

January 2012

# Learning Without Being Taught: A Look at How Schools, the Home and the Neighborhood Influence "Race" Conceptualization

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**Learning Without Being Taught:  
A Look at How Schools, the Home and the Neighborhood Influence  
“Race” Conceptualization**

By

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A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree  
of Masters of Arts  
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Date of Approval:  
June 6, 2012

Keywords: Acquisition, Category, Census, Ethnicity, Power

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this Thesis to my brother, Zach, who got me to get back into school after dropping out and inspired me throughout my collegiate career with his principals and determination in making the world a better place.

I would like to give thanks to my committee Dr. Kathryn Borman, Dr. Angela C. Stuesse, and Dr. Kevin Yelvington for having so much patience with me and guiding me throughout this whole process with compassion and wisdom. I would like to give thanks to my Mother Kellie and two sisters, Katie and Nikole for supporting me throughout this entire process. Additionally I would like to thank two dear friends Jason and Elias Kary for introducing me to anthropology. Thank you to all of my wonderful friends and family that make up the community that I am so blessed to be part of, I love you all and I could not done any of this without every one of you.

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## ABSTRACT

Where do we get our ideas about the concept of ‘race’? The conceptualization of ‘race’ has long been a topic of interest in the social sciences and society in general. The word ‘race’ has been used and defined in different ways and different purposes throughout U.S. history. The definition of ‘race’ therefore is arbitrary, changing according to the situation, but the consequences of how the word ‘race’ is used are concrete and effect peoples lives daily. This research, in accord with much of the literature on the topic, shows that public schools play a major role in the conceptualization of ‘race’. Furthermore, what children are learning about ‘race;’ in schools is not in an academic fashion but rather through inferences by the media, textbooks, and interactions with friends, teachers and school staff. I have conducted both qualitative (semi-structured interviews) and quantitative (questionnaires) research in order to explore where young adults say that they began to conceptualize ‘Race’. The results show that public schools, the home and neighborhoods of the young adults are the places that have influenced their ‘racial’ conceptualization the most. I posit that we should provide the most up to date, accurate and pedagogically appropriate information as possible in public schools to aid our children in their process the conceptualization of the concept of ‘race’.

## **CHPATER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **Introduction**

Throughout my life I have lived in twenty different cities in the United States, ranging from my birth town of Akron, Ohio to Lexington, Kentucky; from Washington D.C. to Los Angeles to Little Haiti Miami. I have lived in a variety of economic situations as well, from extreme poverty to a middle class status and everything in between. I have been exposed to diverse living situations and throughout these experiences and one issue in particular has always caught my attention: “race”. Regardless of my surroundings, the concept of “race” has affected others and myself in many ways. I began to conceptualize “race” in elementary school, as a young boy that was told that he was a “white boy” by the other kids in school growing up in neighborhoods that were mostly African American. How people grouped themselves and were grouped by others was something that I thought about quite often. My brother and I were criticized by many in our family because we always hung out with the kids in our school, almost all of whom were African American. Conversely, many of the kids at school gave us a really hard time for being the only “white boys” around and would consistently beat us up after school. I never really understood why. The peculiar thing about “race” that has always caught my attention is that almost no one can define it, yet so many people believes his or her viewpoint on the subject is correct. I began to study the definition of “race” throughout the history of the United States before I ever stepped

foot into a university, and realized that we, as a society, have never had an accurate definition of “race” that has been collectively agreed upon. Later, when I enrolled into the university I thought that I could figure out why. After researching the topic of “racial” conceptualization for the past eight years during my undergraduate and graduate studies, I found that I was not the exception for not understanding, but the norm. For many people, the first time that they begin to conceptualize “race” is at school. In fact, the institution of K-12 education has been termed a “race making institution” (Lewis 2004).

This thesis investigates the following research question: Where, and when do undergraduates at USF believe they have acquired their conceptualization of “race”? In order to explore the roots of “racial” conceptualization acquisition, I have asked 236 undergraduates at USF about where they learned, how they identify, and how they formulated their ideas about “race”. By comparing the results of my research to the contemporary literature on the topic, I hope to use this information in future research to address where, when, and how young adults’ ideas about “race” and ethnicity are formed.

In this thesis I am arguing that there needs to be pedagogically appropriate, effective and stimulating classes on the topic of human diversity to in order to prepare our children with the best information available. The school system has become a “race making institution” that plays a large role in how our society conceptualizes “race”. To be sure, schools are not the only influence that factors into how “race” is conceptualized. There are other places as well such as the home, neighborhoods, family and friends that, along with schools, form a symbiotic relationship that aid in the conceptualization of “race”. Schools however, can be reached more easily than many of the other influences



mentioned above. Additionally schools are supposed to be centers for information, not places to learn about important societal aspects through hearsay and inferences.

Many aspects of people's everyday lives are affected by how we as a society view "race". Access to education, healthy food, fair wages, safe housing, fair justice system and many more are all heavily influenced by how we as a society view "race".

Unfortunately many peoples base how the view "race" on hearsay and inferences that they have heard from someone's uncle or a friend at school. Anthropologists now have access to much information on skin pigmentation, the human genome and the history of how the word "race" has been used. Its time to provide this information to our children and stop expecting them to figure out such a complex issues on their own.

The topic of "race" and ethnicity has been a long-standing topic of interest in the field of anthropology. Franz Boas, the founder of American anthropology, studied this controversial topic throughout his long career. In the early- to mid-twentieth century, Boas and his students had an immeasurable impact on how American society views the topic of "race" and ethnicity as they launched an anti-racist campaign in the public schools in the United States (Burkholder 2011). Yet, after all these years of battling the misuse of the term "race", the topic is still a controversial one with no consensus even among anthropologists, on how to define the term (Morning 2011). The scientific community has come a long way since the days of Boas in fields relevant to this topic such as: genetics, anthropology, biology, and sociology. Much of this new information refutes many false historical claims about "race", but still there is heated debate on how to define "race", and where people acquire their "racial" conceptualization. The amount of inconsistency present in the scientific community concerning the topic of "race" tells

me that *different* people are getting *different* information from *different* places. Where and how do people learn about “race”? Where do people start to identify themselves, and others, along category lines that the American Anthropological Association calls socially constructed but so many believe to be innate?

There has been much anthropological and sociological research on the topic of the acquisition of “racial” identity leading to a variety of hypotheses. For example, some social scientists believe that “racial” identity is acquired innately through genetics (Hirschfeld 1997). Others claim that “racial” identity is acquired through social structures such as the school system, family life, the work place, government policies, and local communities (Harrison 1995: Hirschman 2004: Winant 2000: Yelvington 1995). Still others assert that “racial” identity is sometimes purposefully taught inaccurately with malicious intent vis-à-vis government influenced eugenics programs, biased accounts in history books, and partial academic curricula (Black 2003: Lewis 2004: Mullings 2005). We, as social scientists, need to identify the location of the acquisition of “racial” identity that is caused by both mal-informed social structures and sometimes mal-intent. By identifying this acquisition, we could then address many of the inconsistencies that exist in society about “race” today.

Generally, there are two camps of people that define “race” differently. Essentialists believe that “race” is innate and related to biology. While constructivists believe that “racial” categories are socially constructed. Even though defining “race” is controversial, “race” is continually used to determine public policy, rights to citizenship, access to resources, and many other aspects of life. People regularly use the term “race” without knowing that its meaning remains highly contested and controversial (Harrison

1995: Jacobson 2001: Morning 2007: Morning 2011). In fact, even those that have made a career studying the concept of “race” have not been able to agree upon a suitable definition (Morning 2007: Morning 2011). This difference of opinion has concrete effects on everyday life. For example, the descriptors recently used for “race” in the 2010 U.S. census were arbitrary, simultaneously based on skin color, nationality, geography and language (U.S Bureau of the Census 2010). I argue that the abstract definition of “race”, in conjunction with its power to dictate concrete concepts, makes the misuse of the term “race” a societal problem. The user of the term becomes the definer. As the definer, the person gains power and can manipulate a particular situation.

Many views of, and about, “race” are introduced and acquired in the public school system (Burkholder 2011: Lewis 2009: Loewen 2007: Morning 2011). In most instances these views are not acquired academically but rather inadvertently through interactions with friends, faculty, and school staff (Burkholder 2011: Lewis 2009: Loewen 2007: Morning 2011). Additionally, when the topic of “race” is brought up in an academic fashion in public schools it is usually addressed with out-of-date and sometimes faulty information, even though we have access to much more accurate and up to date information (Burkholder 2011: Lewis 2009: Loewen 2007: Morning 2011). Furthermore, there is evidence that by introducing scientifically accurate and up-to-date information about the topic of “race” in public schools many of the inaccurate inconsistencies about “race” can be addressed (Burkholder 2011: Lewis 2009: Loewen 2007: Morning 2011). The data that I have collected support these claims made in the literature. My data show that one of the most influential places in which people acquire their conceptualization of

“race” is in the public school system. My data also show that many people are not sure how to answer questions when asked about their “race” or how to define it.

Anthropologically informed classes on human variation should be introduced into our public school system providing the most accurate, up-to-date information available to our children to ensure that we, as educators, are equipping them and allowing them the opportunity to make informed decisions on these crucial concepts based on knowledge, not inference or hearsay.

### **Thesis Organization**

The organization of this thesis is as follows. I begin with an introduction that will introduce the reader to the topic while giving a brief description of the literature. Additionally a “use of terms” section is included to ensure that the reader and the researcher are on the same page when using specific terms whose definitions can be debated.

The second chapter is the literature review, which contains a brief description of the current state, and a history of, the major schools of thought on how and why “race” is defined as it is today. This is followed by a comprehensive review of the social science literature on the societal consequences of how “race” is and has been used in the U.S., followed by an examination of the roots of “racial” conceptualization acquisition, and trends in the literature that suggests future research and actions.

The third chapter is the methods section. Here, the research questions are presented: the details of how the research was designed, how the research tools were designed, and how the data was collected and explained in more detail. The demographic information of USF and the participants, along with a brief description of the research

setting is also included here. The methods chapter concludes with a brief description of the limitations of this research.

The fourth chapter is the findings chapter. This chapter begins with a description of data results that are broken down into two sections. The first is the results of where the concept of “race” is acquired. Secondly, when the concept of “race” is acquired. In both of these sections there is a discussion on the implications of the results of the data that takes place.

The fifth and final chapter is the conclusion. In this chapter, I start by detailing my recommendations on future research needed on the topic of the acquisition of “race” conceptualization. I then share my thoughts and conclusions about where social science should go from here and how my research contributes to that path forward. I conclude with suggestions about what society and, more specifically, educational institutions should do to address the problem that I identify in my research.

### **The Use of Terms**

The topic of “race” is a controversial topic for many reasons, not least of which is the fact that there is no consensus on a suitable definition for the term “race”. As can be seen, every time that I use the term “race” I enclose it in quotation marks. This is because I do not subscribe to any definitions of the word. I do however, believe that how we as a society generally use the word “race” today is not accurate. Additionally, throughout the paper I will use other terms that should be explained before the rest of the paper is read. When writing about a topic that is based on abstract, fluid definitions, it is crucial for the reader to be on the same page as the writer when defining such terms. The definitions for the terms conceptualization, essentialism and constructivism that are explained in this

section, have been taken from sociologist Ann Morning and how she uses them in her book, *“The Nature of Race”* (2011). Her brilliant critique is one of the many influences that have inspired me to explore this topic.

### ‘Race’

The first term that I will address is the term “race”. As was previously stated, throughout the paper you will see the term “race” in quotation marks. In this paper, the term “race” will be used as a descriptor for categories used by the U.S. census. I believe that the categories are socially constructed categories that were manufactured with malicious intent by those with enough power to define the term for mainstream society. I feel that it is important to let the reader know my personal belief on the topic. While conducting my research, I was careful to not let my view and beliefs be known while interviewing participants and administering questionnaires. In fact, I was scolded by more than one participant for, in her words, actually “perpetuating the socially constructed categories of “race” and ethnicity by administering my questionnaires.” This was an amazing moment for me during the research process, because, not only did it show me that I was not projecting my personal biases, but it also reinforced my hopes that society shares my beliefs on the topic.

### Conceptualization

Ann Morning defines conceptualization as “the web of beliefs that an individual may hold about what “race” is” (2011). This is the most accurate method of describing this phenomenon because many people are not sure how to define “race” or ethnicity even though they know *how* they are supposed to do so. This term will be used throughout the paper.

### Essentialism

The term essentialism will be used to refer to the school of thought, which claims that “racial” categories are based on innate phenotypical or genetic measurable differences. There are many terms that have been used to describe this school of thought; Social Darwinist and eugenicists are just two of many that have historically been used.

### Constructivism

Constructivism is the term that will be used to describe the school of thought that “racial” categories are a social construct. Ann Morning defined the term as such, “what we (constructivists) know is not necessarily a reflection of what is really “out there” independent of human action, but instead a product of social life,” (Morning 2011: 13).

## **CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

In this review of the literature I will give a brief description and brief history of the two major schools of thought on how social scientists think about and define “race”. The implications of how “race” is perceived and defined will be the focus of the next section followed by a description of the state of the literature on where these ideas are acquired and why. I have formatted the literature review in this manner to ensure that the reader can get a complete picture of where the research is rooted. The contemporary literature on how people conceptualize “race” in the United States can generally be broken into two theoretical camps: those that believe that “racial” categories are based on ‘natural’ differences that can be measured, and those that believe that “racial” categories are socially constructed. Some scholars overlap and take aspects of both, but these points of view are not the norm. I use Ann Morning’s terms essentialists, which believe that “racial” categories are based on ‘natural’ differences that can be measured, and constructivists which believe “racial” categories are socially constructed (2011). I will use these categories to define the two separate camps throughout the paper. The concept of “race” is a confusing, abstract, and difficult and therefore it is paramount that everyone is on the same page while exploring this concept.

### **Essentialism vs. Constructivism**

The social science literature on “race” is extensive, and current theories can generally range from essentialist to constructivist paradigms. This concept is far too



dense to address all of the literature on this topic in this section. Rather, I will give a competent overview of these two paradigms, and will divide the literature into two distinctive schools of thought.

