Generations Apart: A Mixed Methods Study of Black Women’s Attitudes About Race and Social Activism

Carolyn D. Love

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GENERATIONS APART: A MIXED METHODS STUDY OF BLACK WOMEN'S ATTITUDES ABOUT RACE AND SOCIAL ACTIVISM

CAROLYN D. LOVE

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Ph.D. in Leadership and Change Program

of Antioch University

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of the requirement for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

February, 2013
This is to certify that the Dissertation entitled:

GENERATIONS APART: A MIXED-METHODS STUDY OF BLACK WOMEN’S ATTITUDES ABOUT RACE AND SOCIAL ACTIVISM

prepared by

Carolyn D. Love

is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Leadership and Change.

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The Ph.D. program at Antioch is exceptional in that the faculty has a genuine interest in the success of each student. This interest is comprehensive in nature and extends beyond the academic well-being of students. Duke Ellington, one of the great jazz artists of the 20th century, often said of artists who were so talented that words could not fully capture their genius: they were “beyond category.” My dissertation committee is “beyond category!”
Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation to the social justice warriors in my life—my loving parents James Ross and Catherine Wright, and my beloved husband David.
Abstract

Since the beginning of slavery in the United States, Black women have been actively involved in the creation and formation of Black civil society. The abolitionist, Black women’s club, and civil rights movements challenged White supremacy and created institutions that fought for political, social, and economic justice. Historically, Black women have engaged in the struggle for group survival while at the same time fighting for institutional transformation to eliminate or change discriminatory policies, practices, and procedures. With each passing generation, Black women have led efforts of resistance against racial discrimination, gender bias, and class exploitation. However, with each passing generation, the concept and meaning of race has changed. Immigration, colorblind ideology, post-racial and post-civil rights attitudes influence the meaning and relevance of race. While some Black women have moved into the middle class and beyond, a majority of Black women remain poor and the objects of both racial and gender discrimination. The purpose of this study is to examine how race influences the activities of Black women in search of political, social, and economic justice. The research design was an exploratory sequential mixed-methods study that investigated the generation differences in racial attitudes and social justice involvement among Black women. The study consisted of a total of 183 participants and included six personal interviews, four focus groups, and a survey. Twenty African American women participated in the personal interviews and focus groups. In total, 163 African American women participated in the survey. An analysis of the qualitative data indicated that regardless of the generation cohort, the African American women participating in this study perceive race as a relevant issue and an issue that influences the life chances of African Americans in general. Additionally, there is a perception amongst the participants that there is a crisis of follow-ship rather than a crisis of leadership in the African American
community. An analysis of the quantitative data indicated that gendered racial stereotyping of African American women remains a problem within the African American community and the broader society. While African American women continue to play a critical role in social justice initiatives, gendered racial stereotyping influences the perception of their leadership. This document is accompanied by one video file (MP4) that contains the author’s introduction to the dissertation and 11 audio files (MP3s) that contain selected responses from personal interview and focus group participants. Follow this link to connect to the author’s introduction. The electronic version of the Dissertation is accessible in the open-access Ohiolink ETD Center http://etd.ohiolink.edu.
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Chapter I: Introduction

Overview

“Only the Black Woman can say when and where I enter, in the quiet, undisputed dignity of my womanhood without violence and without suing or special patronage then and there the whole Negro race enters with me” (Cooper, 1969, p. 31).

The words of Anna Julia Cooper resonated throughout the 20th century and served as foundational thinking for the National Association of Colored Women (NACW), the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), and other organizations formed to provide for the needs of African Americans who were poor, elderly, or orphaned. The motto for the NACW was “lifting as we climb.” Their motto reflected the idea that the Black race could climb no higher than its women (Cash, 2001; Nelson, 2003; White, 1999). It was believed that with the liberation of Black women comes the liberation of the race. During slavery, reconstruction, and Jim Crow, Black women experienced gendered racism under systems that were racially and sexually oppressive. Gendered racism, a term coined by Essed (1991), refers to the “racial oppression of Black women that is influenced by narrow and biased views of gender roles” (p. 31). Anna Julia Cooper (1969) understood the unique position of Black women when she argued:

The colored woman of to-day occupies, one may say, a unique position in this country. In a period of itself transitional and unsettled, her status seems one of the least ascertainable and definitive of all the forces which make for our civilization. She is confronted by both a woman question and a race problem. (p. 134)

History is replete with African American women who took a stance against racial and gender oppression. Women such as Verina Morton-Jones, Victoria Earle Matthews, and Nannie Helen Burroughs recognized that their fate was linked to that of the entire Black community (Cash, 2001; Nelson, 2003; White, 1999). The objective of Black uplift was “to strive for social equality, economic development, and political prominence in the larger society” (Nelson, 2003,
There was a certain expectancy that Black women would work for the Black community in its fight against racial oppression (Cash, 2001). Through the club movement, Black women were at the forefront of social activism.

In addition to women previously named, Maria W. Stewart, Sojourner Truth, and Harriet Tubman were among the many women of their generation advocating for racial justice and gender equality. Mae Bertha Carter, Flonzie Goodloe Brown-Wright, and June Elizabeth Johnson were community activists in the 1960s fighting against racial oppression in Mississippi (Sadoff, Sadoff, & Lipson, 2002). These women exemplify how change is made at the local level by local leaders. While leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and Stokley Carmichael were fighting for social justice at the national level, it was ordinary Black women, along with men, who put their lives on the line and created significant change in their local communities.

Bunche (2005) argued that “community and leadership are local phenomena” (p. 2). During the civil rights movement, it was local leaders, and in particular Black women, who provided an infrastructure for national leaders to gain access to local grassroots support (McGuire, 2010). For example, Jo Ann Robinson, a member of the Women’s Political Council in Alabama, was a key architect of the Montgomery bus boycott in addition to being the chief negotiator with the city and bus company and providing rides to people in need of transportation (McGuire, 2010). The Montgomery bus boycott was a clear victory for African Americans because it overturned the 1896 Supreme Court decision, *Plessey v. Ferguson*, which codified Jim Crow practices. However, the Montgomery bus boycott was also a victory for Black women who were the primary recipients of the hostile treatment by Montgomery bus drivers who
frequently referred to them as “Black bitches, Black heifers, ugly Black apes, and whores” (McGuire, 2010, p. 72).

Given the social milieu of the Jim Crow era, Black women who were involved in social justice issues were considered race women. The term race woman and race man signified the approval of leaders in the Black community (Cash, 2001). Race women and men actively protested the egregious policies and practices of the time. As recently as the 1990s, “few people would argue that Black leaders represent his or her race” (Nelson, 2003, p. xiv). Embedded in the connotation of race woman and race man is the emphasis on race as opposed to gender oppression. Although Black women experienced oppression because of their race and gender, they were socialized to believe that race took precedence over gender. hooks (1981) argued that fighting for racial equality was only natural in light of the emergence of Jim Crow laws which reversed the gains made during reconstruction. However, at one point in history, African American women fought to eliminate both gender and racial oppression simultaneously.

Maria Stewart and Anna Julia Cooper understood the power dynamic that lay at the intersection of multiple oppressions. Cash (2001) argued that the genesis of Black feminism dates back to the 1830s. Clubwomen were aware of the fact that gender and race were interlocking identities (Cash, 2001). However, race became more salient for the subsequent generations of Black women activists. hooks (1981) argued that the women of the 19th century were cognizant of the need to “fight for both racial equality and liberation from a sexist social order” (p. 2). In line with the theme of racial uplift, hooks (1981) claimed that 19th century Black women believed that “any improvement in the social status of Black women would benefit all Black people” (p. 2).
For the purposes of this study, the terms African American and Black woman are used interchangeably unless the term African American is used when discussing African Americans in general. Additionally, for the purpose of this study the phrase Black woman is used exclusively to identify a woman who is an off-spring of Black parents born in the United States. An assumption was made that an African American woman with parents born in the U.S. may have a historical perspective about racism and discrimination in the United States. The terms America and United States are used interchangeably.

**Research Purpose and Question**

The purpose of this study was to examine how race influenced the social justice activities of African American women from multiple generations. Using an exploratory sequential mixed-methods design, I investigated the generation differences in racial attitudes and attitudes about leading social justice initiatives among Black women. African American women have played a critical role in the formation of Black civil society organizations and in leading social change. Legalized segregation created housing, educational, religious, and other social enclaves that were predominately Black. Relegating African Americans to rural areas in the South and urban ghettos in the North led to the creation and solidification of a unique ethos in Black civil society “regarding language, family structure, religion, and community politics” (Collins, 2009a, p. 13). A blend of African-derived ideas and being confined in close proximity to one another fueled the formation of Black oppositional knowledge to resist injustice (Collins, 2009a). African American women played an important role in constructing and reconstructing oppositional knowledge by developing their own ideas about what it means to be an African American woman in America. Black women developed skills to lead social change efforts by working individually and collectively in Black civil society organizations and institutions created by
African Americans to address issues of racial discrimination. Kilson (2005) characterized Black civil society agencies as women’s clubs, mutual aid societies, clergy associations, trade unions, professional organizations, intellectual groups, and other such agencies interested in advancing the cause of African Americans.

One consistent theme holds true when reflecting on Black leadership during the 19th century, leaders of the time were extremely race conscious (Nelson, 2003). African American leaders had a strong sense of responsibility to the race (Cash, 2001; Nelson, 2003; White, 1999). The commitment to the race emanates from the fact that, for African Americans, racism had no boundaries. African Americans who were poor were treated in the same way as the Black elite. Under Jim Crow legislation, all African Americans were treated equally in the sense that none were equal to Whites.

Myrdal (1944) argued that Black leadership adjusts to what is going on in society. Society has changed dramatically since Myrdal completed his investigation of the American Negro. African Americans have secured the right to vote. African Americans can live anywhere they choose, if they can afford the housing. Public school systems have been integrated and an African American has been elected President of the United States. According to conservative thinkers, race is no longer a significant problem in American society (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 1997). While this characterization of race relations in the U.S. is unsubstantiated, it is a prevailing thought among some conservative scholars like D’Souza (1995), who argued that racism cannot explain the contemporary hardships of African Americans. Within this frame of thinking, racism alone cannot explain why African Americans as a group are unable to succeed in the areas of education, employment, small business, and the maintenance of productive, cohesive communities (D’Souza, 1995). Given the grassroots nature of Black women’s
leadership and the historical focus on race based leadership, this study explored Black women’s attitudes about race and social justice. I investigated the current attitudes Black women from three different generation groups, baby boom, Gen-X and millennial, had about race. What a person believes about race, gender, and other social determinants informs how she or he will address issues of marginalization, oppression, and discrimination. The majority of the women participating in this study were involved in social justice initiatives voluntarily or professionally. I discuss the conceptual framework for this study in chapter II. However, the research questions were framed to explore the intersection of race, gender, and generation cohort. The following research questions guided this study:

- What are the generation differences in attitudes among Black women about race?
- What are the generation differences in attitudes among Black women about gender and Black leadership?
- What are the generation differences in attitudes about social activism in the Black community?

Historically, race has been the basis for action for Black leaders (Bunche, 2005; King, 1968; Nelson, 2003). A discussion about the racial attitudes of Black women is located in chapter II. However, I provide, in this section, a historical perspective to contextualize the research questions. Bunche (2005) argued that the Black leader was not just a leader, but a minority group leader operating in a microcosm. The microcosm was the current attitudes and beliefs held about Black people. DuBois (1903) argued a similar point when discussing the need for Black people to adapt to living in two worlds, one Black and one White. DuBois introduced the concept of two-ness, being American, and being Black. Using the work of Bunche (2005) and DuBois as a guide, I formulated foreshadowing questions to further ground the study.
• What are the contemporary attitudes Black women have about race?
• How relevant is race in Black women’s leadership of social justice issues?
• How are the leadership behaviors of Black women influenced by their racial attitudes?

**Social Justice Defined**

As with most broad topics, there is not just one definition for social justice. Watt (2007) argued that social justice involves challenging the dominant ideology and advocating for change in policies, practices, and procedures that support systems of institutionalized oppression. Frey, Pearce, Pollock, Artz, and Murphy (1996) defined social justice as “the engagement with and advocacy for those in our society who are economically, socially, politically, and or culturally under resourced” (p. 110). A core tenant of social justice is the conscious desire to change embedded systems and structures that privilege some and marginalize others. This implies a level of critical consciousness about the social determinants that marginalize people. Critical consciousness is the ability to evaluate and take action against the social, political, and economic elements of oppression in society (Freire, 1995). Freire (1995) further claimed that the “awakening of critical consciousness leads the way to the expression of social discontents precisely because these discontents are real components of an oppressive situation” (p. 18).

The harsh conditions of slavery and Jim Crow shaped the racial consciousness of Black leaders of the era. Leaders like Fannie Lou Hamer, Vice Chair of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, exemplify going beyond raising consciousness about the imbalance of power and oppression to taking action to create change. For the purposes of this study, I used Frey et al.’s (1996) definition of social justice that is discussed in chapter III.
The Civil Rights Movement in Colorado

The participants for this study were African American female residents of Colorado. In addition, the participants had at least one parent born in the United States to give them a historical framework that relates to the legacy of the civil rights movement to draw upon as they responded to the research questions. It is within the context of the civil rights movement and the perceived results that many Black people articulate their views about race and to social justice. Generally, Colorado is not thought of as a state with a rich civil rights legacy because the pattern of migration for African Americans from the south primarily included mid-western and northeastern states. In this section, I highlight important facts about Colorado to contextualize the geography for this study.

Isabel Wilkerson (2010) provided a beautiful account of what she termed America’s great migration in her book, The Warmth of Other Suns. Wilkerson told a story about the 6 million African Americans who left the South and moved north and west for a better life. The extent of the migration from south to west was not as great as the migration from south to north. However, African Americans did move west to escape the brutality of the Jim Crow South. In the state of Colorado, African Americans currently represent 4% of the total state population. People of Hispanic origin are the largest racial and ethnic minority population in Colorado.

Alweis (2002) told the history of the civil rights movement in Colorado in a three part documentary titled “Rebels Remembered: The Civil Rights Movement in Colorado.” What is lost in the migration story is the fact that Whites also migrated to other states from the South. When Whites migrated from the South they brought their racist views with them (Alweis, 2002). Colorado has a history of racism and oppression. Colorado was considered Klan country from the early to the mid-20th century. The Ku Klux Klan controlled the political and corporate life in
Colorado. Government officials at the state and local levels were rumored to be members of the Klan (Alweis, 2002).

Dearfield, Colorado was established as an all Black settlement in 1910 by O.T. Jackson. At its peak, the town had a school, doctor’s office, two churches, and a lunchroom. The depression had a devastating effect on the settlement and by the 1940s only 12 residents remained (Colorado Black American West Museum, 2012). However, during its 30 years as an active settlement, Dearfield provided the settlers with an alternative to the racism African Americans faced in Denver.

While Colorado has a history of racism and oppression, it also has a rich history of social activism. Black women in particular have been active in educational, economic, and political reform. After the passage of Brown v. Board of Education, Rachel B. Noel, the first African American to be elected to a public office in Denver, wrote the landmark Noel Resolution to integrate the Denver Public School system. When segregation of the school system persisted, a lawsuit was filed—Keyes v. School District No. 1 Denver, Colorado. In 1973, the Supreme Court ruled seven to one to desegregate the Denver Public School system (Alweis, 2007).

In 1995, Gloria T. Tanner was the first African American woman elected to the Colorado State Senate. Representative Wilma Webb, an African American, served in the House of Representatives during the same time. Together, Tanner and Webb introduced and passed legislation benefitting women and children. Representative Webb is best known for introducing and passing legislation to make the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. a state holiday.

Other prominent women in Denver’s history are Hattie McDaniel and Cleo Parker Robinson. McDaniel and Robinson are women in the arts who, through their craft, shaped images of Black women. Hattie McDaniel is best known in her role as “Mammy” in the 1939
movie Gone With The Wind. While her role is controversial, McDaniel’s struggle as an African American actress cannot be ignored. The Cleo Parker Dance Ensemble is an internationally recognized dance troupe that uses the arts as a means to bring awareness of the plight of people on the margins of society and build relationships between different cultures.

Individuals in Colorado also worked collectively in social justice organizations to bring about change. The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Urban League, and the Black Panther Party each had a presence in Colorado and worked to achieve social, economic, and political justice for African American residents.

**Colorado Demographics**

The 2010 Census showed that the United States population on April 1, 2010 was 308.7 million (Rastogi, Johnson, Hoeffel, & Drewery, 2011). Within the total population, 38.9 million people (13%) identified as Black alone and an additional 3.1 million people (1%) identified as Black in combination with one or more races. Combined, the Black alone and Black in combination with one or more races comprise 14% (42.0 million people) of the U.S. population (Rastogi et al., 2011). African Americans in Colorado represent .005% of the total U.S. African American population.

In contrast to eastern, mid-western, and southern states, Colorado’s African American population is relatively small. The African American population in Colorado totals 201,737 or 4.01% of the total population. People of Hispanic origin comprise nearly 21% of the state’s population. When counting all racial and ethnic groups except people of Hispanic origin, and individuals who identify as White, African Americans, American Indians/Alaska Native, and Asian/Pacific Islanders combined comprise less than 50% of the total Hispanic or Latino origin
population in Colorado. People who identified as White on the 2010 census comprise 81% of Colorado’s population. Table 1.1 illustrates the racial and ethnic demographics for the State of Colorado.

Table 1.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colorado Demographics</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race &amp; Hispanic or Latino Origin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian &amp; Alaska Native</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino (of any race)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Other Race</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Colorado Department of Local Affairs (2011). Percentages do not total 100% because people identified as more than one racial or ethnic group.

**Significance of Study**

Contrary to conservative perspectives (D’Souza, 1995; Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 1997), race remains an important social determinant in U.S. society (Gallagher, 2007; Guinier & Torres, 2007). Apollon (2011) posited that the millennial generation believes that race remains a relevant factor in America and racism exists in the criminal justice system, education, and employment. The millennial generation is resistant to being labeled post-racial (Apollon, 2011). In a follow-up study, Apollon (2012) discovered that millennials view race as a critical component of social movements.

This study examined race and social activism from a generational perspective to discover how African American women’s attitudes about race influence their activism. The baby boomers experienced Jim Crow legislation, Gen-Xers are post-Jim Crow, and the millennials are considered post-racial. Given these dramatic changes in the construct of race and racism
between the generations, this study explored what this means to African American women involved in social justice.

**Black women and community activism.** “How long shall the fair daughters of Africa be compelled to bury their minds and talents beneath a load of iron pots and kettles?” (Richardson, 1987, p. 38). Myrdal (1944), in his landmark study of the Negro problem, argued that there were two types of Negro leaders: protest and accommodating. The protest leader actively fought against slavery and Jim Crow laws. Accommodating leaders were those Black individuals selected by Whites to control the Black masses (Myrdal, 1944).

