPTER V

Findings: Status Narratives and Themes

In this chapter, I offer findings from the critical life histories of the participants. As discussed in previous chapters, narrative inquiry is useful when exploring the stories individuals tell. Critical life histories are beneficial when those stories demonstrate and promote social change (Diniz-Pereira, 2008; Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). A narrative thematic analysis yielded six status narratives for each participant and four major themes: a) understanding of race, b) moral values, c) role models, and c) activist identity.

I begin this chapter, utilizing Helms's (1984) White Racial Identity Development Model (WRID), I discuss stories within the participants' narratives in relation to the six statuses of the WRID model. I present and discuss each participant individually rather than collectively. I chose to present the discussion in this way because I believe the uniqueness of each narrative is displayed so White people may connect with different parts of different narratives (Diniz-Pereira, 2008). Moreover, it demonstrates that not every White person experiences every status the same way, illuminating that White identity is not monolithic; however, similarities can be found in everyone's narrative.

Contact Status Narratives

The contact status in Helms's (1984) model is the status when White people become aware of the existence of Black people. In this status White people possess a color-blind/color-evasive stance that attempts to ignore difference (Annamma, Jackson, & Morrison, 2017; Cabrera, 2018). White people who are in the contact status may experience two different types of contact, vicarious and direct (Helms, 1997). Vicarious contact is contact gained through indirect contact with Black people (e.g., rumors, stories, racial stereotypes, etc.). Direct contact consists of direct interactions with Black people (Helms, 1997).

Gordon. Melissa was Gordon's housekeeper when he was younger. He recalled that she was an important part of the family, as his father "would have preferred she come through the front door." Melissa was seen as a surrogate parent when Gordon's mother was away and someone who Gordon attributed parts of his education to. She was also influential in advancing the contact Gordon had with Black people by inviting him to attend one of her gospel concerts at her church, which was all Black. Gordon was also influenced vicariously through his father, who was involved with some socialist organizations. These organizations were interracial coalitions, and when reflecting on his life Gordon stated that his father's involvement in interracial organizations "shaped him more than he realized."

Gene. Gene's family did not have any maids or house keepers, but he did see various neighborhood workers and school workers who were Black. Though his parents were in an intercultural marriage, his father Mexican and his mother White, race and culture were not a topic of discussion in his household and Gene grew up identifying as a White southerner. Using the racial slur "nigger" was forbidden in his home and instead replaced with "nigra," because as his mother put it, "it's not their fault that they were born Black." Gene did not a make clear connection to how he was influenced by his mother's position; however, her view positioned Black people as inferior due to their condition at birth. Gene Sr.'s behavior contrasted his wife's disposition, as Gene remembered stopping at a service station when he was younger and his dad referring to the attendant, who was Black, as "sir." Growing up, Gene received conflicting messages regarding race and relationships with Black people due to the indirect or vicarious contact of his parents.

Gene did not have any direct contact with Black people until he was in college, however, he did begin to understand marginalization and discrimination through his relationships with his Jewish friend. Through his relationships with Jewish friends and interest in World War II, Gene found that it was easier to get involved in the CRM because he could make the connection between how Black people were being treated in the U.S. and how Jewish people were treated during the Holocaust.

Jim. As the son of a minister in segregated Texas, Jim would attend pulpit swaps with his father. A pulpit swap is when a minister from one church goes to another church for a Sunday to preach. While this was not unusual, Jim's father would regularly swap pulpits with Black preachers. Jim remembered his father performing interracial marriages in Texas, but conceded that his father "was not great, but trying," with regards to race. Despite having the experiences of going to Black churches with his father, Jim still grew up in segregated neighborhoods and did not recognize the weight of what his father was doing from a racial prospective.

Fran. Fran grew up in Atlanta to parents who were not overtly racist but did not do anything to support racial equality in Atlanta. As she thought through the racialized language that Fran's family used, there was no use of the word "Nigger" or "Negro," but rather the word "Nigra." They used Nigra to label all Black people, including the maid and "yard man" that they had. Fran grew up to believe that Robert E. Lee was a benevolent slave owner, a wonderful person, and "would have been a force for reconciliation had he not died." Fran found a role model in Kay Hocking, who was the wife of a professor at Emory University in Atlanta. Kay came from a family of wealthy industrialists in Chicago who also had a legacy of abolitionism. Through Kay, Fran would become acquainted with being in similar spaces as other Black people and working with other Black students her age. A feeling that she described as "mind-blowing."

Ed. Ed recalled a story of his parents arguing while he was at church and going down to the basement and grabbing the leg of a Black worker at the church whom he referred to as "Porter." He did not mention having a relationship or spending a great amount of time with Porter prior to his parent's argument, but he did recall that as he hugged the leg of Porter he felt "safe." Ed's family was in favor of segregation and that was reflected in how they spoke about Black people. A story about "Nigger Annie flushing him down her toilet," that his grandmother used resulted in some "emotional scarring," coupled with stories about his grandfather who was a sheriff named "Big Stick Jim" in Fulton County, Tennessee, positioned Ed's family as being anti-Black. Ed alluded that his grandfather received his nickname because of his treatment of Black people in Fulton county.

Ed did have contact with the church janitor after his family moved to in Jackson, Tennessee. He remembered William being a "kind and gentle man," who was not afraid of Ed's father. Growing up, Ed did not have a lot of meaningful direct contact with Black people "as equals" that he recalled; however, he did have vicarious contact through the socialization of his family about the beliefs and stereotypes about Black people.

Brenda. Brenda recalled her father, and the ministerial association of which he was a member, taking a public stance in favor of the *Brown v. Board* decision. She remembered receiving threats that were intended for her father as a result of his choice to support *Brown*. Brenda regarded that moment as one that was very influential to her, and her path to being an advocate for social justice. She also attended church camps and youth groups that were interracial. Particularly, she remembered being a part of the United Christian Youth Movement that met at Bethany Hills in Nashville, Tennessee where she worked and worshiped alongside Black students.

Tom. Tom's parents were both born in Western Kentucky, but had different familial legacies pertaining to race. While his paternal family had been known to fight off Klan members from recruiting in their town, Tom acknowledged that he "had difficulties around race," with his mother. He described his mother and her family as active participants in the church choir and would sing at public Klan rallies. Tom conceded that his father and mother saw issues of race differently.

As a Navy Junior, Tom moved frequently and had to make friends with children on military bases. He recalled that most of his friends were Black, but they did not attend school together because schools remained segregated in the southern locations where his father was stationed. It was not until he attended a school in New Jersey that had a large Black student population that Tom made friends with Black students that opened his eyes to the "pain of racism."

Summary

Contact status narratives are characterized by the participants' response to their family's values toward Black people, and their own personal experiences interacting with Black people. Socialization plays an important role in this status because values and beliefs about Black people can be passed on both knowingly and unknowingly from role models such as, parents, friends, pastors, teachers, etc. (Harro, 2000) and influence how the participants perceived Black people while growing up. Moreover, living in the South especially influenced on how the participants experienced relationships with Black people and perceived their racial identity. The segregated South provided the opportunity for everyone in the study to perceive their Whiteness at an early age because of a clearly defined racial hierarchy that existed in homes and public spaces. The amount of contact (time/type) determines how long a person can stay in the contact status (Helms, 1997). After prolonged contact the individual can begin to experience racial discomfort, and progress to the disintegration status. In the next section I discuss disintegration status narratives.

Disintegration Status Narratives

White people in the disintegration status are aware of Black people and begin to acknowledge their personal Whiteness (Helms, 1997). During disintegration White people may experience dissonance with how they have been taught socially about relationships with Black people and how they actually interact with Black people (Helms, 1997). Moreover, Helms (1997) identified this status as the one which "triggers" (p. 216) the moral dilemmas that come with the experience of being White and participating in the ideological discourse of Whiteness.

Gordon. As Gordon reflected on his experience at Melissa's concert with his father and being the only White people in an all-Black church, he recalled "feeling something." Looking back he marveled at the exposure to the rich Black culture that he experienced that night. The discomfort that he felt in that space would reappear when he attended Yale University, where in spite of being a northern university that was desegregated, there was still a disparate number of Black students on campus. A trend that continued throughout his time at Yale, and troubled Gordon. Despite the lack of diversity at Yale, Gordon managed to form a friendship with a Black student who taught him about the game of football as they sat together and enjoyed a game. Gordon acknowledged that it was the "first time I had a conversation with someone, that was a peer, who had greater knowledge than I did…"

Gene. When Gene attended college in Atlanta, he remembered going to meetings in the Atlanta University Center and being in a world that was full of "Black people who were intellectuals and sophisticated," that he had not realized existed in Atlanta. During this time, Gene also began to question his faith and was eventually moved to renounce his faith formally. He did, however, become more involved in Unitarian Universalist student meetings, and started going to the Episcopal student center in Atlanta. All of these organizations were working towards informing individuals about social justice through the lens of religion and faith. Gene recognized that through this experience was the first time that he built relationships with Black people "as equals." He realized that Black people were not inferior the way they were born, as his mother insinuated prior to him attending college.

Jim. In junior high school, Jim remembered going to the Texas State Fair in Dallas with his family and another minister's family. Upon arrival at the state fair, which was the only time that his family could attend the fair that year, they discovered it was "Negro Day." Negro Day was the one time during the state fair that Black people were allowed to attend. Jim, his family, and the other family were the only White people in the entire State fair, and he remembered the minister stating that "this is how they must feel all of the time." For the first time Jim felt the awkwardness of feeling minoritized in a space despite having traveled to numerous Black churches when he was younger. This feeling, he recalled, stuck with him for a really long time.

Fran. When Fran contemplated her Whiteness and learning about it, she recalled a conversation that she heard when she was six years old that made her feel uncomfortable. She overheard two housekeepers who were talking about the child of another family who had just been born, and they referred to the child as the "little White baby." Fran remembered feeling unsettled by this conversation. She knew that it had to do with the two housekeepers referring to the Whiteness of the child—and that it somehow implicated her. It was at that point that she believed that she understood the difference between being Black and White, though at a young age she did not have the words to explain it.

Fran also explained, that the moral teachings of Christianity such as the golden rule, loving one's neighbor as yourself, and caring for the least of these, were morals that she did not see exemplified by White Conservative Christians. Having grown up in the church, Fran remarked that she began to feel more rebellious as she grew older and reflected on the "hypocrisy and moral cowardice" of church elders who were supposed to provide spiritual guidance.

Ed. After the first semester of his second year in college, Ed withdrew from Union University and sought to move to Washington D.C. He began to question what it meant to "be a southerner," and believes that it had to do with his Whiteness. In fact, he began to question everything about his upbringing that he believed was a part of his culture. He commented, "I think it had to do with culture…maybe not being aware, I wasn't sure that I had any business being a Southern Baptist." Growing up in a Southern Baptist household and attending a Southern Baptist college, Ed had firmly believed that he was going to be a missionary or work in a church; however, he questioned what he was being taught, and how that informed his Whiteness.

Brenda. When Brenda was in high school, she recalled that she did not have a firm grasp on or the language to articulate what it meant to be White and have privilege. She acknowledged that she was having incongruent feelings based on the morality of how to treat others and her beliefs, and how she observed members of her church treating and speaking about Black people and other minoritized people. Lacking the vocabulary to discuss what she was experiencing and someone to talk to about her feelings, she remembered just sitting in the church basement crying because people who were "racist and xenophobic" where a part of her church.

Tom. One of the ways that Tom made friends when he changed schools was by hosting parties at his home. Tom shared a story of a time when a few of his White friends declined to come to a party he was hosting because their parents found out that Black students were also invited. His mother also expressed displeasure with his choice to host other Black students in their home, to which Tom acknowledged that "she just didn't understand." Tom remembered a dance that was held on the Navy base for the servicemen children. Since the dance was coed, Tom explained that numbers where handed out to the boys who stood on one side of the venue, and corresponding numbers where handed out to the girls who stood on the other side of the venue. One of Tom's friends received a number that corresponded with a girl named Barbara, who was Black and also Tom's friend, and began to verbally voice his displeasure. Sensing the harm that this display could cause for Barbara, Tom switched numbers with his friend. It was in that moment Tom perceived himself as a "race traitor." He recognized that he did not possess a deep understanding of what it meant to be White at the time, but he did understand the complexities of humanity and decency and would not let race dictate where he stood in relation to other people.

Summary

Narratives in this status can be identified by the "triggers" (Helms, 1997, p. 217), that prompt the participant to think about and process their Whiteness. Triggers differed for each participant but resulted in an uneasiness about personal status in a clearly defined southern racial hierarchy. Common in five of the seven narratives is the incompatibility of personal religious beliefs with the beliefs and values espoused by the greater religious community of which the individual was a part. All the participants expressed having some uneasy feelings and the inability to talk about the feelings due to the "lack of words," or "vocabulary" to articulate it.

When a White person experiences a trigger, it can cause some dissonance within their White identity structure, and they may choose to retreat into White cultural norms and practices (Helms, 1984). In the next section I discuss reintegration narratives that illustrate the participants retreat, or reluctance to engage with their personal dissonance.

Reintegration Status Narratives

Reintegration represents the last of the first three racist White identities in Helm's (1984) model (Jones & Carter, 1996). White people in this status often retreat to White cultural norms and ideologies and may present elements of White rage (Anderson, 2017) or White guilt (DiAngelo, 2018). Individuals in the reintegration status may display their beliefs or feelings towards Black people actively or passively (Helms, 1997). Ponterotto et al. (2006) considered the reintegration status as the "purest racist status in the Helms model" (p. 95).

Gordon. During his time at Yale, Gordon developed friendships with both Black students and Black administrators. These relationships allowed Gordon to begin to develop a deeper understanding about race, but he acknowledged that "he wasn't quite there." He recalled a story of when some non-violent protests began in the South, students at Yale staged protests of their own, but he did not make an effort to join them. Gordon even advocated for a "cooling off" period before students engaged in traveling to the South or doing anything that could have been problematic for the status quo.

Gene. One day in Atlanta, Gene witnessed a demonstration that was taking place at a Krystal Burger stand. He wanted to observe what was happening and to see the police response, because he found it hard to believe that the police mistreated Black people and demonstrators who allied with Black people. Gene held this belief after attending meetings with organizers in the Black community and participating in a picket at a local church. He acknowledged that he was "dipping his toe in" and did not feel "fully committed."

Jim. Jim recalled living in segregated Texas towns, being highly aware of his Whiteness at all times. He confirmed that he "understood" it in Texas because of the spaces that were so clearly divided and that he was "clearly privileged" to be able to navigate those spaces. Despite the time that he spent observing his father preach in Black churches, he acknowledged that he did not have any feeling towards, or for Black people and that it was not strange. He called himself an "ordinary, oblivious kid."

Fran. Kay Hocking established an interracial theatre company for youth in the Atlanta area. Fran participated in the theatre company and was amazed at all of the people that she met and the friends that she made. She acknowledged, however, that she only formed deep connections with the White students. In fact, the only time that the White students and the Black students were together was during rehearsals or performances and never in any informal setting. She noted the "racial sophistication" of the Black students, but mentioned that her experience and other White students' experiences in those settings was "weird and wonderful."

In college Fran remembered being reluctant to be a part of any groups that were "agitating" about things. She acknowledged that she was weary of being forced into doing something that she did not want to, but also did not know how to make up her mind about what was important. She did know, however, that she did not like people handing her things and forcing her to think of them as important.

Ed. Ed's decision to drop out of Union University and move to Washington, D.C. also symbolized his privilege to choose to not address the issues that were causing him internal distress. Upon arriving in D.C., Ed only worked "odd jobs" and attended night school at George Washington University. He did not acknowledge if he deliberately chose to ignore his issues with his Whiteness; however, it seemed as if his time spent in D.C. was more to escape his issues, as he felt "called" to return back to Tennessee.

Brenda. Brenda's father was a champion for desegregation and received threats of violence for his outspoken nature, yet Brenda still attended segregated schools and lived in a segregated neighborhood. The decision to attend these schools was not her choice, nor did she explicitly state that she preferred them. However, living in and utilizing segregated spaces while advocating for desegregation does not appear to correlate to her father's justice-oriented stances—especially since he supported the *Brown* decision.