### Essentialism

The essentialist school of thought suggests that differences between “races” and how those differences are perceived are innate, measurable, and are passed down genetically (Hirschfeld 1988,1990,1997; Morning 2007). Anthropology and sociology started addressing “race” from within the school of essentialism, or, as was termed then, Social Darwinism (Moore 2009). American anthropology and sociology also have their roots in the essentialist school of thought with regard to how they addressed the formation of “racial” categories in the United States (Moore 2009; Winant 2000). There was dissent within the social sciences, most notably Franz Boas and his students, however, most of the mainstream social science of the time subscribed to the essentialist paradigm (Black 2003; Burkholder 2011). Much of the essentialist ideology was rooted in well-funded organizations such as the Eugenics programs and New York Chamber of Commerce (Black 2003; Burkholder 2011). Many essentialist influences can still be seen today in much of the anthropological literature on the formation of “racial” categories in the U.S. (Hirschfeld 1988; Koenig 2008; Morning 2007; Morning 2011).

There was a recent study on the effects of the influence of essentialism on current academics that specialize in “race” education conducted by Ann Morning. Morning (2007), in an article titled, “Everyone Knows it’s a Social Construct,” asserts that the majority of social scientists do not look at “race” as a social construct. Furthermore, she says that the majority of professors that participated in her study believe “race” to be

biological (2007). Morning interviewed forty-one faculty members from four research institutes, all of who were either anthropologists or biologists. The four institutions consisted of a city university, a state university, an Ivy League university, and what Morning terms a “pilot university” (sharing characteristics with an Ivy League university) in order to more accurately represent a diverse population. The faculty members were selected from socio-cultural/physical anthropology or genetic/evolutionary biology subfields, which were selected based on “racial” expertise. Morning’s conclusions illustrate how many of the faculty members think that “race” is biologically determined, however, there are methodological discrepancies. The majority of Morning’s respondents were older, white men whose responses differed statistically from those of female respondents and male respondents, of different ethnicities and economic backgrounds. I would like to see if the demographics of the participants in her study reflect the demographics of professors on a nation-wide scale. Nevertheless the implications of her study are real. If there are many professors that are teaching inaccurate information about the topic of “race” and its meaning its no wonder why the essentialist camp is still around.

Lawrence Hirschfeld, for example, claims that there is utility to the biological existence of “race”, and asserts that “racial” and ethnic categories are formed “naturally” in children of preschool age (1988). Hirschfeld also proposes that this happens universally regardless of the geographic location, language, or cultural norms by stating that, “while social classifications vary considerably cross-culturally, critical aspects of the acquisition of these concepts do not; suggesting that the cultural context in which these concepts are acquired may play a significantly less important role than is generally

thought” (Hirschfeld 1988: 611). Hirschfeld’s claim, in my opinion, is not valid due to various contradictory aspects of his research that do not sufficiently support his claim. The inconsistencies and low degree of power of his sample size, the lack of data that is presented as he attempts to support his claims about the socialization process of children, and the definitions he uses when addressing the subject of “race” and ethnicity are all problematic in his research. While Hirschfeld’s research interests in how kids learn “race” are worthwhile, many anthropologists have denounced Hirschfeld’s claim. Unfortunately, as was pointed out in Morning’s study, his influence can still be felt in the anthropological community (2007). There is also significant essentialist influence on other aspects of academia as well, such as medicine and social psychology (Koenig 2008). This has recently led to influential books such as the *Bell Curve* by Herrnstein and Murray, and *Race, Evolution and Behavior* by J. Philippe Rushton. These were written by prominent, influential, social psychologists and reflect essentialist theories in their claims. These paradigms can be seen in beliefs about “race” and ethnicity throughout society even though they are not usually directly taught in anthropology classes (Holt 2002: Lewis 2004: Mullings 2005).

### Constructivism

The constructivist school of thought proposes that societies’ ideas and understandings of the concept of “race” is a social construction formed by man-made phenomena (Hirschman 2004: Holt 2002: Lewis 2004: Mullings 2005: Van Ausdale 2001: Wade 2002: Winant 2000). Anthropologist Peter Wade subscribes to the constructivist school, which is similar to the stance on “race” taken by the American Anthropological Association (AAA). In Peter Wade’s book “*Race Nature and Culture*”

he begins by examining the work of other anthropologists in their use of the term 'phenotypical variation.' Wade concluded that even though essentialist anthropologists also acknowledge the fact that the term "race" is socially constructed, by saying that physical characteristics are not socially constructed reinforces, even subconsciously, the rationale for "race" being 'natural' (Wade 1993). Wade states, "Phenotypical variation is assumed to be neutral and yet also to have certain salient features which are especially liable to acquire the meanings of "racial" difference, or to be subject to perception by people predisposed to privileged phenotypical features of a typically "racial" character" (Wade 1993: 31). Here, Wade is making a worthwhile claim because the 'typical' physical characteristics that are used to define someone's "race" can be found in many different groups of people worldwide (Diamond 1999). Wade then recognizes that the current meaning of the term "race" has its roots in the colonial efforts to develop an *us vs. them* ideology, but at the same time states that:

If the study of "race"-relations' derives at some level from a narrative about how the west came to constitute its selves in relation to colonized others, i.e. from an us-them distinction, then grounding that distinction in taken-for-granted phenotypical difference not only mystifies and misrecognizes it, but makes it more inevitable and to be taken for granted: after all, it was only 'natural' that 'people' should have wondered about differences in 'skin color'. (1993: 26,27)

His weakness lies within his postmodern paradigm and its tendency to self-reflect without suggesting an alternate route of action (Singer 1994). I agree with Wade that we should bring to light the identified roots of the socially constructed "racial" categories and call them out for what they are. Far too often substantial critiques get watered down in semantic debates combing the roots of "racial" categories with debates about human variation. They are different topics and should be treated as such. But where should social

scientists go from here in our attempt to examine the topic of “race” and its implications?

Leith Mullings (2005), like Wade, links the root of the contemporary understanding of “race” in the United States to colonialism, word choice, and socialized meanings of words. What sets Mullings’ work apart from the rest is not only her call for anthropology to be more active in the research on “race” and its application vis-à-vis praxis, but also her references to the effects of ‘situated knowledges’ on the concept of “race” in the U.S. (Mullings 2005).

Mullings illuminates the role of colonization, imperialism, and the slave trade on forming the “racial” categories that exist in the United States today (Mullings 2005). She also addresses the role of the U.S. government in the perpetuation of these categories by stating, “Racialization cannot be accomplished without the manufacture of consent among the majority of Euro-Americans” (Mullings 2005: 680). According to Antonio Gramsci, the term ‘manufacture of consent’ signifies a consent of the masses (both those whom wish to gain or maintain control of the access to resources, and those that are being controlled by the acceptance and use of “racial” terminology) that has been manufactured by a specific group that wields power vis-à-vis mass media, learning institutions, and political rhetoric (Forgacs 1988). By addressing this issue, Mullings gets closer to exploring the reasoning behind the formation of “racial” categorization and its continual usage in the United States – affecting politics, laws, public policy, and much more. She does note the strengths within anthropology to address these issues stating, “Anthropologically informed and ethnographically sensitive studies can potentially illuminate the ways in which contemporary institutions, policies, and structures reproduce “racial” inequality without overtly targeting its victims” (Mullings 2005: 679).

The focal point of Mullings' position is the effect of a term coined by Donna Haraway- 'situated knowledges' (Haraway 1988). Mullings states that, "It is also important to confront the manner in which "race", class, and gender shape the production of knowledge" (Mullings 2005: 685). This is a crucial aspect in the constructivist school of thought in anthropology because Mullings points to the fact that a person's sex, class and ethnic background, affects how they do their research, along with the method that they choose, and the results they attain (Mullings 2005). This is important because, historically, most of the anthropological research on "race" and ethnicity has been performed by white men (Crenshaw 1991: Haraway 1988: Harding 1992: Mullings 2005). This is not to say that white men cannot conduct research on "race" and ethnicity, rather to simply point out this fact and the possible biases that it brings with it such as researching with a particular point of view instead of multiple points of view. Everyone researches from a particular point of view, and it is important that a topic is researched from as many perspectives as possible in an attempt to get the clearest most comprehensive outlook on the particular topic. Anthropology should take a lead role in exploring these concepts using its abilities granted within the science and its diverse practitioners to advance the current knowledge that we have to the public. The topic of "race" affects most of the population in some way or another, and the more educated that a society is on a topic, the better equipped a society is to deal with that topic.

Charles Hirschman is another social scientist that acknowledges the formation of the concept of "race" is not a natural one, but rather a social construct (Hirschman 2004). His view is also similar to Wade's view in that Hirschman believes that the specific vocabulary has an effect on how people understand and view "race" (Garret 2002; Wade

2004). Additionally, Hirschman uses influences from the political economy paradigm to place the formation of “race”, and its causes, in a historically based understanding having to do with colonialism, imperialism, the slave trade, and the formation of an ‘other’ (Hirschman 2004). Hirschman states “European colonialists created sharp divisions of prestige, power, and economic status between the rulers and the ruled in the Victorian age. Because these divisions coincided with differences in color and other physical attributes between whites and the peoples of Asia and Africa, racism provided a powerful legitimization of imperialism” (Hirschman 2004: 395).

Hirschman later addresses the history and implications of how intellectuals view “race” in the United States, including programs such as the eugenics movement, voting rights, and social programs. Here Hirschman states,

Racism waned but the formerly defined “races” and “racial” boundaries remained meaningful social categories in many societies, influencing both popular perceptions and the design of public policy and scientific research... “Racial” groups are regarded as real entities and the word “race” is still widely used in the media, by academics and by the broader public. (Hirschman 2004: 400).

While what Hirschman says is true, “racial” categories were formed in a historical context that continues to influence our understanding of the topic today; he does not suggest what we should do about it. Why is the information on the origins of “racial” categories not presented to us in our public school system? Furthermore, what other aspects influence our understanding of the topic of “race”?

Hirschman also examines the use of the word “race” in the history of the U.S. census and how the census affects the public’s view of the concept of “race” (2004). He claims that, “The reality, in my judgment, is that the concept is broken and there is no valid rationale for preserving the old system, however modified. “Race” without racism is

an anachronism. There is a perfectly good concept to take the place of “race”, that of ethnicity” (Hirschman 2004: 410). Hirschman’s solution runs in stark contrast to the stance of the American Sociological Association (ASA) in its call to not abolish the use of the word “race” in its research (ASA 2003). The ASA released an official stance on “race” titled “The Importance of Collecting Data and Doing Social Scientific Research on “race” (2003).” The ASA’s statement relays the importance of not erasing “race” from the American lexicon within the social sciences because it would hinder the enforcement of hate crimes and affirmative action while making it more difficult to examine the issues that stem from a racist society, such as residential segregation, unequal access to education, and many other social phenomenon caused by racism in the United States (ASA 2003). Anthropologists have critiqued this solution as well. For example, Faye Harrison claims that using ethnicity instead of “race” has many of the same consequences as using “race”. Harrison provides the example of the Rwandan and Serbian conflicts, which were both based on ethnic tensions to illustrate this line of argument (Harrison 1995). I think that using the word “race” in research and using it in the census are two different topics. As long as a context is given while using the word “race” to measure inequalities and injustices then it is acceptable. The context provided needs to be comprehensive and very clear so that the readers are positive of how the word is being used and why. Using the word “race” in instance such as the census, the doctor’s office and school forms are not times in which the context is provided or even could be effectively provided and should not be used. But a solution needs to be much more comprehensive than just replacing the word “race” with ethnicity. A whole new informational program should be introduced nation wide to inform the public of the



history of the word “race” and its implications in society so we a society can decide for ourselves a solution.

Eduardo Bonilla-Silva’s stance on “racial” categories is more in-line with that of the ASA (1997). Bonilla-Silva believes that the word “race” should be used in sociological research, and terms the word “race” as a “social fact.” In his article, “The Essential Social Fact of “race”.” Bonilla-Silva states that, “ I contend that although “race” is not an essential category (no social category is essential) and in fact is highly malleable and historically-bounded (as all social categories are), it is nonetheless a central principle of social organization” (Bonilla-Silva 1999: 899). Therefore, to just erase the word “race” from our lexicon in research is denying that the term has had any affect on our society. This is irresponsible and should be considered unjust. Like Bonilla-Silva stated, however, there are also problems with just dismissing the phenomenon as a social construct and acting like it does not exist.

A major critique of the constructivist stance is that if “race” is a social construct then why can we see differences in how people look and in their genes? There are differences in how humans look and how we are made, and the conflict arises when the categories, that are not based on these differences, change constantly, and in fact, most genetic difference can be found within a specific group rather than between them (Madrigal 2007: Madrigal 2009). In an article by Clarence C. Gravlee, titled “How Race Becomes Biology: Embodiment of Social Inequality,” Gravlee shows that the “racial” categories used in the United States oftentimes regulate access to resources, both social and material (2009). This differential access to resources changes the biology of a population creating biological differences along the socially constructed lines of the

“racial” categories (Gravlee 2009). Therefore the same differences that many essentialists use as evidence of innate differences have actually been made by the same categories they are attempting to justify (Gravlee 2009). This is not the only way in which differences are made. Different amounts of skin pigmentation are developed by evolutionary reasons that take place over many generations. The amount of sun that a population is exposed to, the diet of a population, and the cultural norms all factor into the amount of skin pigmentation that a population can have as well (Madrigal 2007; Mielke 2010). The problem is that skin pigmentation and “racial” categories are different topics and should be addressed as such. While skin pigmentation has contributed to how “racial” categories have been formed, the issue is far more complex than that and far too often be misconstrued as being synonymous.

In each school of thought there is disagreement on how to approach the topic of “race”. There are also many peoples that do not fit into either school but are rather somewhere in the middle. How to address the topic is not the point of this paper and will have to be saved for other research. What follows is a review of the literature on the consequences of how society views and uses the term “race”, and how those views are acquired.