Some Black women were protest leaders who aggressively fought for political, economic, and social change. Although they had to demand to be recognized within the suffrage movement, Black women were actively engaged in the battle to gain the right to vote. Sojourner Truth forced herself onto the stage to give what ultimately became a mantra for the feminist movement. Speaking before a crowd at a women’s convention in 1852, Truth delivered her famous “Ain’t I a Woman” speech, which challenged the notion of White supremacy while at the same time challenging the myth of women being the weaker sex (hooks, 2000). Sojourner Truth’s race and gender consciousness enabled her to publically address the paradox imbedded in extending the franchise to men while denying voting rights to women. Activist Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin worked with integrated organizations to advance the causes of all women. However, she left the predominately all White organizations because of the racism that existed in the woman’s movement. Ruffin ultimately organized the Woman’s Era Club which focused on the needs of Black women (Cash, 2001; hooks, 2000).

Victoria Gray Adams and Annie Devine were among the founders of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Freedom Party, which challenged the legitimacy of the all White
Democratic Party. These women, along with other women in Mississippi, understood the power differential that existed as a result of the denial of the right to vote. Fannie Lou Hamer, Victoria Gray Adams, and Annie Devine changed the political system by calling into question the exclusionary election process which denied the Black vote (Sadoff et al., 2002). Ida B. Wells-Barnett actively protested the institution of lynching in the United States. Using print media as her weapon, Wells-Barnett exposed the horrors of lynching nationally and internationally. The list of women presented here is not intended to be all-inclusive. There were numerous women who led social justice initiatives that created change locally and nationally. Rather, the intent is to illustrate how Black women led social justice initiatives. Gilkes (1994) considered these women race women or community workers. Gilkes (1994) argued that “community work consists of all tasks contained in strategies to combat racial oppression and to strengthen African American social, economic, and political institutions in order to foster group survival, growth, and advancement” (p. 231).

Historically, racial oppression has limited the life changes of African Americans through “economic exploitation, political subordination, and cultural humiliation and destruction” (Gilkes, 1994, p. 232). Throughout the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, leadership in the Black community was driven by racial attitudes, the realities of racism, and an insatiable desire for justice.

**Generation perspective about racial attitudes.** At the turn of the 20th century, the National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs (NACW) was a powerful force in advocating for the rights of Black women. The organization, which began after the passage of laws legitimizing separate but equal policies, worked diligently to provide a social support system for poor Black women while counteracting the racist stereotypes of Black women. However, by the
1930s, the NACW was out of step with the prevailing ideologies and political thinking of the era (Cash, 2001; Giddings, 1984; White, 1999). The club movement began to focus attention on the Black middle class rather than the needs of working class African American women (White, 1999). Recruiting younger leaders was difficult because the younger generation felt the organization was out of touch with the tactics and strategies of the emerging race organizations (Cash, 2001). Sallie Wyatt Stewart, Mary McLeod Bethune’s successor as president of the NACW, continued to focus the organization on racial uplift and equality during the depression years. The underlying attitude was that, as the economic power of professional Black women increased, the Black race would progress (Cash, 2001). Membership in the NACW declined because of its archaic attitudes, its inability to attract new and younger members, and its unwillingness to invite working class women into the organization on an equal basis (Cash, 2001). The National Council of Negro Women also suffered the same fate.

Founded in 1935 by Mary McLeod Bethune, former president of NACW, the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) was to function as an umbrella organization for national organizations serving the needs of Black women. Bethune strongly believed in the necessity of a united coalition of Black women. While the organization was successful in placing women in federal positions during the Roosevelt administration, by the 1950s the younger generation characterized the organization as a relic of the past, a “do nothing organization” (White, 1999, p. 185). With the onset of the civil rights, Black power, and nationalist movements, the National Council of Negro Women elected to shift its focus from gender issues to race issues (Cash, 2001; Giddings, 1984; Nelson, 2003; White, 1999). White (1999) argued that the NCNW supported separatism and a Black women’s movement simultaneously. Stated differently, the leadership of NCNW integrated race and gender inequality into a common platform because any improvement
in race relations would automatically improve the social conditions of Black women (Cash, 2001; White, 1999).

During the early to mid-20th century, the generation differences about race stemmed from how to resolve race problems as opposed to whether or not a race problem existed. A schism existed between older and younger race leaders. An ideological difference between Mary Church Terrell and Mary McLeod Bethune existed regarding how to address the race problem. Terrell advocated for racial integration between Blacks and Whites through interracial collaboration (Cash, 2001). Conversely, the younger Bethune advocated for the economic integration of the social classes. Generally, within the women’s club movement, the younger generation wanted to take a more aggressive stance against racial oppression than the older generation. A generational difference in thinking also existed between African American men. Older race leaders like Kelly Miller supported racial integration while younger leaders like Ralph Bunche advocated for Blacks to align with working class Whites to improve their economic status (Cash, 2001). Generation differences in attitudes about social justice also existed.

**Generation perspective about social justice.** The previous section discussed the generation differences in racial attitudes among women involved in the club movement. In this section, I discuss the generation differences in attitudes about social justice.

The civil rights movement is synonymous with non-violent social action. One of the leading proponents of non-violence was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drawing on the teachings of Mohandas K. Gandhi and Howard Thurman, King crafted his brand of civil disobedience, which served as the foundational ideology for the civil rights movement (Baldwin, 2010). However, not all of the leaders of the era endorsed a non-violent approach. Stokley Carmichael, leader of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), advocated for *Black Power*. 
Carmichael introduced the notion of Black Power into the civil rights movement during the 1966 Freedom March through Mississippi (King, 1968; Payne, 2007). This added a militancy component to the civil rights movement. The concept of Black Power appeared inconsistent with the basic tenants of non-violent civil disobedience. The younger Carmichael advocated for an aggressive approach to the race problem and was resistant to including White liberals in activities like marches and demonstrations.

Ella Baker was not a proponent of non-violence. However, she approved of the use of the tactic for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (Payne, 2007). Baker was more critical of King’s leadership style than his stance on non-violence. Baker advocated for developing leadership at the bottom through community organizing rather than having a leader at the top dictating community change (Baker, 1972; Payne, 2007; Preskill & Brookfield, 2009).

Marable (2003) provided a commentary for understanding different approaches to America’s racial crisis. One approach was race-based politics, which advocated establishing separate organizations and social structures to meet the needs of African Americans. A part of the race-based approach is Black Nationalism, which advocated “relocating African Americans outside of the continental United States” (Marable, 2003, p. 53). Lastly, some Black leaders during the 18th and 19th century advocated for a state-based approach to racial discrimination (Marable, 1998). Within this model, leaders worked to integrate African Americans into the social, political, and economic systems. Marable (2003) argued that the debates over the approach to racism, so intense during the reconstruction through the civil rights era, have come to a “dead-end” (p. xv). For the next generation of leadership, what is required is a “national debate about what constitutes a truly civil society and what policy measures could we implement to guarantee full access and democratic rights to citizens who have been marginalized and
disadvantaged” (Marable, 2003, p. xv). While the approach to social justice issues varies, a consistent theme has been the acknowledgement of the existence of racism and the importance of race.

Racial attitudes and social justice. As immigration patterns continue to shift, the United States becomes increasingly diverse. One of the most significant demographic trends from the 2010 Census is the rapid growth of the Latino population (Mather, Pollard, & Jacobsen, 2011). An unofficial estimate from the U.S. Census predicts that, by 2050, America will become a majority-minority country. Stated differently, there will not be a single racial group that occupies a dominant position within the U.S. population (Blackwell, Kwoh, & Pastor, 2010). Both the Gen-X and millennial generations are more racially diverse than prior generations. I provide a brief analysis of two studies on racial attitudes. The first is a study that included only people who identified as White and the second study had both Black and White participants. A two year gap exists between the times each study was completed. However, the findings are still relevant to the discussion.

Andolina and Mayer (2003) argued that “young Whites are far less numerically dominant within their generation than are their elder counterparts” (p. 19). As a result, the changing demographic trends have created a distinct and complex racial climate in America (Andolina & Mayer, 2003, p. 19). When examining the racial attitudes of people who identified as White, it was discovered that Gen-Xers more strongly supported sending their children to integrated schools than baby boomers. However, this same population is less inclined to support government aid to minorities and is, in fact, opposed to government support for racial minorities. According to a study by Andolina and Mayer, White Gen-Xers are more egalitarian in their
thinking. While most Whites believe that the United States has gone too far in promoting equal rights, only one third of White Gen-Xers share this point of view (Andolina & Mayer, 2003).

In his analysis of racial attitudes, Bobo (2001) argued that a clear trend in attitudinal studies is the “steady movement toward a general endorsement of the principles of racial equality and integration” (p. 269). Key measurements of this trend are the willingness to live in integrated neighborhoods and allow children to attend integrated schools and an integrated public transportation system. Another key measurement of this trend is an equal access to jobs. Bobo (2001) argued that while Whites were willing to live in integrated neighborhoods and send their children to integrated schools, their willingness to do so decreased as the percentage of Blacks in the neighborhood increased. In comparing this finding to the Andolina and Mayer (2003) study, White Gen-Xers are more receptive than older generational groups to send their children to a mostly Black school. However, Andolina and Mayer argued that this response may be due to people wanting to provide a socially acceptable answer to the question or the survey participants may not have children entering the school system. Bobo acknowledged some differences in the extent survey participants supported the principles of racial equality and integration. Bobo (2001) claimed that generally, “the more public and impersonal the arena, the greater the evidence of movement toward supporting ideals of integration and equality” (p. 271). Another finding from the Bobo study is the unpopularity of racial preferences among both Blacks and Whites. However, a difference of opinion exists when the issue of affirmative action is raised. Blacks and Hispanics tend to support affirmative action. Most Whites will support “compensatory policies but fewer support preferential policies” (Bobo, 2001, p. 273). Opinions about the future of race relations are more or less similar for both Blacks and Whites. When asked, “58% of Blacks and 54% of Whites indicated that race relations between Blacks and
Whites will always be a problem for the United States” (Bobo, 2001, p. 285). Bobo’s research pre-dates the election of an African American president. The impact of an African American President on the perceptions of race is not clear at this time. These findings are relevant for social justice leaders because they provide a framework for understanding the social milieu that can influence social change. The race relations statistic is an important one because it points to the growing feeling of alienation felt by African Americans. In the minds of many African Americans, there remains a strong connection between the fate of the race and the fate of individual African Americans (Bobo, 2001). What is striking about the data is the level of dissatisfaction among African Americans in the middle class. Middle class African Americans are becoming disillusioned with the American dream and the prospects for the future (Bobo, 2001; McDermott, 2001). Bobo argued that the feeling of alienation could lead to a more separatist attitude amongst middle class African Americans, which would lead to the further establishment of separate social systems and institutions.

Blackwell et al. (2010) argued that leaders need to broaden their analysis of social justice beyond race. In a highly diverse world, the Gen-X and millennial generations expect a greater integration of their multiple identities when building movements. Movement building in multi-identified generational groups will require leadership that has the capacity to bring together groups that are in conflict over significant issues while at the same time mitigating disputes over scarce resources (Blackwell et al., 2010). In the context of Blackwell et al.’s study, multi-identified means class conscious, queer, people of color, bi-racial, multi-racial, and other self-identified social categories.
**Researcher Background**

Collins (2000a, 2009a) provided a moving commentary about her rationale for writing *Black Feminist Thought*. She blended scholarship and the everyday experiences of Black women in a way that is readable and understandable. However, what is most important is the manner in which Collins (2000a, 2009a) integrated personal experience with scholarship. In essence, the foundation for research is the lived experiences of the researcher. Therefore, it is important to understand the worldview of the researcher and clarify the researcher’s beliefs and values insofar as they may influence the results of his or her research (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998). In this section, I describe some of the beliefs and experiences that inform my desire to become a scholar practitioner.

Growing up in Gary, Indiana, a predominately African American community solidified my positive racial identity. When I traveled south to visit family in Mississippi, I would receive what Ladson-Billings and Donner (2005) termed “the call” (p. 279). Simply stated, the call is that moment in time when “regardless of one’s stature or accomplishments, race is recruited to remind one that he or she still remains locked in the racial construction” (Ladson-Billings & Donner, 2005, p. 279). Whether dealing with segregated restrooms or confronting social inequity on college campuses, my young adult memories are littered with examples of receiving the call, the subtle and not so subtle reminders of my difference.

As I reflect on my life experiences, I am reminded of the African American women that shaped my thinking about race and gender. At an early age, my mother provided me with instruction on how to confront segregation. As situations arose, she used personal incidents of injustice as learning opportunities to understand oppression and the importance of naming yourself.
While I do not consider my mother a feminist, she took strong exception to the notion that all of the problems in the African American community were the result of the perceived shortcomings of Black women. As an adult, I understand her position in opposition to the characterization of African American women as portrayed by Moynihan (1965). It was suggested that the Black family was in a state of disarray because of a strong Black female presence in the household that left Black men powerless (Davis, 1983; hooks, 1981; White, 1999). Crime, teen pregnancy, and high dropout rates could be attributed to the dominating spirit of African American women in the home. I remember conversations my mother had with her friends who opposed the stereotypical images of Black women.

My mother was a member of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), Urban League, and a member of the local Parent Teacher Association (PTA). My early understanding of activism comes from her involvement in the community and my father’s involvement in the church. I learned that change “occurs when there is action, movement, and revolution” (hooks, 1981, p. 193). What spurred me to action was my racial identity. As a member of the baby boom generation, Jim Crow laws and the civil rights movement were contemporary experiences. I experienced a great sense of racial solidarity that stems from being part of a marginalized group fighting for social justice (Guinier & Torres, 2002; Jackson, 2000; Johnson, 1938; King, 1968; Robinson, 2010; White, 1999). King (1968) argued that “we have been oppressed as a group and we must overcome that oppression as a group” (p. 125). For most of my life, race was the filter I used to understand and interpret the world.

I facilitated a workshop for a local social justice organization in the African American community. One of the participants from the millennial generation questioned the need for the organization because race is no longer a problem. The individual said “you will have to show
me examples of racism before I believe it exists” (Anonymous, personal communication, October 20, 2007). The experiences of young people in their 20s are different from the experiences of people in their 60s. Robinson (2010) argued that the millennial generation is “anti-racial instead of post-racial because the millennials were raised in a society where the dominant view was that race does not matter” (p. 182).

In another recent community meeting I facilitated that consisted primarily of baby boomers and Gen-Xers, the issue of who gets to be called Black surfaced. A determining factor was the historical marginalization of African Americans in the United States. The historical marginalization of people of color born outside the United States was not important. The underlying theme that weaved through the discussion was “who is considered Black in America?” Race was at the center of the debate to determine which group has priority over the other.

Historically, race has been a major social determinant influencing the attitudes and behaviors of African American activists. For example, the missionary generation, as described by Strauss and Howe (1991b), included W. E. B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington. Both men had diametrically oppositional views about obtaining equal treatment. DuBois advocated for political power, civil rights, and higher education while Washington advocated for vocational education and basic skill training (DuBois, 1903). At the center of the debate was the issue of race. The American Negro problem, as described by Myrdal (1944), is at the heart of the American, “it is there that the interracial tension has it focus” (p. xlvii).

As I reflect on my work today, it is focused on race and social justice. Discussing race and designing interventions around difference is an everyday occurrence. Working with nonprofit and non-governmental organizations affords me the opportunity to work with people
on the forefront of social change. I am particularly interested in Black women who are involved with social justice initiatives because change in the African American community traditionally began at the local level.

**Research Design Rationale**

I selected an exploratory sequential mixed-methods design for this study. I discuss in greater detail the rationale for an exploratory sequential mixed-methods design in chapter III. However, in this section, I provide two reasons for selecting this method. First, it is crucial to ask the right questions to obtain information about racial attitudes. A qualitative design enabled me to ask questions and delve deeper into the meaning of the responses. Including a quantitative design enabled me to test and explore the ideas expressed in the qualitative phase of the study. Second, I used a mixed-methods design because qualitative analysis alone is not designed for hypothesis testing or testing for reliability (Creswell & Plano, 2011; Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Using a quantitative survey enabled me to test the data derived from the six personal interviews and three initial focus groups. A follow-up focus group was conducted to reflect on the data and derive meaning from the perspective of the focus group participants. This triangulated approach allowed me to identity points of convergence, corroboration, and correspondence of results (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). The reflexive process allowed for thoughtful consideration about the meaning of race in the lives of African American women from different generation cohorts.

**Research Methodology**

This study had three phases: (a) a qualitative phase where data were collected through personal interviews and focus groups; (b) a quantitative phase where data were collected through Likert-type scale response questions and open-end questions; and (c) a qualitative phase where
data were collected through a final focus group designed to explore contradictions and inconsistencies in the data and solicit meaning from the survey findings. A total of 183 African American women participated in this study. During phase 1 of this study, the concept of race was explored to understand the “perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes” (Henderson, 1995, p. 466) the participants held about race and its influence on social justice work. I used a snowball sample to recruit African American women for the personal interviews and focus groups. The personal interviews were the first step in the process of discerning themes for the study. The personal interviews and focus groups also provided data which informed the design of the survey.

The individual interviews involved soliciting women from each generation cohort, baby boom, Gen-X, and millennial, to interview. The semi-structured interviews were originally designed to last 90 minutes. However, because of the design of the interview guide, the timeframe was expanded to 120 minutes. The personal interviews were conducted at my office or the Blair Caldwell African American Library and Research Center. The interviews were taped and transcribed by a professional transcriptionist. The transcripts were analyzed to identity potential emergent themes. Data collected from the personal interviews informed the focus group questions.

I conducted three generation specific focus groups. Statements from the qualitative data informed the themes used to develop the online survey. The purpose of the quantitative phase was to capture the attitudes of a broader sample of Black women from the different generation cohorts to determine if there was consistency in the emergent themes from the individual interviews and focus groups. The initial thought was the survey may expose themes not surfaced during the individual interviews and focus groups. Questions for the second phase of the study
were developed after the completion and analysis of the personal interviews and initial focus groups. The survey had 76 Likert-type scale response questions and nine open-end questions. I used data bases from nonprofit organizations in the African American community, a ListServ, and Facebook to recruit Black women for the survey.

The third phase of the study added another layer of member checking. It was designed to review the findings and discuss any contradictions or inconsistencies between the qualitative and quantitative data. The design of this study was developmental in nature. Each phase was built on a prior phase and within phase 1, the focus group was built on the results from the individual interviews (Rossman & Wilson, 1994). The people involved in the initial focus group participated in the final focus group. The people participating in the personal interviews and initial focus groups did not participate in the survey.