Tom. Despite Tom having both Black and White friends, he still recalled a time when he was scolded by his father for using the "N-word." He did not remember the context of the conversation or why he and his friends would have used the word, but his father came down on him like a "ton of bricks." Tom also recognized the White privilege that allowed him to get accepted into the University of Virginia. He acknowledged that he behaved in a manner acceptable for his Whiteness, such as participate in athletics, ROTC, and fraternity life.

Summary

The reintegration narratives represent the retreat to White cultural norms for many White people (Helms, 1984). The participants' reintegration narratives display the privilege that they possessed to either run away from their dissonance or revert to White cultural norms in the presence of White peers. Their retreat was not marked by a personal violent reprisal towards Black people; however, it signaled that it was acceptable for others around them to continue their behaviors and (potentially violent) actions towards Black people. White people in this status can choose to remain in this status or begin to redefine their Whiteness. As they redefine themselves, White people begin to rethink their relationship to norms and values that support racism and that begins the transition into the pseudoindependent status. The following section discusses the pseudoindepence narratives of the participants.

Pseudoindependence Status Narratives

The pseudoindepence status is the first status in what Jones and Carter (1996) identified as the non-racist statuses; furthermore, Helms (1997) designated this status as the first in the path of "redefining a positive White identity" (p. 219). White people in this status approach racial relations from an intellectual perspective and are more interested in similarities with Black people. Individuals in this status are in the process of abandoning the ideology of supremacy and inferiority, but may potentially still engage in activities or hold ideas that perpetuate both White supremacy and Black inferiority (Helms, 1997).

Gordon. When Gordon attended graduate school, he described beginning to look closer to what was being done in Unitarian Universalist congregations about racial justice. He conducted a survey of the predominately White congregations to understand how they were addressing racial issues. The results of his survey revealed that the congregation did nothing, aside from preach a few Sunday sermons, with regard to racial justice. This troubled Gordon and led him to begin learning more about racial issues by reading books about race in the U.S. Specifically he began reading books and attending lectures given by James Baldwin.

Gene. While observing the demonstration at the Krystal Hamburger stand, Gene was mistaken for a demonstrator, assaulted by police, arrested, and taken to jail. While in jail, he recalled being placed in the section for White people, separate from the Black section of the jail. In the holding area, Gene recalled hearing the Black demonstrators singing freedom songs. He remembered being comforted and moved by the songs they were singing, calling the experience “deeply meaningful.” He also met Sam Shirah who began to tell him about ways that he could become more involved in the movement, which included involvement with the SNCC Southern White Student Project. When released from prison, he began to learn more about the freedom movement and inequality through the United Nations Commission on Inequality that was in Atlanta at the time. Moreover, Gene began to connect the teachings of Ashton Jones, a White preacher who taught equality; Howard Zinn, a White professor who taught at Spelman College; and Vincent Harding, a Black Mennonite, who stressed the importance of living lives based on principle and the deepening of one’s mind to consider issues of justice and equality.

Jim. As Jim attended college and later graduate school in Dallas, he became disenchanted with being in a predominately White environment. He recalled being expelled from his rush class in a fraternity because he decided to defend his Jewish friend. The decision to dismiss him and his friend from the fraternity was an "awakening" for him. That awakening, along with the deeply segregated community, led to Jim's decision to transfer to Drew Seminary which was desegregated. Jim welcomed the change in the environment, and recalled that he did not experience any shock or surprise about the desegregated nature of Drew Seminary. Due to his experiences growing up in the South, Jim decided to organize a program that exposed students to areas of New York and New Jersey that he described as "tough." In these low socio-economic areas, Jim and his students were exposed to the realities of systemic racism and provided the impetuous for Jim and his students to begin to seek other opportunities to understand inequality.

Fran. Fran attended college in the Northeast and recognized the dynamics of race and racism still existed outside the South. The summer after Fran's first year of college, she volunteered with a Quaker-sponsored community organizing project in Vine City, Atlanta. In Atlanta, Fran encountered racialized poverty and the poor treatment of community members by the city government. She acknowledged this experience was "life-altering" and changed her perspective on how she approached social justice. She described the change as being prompted by a disconnect with the trust she had for all authorities including the government. She was also inspired by the residents of Vine City who were passionate in their pursuit for economic and racial justice. Intellectually, Fran was stimulated due to the close relationships she had with individuals from the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). She often had informal conversations and interactions with individuals who were active in "high profile campaigns against Jim Crow."

Ed. Ed decided to return to the South after reading a news story about Black people being denied their right to vote and losing their property for attempting to do so. He moved to Knoxville and enrolled at the University of Tennessee (UTK). At UTK, Ed wanted to learn more about Black people and the issues other minoritized groups faced and enrolled in a “Minority Relations” sociology course. He also joined a Unitarian discussion group (The Jefferson Club) that discussed issues of equality on campus and in Knoxville. Intellectually, Ed began to work through the issues with his Whiteness, the reason he came back to the South.

Brenda. The summers that Brenda spent at Bethany Hills Christian Camp, she worked and worshiped alongside both Black and White students. She remembered one summer at a Bethany Hills conference, Martin Luther King, Jr. gave a speech and “three or four” of the Black students that integrated Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas were also attending the conference. Brenda was energized by her time at Bethany Hills, citing being around other “young people who wanted to do something” as the source of her energy.

Tom. Tom attended the University of Virginia, Charlottesville (UVA) and participated on the swim team, the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), and fraternity life. Opportunities that were as Tom described, “afforded to him by his Whiteness.” He admitted that he never felt comfortable in any of those organizational situations and was not until he was invited to an organization called Students for Social Action that Tom felt “at home.” In this organization, Tom believed they discussed issues that were important to him and attempted to address systemic racism.

Summary

White people in the pseudoindependence status are in the process of abandoning their beliefs about Black inferiority and White supremacy (Helms, 1997). The participants’ narratives demonstrate the beginning of their pursuit of a positive White identity. This process started with an unconscious or conscious rejection of socialized norms the individual previously believed, and the intellectual pursuit to justify that rejection. Gordon, for example, needed to observe and evaluate everything in Selma before he could make a commitment to acting. Likewise, Gene was jailed before he could fully believe in the mistreatment of Black people in Atlanta. White people in this status learn how racism affects others, and how they can be complicit in systemic racism. As they learn about these issues, Helms (1997) found that White people begin to search for a positive White identity and positive aspects of Whiteness. This is the beginning of the immersion/emersion status, and I share those narratives in the next section.

Immersion/Emersion Status Narratives

White people in the immersion/emersion status begin to commit to learn about race in ways that make sense personally (Hardiman, 2001). Moreover, White people in this status will participate in groups that are involved in activism or social justice related activities. Helms (1997) stated that in the immersion/emersion status, White people experience emotions and gain knowledge that provide the "fuel by which the person can truly begin to tackle racism and oppression in its various forms" (p. 220).

Gordon. While he was choosing to observe in Selma, Gordon was approached by a White woman who volunteered to show him "real Selma." As they drove around, Gordon took pictures of the White spaces and the houses in the White neighborhoods. He recalled being awestruck at the differences between the Black neighborhoods and the White neighborhoods. Gordon was also astonished at the ambivalence of the woman driving him around towards the demonstrations occurring in Selma and what she perceived as real Selma. After his tour, Gordon decided that Selma "didn't need any more observing," and committed to the process of working toward racial justice.

Once he decided to shed his "observer mentality," Gordon participated in the protests still occurring in Selma and was arrested twice. When he was released from jail, on one occasion, one of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assistants chose Gordon and his White friend to take a photo with King for the associated press. When Gordon returned to his congregation in Boston, he monitored news and information from the South, wanting to return to Selma. He eventually went to Jackson, Mississippi to support another church whose pastor had been murdered by White supremacists. Gordon decided to not hide his presence there, but to be a “steady and calming influence,” for the congregation. He also stressed the importance of continuing the racial justice work that was being done by their pastor.

Gene. When Gene was released from jail, he founded Georgia Students for Human Rights with other White students from area Atlanta colleges. This organization served as an auxiliary organization for SNCC and supported demonstrations against segregated businesses in Atlanta. Gene also became a founding member and chair of the Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC). The SSOC was founded as a fraternal organization to SNCC and recruited White students across the South to organize for racial justice. Through SSOC, Gene built a network of SSOC chapters from the University of Texas at Austin to the University of Florida.

Jim. At Drew Seminary, Jim organized a sit-in at a local barbershop. He and several other students, both Black and White, wanted to make a point that racism was the same in the North as in the South. After the barber refused service to the Black students, they all stayed in the barbershop and were arrested. Furthermore, Jim was a part of the Northern Student Movement, an affiliate of SNCC in northern states. Students from the Northern Student Movement would go to the South to support SNCC sponsored activities. As an organization affiliated with SNCC, students in the Northern Student Movement attended nonviolent workshops and SNCC conferences. They also implemented similar nonviolent tactics to protest segregated public spaces in the North.

Fran. After Fran returned from her life-altering experience in Atlanta, she went in search of individuals who shared her passion for equality and justice. Fran eventually joined Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). Through SDS, she served on interracial projects, including a couple of projects that brought White southern students into neighborhoods in Chicago and Cleveland to work with the “hillbilly diaspora.” At her college, she was also no longer afraid to read the subversive material that she was reluctant to read before.

Ed. Through the Jefferson Club, Ed became acquainted with Marion Barry who was also a student at UTK. He viewed Marion as both a friend and a mentor who taught him about Black culture in

Knoxville. Together Ed and Marion co-chaired Students for Equal Treatment (SET), an interracial organization, that Ed believes was the first of its kind. SET advocated for desegregation among the eating establishments in Downtown Knoxville. Through Marion, Ed also began attending SNCC meeting.

Brenda. Brenda was always inspired by her non-fundamental Christian beliefs to act on behalf of others, especially Black people. While working at the summer camp in Bethany Hills, Brenda recalled a time, where she felt like she had enough and decided to jump in the pool when one of her Black friends was swimming. Though the camp was integrated it still had segregated activities, and Brenda's actions broke the rules of the camp and the denomination. Brenda understood that the values of equality espoused by the Christian organizations that she was a part of did not align with how she believed Black people should be treated.

Tom. Through Students for Social Action, Tom worked with the Virginia Student Civil Rights Committee. The goal of Virginia Student Civil Rights committee, like the Mississippi Summer Project, was to organize and register as many Black voters in the state of Virginia as possible. Tom was responsible for coordinating the state-wide conference for the organization, and invited John Lewis to speak. Despite having been beaten during Bloody Sunday in Selma, Alabama, John Lewis still showed up with bandages on his head. Inspired by Lewis's display of courage, Tom became more involved, enlisting participants for the "Freedom Train," that took civil rights supporters from Boston to Montgomery, Alabama.

Summary

Immersion/emersion status narratives are of White people attempting to engage in sense-making of their developing beliefs. Helms (1997) detailed that in this stage White people are asking "Who am I racially? And Who do I want to be" (p. 220). The participants began to seek the answers to those questions by becoming involved with organizations that addressed the issues that caused the incongruence in their identities. These organizations could not provide the answers as to who they should be, but rather the validation that the participants were on the right path to discovering who they wanted to be. The participants chose to be a part of these organizations and conversations and were not required or strong-armed to do so. The events that occur in the immersion/emersion status give White people in the status the energy to confront racism and oppression however it may appear (Helms, 1997). The goal of the now autonomous White person is to change the thoughts and feelings of other White people. The following section are the autonomy status narratives of the participants.

Autonomy Status Narratives

In reaching the autonomy status, White people begin to develop a new understanding of Whiteness that is not based upon the marginalization of other people (Hardiman, 2001; Helms, 1997). A person in the autonomy status has less rigid world views, and actively seeks opportunities to learn from other cultural groups (Helms, 1997). Moreover, in this status, it can be thought that a White person can reach "racial self-actualization," through an ongoing process to eliminate racism and all forms of oppression (Helms, 1997).

Gordon. Gordon divided his life into two distinct periods, life before and life after Selma. What he saw and experienced during his visit to Selma have compelled him to be an active participant in advocating for justice throughout his life. He believed that his participation in the CRM was not just about racial equality, but a broader vision for a just society. He expressed the need for potential racial justice allies to listen, be supportive, and avoid being siloed. Furthermore, he stressed that sometimes it is more important to just be a presence, rather than co-opting a movement. As Gordon reflected on his life, he named White supremacy as the reason he was needed to take a photo with Dr. King to legitimize the efforts that took place in Selma. He confessed that it had taken a lifetime for him to understand that.

Gene. While in SSOC, Gene recalled hearing Stokely Carmichael advocating for the Black Power Movement. He mentioned that before the national rollout of the Black Power Movement rhetoric, Carmichael delivered his thoughts and speaking points to SSOC. Carmichael pressed for White organizations return to White communities and focus on organizing White people to be advocates for racial justice and economic empowerment. This pivot made sense to Gene, and he credited the Black communities and organizers that he worked for and with, for helping him understand that.

Gene stressed it was important for White people to know their history with regard to racial justice. While there have been many individuals who supported unjust causes, there were also those who have been on the right side of history and advocated for equality and racial justice. That history also includes understanding how religious values and morals can also be used to support radical change. He emphasized the importance of advocating for actual change as a major component of activism and having a plan for that change.

Jim. Jim acknowledged his privilege as a major component that allowed him to be an activist. He realized that because he is White and male, that he could afford to take risks that other people could not. As he advised White students at northern schools, he believed it was his obligation to speak to and against issues of race and racism because of his understanding of the issues. He regarded activism as a vocation and has sought to integrate it into everything he has done and every position that he has held. Moreover, he advised that individuals connect their education of social issues to the actual practice of addressing those issues.

Fran. Fran credited her racial awareness and development to the role models that she had throughout her life. Moreover, she recognized the Black women in the movement who she worked with for helping her to understand her Whiteness and also providing space for her and others like her (i.e., White people) in the movement. Fran believed her involvement in social justice initiatives evolved from an “altruistic self-interest” in the issues and believed that White racial justice allies need to similarly have the same self-interest. She addressed that when Black organizers where stressing the importance of Black Power, it made sense to her that she should work in White communities. She believed that her interest in the greater movement aligned with the interests of Black organizers, and she could better serve her purpose working with White communities. Moreover, Fran recommended that White people who are interested in being involved in racial justice initiatives, do the research to understand the multiple intersecting variables that define social justice broadly. She explained that they should understand that a system exists that both harms Black people for being Black, while simultaneously rewarding White people for being White. That same system is also bad for poor and working-class White people as well. Furthermore, she stressed the need for White people to engage other White people on issues of racial equity.

Ed. Ed’s involvement with SNCC increased when he enrolled at Southern Illinois University (SIU). He collaborated with individuals such as James Baldwin, Bayard Rustin, Dick Gregory, Fannie Lou Hammer, John O’Neill, and Minnijean Brown. Ed understood that it was equally important for him to organize in the White community as it was for him to continue work in interracial coalitions. He served as a field secretary for the “White Southern Student Project” within SNCC and would eventually become involved with SSOC.

Ed discussed his “White skin privilege” and admitted that it was something that he continues to struggle with. He reflected on the relationship with Minnijean Brown that he ruined due to asking questions born from his Whiteness and White privilege. Ed stressed the importance of “doing something,” with regard to being an activist, and reiterated the importance of democracy and coalitions. He noted that while White people, including himself, may not fully understand racial discrimination they understand factors that marginalize White people (i.e., economic discrimination) and can use that understanding to work collaboratively toward justice. Ed likened his views on justice and equality to emulating Jesus, a person who was for liberation and “setting the captives free,” both Black and White captives.

Brenda. When Brenda entered college, she fully embraced her activist identity. She committed small acts of resistance that aligned with national movements at the time, including not wearing the proper attire for a woman to dinner. In college, Brenda would also organize in White communities in Kentucky, and her best friend who was Black would organize in Black communities. After they each spent their summers apart, they would return to campus and discuss their experiences. This experience helped her to understand that she should work where she had the greatest influence. Brenda also founded the Appalachian Volunteers, which served in both Black and White communities in Appalachia and became more involved with the CRM through her connections in Nashville and organizing in Appalachia.

Brenda reconsidered her actions as a child, teenager, and young adult; and acknowledged that her impulsivity served a purpose in breaking down barriers. She admitted, however, that often she did not understand the organizational systems which held oppression and inequality in place. She emphasized the need for White people to understand systemic oppression before getting involved in advocating for racial justice, and also having shared goals and common interests with people already working for change. According to her, activism starts with small deliberate personal actions that build toward solidarity and collaboration with others.