### **Implications of “racial” Categorization**

The “racial” categories used in the U.S. have persistently remained relevant since their formation. These categories have been negotiated by such means as, how the U.S. census addresses the “race” question every ten years, (Hirshman 2004; Snipp 2003) to honorary white status for certain peoples, (Black, 2003 Jacobson: 2001) to what it means to be White, Black, Latino, etc, and the negotiation of those meanings (Harrison: 1995

Mullings: 2005). While the definition of “race” is less than concrete, its implications are very concrete and affect people’s life on a daily basis (Gillmore 2009; Kelly 1997). These affects range from specific laws that target certain populations, aid programs supposedly designed to help specific populations, the gerrymandering of congressional voting districts, residential segregation, unequal access to quality education, nutrition and health care, wage gaps, and much more. (Krysan 2009; Lewis 2004; Pager 2005; Pager 2009)

The U.S. census has changed its language on the question of how Americans identify “racially” every time since 1890. (Hirschman 2004) According to the sociologist Mathew Snipp, how the census defines “race” has a heavy influence on how American society in general views race (2003). Apart from influencing how people define “race”, the census is used to determine many other factors in the U.S. such as, the amount of congressional seats a state has and how those districts will be gerrymandered, demographic information informing politicians on the makeup of his/her voting population, and the start of affirmative action (Hirschman 2004). Changing along side with the definition of “race” has been ‘what it means to be’ each of the “racial” categories (Mullings 2005). What does it mean to be white, black or Latino? Differences in income are not enough to explain the difference between these groups, therefore stereotypes bases on false accusations of critiques about work ethic, religiosity, morality, and other characteristics, were socially constructed to formalize the us vs. them mentality (Black 2003; Gilmore 2009; Jacobson 2001; Harrison 1995). As Fay Harrison eloquently stated, “In the political rhetoric of the day, the white ethnic blue collar silent majority was considered patriotic, committed to traditional patriarchal family values, resident in stable urban communities, and deserving of government largesse, unlike the black ‘undeserving

poor (1995: 58).” These stereotypes lead to the possibility of minority populations that were before considered ‘non-white’ to become ‘honorary whites’ not based on skin color but rather on perceived qualities supposedly based on morals, work ethics and the like (Jacobson 2001; Mullings 2005). This ‘opportunity’ leads to further divisions within the working class as many, with the possibility of becoming ‘honorary whites’, attempted to distance themselves from those that were considered ‘non-whites’ (Jacobson 2001; Loewen 2007; Mullings 2005)

The division among the working class and the pursuit to become part of the ‘white’ or ‘honorary white’ groups gives ample opportunity to covertly ‘blame/demonize the victim’ for their own plight by suggesting inadvertently that these conditions are due to innate tendencies of the population being targeted even though there is no legitimate scientific backing for these claims (Koenig 2008). The ruling class is carrying out the demonizing process while they are at the same time profiting heavily from it (Gilmore 2009; Kelly 1997; Loewen 2007).

Faye Harrison addresses the issue of blaming the victim and dividing the working class with false ideological differences when she states,

The rise and mobility of intermediate, buffer groups may appear to reflect society’s democratization of race; yet, the discourse celebrating their incorporation into the mainstream implies a condemnation of those racial minorities that supposedly rely more on political agitation and affirmative action than on the values of individualism, hard work, and thrift. (1995:59)

An example of “race” based stereotypes that leads to public policy is the Prison Industrial Complex and its concentration on target populations (Gilmore 2009). As Ruth

Gilmore points out in her article “From Military Industrial Complex to Prison Industrial Complex”,

The problem that the U.S. faced was that even though they could demonize this or that little group, there was enough of a positive response to anti-racist or anti-colonialist struggle that the state couldn't really contain it... and so the state's response was “what do we have? We lost Jim Crow. Culturally we still have racism, so we don't need to worry about it too much, but legally Jim Crow is no longer a weapon. What do we have left in our arsenal? Well we have all the lawmaking that we can do. And we do have the idea that there's something wrong with ‘those people’... During this time we saw the conversation around race change from “they're just not smart enough” to “they're just not honest enough. (Gilmore 2009: 5)

The stereotype of minorities being criminals and dishonest was strong enough to have a disproportionate amount of minorities in prison without, for the most part, it even being questioned (Gilmore 2009). I would argue that this was a method used by those in power to utilize the “racial” categories that had been formed long ago, to create these stereotypes, in order to make laws that target specific disenfranchised groups in order to fill their prisons with those disenfranchised groups, as freedom became a commodity. Those disenfranchised groups largely mirror the constructed “racial” categories that are addressed in this paper.

If there is any question about the persistence of the effects of the formation of “racial” categories in the U.S. one need not look further the current political conversations. While George W. Bush passed ‘no child left behind’, a program that changed the national education system, and a prescription drug bill that he did not pay for and most agree costs more than Obama's health care reform, not a single person labeled him a socialist, communist or Muslim. On the Contrary when President Obama attempted to address health care reform, he was labeled as a socialist, communist, and a Muslim;

despite the fact that he said he was Christian capitalist from Hawaii. I am not advocating any of these policies or any political party. What I am attempting to show is that even though the math and the actual policies show that there is not much difference in the action of the two men, one of them has been successfully “othered”.

### **Where ‘Racial’ Conceptualization is Acquired**

There are many avenues in which ideas and concepts are learned in society (Appadurai 2008: Chomsky 1988: Forgacs 1988). These avenues include everything from advertising, entertainment, government sponsored programs, the census, the workplace, to interactions with friends and family, and public schools. Many factors of our everyday lives carry with them advert and overt meanings. The literature on the acquisition of “racial” conceptualization points to a few specific entities that have the most impact.

#### The Home

The first avenue in which people acquire “racial” conceptualization that I will address is the home. Po Bronson and Ashley Merryman wrote a book titled *Nurture Shock, New Thinking About Children*, in which they write about new research on raising children. One of the research projects they feature in the book, is Brigitte Vittrup’s study at the University of Texas in 2006 in which she conducted research with self-described socially liberal, Caucasian families in the Austin, Texas area with a child from five- to seven-years-old that had volunteered to be available for research. The study was to analyze the effects of children’s videos with multicultural storylines on children’s “racial” attitudes. What drew Bronson and Merryman's attention to the project is the fact

that most of the families refused to talk about “race” with their children when asked to do so by Vittrup. The parents had taken the approach that if they just did not talk about “race” that their children would not see the difference. This approach proved to be detrimental to the children in the study. As was pointed out in the study, there are many social cues that are picked up on from actions that are different than language. An example used in the research was how people act when certain others are around- anything from tightening the grip of a child, or a purse, when a certain type of person is around, to the types of friends a person keeps. Children are smart, and pick up on these cues. Vittrup’s research claims that the most effective way to improve children’s “racial” attitudes was to talk about “race” with them and address the topic with as much accurate information possible. Therefore, informing children about “race” and ethnicity at home at a very young age could be a key for a better understanding on “race”. The method that parents use when they say that they do not believe in “race” and think that they are doing a good thing for their children is incomplete at best. The term “race” and all of its implications has had profound affects on American society. Only by confronting these effects and addressing them accordingly will we as a society ever be able to move past our nightmarish historical relationship with the concept of “race” and it consequences.

#### Government Programs

The next avenues where the acquisition of “racial” conceptualization is formed that I will address are government programs, such as the U.S. census, and historically, the Eugenics movement. The U.S. census has changed its language on the question of how Americans identify “racially” every time since 1890 (Hirschman 2004: Snipp 2003). According to the sociologist Mathew Snipp, how the census defines “race” has a heavy

influence on how American society in general views “race” (2003). The changes in how “race” is addressed continue today (US Bureau of the Census). The 2010 U.S. census addressed “race” far differently than did the 2000 census, which also differed greatly from the 1990 census (US Bureau of the Census). Apart from influencing how people define “race”, the census is used to determine many other factors in the U.S., such as the amount of congressional seats a state has, and how those districts will be gerrymandered, demographic information informing politicians on the makeup of his/her voting population, affirmative action, and much more (Hirschman 2004). I do acknowledge the need to know how many and what types of people live in our country to better accommodate the needs of the population. However, there are many other methods that can be used to accomplish this goal. Starting a nation wide conversation on how to better address the topic is a necessary step to figure out how to improve the government’s methodology in learning about its people without perpetuating an often–times detrimental categorization that is outdated and inaccurate. Americans are constantly told by our politicians that we are exceptional; it’s time to actually act on that statement and introduce this topic to the public and let us figure out how to move forward.

Another government program that has had a profound effect on how American society conceptualizes “race” is the eugenics program (Black 2003: Loewen 2003). Edwin Black wrote a book titled *War Against the Weak* in which he examines the eugenics movement in the U.S. from 1904 until the end of World War II, at which time the term Eugenics was changed to “human genetics” (2003). This book was intended to present the influences that the eugenics movement has had on America’s understanding of genetics, human attributes, and “race”. Black led a team of fifty researchers in four



countries, generating some 50,000 documents. He states how respected intellectuals of the time started the eugenics movement in the U.S. as a rationale for who was legally allowed to reproduce, as well as determining which individuals were considered fit to live amongst the rest (2003). The relevance for this research to my project resides in the fact that many of the proponents of the eugenics movement were prominent lawmakers, respected professors, and other influential personalities who, at the time, helped shape societal views of “race”. Consequently, these highly influential peoples shaped how we, as a society, are taught about “race” and ethnicity in schools, in mass media, and the U.S. current societal views of the definition of “race” and ethnicity. Additionally, the New York Chamber of Commerce, working with the eugenics movement, funded the fight against Franz Boas and his students in their attempt to squash many of the misconceptions on the topic of “race” that were being produced by the Eugenics program (Burkholder 2011). It is up to anthropologists and other academics to join the fight against inaccurate information provided to the public whenever possible. Noam Chomsky has termed this phenomenon, “the responsibility of the intellect.” I agree wholeheartedly with this stance. If we as academics do not contribute to the public discourse on topics in which we have access to the latest research then what really are we studying for in the first place?

### Schools

The K-12 public school system has long been the site of an ideological battle on whether or not and how the topic of “race” should be addressed (Burkholder 2011: Lewis 2004: Morning 2011). It has even been claimed that schools are “race making institutions” and are the best places to combat misconceptions about “race”(Burkholder

2011; Lewis 2004) The debate on how the public school system contributes to “race” conceptualization, which eventually leads to how people view “race”, has a long history in the United States (Burkholder 2011: Lewis 2004: Morning 2011). In *Color in the Classroom: How American Schools Taught Race 1900-1954*, Zoe Burkholder explains the role that the public schools have had in “racial” conceptualization in the early twentieth-century (2011). Burkholder also details how the topic of “race” has been addressed in schools and by whom (2011). She found that there was a battle to combat racism throughout the public schools that was lead by Franz Boas and his students. The methodologies that the different anthropologists used were diverse, usually ranging between a multiculturalist paradigm lead by Margret Mead, to a paradigm that believed that the best way to combat racism was through science, lead by Ruth Benedict. Even though the methodologies were different, the desired outcome was the same- eradicate racism. This push came at a time of history in the United States that was dealing with profound questions about anti-Semitism coming out of Europe, anti-immigration and anti- ‘other’ happening here in the United States.

The ‘scientific’ paradigm, lead by Benedict, was the first one used. In this approach, Benedict thought that the best way to combat racism in the United States was for public school teachers to teach about the scientific facts of “race”. The facts were mostly the result of work done by Boas in which he dispelled many misconceptions about “race” including the notion that “race” dictates intelligence. Benedict wanted to put this knowledge, in addition to the fact that most differences could be found within particular groups than between them, into public schools. Unfortunately, the amount of scientific knowledge that Benedict and Boas had at the time was small in comparison to what is

now available. Nevertheless, they fought against racism on the front lines by writing articles in newspapers, developing pamphlets to hand out to the public and fought to have classes on the topic introduced into public schools.

Margret Mead was convinced that the best method of combating racism was through a multiculturalist approach in which different cultures and aspects of each were celebrated in class, in an attempt to familiarize children with different cultures and traditions. Mead believed the masses were not interested in the science on the topic and if the general public were to simply have more contact with each other, that racism would go away on its own (Burkholder 2011). Margret Mead's approach eventually won out and the multiculturalist approach was used in the public schools. This was later admitted by Mead to be a mistake as she wished that she had combined her approach of multiculturalism with that of Ruth Benedict's scientific approach. (Burkholder 2011). A common trait of both of these approaches was the way they pointed out the roots and problems caused by racism were systemic and should be addressed systemically. Eventually, however, in post-war America, the main science fueling the anti-racist push was changed from anthropology to psychology (Burkholder 2011). This became problematic, because the focus went from racism being caused by systemic issues, to a paradigm that explained racism to be caused by an individual's personal failures (Burkholder 2011). This is far different than the stance anthropology currently has on the topic. Where have the anthropologists gone in this battle? When some anthropologist do suggest that we should address the public and attempt to make our discoveries more accessible to the public, they are shunned by the academic establishment in many instances for being "activists". This is problematic.

Unfortunately, even though there have been many pushes in academia and the public school system to battle racist ideologies, there is still a large portion of the population of professors and teachers that believe that “race” is essential (Morning 2011). This can be seen in the teaching practices of professors and teachers, in the adoption of textbooks that teach essentialist ideas, and in the exclusion of classes such as anthropology in the school system (Morning 2011). In Ann Morning’s book from 2011 titled, *The Nature of Race: How scientists Think and Teach about Human Difference*, Morning examines high school anthropology, sociology, geography and biology textbooks noting when and how each of them address the topic of “race”. Morning found that while anthropology did use the term in a social constructivist manner, courses such as biology moved from an essentialist point of view to not addressing the topic at all (2011). This poses a problem because, based on sociologist Amanda Lewis’ research in her book *Race in the Schoolyard*, schools are “race”-making institutions (2004). Worsening the problem, anthropology and sociology are not regularly taught in the K-12 systems, whereas biology is a mainstay. If children’s textbooks are not addressing the topic, and schools are still the one defining the topic, there is an inconsistency- where are children learning the conceptualization of “race”?

For *Race in the Schoolyard* Lewis spent one year in three different elementary schools conducting ethnographic research using the participant observation model (2009). Her research indicated that children “learned what it meant to be white, black, Asian, or Latino in the contexts of those institutions. They were already becoming what teachers assumed they already were – “racial” subjects,” (Lewis 2009:188). Lewis also stated that many of the practices and organizational methods used by the elementary schools in

which her study took place are perpetrators of specific, inaccurate assumptions and generalizations about “race” (Lewis 2009).

This leads to other theorists’ claims, such as those made by Van Ausdale and Feagin (2001) in *The First R, How children Learn ‘race’ and Racism*, in which they claim that preschoolers are much more advanced thinkers than we understand. Therefore, teachers and other adults that conduct activities that highlight difference and give importance to phenotypical variation are perpetuating “racial” categories and forming a thought process about “race” and ethnicity very early in children’s psyche (Van Ausdale, Feagin 2001). Schools are forming the conceptualization of “race” but not in an academic fashion in which the most up to date, accurate information available is given to our children so that they can make their own decisions. No, our children are instead left to figure such an important topic out on their own. What’s worse is the fact that the topic of “race” is considered a taboo by many, therefore our children actually discouraged in many cases from even bringing the topic up.