Limitations of the Study

A limitation of this study was the sample size. The criterion for participating in the study was very specific. The study participants were African American women between the ages of 21 and 69 and were residents of Colorado. Additionally, it was preferred that the participants were involved in social justice work in some manner. Due to the limited number of participants, it is difficult to generalize the results.

Organization of Study

Chapter II presents a theoretical and conceptual framework, which connects social identity theory, generational theory, and Black women’s leadership. I provide a review of Black women’s social justice leadership literature to understand the historical context for Black women’s social activism. A historical and contemporary examination of race in America and the different discourses around the relevance of race is provided to understand the social and
political context for Black women’s social justice leadership. The chapter includes a discussion of how standpoint and intersectionality theories were used to explore, analyze, and interpret the views of Black women.

Chapter III is a discussion of the research design and process for this study. I describe the three phase exploratory sequential mixed-methods approach used in this study. I also discuss how an exploratory sequential mixed-methods design enabled me to extrapolate the best features of both qualitative and quantitative analysis and blend them together to produce an enhanced research project (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Chapter IV is a presentation of the findings for this study. The findings are presented by research method. I discuss how the data collected were analyzed. Additionally, I integrate the findings and results from the qualitative and quantitative phases of this study.

Chapter V is a discussion of the major findings from this study and what I learned as a researcher. I discuss the limitations of the study and make recommendations for future research and potential applications of the research.
Chapter II: Background and Conceptual Framework

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss what surfaced in the literature about racial attitudes and social justice. I reviewed literature from a variety of disciplines: Black women and social activism, Black social justice leadership, racial attitudes, and generation studies. I researched the literature to examine how scholars discussed the historical roots of African American women’s activism, the historical and contemporary conceptualizations of race, and generation studies about racial attitudes.

I reviewed seminal and contemporary writings and empirical studies to determine the potential gaps in literature. At the time of the literature review, two empirical studies by Apollon (2011, 2012) related directly to my research. These studies focused on generation differences in racial attitudes. I discuss these two studies later in the chapter. However, a significant gap in the literature at the time of the literature review was the absence of research about generation differences in racial attitudes and social activism among multiple generation cohorts.

The remainder of this chapter discusses African American women and social activism, race, gender, and leadership, and the conceptualizations of race. The discussion about race includes the historical conceptualizations of race and the current ideologies of colorblindness, post-racial and post-civil rights. The chapter concludes with the conceptual framework for the study.

African American Women and Social Activism

“I’m sick and tired of being sick and tired” (Sadoff et al., 2002). This quote, taken from the speech of Fannie Lou Hamer presented at the 1964 Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City, exemplifies the persistent struggle of Black women. African American women
encountered the persistent struggle to survive and thrive in an environment that was socially, politically, and economically punitive. Jim Crow legislation had a negative impact on African American women and men. When Fannie Lou Hamer spoke at the 1964 Democratic National Convention, she spoke from her lived experiences of Jim Crow legislation. Generally, two themes emerge when examining the scholarship of Black history. The first theme is the struggle to survive “as a marginalized group in a hostile environment” and the second theme is the struggle to “change society into a more hospitable and inclusive environment” (James, 1993, p. 50). These analytical frameworks are consistent with the study of Black women. Collins (2009a) argued that research about Black women emphasizes the ways in which they experience intersecting oppressions within a hegemonic power structure while simultaneously exploring the strength and resiliency Black women exhibit when faced with hardship and despair. Black women employed different resistance strategies during the slavery, reconstruction, and Jim Crow eras to survive and change the prevailing social conditions. Black women’s activism occurs within the individual and institutional domain (Collins, 2009a).

Black women and other women of color created social change in their neighborhoods by organizing to protest the poor conditions of the schools, inadequate housing, and lack of healthcare (Gilkes, 1994; Naples, 1996, 1998). Naples’ (1998) study of African American and Latina women in New York and Philadelphia revealed how the roles of mothering and community activist intersect to create change. Terms such as othermothers, community othermothers, and activist mothers capture the distinct type of activism Black women and other women of color engage in as an extension of their role as mother. Othermothers are women who provide nurturing and care for relatives or fictive kin. Community othermothers reflect an ethic of care for the Black community that manifests in community activism and a commitment to
social change (Collins, 2009a). Naples (1998) argued that the term activist mothering explicates community workers “gendered conceptualization of activism on behalf of their communities, often defined beyond the confines of their families, households, and neighborhoods” (p. 114). Collins (2009a) argued that the experiences of African American women as othermothers provide “a foundation for conceptualizing Black women’s political activism” (p. 205). In response to racism, sexism, and classism, community othermothers demanded school reform and better housing and living conditions for the residents in the community as well as other social reforms. Lerner (1973), in her documentary *Black Women in White America*, provided numerous accounts of Black women engaged in a broad array of activism. The activism of Black women included “organizing communities, collecting money to build facilities for Black servicemen, building playgrounds for Black children, and conducting surveys of colored public schools” (Lerner, 1973, p. 503). As individuals, Black women’s consciousness of their social, economic, and political environments informed their decisions to become activists.

Davis (1972) argued that during slavery, Black women played a crucial role in the community of slaves while paradoxically engaging in work equal to Black men. Black women were “forced by the circumstances of slavery into the center of the slave community” (Davis, 1972, p. 87) and became essential to its survival. Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman are popular characters in history. However, there were other women of the era whose stories remain untold (Davis, 1972). In New York in 1708, a Black woman, along with three Black men, was killed in retaliation for killing seven Whites; Black women played a role in a 1712 slave uprising; and Black women often poisoned food and set the houses of their masters on fire (Davis, 1972, p. 91). These acts of resistance provide a framework for understanding Black
women’s social justice leadership. As Lerner (1973) argued, Black women’s involvement in social justice activities took a variety of forms.

In addition to slave revolts and similar forms of activism, Black women also used public speaking and the media to raise awareness about racism and sexism. Maria Stewart was the first American-born woman to speak in public and she was the first Black woman political writer (Lerner, 1973; Richardson, 1987). The political messages of Stewart were infused with religious teachings that spoke to the multiple oppressions Black women experienced (Richardson, 1987). Black women were encouraged to build economic self-sufficiency. In addition, Stewart spoke truth to power by challenging the merit of White supremacy and the prevailing myths about Black people. Women like Maria Stewart, Anna Julia Cooper, Mary McLeod Bethune, and Ida Wells-Barnett are among a long list of Black women who laid an analytical foundation for a distinctive standpoint on self, community, and society (Collins, 2009a). Wells-Barnett, the owner and editor of the *Memphis Free Speech*, used the print media to highlight the atrocities of lynching. Her refusal to sit in the colored section of a bus ultimately led to the Atlantic streetcar boycott. This action served as a precursor to the techniques used by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and Urban League in the 1940s and the civil rights movement of the 1960s (Lerner, 1973). Daisy Bates, along with her husband, was the owner/publisher of a weekly publication, *State Press*, that informed the community about the social conditions of the time. Bates also served as a key organizer of the desegregation of Central High School in Little Rock Arkansas (James, 1993).

Cash’s (2001) research on Black women and social action revealed findings similar to Davis (1972). African American women’s social activism through pre-civil war mutual aid societies and post-reconstruction societies and clubs “laid the foundation for the Black women’s
club movement” (Cash, 2001, p. 17). The exclusion of African Americans from social systems raised the consciousness of Black women and led them to form organizations like orphanages, senior citizen homes, hospitals, and settlements (Cash, 2001). The tradition of Black women’s leadership emerged from their approach to the fight for social justice (Parker, 2005).

The fight for social justice can also be seen through the activism of women within the framework of institutions. Collins (2009a) argued that Black women fight against discriminatory policies, procedures, and practices within the “government, schools, the workplace, stores, the media, and other social institutions” (p. 219). The purpose of institutional activism is to bring about institutional transformation. Institutional change rarely occurs without engaging in coalition politics (Collins, 2009a; Guinier & Torres, 2002). In her study of Black and Latina women, Naples (1998) discovered that community women did work successfully across racial and ethnic groups. However, cross-cultural coalitions were difficult to start and maintain (Guinier & Torres, 2002; Naples, 1998). The social and political climate influences the nature of the collaborative effort. For example, Black feminists worked within White organizations in an attempt to bring about change. However, their efforts to work collaboratively to gain the right to vote were thwarted because of the racist attitudes and segregationist behaviors of White women (Cash, 2001; Davis, 1983; hooks, 1981). Although working with White women on feminist issues did not yield the desired results, there are examples of coalitions working in the community (Naples, 1998). For example, forming a coalition enabled African American and Latina women to obtain information about the public schools in their neighborhood (Naples, 1998). As leaders of social justice issues, Black women adapted their leadership strategies to respond to the prevailing challenges.
Race Gender and Leadership

Early conceptualizations of leadership were based on White middle-class men (Parker, 2005). Generally, the population studied was White men to the exclusion of women and people of color (Parker, 2005; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). Gender related research focused on the differences in leadership styles between men and women and the barriers that prevented women’s mobility and access to leadership opportunities in management (Meyerson, Ely, & Wernick, 2007; Parker, 2005). However, within gender research, the focus was White middle-class women to the exclusion of women of color (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Parker, 2005; Parker & Ogilvie, 1996; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). It was assumed that the organization experiences of women are universal. Within a gendered approach to research, all of the women are White yet their experiences are generalized to include women of color (Collins, 2009a; Hull, Scott, & Smith, 1982; Parker, 2005). Parker (2005) argued that the problems created by the standard modes of theorizing were linked to domination, exclusion, and containment. The unspoken “taken for granted notions of superiority and inferiority, the exclusion of people of color from the knowledge production process, and engaging in practices that silence some voices typify race-neutral theorizing” (Parker, 2005, p. xvi). Parker argued that an inclusive framework for re-envisioning leadership is needed that encompasses race, class, and gender. Placing Black women at the center of analysis provides an opportunity to generate new knowledge about leadership. This is important in light of globalization and the continued increase in diversity within U.S. based companies (Parker, 2005).

Through their experiences of slavery and Jim Crow segregation and subsequent acts of resistance, Black women developed a unique tradition of leadership (Parker, 2005). The experiences of Black women and the subsequent strategies used to combat racial and sexual
oppression fosters a group knowledge or standpoint deemed essential for informed political action (Collins, 1998, 2009a).

At the grassroots community level, Black women organized to change the living conditions in their neighborhoods. Black women’s civic and social involvement emerged from a rich history of their involvement in community activities (Cash, 2001). Using the skills learned in the Black church, Black women organized protests, marches, and demonstrations to bring attention to the lack of services in the community. Working within Black civil society, Black women exercised power through the formation of clubs. This tradition was built on an ideology of self-help and racial solidarity that manifested itself through abolitionism and protest (Cash, 2001). The work of club women was highlighted in previous sections. The intent here is to explicate the challenges to Black women’s leadership as a result of their race and gender.

The civil rights movement shifted the focus of women’s activism from the notion that the race could rise no higher than its women, to women could rise no higher than the race (Giddings, 1984; White, 1999). During the period of the civil rights and Black power movements, Black women were relegated to a second class status by Black men (Cade, 1970; Cash, 2001; Davis, 1983; Giddings, 1984; hooks, 1981; White, 1999). In an attempt to become liberated, Black men adopted similar attitudes about womanhood as their White male counterparts. Michele Wallace’s (1979) book, *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman*, brought to light the conflict that existed between Black men and women during the struggle for equality and social justice. Cade (1970) argued that the Black community is not immune to the restrictive attitudes about Black women when she stated, “we are just as jammed in the rigid confines of those basically oppressive socially contrived roles” (p. 102).
Ella Baker, a long-time civil rights worker was denied the formal leadership role of the Southern Christina Leadership Conference (SCLC) because she was a woman. Baker’s style of leadership stood in sharp contrast to the male dominated leadership of the civil rights and Black power movements (Payne, 1989, 2007; Preskill & Brookfield, 2009). Baker believed in helping people at the local level understand that they had something within their power they could use to create change (Lerner, 1973; Payne, 2007). Martin Luther King, Jr., Stokley Carmichael, Malcolm X, and other contemporary male leaders failed to recognize the importance of distributing power and leadership among the masses. During an interview with Gerda Lerner (1973), Baker argued that:

> It was a handicap for oppressed peoples to depend so largely upon a leader. A person called upon to give public statements and is acclaimed by the establishment such a person gets to the point of believing that he is the movement. (p. 351)

The Black women’s club movement provides numerous examples of Black women’s social justice leadership. Emerging from the reconstruction period, organizations like the Colored Women’s League of Washington, Harper Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), and Women Mite Missionary Society worked to improve the conditions of poor Black people. Clubwomen, as they were called, were committed to improving the images of Black women. To this end, Josephine Ruffin advocated for the creation of a national union for Black women to “exonerate their moral integrity” (Cash, 2001, p. 39). During its peak, the club movement initiated a variety of programs that were later transferred to organizations like the National Urban League and government entities like the Alabama State Department of Youth Services and the National Park Service. The club movement is best known for the stability of its leadership, most notably “Mary Terrell, Lucy Thurman, Elizabeth Carter, Margaret Washington, Mary Talbert, Hallie Q. Brown, and Mary McLeod Bethune” (Cash, 2001, p. 150). Under their leadership, the club movement and specifically the National Association of Colored Women and
National Council of Negro Women, organized women across the United States to provide shelter for the orphaned and aged, open schools, feed the poor, and provide shelter to the homeless. While the accomplishments of club women are vast, there was also some criticism of club women.

Giddings (1984) argued that the women’s movement failed to isolate the reasons for the relative success of some Black women in light of the gendered racism they encountered. Consequently, organizations like the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) and the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) were unable to challenge the findings of the Moynihan Report, which claimed the Black family was dysfunctional because of the strong, emasculating Black woman (Giddings, 1984). White (1999) offered a different perspective regarding the inadequate response to the Moynihan Report. White argued that the shift away from women’s rights to civil rights and community service left Black women without an organization that addressed their struggle with sexual discrimination.

Cash (2001) argued that Black men and women in the upper and middle class were not focused on philanthropy. As more Blacks moved into the middle class, a schism developed between club women and lower class Black women. This schism is evident in the NCNW’s lack of response to welfare rights. The goal of the NCNW was to integrate Black people and Black women in particular into “mainstream society as independent and not dependent citizens” (White, 1999, p. 234). Club women became the female version of DuBois talented tenth. DuBois (1903) argued that it would be the talented tenth that would lead the race. The talented tenth reflected highly trained and educated Black men, which DuBois hoped would have a commitment to service in the Black community (Gates & West, 1996). Club women reflected college educated Black women thought to be the ones to move the race forward. The image of
club women became synonymous with debutante balls and social gatherings (Cash, 2001; Giddings, 1984; Nelson, 2003; White, 1999). Nelson (2003) argued that from the period of the Great Depression forward, the needs of the middle class superseded the welfare of the race.

The club movement was impacted by the depression, New Deal, civil rights, and Black power movements. Organizations like the Ladies Auxiliary of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters ceased to exist while others became a shadow of their former selves. However, the leadership exhibited by the Black women involved in the club movement further established an ethos for social change.

**Conceptualizing Race**

“To engage in a serious discussion of race in America, we must begin not with the problems of Black people but with the flaws of American society—flaws rooted in historic inequalities and longstanding stereotypes” (West, 1993, p. 3). The concept of race is becoming increasingly complex. Winant (2004) argued that race has no fixed meaning, instead it is constructed and “transformed sociohistorically through competing political projects” (p. 45). Race is a concept with permeable boundaries (Bhattacharyya, Gabriel, & Small, 2002; Omi & Winant, 1994; Winant, 2004) that are constantly under negotiation and construction. A tangible example of the negotiation of race is the creation of the U.S. census categories. The term *Hispanic* (and *Hispanic origin*) is not considered a racial group but a broad category referencing the country of birth, heritage, or nationality of people entering the United States (Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2011). The term Hispanic was socially constructed to refer to people from Mexico, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Central, and South America. Therefore, people who identify as Hispanic may be of any race.
The concept of race is a European invention that emerged with the rise of the world political economy and capitalism (Winant, 2004). The notion of White supremacy was espoused to justify the slave trade and establish a racial hierarchy. In an attempt to further justify White supremacy, the scientific community used theories such as head size to validate the hypothesis that White people were intellectually superior to Blacks (King, 1968). Generally, at this point in our history, most people would agree that there is no scientific data to support the coherence of race (Omi & Winant, 1994; Winant, 2004). However, Herrnstein and Murray’s (1994) book, *The Bell Curve*, or the current genome project are evidence of the fact that a need to prove intellectual and biological racial differences remain.

Bhattacharyya et al. (2002) posited that race is a fiction with a history. These authors positioned race within the context of Whiteness. Whiteness is explicated through the notion of White supremacy and Black inferiority. In essence, Whiteness has inherent power and the ability to secure White privilege (Bhattacharyya et al., 2002). Roediger (2002) made a similar claim about the fictive nature of race when he wrote, “race is a social fiction that defies rigorous definition” (p. 325). Winant (2004) captured the thoughts of both Bhattacharyya et al. (2002) and Roediger (2002) when he loosely defined race as a “concept that signifies and symbolizes sociopolitical conflicts of interests in reference to different types of human bodies” (p. 155). Winant’s admittedly loose definition encompasses the historical and political nature of race while also acknowledging the phenotypical nature of race.

Essed (2002) argued that “race is an ideological construction with structural expressions (racialized or “ethnicized” structures of power)” (p. 185). She further contextualized race beyond the conception of race as a social construction:

Race: is called an ideological construction, and not just a social construction, because the ideal of “race” has never existed outside of a framework of group interest. As a 19th
century pseudoscientific theory, as well as in contemporary “popular” thinking, the
notion of “race” is inherently part of a “model” of asymmetrically organized “races” in
which Whites rank higher than “non-Whites.” (Essed, 2002, p. 185)

This definition extends the understanding of race beyond a social construction to an
ideology of intentional (or unintentional) exclusion. Essed’s (2002) characterization of race
explicates the power of race that privileges Whites and marginalizes non-Whites.

Marable (2003) offered a characterization of race that blends the perspectives of Essed
social groups based on privileged access to power and resources by one group over another”
(p. 22). This characterization of race elucidates the dynamics of power and privilege inherent in
social relationships between people. Marable (2003) recognized the history of race and
acknowledged that race is a social construction that is created and recreated over time, “by how
people are perceived and treated in the normal actions of everyday life” (p. 22). Essed (1991)
illuminated the everyday nature of race manifested in racism. Race and racism are not
interchangeable concepts.