Tom. Tom dropped out of school to become a full-time activist. His decision to drop out of school to become an activist, carried the risk of losing his draft student deferment status for the war in Vietnam, but he acknowledged that it was a risk he had to take. The energy that he felt marching into Montgomery, Alabama with other activists solidified his commitment to the freedom movement. Tom became a member of SSOC and worked with SNCC and other organizations to bring about racial liberation.

The emergence of the Black Power movement was difficult for Tom because he was drawn to the interracial aspect of organizing. However, he understood that it needed to be done because of his and other White organizers ability to work in White communities. It shaped his view of activism and his belief, that activism is doing what you can where you are. More specifically for Tom, it was utilizing his “White skin privilege” to speak to racial issues in White communities. He argued that White people, like Black people, need to be liberated from their own racism especially when it came to issues such as class and socio-economic status.

Summary

The autonomy status represents the pinnacle of White racial identity development. Individuals in this status are prepared to address issues of oppression in the form that it arises and to struggle with the realities of their personal White privilege. According to Helms (1984), White people in this status possess a positive White identity; that is, a White identity not predicated on the oppression and marginalization of other minoritized identities. However, other race scholars (see DiAngelo, 2017 and Love, 2019) believe a positive White identity is unobtainable and that White individuals who seek racial and social justice must struggle with their Whiteness daily. All of the participants defined activism and acknowledged the role White privilege has in advocating for others. Specifically, they spoke about being able to choose how and when they show up for racial justice, or the ability to not show up at all. Jim observed this understanding, by acknowledging he can take risks that other people cannot take. Moreover, the participants understood the systemic nature of racism and its potential to effect both Black and White people as a reason to further advocate for and work towards racial justice.

Major Themes

The status narratives in the previous section served as a retelling of the participants' experiences through Helms's (1984) WRID model. By utilizing Helms's (1984) framework, I illustrated the participants' journey to becoming antiracist. However, to demonstrate the shared experiences and intricacies, a more detailed analysis of their stories is warranted. In this section, I discuss four major themes constructed to describe participants' experiences developing their anti-racist stance: a) understanding of race, b) moral values, c) role models, and d) activist identity. I provide definitions, examples, and subthemes to support each theme.

Understanding of Race

The *understanding of race* describes participants' understanding of race as they perceived it during their life. Growing up in segregated neighborhoods and attending segregated schools but having Black laborers in their neighborhoods and homes or Black students being bussed to their drama clubs, the racial hierarchy that existed in the South was always apparent to the participants. The participants came to understand race as it was articulated by their family members, and as they experienced the racialization of their friends. Having an early understanding of race, aided the participants in their antiracist development.

Racial ignorance. The racial ignorance the participants experienced was a result of vicarious contact they had with Black people through their parents. The activists' parents perspective demonstrated a limited understanding of racism, and contributed to activists complicity in racial inequality. Many of the participants used racialized language in their household because it was the norm in the South. Fran explained:

> *But we would have never used a word like nigger in our house. We could say nigra, that was really different from saying nigger, and Negro just sounded bizarre, like it would come from a White yankee. But certainly, certainly no racist jokes.*

Gene also experienced similar language usage in his home:

> *My mother told me, you know, people shouldn't be mean to Black people because they couldn't help being born Black, and you ought to be nice to people. She would have never called someone, nor would her mother, call someone a nigger, you don't do that. 'You don't treat Nigras bad because it's not their fault [they are Black],' that's the way she would have put it.*

Though the participants and their families believed they were being racially sensitive and aware, they were creating a racial dichotomy they observed mentally—normal and Black. This dichotomy is further demonstrated in Gordon's comments about his housekeeper growing up.

> *Our maid during most of the time I was growing up was someone we got very close to. I knew her by her first name. I—I didn't address White adults by their first name, but Melissa was a part of the household. And we would have been willing for her to come in the front door [but] she preferred the back door.*

They perceived their housekeeper was respected as a part of the family; however, Gordon did not pay her the same respect he paid to White adults (normal), and he mentions her using entering their home as his family's preference and not what was expected of Black and People of Color).

Overt racism. Overt racism were thoughts, behavior, actions, and language directly meant to reproduce White supremacy and Black inferiority. Many of the participants did not personally display or have parents who were openly racist; however, Ed experienced his parents' racism and called it "psychological warfare." He recounted his father regularly used the N-Word, and his grandmother would discipline him by telling him "Nigger Annie was going to flush him down the toilet." Ed's father even voted for segregationists. Ed and Tom both had racist parents; however, Ed did not have any Black friends growing up. Unlike Ed, Tom and his mother would regularly argue over bringing his Black friends over to his home.

> *I would have parties, and I would invite friends over for parties and when my White friends would find out that I invited some of my Black friends over, they had to tell me that their parents said they couldn't come because of my Black friends, and of course I also had difficulties around that with my mother…*

Ed and Tom both experienced the racism of their parents at an early age. Despite this direct attempt to socialize them as overt racists, Ed and Tom grew to become antiracists. Interestingly, due to the harshness of Ed's father, he sought comfort at the feet of a Black man as a child. Tom would learn how to critique his Whiteness, and eventually deemed himself a race traitor.

Racial awareness. All of the participants reported being aware of racial difference from an early age. Due to segregation in the South the differences between being Black and White were apparent in the daily lives of the participants. They realized how consequential their Whiteness was in upholding the racial hierarchies in the South, and their unexamined, unnamed Whiteness made their racial ignorance possible. Fran recalled the first time she heard two Black housekeepers mention a "White baby," and though Fran heard her family talk about "Nigras" in her home, she suddenly felt implicated in the larger racial conversation.

Similarly, in junior high, Jim had a profound moment of realization when attending the Texas State Fair.

> *We traveled from wherever we were living at the time to Dallas for the State Fair, that would have been on a Saturday, and it turns out it was Negro day. We had another minister and his wife with us; but there we were, our one day at the fair, and we were some of the only White people at the fair because it was the day for African Americans. And I remember the other minister saying, "Well I guess this is the way they feel all the time." It really struck me, I've never forgotten him saying that because here we were these few very, very, very few White people in a large African American gathering and feeling awkward about that, and him pointing out this is the way they feel every day.*

Gordon had a comparable experience when he attended his housekeeper's gospel concert when he was younger.

> *There was one point I was probably 10 or 12 years old and she was really anxious for us to attend the concert her choir was putting on. My father and I attended, and I remember our picture was taken. We sort of stuck out—I'm not sure but I think we may have been the only White people in the audience.*

Like most of the participants, Gene was aware of Black laborers in his neighborhood; however, he insisted he did not have any one-to-one interaction with Black people until college. Instead Gene recounted he came to an understanding about race and Whiteness through his interest in WWII. He remembered reading about the treatment of the Jews during the Holocaust and credits his understanding of their marginalization to better understanding the reasons for the CRM.

Tom remembered becoming aware of the "pain of racism" from an early age due to having Black friends. As Navy Junior Tom recognized racism was not just a southern problem but an American problem. Because of his awareness, Tom stated he became a race traitor early in his life. Tom's awareness of his Whiteness and its benefits continued to grow as he got older. When speaking about his college years, Tom mentioned doing what was "afforded to him" by his Whiteness at the University of Virginia. Social privileges, like being a part of the swim team, joining the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), and fraternity life, Tom would eventually give up these privileges when he decided to drop out of college to become a full time activist.

Ed summarized the racial awareness journey of all the participants when he admitted that he was still learning and struggling with his White skin privilege.

> *I'm still learning about White skin privilege; I think all White people are subconsciously aware of White skin privilege. People will argue up one side and down the other about they never did anything bad to Black people and there's nothing about Whiteness that*

> *they're proud of, while at the same time having a better style of life because they're White.*

The participants' racial awareness started at an early age, due to living in the South; however, their awareness was situated in understanding their Whiteness as a neutral factor. The participants in their family were accustomed to critiquing Blackness (i.e., "it's not their fault they are Black) without examining their Whiteness as the foundation of racialization. When confronted with their Whiteness, they often did not have the words to describe their discomfort but acknowledged it was a feeling that would "stick with them." The dissonance they felt pushed them to struggle with their Whiteness and privilege toward antiracism, rather than retreat into White supremacist beliefs and ideals.

The *understanding of race* theme captured how participants experienced and learned about race during their antiracist development. Due to living in the South, race and racism were an aspect of life the participants experienced every day, so much so, Jim articulated that it could become easy to just ignore. As the participants developed a more nuanced understanding of race which differed from the ideology of their parents or community, they began to question their roles as participants in systemic racism.

Moral Values

The theme *moral values* highlights the values that informed the participants' antiracist practice. Moral values are principles that help an individual determine right and wrong. In many cases, the values were meant to support White supremacy; however, as the participants became more aware of their Whiteness and complicity in systemic racism, they reinterpreted these values to support racial justice. In other instances, the values the participants learned motivated them during their antiracist development. Participants learned values from their family, religious faith, and cultural values related to the South.

Family. All of the participants except for Fran, spoke of their family as important in their antiracist development. The beliefs and values of the individuals' family members shaped their understanding of how Black people should be treated. Some of the participants had parents in support of some form of equality, such as Brenda whose father received threats because of his support of *Brown v. Board.*

> *You know, I didn't even know enough to be proud of him at that point, but I just knew that he was involved in stuff that was serious, and that he was sticking his neck out. And that's where my interest in and my commitment to racial justice started.*

Or Gordon, whose father taught him that he had a moral obligation to help solve societal problems.

> *He was involved in some interracial things. The socialist activities were not segregated, so we had some connections. And I think that shaped me more than I realized at the time. He had the outlook that 'if you see a problem you have to figure [out] how to change it.*

Brenda and Gordon drew inspiration from their parents and strived to live up to the example they set in advocating for others. Their parents provided the moral template for the participants to follow and motivation for their participation in racial justice activism.

Other participants, such as Tom and Gene, received mixed moral messages from their parents. Tom, particularly, talked about the backgrounds of both his parents.

> *I also had difficulties around [race] with my mother whose family, a poor White family in Western Kentucky, definitely had more problems around racism and racial bias than my father's family. Father's father was a dentist, small town, took care of everybody, you*

> *know without regard to race, etc. In fact, when the Klan tried to organize in his town, he and the judge and the sheriff rounded up the people who would come in from out of town to organize for the Klan and told them that if they come back they would ride them out of town on a rail. Whereas, my mother's family, she and her sisters were in the church choir, and whenever a public event was going on, they wanted the choir to perform. So, they would actually go and sing at Klan rallies and their parents didn't have a problem with that.*

Though Tom acknowledged his mother generally followed his father's lead in embracing an integrated society, she still had issue with Tom having Black friends visit their home. Likewise, Gene navigated a childhood in which he received messages to pity Black people by his mother, "it wasn't Black people's fault that they were born Black," and where he witnessed his father be kind and respectful to Black workers.

There were also families who had completely racist values, such as Ed's family. He recalled a lineage of people in his family who believed in the supremacy of White people, and actively participated in the brutalization of Black people.

> *Grandmother did not like corporal punishment. The way she would try to discipline me was she would say, "Old Nigger Annie will flush you down her toilet." And my Grandfather was the Chief of Police in South Fulton, Tennessee, and Deputy Sheriff in Union City. He was called Big Stick Jim Hamlett, and I'm afraid that I'll be embarrassed when I find out why he actually got that name. And I know father, and [my grandparents] regularly used the N-word.*

Ed called the racist parts of his childhood "psychological warfare," and he at one point sought comfort from his parents yelling by hugging the legs of a Black man who worked at his church.

At a young age, his family's values drove him to begin getting closer to Black people. Ed even recalled his decision to vote is rooted in the value of democracy his father instilled in him, but it was motivated by wanting to see racial justice in West Tennessee.

Religious. The participants agreed religion, specifically Christianity, antagonized their participation in the CRM and antiracist development. As Fran voiced, "the experience of growing up in the church often carried moments of rebellion and critique when children reached adolescence and began to feel restive at what they saw as hypocrisy and moral cowardice in their elders." Being a part of the church for the participants was a way of life growing up in the South, and most of the participants (Ed, Jim, Gene, Gordon, Tom, and Fran) grew up going to segregated churches. Ed recalled his father, who was a deacon, regularly using the N-Word, and despite having Black employees of the churches where he served, viewing Black people as inferior. Ed's relationship with "White Christianity" led him to run away from the South.

> *I was starting to have some problems with being a southerner and what that represented to me and I think—I think part of it had to do with race. I think it also had to do with culture. I think it had to do with maybe not being aware. I wasn't sure that I had any business being a Southern Baptist.*

Ed, Fran, Gene, and Tom all renounced the Christian faith they grew up with, but eventually came to reembrace Christian ideals, as they were an important CRM foundation. Gene spoke extensively of attending lectures about "smashing fundamentalist Christianity" while attending Emory University, and listening to both Black and White preachers expound on the virtues of equality and justice as articulated by the Bible. The religious tradition many of the participants did embrace was Unitarian Universalism (UU). During the CRM, the UU church sponsored many student groups on campuses the participants were at or close to and dialogued about issues of racial justice and equality. The UU tradition seemed to embrace the moral values of loving your neighbor and concern for the least of these that fundamentalists (i.e., White Supremacist) Christianity only espoused.

Unlike many of the other participants, Brenda's non-fundamentalist faith informed her antiracism and primarily informed her views on social justice.

> *That was my world growing up in minister's family and being at church all the time, so I can't remember any other influences, when I was really young that led me in a direction of a commitment to social justice. My father was in sort of a progressive denomination, and I didn't grow up as a fundamentalist, but I did grow up believing that people should do the right thing. If they were Christians, they should follow the Word.*

Similarly, growing up in a religious household and experiencing his father preach in African American churches, Jim felt uncomfortable living and going to school in segregated Dallas, Texas. After one year in a Dallas seminary, he transferred to Perkins Seminary where he said he was more comfortable with the integrated environment.

Cultural. All of the participants lived in a segregated neighborhood or attended a segregated school or church at one point in their life. When speaking about their experience, it was a normal part of life despite some of the participants' parents fighting for desegregation. Most notably, Brenda's father advocated for school desegregation, yet still chose to have his family live in a segregated neighborhood. The culture of segregation led to some of the participants viewing Black people only capable of manual labor jobs and not as equals. Gene expressed this sentiment when he went to college in Atlanta stating, "That was the very first time I really felt, you know, one-to-one with Black people as equals." Gordon expressed a similar sentiment when he was having a conversation with a Black student whom he had befriended, "It was probably the first sort of conversation with someone who was my peer and had greater knowledge than I did…" Which also contributed to the racial ignorance of participants such as Gene and Gordon.

Ed, Gene, Tom, and Brenda were part of or affiliated with the student group, Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC). SSOC was a White student organization that formed out a need for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) to organize on White college campuses across the South to find White students who were sympathetic to the CRM. The goal of the SSOC was to reclaim the South as a place of equality and justice for all, and adapted a famous Southern manifesto entitled *I'll Take My Stand*, written to glorify the agrarian society, uphold old southern traditions, and reaffirm lost cause ideology, into *We'll Take Our Stand. We'll Take Our Stand* as a manifesto championed collaboration, equal opportunity, and a democratic South.

> *We do hereby declare, as southern students from most of the Southern states…that we will here* *take our stand* *in determination to build together a New South which brings together democracy and justice for all its people…The Freedom movement for an end to segregation inspires us all to make our voices heard for a beginning of true democracy in the South for all people. We pledge together to work in all communities across the South to create nonviolent political and direct action movements dedicated to the sort of social change throughout the South and nation…*

The *We'll Take Our Stand* manifesto took the people first orientation of *I'll Take My Stand* and used it to justify its position to achieve democratic justice for all Southerners regardless of "economic, ethnic, and religious backgrounds," to achieve "not only civil rights, but in other areas beyond civil rights, e.g., peace, academic freedom, civil liberties, capital punishment, and unemployment" (SSOC, 1964, p. 3). Though the SSOC would only exist for five years, its unique embrace of its southern culture allowed it to do what other organizations thought was impossible—build a radical movement in the South (Gardner, 2015).

The moral values of the participants framed the way they interacted with the racialized world. Some of the values inherited from their families, religion, and culture informed the racial ignorance and racism present in the lives of the participants. While, some of the values reinforced the antiracist identities the participants would later develop. Important from the study is the participants learned from and were not defined by the values of others. They developed a sense of self-authorship (Baxter-Magolda, 2008), leading to their development as antiracists and activists.