For example, Jennifer Hochschild, a professor of African and African American studies at Harvard University, wrote an article in 2003 titled “Social Class in Public Schools”, comparing the quality of education of poor public schools to affluent public schools. Hochschild explains how in most cases poor public schools are made up mostly of African American and Latino children while the more affluent schools are predominantly white. Within each school, and sometimes within a class, there are different expectations and biases that are bestowed onto some children. Hochschild examined the different educational outcomes of children that graduate from these schools, and the effects on the children’s adult lives. These types of generalized

expectations usually lead to poor performance in school and after graduation, and infer certain characteristics about children on “racial”/ethnic lines. While we do need to improve the level of education and level the playing field for all students, we must still be cautious how we teach a topic of “race” and ethnicity, which often times happens through subconscious differential treatment of the students. This subconscious differential treatment, coupled with discouraging our children from talking about the reasons that the differential treatment exists in the first place and adding to that unequal education is a societal crime in which a large portion of American children are the victim. The situation is not much better at the university level either.

Large portions of social science professors cannot agree on a suitable definition or use of the term “race”, and they are the ones responsible for teaching college and university students across the nation, including future public school teachers (Morning 2007: Morning 2011). Therefore we can expect there to be an effect on our youth’s education on “race” as well. Ann Morning’s research states that many teachers and professors have not reached consensus about how to treat and or teach the topic of “race” and that many of them still use outdated inferences when they do so, it makes sense that schools would be considered “race-making” institutions. (2011).

### **This is Why We Should Teach What We Can**

Anthropologists have had a role in forming “racial” conceptualization since its founding which has varied in influence throughout the twentieth- and early twenty-first centuries (Burkholder 2011). During the first half of the twentieth century anthropology played a major roll, post WWII America inspired a shift from anthropology being the main source of science behind combating racism to social psychology. Under the social

psychology paradigm, the cause of racism was shifted to the individual rather than the system that perpetuates the problem (Burholder 2011). This paradigmatic shift took the focus of facing racism away from the public school system even though research demonstrates that many people form how they conceptualize “race” in the school system (Burkholder 2011: Lewis 2004: Loewen 2007: Morning 2011). Additionally, research shows that anthropology is particularly equipped for handling this issue (Morning 2011: Mullings 2005). In Ann Morning’s research, she pointed out the fact that, only when students examined “race” in anthropology classes as opposed to sociology, geography or biology, did they begin to have a more constructivist, well-rounded “racial” conceptualization (2011). Not until I took my first anthropology class on “race” and ethnicity did I begin to think that I possibly quench my curiosity on the topic. If, according to the literature, anthropology is the best-equipped science to address the topic of “race”, then anthropology should begin to play a larger role in designing curricula in the public schools in order to address “racial” conceptualization.

As Burkholder’s book shows, when anthropology was involved in the public school system addressing “racial” categorization, there were different strategies that were used and for some reason thought to be mutually exclusive (2011). Ruth Benedict’s method of using science to combat misconceptions about “race” has become much stronger due to the new scientific research on the topic such as the human genome project. I am not saying that benefits of multiculturalism cannot be found in the literature; they can. The fact is that the two methods of how anthropology has been used to fight racism are not mutually exclusive and should be used in tandem. The literature shows that children are learning about “racial” categorization in school and most often

without being taught about it in class (Burkholder 2011: Lewis 2004: Morning 2011).

Research also shows that by using anthropology to teach about the history, the construction, and the consequences of “race”, coupled with the most up-to-date scientific evidence on human genetic diversity, has a beneficial affect on how people conceptualize “race”. Therefore, we should introduce anthropological classes on “race” and ethnicity into public schools as early as we can. It is irresponsible for us as social scientists to leave our children to figure out such a complex concepts on their own, especially considering how well equipped we are to add to the conversation. Now let us examine the methods of my data collection.



## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

The methods of data collection that I have chosen for this research contain both quantitative and qualitative strategies. I have administered 236 questionnaires and conducted 6 semi-structured interviews. The sampling method that I have used is non-probability sampling, mixing both availability sampling and purposive sampling methods, therefore this is an exploratory study with aspirations of inspiring future research on the topic. This chapter is divided into eight sections. The first section is the introduction followed by the second, which details the research question at the root of this thesis. The third section explains how the research was designed, how many participants and the justification for the tools that I used to collect data. The fourth section explains how the data was collected and why. The fifth section explains the methods of how I analyzed the data and why. The fifth and sixth sections go over the demographic information of the USF student body compared to the demographics of the participants of this research, followed by a brief description of the research setting. The last section portrays the limitations of the study, some of the mistakes that happened during the data collection, and opportunities to improve the study.

### **Research Questions**

My research question for this study is as follows: Where, why and how do undergraduates at USF believe they have acquired their conceptualization of “race”?

The reason that I chose this question is because if a determinable origin of the conceptualization of “race” can be identified, then the spreading of many of the misconceptions that currently exist on the topic can be addressed with future research. This is necessary for an attempt to provide the most up to date accurate information to the public for them to base their decisions on.

### **Research Design**

There were 237 questionnaires that were administered, they consist of seven general demographic questions such as: what is your major, what year are you in your education and what high school did you attend? The next two questions on the questionnaire were derived directly from the 2010 U.S. census and ask about the participant’s “race”/ethnicity. There are six multiple-choice questions and eight Likert-Scale questions. The Likert-Scale questions address a variety of themes, ranging from where, and how “racial” and ethnic identities are acquired, to how often the participants had conversations about “race”/ethnicity with their family and friends. The answer options consist of different degrees of occurrence, frequency, and diversity. The questionnaire also has eight open-ended questions. The first asks: why do you feel that the options provided by the U.S. census to classify yourself ethnically/”racially” adequately or inadequately describes you? Examples of the other open-ended questions can be found in the copy of the questionnaire that I have provided in the appendix (1). There is a total of thirty-three questions consisting of a mix of demographic, open-ended, scale and multiple-choice questions which ensures that I take a qualitative and quantitative approach by giving a chance for the participants to not only choose out of answers that I have provided via multiple choice and scale questions, but also come up

with their own answers and ideas through the open-ended questions. Most of the questions on these questionnaires had been tested in a pilot project that I conducted prior to this research in which there were 87 participants, in order to ensure accuracy. I have changed the questionnaire since the pilot, working out the wording difficulties and adding more relevant questions, as well as eliminating questions which had proven irrelevant. Even though most of the questions had been tested before, I did find possible improvements on a couple of questions that I would suggest for future research. I will address this later in this section.

There are multiple reasons that I chose to utilize questionnaires as a method of data collection. Primarily, questionnaires are relatively quick to complete, having averaged between twelve and eighteen minutes, while allowing for a large sample-size. This is important because college students are typically very busy and are more likely to participate in research if it does not take too much of their valuable time. The variety of question types allows for greater accuracy of the data, using a cross-reference questioning method. Additionally, the open-ended questions provided a space for each participant to give an in-depth answer by not limiting the participants to a specific answer or length of answer, thereby allowing the participants to take more time if they like, while at the same time providing a method of data collection that can be quick and easy. Plenty of space was provided for each open-ended question in the questionnaire and the participants were told before they completed the questionnaire that if they needed more space that more paper would be provided to them accordingly. The next phase of the data collection is the interviews that I conducted.

The interviews that I used were designed to enhance the data that I had collected with the questionnaires. The interview questions were based on the questionnaire, but they were all open-ended, which allows me the opportunity to use follow-up questions to explore in more detail how the participants think. Additionally, the interviewing method is conducted in a different atmosphere, {wherever the participant felt most comfortable} rather than in class where time is of the essence. Therefore, both the participant and myself were in a more comfortable setting when exploring the concepts of the acquisition of “racial” conceptualization, which for many, is a difficult and awkward subject to address. The interview process adds a qualitative aspect to my data collection, which is important to strengthen the accuracy of the results through triangulation of the data. I have provided a copy of the template of the interview protocol in the appendix (2).

### **Data Collection**

I have administered questionnaires in seven different undergraduate classes in four different departments at the University of South Florida. I have administered the questionnaires using the allotted class time granted to me by the professors of each course. The administration of the questionnaires ranged from 15 to 20 minutes and was usually administered at the end of the class. Participation in the study, including the completion of the questionnaires, was voluntary. This aspect was explained prior to the administration of the questionnaires and was accompanied by a consent form that explained the research in detail and was also gone over before administration. The participants were not required to sign the consent form because their participation was anonymous. I have included a copy of this consent form in the appendix (3). I also conducted and recorded six semi-structured in-depth interviews. I offered incentives to

participate in the interview process in the form of \$10 gift cards which I provided. I explained this to the participants prior to the administration of the questionnaires while I was reviewing the consent forms. Each interview participant received a consent form that they were required to sign. Additionally I gave each participant a pseudonym while writing about the interviews to ensure the participants remained anonymous. The consent form explained the research and was gone over with each participant before the interview was conducted. A copy of this consent form can be found in appendix (4). I sought a total of three interviews from each class; unfortunately, I was unable to acquire the amount of interviews that I would have liked. It seemed as though the participants were not very comfortable addressing the subject, and, generally speaking, did not want to participate in an interview on the topic. This is an aspect of my research that needs improvement and will be addressed more in-depth later in this section of the paper.

The classes that I administered the questionnaires were chosen by availability to access. I used multiple list-serve email lists to contact graduate students and professors asking for permission to administer the questionnaires in their classes. I also attempted to contact as many people that I personally knew that are teaching throughout the University of South Florida. The participants for the interviews were selected by announcing that “I would be conducting interviews on the same topic of the questionnaires, anyone that is interested in participating in one of these interviews please speak to me after class or contact me at a later date”. I provided my contact information on the consent forms that I passed out before I administered the questionnaires. The interview participants contacted me via email to volunteer.

## **Data Analysis**

The responses to the questionnaires have been coded and analyzed using SPSS statistical software. Each of the possible answers for the multiple-choice and Likert-Scale questions were assigned a numeric code, which are included in the codebook that is in the appendix (5). These codes were then entered into an Excel spreadsheet. Each questionnaire was assigned a participant number and then each question on the questionnaire was filled in with the corresponding number. The open-ended questions were inductively and deductively coded as well. Possible responses based on trends in the literature and responses to the pilot study were deductively constructed for each open-ended question. Each of these possible responses were given a number as a code. Then, each open-ended question on each questionnaire was read. For every response that did not fit into the deductive codes, another number code was created. After every response was read the first time, and the inductive and deductive codes were combined, each open-ended question from every questionnaire was read again and coded accordingly. These codes were also imputed into the excel spreadsheet according to participant number. The data was then cleaned and uploaded into SPSS statistical software to be analyzed. Additionally, many of the responses to the open-ended questions were analyzed qualitatively, looking for trends and statements within the answers that were relevant. Many of these quotes will be found in the discussion/results section of the paper.

The interviews were also analyzed quantitative and qualitatively. First, each interview was transcribed. The quantitative analysis of the interviews was then conducted in the same manner as the open-ended questions on the questionnaires. Possible responses were deduced based on the major trends found in the literature. Each interview

was then read and any response that was not deduced was given a code and written down. The interviews were then read again and coded accordingly. These codes were imputed into an excel spreadsheet and uploaded into SPSS statistical software. Comparing the responses of each participant identified trends in the data. Additionally the interviews were read and listened to many times each with an attempt to really empathize with the participants. Important quotes were extracted from the interviews and used accordingly as well. The qualitative data is one of the main strengths of the data that I have collected because of the ability to obtain real insight that is to often not obtained through multiple-choice questions on a questionnaire. The qualitative aspect to research provides peoples actual words and sentiments. Additionally qualitative research strengthens the quantitative aspect of the research because it can be used as a way to triangulate answers to test the validity of the questions on the questionnaires.

### **Research Setting**

The data that I have collected was from undergraduate students at the University of South Florida. I went to seven different classrooms to administer the questionnaires. Five out of the seven had me administer the questionnaires at the last fifteen minutes of class, the other two were at the beginning. Additionally I conducted six semi-structured interviews. All of the interviews were conducted on campus. I let the participants decide where on campus that they wanted to take part in the interview, to ensure that the participants felt as comfortable as possible. Therefore all of the data for this research was collected on the Tampa campus of the University of South Florida.

## **Demographics**

I have administered 236 questionnaires to undergraduate students at the University of South Florida (USF). The first section on the questionnaires asked about the participant's gender, major, and year in school. Afterward the first two questions on the questionnaire are taken directly from the 2010 U.S. census and ask about the participant's ethnicity and "race". The gender of the participants in the study registered as 31.4% male, and 68.6% female, compared to the USF gender statistics at 43.2% male and 56.7% female (USF info). The breakdown of the year that the participants are in at the university is as follows: 33.5% Freshman, 27.1% Sophomore, 25.8% Junior and 12.7% Senior. The participants self reported "race" and ethnicity is as follows: 24.9% (some type of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin) compared to the USF 17%, 62.3% (White) compared to USF 60.8%, and 14% (Black, African American or Negro) compared to USF at 11.11%. While I do not claim that the results of my data represent the entire undergraduate population at USF, the similarities in percentages of self described demographic information does strengthen the validity of the data.

Additionally forty-five different majors were reported by the participants with the most common being nursing and public relations that each represented 9.7% of the participants. The rest of the majors that represents (>5%) are as follows: Biomedical science 8.5%, Public Health 7.6%, Criminology 6.8%, Psychology 5.5%, and Education at 5.1%. This demographic information is important to mention in order to show that the data that I have collected is not dominated by a specific major, class, gender or ethnic category and furthermore, closely resemble the population of undergraduates at USF.



## **Limitations**

There were various opportunities that I realized that I could have done better during data collection. The first was the amount of classes and variety of classes that I was able to gain access, in order to administer the questionnaires. I originally had planned to administer questionnaires in at least one class of a variety of departments including biology, mathematics, engineering, sociology, public health, foreign language, music, and anthropology. I was only able to gain access to public health, sociology, foreign language, and anthropology. Another issue that came up is that the topic of “race” and ethnicity is a controversial one to many, and therefore some of the professors and students were hesitant to participate. These are all reasons that I could not gain access to all of the departments that I would have liked.

Another issue that I encountered while collecting data is that many of the participants themselves were reluctant to volunteer to participate in the interview portion of my data collection, even after a \$10 gift card was offered. One of the reasons that this occurred might be that the research topic is an uncomfortable one for many to address. Another reason might be that the students were just too busy, and yet another reason might have been insufficient tact on my part. Nevertheless, I was only able to acquire six interviews, falling short of the eight to twenty-four that I would have liked to acquire.