Racism, like race, is difficult to define. However, any definition should encompass the
macro or structural dimensions of racism and the micro or tangible experiences of racism (Essed,
1991; Winant, 2004). At the macro level, racism is a structure of inequity that is sustained
through formal processes like rules, regulations, principles, practices, and according to Essed
(1991), “access to and the allocation of resources” (p. 44). At the micro level, racism is a social
process. As a social process, racism is the action taken as a result of the ideology of race.
Racism has a historical past and is created and recreated through the attitudes and behaviors of
actors. Winant (2004) posited that “racism invokes a particular logic of racial representation to
justify a hierarchical racial order in which dark skin still correlates with subordination and
subordinate status is often represented in racial terms” (p. 58). Given the history of enslavement
in the United States and the colonizing practices of Europe, racism is a structure and process that is deeply embedded in a racial hegemony that purports the supremacy of Whites over people of color.

W. E. B. DuBois’ (1903) ominous prediction “the problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color-line” (p. vii) is perhaps the most quoted affirmation of the existence of the color-line. While the exploitation of indigenous peoples was not new, what was new was the addition of color as a way to separate the rights and privileges of people (DuBois, 1972; King, 1968). The recognition of color, a visual representation of a person’s existence, laid the groundwork for the subjugation of people who were not White.

Myrdal (1944) grounded the issue of race in morality when commissioned to study the Negro problem. Myrdal’s study focused on social, economic, and political race relationships. However, a critical analysis of these forces revealed divergent thinking and dichotomous attitudes about America’s racial consciousness. One of the perspectives that framed the study was the belief that the “American Negro problem is a problem of the heart of the American” (Myrdal, 1944, p. xlvii). The core of the problem is a moral dilemma between the “American Creed and the group prejudice against particular persons or types of people” (Myrdal, 1944, p. xlvii).

Foner and Marable (2006) argued in *Herbert Aptheker on Race and Democracy* that Aptheker disagreed with the idea that race was a moral problem as contextualized by Myrdal (1944). Aptheker viewed race as a material matter because of the exploitation of and prejudice against Black people, which was maintained out of the interest of profits and those who held property (Foner & Marable, 2006). Aptheker further postulated that for those affected by
oppression, and those who believed in and fought for full rights for all people, “there was not an American dilemma” (Foner & Marable, 2006, p. 196).

Framing race in this manner intrinsically links race to democracy. In this context, race is politicized and stands in opposition to the democratic principles of the American Creed and the articulation of unalienable rights for all. Myrdal’s (1944) positioning of race as a moral issue obfuscates the reality of social and economic oppression and the pragmatism of the color-line. I agree with the characterization of race as an ideology with structural expressions manifested in social systems. Attitudes and perceptions about race framed the activities of early activist.

Bunche (2005) argued that race was the basis of thinking for many leaders. The attitudes of leaders and how they interpreted what was happening in society was influenced by the concept of race (Bunche, 2005). With the continuous movement of people and the increase in people identifying as mixed-race, the frame for characterizing race continues to change. To further establish a context for discussing Black women’s attitudes about race, I discuss the concepts of colorblind, post-civil rights, and post-racial. These perspectives currently influence public policy and frame the discussion about race in America.

**Colorblind ideology.** A discussion about a colorblind society, post-civil rights, and post-racial is relevant because these ideologies capture the social milieu that frames the activism of African American women. Understanding these ideologies helps to understand the environment in which social activism happens. Additionally, the participants in this study may have a perspective about colorblindness, post-racial, and post-civil rights that influence their attitudes about race.

Neville, Coleman, Falconer, and Holmes (2005) argued that colorblindness is “a contemporary set of beliefs that serves to minimize, ignore, and or distort the existence of race
and racism” (p. 29). Embedded in the thinking of colorblindness is the belief that race is a thing of the past and race and racism do not play a role in current political, social, and economic realities (Neville et al., 2005). The ideology of colorblindness emerged as a response to legislation passed during the civil rights movement and the United States’ subsequent commitment to affirmative action (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Brown et al., 2003; Goldberg, 2009; Guinier & Torres, 2002; Winant, 2004). With the passage of civil rights legislation in the 1960s, neoconservatives began an active campaign to dismantle legislative gains and espouse the theory of colorblindness. The ideology of colorblindness or as Goldberg (2009) characterized it—racelessness—paved the way for controlling the appearance of equality without directly addressing the reality of inequality. Gallagher (2007) argued that adopting a colorblind perspective “provides psychological comfort for Whites because race is no longer a factor in the social-economic hierarchy” (p. 131). In a series of focus groups conducted around the country, Gallagher posited that the new colorblind ideology renders a discussion about race a moot point. Stated differently, colorblindness is “an illusion that reflects contemporary expressions of racism” (Helen Neville, personal communication, October 8, 2012).

Guinier and Torres (2002, 2007) argued that there are three basic tenets that govern colorblind ideology. First, race is about the false construction of phenotypical characteristics that improperly ascribes physical attributes to distinguish one group of people from another. Second, there is no scientific basis for race. Therefore, treating people differently based on the false notion of race is unacceptable. This concept forms the basis of the anti-affirmative action argument. Third, racism is a personal problem. Racism is reduced to an individual act of an uninformed or unenlightened individual and not a reflection of a social hierarchy or system (Guinier & Torres, 2007). Depicting racism as an individual problem mitigates the need for a
broader discussion concerning the ways people are systematically excluded from the basic benefits of society. Situating race and racism as an individual problem suggests that the solution is also located at the individual level without looking critically at other options (Essed, 1991, 1996; Guinier & Torres, 2007). Bonilla-Silva (2006) challenged the paradox of racial disparities when race is no longer deemed relevant. Bonilla-Silva argued that the new ideology of colorblindness explicates racial disparities as the result of nonracial dynamics. Under the colorblind rubric, the status of racial minorities is positioned as “the product of market dynamics, naturally occurring phenomena, and Blacks imputed cultural limitations” (Bonilla-Silva, 2006, p. 2).

Brown et al. (2003) made similar claims about the rationality of a colorblind society. Brown et al. argued that many White Americans believe that the civil rights movement was successful. If Black people are not successful it is because they did not take advantage of the opportunities presented by the civil rights revolution. The vision, espoused by King (1963), to live in a society where people are judged by the content of their character, is perceived as a social reality.

Not seeing color challenges the problem of the color-line postulated by DuBois. The ideological erasure of the color-line is problematic for Blacks because it creates an environment which “one cannot escape the clanging symbolism of oneself” (Williams, 1997, p. 27). The denial of the color-line creates a level of comfort for Whites because they can no longer be implicated for the social conditions of Blacks.

The literature about the implications of colorblindness is extensive. Most scholars examine the implications of colorblindness using the lens of attitudes held by the White population. Neville et al. (2005) examined the implications of colorblind racial ideology and
psychological false consciousness among African Americans. Neville et al. (2005) posited that embracing the ideology of colorblindness is related to “victim blame attributes of racial inequality, internalized oppression, and justification of social roles or social dominance orientation” (p. 27). In essence, African Americans who adopt the notion of colorblindness may inadvertently help to support systems of oppression because of false beliefs held about African Americans.

Irvin (2004) provided an alternate perspective about race consciousness among young African Americans. He challenged the assumed existence of a color line and the prognostications of DuBois (1903). Irvin (2004) argued that there is a new generation of Blacks emerging that he calls the thrivals. This younger cohort of African Americans is part of the millennial generation. They challenge the double consciousness theory explicated by DuBois (1903). Irvin (2004) argued that the thrivals have resolved the double consciousness dilemma by creating a new archetype: a global identity (p. 19). Having a global identity may negate the relevance of race and potentially influence the perception of racism. A colorblind racial ideology may influence how individuals process and interpret racial information and may also influence individual behavior (Neville et al., 2005).

Bobo (2001) rejected the notion of a colorblind America and examined an alternative construct to explain the current attitudes about race. Laissez-faire racism is an ideology that encompasses negative racial stereotypes, the individualistic nature of the United States, the rejection of racism as structural, and a rejection of government intervention to ameliorate inequality (Bobo, 2001). Because of legislative changes and the unspoken norm of silence (Williams, 1997), laissez-faire racism is more difficult to confront than its predecessor Jim Crow.
Laissez-faire racism, like the ideology of colorblindness, is subtle because it admonishes bigotry and is difficult to challenge because it sanctions White privilege.

Brown and Wellman (2005) challenged colorblindness from an economic perspective. They argued that the contemporary color line exists because of the accumulation of privilege by Whites resulting from political and economic policies to the detriment of Blacks and Latinos. Over time, the continued accumulation of privilege creates disparities in economic and political assets between Whites, Blacks, and Latinos. Laissez-faire racism, the accumulation of racial advantage, and the disaccumulation of opportunity are situated in the post-civil rights debates. This section discussed the different perspectives held by scholars concerning the ideology of colorblindness. One common thread that exists among critical scholars is the rejection of the notion that America is colorblind.

**Post-civil rights.** There is not a clear consensus about the timeframes for the civil rights movement. Brown et al. (2003) wrote that the post-civil rights era came after the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964. Within the context of this study, post-civil rights mean the formal end of the civil rights revolution. The use of the phrase post-civil rights announces the end of one era, Jim Crow, and the beginning of another, colorblindness. Within the context of this study, post-civil rights mean the end of overt discrimination viens a vie Jim Crow legislation. This is consistent with Brown et al.’s use of the term when describing the social climate and conditions of African Americans pre and post-civil rights. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965 brought change to the country. The focus of the movement was social equality, tearing down the codified discrimination that blocked the path of full citizenship for people of color (Blackwell et al., 2010). However, what remains a challenge is racial equity. Racial equity
means establishing policies and practices that comprehensively address practical barriers to economic and social parity.

The end of the civil rights era marked the end of a rigorous debate about economic and social inequality expressed through race. As a point in time, for most Americans, the civil rights movement is a history lesson rather than a lived experience. The majority of Americans alive today were born after the passage of the civil rights act. Consequently, most of the people living in the United States did not experience de jure discrimination or segregation (Brown et al., 2003). In a very real sense, Gen-Xers and millennials are part of a post-civil rights generation (Brown et al., 2003).

In an interview with journalist Eugene Robinson (2010), President Obama stated:

If we haven’t already reached this point we’re getting close to reaching it, where there are going to be more African Americans in this country who never experienced anything remotely close to Jim Crow than those who lived under Jim Crow. That [difference in experience] obviously changes perspectives. (p. 159)

An analysis of President Obama’s comments suggests that one era for experiencing racism has ended and a new generation is emerging. The contextual framework for interpreting race is different. Robinson (2010) argued that the next generation of Black elite does understand racism and discrimination. However, because of their circumstances, the Black elite “does not know what it is like to be relegated by law to second-class citizenship” (p. 160). The civil rights era was a moment in time when masses of people protested racial overt injustice in America. The concept of post-civil rights signals the official end of Jim Crow. However, paradoxically, the legacy of Jim Crow remains entrenched throughout a variety of social systems.

Post-racial. Another critical transition that is influencing our attitudes about race is the movement of African Americans into the higher echelons of wealth and power and the election
of the first African American president. In the context of this study, post-racial means race is no longer a social determinant that can explain the gaps in life chances between Blacks and Whites.

The success of a few African Americans is evidence, in the mind of some, of a post-racial society. Following the election of President Obama, CNN and other news outlets asked the question “is America post-racial?” The underlying question is whether or not race remains a problem in America. Apollon (2011) argued that the election of President Obama and the demographic changes as a result of the number of millennials eligible to vote caused the mainstream media to promulgate the notion that race and racism are no longer significant barriers to success. Whether in the workplace or a casual setting, the reoccurring theme is that the United States elected a Black president and the White community cannot be blamed for the misfortunes of African Americans. Stated differently, the United States is now officially post racial. From the perspective of some Americans, the election of President Obama is proof that race is no longer an issue in United States. I challenge the notion that America is post-racial based on the election of an African American president. When investigating the racial attitudes of the millennial generation, Apollon (2011) argued that generally millennials agree that race and racism continue to be relevant factors in social systems like education, employment, criminal justice, and health care. Additionally, the lived experience of poor African Americans did not improve as a result of the presidential election. The unemployment rate in general and among African Americans in particular during the Obama administration remains as high as or higher than the unemployment rate during previous administrations (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011).
Another indicator of a post-racial era is the number of African Americans with wealth, power, and influence. In the minds of some, Oprah Winfrey’s success is the clearest example of the value of hard work. Along with the extremely wealthy, African Americans are in the “mainstream middle-class majority with a full ownership stake in American society” (Robinson, 2010, p. 5). As a result of the civil rights movement, and the subsequent affirmative action policies, the median income for African American households has increased (Blackwell et al., 2010; Jackson & Jones, 2001).

Arguably, the number of African Americans in the ranks of the middle class can signal a post-racial environment. However, as African Americans moved into the middle class, more African Americans slipped into poverty. The weekly earnings report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2011) indicated that the median earnings for African American males is 79.2% of the median earnings for White males and the median earnings for African American females is 84% of those of White women (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). Nonetheless, a critical marker indicating the country is post-racial is the existence of middle class African Americans.

Another factor in the post-racial debate is the diversity within the younger generations. I discuss race and generation differences in a subsequent section. However, it is important to note that the diversity of Gen-Xers and millennials contribute to the notion of a post-racial society. Andolina and Mayer (2003) argued that the Generation-X is more supportive of school integration and government intervention to create racial equity than prior generations. Keeter and Taylor (2009) argued that the millennial generation is more racially tolerant than the racially diverse Gen-X. With each successive generation, there is a liberalization of attitudes about difference that contributes to the post-racial thinking. However, the post-racial attitudes held by some Gen-Xers or millennials does not imply that the United States has moved beyond race
being an important social issue. This conclusion is supported by the results of the Apollon (2011) study where a large portion of research participants assert that race still matters.

Another potential factor that may suggest a leaning towards a post-racial society is the acceptance of immigrants by the millennial generation. Taylor and Keeter (2010) found that more millennials are receptive to immigrants than earlier generations. Fifty-eight percent believe that immigrants strengthen the country. However, immigration policies are becoming increasingly more restrictive. The concept of post-racial does not fit the daily reality of the United States’ policies and practices. I argue that post-racial is a component of colorblind ideology. The notion that America is post-racial is a false claim that is not substantiated. I further argue that colorblind ideology, post-civil rights, and post-racial create a political, social, and economic environment that influences the discussions about race and racism. Understanding the current thinking about race and racism and the contemporary discussions that shape public thinking about their relevance provides a context for situating a discussion about how African American women perceive the relevance of race.

**Racial Attitudes and Race Consciousness**

As the civil rights and Black power movements faded during the 1960s and 1970s, the historical conditions of overt racism changed. A shift in the construction of race and racism in the United States leading to colorblind ideologies that challenge the relevance of race occurred. An inherent paradox in this shift is whether or not the United States is moving toward a genuinely colorblind society or sinking deeper into a society polarized by race (Bobo, 2001). For example, an analysis of racial attitudes suggests that both Blacks and Whites no longer favor racial preferences specifically as it pertains to the use of quotas (Bobo, 2001). Robinson (2010)
claims that “over 50% of African Americans blame poor Black people for their plight” (p. 226). The blaming the victim attitude is a function of the ideology of colorblindness.

However, when examining racial attitudes about the highly controversial topic of affirmative action, typically African Americans, Hispanics, and other groups who benefit from affirmative action are supportive of affirmative action policies (Bobo, 2001; Oh, Choi, Neville, Anderson, & Landrum-Brown, 2010).

In a 1997 survey conducted by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Research (as cited in Bobo, 2001), 58% of Blacks and 54% of the Whites surveyed indicated that race relations will always be a problem between Blacks and Whites in the United States. What is most disturbing about the study is the dissatisfaction of middle class Blacks. This finding is similar to the research conducted by McDermott (2001). In her study of class and racial consciousness, McDermott found that middle class Blacks, especially those on the lower rung of the middle class ladder are disillusioned with the promise of the American dream. While one might assume as Blacks move up the economic ladder they would assimilate into White society, the results of the McDermott study proved inconclusive on this point. Racial attitudes of African Americans are strongly associated with their experience with exploitation and oppression (McDermott, 2001). Generally, the more oppression a person experiences the greater the identification with his or her African American identify. McDermott examined racial attitudes using the lens of class. The social movements of the 1960s and 1970s provide another lens for examining racial attitudes.

The civil rights and Black power movements were instrumental in raising the racial awareness of Black women. Brush (2001) argued that the social and political discourse surrounding both movements enabled Black women to understand, articulate, and resist
oppression. Brush (2001) argued that in the absence of this discourse, “women of color struggle to understand and resist the particular forms of racial oppression they experience” (p. 172). This is particularly true of younger generations of Black women who tend to resort to individualistic explanations of racial oppression (Brush, 2001). The millennial generation recognizes the relevance of race in the United States. However, millennials have difficulty defining and interpreting present-day racism (Apollon, 2011; Brush, 2001). Generally, the era of overt acts of racism has ended. Black women generally and millennials in particular have difficulty putting race and racism in a broader context due to the inability to recognize that the personal is political (Brush, 2001).

The Black power movement created a cultural revolution which demanded the right to define for itself a separate Black culture. In her study, Brush (2001) posited that Black women autobiographers substantiate the claim that civil rights discourse provided an “interpretive tool to explain their situation and understand their own lives” (p. 181). The Black power movement rejected the drive towards integration and the creation of a race neutral society (Omi & Winant, 1994). Throughout history African American women interpreted and responded accordingly to the social conditions of the time. The critical discourse created by the civil rights and Black power movements aided Black women in contextualizing their experiences.

The civil rights and Black power movements created a sense of solidarity within the African American community. The civil rights and Black power movements had separate identities based on notions of how to best address the race problem. However, undergirding the philosophies of both movements was a sense of racial solidarity. Hoston (2009) argued that racial solidarity is a consequence of racial consciousness. Advocates of Black consciousness argued that the Black race is empowered by their awareness of race. The counter argument
claimed that “the Black race creates a mentality of victimization that leads to separatist attitudes as a result of Black consciousness” (Hoston, 2009, p. 719). Black consciousness is defined by an individual’s acceptance of his or her racial identity and an acceptance of the identity of the group to which he or she belongs. The acceptance of individual identity and the identity of the group empowers people to redefine the inequality in status, privilege, and power that exists between the dominant and subordinate racial groups (Hoston, 2009). The literature on Black women’s social activism suggests that race consciousness empowered women to design an agenda for social change. Being considered a race woman was symbolic of race loyalty and pride (Cash, 2001). Racial solidarity and the general consensus that the fate of women was linked to the fate of the race were critical themes in leading social change. Hoston argued that the concept of linked fate is positively connected to Black solidarity. Race consciousness may, in some cases, lead to social activism.