Role Models

Role models for the participants in the study were people who informed their antiracist ideals. Role models exhibited behavior the participants sought to emulate, and demonstrated ideals that informed their antiracist development. White role models were both mentors and colleagues and emphasized the importance of collaboration and followership; and how to be a part of the movement as a White person. Black role models were important for helping the racial/cultural competency of the participants and how they could be useful in the movement.

White mentors/colleagues. White colleagues and mentors demonstrated the possibility of being antiracist during a time when it was not popular. They provided a space for the participants to understand they could be different from their parents, and there was activism specific to White people to be done. Many of the participants cited having their fathers as a role model. Brenda recalled her father being a advocate for desegratation, Gordon recalled his father participating in integrated socialist organizations, Jim's father preached in African American churches, they all demonstrated the possibility of being a White antiracist. Unlike the participants who found their parents to be role models in their antiracist development, Fran recalled her parents being ambivalent to racial issues, but found a role model in Kay Hocking, the wife of a professor at Emory with her father.

> *[Kay Hocking] kind of moved in those circles. And she invited me, their family always did this, invited me to come with them and go to the annual Christmas concert at Atlanta University. So, Spelman and Morehouse choirs are there. It's a huge room filled with Black people. So, here I am, this little White speck or one the few little White specks in here. What an interesting—what a mind-blowing feeling.*

Though Fran's family would not have used racial slurs in their house or went out of their way to treat Black people poorly, they did not actively seek to engage with Black people. Kay Hocking, however, held regular parties with Black and other People of Color and even invited Fran to be a part of the interracial theatre troupe she directed. Moreover, it was through the Hocking family that Fran became introduced to other Black mentors and provided the motivation for Fran's parents to join a human relations council.

After he was arrested, Gene shared a cell with Sam Shirah. Sam was a field secretary for SNCC and ran the White Folks Project, which sought out southern Whites to join the freedom movement. Sam was influential in helping Gene understand ways he could get involved as a White person. Sam was also influential in recruiting Ed to be a part of the White Folks Project once Ed became a SNCC member. Moreover, Gene recalled being inspired by a White preacher named Ashton Jones who drove across the South and preached about equality. Gene felt it important that historical White antiracists exemplars be recognized proclaiming, "White students need to know their history…it's important to know that we come from what people have done before us." He referenced Myles Horton and Reinhold Niebuhr as two White people who stood for social justice. Likewise, Fran acknowledged the need to understand and study White antiracist role models. She cited reading Anne Braden's *The Wall Between* as important in her antiracist develop along with her relationship with Kay Hocking.

Jim spoke of the importance of being a mentor to other White students. He stated that activism was his vocation. As his vocation, he believed it was his responsibility, through whatever job he held, to help White students gain an understanding of how to advocate for the marginalized. For Jim, it was vital to help White individuals gain experience and practice in college before entering the "real world."

> *What is that practice like? I think that practice is in the world, in the community, in the neighborhood…undergraduate students need to learn how to practice what their life is going to be like outside those four or five years, they have to learn that as a part and parcel of their education.*

Likewise, Fran expressed the importance of individuals who could help "create space" for her and other White people to contemplate their Whiteness, and to foster meaningful interracial interactions.

> *Another thing that Kay Hocking did was have international student parties. They were racially integrated student parties, but it was never just Black and White students. There were some Indian people, women with saris and men with turbans. That made a big difference in those days, it opened up political space. But trying to think about all of the places that nurtured me, I would say thos adults that were helping us have these [interracial] experiences with each other…creating a space.*

Black mentors/colleagues. Black mentors and colleagues helped to "keep them honest," educate, and reveal truths about the role of White people in the movement. While attending college in Atlanta, Gene regularly found himself in the Atlanta University Center (AUC) listening to lectures given by Vincent Harding, a Black Mennonite, who encouraged him to deepen his mind to the ideals embraced by the freedom movement. Having Black mentors and colleagues allowed the participants to learn how their privilege influenced their perspective and what was acceptable for them as White people in the movement to do, especially when it came to organizing. Tom recalled being told in a conversation with a Black colleague as SNCC started to embrace the Black Power Movement, it was more beneficial for him to talk to the "White guy at the gas station" than it was for him to be in Black communities. Though it was hard for Tom to feel like he was turning his back on his obligations and commitments as an activist, he came around to embracing the idea.

> *We went from shame to value. It was like—a different way of using White skin privilege, right? We actually have the privilege of being White southerners in organizing against racism. I remind people who want to leave the country because of what America is doing around the world, you have the privilege of being in the belly of the beast. It's a privilege and a responsibility to use the position you're in to make change.*

Ed credited his friendship with Minnijean Brown as a factor in his growth as an antiracist and for revealing he still had a long way to go in addressing his Whiteness.

> *Another student at SIU was Minnijean Brown, one of the Little Rock Nine, and she and I were good friends…she was an important person in my metamorphosis…she had been courageous. There was a time that she was speaking about her experience in Arkansas and being a part of the Little Rock Nine and she cried, and I stupidly asked her about*

> *crying. I think my Whiteness, my White skin privilege, and my way of viewing myself [prevented] me from seeing that was a stupid question.*

Both Jim and Brenda relied on their Black colleagues to learn how to better organize in their communities. Brenda would recap her summers with her best friend from college, who was Black, and learn how she was organizing in her hometown. Jim became a part of a northern SNCC affiliate and regularly attended conferences and learned of the nonviolent tactics practiced by SNCC members.

As Fran articulated, “the racial sophistication,” of Black mentors and colleagues, helped the participants learn how to be equal partners to and best advocate for Black people in the CRM. Tom also attributed his ability to build relationships with people quickly, due to the fact he changed schools frequently and attended desegregated schools. Black mentors where important because they taught the reasons why the movement was important and connected the actions of the Black community back to ideals that were relatable to the participants. Black colleagues were important because they gave the participants the space to become antiracist activists; however, they were not afraid to let the participants know their actions were either wrong or could be used in a different capacity. More importantly, Black mentors and colleagues were important because they dispelled the conditioning the participants experienced from their parents or community that Black people were inferior and deserving of discrimination.

Both White mentors and Black mentors were important in the antiracist development of the participants. White mentors provided a template of how to successfully partner with Black activists, as well as how to use their privilege in advancing racial justice. Black mentors provided all important racial education for participants, as well as provided space for White activists in the movement.

Activist Identity

In this study, activism was conceptualized as organized activity around a set of issues by a group of people. The participants' *activist identity* emerged as they became more educated about racial justice and embedded in community with other activists. This theme captures the factors which led to the participants eventually identifying as activists during the CRM. Some of the participants identified as an activist prior to matriculating into college, while others had their *activist identity* emerge through experiences in college. Factors that contributed to the emergence of the *activist identity* are turning points, actions by the participants, and the goals expressed by the participants.

Turning points. Turning points were moments in the lives of the participants when they decided to become active CRM participants. Prior to a turning point, the participants may have been struggling with or questioning their Whiteness; however, a turning point represents a distinct choice to advocate on the behalf of Black people during the CRM. For example, Gordon spoke frequently about his choice to be an "observer" of civil rights demonstrations and protests. Though he knew how Black people were being treated in America was inherently wrong, at times he decided to "wait until things cooled off…" before he personally advocated or participated in any demonstration. Gordon's turning point came when he was observing neighborhoods in Selma and he was offered by a White woman to see the "real Selma." He was shocked at her willingness to show him around, despite identifying himself as being there on behalf of the protests that were occurring, and her perceived ambivalence toward what was happening in the Black community. Gordon called the experience "utterly life changing," and decided to stop hiding behind his camera and observing things, and to be an active participant with the people who did not have the option to leave whenever they wanted.

Experiencing the marginalization and oppression of Black people personally affected how the participants viewed themselves as active contributors to the CRM. Similar to Gordon, Fran had participated in some interracial activities growing up and even had an understanding of what it meant to be White and the effects of racism in the South. Yet, it was not until she did a summer project in college that she became involved in the CRM. She noted the change from her freshman year to her sophomore year.

> *I remember as a freshman I was reluctant to interact with groups that were agitating about things—groups that wanted to hand me a leaflet that took a strident tone about the war in Vietnam for instance. I would kind of shrink from that. I didn't want to be pushed. I did not feel like I knew how to make my mind up about things, and I was leery of troublemakers who might want to make up my mind for me. That summer in Atlanta, I was living in a neighborhood that was both Black and poor, and I met people who were enduring great deprivation and discrimination but were unbowed.*

Likewise, Gene shared a story of being wrongfully arrested at a protest after witnessing the wrongful treatment of Black people by the police. He expressed that the songs being sang by Black protestors in jail were "quite overwhelming" and motivated him to go beyond "just sticking his toe in." Prior to that experience, Gene expressed some doubt that any American could be treated poorly because of the color of their skin despite hearing White and Black people speak about injustice and inequality.

Other participants experienced turning points due to their close relationships with Black and minoritized friends. They experienced as Tom explained, "[the] pain of racism being suffered by friends," that allowed for the participants to become intimately involved in advocating for the equitable treatment of individuals like their friends. Tom also spoke about his experience at a school dance that led him to become a “race traitor,” or someone who actively rejects the benefits of being a White person.

> *A guy I knew drew a number [to dance with] a girl that I knew who was Black. Well they weren’t used to being in integrated situations, and I could tell. I think there was some perception on the other side of the hall that there was something going on, and I was just really worried that he was going to really hurt her feelings. So, I quickly went over to him and switched cards with him, so she wouldn’t have her feelings hurt. It was at that time that I discovered what White people were about, in terms of racism, and at the same time I became a race traitor.*

As an undergraduate in Dallas, Texas, Jim experienced the marginalization and exclusion of his Jewish friend from a fraternity they were pledging. He recalled the prejudice against the Jewish man was so pervasive in the fraternity, the Mayor of Dallas oversaw their trial for expulsion from the organization. Astonished they held a trial for him and his friend, Jim called the experience an “awakening” as to the type of town Dallas was and the South as a whole. Furthermore, Jim expressed the importance of a turning point for White students as he recalled taking students to Mississippi during Freedom Summer. After three students went missing one night, their three bodies were later found, assumed murdered by White supremacists. Remorseful about what happened, Jim acknowledged, “That was a tough, tough time; but those students—White students—their lives were changed in huge ways.”

Some turning points were not as dramatic as experiencing the direct mistreatment of Black people, but rather a culmination of personal experiences coupled with the news of the mistreatment of Black people. Ed decided to run away from the South because of the internal struggle that he was experiencing as a White person. When he read about the mistreatment of

Black people in Tennessee for attempting to vote, he decided that he could no longer run away from his problems as a White person and he need to confront not only his personal issues, but injustice as well. Brenda grew up in a house that advocated for the equality of all people, and even received a death threat intended for her father, but it was not until she sat in the basement of her church upset and crying about the racism and bigotry of her fellow church members that she started on her path to being and activist.

The turning points for the participants were a result of the emotional dissonance they experienced. Their emotional dissonance was caused by being confronted with their privilege and its implications in the treatment of Black people. Turning points do not represent the end of the activists' journey but rather the beginning. Experiencing a turning point, the activist developed a sense of why their voice and actions are needed; moreover, they began to see behind the veil of race and racism (Du Bois, 1999). After the activists' turning point, it was common for each individual to begin learning more about the issues around race and racism and becoming more involved in demonstrations and protests.

Action. Action represents specific actions taken by the participants that they would define as activism. Their actions were a result of their turning point toward racial justice and newfound critical awareness of the marginalization and oppression of Black people. As Brenda clarified "it can be something as small as picking up the telephone or as large as organizing 300 people, activism is acting on your best interests for the greater good…so much that you're willing to get arrested…" Brenda expanded this notion by telling the story of integrating the swimming pool at an already integrated summer camp.

> *One of the first actions I personally took was I broke the rules of that camp, or the state denomination by integrating the swimming pool. One of my good friends was a Black*

> *guy, who had a job just like the rest of us and couldn't go swimming when we did. Bullshit, I just jumped in the pool because this [was] non-sense. We're all swimming together. And we got into trouble, and had to go before the board, and we used that as an organizing tool across the state to say, "this is not right!"*

Gordon found getting arrested while in Selma demonstrated his solidarity in the movement. It indicated that while he did have a bus ticket to go back to Boston to report what he had observed, he was instead choosing to stand with the people who were already at home and could not run away from the realities of the segregated South. Whereas, Ed began educating himself more about the treatment of Black people in the U.S. by taking classes and going to the Jefferson Club, a Unitarian Universalist Club that debated topics such as racial justice.

Jim acknowledged it was his responsibility as a White person to commit to action that could not be carried out by Black people.

> *I think I've always considered, not so much maybe a duty to get arrested or not, but I knew that I could always afford to be, and I knew I could always get out of it. Which wasn't true for other people.*

He modeled his responsibility by staging a demonstration in local barbershop in New Jersey, putting himself in the movement, to not only demonstrate that Black people were treated unfairly, but racism also existed across the United States, not just the South.

Tom was inspired to act by and getting students in Virginia to commit to being a part of the Freedom Train, which was a train that carried demonstrators from Boston into Montgomery, Alabama. His actions led to what he defined as a life altering moment and solidified his sense of belonging in the movement, as he felt like he was a part of a "liberating army" going into Alabama. Gene and Fran alike, also became more active in planning movements as a part of their actions toward achieving racial justice. Gene started an organization called Georgia Students for Human Rights, and Fran went on to join Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and participated in other projects like her experience in Atlanta.

Small actions on behalf of the participants allowed them to grow their confidence as activists and take progressively larger actions. At the crux of the participants willingness to act on behalf of Black people during the CRM, was the realization their privilege can actually be used to subvert Whiteness in the South. Once the participants committed to action, they all agreed, they were officially activists.

Goals. The goal of activism is to produce change (Barnhardt, 2014, 2019; Biddix, Somers, & Polman, 2009; Chambers & Phelps, 1993), therefore articulated goals for change are a part of the activist identity. Tom shared his goal of being an antiracist activist was liberation, of not just Black people, but White people as well, “I’ve always felt like ending racism is liberation. Not just of people who are directly oppressed, but of White folks as well, who are oppressed by their own racism in many ways.” Ed also shared similar views of liberation as a goal, his rooted in a belief in Jesus. As a “freedom fighter,” it was his responsibility to emulate Jesus—“liberating the captives [and] freeing the enslaved.”

Brenda articulated a goal for change, especially for an activist who is getting started, may be to have better understanding of the systems and structures that affect racial and social justice for all people. She acknowledged it was an important concept for her to understand and spurred personal change in how she engaged in activism.

> *Now, I look back on the time period with this more nuanced understanding of how institutions work, especially religious institutions, and how they are made up of individuals and how individuals just can’t shake off what you come from. There’s a*

> *relationship between racial justice and economic justice and understanding the structural underpinnings of what we all deal with in our daily lives every day. So, I think I reacted in certain ways that were not quite as mature.*

Fran expanded Brenda's notion of personal change to also include those who she might have influence over. She believed it is important to challenge beliefs for growth and development, and for White people to engage other White people on issues of racial justice.

Acknowledging their privilege, both Gordon and Jim realized more practical goals in engaging in interracial coalitions as activists. Reflecting on his experience, Jim asserted the importance of utilizing his privilege in ways Black and other minoritized people could not; whereas, Gordon phrased it as "just being a people." They both recognized, from the perspective of White observers, their presence and actions as White people brought additional legitimacy to the goals of the movement. Gordon expressed the moment he realized this when he was asked to pose for a picture with Dr. King.

> *One of the people we'd been jailed with was doing PR for Dr. King, and when he'd realized that we were out, he told us that Dr. King was at the courthouse observing people in line at the courthouse. He wanted us down there to have our picture with Dr. King. It dawned on me recently this picture of two White ministers from Boston standing on either side of Dr. King, makes sense only in a society created by White supremacy. At this point in the Selma campaign, hundreds of people, probably close to thousands of people have been arrested, most of them had not had their pictures taken alone, or with Dr. King—but two White ministers from Boston. That's worth the AP sending out as an AP wire photo.*

Being present to help advance the goals of the movement was change.

The goals of the participants ranged from large scale philosophical goals, such as liberation; to smaller more personal goals, such as educating themselves or changing the perspectives of those around them. Whereas, others had more practical goals, such as just being present. All of these goals pointed to changing what was accepted as the status quo in the South, and the U.S. during the CRM.