There were a couple of questions that could have had improved wording. I found these improvements while analyzing the data. For example, question 14 on the questionnaire asked, have you ever taken classes on “race”/ethnicity in school? This should have been phrased, Have you ever taken classes on “race”/ethnicity in high school? There should have been an additional question asking whether the participants

had taken a class on “race”/ethnicity at the collegiate level as well. The reason that this is important is because I want to know about the effect of public K-12 schools on people’s views on the topic of “race” and ethnicity. It is equally important to know if the participants had taken classes on “race” and ethnicity at the collegiate level also to factor that into analyzing how the participants answered the other questions on the questionnaire. The methods have been explained. Next the findings chapter will analyze the results.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS**

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section is about the demographic information of the participants and how that relates to the study. The second section of the chapter is where the results and findings of the data are examined and explained and is broken down into two different parts. The first part explores where “racial” conceptualization takes place, and the second part explores when.

### **Identification**

The third question on the questionnaire asked: Does the system of categorization from questions 1 and 2 represent you accurately? 67.4% of the participants answered yes, with 24.2% answering no and 5.8% not answering. I did not look too far into this question until I began to analyze the results of open-ended question twenty-five on the questionnaire which asked: How do you define “race”? The responses to open-ended question twenty-five had: 19.5% of the participants defining “race” as skin color, 18.6% defining “race” as nation of origin/background heritage/where you were born, and 11.4% defining “race” as culture/social construct/ environment. The census’ use of the term “race” in their question is based off of two colors, black and white, which no humans are either of those two colors rather variations of tan and brown, nation of origin, and geographic location. Yet, the participants’ responses were far more diverse than the options provided by the census in how they defined “race”. There is an inconsistency in how the participants defined “race” and the options that are provided by the census.

Question number four on the questionnaire asked why the participants felt that the census questions either adequately or inadequately described them. The results highlighted the above-mentioned inconsistency. A female participant that is sociology major said that the census categories do not adequately describe her because, "I am black but I do not consider myself to be African American because I am of Jamaican descent." Here you can see that she does not feel that the census' "racial" classifications adequately describe her. A sophomore chemistry major stated that the census questions did not adequately describe her because, "I am Italian. I wouldn't consider myself white, however I wouldn't consider myself from Latin descent. My family is from Italy. But this is multiple generations ago". Once again the idea of a color is being confused with ancestry, but all based off of a question about the concept of "race". A female mass communications major also said that the census question, "inadequately describes me because my blood may be Colombian, but I see myself as white and others see me as white too. For me, my "race" is on a very blurred line. I'm not sure how to define myself". These responses show that the census categories inadequately describe people and show that the results of inquiries based on census categories are inadequate as well. Much of the supposed certainty that people claim come out of demographic inquiry causes more confusion within our population. Here a male senior Psychology major also said the census questions do not adequately describe him because, "Just as a Mexican wouldn't want to be called a Puerto Rican. I don't want to fall under the huge category of "white". I am of Western European descent. I'd like to see that as a choice on questionnaires." This response is complex. While there is the confusion of nationality and "race" once again,

there is also a want to connect with the geographic location of Western Europe in particular, not to be confused with others from outside of Western Europe.

Some of the participants said they do feel as if the census questions adequately describe them. For example, female nursing major said, “I think that they adequately describe me because I am white and American.” While a male freshman biomedical science major stated that, “I am of Anglo-Saxon descent, therefore I am “white”. Here the participants are using the some of the same inconsistencies to explain why the census questions do adequately describe them that the above-mentioned respondents used to explain why the census questions did not adequately describe them, such as descent, nationality and color. A senior mass communications major used genetics to explain why the census adequately describes her by saying, “Because my genetics show me that I am a white female”. In her statement the participant is using a genetic explanation for “race” even though recent genetic research says that there is more genetic diversity within groups than between them (Madrigal 2007; Mielke 2010).

The reason why pointing out these inconsistencies is relevant to my research is because in the next sections of this chapter I examine where and when “racial” conceptualization begins. The fact that how people view “race” is inconsistent is important because by finding out where and when these inconsistencies are developing we might be able to address them more effectively.

### **Where and When The Concept of “Race” Was Acquired**

*Researcher:* SO when the topic of “race” was brought up it was more because of conflict per say, between students?

*Mellissa:* Yeah, between students. Some teachers or administration would be like “yeah they would act like that because they’re –“ That’s not cool.

Sometimes I would have it come up in class like “You’re a really pretty black girl.” It had to be specified; “you’re a really smart black girl” it’s just like wow. Those things shouldn’t matter, but I mean it does, I guess, to some people.

*Question 24:* Where was the first place you began to feel an ethnic/”racial” identity?

*Female “white” senior:* “Home first then school. At home, my father made sure I knew the difference between whites and blacks. I had friends at school that he was sure to identify as my “black friends”. He made the distinction that I never noticed before.”

The main question that I have attempted to answer with this research is: Where and when do undergraduates at USF believe they have acquired their conceptualization of “race”? There are many different aspects of my research design that allowed me to answer this question. The most telling were the interviews and open-ended questions from the questionnaires. Five out of the six interviewees mention school as being the place where they started to conceptualize “race”. The one that did not mention school said that she began to conceptualize “race” around her family and at home. This five to one ratio from my interviews is strengthened with the responses from the questionnaires. One survey question asked: Where was the first place you began to feel an ethnic/“racial” identity? 59.8% of respondents said that some type of school was where they first began to feel an ethnic/“racial” identity, furthermore 56.8% of participants responded that they began to feel a “racial”/ethnic identity in k-12. The second largest percentage was the 7.6% of respondents that answered that home was where they first began to feel a “racial”/ethnic identity.

The responses from question twenty-four on the questionnaire are proportionately similar to the responses of the interviews. Based on these data, and other data that I have collected, in conjunction with the literature on the topic and my own hypothesis I chose to look in depth at k-12 schools and the home as places in which “racial” conceptualization takes place. I will begin analysis with K-12 schools and their place in “racial” conceptualization. Afterward there will be a section on the influence that the participants’ home had on “racial” conceptualization. The term “home” includes the participant’s family, friends and the neighborhood in which they grew up.

This chapter ends with a discussion of the topic of when “racial” conceptualization takes place. It is important to remember, however, that there is no one time or place in which “racial” conceptualization takes place. The places and time periods that I mention here are, according to my data, the most influential, but not one of these contributes to the children’s “racial” conceptualization on its own, it is more similar to a symbiotic relationship. How the children learn about “race” and ethnicity at home affects how they learn at school, from their friends and the neighborhood that they grow up in. For the purposes of making it easier to explain, however, I have separated these places and times in the analysis of this data. This symbiotic relationship between when and where “racial” conceptualization takes place is exemplified in the interview excerpt below:

*Researcher:* “Just to think back, what was the first place that you started to think about “race” and ethnicity that you can remember? If there was a pivotal moment or a certain place that you started thinking about these concepts.”

*Christy:* “Elementary school someone asked me what was I because I looked different from everyone else. I asked my mom and she told me that I

was black and white, but that didn't make any sense to me because I didn't look like them. My dad said I was Puerto Rican. So was just really confusing because I didn't look anything like my parents. My mom is really really pale but she's black, and my dad is white so when we are in a group together everybody is like, "oh whose child is that?" because I don't look like my parents at all."

*Researcher:* and if you can remember back, where was the first place that you began to identify yourself? Would it be that same experience or would it be a different type of experience?"

*Christy:* "It was pretty much the same thing, elementary school. That's when people start to ask you questions like that about your parents."

### **Where The Concept of "Race" Was Acquired (School)**

*Question 22* How old were you when you first started to think about "race"/ethnicity?

*Freshman architecture major* "I was in first grade. I was at daycare and my best friend was African American. We wanted to play with another group of girls but they said we couldn't because my friend was black. This really upset me."

*Question 23* How old were you when you first started to identify yourself "racially"/ethnically?

*Freshman mass communication major* "Elementary school. My mom had a rather unconventional childhood and doesn't know her exact ethnicity other than French/native American, which is very minimal. My dad's side is Irish. My brother and I have darker skin, light brown eyes and dark hair and could pass for many ethnicities, so kids would always ask what I was saying "Irish" never satisfied them!"

### **School**

As I have mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, I began to conceptualize "race" in elementary school. According to the literature many others do as well. The results of my data collection concur with this claim. Five out of the six interviewees that participated in my study answered that the first place that they began to conceptualize "race" was at school. Additionally, for open-ended question twenty-four on the



questionnaire which asked: Where was the first place you began to feel an ethnic/“racial” identity: 56.8% of the participants responded that they began to feel a “racial”/ethnic identity in k-12 schools.

Other results of my data collection point in the same direction. Question five on the questionnaire asked the participants: To what extent did school influence how you see yourself ethnically/“racially”? Their answer choices were in a likert-scale form that ranged from: very little extent, little extent, some extent, great extent and very great extent. 77.1% of the participants responded that school influenced how they see *themselves* ethnically/“racially” to at least some extent. Question six was the same question but instead asked how school influenced how the participants see *others* ethnically/“racially”. 88% of the participants responded that school influenced them to at least some extent, while 66% said that they were influenced to a great or very great extent. The qualitative and quantitative data both revealed the need to explore this topic deeper.

In this section I will break down the results of my data into two topics that are repeatedly brought up and formed patterns in my data as to why schools play such a large role in the conceptualization of “race”. The first topic is interactions with the school institutions, teachers and other students in a non-academic role. This is important because the children are left to figure things out on their own about a topic that is complex, without the help of an institution that they rely on for information. Only one out of the 134 respondents that answered that K-12 schools are where they began to conceptualize “race” said that it was because of a class. This respondent said that it was in an American

history class and it was very inaccurate. Furthermore, many of the respondents that did elaborate on where in school they did begin to conceptualize “race” in school said that how they learned these ideas was through interaction with other students and teachers in a non-academic fashion. A freshman mass communications major said, she began to conceptualize “race” in “elementary and middle school, when teachers would act differently”, and female psychology major that identified as “black or African American” stated, “I didn’t really notice until a little boy started talking about my hair in second grade.” The second pattern that was brought up repeatedly was the “grouping” of students along “racial” categories, and the tension that followed. As senior psychology major stated: “In school, middle school, different “races” seemed to hang out within their “race” groups”.

#### Institutions and Lack of Classes

With such a large percentage of participants and so much of the literature that claims that schools play a large role in “racial” conceptualization, I first thought that perhaps schools were beginning to offer classes on the topic. This is not the case. The majority of participants (66.5%) said that they had never taken a class on “race” or ethnicity in school. However, when asked should there be classes on ‘race’ and ethnicity offered in schools 76.3% answered yes. This is an even more significant answer than it looks because 13.6% of the respondents did not answer the question. This means that most of the people that conceptualized race in school did not do so in an academic manner. As a freshman mass communications major stated when asked where she began to conceptualize “race”, “In School when “race” was obvious”. Other examples are from a senior physics major that stated, “In school as the differences between people became

apparent”, and a gender studies senior that said “I guess high school. Suddenly I was expected to hang out with only white people when my whole life I’ve had a very diverse group of friends.” Not one of these participants mentioned anything about a class or a lesson of any kind. They are working off of inferences and hearsay.

The school institutions also play a role in conceptualizing “race”. Standardized tests, registration forms and demographic inquiries all play a role in how children begin to conceptualize “race” (Hochschild 2003; Snipp 2003). A sophomore nursing major stated how the FCAT was when she first began to conceptualize “race” by saying “School, they made you fill in “race” on the FCAT and other standardized testing, which at a young age I feel can make people feel alienated”. When asked: How old were you when you first started to identify yourself “racially”/ethnically? A sophomore biomedical science major said that, “Middle school, when we had to fill out tests like the FCAT and ITBS that asked us to identify ourselves “racially”.”

Interactions with teachers, other student and school administrators also seemed to be a re-occurring aspect of the educational institution that influenced “racial” conceptualization among students. For example, when a junior nursing/public health major was asked: How old were you when you first started to think about “race”/ethnicity, she stated “High school when teachers and classmates would ask what my ethnicity was. Of course I knew some of what I was, but I am a mut so I didn’t learn entirely about my ethnicity till high school.” If children are learning about “race” in schools without taking classes on it, why aren’t we offering them? Unfortunately, just offering classes however, does not fix the problem, the classes have to be informed with the most up to date accurate information possible and be pedagogically appropriate,

effective and stimulating. This can be seen by the conversation that I had in an interview with Mellissa when she said that she had taken a history class and the teacher was badly misinformed. Our conversation went as follows:

*Researcher:* So in high school you had classes on “race” and ethnicity. Did you find it useful?

*Mellissa:* To an extent. The material wasn’t current, and it was skewed, and I’m just like ok well.

*Researcher:* Really? Could you maybe give me an example on some of the content that was skewed?

*Mellissa:* Yeah, my one teacher –

*Researcher:* And this was here in Florida correct?

*Mellissa:* Yes, American history, they were talking about different cultures and they were just saying what was in the textbook, which is fine, and then I guess they let people talk about their personal experiences. So some one would be like well this happens in my country dot dot dot, and they would be like, no it doesn’t and they would completely shut off that person and would be like, no you’re wrong. Here is what the book says. It was just weird. I don’t know if I’m allowed to say this, or if it’s the next question but they said there hasn’t been any hangings in decades, or you know, hundreds of years. It was like maybe a month or two before we had this discussion that he said that and I was like no, I’ve seen this on the news. This just happened. He was like “no, no, no that was an accident.” I was like ok, no the parents of both parties said this was not an accident so this wasn’t an accident and it got heated. I don’t think he expected that out of a junior in high school, but I definitely let the class know that this does happen. You can’t just go on what the textbooks say, these are old textbooks, you can’t just go on, you have to dig deeper.

In interview with Laura when I asked: Do you think classes on “race” should be put into schools? She said, “Yes, and especially, well I’m learning about how the teachers who are teaching different “race” and ethnicities should really be trained on it. So I think they should put it in schools”. Not only do the student want to have classes on this topic in their schools but they want them to be accurate and up to date. The research shows that social science and specifically anthropology is best equipped to handle this

topic (Morning 2011). My data show the same. When I asked a freshman education major if addressing the topic of “race”/ethnicity was useful she answered,

“By discussing racial issues, my scope of awareness expanded. I have also realized that through instruction in my sociology and anthropology class, “race” is a myth: a socially constructed concept not a biological stigma.”

Interactions with institutions such as filling our FCAT forms and being treated differently by you peers and teachers, coupled with the lack of classes on the topic leaving our children to figure things out on their own, are not the only influences that are prevalent in my data. Another pattern from the data is the fact the children tend to group themselves and be grouped along these socially constructed lines known by the census as “race”.

#### Clicks

*Question 24: Where was the first place you began to feel an ethnic/ “racial” identity?*

*Junior education/mathematics major* “junior high school was a big deal, lots of racial tension.”