**Conceptualizing Generations**

For centuries, philosophers have debated the concept of generation. From biblical scholars to Greek philosophers, the standard measure of time was not years but instead generations (Strauss & Howe, 1991a). There are varying opinions among scholars about what constitutes a generation. For some scholars, generation has biological roots that extend from parent to child, the familial generation (Biggs, 2007). The familial study of generation is important when the goal is to examine the link between a specific group of parents and children (Strauss & Howe, 1991a).

Kertzer (1983) argued that there are four categories of generation: kinship/familial, cohort, life stage, and historical period. Anthropology undergirds the kinship view of generation and in this context refers to the large universe of kinship relations. Demographers greatly
influenced the concept of cohort groupings. Within this context, a cohort generation refers to the “succession of people moving through the age strata, the younger replacing the old as everyone ages together” (Kertzer, 1983, p. 126). The life-stage generation describes how people of the same generation respond differently to the same events. Kertzer’s description of cohort and life-stage generation aligns somewhat with Strauss and Howe’s (1991a) characterization. Lastly, Kertzer framed generation from the perspective of people living in a particular historical period. While this is the least common characterization of generation, it remains a part of the generation theory literature.

Mannheim’s (1968) conceptualization of generation was expansive. Two relevant themes of Mannheim’s theory of generation are generation as actuality and generational unit. Generation as actuality is the way in which generations interpret their experiences. This requires the members of a generation to participate in the social and intellectual currents of his or her society and period (Mannheim, 1968). Additionally, the members of the generation should have an active or passive experience with the societal forces of change. People growing up during the time of Jim Crow legislation share a common experience and apply meaning to that experience. Mannheim (1968) characterized this as participating in a common destiny (p. 303).

Mannheim (1968) argued that the existence of generation as a unit is “constituted by the data that makes up the consciousness of its members” (p. 304). To become fully assimilated in a group, its members must see things from “the perspective of the group and apply meaning accordingly” (Mannheim, 1968, p. 306). Generation cohorts are bound together by the handing down of attitudes and traditions from the prior generation. For example, African American women pass stories of survival and resistance to younger generations (Collins, 2009a). With this knowledge, successive generations are able to become the source of continuing practice
Knowledge is transferred from one generation to another. As a result, new knowledge is created that can inform political structures.

Another frame in which to examine generation is through the lens of cohort groups. Strauss and Howe (1991a) argued that generations are not connected to genealogy or family lineage, but instead are created by the same historical moments. They define a generation as “a cohort group whose length approximates the span of a phase of life and whose boundaries are fixed by peer personalities” (Strauss & Howe, 1991a, p. 60). Members of the same cohort live in the same social or historical time, share a history, and are shaped by the common history (Strauss & Howe, 1991a, p. 436).

Cohort groups became popularized by demographers and the media. Strauss and Howe (1991a) argued that each generation has its own personality or identity. There are seven generations alive today and two of the seven are extremely old. The five remaining generations include the G.I., silent, baby boom, Gen-X, and the millennial generations. These generation categories situate people by birth year ranges.

Certain identities are ascribed to cohort groups based on a shared history. Millennials are described as the generation that is connected and confident. The use of technology is one of the things that differentiate millennials from Generation-X. Generation-X is depicted as “savvy, entrepreneurial loners” (Keeter & Taylor, 2009, p. 4). Baby boomers work hard out of loyalty and expect a long term job (Bickel & Brown, 2005). These are just a few of the generational descriptors for the millennials, Gen-Xers, and baby boomers.

Table 2.1 is an illustration of the most common birth ranges. However, it is important to note that there is little consensus about the birth ranges for the different generations (Smola & Sutton, 2002; Strauss & Howe, 1991b).
Table 2.1

*Generation Birth Year and Identity*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Generational Identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G.I. Generation</td>
<td>1901-1924</td>
<td>This is the generation of the original Boy and Girl Scouts, victorious soldiers and the builders of rockets, suburbs, and highways. This generation is politically assertive and held on to the White House for 30 years. They are active senior citizens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silent Generation</td>
<td>1925-1942</td>
<td>This generation falls between World War II and the Vietnam draft in terms of historical events. This is the generation of Peace Corps activists. They tend to give to charity, are apt to see both sides of an argument and believe in fair processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boom Generation</td>
<td>1943-1964</td>
<td>A defining characteristic of baby boomers is a lack of social discipline and a desire to inject new values into institutions of which they are a part. Boomers exhibit an inclination toward inner absorption, perfectionism, and individual self-esteem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation X</td>
<td>1965-1981</td>
<td>This generation grew up with a great deal of insecurity and rapid change. This was the most diverse generation of its time. It’s a generation that lacked solid traditions. This is a generation influenced by MTV, HIV/AIDS, and increased divorce rates. They are technically competent and comfortable with change, diversity, multi-tasking, and competition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millennials</td>
<td>1982-2003</td>
<td>This generation is just entering the workforce in numbers. However, they crave higher salaries, flexible work schedules, and more financial leverage. This generation is the most wired and has access to information 24/7. They are predicted to be the most socially active generation since the 1960s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Smola and Sutton (2002); Strauss and Howe (1991b).

There are different ways of looking at generational identity. Joshi, Dencker, Franz, and Martocchio (2010) argued that cohort-based identity “emerges because of a specific event that leads to a common set of experiences and outcomes for individuals” (p. 396). In this framework, cohort means “groups of individuals that enter the same state such as an organization or educational system at the same time” (Joshi et al., 2010, p. 396). Because of a shared point in time, members of the same cohort groups typically respond to situations in a typical fashion that is different from other cohort groups (Joshi et al., 2010).
There are multiple dimensions to generation identity that include age-based and cohort-based generation identities. Age-based cohorts possess a unique and communal set of attitudes and values that materialize as a result of “the successive coming of age” of birth year cohorts (Joshi et al., 2010). These attitudes are unique to each successive generation based on their experiences and collective memories. The meaning applied to experiences and collective memories inform the expectations of a generation cohort in later years (Joshi et al., 2010).

A cohort-based generation identity emerges as the result of a specific event that leads to “a common set of experiences and outcomes for individuals” (Joshi et al., 2010, p. 396). Cohort effects must be taken into consideration when analyzing generations. The cohort effect is the way in which members of a cohort respond to the same experiences that are characteristic of the group. This characterization of cohort identity is similar to Mannheim’s (1968) thinking about generational units.

Within the scope of this study, I examined the perceptions African American women have about race and social justice. I made the assumption that women from different generation cohorts may perceive race differently as a result of the societal changes in attitudes about race and racism. Investigating how African American women compare to the different characteristics of generation cohorts is beyond the scope of this study.

**Race Gender and Generation Differences**

A key element in the transition from one generation to another is the transfer of cultural heritage. Gongaware (2003) argued that collective memories are intertwined with collective identity. Through narrative commemorations, such as recalling the past or storytelling, communities can link the past to the present (Gongaware, 2003). Additionally, commemorations can occur with the building of structures, holidays, special events, and similar tactics that keep a
memory of the past alive. Juneteenth, a celebration of the commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States, and Kwanzaa, a celebration of family, community, and culture are examples of commemorations within the African American community.

Within the framework of social justice activism, African American women have a history of passing the torch to subsequent generations (Gyant, 1996). From slavery to the civil rights movement, Black women have organized around the needs of the community (Gyant, 1996). The collective identity of Black women and their collective memories maintained social movements. The Black women’s clubs of the 19th century were formed to fight oppression and the marginalization of African American women and to fulfill needs in the Black community. Black solidarity arose from a strong sense of personal and group identity that led to social activism.

Gongaware (2003) argued that the collective identity of a social movement “implies the unity of a shared sense that it is a coherent actor with shared ends, means, and fields of action and shared emotional investments” (p. 486). Black women involved with the civil rights movement, for example, were raised during Jim Crow and were extremely conscious of racial injustices (Gyant, 1996). During the Jim Crow era, racism was easier to identify and name. In a colorblind era, this is not necessarily the case. The Gen-X and millennial generations are confronted with a new construct of race. Marable (2003) posited that the challenge for oppressed groups in a racist society is the “struggle to reclaim collective memory and identity” (p. 172).

Knowledge is created from personal experience (Mannheim, 1968). Different personal experiences with racism can lead to different conclusions about the relevance of race. The race consciousness among Black women varies and within the same generation, different degrees of race consciousness can exist. Additionally, not all Black women of the younger generation are
empowered with race consciousness. However, for those Black women who are race conscious, it is important to examine the “historical conditions and discourses that enabled their awareness” (Brush, 2001, p. 193).

Mannheim (1968) argued that different generations fight different opponents. What shapes the thinking of one generation may not necessarily shape or influence the thinking of the next generation. Mannheim (1968) stated his position in this way:

While older people may still be combating something in themselves or in the external world in such fashion that all their feelings and efforts and even their concepts and categories of thought are determined by that adversary, for the younger people, this adversary may be simply non-existent: their primary orientation is an entirely different one. (p. 299)

Mannheim offered a plausible explanation for differences in thinking across generations. His analysis brings into focus how generations apply meaning and create knowledge from their experiences.

The transition from the civil rights movement to the Black power and Black Nationalist movement are examples of the tensions created both within and among generational cohorts. Integration and social equality were the precepts of the civil rights movement. Disillusioned with the non-violent approach to social change advocated by Dr King, students on college campuses began a series of sit-ins throughout the south. The emergence of Black power and radical groups with nationalist and Marxist orientations began to form (Winant, 2004). The construct of race was transforming again and Carmichael and Hamilton (1967) introduced the notion of institutional racism into the American lexicon and thinking. Black women’s clubs formed during the early part of the 19th century were not immune to the rallying cry for militancy. The National Council of Negro Women had difficulty recruiting and maintaining memberships among the younger generation who believed the NCNW lacked knowledge of the
younger generation. The younger members complained that the older members did not respect their thoughts or ideas and were relegated to menial tasks within the organization (White, 1999). The inability to attract younger members almost rendered the organization obsolete in the 1960s.

The National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs and the Ladies Auxiliary of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters were not able to remain relevant when the focus shifted from racial uplift to Black Nationalism. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was formed in 1960 by Southern student activists organized by Ella Baker. SNCC quickly became the more “radical and confrontational arm of the civil rights movement” (Holsaert et al., 2010, p. 1). Ella Baker understood the sentiments and attitudes of the students who felt the adult leadership was too accommodating and unimaginative (Payne, 1989). Leaders of the NCNW were not the only ones to feel the effects of generation differences. Younger leaders felt DuBois was “too leftist and considered him a lost leader” (Nelson, 2003, p. 101). Martin Luther King, Jr. and Kwame Ture (Stokley Carmichael) were from different generations, the G.I. and Silent generations respectively. However, they shared a common identity and experience as African American males living within a legal system that confined them to being second class citizens. While there was a disagreement about how to respond to racism, neither man disagreed with the egregious nature of the system. King (1968) argued that the racial environment confronting African Americans was complex and required a diversified approach to find solutions. Table 2.2 depicts how Black women responded to the racial conditions of the era. The generational cohort groups are derived from the work of Strauss and Howe (1991a). These cohort groups are part of a generational life cycle with generational personalities (Strauss & Howe, 1991b). W. E. B. DuBois is part of the missionary generation and the lost generation
includes Presidents Eisenhower and Truman. The missionary and lost generations are included here for historical purposes only.

Table 2.2

**Critical Generational Influences and Social Action**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Generational Influences</th>
<th>Social Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Missionary Generation</td>
<td>1860-1882</td>
<td>End of slavery and repeal of civil rights legislation</td>
<td>Sojourner Truth influences public thought about race and gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost Generation</td>
<td>1883-1900</td>
<td>Reconstruction period, Plessey v. Ferguson, rise of the color-line, lynching of African Americans</td>
<td>National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs formed; Ida B. Wells-Barnett resistance to lynching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.I. Generation</td>
<td>1901-1924</td>
<td>World War I, institutionalization of Jim Crow, Pan Africanism Movement</td>
<td>Women started schools to educate Black children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silent Generation</td>
<td>1925-1942</td>
<td>World War II, New Deal</td>
<td>National Council of Negro Women formed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boom Generation</td>
<td>1943-1964</td>
<td>Civil Rights Movement</td>
<td>Ella Baker works to form the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation X</td>
<td>1965-1981</td>
<td>Civil Rights Movement, Black Panther Party</td>
<td>Black Nationalism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Strauss and Howe (1991b).

I argue that another transition is occurring with the African American community. Millennials perceive race and gender issues differently and want to disassociate from what may be viewed as traditional ways of responding to social injustice. Womack (2010) argued that a new generation is redefining Black identity in the United States. She did not ignore the fact that racism exists. However, there is a new generation of African Americans who want to shed the
old identity of the permanently disadvantaged. Womack’s (2010) perspective is similar to Irvin’s (2004) depiction of the thrivals. Young African Americans are driven by a consciousness of thriving rather than merely surviving. According to Irvin (2004), thrivals have moved from fighting for basic human rights to embracing a new world view that positions them to see themselves as “shaping the future rather than being shaped by the forces of the future” (p. 16).

The notion of racial solidarity is rapidly becoming obsolete. Racial solidarity has historically been the glue that held the African American community together. Racial uplift was the critical theme espoused during much of the 20th century. It was the realization that regardless of your station in life, all African Americans encountered the same racial, social, and economic injustices (Cash, 2001; Collins, 1998, 2009a; Davis, 1972; Jackson & Jones, 2001; Marable, 2003; Nelson, 2003; Robinson, 2010). The racial solidarity that pitted mainstream Black culture against U.S. policies is dissolving (Robinson, 2010).

The racial milieu is different for baby boomers than for Gen-Xers and millennials. As a cohort, they share different historical experiences. Current generational theory describes a narrow slice of the population, typically White males (Kunreuther, 2003; Shaw, 2010). Race and ethnicity are rarely taken into consideration when conducting generation studies. Kunreuther (2003) argued that examining race and ethnicity may be of more value than just investigating “generation issues alone” (p. 452). Examining generation identity alone excludes other social determinants that can influence the perspectives of cohort groups. Using an intersectional lens to examine race, gender, and generation differences can illuminate the current understanding of the way Black women are thinking and responding to social injustice. Cole (2009) argued that a “failure to attend to how social categories depend on one another for meaning renders our knowledge of any one category both incomplete and biased” (p. 4). The recognition of
generation as a relevant social category in the analysis of race and social activism provides a more comprehensive perspective.

The profiles of people participating in generation studies rarely include people of color in significant numbers. In the comprehensive study of millennials conducted by the Pew Research Center, Taylor and Keeter (2010) acknowledged the small sampling of people of color which affected the significance of some of the data collected. The demographics of the Sessa, Kabacoff, Deal, and Brown (2007) study of generation differences in leader values and leadership behavior included 84.9% people who identified themselves as White. The race and ethnicity of the remaining participants is unknown. In Smola and Sutton’s (2002) study of generational differences, 87% of the participants identified as White and 8% identified as African American.

The exception is the Apollon (2011) study that focused on the millennials attitudes about race and racism in key societal systems. The participants were highly diverse—17% White, 17% Black, 33% Latino, and 33% Asian American/Pacific Islander. The representation of male to female was 40% and 60% respectively. The purpose of the study was to examine millennials as a cohort group. A cross generation comparison was not made. However, within the population studied, the millennials indicated that race remains a factor in social systems like criminal justice, health care, housing, immigration, and public education.

Using intersectionality theory, I will compare the racial attitudes of African American women from three generation cohorts. This entails designing research questions that investigate Black women’s attitudes about the relevance of race, gender and leadership, and social activism.
Conceptual Framework

I used intersectionality theory and social identity theory to explore, analyze, and interpret Black women’s attitudes about race. The racial attitudes of Black women are complex and how they respond to social conditions vary. My attempt here was not to essentialize African American women but rather to explicate the relevance of their perspectives. While I investigated the attitudes of Black women, I did not mean to suggest that the attitudes of Black men were unimportant. Black men played an important role in crafting democratic principles in the United States. I acknowledge the fact that the stories of Black men are relevant and needed to understand the historical oppression of African Americans. However, I decided to narrow the focus of the study to Black women because of my interest in this segment of the population. I am interested in studying African American women because of the unique place Black women occupy in American history (Cash, 2001; Collins 2009b; Davis, 1972; Shorter-Gooden, 2004; Shorter-Gooden & Washington, 1996).

Race and gender have historically been at the center of Black women’s activism. In reviewing the literature, it appears that Black women’s activism occurred in all sectors of society: public, private, and nonprofit. Within the nonprofit sector, change happened through nonprofit organizations established to resolve social problems and unmet needs and at the local level through community-based organizations. The historical accounts of Black women’s social activism highlight the formation of the club movement with national organization structures (Cash, 2001; Giddings, 1984; Nelson, 2003; White, 1999). Historical accounts of community activism focus on how Black women created change at the local level through community-based organizations or neighborhood groups (Collins, 1998; Gilkes, 1994; Hine & Thompson, 1998; Naples, 1991, 1996, 1998; Payne, 2007; Preskill & Brookfield, 2009). Building on community-
based activism, another perspective of social change that exists in the literature is based on coalition building. Using intersectionality theory as a lens of analysis, Cole (2008) investigated the conditions necessary for successful coalition building. Themes that emerged from this work were the challenges of defining similar interests to bring diverse members together and the capacity to address power differences to maintain a working alliance. This work explicated the importance of examining multiple social categories to enhance the quality of the analysis.

Another element of women’s activism and resistance is evident in the work that focuses on Black women in corporate America. Ella Bell, Stella Nkomo, and Patricia Parker, and other scholars increased awareness of gendered racism and activist strategies to create change in corporate America. The scholars and the work reflected here are an example of the research about Black women and social justice. There is limited research on generation differences in racial attitudes and community leadership. In the context of this study, the phrase community leadership and social justice leadership are used interchangeably.

Naples (1996) examined the continuity of activist mothering among low income women. Using standpoint theory, Naples interviewed a diverse group of women to understand their motivation for community work and how the tradition continues in the next generation. Race and ethnic differences informed their community work. For example, Black women’s community work emerged from their mothering practices (Gilkes, 1994; Naples, 1996). Generally, Black women involved in social justice activities did so as they held full or part-time jobs (Payne, 2007). Numerous Black women working for social change did not carry a formal title of leader and their efforts went unrecognized (Payne, 2007). Then, there were women like Ella Baker who worked for social justice organizations like the NAACP.
The research sample for this study included Black women who were engaged in social justice work through volunteerism or employment for a social justice organization. Women from diverse socio-economic statuses were invited to participate in the study. The Black women were selected from three distinct generation cohorts: baby boom, Gen-X, and millennial. All of the participants were at least 21 years of age and lived in the Denver metropolitan area. The highest concentration of African Americans living in the state of Colorado exists in the Denver metropolitan area.