The activist identity of the study participants was influenced by their turning points, actions, and goals. They all experienced different turning points, but each turning point oriented them away from their supremacist position in society to one of equality. Through questioning their complicity in White supremacy and systemic racism, either actively or as a bystander, each was motivated by the incongruence they felt internally and what they observed or experienced externally. As each participant experienced their turning points, each began committing to more acts advocating for the equal treatment of Black people. Some acts were as small as becoming more educated about racial differences, as consequential as getting arrested, or as large as starting organizations oriented towards racial justice. The goals articulated by each of the participants focused on change, a primary indicator of being an activist. The focus of their change was the systems upholding White supremacy in the South.

Conclusion

Through the use of critical life history narratives, southern White student activists told stories of their participation in the CRM. The stories the participants told encompassed their racial identity development and included their understanding of race, the influence of values and role models, and their activist identity. The critical life histories of the participants can influence and encourage the next generation of White student activists. To aid in the understanding of the complexity of White racial identity development toward anti-racism, there is a need to examine historical examples of White anti-racist exemplars (Malott et al., 2015). Therefore, the stories of southern White student activists during the CRM provide historical examples of southern White anti-racists, and a deeper understanding of White anti-racism.

This chapter included the status narratives of each of the seven participants to demonstrate their White racial identity development. I then provided a more detailed thematic analysis of four major themes that were present in the study a) racial understanding, b) moral values, c) role models, and d) activist identity. In the next chapter, I discuss the study findings, implications for higher education, and future research.

CHAPTER VI

Discussion, Implications, and Conclusion

I collected the stories of southern White students who participated in the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) to better understand how they developed their antiracist identities. The research questions that guided this study were:

1. What are the stories of southern White student activists who participated in the Civil Rights Movement?
    a. How did White activists develop their antiracist identities?
    b. How did White activists develop their activist identities?
2. How might the stories of southern White student activists who participated in the Civil Rights Movement provide implications for antiracism in higher education?
    a. How might White antiracist exemplars perspectives and experiences provide direction in overcoming racial identity regression among college students?

This study provided the means for gaining an in-depth understanding of the experiences and perspectives of southern White students who participated in the CRM. More specifically, this study highlighted stories that demonstrate the development of White students' racial identities through Helms's (1984) WRID model. Through the use of critical life histories (Diniz-Pereira, 2008), the participants had the opportunity to share their stories as they relate to anti-racism and racial justice activism. The goal of concentrating on their stories was to acknowledge their participation in the CRM as White southerners, understand their White racial identity development toward anti-racism, and to inform administrators, educators, and researchers of their actions. If administrators, educators, and researchers can learn from the stories of southern White anti-racists, then we may be able to better build higher education structures and systems that support anti-racism, as well as educate all students, specifically White students, of the need for anti-racist beliefs (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Juárez, 2013; Yamato, 1998).

Narratives of Southern White Antiracists

Historically student activists have been at the heart of societal change and university reform (Altbach, 1973; Boren, 2001, Rhoads, 1998; Thelin, 2011;2018); yet, the literature is deficient of White student racial-justice advocates (Ayvazian, 2004; Malott et al., 2019; O'Brien, 2001; Smith & Redington, 2010; Spanierman & Smith, 2017). The intention of this study was not to center and glorify Whiteness. Rather, the aim of this study was to dissect and understand the process by which the participants became anti-racist activists. Through uncovering the stories and experiences of these southern White student activists, this research affirmed that southern White people do not exist as a cultural and ideological monolith (Sokol, 2009), though they do have shared experiences.

The experiences articulated by all of the participants indicated that they all possessed knowledge of racialized difference at an early age as a result of being southern and living in the South. Though there were clearly defined racial hierarchies the participants could observe, such as Black housekeepers having to use the backdoor, observing Black laborers work low-wage jobs, and notably living in a hyper-segregated society. They often lacked the vocabulary to speak to what they were experiencing or readily identify the injustices that they were observing. Parents of the participants facilitated their inability to talk about racism due to their unwillingness to address racial difference, blind adherence to the racial status quo in the South, or blatant racism. Even when the participants' parents or role models did participate in social justice activities (e.g., participating in socialist groups, advocating for *Brown v. Board*, preaching in African American churches), they remained in a segregated neighborhood or school which limited the amount of direct contact they could have with Black children. In general, the abundance of vicarious (indirect) contact, through parents and role models, led to instances of surprise and shock at the intelligence, poise, and compassion possessed by Black people.

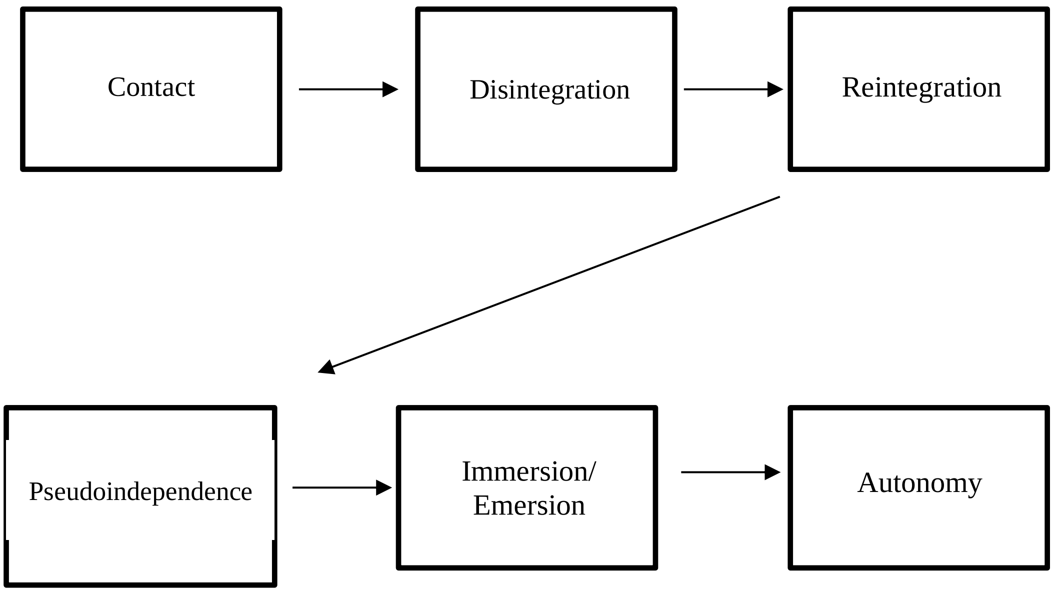
As southerners, the participants acknowledged the role that religion, specifically Christianity played in their lives. Christianity provided a moral compass that guided the actions and beliefs of individuals across the South; however, Christianity antagonized how the participants viewed the treatment of Black people in the South. For the participants, the Christian ideals of loving your neighbor and doing unto others as you would have them do unto you, did not align with the actions of the adults who professed to live by these ideals. This crisis of personal morality led the participants to question their role in a society that did not treat all of its members equitably. Helms (1997) labeled moments like these as "triggers" (p. 217), as they prompt the process of the White individual contemplating about their Whiteness and complicity in systemic racism. The process of addressing ones Whiteness and White privilege is painful and caused mental anguish amongst the participants. Their racial discomfort was evidenced by physically running away from their problems, doubting the racial inequities and experiences of Black people despite being told otherwise, or experiencing reproof from parents and role models. In experiencing the emotionality of being exposed to and confronting Whiteness and privilege, White individuals may advance into reintegration which Jones and Cater (1997) regard as the most racist status in the Helms (1984) model.

Reintegration behaviors the participants exhibited were not overtly violent towards Black people as Helms (1997) suggested; but rather subtly signaled their willingness to allow for the further marginalization and oppression of Black people. This behavior served to protect their racial status even if the behavior was unconscious. Lipsitz (2018) named this behavior the possessive investment in Whiteness. The constant tension between disintegration and reintegration behaviors forced the participants to redefine themselves, abandon White values and norms grounded in supremacy and oppression, and identify the ethical and moral values that they sought to uphold.

In the pursuit to redefine their White identity the participants sought to learn more about others and racial difference. Often this began in a formal post-secondary/higher education setting (e.g., a classroom, university-sponsored lecture, or service-learning experience) but was most formative outside of formal education settings (e.g., community meetings, townhalls, etc.). In these settings, the participants engaged with community stakeholders, developed a deeper intellectual understanding of race and racial justice issues, and oriented their moral compasses to the aims and ideals of the CRM, which was grounded in a radical emancipatory view of Christianity. Ultimately, the increased racial knowledge of the participants led to their increased involvement in racial justice activities and organizations. The participants' increased involvement in racial justice activities and organizations led to their increased racial knowledge and active awareness of White privilege. Common in the participants' active awareness of White privilege was the ongoing struggle to reconcile the unearned merits that Whiteness granted and their pursuit of racial justice. Having narrated their life history as anti-racists, the participants recognized the need for White people to acknowledge how White privilege affects their ability to do anti-racist work.

White Racial Identity Development

The use of Helms's (1984) White Racial Identity Development model (WRID) in examining these stories provided a method for the interpretation of their stories to showcase how they developed an anti-racist identity in the South (See Figure 1). The stories that they told also demonstrated their development of an activist identity. Participants told stories of their abandonment of racism and their embrace of an anti-racist/activist identity.



Racist White Identities Toward the Abandonment of Racism

Non-Racist Identities Toward Positive White Identity

Figure 1. (Helms, 1997; Jones & Carter, 1996)

Racist White Identities Toward the Abandonment of Racism

The contact, disintegration, and reintegration narratives that the southern White students told exist in what Jones and Carter (1996) refer to as racist White identities.

Stories in these statuses reinforce White norms and values that perpetuate the marginalization and oppression of Black people. White people in these statuses act according to the socialization cues that they receive from their parents, extended family, and other important figures and institutions. Harro’s (2000) research confirms the effect of role models, either positive or negative, in reinforcing norms and values. Though some scholars (see Katz & Kofkin, 1997; Perry et al., 2019; Wise 2005) argue that it is possible for White individuals to be raised with a colorblind ideology, the study participants due to the reality of segregation and White racial hierarchies in the South were aware of their Whiteness and the Blackness of others from an early age.

Toward Anti-Racist/Activist Identities

The pseudoindependence, immersion/emersion, and autonomy narratives that participants told represent their transition to anti-racist identities. Furthermore, they drew on their experiences and perspectives to define who is an activist and what that person does. Helms (1997) expressed the importance of the immersion/emersion and autonomy statuses as essential in moving a White person toward activism, and the narratives shared reflect her observations. Moreover, the southern White students in this study recall stories of addressing their personal privilege during their transition to becoming anti-racist.

The stories of the participants revealed that the process of addressing personal White privilege is a life-long process; a process that they are all still doing. The racial self-actualization that they have achieved is not a shedding of one’s Whiteness, but a deliberate and thoughtful navigation of ways to use White privilege to dismantle the systemic nature of racism. They acknowledged that they did not reach this place of self-actualization alone but rather had the support of both White and Black mentors. White mentors were important because they had done or were doing the work that each of the participants was attempting to do; whereas, Black mentors were important because they not only informed the participants of the work that needed to be done, but they kept them honest and gave them space to grow into themselves.

As the participants narrated their lives, their stories revealed how they developed their anti-racist identities. Each participant had to overcome racial socialization that led them to be complicit in the White racial hierarchy that existed in the South. The motivation for them to overcome that socialization was provided by contact with Black people in various capacities and prompted by experiences that led to personal questioning of their beliefs and values. Each participant independently sought opportunities to enhance their intellectual competence about the issues that they were concerned, and in the process became more involved in the movement or movement adjacent activities. As they navigated their development, they all became more aware of their privilege and the role that it played in allowing them to participate or not participate in demonstrations; engage or not engage with Black people; to bring attention to or not bring attention to issues of racial injustice. As each became involved and educated, not doing anything became less of an option. Their anti-racist identities reflected Love's (2019) declaration that they must take risks that Black people cannot take because that is what their White privilege affords them. The study participants recognized that they must be cognizant of their privilege. They acknowledged that they must continuously work to deny how they are socialized to behave in their Whiteness and utilize their privilege in ways that advance social justice. This confirms DiAngelo's (2018) statement that White people cannot exist outside White supremacy, but also Love's (2019) assertion that to remedy systemic oppression the first step is to understand and struggle through one's personal Whiteness. Helms's (1984) WRID model provided an ideal framework by which to examine the narratives of southern antiracists; however, Helms's (1997) goal of a *positive* White identity should not be the goal of antiracists, because it suggests being comfortable with Whiteness and privilege. The narratives of the participants demonstrate that in order to be an antiracist one must be uncomfortable with White privilege and strive to subvert their privilege daily for a lifetime.

Continuum of Activism/Activist Identity Development

The perspectives, experiences, and definitions offered by the participants provided a deeper understanding into the process of developing an activist identity. In telling their stories, participants confirmed that to be an anti-racist is to be an activist (Helms, 1997), and that once an individual develops an activist perspective, the work does not end (see Renn, 2007). I also identified four domains, from the participants' stories, that exist for racial justice activists. These four domains are self-interest/outrage, personal action, coalition building/collective action, and change; and are a continuum[10] of activism/activist identity development. Similar to Komives et al. (2006) LID model, the domains in the continuum of activism/activist identity development occur in linear fashion; however, they are cyclical in nature and go on in perpetuity. Like the LID model, the continuum of activism/activist identity development model is conceptualized as a helix, allowing the individual to return to previous domains multiple times (Komives et al, 2006; Perry 1981). As an individual goes through the continuum once, when they return to a previous domain, they will experience the domain at a deeper level. None of the domains exist by themselves as activism; however, any domain combined with the change domain are activism, and an activist will cycle through all four domains (See Figures 2 and 3).

To be an activist one has to have a general self-interest or outrage about the issue. In the case of anti-racism, the existence of systemic racism. This self-interest/outrage is influenced by both education and experience and was demonstrated by the narratives of the individuals seeking mentors, taking classes, and immersing themselves in the educational aspects of the CRM. From a critical perspective, this status may be seen as interest convergence (Alemán & Aleman, 2010; Bell, 1995; McCoy & Rodricks; 2015; Milner, 2008); however, because the individual will cycle through this domain multiple times, they will approach the domain from a social justice perspective, similar to what Edwards (2006) identified in his aspiring ally development model.

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[10] This exists as a continuum because the process of being an activist is ongoing and has no end. A life-cycle (cycle) model implies that a process has an ending, or can be halted at a given point in time (i.e., Harro's (2000) cycle of socialization "ends" when an individual disrupts their socialization.

The next domain of the continuum is personal action. Individuals in this domain must commit to personal action. The personal action can be as small as showing up and listening to the needs of marginalized people or getting arrested for a cause (Helms, 1997; Renn, 2007; Rhoads, 2016). In the coalition building/collective action domain, individuals work to recruit other individuals and partner with organizations that share similar interests and ideologies organizations (DeAngelo et al., 2016; Helms, 1997; Komives & Wagner; 2012; Renn, 2007). The participants' narratives demonstrated how they joined groups of like-minded people in order to fight for social and racial justice. Lastly, the goal of the activist is to produce change, as without change there is no purpose for the other domains (Barnhardt, 2014, 2019; Biddix, Somers, & Polman, 2009; Chambers & Phelps, 1993). None of the domains exist by themselves as activism, however two or more together are activism, and an activist will cycle through all four domains (See Figures 2 and 3).