*Sophomore international business major* “Middle school was the first place that I met/interacted with a lot of people from other races and groups were starting to form based on that.”

Many children begin “racial” conceptualization in school and mostly not by taking classes on the topic. One of the patterns that I saw in my data was that grouping amongst friends along the socially constructed categories of “race” is where they began to think about the topic of “race”. For many children the first time that they even interacted with others that look differently than they do is in school. Therefore, how children are grouped even as friends, has profound and lasting effects on how they conceptualize “race”. Many of the participants in my research have stated that this

grouping lead to violence, racist comments and tension in many cases as well. This fact was illuminated most in the interviews that I conducted. What follow are a series of conversations that I had with four different interviewees. The sections of the conversations that I have included here are specifically when the participants began to speak about the grouping of peers in schools along “racial” lines and some of the tension that followed as a result.

*Researcher:* Would you be able to tell me about one of them?

*Mellissa:* Yeah. Teaching about it to somebody or?

*Researcher:* Just bringing up the topic.

*Mellissa:* My school there was a lot of bullying. People would get mad like “oh these white boys” or “oh these black girls” and it was just a mess. So I was just like no, not that I was the mediator, but I would clearly say, “No, you can’t be like that”.

In this excerpt, I was asking the participant if there were any ways that “race” or ethnicity were brought up in school in a non-academic fashion. The participant replied that yes, and remarked on the name calling on terms that are usually used as “racial” identifiers, “white” and “black”. The participant is also suggesting that the behavior went a little farther than just name calling by using the term, bullying.

*Researcher:* In your opinion do you think that classes on “race” and ethnicity should be given in high school?

*Nicolie:* yeah.

*Researcher:* Why?

*Nicolie:* Because high school teenagers are stupid, and they can say racist things, and it’s not a nice thing to do. They need to know the difference between being racist and being a good person. You need to not be like that.

In this section of the interview the participant was bringing up morality, and intelligence when speaking about racism. Nicolie used these reasons as justification on

why classes about “race” and ethnicity should be put into high schools, implying that providing classes on the topic would let people know how to not say racist things and hurt others feelings. I interpret this as Nicolie suggesting that racism and racist comments are a result of a lack of information and knowledge about the topic of “race”. I agree that this is a part of the problem as well.

*Researcher:* Is there any specific thing, or reason?

*Laura:* I don’t know why I didn’t think about it middle school or elementary schools when I was growing up. I guess you would just hear more terms when I got into middle school, terms of race because my whole entire life I went to a mostly white school. There weren’t many black people at all, I guess when you get into middle school is when you get more chatty and hear more remarks. I guess that was when I was more aware of ethnicity and race and stuff.

In this excerpt Laura is suggesting that the reason that she began to conceptualize “race” is because access to diversity in her middle school and people using comments based on “racial” stereotypes. Another example of how “race” is learned in the schools non-academically.

*Researcher:* Ok, additionally, did you ever touch on it outside of an academic situation, in the sense of outside a class, with teachers in the hall? Or with friends in halls, or was it ever an issue in your high school with learning...

*Kellie:* I mean there was my history teacher, my world history teacher was native American, he was 50 percent native American but he presented white. He and I had a lot of really in depth conversations about what it is to be Native American, what it meant and the different cultures that were around us. And then I remember in high school there was this big race war that I never understood between the blacks and the Hispanics at the school and they fought everyday, huge fights. Nobody talked about it, it was just like a fact of life. Every time I talked about it, or tried to talk about it everybody was like, “they fight. That’s just what they do”. So it was never like, I mean I had one teacher and we talked about being native America we didn’t talk about any other races or ethnicities.

This interview with Kellie has a lot of different things going on. First of all, she is celebrating the fact that they had a diverse history teacher that was 50% Native American so that culture would get brought up quite a bit. An important part about this is the fact that the teacher would bring up a different ethnicity was out of the ordinary. Additionally as you can see at the bottom of the comment, Native American culture was the only ‘other’ culture that he brought up. This implies that Kellie was not use to having classes about different cultures and when she did, it was because they had a teacher from that culture. There is another point about this section of Kellie’s interview that I would like to examine. The fact that she mentioned that there was a “race war” between “Blacks” and “Hispanics”. The reason that this is relevant is because, first of all, they are talking about violence along the socially constructed lines that are in many ways created in the school system and second, the participant believes that “Hispanics” and “Blacks” are “races” and that the fact that they fight is in their nature. When Kellie said that she tried to talk about it and people said “that is just what they do” is method in which the majority of people conceptualize “race”.

As we can see from these interactions, the way that students group themselves and as I would argue, are grouped, often times coincide with the categories provided by the census. In another response when a junior sociology major was asked: do the categories provided by the census describe him adequately she said no, “I am of Hispanic descent, so when it only gives me the option to check white or black for my “race” it bothers me. It also doesn’t make sense that I have to check white for my “race” but then for my nationality I have to choose what I really am.” This is an interesting comment because



according to various participants, Hispanic, the category that she is looking for, is another common group in the school system that tends to group together.

We are producing divisions within our schools by leaving our children to attempt to figure out a very complex concept rooted in historic power struggles and not addressing the topic of “race” in an academic fashion using the most up to date, accurate information that we have at our disposal. This is an injustice to our society. The school system however is not the only place where children begin to conceptualize “race” however. The next section will address how home life also contributes to “racial” conceptualization.

### **Where The Concept of “Race” Was Acquired (Home)**

*Question #22.* How old were you when you first started to think about “race”/ethnicity?

*Junior sociology major* “I began to think about how I am (race) early maybe like elementary at age 10. I thought I was brown (dark brown) until an uncle told me I was black.”

*Senior biomedical science major* “As a child. Probably about 6-10yrs old. I grew up in a very “country” family. Words such as Nigger and Spic, Mexican etc. were used often growing up.”

This section of chapter four is dedicated to explaining the results of my data about the influence that the home has on “racial” conceptualization. In this section the ‘home’ refers to the family, friends and neighborhood of the participants. The section is broken into two separate parts, the first detailing the role of the home and family on influencing the “racial” conceptualization of the participants. The second part explores the influence that the participant’s friends and neighborhood had on their “racial” conceptualization. The quantitative data that I collected pointed me in this direction of exploration, then

after further examination of the qualitative data I realized the immense influence that the home actually does have on the participant's process of "racial" conceptualization.

### Home/Family

Statistically the home played a large role in how the participants in my research were influenced on how they see themselves and others "racially" and ethnically. Question number five on the questionnaires that I administered asked to what extent the home played in how they see themselves ethnically/"racially"? The answer options were available in Likert-Scale form ranging from: very little extent, little extent, some extent, great extent, to very great extent. 70.8% of the respondent answered that the home had influenced how they see themselves at least to a great extent, with 49.25 answering that they were influenced to a very great extent. Question six asked the same except instead of asking to what extent the home influenced how they see themselves, question six asked, to what extent did the home influence how they see others. 53.4% of the respondents answered that their home influenced them to at least a great extent, with 75% saying that they were influenced to at least some extent. These numbers seemed relevant after I compared them with the responses to question eight on the questionnaire, which asked: How often have you had conversations about "race"/ethnicity with your family? The answer options were again in Likert-Scale form and ranged from: never, almost never, sometimes, often and very often. Only 12.3% of the respondent answered that they have conversations with their family on this topic very often, with another 25.4 answering that they had conversations about "race"/ethnicity often. Therefore a large percentage of the respondent said that they were influenced by their homes but far fewer actually had conversations about "race" and ethnicity. Additionally some of the conversations that the

participants did have with their family and shared with me, about “race” were confusing at best, and in many instances were misleading and down right racist. This leads me to believe that, like in the school system, many children are being left to figure things out about the topic of “race” by themselves, not based off of science and or research of some kind but, more inferences and hear say. Many of these interactions that the participants told me about having with family lead to more confusion, questions and mis-information than before they had them. This hypothesis is exemplified in the quantitative data. What follows is a series of different excerpts of the interviews I conducted that are relevant to how the home and family influenced “racial” conceptualization.

*Researcher:* who is the person that most influenced your thoughts about race and ethnicity? In general, just even just concerning yourself, but in general.

*Mellissa:* My mom. She would always say, “you are Jamaican, you are not black American and we act differently.” I was like, what are you talking about? On tests and things it ask what are you; black American. I would put black American if they didn’t have Jamaican, so it’s like uh.. So she taught me about that.

Here Mellissa is commenting on how her mother differentiates between “Black” or “African American”, and Jamaican. This is an important topic that comes up quite a bit and was discussed at the beginning of this chapter dealing with the inconsistency of the definition of what “race” is. Sometimes it is considered a color, sometimes a nationality, and, in this case both Jamaican and African American have a specific way that they are supposed to act. The relevance here however is the conflict between what the mom is saying and what Mellissa had learned through standardized tests at school. The inconsistency is evident.

*Researcher:* Right on. How often, if you have, how often have you had conversations about race and ethnicity with your family?

*Nicolie:* I'd ask my parents. My dad sometimes would be an asshole about; like I was home a couple weeks ago and he called someone a dot head. I screamed at him, cuz it was a taxi driver. I was like, "dad what the hell are you saying?" Taxi drivers can be whatever, it's racist. Don't say stuff like that, I yell at him for it all the time.

Once again here Nicolie has a certain set of beliefs about the topic of "race", those beliefs are not reflected at home. There is an inconsistency there. Because there is such a large percentage of the participants that said their conceptualization of "race" is influenced by their home, I cant help but assume that the types of view that Nicolie's father shares in this excerpt has, at least, subconsciously influenced her. For example, the fact that the term "dot head" was considered by the participant to be based on "race" even though, assumingly, the red dot that they were referring to has to do with religion. Therefore, even someone that seems to be liberal, open-minded, and at least fairly educated in her views as Nicolie is still thinks that "race" has to do with religion. This type of interaction deepens confusion and misunderstanding.

*Researcher:* Have you ever had conversations about race and ethnicity with your family?

*Katie:* Yes

*Researcher:* And how was the topic addressed?

*Katie:* This is gunna be funny, but I always had a dream to marry a black person. This is gunna be really racist, this is really bad. My grandma was like, "You can't because you are Arab", and because you know pretty much whatever your culture they want you to marry inside your culture, or inside your race, or inside your ethnicity. So my grandma was like, "you're crazy. No black person will ever marry you" like "you're crazy". So it always made me laugh, that conversation, so I was like that goes down the drain. So that was one conversation that I had with my grandma and then you know me and my dad always had talks, because we lived in the ghetto and they were always Spanish people, and black people, and then I didn't know Arabs until I went to (school's name) and then we started talking about Arabs as well.

This piece of conversation is very interesting to me. The exchange is, in my opinion, not racist, but there are some serious issues. The first is the fact that Arab and Black are both considered “races”. The term Arab, in most instances, is based on language. The term Black can have many meanings as well, from skin color to a certain place in society to even a way to behave. Because Katie was speaking with her grandmother she takes this all to mean “race”. Later in the conversation when recalling a conversation with her father, the participant uses the term “Spanish” and “Black” referring to “races”.

The home and Family do play a large role in influencing “racial” conceptualization. I am not claiming that the influence is bad or good, that’s not the point of this research. What I do claim is that the information that children get for the most part is just as inconsistent and mis-informed as the options for “race” that are available on the census, standardized tests, and American society in general. On open-ended question twenty-four on the questionnaire I asked if the participants found addressing the topic of “race” and ethnicity useful, a sophomore nursing major answered yes and that:

“Some of the people I know are very closed minded and listen to everything that parents tell them. Like they believed that only minorities were lower income and uneducated and that the only way they could ever become wealthy was through a music career. We had an argument and we came to the conclusion that people become what they want to become, no matter the race.”

Here, once again, what children are being taught at home does not correlate what they confront outside of the home. I am not necessarily addressing the content of the information that children get at home, even though there is much to be said about that as

well, the point that I am making is the amount of influence that the home has on “racial” conceptualization. The content of the information seems to reflect the same inconsistency as found in most places outside of the home as well. Having conversations with friends and other people in the neighborhood also has a great influence on “racial” conceptualization according to my data.

### Friends

Once again, here, I used the results of the quantitative data to identify patterns and trends. Question five on the questionnaire asked: To what extent do your friends influence how you see yourself ethnically/“racially”? The available answers were in Likert-Scale form and were as follows: very little extent, little extent, some extent, great extent, and very great extent. 73.7% of the participants said that their friend influenced how they see themselves ethnically/“racially” to at least some extent. Furthermore, when asked about how their friends influenced how they see others ethnically/“racially”, 81% said to at least some extent. After seeing this trend I began to explore the qualitative data results and found that they strengthened the quantitative results. As a sophomore nursing major answered when she was asked if she felt that addressing the topic of “race” and ethnicity is useful, on the questionnaire she answered, “If people are uneducated about other ethnicities they are lead to believe whatever they learn from their parents or friends and not actually real facts.” Once again here is a student wishing that people had access to information on “race” and ethnicity in an academic fashion as to not have to rely on his family and peers for what he terms as “not actually real facts”. Below is an excerpt from my interview with Mellissa. In this section I had asked her where the first place that she began to identify her self and others.

*Researcher:* Right on. So where was the first place that you began to identify yourself in these terms? Also at home?

*Mellissa:* No, at my friend's house. After I learned that I'm like ok, my best friend was white, so I'd be like we are different. I would teach her about my things, she would teach me about her ethnicity at school, so that was at about 7.

As you can see Mellissa said that she began to conceptualize "race" at her friends house. Now while the experience that she describes is, in my opinion, a positive one, this is not always the case. Actually, according to my data and the literature on the topic, Mellissa's case is the exception. More often intolerance and misconceptions are taught in the streets and at home and in the schools system, in a non-academic fashion. Therefore the relevance of this excerpt to my research is not exactly the content of what's being taught, rather where it's being taught and whom it is influencing. The next section explores the influence that a person's neighborhood has on their conceptualization of "race". A senior psychology major most eloquently describe the transition when he was asked on question twenty-four of the questionnaire: Where was the first place you began to feel an ethnic/ "racial" identity? He answered, " It was made aware to me by my family, but it was actually the local corner store. It was owned by poles, but eventually catered to Hispanics with the changing neighborhoods."

#### Neighborhoods

*Question 22* How old were you when you first started to think about "race"/ethnicity?

*Junior anthropology major* "race is something that has been kind of thrown at people where I grew from, a very young age. The area where I'm from is

predominantly white so you find many racist types around you from a young age.”