**Social identity.** Social identity is that aspect of “an individual’s sense of self that is rooted in the individual’s group membership—the part that gives people a sense of ‘we’ and includes other members of the group in one’s sense of self” (van Knippenberg, 2011, p. 1079). Groups exist in relation to other groups and derive their social meaning in relation to other groups (Hogg, 2001). Social identity theory postulates that people categorize themselves and others into social classifications that influence human behavior (Nkomo, 2010). These social classifications create in-group and out-group memberships. Booysen (2007) argued that individuals have multiple social identities with different degrees of salience. For example, if a Black woman is the only racial and ethnic minority in a meeting consisting of males and females, her race and ethnicity may become more salient than her gender. These overlapping identities are viewed as a constellation of cultural identities or a repertoire of identities (Booysen, 2007). Settles (2006) argued that “the intersected Black-woman identity was more important than the individual identities of woman and Black person” (p. 589). This is consistent with a study conducted by Gay and Tate (1998) that found Black women identify as strongly on the basis of their gender as their race and that “gender and race identities are mutually reinforcing” (p. 169). At the turn of the 20th century, women working to create social change identified as race women
(Cash, 2001; Giddings, 1984; White, 1999). The phrase race woman suggests a possibility that race and gender identities were equally salient. As a social group, activism for Black women was based on their race and gender.

Social identity groups can be defined as groups where an individual’s self-concept results from being a member of the group (or category) along with the psychological value and emotional importance attached to the group membership (Booysen, 2007). Essentially, individuals attach emotional value and significance to their respective groups, which can in turn influence how they think about themselves and others (Nkomo, 2010). Social identity groups can perceive their group as being better than other social identity groups, creating an in-group out-group competition.

In the context of leadership, van Knippenberg (2011) argued that social identity is relevant in understanding the effectiveness of leaders. Within the framework of leaders and followers, leaders are effective to the extent that followers perceive them as having mutual social group identifications. Stated differently, leaders are effective if the group perceives the leader as someone who is mindful of the group’s interests. During the civil rights movement, African Americans strongly identified with Dr. King because of his understanding of the needs of the community. His message resonated with a broad spectrum of people who in turn took action to create social change. Malcolm X emerged as a leader with a strong followership because his ideology of self-identification appealed to a different group of people than those who identified with the ideology of Dr. King. In-group bias and out-group derogation can exist within racial and ethnic groups.

A unique social identity for African Americans emerged as a result of a common legacy of oppression and the civil rights movement. For most of the 19th and 20th centuries, African
Americans were the dominant racial minority group in the United States. African Americans significantly influenced legislation creating fair housing, employment, and educational opportunities. The Immigration Act of 1965 influenced a shift in the racial and ethnic landscape of the United States (Vaca, 2004) and people of Hispanic origin now hold the distinction of being the largest racial and ethnic minority. This shift is significant because the United States is no longer divided between Black and White. More importantly, in some parts of the country, African Americans may not yield the same level of social, economic, or political power they once held as the largest racial and ethnic minority.

Another important demographic shift is the emergence of the millennial generation. The millennial generation is one generation removed from Jim Crow laws that legally restricted access and opportunities for African Americans (Robinson, 2010). The millennial generation is the most racially and ethnically diverse generation (Apollon, 2011, 2012; Keeter & Taylor, 2009) and it is also touted as the most liberal generation (Taylor & Keeter, 2010). Stated differently, the millennial generation may be more receptive to racial and ethnic diversity than other generation cohorts. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the number of individuals identifying as mixed-race is increasing. In 2010, the largest multiple race categories were Black and White (Humes et al., 2011). The racial identity of African Americans and people in general is becoming more difficult to define. This is the context that frames individual and group social identities and the conditions that frame Black women’s social activism.

Social identity theory was used to interpret the lens through which Black women perceive race, gender, and leadership. During the course of the study, I asked questions like “how important is it to have Black leaders in the Black community?” Other questions were “do you
feel you have been discriminated because of your race and gender?” and “researchers say Black women either identify with their race or their gender. How do you feel about that statement?”

Race and gender. As a critical social theory, Black feminist thought embodies the dialectic relationship between oppression and activism. The intent of Black feminist theory and other social theories emanating from or on behalf of Black women and other historically oppressed groups is to seek ways to “escape from, survive in, and oppose prevailing social and economic injustice” (Collins, 2009a, p. 11). In her critique of Black feminist thought, Collins (2002) argued that at the intersection of multiple oppressions; race, class, gender, sexuality, and age among others, knowledge is created and recreated from the tensions that exists between oppression and the fight for social justice.

Historically, Black women have played a critical role in the creation of oppositional knowledge through their work as “other mothers, teachers, clubwomen, churchwomen, cultural workers, and community activists (Cash, 2001; Collins, 1998, 2009a; Davis, 1972, 1983; Giddings, 1984; hooks, 2000; Lerner, 1973; Naples, 1998; White 1999). The act of analyzing and constructing ways to fight systemic oppression through poetry, literature, the academy, and other tactics, characterizes the core of Black feminist thought. Within the framework of Black feminist thought, I examined the dynamics of race and gender related to Black women’s social activism. While constructed differently, race and gender work in tandem to shape the experiences of Black women. Race and gender are inexorably linked together to create and sustain complex systems of oppression. Gay and Tate (1998) argued that Black women are doubly bound in the web of race and gender.

Intersectionality theory. Intersectionality theory operates within a paradigm that claims racialized constructions of social groups can sustain other hierarchies of inequality (Brewer,
Traditionally, race and gender have been treated as mutually exclusive sites of experience and analysis. Cole (2009) argued that early expressions of intersectionality theory focused on the “experiences of groups holding multiple disadvantaged statuses and by doing so explicated the way in which analysis of social categories like race and gender independently may be limited because in practice individuals experience these social categories simultaneously” (p. 3). Intersectionality theory refutes the single-axes and additive frameworks of race and gender when analyzing the experiences of Black women. The additive framework of analyzing social categories such as race, gender, class, age, and sexuality misses the compounding effects of multiple social locations that create and recreate inequitable conditions (Collins, 1998, 2000a, 2009b; Crenshaw, 2000; Dill & Zambrana, 2009).

Crenshaw (2000) argued that Black women are sometimes excluded from “feminist theory and anti-racist policy discourse because both are predicated on a discrete set of experiences that often does not reflect the interaction of race and gender” (p. 209). Intersectionality theory, a term coined by Crenshaw (1991), originated from a legal viewpoint. However, the theoretical structure of intersectionality theory extends beyond the legal constructs. Intersectionality is a multi-disciplinary theory to analyze the complexity of power, domination, and marginalization as a result of intersecting social locations. Intersectionality theory is based on the pursuit of social justice by challenging the standard modes of knowledge production and offering an alternative model that blends “advocacy, analysis, theorizing, and pedagogy” (Dill & Zambrana, 2009, p. 1). Dill and Zambrana (2009) argued that the underlying premise of intersectionality theory is a focus on the experiences of people of color, acknowledging the complexity of individual and group identity revealing the inherent power contained in
interconnected structures of inequality and the promotion of social justice and social change.

Collins (1986) argued that Black women operate from a position of being the *outsider within*, part of a social system yet oppressed and marginalized by the system. Status as an outsider within provides a special perspective on self, family, and society in general (Collins, 1986). Being an outsider within is evidenced by the systemic exclusion experienced by African American men and women during the era of reconstruction and Jim Crow. For Black women, the concept was particularly relevant when attempting to gain the franchise and obtain their legal rights under the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

McCall (2005) provided an alternate lens from which to understand intersectionality theory. Intersectionality theory, argued McCall, is complex because the experiences of the subject studied are expanded to include multiple dimensions of social life and categories of analysis such as ethnic females and lesbians. From this perspective, the question becomes how to study intersectionality. The general thesis of McCall’s argument is the fact that individuals have multiple identities that are socially constructed. These multiple identities add a level of complexity to intersectional theory. This argument is interesting when evaluated using the lens of social identity theory. Individuals have a constellation of identities that operate in relation to one another and in relation to the group identity. Therefore, the salience of an identity is constructed and reconstructed depending on the context of the situation. Within the scope of this study, race and gender were the identities under investigation. An alternate view of this argument is provided by Crenshaw (1991). While categories such as race and gender are socially constructed, to ignore race and gender would also ignore the way in which people are oppressed because of the categorization of race and gender. Stated differently, it is important to think about how “power is clustered around certain categories and is exercised against others. In line with
this thinking, ‘categories have meaning and consequences’” (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 24).

Additionally, Crenshaw argued that values are attached to categories, which in turn creates and sustains social hierarchies. This is the similar argument made by Booysen (2007), who postulated that a constellation of social identities that have meaning work in tandem to inform a person’s perception of self and their group.

Social identity theory compliments the precepts of intersectionality theory. Both McCall (2005) and Crenshaw (1991) recognized the complexity inherent in categorization. However, Crenshaw built a bridge between categorization and the exercise of power. The exercise of power is not unilateral. Categorization provides the dominant culture the opportunity to oppress those perceived as different, while categorization provides people who are oppressed with the power to self-identify. Self identification is a form of resistance. I used intersectionality theory to analyze and interpret how race and gender inform the attitudes of Black women from different generations.

**Standpoint theory.** Standpoint theory flows from Black feminist thought. Collins (1998) defined standpoint theory in this way:

A social theory arguing that group location in hierarchical power relationships produces shared challenges for individuals in those groups. These common challenges can foster similar angles of vision leading to a group knowledge or standpoint that in turn can influence the group’s political action. (p. 201)

With roots in Marxist theory, standpoint theory provides “the justification for the truth claims of feminism” (Hekman, 1997, p. 341). Hartsock (1998) argued that the perspectives of people on the margins tend to be clearer than those of the oppressor. A more accurate view of inequality is held by individuals who are most marginalized (Hartsock, 1998). Standpoint theory, as articulated by Hartsock, generated out of the need to theorize the oppression of women, which tended to refer to White women. The essence of Hartsock’s argument is the
sexual division of labor which defined women’s activities. Hartsock’s argument for standpoint theory is based primarily on gender. Collins (1998) argued that Black women hold a unique standpoint bourn from their subjugation resulting from race, class, and gender. Standpoint theory is an alternative epistemological approach to substantiate the wisdom of Black women gained through their history of oppression and resistance.

At the core of standpoint theory is acknowledging the lived experience as a criterion of meaning, the use of dialogue in assessing knowledge claims, an ethic of caring, and an ethic and commitment to personal responsibility (Collins, 2009a). These core tenets were further explicated when Collins (2009a) wrote:

Black feminist intellectuals must be personal advocates for their material, be accountable for the consequences of their work, have lived or experienced their material in some fashion, and be willing to engage in dialogues about their findings with ordinary, everyday people. (p. 285)

Standpoint theory places Black women at the center of analysis and recognizes the knowledge gained through experiencing multiple forms of oppression (Collins, 1998, 2009a). Placing African American women at the center of analysis juxtaposes the analysis of women from objects of analysis to producers of new knowledge. Collins (1998, 2009a) argued that historically, the voices of Black women in the United States have been suppressed, thus rendering Black women and their ideas relatively invisible to the society at large. In response to this situation, contemporary Black feminism operates from a shared belief that “Black women are inherently valuable” and the liberation of Black women is a necessity to achieve authentic personhood (Hull et al., 1982, p. 15). Recognizing the inherent value of Black women’s voices enables researchers to uncover different forms of resistance and alternate narratives gained from investigating the standpoint of Black women.
The experience of Black women is an essential theme of standpoint theory. However, it is important not to essentialize the experiences of Black women and assume they all think alike and their experiences are the same. Critics of Collins’ (2009a) standpoint theory argued that she ignored the ideological and material differences among Black women (Harnois, 2010). Collins (2009a) countered this claim by arguing that as a result of Black women’s location in a society that devalues them, they share a common experience. Harnois (2010) claimed that Black women and Black men embrace the basic tenets of Black feminist thought. I argue that the intent of standpoint theory is to recognize alternate ways to investigate and comprehend the knowledge generated by the lived experiences of marginalized people.

The question of whose voice is heard is another criticism of Black standpoint theory. Reynolds (2002) argued that only select stories of Black womanhood are discussed. In essence, standpoint theory is reductionist because it accepts the lived experiences of a few as the lived experiences of all Black women (Reynolds, 2002). Within this frame of thinking, Black women are positioned as victims instead of actors and meaningful contributors to society. The multiple oppressions of race, class, and gender are valorized and the assumption of collective history based on the struggle against marginalization form the framework for standpoint theory (Mirza, 1997; Reynolds, 2002). I argue that the study of historical oppression and marginalization is necessary to lay the foundation for understanding the evolution of racial attitudes among African American women. You need to know “how we got to where we are to fully appreciate where we are now” (Dr. Rose Brewer, presentation, October 27, 2011). The intent of this study is not to position Black women as victims, but to instead use standpoint theory to explicate the differences in thinking about race based on personal experience and the involvement of women.
in Black civil society. The research questions were designed to investigate racial attitudes and the propensity for social activism.

Another criticism of standpoint theory is the seemingly narrow focus on African American women. I argue that standpoint theory is not the exclusive domain of Black women. Anyone can have a standpoint based on his or her experiences with a particular social phenomenon. In essence, everyone has a standpoint. Collins (2002) argued that “it is tempting to claim that Black women are more oppressed than everyone else and therefore have the best standpoint from which to understand the mechanisms, processes, and effects of oppression, this is not the case” (p. 290).

The concept of experience is another concern expressed about standpoint theory. Generally, it is assumed that the term experience is self-explanatory (Reynolds, 2002). Marx introduces the concept of experience when he analyzes the position of the proletariat (Hartsock, 1998). Both Hartsock (1998) and Collins (2009a) relied heavily on a Marxist paradigm to explicate the value and merit of expanding what constitutes knowledge.

When providing a framework for understanding feminism, Hartsock (1998) argued that privileging lived experiences respects an individual’s experience enough to “understand that they are in the best position to make their own revolution” (p. 6). Standpoint is an active stance based on individual lived experience. Standpoint is not based on a preconceived viewpoint (Hartsock, 1998). Borrowing from a Marxist paradigm, Hartsock challenged what gets to count as knowledge. She argued that truth is fluid and the creation of knowledge is a human activity constructed by human concerns. Essed (1994) argued there are different methodological approaches to the study of race, class, and gender. However, regardless of the approach, the
concrete experience of the people involved in a study is “an essential criterion of meaning” (Essed, 1994, p. 100).

I argue that standpoint theory within the context of this study is relevant because it enables me to delve deeper into the attitudes and opinions Black women have about race. Attitudes and opinions are partially formed by personal experiences. I conducted an exploratory mixed-methods study that explicated the gendered expressions of race and racism.

**Generation cohort.** I examined the intersection of race and gender using the lens of the generation cohorts, baby boomers, Gen-X, and millennials. I investigated how each generation viewed race and how that perspective influenced their involvement in social change. Generation cohorts have different experiences that may influence their involvement in social activism.

From Mannheim (1968) to Strauss and Howe (1991a), generation studies include a broad range of topics. Studies focus on single generations, comparisons of generations from a societal framework, and generational differences in the workplace. What is absent from the literature is an analysis of generation differences from the perspective of African American women. Studying generation differences about race, gender, and social activism builds on the precepts of Black feminist thought. I argue that a study of attitudes based on different generations is timely given the contemporary perspectives about race, a social environment that espouses colorblind ideologies, and an attitude that the country is post-civil rights and post-racial. This study provided a context for understanding how Black women from different generation cohorts perceive race and address social justice issues.

The intent of this study was to examine the differences in attitudes about race among Black women who are social activists from different generations. This study did not include an examination of how Black women identify with the prevailing descriptions for baby boomers,
Gen-Xers, or millennials. A review of the literature indicated that references to generation differences occurred within the context of race. Marable (2003) discussed the different perspectives between older and younger generations about how to address racism in America. King (1968) provided a reflective commentary on what the social justice focus should be for the next generation. Ella Baker mentored Black women in community organizing and provided examples for community leadership (Payne, 2007). Gaining knowledge about the relevance of race for Black women from different generations is relevant for understanding social activism. This study also has relevance and applicability for workplace diversity. However, this level of examination was outside the scope of this study.

Theoretical framework model. This study examined generation differences amongst African American women. Within the generation cohorts, I explored Black women’s perspectives or standpoint about the intersection of race and gender and the implications for their social justice work. Social identity theory guided an understanding of how African American women identify in the collective. Stated differently, social identity theory facilitated an awareness of African American women’s race and gender identities. Figure 2.1 is an illustration of the conceptual framework that guided this study.
African American women from three different generation cohorts were the focus of this study. I explored the personal experiences, past and present, of African American women to understand their view about race. I assumed that because of their location in hierarchical systems of power, African American women may experience some common challenges (Collins, 2009a) and may have a unique view about growing up in a Jim Crow, civil rights, and post-civil rights America. Questions like “what were your experiences with racism growing up as an African American female in your neighborhood?” were asked. This type of question connects race and gender identifications. Additionally, I intentionally linked race and generation cohorts. For example, the focus groups were organized by generation cohort. I focused questions on both historic and contemporary issues about race. For example, “historically, having lighter skin was perceived as being better than having darker skin, what is your opinion about this?” Then they were asked to explore the question deeper by examining their racial identity based on their generation cohort. For example, “a Black man dating White women was problematic for women
of the baby boom generation. Is interracial dating an issue for all generation cohorts?” The focus group participants were questioned about their attitudes about racism and how their experiences influence their social activism. I asked questions like “what did you learn from your parents or community about race?” and “what did you learn from your family or community about social activism?” Because the focus groups were cohort specific, the responses to the questions added an understanding about race and gender within the context of a generation cohort.

Intersectionality theory connected race and gender within the generation cohort. I used intersectionality theory to analyze and interpret the data collected from the focus groups and the survey. A core tenet of Black feminist thought is activism. Collins (2009a) argued that the “changing organization of intersecting oppressions as well as the contours of activism required for resistance demand a dynamic Black women’s activism and an equally vigorous U.S. Black feminism” (p. 238). Dill (2002) made the same argument: “the goal of intersectional theory is to contribute to a more just society” (p. 5). I used intersectionality theory to identify points of convergence or intersection between race, gender, and activism within the three generation cohorts.

In chapter III, I discuss the research design and data collection methods for this study. I also discuss the rationale for an exploratory sequential mixed-methods study and the components of each phase.
Chapter III: Methodology

Overview

This chapter describes the research design and methods used in this study. I first provide a brief explanation of the study phases. Then, I discuss the rational for conducting an exploratory sequential mixed-methods design and my research philosophy. A discussion about the sample selection process and criteria for participation in the personal interviews, focus group, and survey is next, followed by a discussion of the research methods used to collect data. The final section discusses how data were analyzed, interpreted, and integrated.