Continuum of Activism/Activist Identity Development
(Linear View)

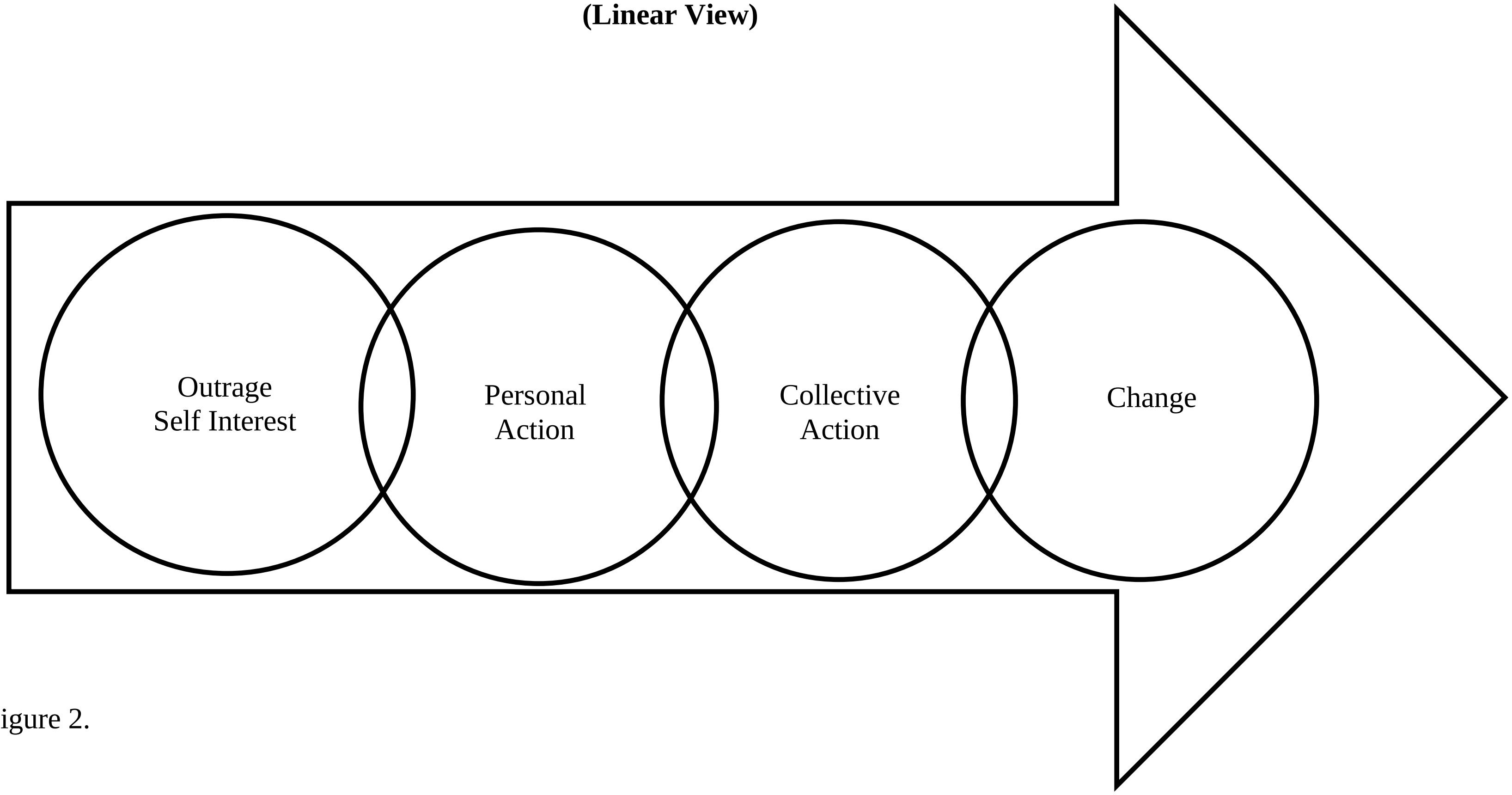
Outrage
Self Interest
Personal
Action
Collective
Action
Change

Figure 2.

Continuum of Activism/Activist Identity Development
(Helix View)

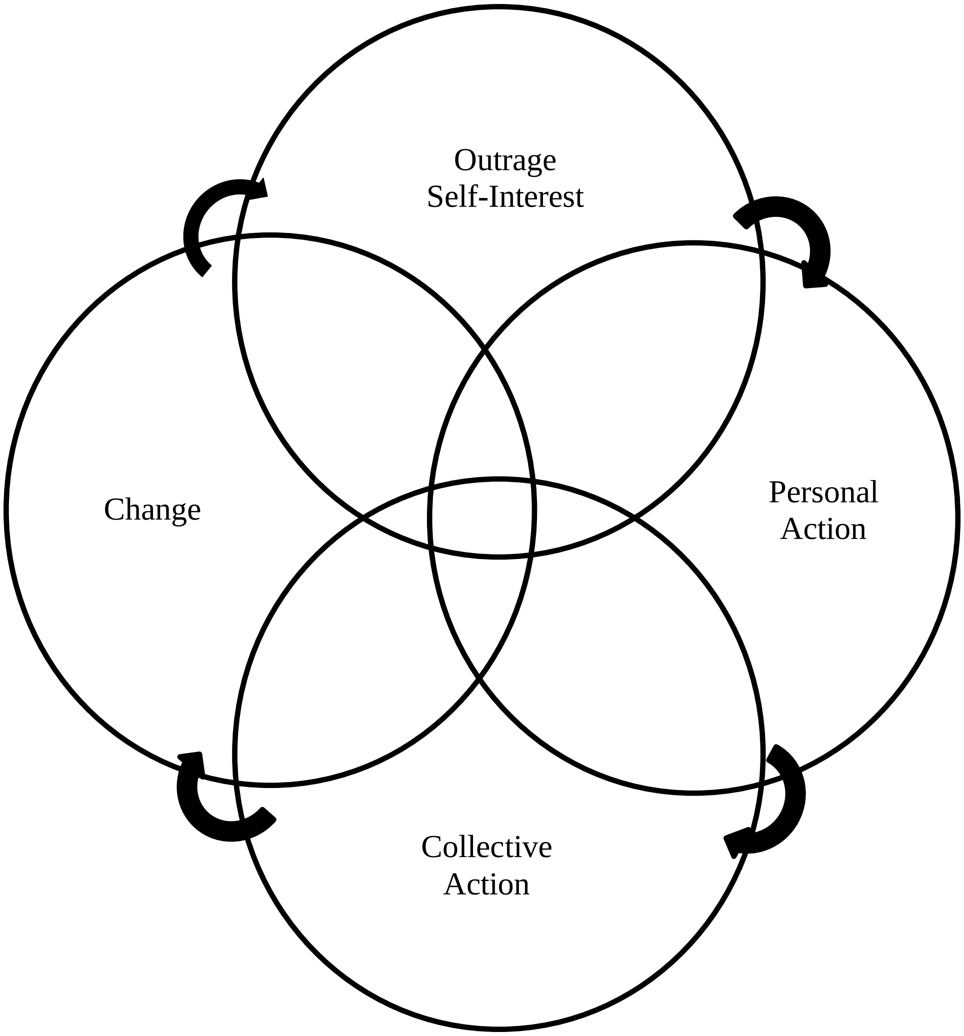
Outrage
Self-Interest
Change
Personal
Action
Collective
Action

Figure 3.

Implications

The purpose of U.S. higher education is to prepare students for future societal involvement (Jones, 1990). By engaging students' critical thinking skills and connecting them to larger societal issues, higher education has a role in not only shaping the individual student, but society as a whole (Eaton & Stevens, 2020; Hill, Hoffman, & Rex, 2005; Ropers-Huilman & McCoy, 2011; Sutton, 2016). Given the rapidly diversifying U.S. demographics, it would be logical to assume that institutions of higher education (IHE) are preparing students for a diverse and multicultural world, yet issues of racism and anti-blackness remain rampant in U.S. higher education (Foste, 2019; Gordon, Elmore-Sanders, & Gordon, 2017; Harper, 2012; Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Williams, 2019). While the study findings suggest that anti-racism is merely a result of personal development of White students, the implications are far reaching for U.S. higher education as a whole.

It cannot be overstated that U.S. higher education was established to maintain and reproduce White hegemonic norms (Gusa, 2011, Harper & Hurtado, 2007). Therefore, in order to prevent White racial identity regression among White students, U.S. higher education must be reimagined as a site for racial justice, inclusivity, and equity—not just diversity (AAC&U, 2018; ACPA, n.d.; Ahmed, 2012; Foste, 2019; Poon, 2018; Tate & Bagguley, 2017; Thomas, 2017). The university itself must become antiracist. While the study participants began to develop their anti-racist identities through experiences during college, confirming Broido's (2000) assertion, they did so outside the influence of the university. In fact, during the CRM, many IHE in the U.S. were actively surveilling students involved in the CRM as threats to national security (Mississippi Sovereignty Commission; Paget, 2015). Moreover, students were expelled for and discouraged from participating in CRM activities (Boyd, 2010; Lee, 2014; Zellner & Curry, 2008). IHE must address how they historically, and currently, have been harmful to Black students and White student advocates. The process of addressing harms in higher education will allow administrators to not only identify harmful practices and policies, but also begin the process of correcting them (Pemberton, 2015). As IHE begin to address historical and current harms, they must also begin to recruit, hire, and retain administrators and faculty who model the anti-racist goals of the university (paperson, 2017; Pope et al., 2009; Pope, Mueller, & Reynolds, 2014). These individuals are important because they are essential to identifying racist policies and ideologies and creating an environment that rejects hegemonic norms (Rodricks & McCoy, 2015).

Administrators, educators, and researchers must also consider the role that the campus plays both culturally and physically in preventing White racial identity development. IHE must consider the role that cultural practices (e.g., icons, traditions, and mascots) on campus contribute to recreating White supremacy and oppression (Gusa, 2010; Spring, 2007; Squire, Williams, & Tuitt, 2018, Thelin, 2011). Physically, they must consider how campus environment supports and upholds White supremacy through their structures; specifically named student housing and confederate statues (Brasher et al., 2017; Combs et al., 2016; Keels, 2019; Spring, 2007). Campus ecology provides messaging that can reinforce socialized White norms that students bring to campus (Cabrera et al., 2016a). Disrupting the supremacist messaging that the campus environment contributes to can aid in providing an increased sense of belonging for Students of Color (Keels, 2019; Strayhorn, 2012). Moreover, disrupting the supremacist messaging of the campus environment can create the racial dissonance needed for White students to begin, or continue, their development into anti-racists (Cabrera et al., 2016a). IHE administrators may consider removing the vestiges of White supremacy (e.g., renaming on campus housing; removing statues; changing mascots; or discontinuing traditions), or faculty may consider utilizing these physical spaces and traditions in the curriculum to facilitate dialogue and encourage counter-narratives (Alderman & Rose-Redwood, 2019; Brasher et al., 2017; Cabrera et al., 2016a; Keels, 2019).

The curriculum and co-curriculum in higher education is essential in fostering White racial identity development and inhibiting White racial identity regression. Faculty, particularly Higher Education and Student Affairs (HESA) faculty and student affairs administrators, should be equipped to discuss race and racial identity in ways that are meaningful to students and provide context to the racial inequality that occurs both inside and outside higher education (Milner, 2017; Poon, 2018). In order to teach critically about race, racism, and racial identity development, educators must first have an understanding of their own racial identity and role in being antiracist (Linder, 2015; Picower, 2009).

Educators may enter the field with unexamined racial biases or teaching practices grounded in Whiteness that can be harmful to Students of Color (Picower, 2009). Educators can serve as antiracist mentors to students, but first must acknowledge that they must also commit to the life-long process of being antiracist. (Bloom et al., 2015; Dunac & Demir, 2017; Edwards, 2006; Linder, 2015; Matias; 2016). Having the stories of White antiracist activists is important in the development and education of White students who may have interest in being antiracist, developing multicultural competence, and developing intercultural maturity (Boutte & Jackson, 2014; Bridges & Mather, 2015; Linder, 2015; Smith & Redington, 2010). Equally important is the individual educating and developing White students. Scholars have noted the resistance to Black professors by White students (Anthym & Tuitt, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 1996; Yoon, 2019), the amount of responsibility placed on Students and Faculty of Color to enhance the cultural competency of their White peers (Quaye, 2012; Richeson & Shelton, 2007), and the under-preparedness of White educators to discuss anti-racist praxis or racial development in any meaningful way (Bloom et al., 2015; Cross, 2003; Dunac & Demir, 2017; Matias, 2016). If there exists a need for more educators and administrators to prepare multiculturally competent, inclusive, social justice allies, then there must exist multiculturally competent, inclusive, and socially just educators and administrators—especially White multiculturally competent, inclusive, and socially just educators and administrators (Crowley, 2019; Utt & Tochluk, 2016). Moreover, those attributes should be present in the work these individuals do. There cannot exist an expectation for a field of study, particularly student affairs and higher education, to produce equity-minded students who are willing to seek justice for minoritized and oppressed people if the individuals in that field are not also involved in that work. The presence of theory without practice would only further encourage the subtle forms of racism and preservation of White hegemonic norms that currently exist throughout higher education (Cabrera, 2018; Jupp, Leckie, Cabrera, & Utt, 2019; Picower, 2009).

Furthermore, educators must realize that an isolated semester of multicultural education will not provide the experiences necessary for students to embrace antiracism (Picower, 2009). Higher education and student affairs educators should instead embrace holistic teaching practices in all courses that underscore the importance of antiracism. This includes utilizing culturally sustaining pedagogy (see Alim & Paris, 2017; Cole, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Larke, 2013; Paris & Alim, 2014) and emphasizing racial identity awareness/critical consciousness (see Bridges & Mather, 2015; Kordesh et al., 2013; Linder, 2015; Tatum, 1994) and critical reflexivity (see Cunliffe, 2004). Culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) fosters cultural pluralism in education, rather than focusing on deficit models of learning that support Whiteness (Alim &

Paris, 2017; Paris & Alim, 2014). Particularly in higher education, curriculum grounded in CSP can help to eliminate pedagogical bias toward Whiteness and provide equitable learning opportunities for marginalized and White students (Larke, 2013). Moreover, CSP creates a learning environment where all experiences and perspectives are used to create knowledge, therefore allowing students to gain diverse perspectives and challenges to their beliefs. Additionally, the curriculum should include integrating work by Black and Scholars of Color (see Baldwin, 1963; Du Bois, 1999; Fannon, 2008; Freire, 1970, 2013) that speak to the need for critical consciousness and multicultural competence (Foste, 2019; hooks, 1993; Love, 2019; Mueller & Pope, 2001; Poon et al., 2016). The narratives from this study provide profiles of White antiracist exemplars that are needed for students to understand the steps and processes of an antiracist lifestyle (Malott et al., 2015; 2019, Spanierman & Smith, 2017; Tatum, 1994). Additionally, by focusing on White racial identity development, students should be able to identify facets of White privilege and White racial socialization and the emotions associated with them (Linder, 2015). By incorporating critical reflexivity into the curriculum, educators are preparing students to acknowledge and evaluate their actions and thoughts through an antiracist lens. This can be accomplished by including reflective journals in coursework addressing racial identity and anti-racism (Cunliffe, 2004).

Service learning is a useful tool in fostering antiracist development and preventing racial regression of White students. Service learning combines community service with learning objectives and guided reflection to foster educated and socially responsible students (Rhoads,1997). Co-curricular service learning must address social inequality while also identifying Whiteness as an ideology and informing how systemic racism perpetuates inequality. All students should be challenged by their complicity in supremacy and oppression through service learning, with the outcome situated in a more caring and socially just student body (Foste, 2019; Rhoads, 1997, Yamato, 1998). To allow students to fully grasp the racially just aims of service learning, opportunities should not be one-time experiences but rather semester- to year-long experiences. Longer experiences will allow students to become embedded in their learning site so that they develop relationships with the people and communities they are serving. Through the relationships they develop; they will learn, see, and experience the effects of Whiteness they are not accustomed to seeing regularly (Foste, 2019; Juárez, 2013).

Student leaders on campus interested in antiracism and aiding others in developing antiracist identities should find groups that can provide racially informed feedback on their leadership and interpersonal skills (Lewis et al., 2000). White students who engage in this practice can develop their critical consciousness and are more likely to actively struggle with their Whiteness and its implication in interracial coalitions in higher education (Cabrera, 2012). This includes receiving criticism by Black and other Students of Color on how to best support their efforts and practices to suspend. Furthermore, as White students become more racially informed and antiracist, they must be willing to risk their social status to identify and speak against racism in their spheres of influence. Antiracist White students must also be willing to educate and train other White students to commit to antiracism. White students can accomplish this by being willing to share their stories of how they became antiracist, organizing study groups that review books by antiracist White authors (i.e., *Killers of the Dream* by Lillian Smith; and *The Wall Between* by Anne Braden).