### Neighborhoods

The quantitative data did not point to a participant’s neighborhood as being a large influence on children’s “racial” conceptualization. After analyzing the qualitative data however, I found patterns that suggest otherwise. Many of the answers to the open-ended questions on the questionnaire had inferences on how the neighborhood that they grew up in had an influence on their “racial” conceptualization. Additionally, the interviews with Mellissa and Kellie had some very interesting things surface, relative to their neighborhoods influence on how they conceptualize “race” as well. Below are the excerpts of interviews both of them that are relevant.

*Researcher:* how would you describe, and you touched on this as well, but how would you describe the diversity of the neighborhood that you grew up in?

*Mellissa:* well I moved here for high school, that was almost all black, well half and half, but where I was born and raised that was almost all white.

*Researcher:* So big difference huh?

*Mellissa:* Huge difference. It was like ok, new things.

*Researcher:* Back to the neighborhood. Do you think it is beneficial or detrimental to live in a diverse neighborhood versus a non-diverse neighborhood?

*Mellissa:* Its important, I think it’s better to grow up in a diverse neighborhood, or go to a diverse school because you can learn things if you are just stuck in one view of things. You don’t meet different people, you don’t know different backgrounds; you’ll never learn.

In this exchange, Mellissa is explaining how it is a good thing to live in a diverse neighborhood and attend a diverse school. What is more relevant to this section however is the emphasis that she put on the amount of influence that the neighborhood has on the “racial” conceptualization of the participant. Mellissa conveys this sentiment by first



saying that, “its important, I think its better to grow up in a diverse neighborhood”, and secondly she finishes by stating that without doing so, “you’ll never learn”. I interpret this to mean that Mellissa knows that she will not be getting access to this type of information in other places and therefore the diversity of the neighborhood is the place to conceptualize “race” for better or worse. This sentiment was shared by a sophomore nursing major when he was asked: Where was the first place you began to feel an ethnic/“racial” identity? He responded with, “In my neighborhood when kids of all “races” played together.” Again the participant responds to a question about “racial” identity acquisition by referring to his neighborhood as the main influence. The next excerpt from my interview with Kellie that I provide below started with me asking about the diversity of her neighborhood that she grew up in. The conversation quickly moved in another direction when I asked if growing up in diverse neighborhoods was beneficial or detrimental.

*Researcher:* So we kinda already touched on this actual question. How would you describe the “racial” or ethnic diversity of the neighborhood that you grew up in?

*Kellie:* It was, I mean there were people of every nationality that you could think of, we had a neighbor who had just moved to America from Africa. We had, I had a lot of black friends. We had a lot of white people that were poor white people. We had a lot of Hispanics Puerto Ricans and Cubans. There was just, if somebody took a picture of our neighborhood they would have a greeting card for America’s melting pot.

*Researcher:* Did you find that beneficial at all? Detrimental or beneficial at all?

*Kellie:* Yeah, I mean for me it was beneficial, because I got exposed to a lot of different cultures early on. I mean, a there a lot of things that people come to college that they don’t know about and its kind of a culture shock because there are people of every race and ethnicity around you and if you’ve never been in contact with them, than you don’t exactly know what to do or how to like, respect them. Or how to just take them. So I think it was really beneficial for me to get that exposure.

Here Kellie is asked about the “racial” or ethnic diversity of the neighborhood that she grew up in. She answers by saying that there were many nationalities represented in her neighborhood and starts to list them by saying that someone moved there from Africa and the saying that she had a lot of “black” friends, essentially referring to being “black” as a nationality. Later on in the conversation, after I asked her if she felt that growing up in a diverse neighborhood was beneficial or detrimental, she said that it was beneficial because it prepared her for the “culture shock” that many people experience when they go to college. Additionally she states that without growing up in a diverse neighborhood, children do not “know what to do or how to like, respect them. Or just take them”. Here she is alluding to the fact that she doesn’t believe that children will learn about “race” and ethnicity in any other fashion besides growing up in a diverse neighborhood, not at home and not at school. I feel that people’s neighborhoods that they grew up in have a profound affect on their “racial” conceptualization and to understand that, and its implications will better prepare us as educators on how to deal with diverse points of view on “race” and ethnicity. As a sophomore biomedical science major stated when asked on the questionnaire if she felt that addressing the topic of “race”; and ethnicity in an academic fashion was useful, she said yes, because, “It opens my eyes to diversity. My neighborhood and city that I lived in was not very diverse at all so talking about “race” made me less ignorant.” Where “racial” conceptualization has taken place is a complex issue. I have only touched on a couple of different places, based on the results of my data and corresponding literature on the topic. The next section of this chapter addresses when the participants began to conceptualize “race”.

## **When The Concept of “Race” Was Acquired**

When people begin “racial” conceptualization is of great interest to me. My research question included both where and when “racial” conceptualization begins because when we only look at where, it leaves that picture incomplete. For example, according to my data, schools have a great influence on how people conceptualize “race”. The next question is when; in school do people begin so that efforts can be made to address the issue. Therefore I have asked questions about when the participant felt they began to conceptualize “race” in both the questionnaires and the interviews that I administered. This section is dedicated to explaining the results.

On question 22 of the questionnaire I asked: How old were you when you first started to think about “race”/ethnicity? Additionally question 23 asked: How old were you when you first started to identify yourself “racially”/ethnically? The results were stunning. Something important to remember while reading the results of this analysis is that these questions were analyzed and coded inductively. The results for question twenty-four the most frequent answer was at 45.3% that answered that elementary school/1-10 years old was when they began to think about “race” and ethnicity. The percentages dropped the older the responses were. 29.2% of the participant said that middle school/11-15 years old, is when they began to think about this topic and only 6.8% answered high school/16-20 years old. The only other response that was statistically relevant (>4.%) was the 4.7% that answered that they were “very young”. The responses for question twenty-three had the same pattern: 39.4% of the respondent said elementary school/1-10 years old, 27.5% said middle school/11-15 years old, 6.3% said high

school/16-20 years old, and again 4.7% answered that they were “very young”. The qualitative analysis of my data shares the same trend that emerged from the analysis above. When a freshman mass communications major was asked when she first started to think about “race” and ethnicity she answered, “When I was a young child because I noticed things were different for me than other students of different “races”, and after a while I wondered in my skin color was the reason”. A freshman chemistry major answered the same question by stating, “I think it was when I started kindergarten at the age of five. I didn’t understand why some boys and girls had different/darker colored skin than me”. These answers were not the only ones that correlated to the trends above, rather just a small sample of answers that were saying the same thing, children are conceptualizing “race” at a very young age and often time is school.

Another question that I asked in the interviews and questionnaires asked if the participants thought that classes on “race” and ethnicity should be offered in school, and, if so, at what age. 76.3% of the participants that filled out the questionnaires said that classes on “race” and ethnicity should be offered in school, and all six of the interviewees said that classes should be offered. Of the participants that answered that there should be classes offered in school on the questionnaires, 46.2% said that they should be offered in elementary or middle school. Some of the responses to the same question on the interviews are found below. Each excerpt is a part of the interviews that I found particularly compelling.

*Researcher:* what grade do you think these types of issues should be addressed in, what grade should it start in? I’m not talking about over the hill deep

right away but at what age group do you think it should start being addressed?

*Christy:* it's a really difficult question because I remember my health teacher; she asked what age do you start talking to your kids about sex and stuff like that. Even if you do teach it to them early are they going to pay attention or are they going to know what it means. I think it should start at a young age. You don't want to wait until high school, I don't even think my middle school or elementary schools had it, but by middle school at least. You don't want to start it out in kindergarten or anything. I don't think they would remember too much.

The significance of this inquiry is the fact that Christy is suggesting that classes be put into school "at least by middle school". Furthermore she is equating teaching sex with teaching "race" as a taboo topic, even though people do not have the choice of what supposed "race" to be as most people do have the choice of whether or not have sex.

*Researcher:* what grade would you say that they should be introduced at?

*Mellissa:* Like a basic class.

*Researcher:* or even, for example a piece of social studies, or a piece of biology. What age do you think that this topic should be addressed at?

*Mellissa:* At the very least 8<sup>th</sup> grade. I don't know how old you are, 13, 12, about that because then you are going to go into high school and what? Are you not going to have any knowledge of other people, of other backgrounds? That should start early.

In this exchange Mellissa says that "they should start early" as a method of preparing student that are going to go to high school. This statement tells me that Mellissa believes that the student will not get this type of education from other places.

*Researcher:* So that being considered, do you think classes on race and ethnicity should be offered in high schools?

*Kellie:* Yeah I mean on the same level that I think classes on sexuality should be taught, so should classes on race and class.

*Researcher:* Why?

*Kellie:* Because I think that if you are going to be out in the real world you should know what you are about to be faced with. Because if you come from, stereotypically speaking, you are a white kid coming to a college that is ethnically diverse, with programs that bring students

from other countries here, you are gunna lose it because there's so many different things that you have never been faced with at your high school. And then there are things like class in college that teach race and class and it gets a little depressing if it you know shocks you. It's a little overwhelming.

*Researcher:* So that being said, realizing that you think that we should offer, what grade do you think that that type of class or these types of issues should be addressed? Like starting in what grade.

*Kellie:* I think, when you can actually really comprehend it and you can understand it. Like freshmen year in high school, or the last year in middle school. Just because I don't think that children should be exposed to that, I think they should be able to form bonds without that. But I think that when it really becomes an issue and when you are really starting to notice it and that's between like middle school and high school, so sometime in those grades; 13 or 14, coming into your teens.

This conversation was the most intriguing to me because Kellie seemed to be the most "liberal", in my interactions with her, but at the same time she is still comparing classes on "race" to sex education and is suggesting that they should start in high school. The reoccurring theme that classes on "race" and ethnicity would be integral to preparing students for diverse situations is also very interesting because it shows that Kellie recognized that classes could be a great way to get access to otherwise unobtainable information.

Based on my research, it is clear that children are conceptualizing "race" at a very young age through often times inadequate, inconsistent and unreliable venues. Schools, the home and neighborhoods are all influencing our children on how to conceptualize "race" without any science or history behind it for the most part. This is outrageous, but what do we do about it? That will be the focus of the next chapter.

The fifth and final chapter is the conclusion. In this chapter, I start by detailing my recommendations on future research needed on the topic of the acquisition of “race” conceptualization. I then share my thoughts and conclusions about where social science should go from here and how my research contributes to that path forward. I conclude with suggestions about what society and, more specifically, educational institutions should do to address the problem that I identify in my research.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS**

### **Future Research**

Much future research is need on this topic. As I have stated previously, my research was exploratory. I feel that the next first step for future research would be to contact the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) and propose research, similar to the research that I have conducted, that incorporates all major universities in the state. There will need to be an agreement with each university to have access to introductory classes in all of the majors on campus in order to target freshman from a diverse array of interests. This is extremely important because freshman have just left the K-12 school system in most cases and therefore remember their “racial” conceptualization process better because, generally speaking, it has happened more recently. Furthermore, by having the universities complete cooperation it will be easier to access a more diverse array of introductory classes to have the major of the student be used as another comparative variable. This way, if the results are similar to mine, a pathway forward to justify the introduction of curricula on human diversity into K-12 schools would be more attainable.

The second step of future research that I think is necessary is the introduction of anthropologically inspired classes or courses on human diversity. This could happen by inserting human diversity modules into biology, history and social studies classes or by simply offering anthropology courses in the K-12 schools. These courses should first be



introduced to pilot schools and then, depending on the results, be introduced larger scale. The grades that this introduction of human diversity courses would be determined by a consensus of the literature on the topic and, most importantly, by the results of the expanded project mentioned above. Anthropology is uniquely suited for this task and should be at the forefront on a fight for accurate knowledge on human diversity and against racism in general.

### **Recommendations and Conclusions**

According to my data the sites at which the majority of influence on “racial” conceptualization occurs are what I have termed, the home, and schools. This happens in a variety of ways and ages, depending on the person and their surroundings in which they live. Anthropologists have historically been out in front of the push against racism and for educating the masses on this topic of “race” and its societal implications. Unfortunately this push was quelled to a large extent, in the 1960’s with a shift of references away from anthropology and towards social psychology. This shift took the attention off of the systemic influences of “racial” conceptualization, and has focused on the individual. This is detrimental to the cause of explaining human diversity to the masses because many of the reasons for the misconceptions on human diversity are systemic. We, as anthropologists, need to be at the forefront of this push, in order to make information available and accessible to people, on the topic of human diversity. We should follow in the footsteps of Franz Boas, and his students in the first half of the twentieth century. If we are not actively spreading the knowledge that so many anthropologists have worked so hard to obtain, then why obtain it in the first place. Sharing academic knowledge with other academics does have it place. I believe however,

that it is our responsibility, as students of humanity, to make the knowledge that we obtain about humans available and accessible to humans. That is the reason that I came to anthropology and the reason why I will continue to study anthropology.

There are many methods in which anthropologists can make our knowledge on human diversity accessible to the public. After locating specific points where “racial” conceptualization takes place, we now have the luxury of knowing where to disseminate information. The schools and the home are the main two places in which “racial” conceptualization occur. We do not have the ability, or the right, to tell people how to teach this topic in their homes. There are two methods that I believe we can disseminate information on human genetic diversity to the public in order to reach the homes however. First, free, adult education courses on human diversity should be made available to any parents that would like to participate. Secondly, anthropologists should design pamphlets with information about human diversity on them and make them available through every avenue we possibly can. Newspapers and mailing lists, doctor’s offices and television are just some of the avenues that should all be used when possible to disseminate this information. Additionally, we can gain access to the public school system. The introduction of curricula on the topic of human diversity should be the number one priority for any anthropologist interested in the topic of “race”. There is a rift in the anthropological community on whether or not we should be activists. I posit that I am and activist first and that is why I decided to study anthropology. The father of American anthropology was an activist and many others have actively participated in disseminating knowledge and aiding in the plight of disenfranchised peoples. Addressing human genetic diversity should be another cause in which anthropologist should rally

around. We have the information, we have the science but do we have the drive and intent on making the most up to date information available to the public? I am not suggesting that just by making information about human diversity available will squash racism. I believe that making information about human diversity available to the public will start a public dialogue on the topic and that an educated society will be able to figure out where we want to go from there. As of right now many people feel as though they cannot, or are not supposed to talk about the topic of “race”, even though it affects so many aspects of American life. This dialogue is necessary and cannot be had if access to quality information on the topic is only found in academic journals and university classes. That has to change and we, as anthropologists, need to be the vehicles of that change.