This study consisted of 183 participants. In phase 1 of this study, I conducted six personal interviews with Black women from the targeted generation cohorts and three generation specific focus groups. Twenty women participated in the personal interviews and focus groups. In phase 2 of this study, 163 women participated in a survey. I conducted a survey to further explore the information gained from the personal interviews and focus groups. The survey was used to corroborate the themes that emerged during the personal interviews and focus groups. In phase 3 of this study, I conducted a final focus group with the same participants from phase 1 to examine the contradictions in findings between the qualitative and quantitative phases of this study. By comparing the racial attitudes of Black women from different generations, new insights were gained about Black women’s leadership of social justice issues. The three phase approach addressed a gap in the literature by investigating attitudes about race and social justice from a generation cohort perspective.

Exploratory sequential mixed-methods design. The construct for this study was a three phase exploratory sequential mixed-methods design. For the purposes of this study, the intent of the exploratory design was to explore the phenomenon to determine if the data
suggested something significant to investigate further. Tukey (1980) argued that exploratory data analysis is “an attitude, a flexibility, and a reliance on display, not a bundle of techniques” (p. 23). In an exploratory sequential mixed-methods design, qualitative and quantitative data collections are implemented in different phases and relevant data are connected in some way (Creswell, Plano Clark, & Garrett, 2008). In this research, each phase was built on a prior phase of the study. Creswell et al. (2008) argued that an exploratory design begins by “exploring the topic with qualitative methods and then build to a second quantitative phase where the initial results may be tested or generalized” (p. 6). Phase 1 was qualitative. I conducted six personal interviews and three focus groups to collect data. Phase 2 was quantitative. I designed a survey with Likert-type scale response questions and open-end questions. Phase 2 was designed to further explore the findings from phase 1. The Likert-type scale response questions were not constructed as a coherent family of items, rather as a grouping of items that emerged from the qualitative data analysis. The survey questions were grouped together under a broader theme that emerged from the personal interviews and focus group analysis. Subscales were not a component of the research design. Phase 3 was qualitative. I conducted a focus group to collect data. The purpose of the three phase exploratory sequential mixed-methods design was to explore the phenomena from multiple perspectives using qualitative and quantitative research methods.

An exploratory sequential mixed-methods design was most appropriate to answer the research questions because little information was available on generation differences in racial attitudes among African American women. The first phase of this study provided an opportunity to gather data to further explore in phase 2 and phase 3.
Figure 3.1 illustrates the process for collecting data and integrating the findings to develop the next phase of the study.

The mixed-methods typology for this study had four components: (a) developmental, each phase built on the results of the prior phase (Rossman & Wilson, 1994); (b) sequential, one phase followed the other in sequence; (c) full mixed-methods, a mixed-methods approach was integrated into the design, collection, analysis, and interpretation of the data; and (d) equal status design, qualitative and quantitative methods received equal treatment (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). Table 3.1 illustrates the three-phase construct of this exploratory sequential mixed-methods design: the data collection methods used, the process used to solicit participants, and the design of the interview, focus group, and survey questions.
Explanation of study phases. Phase 1 explored how Black women gave meaning to race in a society described by some social scientists and conservatives (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Dyson, 2007; Gallagher, 2007; Guinier & Torres, 2002; Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 1997; Winant, 2004) as a society that adopts a colorblind, post-racial, or post-civil rights point of view. The emergent themes from the personal interviews informed the design of the focus group questions. The emergent themes from both the personal interviews and focus groups informed the design of the survey questions.

Phase 2 was designed to: (a) capture the perceptions and attitudes of a broader sample of Black women to determine if there was consistency in the themes that emerged during phase 1 of the study, (b) expose additional themes not surfaced during the focus group conversations, and (c) corroborate and elaborate on the qualitative data collected in phase 1. I used data collected...

Table 3.1

*Exploratory Sequential Mixed-Methods Research Design*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualitative Phase 1</th>
<th>Quantitative Phase 2</th>
<th>Qualitative Phase 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Interview</td>
<td>Focus Group</td>
<td>Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 6</td>
<td>N = 14</td>
<td>N = 163*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Selection</td>
<td>Sample Selection</td>
<td>Sample Selection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Purposive</td>
<td>• Snowball</td>
<td>• Random Selection</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Snowball</td>
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<td>• Snowball Sample</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview Construction</td>
<td>Interview Construction</td>
<td>Survey Construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Semi-structured</td>
<td>• Semi-structured</td>
<td>• 76 Likert Scale Type Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interview Guide</td>
<td>• Interview Guide</td>
<td>• 10 Open-end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 6 Open-end</td>
<td>• 6 Open-end</td>
<td>• 9 Demographic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Questions</td>
<td>Questions</td>
<td>Questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Member Checking</td>
<td>• Member Checking</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note. A total of 205 African American women completed the survey. However, 30 women did not specify their generation cohort group and 12 were 70 years of age or older.
from the survey to corroborate data collected from the personal interviews and focus groups (Rossman & Wilson, 1994). Additionally, I used data collected from the final focus group to clarify or help understand data collected from the survey (Rossman & Wilson, 1994). Collecting data from multiple data sources allowed me to examine conflicting and contradictory pieces of information (Creswell et al., 2008).

Phase 3 was initially intended to review and discuss the results from the initial focus group and survey. After an analysis of the personal interview, focus group, and survey data, the design was modified to focus on the results of the survey.

**Exploratory sequential mixed-methods design rationale.** A mixed-methods approach allowed me to investigate the phenomena in a way that could not be accomplished by using strictly a qualitative or quantitative approach. Using this mixed-methods approach provided a complete picture of the research questions by discovering emergent themes as well as obtaining in-depth knowledge of the participant’s perspectives by administering a survey (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The study was enhanced by using multiple data sources: personal interviews, focus groups, and a survey containing closed and open-end questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Using multiple data sources illuminates points of corroboration and contradictions in the data (Rossman & Wilson, 1994). For example, the open-end survey narrative responses expanded and added another layer of understanding to the findings from the personal interviews and focus groups. The final focus group participants applied meaning to survey results and clarified conflicting data. This strengthened the credibility of the research findings while providing insight into the relationship between inquiry, approach, and the phenomenon under study (Patton, 2002).
It is important to note that between the time the focus group interviews were conducted and the survey was distributed a high profile, potentially racially motivated killing of an African American youth occurred that could impact the research findings. The potential spillover from this incident is discussed in chapter IV.

**Research philosophy.** My research orientation is dialectical pragmatism (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Johnson & Christensen, 2012). The battle lines drawn between quantitative and qualitative research do not enhance society’s ability to resolve intractable social problems. Dialectical pragmatism is a type of pragmatism that focuses on listening and synthesizing multiple worldviews and interdisciplinary outlooks (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). A dialectical perspective acknowledges different paradigms which can lead to contradictory ideas and arguments (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Singular and multiple paradigms can be used to explain a particular phenomenon. Following the appropriate research protocol for the design method selected should be the deciding factor for determining the quality of the research, not whether or not it is a quantitative or qualitative study. The focus of dialectical pragmatism is on the outcome of the research and draws on what works “using diverse approaches and valuing both objective and subjective knowledge” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 43). In accordance with a pragmatic philosophy, I was explicit about the use of multiple paradigms (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Johnson & Christensen, 2012). The organizing principle for the research findings delineates the different research methodologies used in this study.

**Personal Interview and Focus Group Design, Coding, and Analysis**

**Overview.** In this section, I first discuss the design and participant selection process for the personal interviews and then the design and selection process for the initial focus groups. The next section includes a discussion of the personal interview and focus group coding process.
I then discuss the analysis of the personal interview and focus group data. A discussion of the quantitative data collection and analysis follows the qualitative discussion. I conclude with a discussion of the final focus group data collection, coding, and analysis.

**Personal interview design.** The initial purpose of the personal interviews was to test the proposed focus group questions. However, the personal interviews were redesigned to serve as the beginning of the data collection process. I proposed conducting three personal interviews with Black women involved in social justice initiatives. I conducted a total of six interviews, with two African American women from each generation cohort. The interviews were semi-structured and there were six themed open-end questions with follow-up questions that guided the discussion. This process follows the pattern proposed by Kvale (1996) who argued that semi-structured interviews are “conducted according to an interview guide that focuses on certain themes and may include suggested questions” (p. 27). A member checking function was incorporated into the personal interviews. This was accomplished by asking clarifying questions. The personal interviews were initially scheduled for 90 minutes. The time was extended by 30 minutes to allow the participants adequate time to respond to the questions. The personal interviews were conducted at my office or the Blair Caldwell African American Library and Research Center. A copy of the personal interview guide is located in Appendix A.

**Personal interview sample selection process.** Initially, I planned to use a convenience sample to select the participants for the personal interviews. I planned to contact African American women who met the research criteria through formal and informal networks. I decided to use a purposeful sampling and snowball sampling to ensure a match between the participants and the purpose of this study. Patton (2002) argued that purposeful samples are information rich cases that can address the issues pertinent to the research. During the early
stage of developing the personal interview questions, I conducted a pilot test of the preliminary interview questions with three individuals from the generation cohorts targeted in this study. These meetings were scheduled prior to receiving Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval and the results of the interviews are not included in this study. However, this initial pilot test informed the criteria for participant selection. The criteria for participating in the personal interviews included:

- The participant should identify as an African American or African American mixed-race female.
- The participants should be involved in social justice initiatives. This included working on boards, commissions, task forces, or committees for social justice organizations. It also included volunteering for an organization, serving as an advocate for marginalized communities, or working on social justice issues as part of their profession.
- The participants should be residents of Colorado and a second generation U.S. born citizen.

The snowball sampling consisted of distributing solicitations through email to organizations focused on social justice requesting referrals based on the research criteria. As I recruited potential participants, I asked for names of other potential participants. This process is consistent with the pattern suggested by Patton (2002). The process begins by asking “well suited people ‘who know about x’ and by [their] asking a number of people the snowball gets
bigger as you accumulate information rich cases” (Patton, 2002, p. 237). A sample recruitment email is located in Appendix B.

To reach a broad range of African American women from different socio-economic classes, I contacted nonprofit organizations that served low to moderate income populations. A pre-interview questionnaire was distributed to the potential interview candidates along with a Community Involvement Matrix (CIM) and an informed consent statement to read prior to their arrival for the interview. The purpose of the pre-interview questionnaire was to determine the age, racial identification, and income range for the potential candidates. In the original design of this study, a questionnaire was going to be distributed at the end of the interview. I changed the order because I needed to know the background of the potential participant to ensure a balanced mix of income levels. A sample of the pre-interview questionnaire is located in Appendix C.

The CIM was designed to determine the level of activity for the research participants and assess a range of activism. White (2006) designed a study to “explore the racial and gender attitudes and feminist activities of self-identified African American feminists” (p. 455). As part of the study design, White (2006) developed a Feminist Activity Checklist to “assess the range of activism” (p. 465) among the survey participants. Eleven of the 18 items on White’s checklist were adapted to address the research questions in this study. The Feminist Activity Checklist informed the construct of the Community Involvement Matrix. A sample of the Community Involvement Matrix is located in Appendix D.

A copy of the informed consent statement was provided in advance for the participants to review and a copy was made available when the participants arrived for the interview. Prior to the start of the interview, the informed consent statement was reviewed and each participant was asked if they had questions. The personal interview participants were informed that the
interview would be taped. The participants were initially informed that the interviews would be taped when they received a copy of the informed consent statement. I explained the research process and what would happen to the data at the conclusion of the study to each participant. They were informed that the data would be reported in the aggregate and their personal identity would remain confidential unless they provided written permission to use their names. Pseudo names are used for all of the personal interview participants. The personal interview participants were also informed they could withdraw from the study at any time. A sample of the informed consent statement is located in Appendix E.

**Focus Group Design and Sample Selection Process**

**Phase 1 focus group design.** The semi-structured focus groups were organized by generation cohort. Each focus group was scheduled for two hours and a meal was provided before the start of the meeting. There were six questions with potential follow-up questions. This structure follows the protocol outlined by both Krueger (1994) and Kvale (1996), which stated an interview guide should be arranged by topic with subsequent questions for each topic. I intentionally included biased questions to stimulate a discussion within the group. The focus group participants were given time to respond to the questions. I followed Krueger’s (1994) framework for the flow of focus group questions. In this model, there are opening, introductory, transition, key, ending, and summary questions. Because of the enthusiasm of the participants, an informal conversation format was used. The baby boom focus group participants appreciated the less formal structure and “not having ground rules” (Baby boom focus group participant, January 23, 2012)

The focus group questions were designed based on the data collected during the personal interviews. The salient themes from the personal interviews were woven into the focus group
questions and discussion. I modified the question “where were you raised” because during the personal interview the influence of geographic location on racial attitudes surfaced as a theme. Additionally, the question generated a one- or two-word response. The question was changed to “how does where you were raised influence your attitudes about race?” The following statement and question was added to the interview guide after the baby boom focus group:

One definition of social justice is social justice is the engagement with and advocacy for those in our society who are economically, socially, politically, and/or culturally oppressed and intentionally taking action. Does this definition capture your thinking about social justice?

The careful design of focus groups was essential to obtaining useful data for the research project. After listening to the audio-tape and reflecting on the baby boom focus group, it was apparent the focus group participants each had a different view of social justice. The question was added to determine how generation cohorts defined social justice. When designing focus groups, the most essential thing to keep in mind is the purpose of the study (Knodel, 1993; Patton, 2002). A copy of the focus group interview guide is located in Appendix F.

Each focus group participant received an informed consent statement, a pre-focus group questionnaire, and a Community Involvement Matrix prior to arriving for the focus group. The forms were consistent with the documents used for the personal interview participants.

The focus group participants were instructed to fax or email the pre-focus group questionnaire prior to confirming their attendance. This step was taken to ensure a diverse group of women participated in the focus group. A copy of the pre-focus group questionnaire and informed consent statement was available at the meeting.

Before the focus group meeting began, I introduced myself and reviewed the informed consent statement. The participants were told they could withdraw from the research at anytime without repercussion, their names would not be used in the research, and that the focus group
session would be tape recorded. The participants were reminded of the follow-up focus group that would be conducted after the results of the survey were analyzed.

To begin building the research learning community, the participants introduced themselves and described how they were raised influenced their attitudes about race. This was an important step to begin establishing a connection between the group members. Focus groups work best when the participants engage in a dialogue amongst themselves instead of responding to the moderator when asked a question (Zeller, 1993). Establishing a connection between the focus group participants is also important because of the cultural framework of Black women. Cultural framework means the unique characteristics that distinguish the African American community from other communities (Rosinski, 2003). I perceive African American women, as a collective group, as highly relational. Therefore, taking the time to allow for relationship building honors the way in which the Black women socialize and interact. The baby boom and Gen-X focus groups were highly animated. There were several times group members spoke simultaneously. At different points, I asked specific people to share their perspective because of the length of responses from some of the group participants. The focus group participants were very comfortable discussing the topic and being tape recorded was neither intimidating nor uncomfortable. Saturation was reached by the third focus group.

As part of moderating the focus group process, I captured notes of the conversation using flip chart paper. I engaged in the conversation to ask a clarifying question or introduce a new question. Asking clarifying questions was a member checking function to ensure what was said was heard and interpreted correctly. Additionally, the member checking function served to summarize the emergent themes. The Gen-X focus group began 50 minutes late because access to the building was restricted. I moved the location of the focus group to a nearby coffee shop.
The audio tape of each of the focus group sessions was professionally transcribed. The tapes were transcribed verbatim. No extraneous remarks like “Um hmm,” were excluded from the transcript. Going from spoken to written word is difficult (Poland, 2003). The transcriptionist provided a time marker for places where the tape was inaudible. I compared the transcripts to the audio tape of each session. The transcriptionist captured over 90% of the conversation accurately. I used an Olympus Digital Voice Recorder WS-6005 as the primary recording device. I used a Sony IC Digital Voice Recorder ICD-MX20 as a backup device.

**Phase 1 focus group sample selection.** The selection criteria for the focus group were the same as the selection criteria for the personal interviews with one exception. Focus group participants needed to commit to participating in the final focus group. A drawing to win a $100 grocery gift card was used as an incentive to attend the final meeting.

A purposeful sampling and a snowball sample were used to solicit participants. Emails were sent to local nonprofit organizations and foundations to locate potential members. Announcements were placed in a church bulletin. I contacted African American organizations and African American organizations with women only memberships for referrals. I solicited potential members from the community Zumba/African dance class and biking club, the Association of Black Social Workers and the Denver African American Commission. Six African American women participated in the baby boom and Gen-X focus groups. I discovered that six women in each group were sufficient to explore the complex nature of race and social activism within different generations in depth (Krueger & Casey, 2009; Patton, 1987).

The millennial focus group was smaller, with only two participants. Six women agreed to participate. Due to a variety of personal reasons, only two were able to participate. Because of the difficulty finding a central location for the focus group, I decided to move forward with
the two participants. In total, 14 women participated in the initial round of focus groups. I contacted nonprofit organizations serving low to moderate income women for referrals. Additionally, I contacted women who had access to African American women from diverse socio-economic backgrounds for referrals. There were two women who expressed an interest in participating in the baby boom focus group. However they were not selected because their income exceeded what was needed for this focus group. Once the online survey was complete, the two women were provided with the link so they could participate in this study through the online survey.

**Phase 3 final focus group design.** The final focus group was a structured interview scheduled for two hours. Initially, the purpose of the final focus group was to review the results from the personal interviews, initial focus groups, and survey. The emphasis changed and the final focus group reviewed the results from the survey, specifically the areas where differences occurred between the generation cohorts. Stated differently, the final focus group added interpretive validity to the findings by clarifying contradictory data and where appropriate corroborating the results. A member checking function was incorporated into the inquiry process. There were five themed questions with additional questions under each theme. The final focus group participants did not receive any information prior to the meeting. The focus group was conducted at the Blair Caldwell African American Library and Research Center. A meal was provided and each person received a gift for their participation. In addition, a drawing was conducted for a $100 grocery gift card. A copy of the final focus group interview guide is located in Appendix G.

**Phase 3 final focus group sample selection.** To participate in the final focus group, the participant must have participated in the initial focus group meetings. An email was sent to the
initial focus group participants with a date and time for the final focus group meeting. Nine of the women indicated they would participate in the focus group and four actually participated. Before the start of the focus group, the participants were reminded that their names would not be included in the study and everything discussed in the session should remain confidential. The focus group participants were provided with a summary of the survey results and instructed to return the document at the conclusion of the meeting. A copy of the survey summary is located in Appendix H.