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the nature of this research, one recommendation for future research is to expand this study to an anthology of stories of White CRM participants. The stories of these individuals are important for understanding the development of White individuals in advocating against Whiteness and for a socially just society (Rhoades, 2016). Moreover, as individuals who participated in the CRM advance in age, scholars interested in CRM history or White identity risk losing their stories. Additionally, conducting a comparative analysis utilizing the historical narratives of White activists and contemporary White activists is warranted. Such a study would highlight the differences and shared experiences between contemporary White students who identify as student activists, and their historical exemplars. Furthermore, it would allow scholars to understand how to engage contemporary White students who may become involved in social justice activism. As racial justice issues have evolved and become intersectionally focused, so have Black movements (Clayton, 2018; Crenshaw, 1990). How might contemporary White students engage in activism, and does their development align with the development of historical White student activists?

Further research should also be conducted in examining the ways that IHE can become antiracist and support the racial identity development of all students. This may include identifying the ways IHE harm Students, Faculty, and Administrators of Color by upholding the standards of Whiteness, White student response to culturally sustaining pedagogy, and examining critically reflexive student affairs practitioners. Moreover, it would be beneficial to understand if and how student organizations (e.g., fraternities and sororities, student government association, etc.) develop antiracist stances and how IHE and its administrators and educators support that development.

Findings from this study also suggest continuing research into understanding activism/activist identity development. The model presented in this study represents a conception of how activism and activist identity development occur synchronously. Further research will be needed to validate the model. This also includes understanding the moral development of student activists as leaders.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to collect and examine the stories of southern White students who participated in the Civil Rights Movement (CRM), and in doing so understand how they developed their anti-racist identities. Cabrera at al. (2016) reminded researchers that there is a need for White role models when attempting to create more racial justice allies in higher education. In this study, I examined the experiences of seven White southerners who participated in some aspect of the CRM whose individual stories have been under-researched and under-utilized in multicultural educational contexts. The study findings indicated the experiences and perspectives of White southerners were unique to each other, but generally followed a path towards acknowledging their privileged position in a racial hierarchy created by the discourse of Whiteness. It is important to acknowledge the unique life histories and identity construction of all people; the experiences of the study participants distinctively affected their development collectively as anti-racists during the CRM. The participants acknowledged their privilege allowed them access to spaces to better advocate for Black people and racial justice during the CRM; and each came to understand that privilege through different means.

This study contributed to the literature by presenting the narratives of White anti-racists, who participated in the CRM. White students, educators, and administrators alike can use the study findings to identify themselves in the narratives that were shared to better navigate their own anti-racist journey. Moreover, educators and administrators can utilize this study to enhance their curriculum or co-curriculum to enrich multicultural education and student-experiential learning opportunities.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A

Recruitment Script

Hello [Name],

My name is Ashton Cooper, and I am a Ph.D. candidate in the Higher Education Administration program at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. For my dissertation research, I am looking for participants who identify as both Southern and White, and participated in the Civil Rights Movement in Tennessee. My study aims to explore the stories, experiences, and perspectives of southern White student Civil Rights activists and their implications for anti-racism in higher education.

I have identified you as a potential candidate in this study through archival research, and an initial conversation with Bob Zellner, a former member of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and would like to set up an interview to speak with you further about your experiences. The interview should last approximately one and a half to two hours, and may require later follow-up. When would be a good time for this to occur?

Furthermore, this study is approved by the University of Tennessee, Knoxville's Institutional Review Board, and will require you to sign informed consent and release forms. If you have any further questions about the study please contact me at 865-315-0862 or at arcooper@utk.edu.

Thank you,

Ashton R. Cooper

Appendix B

Consent for Research Participation

Not Accepting the Status Quo: A Narrative Inquiry Examining Southern White Student Activists During the Civil Rights Movement

Ashton R. Cooper, University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Dorian L. McCoy, Ph.D., University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Why am I being asked to be in this research study?

You, the participant, are invited to take part in this research study examining the experiences of southern White student activists during the Civil Rights Movement. Your story is important because as a White student from the South, you participated in advocating for racial justice during the Civil Rights Movement. This study will document your story and experiences for the purposes of this research and preserve it for future research and others interested in these events. This study is being conducted by Ashton R. Cooper a doctoral candidate at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, under the direction of Dorian L. McCoy an Associate Professor at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

What is this research study about?

The purpose of the research study is to collect the stories of southern White student activists about their life experiences and the events that led to their participation in the Civil Rights Movement.

If I say yes, how long will I be in the research study? What if I say no?

If you decide to participate in this study, the researcher will schedule an interview with you, and answer any questions that you may have about the consent and release forms. The interview cannot occur unless these items are signed. The interview should last approximately 1.5-2 hours and will be conducted either face-to-face or electronically (e.g., via telephone, Skype, or Zoom). While it is preferred that your interview be recorded both via audio and video, you can choose to not be recorded by both or either. Additional follow-up interviews might be necessary as the study progresses. These will be conducted either via telephone, in-person, or written. These interviews will not be transcribed; however, the audio and visual data will be stored for data analysis. Your recorded interview will also serve as oral histories about your participation in the Civil Rights Movement. You will be asked to review the write-up of your interview, and be given the opportunity to give feedback. The total amount of time you should spend on this study could be a minimum of 2 hours and a maximum of 4 hours. Your participation in this project will end before January 2020. Being in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose to leave the study now or at any time in the future. Your decision to participate or not participate will not hinder your relationship (if any) with the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in any way, nor will it affect your relationship with the researcher.

Are there any possible risks to me?

There are minimal risks associated with this study. Emotional risks may occur with reliving certain experiences; however, emotionality is expected when speaking about race and racial development among White people. At anytime during the study if you feel any emotional distress that is too great for your personally, you will be allowed to discontinue the interview. This study will involve you being recorded both audio and visually. The data collected will be kept safe on a password protected hard drive. While it is preferred that your interview be recorded both audio and visually, you will be given the choice of varying levels of confidentiality for your interview. This will provide additional protection should an unforeseen risk arise.

Are there any benefits to being in this research study?

This narrative study captures, in your own voice, your story for future generations—individuals who aspire to change the world. Apart from providing narrative data for the researcher to examine and interpret your experiences, this study provides a vehicle for talking about anti-racism and racial justice issues. The personal narratives bring to life, historic events and perspectives and add depth to students' and scholars' current understanding of those events. Source material collected may be used to further secure grant funding for creation of a broader multimedia experience, with uses in classroom settings, and educational documentaries. It is the hope of the researcher that the knowledge gained from this study will benefit others in the future.

Who can see or use the information collected for this research study?

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose to stop your participation in the study at any time. All interview data collected by the researcher will be kept on a password protected hard drive. Furthermore, you have the choice of the following levels of confidentiality:

1) Video-recording – You will have no expectation of privacy or confidentiality. Your participation in the interview and signed consent and release forms acknowledge and agrees that your identity, responses, and likeness may be publicly included in publications, classroom and public presentation of results, multimedia projects, and archived materials;

2) Audio-recording – Your recorded answers without your identity or identifying information may be included in publications, presentations, and multimedia projects. Your identity and identifying information will be withheld from the public, and researcher notes before any publication, only to be used by the researcher;

3) Not recorded – Your identity will be available only to the researcher. The researcher will take notes of the interviews. Written representations of your responses, without identifiable information, may be included in publications, presentations, and multimedia projects.

You may indicate your choice of desired level of confidentiality and method of capturing your responses on the attached release form.

Only the researcher and those directly assisting with the research will have access to the recorded interviews, notes, or transcripts during the production of publications, presentations, and/or multimedia projects. The researcher will maintain personal copies of and the right to use and distribute the interview materials (i.e. publication, presentations, and multimedia projects) as indicated by the participant's signed release form. The forms will be retained in a secure location at the University of Tennessee.

What else do I need to know?

About seven people will take part in this study. Due to the small number of participants in this study, if you choose to remain anonymous, it is possible that someone could identify you based on the information collected from you. Should you have a concern about the possibility of being identified but still want to participate fully in the study, the data that are collected from your interview will be used to inform the study and your likeness will not be used in the study.

If we learn about any new information that may change your mind about being in the study, we will tell you. If that happens, you may be asked to sign a new consent form.

Your research data may be used to create products or to deliver services, including some that may be sold or make money for others. If this happens, there are no plans to provide financial payment to you or your family. **No use of the interview material is authorized for purely commercial purposes, including dramatic film production, without the express permission of the subject of the interview.**

The University of Tennessee does not automatically pay for medical claims or give other compensation for injuries or other problems. If injury occurs during the course of the study, please consult your primary physician, and notify the principal investigator (Ashton R. Cooper, 865-315-0862 or arcooper@utk.edu).

Who can answer my questions about this research study?

If you have questions or concerns about this study, or have experienced a research related problem or injury, contact the researchers, Ashton R. Cooper, arcooper@utk.edu, 865-315-0862 or Dorian L. McCoy, Ph.D., dmccoy5@utk.edu, 865-974-6140 For questions or concerns about your rights or to speak with someone other than the research team about the study, please contact:
Institutional Review Board
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville
1534 White Avenue
Blount Hall, Room 408
Knoxville, TN 37996-1529
Phone: 865-974-7697
Email: utkirb@utk.edu

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the chance to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have more questions, I have been told who to contact. By signing this document, I am agreeing to be in this study. I will receive a copy of this document after I sign it.

Name of Adult Participant	Signature of Adult Participant	Date

Researcher Signature (to be completed at time of informed consent)

I have explained the study to the participant and answered all of his/her questions. I believe that he/she understands the information described in this consent form and freely consents to be in the study.

Name of Research Team Member	Signature of Research Team Member	Date

Appendix C

Interview Release Form

I,________________________________, give my permission to the researchers Ashton R. Cooper, and Dorian L. McCoy to maintain personal copies of the right to use and distribute the interview materials (i.e., publication, presentations, and multimedia projects). Initial your selection below. You also agree for your interview(s) to be (initialed selection below):

1.) ______Video-recorded and identified by name. You will have no expectation of privacy or confidentiality. Your participation in the interview and signed consent and release forms acknowledges and agrees that your identity, responses, and likeness may be publicly included by the researchers in publications, classroom and public presentation of results, and educational multimedia projects/documentaries.

2.) ______audio-recorded (ONLY) and identified by name. You will have no expectation of privacy or confidentiality. Your participation in the interview and signed consent and release forms acknowledges and agrees that your identity, responses, and likeness may be publicly included by the researchers in publications, classroom and public presentation of results, and educational multimedia projects/documentaries.

3.) ______audio-recorded (ONLY) and your identity withheld. Your recorded answers may be included by the researchers in publications, presentations, and educational multimedia projects. Your identity and identifying information will be withheld from the public and purged it from the transcript, tapes, and researcher notes before the materials are archived.

4.) _______NOT recorded with your identity withheld. Your identity will only be available to the researchers. Researchers will take notes of the interviews. Written representations of your responses, without identifiable information, may be included in publications, presentations, and multimedia projects. All documents and notes associated with your interview will be destroyed before the researchers' files for this project are archived.

I have read the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to the outlined procedures for collecting, maintaining, and disseminating all aspects of my participation in this study –including the selected procedures related to the release of my identity, responses, audio- or video-recording--and give the researchers the permission to use all as indicated by my initials above.

Participant's signature _______________________________ Date __________

Investigator's signature ______________________________ Date __________

Appendix D

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Purpose: To collect the stories and understand the experiences and perspectives of southern White student activists who participated in the Civil Rights Movement.

Research Questions: How might the stories of southern White student activists who participated in the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) in TN provide implications for anti-racism in higher education?

- How did White activists develop their anti-racist identities?
- How did White activist develop their activist identities?
- How might White anti-racist exemplars perspectives and experiences provide direction in overcoming racial identity regression among college students?

Introduction:

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me about your experiences during the civil rights era. This study aims to better understand how your experiences as a southern White student informed your identity as an activist and led to your participation in the Civil Rights Movement. It is especially important that we collect your story for future students to learn from and emulate your contributions to racial justice.

Do you have any questions about the study or the consent form?

Questions:

1. Tell me about yourself? Where did you grow up?
    a. Tell me about your family? Parents? Siblings? Hometown?
    b. What kind of schools did you attend?
    c. Tell me about the friends you had?

2. How did you come to understand your racial identity?
    a. Tell me a story about when you first understood that you were a White person.

3. What where your feelings towards Black people?
    a. How were those feelings influenced by the people around you?
    b. How did you experience relationships with Black people?
        i. How were your relationships with other people affected by your experiences/relationships with Black people?

4. Tell me about your college experience? What kinds of activities where you involved in?

    a. Was your college integrated?
    b. What kinds of friends did you have?

5. How did you come to be involved in the Civil Rights Movement?
    a. Tell me a story about the experiences that led to your participation in the CRM.
    b. Why did you participate?
    c. Did you consider yourself an activist then?

6. How did your identity as a Southerner influence your participation in the CRM? As a White person?
    a. What changes did you experience while participating in the CRM?
    b. How did your perspective change while participating in the CRM?

7. How did you work to recruit other students/people like you?

8. In your own words, can you describe what activism is to you?
    a. What did it mean when you were in the movement?
    b. What do you think students, particularly White students, can learn from your experience?

9. Looking back on your experiences, what events stood out to you? Affected you the most?
    a. Interactions with people who were different from you? Things you read?

10. How did those experiences influence your identity? How do they continue to influence your identity?

11. Are there any other stories that you think would be beneficial to learning about yourself, your perspectives, or your experiences in the CRM?

Appendix E

Thematic Findings and Code Book

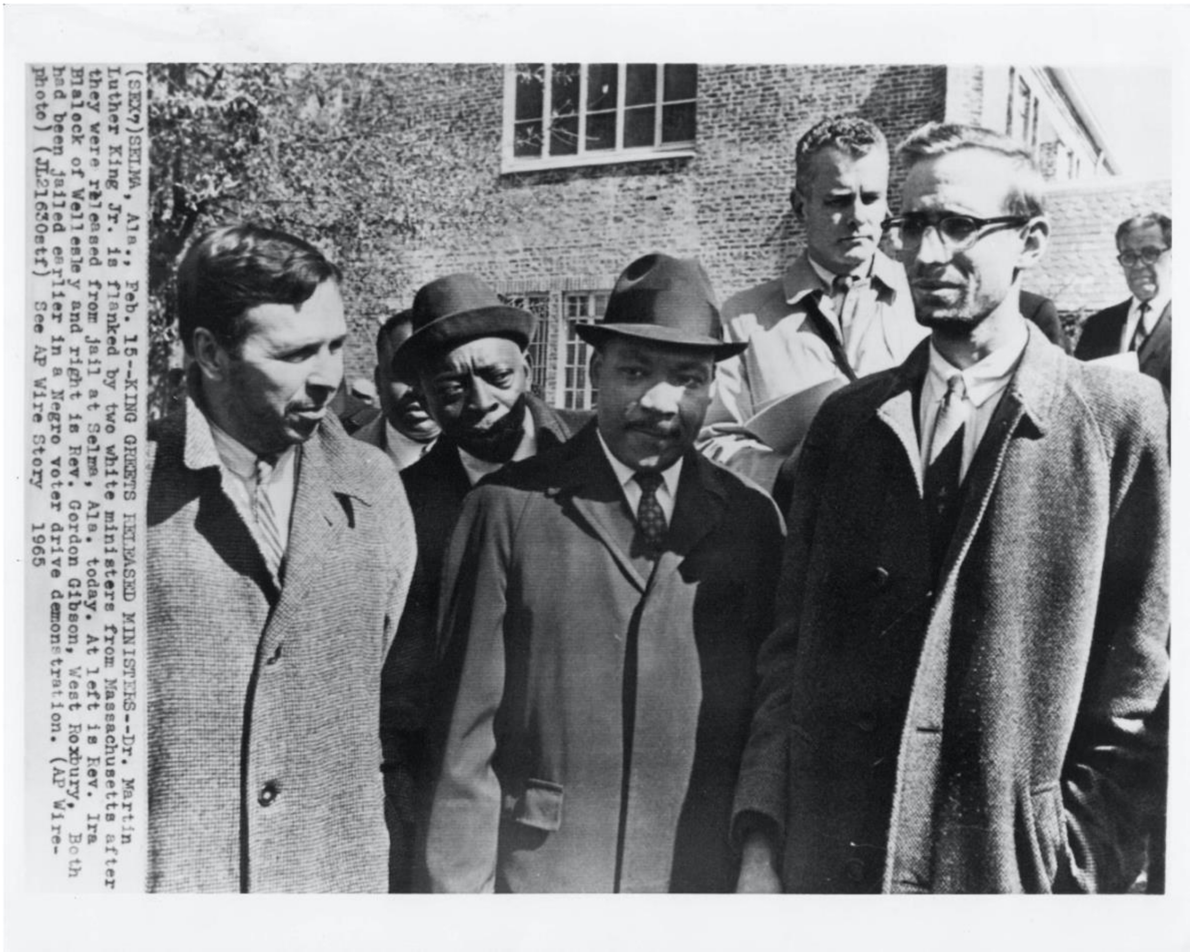
Theme	Description	Code/ Sub-Theme	Description	Example/Quote
Understanding of Race	Living in the South, the participants were exposed to race early in life. Therefore, they developed and continued to evolve their personal understanding of race.	Racial Ignorance	Vicarious/Direct contact rooted in ignorance towards racial inequality	My mother told me, you know, people shouldn’t be mean to Black people because they couldn’t help being born Black, and you ought to be nice to people...‘You don’t treat Nigras bad because it’s not their fault [they are Black],’ that’s the way she would have put it.
		Overt Racism	Vicarious/Direct contact rooted in blatant racism	Ed's grandparents threatened him that "Nigger Annie" was going to flush him down the toilet.
		Racial Awareness	Aware of racial hierarchies in the South, and White privilege	We traveled from wherever we were living at the time to Dallas for the State Fair, that would have been on a Saturday, and it turns out it was Negro day...and we were some of the only White people at the fair...I remember the other minister saying, “Well I guess this is the way they feel all the time."
Moral Values	Values that were taught or models to participants that shaped how they viewed being anti-racist and participating in the CRM.	Family	Family values that reinforced or opposed White supremacy	Ed's father reinforced the value of voting, Ed used his vote for JFK.
		Religious	Religious values that reinforced or opposed White supremacy	“the experience of growing up in the church often carried moments of rebellion and critique when...they saw hypocrisy and moral cowardice in their elders.”
		Cultural	Cultural values that reinforced or opposed White supremacy	Attending segregated schools; Living in segregated neighborhoods, etc.