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## **Appendices**

## Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Are you Male or Female? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your major? \_\_\_\_\_

What year student are you at USF? (Please circle one) a. freshman b. sophomore c. junior  
d. senior

What is the name of the high school you graduated from? \_\_\_\_\_

What State is that school located? \_\_\_\_\_

What City is that school located? \_\_\_\_\_

What County is that school located? \_\_\_\_\_

*I. The first two questions that will be asked are taken directly from the 2010 US census.*

1. What is your race? (Mark an X for one or more categories)

\_\_\_\_ White

\_\_\_\_ Black, African American or Negro

\_\_\_\_ American Indian or Alaskan Native (print name of enrolled or principal tribe)

\_\_\_\_ Asian Indian \_\_\_\_\_ Japanese \_\_\_\_\_ Native Hawaiian

\_\_\_\_ Chinese \_\_\_\_\_ Korean \_\_\_\_\_ Guamanian or Chamorro

\_\_\_\_ Filipino \_\_\_\_\_ Vietnamese \_\_\_\_\_ Samoan

\_\_\_\_ Other Asian (*Print race below, for example, Hmong, Lotian, Thai, Pakistani, Cambodian, and so on*) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Other Pacific Islander (*Print race below, for example, Fijian, Tongan, and so on*)

2. Are you of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin?

\_\_\_\_ No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin

\_\_\_\_ Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano

\_\_\_\_ Yes, Puerto Rican

\_\_\_\_ Yes, Cuban

\_\_\_\_ Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin

*Print origin, for example, Argentinean, Colombian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Spaniard, and so on.* \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Does the system of categorization from questions 1 and 2, represent you accurately?

\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_ N/A

*Question 4 is an open-ended question; answer it as completely as possible.*

4. Why do you feel that the options provided by the U.S. census to classify yourself ethnically/racially adequately or inadequately describes you?

II. In order to answer question 5 and 6 use a scale from 1 to 5 by marking an X in the category that best describes your answer.

1=very little extent 2=little extent 3=some extent 4=great extent 5=very great extent

5. To what extent did each one of these places influence how you see yourself ethnically/racially?

	1 very little Extent	2 little extent	3 some extent	4 Great extent	5 very great extent
Home					
School					
Friends					
Work					
Church					
Other					

6. To what extent did each one of these places influence how you see others ethnically/racially?

	1 very little Extent	2 little extent	3 some extent	4 Great extent	5 very great extent
Home					
School					
Friends					
Work					
Church					
Other					

7. If you marked other, in question 5, please explain.

\_\_\_\_\_

III. In order to answer questions 8 thru 13 mark an X in the box that best describes your answer.

8. How often have you had conversations about race/ethnicity with your family?

1. Never	2. Almost never	3. Sometimes	4. Often	5. Very Often

9. Would you have liked to have more or less conversations about race/ethnicity with your family?

1. Much less	2. Less	3. Same	4. More	5. Much more

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10. How often have you had conversations about your race/ethnicity with your friends?

1. Never	2. Almost never	3. Sometimes	4. Often	5. Very Often

11. Would you have liked to have more or less conversations about race/ethnicity with your Friends?

1. Much less	2. Less	3. Same	4. More	5. Much more

12. How would you describe the racial/ethnic diversity of the neighborhood that you grew up in?

1 Very Diverse	2 Diverse	3 A little diverse	4 Not Diverse

13. How would you describe the racial/ethnic diversity of your school?

1 Very Diverse	2 Diverse	3 A little diverse	4 Not Diverse

*IV. For questions 14 through 20 mark an X in the answer that most accurately answers the question.*

14. Have you ever taken classes on race/ethnicity in school? A. Yes\_\_\_\_ B. No  
\_\_\_\_\_

15. If you answered yes to the previous question, how many classes on race/ethnicity did you take? \_\_\_\_\_

16. Did you find those classes useful? A. Yes\_\_\_\_ B. No\_\_\_\_ C. N/A\_\_\_\_

17. Should classes on race/ethnicity be given in school?  
Yes\_\_\_\_ B. No\_\_\_\_ C. N/A\_\_\_\_

18. If you believe that there should be classes on race/ethnicity in school, what grade should they start?

19. Have you ever addressed the topic of race/ethnicity in a non-academic manner in your schooling experience? Yes\_\_\_\_ B. No\_\_\_\_ C. N/A\_\_\_\_

20. Did you find addressing this topic useful? A. Yes\_\_\_\_ B. No\_\_\_\_ C. N/A\_\_\_\_

*Question #21 is an open-ended question. Answer it as completely as possible.*

21. If you answered yes to the previous question, how so?

*Questions 22 through 26 are open-ended questions. Answer them as completely as possible.*

22. How old were you when you first started to think about race/ethnicity?

23. How old were you when you first started to identify yourself racially/ethnically?

24. Where was the first place you began to feel an ethnic/racial identity?

25. How do you define race?

26. How do you define ethnicity?



## Appendix 2: Interview

What is your major?

What year student are you at USF? What is the name of the high school you graduated from?

What State is that school located? \_\_\_\_\_

What City is that school located? \_\_\_\_\_

What County is that school located? \_\_\_\_\_

1. How do you define race?
2. How do you define ethnicity?
3. How do you identify yourself racially/ethnically?
4. Where was the first place that you began to think about race/ethnicity?
  - a. When/How old where you?
  - b. What happened?
  - c. Who was involved?
5. Where was the first place that you began to identify yourself ethnically/racially?
  - a. When/How old where you?
  - b. What happened?
  - c. Who was involved?
6. Who is the person that most influenced your thoughts/concept about race/ethnicity?
7. What do you think influenced your thoughts about race the most? (a person, place or location)
8. How often have you had conversations about race/ethnicity with your family?
  - a. How did your family address the topic?
  - b. If you could change anything about how your family addressed the topic, what would it be?

9. How often have you had conversations about your race/ethnicity with your friends?
- How did your friends address the topic?
  - If you could change anything about how your friends addressed the topic, what would it be?
10. How would you describe the racial/ethnic diversity of the neighborhood that you grew up in?
11. How would you describe the racial/ethnic diversity of your school?
12. Have you ever taken classes on race/ethnicity in school?
- If so, how many classes on race/ethnicity did you take?
  - Did you find those classes useful?
13. Should classes on race/ethnicity be given in school?  
Why or why not?
14. If you believe that there should be classes on race/ethnicity in school, what grade should they start?
15. Were there other ways that you addressed the topic of 'race'/ethnicity in school besides in class?
16. Did you find it useful? How so?
17. Is there anything that you would like to add?

## **Appendix 3: Questionnaire Consent**

### **Informed Consent to Participate in Research**

#### **Information to Consider Before Taking Part in this Research Study IRB #5419**

Researchers at the University of South Florida (USF) study many topics. To do this, we need the help of people who agree to take part in a research study. This form tells you about this research study.

We are asking you to take part in a research study that is called Learning Without Being Taught.

The person who is in charge of this research study is Owen Gaither. This person is called the Principal Investigator; Dr. Kathy Borman, Dr. Kevin Yelvington, and Dr. Angela Stuesse are guiding him in this research

The research will be done at the University of South Florida.

#### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study is to: Collect data for a master's thesis. I would like to find out how undergraduate students at USF identify themselves ethnically from the choices that are given in the US census. I would like to know if they feel that the choices that are given represent them correctly and where this self identity originates from more, school, personal relationships or home.

#### **Study Procedures**

If you take part in this study, you will be asked to fill out a questionnaire consisting of 26 questions that consist of 18 table and multiple-choice questions and 8 open-ended questions. Once you have completed this survey you may volunteer for an interview. Please contact me if you are interested.

#### **Benefits**

We don't know if you will get any benefits by taking part in this study. We will not pay you for the time you volunteer while being in this study.

## **Risks or Discomfort**

This research is considered to be minimal risk. That means that the risks associated with this study are the same as what you face every day. There are no known additional risks to those who take part in this study.

## **Confidentiality**

We must keep your study records as confidential as possible. The information obtained in this study will be locked in a file in office 30 in the social science department under lock and key

However, certain people may need to see your study records. By law, anyone who looks at your records must keep them completely confidential. The only people who will be allowed to see these records are:

- The research team, including the Principal Investigator, study coordinator, and all other research staff.
- Certain government and university people who need to know more about the study. For example, individuals who provide oversight on this study may need to look at your records. This is done to make sure that we are doing the study in the right way. They also need to make sure that we are protecting your rights and your safety.) These include:

We may publish what we learn from this study. If we do, we will not let anyone know your name. We will not publish anything else that would let people know who you are.

## **Voluntary Participation / Withdrawal**

You should only take part in this study if you want to volunteer. You should not feel that there is any pressure to take part in the study, to please the investigator or the research staff. You are free to participate in this research or withdraw at any time. Your decision to participate or not to participate will not affect your student status or grade.

## **Questions, concerns, or complaints**

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this study, call Owen Gaither at (323) 839-2780

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, general questions, or have complaints, concerns or issues you want to discuss with someone outside the research, call the Division of Research Integrity and Compliance of the University of South Florida at (813) 974-9343.

## **Consent to Take Part in this Research Study**

It is up to you to decide whether you want to take part in this study. Completion of the questionnaire indicates consent.

If anyone is interested in inquiring more about this subject you can contact Owen Gaither at  
(813) 384-9755 or at [owengaither64@yahoo.com](mailto:owengaither64@yahoo.com)

## **Appendix 4: Interview Consent**

### **Informed Consent to Participate in Research**

#### **Information to Consider Before Taking Part in this Research Study IRB #5419**

Researchers at the University of South Florida (USF) study many topics. To do this, we need the help of people who agree to take part in a research study. This form tells you about this research study.

We are asking you to take part in a research study that is called “Learning Without Being Taught”.

The person who is in charge of this research study is Owen Gaither. This person is called the Principal Investigator; Dr. Kathy Borman, Dr. Kevin Yelvington, and Dr. Angela Stuesse are guiding him in this research

The research will be done at the University of South Florida.

#### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study is to: Collect data for a master’s thesis. I would like to find out how undergraduate students at USF identify themselves ethnically from the choices that are given in the US census. I would like to know if they feel that the choices that are given represent them correctly and where this self identity originates from more, school, personal relationships or home. You are being asked to partake in this interview because you are a undergraduate, you have taken the survey, and you meet the requirements for my study.

#### **Study Procedures**

If you take part in this study, you will be asked to be interviewed. This should take between 30 to 60 minutes.

#### **Alternatives**

At all times you have the option to not participate and/or opt out.

#### **Compensation**

For completing this survey you will be given a ten-dollar visa gift card.

## **Benefits**

We don't know if you will get any benefits by taking part in this study. We will not pay you for the time you volunteer while being in this study.

## **Risks or Discomfort**

This research is considered to be minimal risk. That means that the risks associated with this study are the same as what you face every day. There are no known additional risks to those who take part in this study.

## **Confidentiality**

We must keep your study records as confidential as possible. The information obtained in this study will be locked in a file in office 30 in the social science department under lock and key

However, certain people may need to see your study records. By law, anyone who looks at your records must keep them completely confidential. The only people who will be allowed to see these records are:

- The research team, including the Principal Investigator, study coordinator, and all other research staff.
- Certain government and university people who need to know more about the study. For example, individuals who provide oversight on this study may need to look at your records. This is done to make sure that we are doing the study in the right way. They also need to make sure that we are protecting your rights and your safety.) These include: the Department of Health and Health Services, USF Institutional Review Board and any other offices who oversee this research.

We may publish what we learn from this study. If we do, we will not let anyone know your name. We will not publish anything else that would let people know who you are.

## **Voluntary Participation / Withdrawal**

You should only take part in this study if you want to volunteer. You should not feel that there is any pressure to take part in the study, to please the investigator or the research staff. You are free to participate in this research or withdraw at any time. Your decision to participate or not to participate will not affect your student status or grade.

Signature of Person Taking Part in Study

Date

---

Printed Name of Person Taking Part in Study

## **Statement of Person Obtaining Informed Consent**

I have carefully explained to the person taking part in the study what he or she can expect.

I hereby certify that when this person signs this form, to the best of my knowledge, he or she understands:

- What the study is about.
- What procedures/interventions/investigational drugs or devices will be used.
- What the potential benefits might be.
- What the known risks might be.

---

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent

---

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

---

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent

### **Questions, concerns, or complaints**

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this study, call

Owen Gaither at (323) 839-2780

or at [owengaither64@yahoo.com](mailto:owengaither64@yahoo.com)

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, general questions, or have complaints, concerns or issues you want to discuss with someone outside the research, call the Division of Research Integrity and Compliance of the University of South Florida at (813) 974-5638.



## Appendix 5: IRB Approval

September 21, 2011

Owen Gaither  
Anthropology

**Expedited Approval** for Initial Review IRB#: Pro00005419

Title: Learning Without Being Taught Dear Mr. Gaither :

On 9/21/2011 the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and **APPROVED** the above referenced protocol. Please note that your approval for this study will expire on September 21, 2012.

Approved Items: Protocol Document(s): [Learning Without Being Taught](#)  
8/6/2011 8:30 PM 0.01

**Consent/Assent Documents:** Name [interview consent form.pdf](#) survey consent granted a Waiver of Informed Consent Documentation (an IRB stamped consent form is not required to be used)

It was the determination of the IRB that your study qualified for expedited review which includes activities that (1) present no more than minimal risk to human subjects, and (2) involve only procedures listed in one or more of the categories outlined below. The IRB may review research through the expedited review procedure authorized by 45CFR46.110 and 21 CFR

Modified 9/21/2011 9:17 AM 0.01

Version56.110. The research proposed in this study is categorized under the following expedited review category:

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Please note, the informed consent/assent documents are valid during the period indicated by the official, IRB-Approval stamp located on the form. Valid consent must be documented on a copy of the most recently IRB-approved consent form. (For Interview Consent Form).

Your study qualifies for a waiver of the requirements for the documentation of informed consent as outlined in the federal regulations at 45CFR46.116 (d) which states that an

IRB may approve a consent procedure which does not include, or which alters, some or all of the elements of informed consent, or waive the requirements to obtain informed consent provided the IRB finds and documents that (1) the research involves no more than minimal risk to the subjects; (2) the waiver or alteration will not adversely affect the rights and welfare of the subjects; (3) the research could not practicably be carried out without the waiver or alteration; and (4) whenever appropriate, the subjects will be provided with additional pertinent information after participation.

As the principal investigator of this study, it is your responsibility to conduct this study in accordance with IRB policies and procedures and as approved by the IRB. Any changes to the approved research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval by an amendment.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638. Sincerely,

John Schinka, PhD, Chairperson USF Institutional Review Board  
Various Menzel, CCRP USF IRB Professional Staff