Thematic Findings and Code Book

Theme	Description	Code/ Sub Theme	Description	Example/Quote
Role Models	Individuals and exemplars who taught the participants and modeled the behavior for participants to emulate.	White Mentors/Colleagues	White mentors and colleagues provided solidarity and examples to follow.	Gene recalled listening to Ashton Jones, a White preacher, who preached about racial unity. He felt inspired to be doing the same thing.
		Black Mentors/Colleagues	Black mentors and colleagues helped to educate participants and provide direction	Tom being confronted by Black organizers to continue organizing in White communities in lieu of the emergence of the Black Power Movement.
Activist Identity	Factors that contributed to the participant identifying as an activist.	Actions	Specific actions (individually or collectively) taken to advocate for others	One of the first actions I personally took was I broke the rules of that camp...I just jumped in the pool because this [was] non-sense. We’re all swimming together.
		Goals	Goals for change articulated by participants	Tom articulated his goals for liberating White people from their own racism.
		Turning points	Events that changed the participants perspective	"I figured out, the observer thing is a real cop out. Selma natives aren’t observing, they go down to the courthouse, [Risking] their physical well-being, their employment, their housing, the well-being of their family or more."

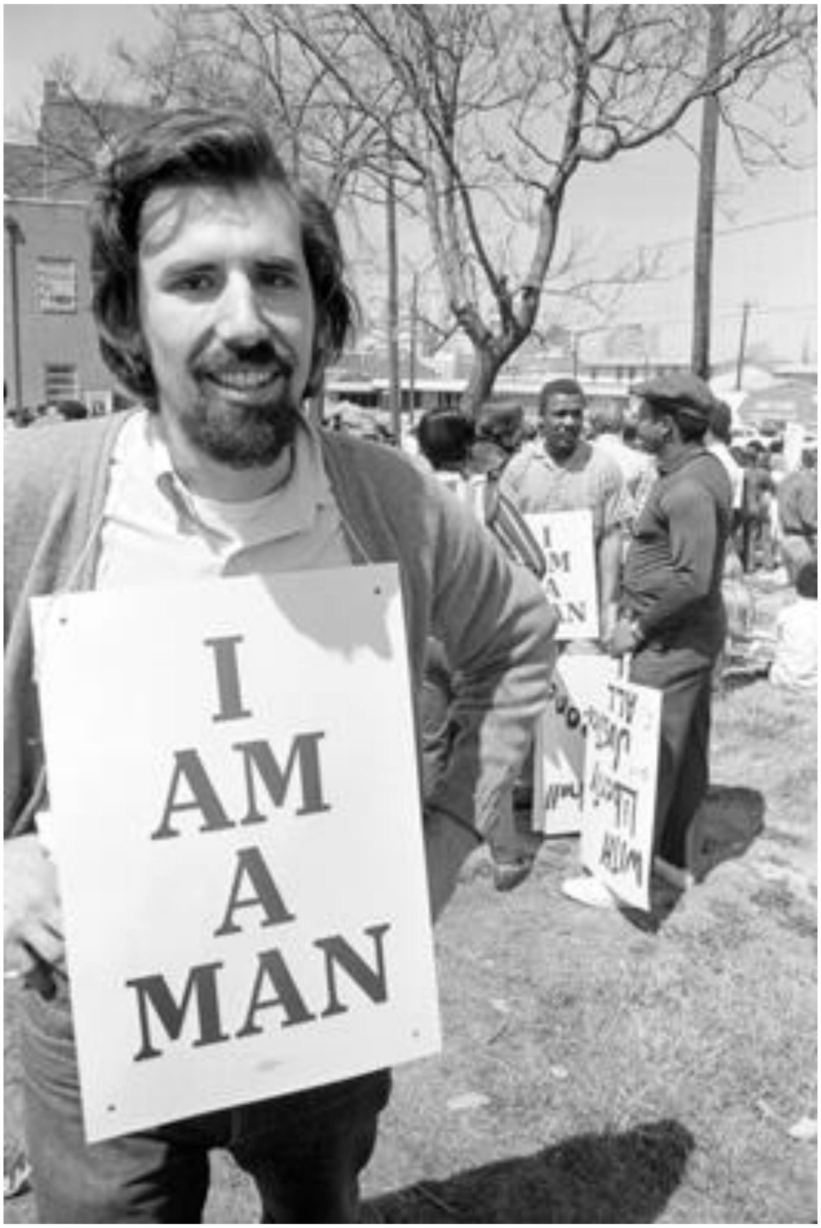
Appendix F

Historical Artifacts

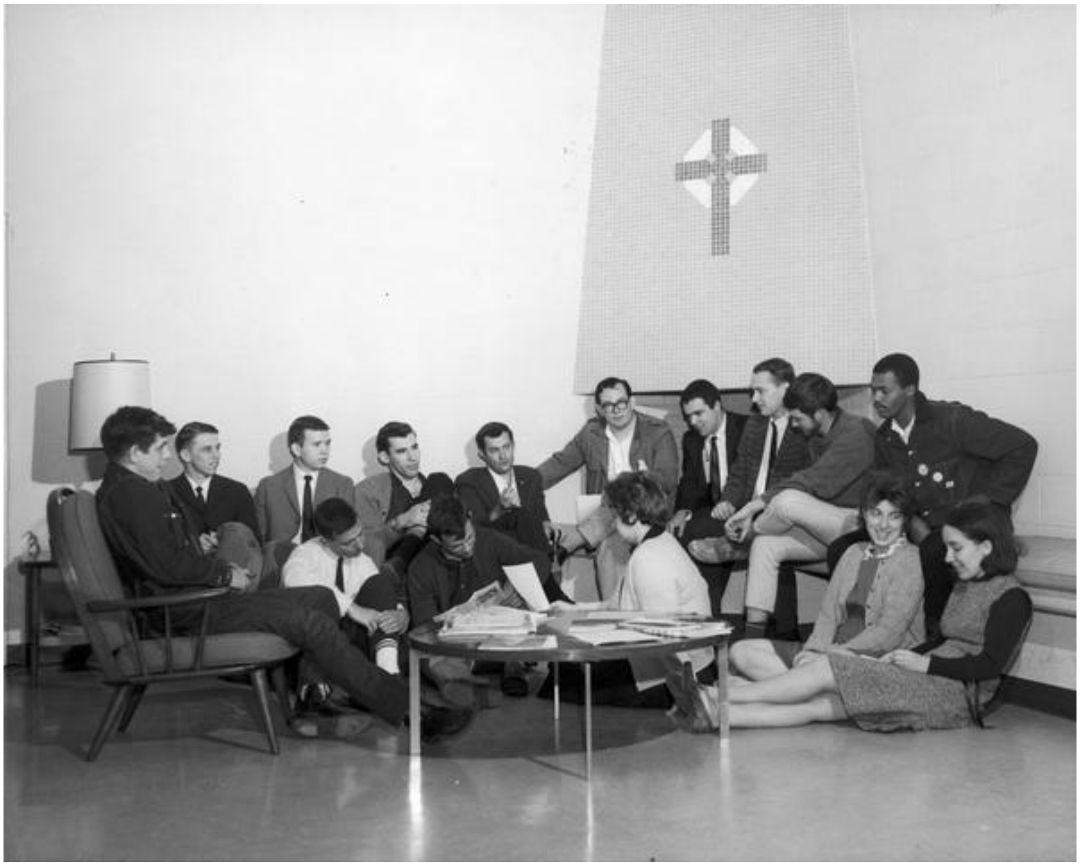


(SEX7)SELMA, Ala., Feb. 15--KING GREETS RELEASED MINISTERS--Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is flanked by two white ministers from Massachusetts after they were released from jail at Selma, Ala. today. At left is Rev. Ira Blalock of Wellesley and right is Rev. Gordon Gibson, West Roxbury. Both had been jailed earlier in a Negro voter drive demonstration. (AP Wire-photo) (JL21630stf) See AP Wire Story 1965

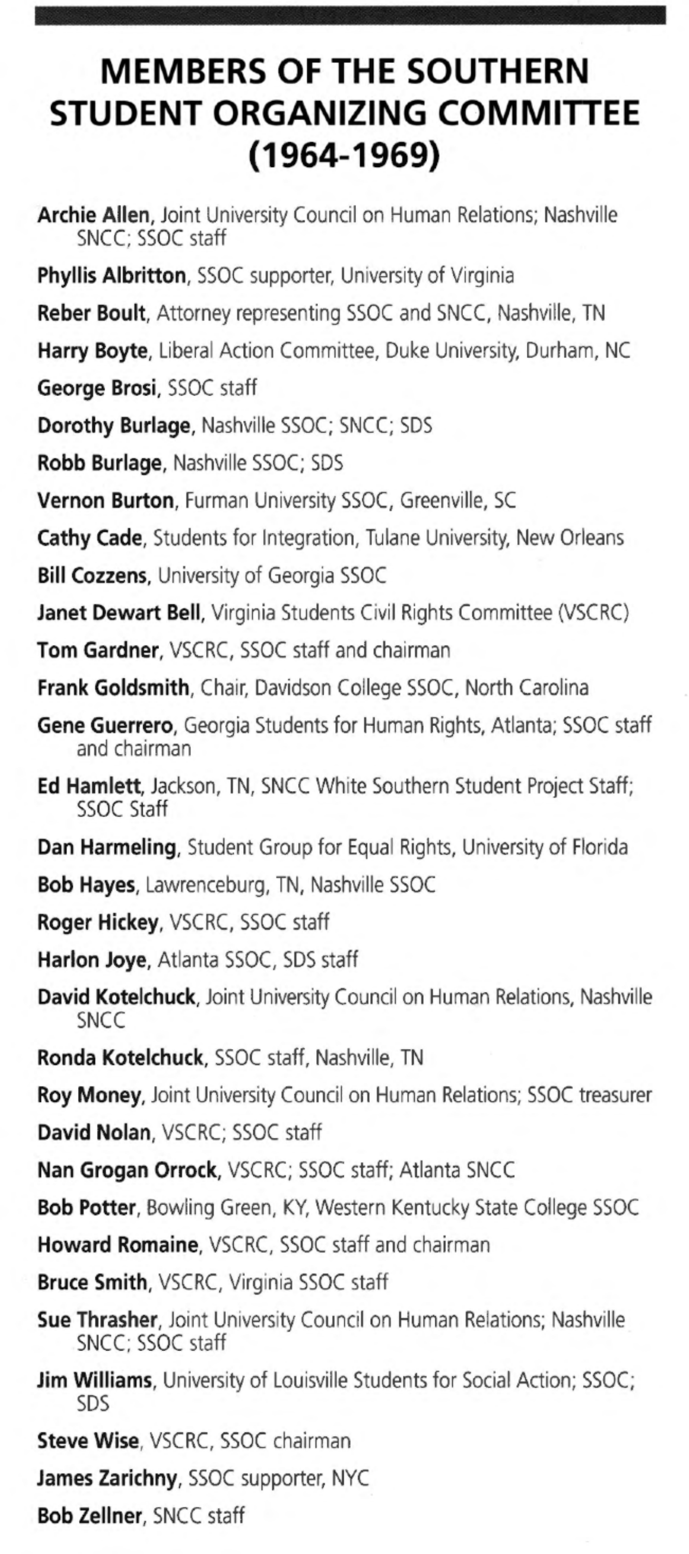
Gordon Gibson (right) with Martin Luther King, Jr.



Gene Guerrero



SSOC meeting in Nashville with Ed Hamlett and Marion Berry



MEMBERS OF THE SOUTHERN STUDENT ORGANIZING COMMITTEE (1964-1969)

Archie Allen, Joint University Council on Human Relations; Nashville SNCC; SSOC staff

Phyllis Albritton, SSOC supporter, University of Virginia

Reber Boult, Attorney representing SSOC and SNCC, Nashville, TN

Harry Boyte, Liberal Action Committee, Duke University, Durham, NC

George Brosi, SSOC staff

Dorothy Burlage, Nashville SSOC; SNCC; SDS

Robb Burlage, Nashville SSOC; SDS

Vernon Burton, Furman University SSOC, Greenville, SC

Cathy Cade, Students for Integration, Tulane University, New Orleans

Bill Cozzens, University of Georgia SSOC

Janet Dewart Bell, Virginia Students Civil Rights Committee (VSCRC)

Tom Gardner, VSCRC, SSOC staff and chairman

Frank Goldsmith, Chair, Davidson College SSOC, North Carolina

Gene Guerrero, Georgia Students for Human Rights, Atlanta; SSOC staff and chairman

Ed Hamlett, Jackson, TN, SNCC White Southern Student Project Staff; SSOC Staff

Dan Harmeling, Student Group for Equal Rights, University of Florida

Bob Hayes, Lawrenceburg, TN, Nashville SSOC

Roger Hickey, VSCRC, SSOC staff

Harlon Joye, Atlanta SSOC, SDS staff

David Kotelchuck, Joint University Council on Human Relations, Nashville SNCC

Ronda Kotelchuck, SSOC staff, Nashville, TN

Roy Money, Joint University Council on Human Relations; SSOC treasurer

David Nolan, VSCRC; SSOC staff

Nan Grogan Orrock, VSCRC; SSOC staff; Atlanta SNCC

Bob Potter, Bowling Green, KY, Western Kentucky State College SSOC

Howard Romaine, VSCRC, SSOC staff and chairman

Bruce Smith, VSCRC, Virginia SSOC staff

Sue Thrasher, Joint University Council on Human Relations; Nashville SNCC; SSOC staff

Jim Williams, University of Louisville Students for Social Action; SSOC; SDS

Steve Wise, VSCRC, SSOC chairman

James Zarichny, SSOC supporter, NYC

Bob Zellner, SNCC staff

Members of the Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC)

Jacobs:
You OWE
these famili
COAL

Jim (left) and Fran (right) in 2019 (Knoxville News Sentinel, 2019)

VITA

Ashton R. Cooper was born in Houston, Texas. He is the son of Annette and Michael Latigue. Ashton received a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in Marketing and Non Profit Leadership in December 2009 from Baylor University, and a Master of Public Service and Administration degree from Texas A&M University in May of 2012.

Ashton started his career in student affairs at Baylor University, and now works for the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. He defended his dissertation, *Not Accepting the Status Quo: Southern White Student Activists in the Civil Rights Movement,* virtually during the 2020 Corona virus/COVID-19 pandemic, and will receive his Doctor of Philosophy in the Spring of 2020.