**Personal Interview and Focus Group Data Coding Process**

In this section, I discuss the data coding and analysis process for the personal interviews and focus groups. Figure 3.2 illustrates the data coding and analysis process.

*Figure 3.2. Data coding and analysis process.*

The method for coding and analyzing the data was sequential. Data collected from the personal interviews were coded and analyzed first. Then, data from the focus groups were coded and analyzed. The data from the personal interviews and focus groups were merged for analysis. The emergent themes derived from this process informed the design of the survey questions.
This section is organized by a discussion of the personal interview coding and analysis process followed by a discussion of the focus group interview coding and analysis process.

**Personal interview coding.** I used an open coding process to code data and thematic analysis to analyze the data. I first discuss how the data collected were organized then I discuss the coding process. Then, I discuss the thematic analysis process.

As the transcripts of the personal interviews were completed, they were emailed as a word document and downloaded. The transcripts were identified with a date, participant name, and pseudo name, and a notation that it was the original text. I numbered the lines of the transcript in the word document. This proved to be an ineffective method to manage the data. As the numbers were added the lines shifted making reformatting the document tedious and inefficient. I then numbered the lines of the printed transcripts. This was a tedious process that did not prove valuable for the data analysis process. Therefore, numbering the lines on the printed transcript was discontinued. The notes taken during the personal interviews were typed and maintained in a separate data file.

The transcripts were initially read to become familiar with the data and to check for accuracy between the tape recordings and the written text. After the initial reading of the transcripts, I re-read the transcripts by generation cohort to begin looking for emergent patterns. During this stage, the research questions were kept in the forefront to guide the coding process. The open coding process began by highlighting the relevant text in the word document. I then printed the pages and reviewed the highlighted data. The intent was to begin separating the relevant text from data that was interesting (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Seidman, 2006). Notations were made in the margins of the text to indicate a pattern. A word or phrase expressed by both personal interview participants was considered a pattern. For example, when
interviewing the African American women in the millennial generation about the relevance of race they both made similar comments:

- Carla’s response: . . . race is very much a factor still. . . . It may not be as overt as it was you know, 20, 30 years ago but it’s still definitely, um, a factor in our day-to-day lives

- Jordan’ response: . . . I feel like race is still relevant. . . . Um nowadays I feel like it’s not so much out in your face type of racism . . . I would define it as covert acts . . .

This description of patterns is consistent with Patton (2002) who argued that “the term pattern usually refers to a descriptive finding” (p. 453). When examining the comments of the two participants, the pattern was covert racism.

The transcripts were reviewed again while simultaneously listening to the tapes. This dual process facilitated the identification of key words and phrases. I color coded the text to delineate the patterns. Additionally, I highlighted the member checking conversations and identified potential quotes to substantiate findings. I then used the patterns that emerged to inform the design of the focus group questions.

**Focus group interview coding.** Consistent with the personal interviews, I used an open coding process to code data and thematic analysis to analyze the data. I first discuss the coding process then I discuss the thematic analysis of the data.

The focus groups were taped and the notes were professionally transcribed. A word document was sent via email from the transcriptionist that was downloaded and labeled with a date, generation cohort, and identified as original text. The notes taken during the focus group were typed and labeled in the same manner as the transcripts. I kept the transcripts and focus group notes in two separate data files instead of combining them as originally planned. This was
an effective way to manage the data. Additionally, I did not number the lines of the transcript. This process was not effective and did not facilitate the analysis of the data. However, I developed a process to identify statements as data were moved to create different files.

Working with each file separately, I indentified the relevant text. The relevant text was any word or phrase in the transcription and meeting notes relevant to the research topic (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). Notations were made in the margins of the text. I color coded the text to differentiate patterns. Additionally, sections of the text were highlighted to denote member checking conversations and potential quotes were highlighted. Any orphan statements, relevant statements that were raised by one person or the importance of the statement was unknown, were marked with a question mark on the transcripts. There were instances where an idea was expressed by one person that was identified as relevant because it provided an alternate experience and perspective or it related to the theoretical model for this study. This method of handling orphan data is consistent with the process suggested by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003). A decision can be made to keep orphan data because “it is important to reflect differences in experiences as well as commonalities” (Auerbach, & Silverstein, 2003, p. 59).

I then consolidated the repeating ideas into a word document by generation cohort group. This document combined both the personal interview and focus group repeating ideas and patterns. I identified the statements by generation cohorts, date of the interview or focus group and the person’s initials if appropriate. The following is an example of the identification process: Just it’s a tough, it’s a tough place to be, um, being an African American woman. (013012FGDC).

In this example, the numbers denote the date of the meeting, FG indicates it was a focus group and the DC reflects the initials of the participant. I grouped the repeating thoughts and
ideas together and gave them an initial label to describe the statements. Examples of an initial label include interfacing with society, experiences growing up, and interracial racism. Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) suggested using “pedestrian language when naming repeating ideas” (p. 58). Using the mark-up function in word, I began to connect the key words and phrases from the personal interviews and focus groups. For the example provided above, I highlighted the statement and made a personal comment “difficult being an African American woman.”

The next step in the process was the creation of a spreadsheet that combined the data from the personal interviews and focus groups by generation cohorts. Stated differently, I did a side by side comparison of the data collected from the personal interviews and focus groups. The research questions for this study centered on the generation differences in attitudes among African American women. The purpose of this step was to identify differences in responses between the generation cohorts. From this analysis, I developed a document titled “Summary of Themes From Personal Interviews and Focus Groups.”

The “Summary of Themes from Personal Interviews and Focus Group” document was given to the dissertation committee chair and methodologist for review. Additionally, I asked two external readers to review and comment on the themes. Some of the language used in the personal interviews and focus group were culturally specific. The two external readers were African American women with Ph.D. degrees and expertise in qualitative and quantitative research design. The feedback from the internal committee and external readers informed the next phase of data analysis.

The data analysis process was iterative. The themes and patterns were analyzed again to narrow and sort the data into manageable parts. The analysis process to this point was inductive where I attempted to discover patterns and categories (Patton, 2002). As I analyzed the data
again, the process was deductive. The data was analyzed based on the research question and the emphasis placed on the data by the interview and focus group participants. The criteria to determine the relevance of the data include the following:

- the relatedness of the statements to the research question,
- the consistency of statements made within and between the personal interview and focus group participants,
- the emphasis the participants placed on the statements during the personal interview or focus group meetings, and
- the connection of the statement to existing theory.

This deductive process is consistent with what Patton (2002) characterized as a deductive process:

Once patterns, themes, and/or categories have been established through inductive analysis, the final, confirmatory stage of qualitative analysis may be deductive in testing and affirming the authenticity and appropriateness of the inductive content analysis, including carefully examining deviate cases or data that don’t fit the categories developed. (p. 454)

From this process, five themes emerged that were applicable to each generation cohort. However, sub-themes emerged that varied by generation. The five broad themes are racial, community, gender, and social identities and leadership. Racial identity includes the sub-themes of personal experiences with discrimination, race and racism, and racial identity. Community identity includes the sub-themes of community activism and individualism versus collectivism. Gender identity includes the sub-themes of gender and racial stereotyping. Social identity includes the sub-theme of the intersection of identities that shape the Black experience. Leadership includes the sub-themes of leadership versus follow-ship and Black women as leaders.
Personal Interview and Focus Group Data Analysis Summary

Open coding was used to identify the patterns in the data. An open coding process illuminates the importance of “being open to what the data are telling you” (Patton, 2002, p. 453). Thematic analysis was used to analyze and interpret the personal interview and focus group transcripts. This involved identifying the emergent patterns in the transcribed notes (Patton, 2002). The emergent patterns were grouped together to form categorical themes (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Patton, 2002). The survey was developed based on the categorical themes. The categorical themes were not grouped together to form theoretical constructs. There was not a great deal of difference in responses between the generation cohorts. I decided to use the categories that emerged from the analysis of the personal interview and focus group data to test the strength of the categories.

Consistent with Caracelli and Greene (1993), data were merged to integrate the analysis of the data and create new data sets. The patterns and themes that emerged from the analysis of the personal interviews and focus groups informed the design of the survey. The format of the survey reflected the themes that directly correlated to the research questions.

Memoing

The personal interviews and focus group interviews generated in excess of 800 pages of text. The process to code and analyze the text was described in the previous section. In this section, I discuss the memoing process used to further conceptually think about the data.

The intent of memoing is to think about data in a conceptual way (Miles & Huberman, 1984). In this study the memoing process served as another level of analysis. As I reviewed the notations in the margins and the emergent patterns, I began to connect the data to the conceptual framework for this study. I clustered emergent themes together to determine if they cohered to
concepts related to social identity, standpoint, intersectionality, and generation theories. A function of memoing is to show that “a particular piece of data is an instance of a general concept” (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 69). I created memos to describe what unfolded in the data. As part of this process, I also examined how the emergent concepts connected to the responses from the personal interview and focus group participants to further analyze points of convergence and divergence in the data.

Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis

**Background.** The initial purpose of the survey was to explore the relevant emergent theoretical constructs from the qualitative phase of the study in more depth. The qualitative phase generated information rich data. The focus of the survey changed from collecting new data to corroborating data and investigating contradictory data that emerged from the personal interviews and focus groups.

**Survey testing.** I conducted a pilot test of the survey questions. Six African American women were asked to complete the survey and provide feedback. The respondents reflected the generation cohorts targeted in this study. One of the pilot respondents participated in the initial focus group. Three of the respondents had expertise in quantitative research and survey design. The pilot test participants were asked to provide feedback on the clarity of the questions, the length of time to complete the survey, the ease or difficulty navigating the survey, and the survey format. Select questions were modified based on the feedback from the survey test participants. Additionally, the introduction to the survey was modified to emphasize the fact that the survey was anonymous. An example of the feedback received from a test participant is located in Appendix I.
Survey design. The survey contained 76 Likert-type scale response questions, 10 open-end questions, and nine demographic questions. The Likert-type scale response options included strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat disagree, somewhat agree, agree, and strongly agree. I used Likert-type response scales questions to determine the strength of the categories identified in the analysis of the qualitative data. The Likert-type response scale questions were designed individually under broad categories that emerged from the qualitative phase of this study. Stated differently, the Likert-type response scale questions addressed different issues raised in the personal interview and focus groups. Therefore, the questions do not make up a family of items that might result in a scale. I incorporated language and specific quotes, as appropriate, into the survey questions. This approach is useful when developing content for survey instruments (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Questions about racial identity, experiences with discrimination, and experiences with race and racism were grouped together under two discreet headings. The first heading was personal reflections of racial identity and discrimination, and the second heading was race and racism. Statements concerning the influence of gender and gender stereotyping were grouped together under the heading of gender issues. The broad category of community identity was investigated by asking questions about activism and community involvement. The broad category of leadership was investigated by asking questions about African American leadership and generation leadership. Statements related to social identity were integrated into items related to racial identity and gender issues.

The survey was designed in SurveyMonkey (SurveyMonkey, 2012). I used the Gold version, which had the capability to export data into SPSS. An introductory statement preceded the Likert-type response scale questions to contextualize the questions that followed. The 10 open-end questions provided an option to elaborate on the responses to the closed-end questions.
Part of the rationale for selecting a mixed-method design was for the purpose of elaboration. Elaboration means using data from one method to help explain and understand data obtained from another method (Waysman & Savaya, 1997).

I developed three filter questions that were placed at the beginning of the survey. The filter questions were: (a) please indicate the racial group that best describes your racial identity, (b) what is your gender, and (c) do you live in Colorado? If the response to the first question was African American or African American mixed-race and yes was the response to the remaining two questions, the respondent was permitted to continue with the survey. Four of the six remaining demographic questions provided specific information about the respondent’s age, income, number of people in the household, and educational level. The remaining two questions were: (a) were you primarily raised in Colorado and (b) were your parents born in the United States; these two questions directly addressed findings from the personal interviews and focus groups and the participant criteria for this study. The personal interview and focus group participants indicated that attitudes about race varied geographically. The participant should be a second generation U.S. citizen to participate in this study. The intent of the criteria was to ensure the participants had an awareness of the history of African Americans in the United States.

The original timeline for completion of the survey was April 4 through April 25, 2012. The deadline was extended to May 5, 2012 to solicit more millennial respondents.

**Survey sample selection process.** The criteria for participating in the survey were the same as the criteria for the personal interviews and focus group:

- The participant should identify as an African American or African American mixed-race female.
• The birth year of the participants should follow the birth years for millennials (1982-1991), Gen-Xers (1965-1981), and baby boomers (1943-1964).

• The participants should be involved in social justice initiatives. This included working on boards, commissions, task forces, or committees for social justice organizations. It also included volunteering for an organization, serving as an advocate for marginalized communities, or working on social justice issues as part of their profession.

• The participants should be residents of Colorado and a second generation U.S. born citizen.

The personal interview and focus group participants were not eligible to participate in the survey. Generally, individuals who participate in the first phase of data collection are not involved with the second phase of data collection when conducting an exploratory sequential mixed-methods design (Creswell et al., 2008). The target population for this study was Black women who serve in leadership roles in the public, private, or nonprofit sectors. In this context, a leader is anyone serving directly or indirectly in a leadership role. These leaders can lead people, projects, or initiatives. Individuals serving on boards, commissions, committees, or task forces are included in the definition of a leader. The participants self-identified as community leaders because of their involvement on boards, commissions, committees, task forces, or community initiatives. I used four different ways to reach the target population.

First, the link to the survey was distributed using a ListServ managed by an African American woman in the community. Second, the link to the survey was placed on my Facebook page and on the Facebook page of individuals with connections to the target population. Third, the link to the survey was distributed to nonprofit, civic, and social organizations serving the
African American community, and fourth, I made personal appeals through email for potential survey respondents. I contacted organizations serving a diverse population to solicit respondents from different socio-economic classes. Additionally, I used a snowball sample to solicit respondents. The personal interview and focus group participants were asked to distribute the survey link through their respective networks. A copy of an appeal email is located in Appendix J.

I established a goal of 150 respondents to meet the requirement for statistical testing and a rigorous quantitative study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). A total of 228 surveys were collected. As a result of a preliminary scrub of the files, 23 surveys were deleted in survey monkey. Ninety-five percent of the surveys deleted were removed because the respondent did not live in Colorado. The remaining 5% were deleted because the respondent did not identify as an African American female or an African American mixed-race female. After the preliminary scrub, the files were exported to SPSS. The files were analyzed again to identify and respondents who did not provide their age or were over the age of 69. A total of 205 surveys were downloaded into SPSS, 42 surveys were not included in the analysis because (a) the respondent did not specify a generation cohort, or (b) the respondent was over the age of 69. There were 30 respondents who did not specify a generation cohort and 12 respondents over the age of 70. There were 23 millennials, 63 Gen-Xers, and 77 baby boomers that started and completed the survey. Once the appropriate data sets were defined, the generation cohorts were analyzed.

**Quantitative Data Analysis Process**

I analyzed the data in three discreet ways. First, I ran a descriptive analysis that included the means, standard deviation, frequency, and percent distribution for the 76 Likert-type scale
response items. I used ANOVA with Tukey’s Post Hoc tests to compare the mean scores across the generation cohorts. Given the exploratory nature of the research, I used $p = .10$ to test for statistically significant differences across mean scores (McMillian & Schumacher, 2000; Nardi, 2003). Nardi (2003) argued that “convention encourages us to use at least .05 as the level of significance when testing statistics, depending on what is being tested and for what reasons. [However,] exploratory research may allow a lower standard” (p. 132). The F statistic identified whether or not there were any differences across the three generations. The post hoc tests showed where the statistically significant differences were between the generation cohorts.

Third, after observing from the percentage distributions that some differences across generations appeared to be in the degree of agreement, that is between somewhat agree, agree, and strongly agree, I recoded the data to truncate the strongly disagree, disagree, and somewhat disagree responses into one category, and left the somewhat agree, agree, and strongly agree categories to determine if there were statistically significant differences between the generation cohorts across response categories. This resulted in a four-category response for each of the Likert-type scale response items. Using frequency and percentage distributions, I analyzed the respondents’ activist activities and their level of activism by generation cohort.

**Qualitative Analysis of Quantitative Data**

I sorted the narrative questions in Survey Monkey by generation and downloaded the data into a Word document for analysis. I used open coding and thematic analysis to analyze the narrative responses by generation. I color coded the responses to delineate patterns. Notations were made in the margins to denote themes. Any similarities and differences between the personal interviews and focus group data were noted in the margins. Potential quotes to substantiate the findings were highlighted. I developed a summary of the key findings from the
survey. The questions for the final focus group were derived from the responses that demonstrated a statistically significant difference among the generation cohorts. Additionally, questions were included that demonstrated a pattern of interest or contradictory data. Creswell et al. (2008) argued that a reasonable strategy for handling conflicting data is to add an additional phase to the study to “obtain a comprehensive, inclusive set of results” (p. 20). The final focus group participants were asked to reflect on the summary of key findings and discuss what the data meant to them. The results of the final focus group are presented in chapter IV.

**Data Integration**

Data were integrated throughout the research process. In a mixed methods design, it is important to determine the point when the qualitative and quantitative phases of the study are integrated (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Within this study, the first point of integration occurred when the qualitative data from the personal interviews informed the design of the focus group questions. A second point of integration occurred when the qualitative data from the personal interviews and focus groups informed the design of the survey questions. A third point of integration occurred when the findings from the survey was presented to the final focus group for interpretation. Figure 3.3 illustrates the techniques used to integrate the data within research method and between research methods.
A member checking function was incorporated into the qualitative phases of this study. This involved asking clarifying questions during the personal interviews and focus groups and providing the participants with a copy of the transcribed notes to review. Additionally, the language used by the research participants informed the question design and data collection method. Stated differently, I used key words and phrases from the research participants to design the focus group and survey questions. The results of the qualitative and quantitative phases of this study are discussed in detail in chapter IV.
Chapter IV: Research Findings and Results

“At a time when the problems of our society seem insoluble and the obstacles to peace and freedom insurmountable, all Americans have a great deal to learn from the history of Black women in America” (Hine & Thompson, 1998, p. 308).

Overview of Chapter

This chapter discusses the findings and results from the qualitative and quantitative data collection methods prescribed in the three phase research design. I first discuss the mediating influences that may have affected this study. Then, I provide a summary of the research findings as it pertains to the research questions. This overview is provided to connect the research findings to the research questions and contextualize the discussion of the three phases of this study. The research findings are complex because of the multiple sources of data collection, the emergent themes from each data source, and the analysis of generation similarities and differences. The overview is designed to lay a foundation for a more detailed reporting of the results. A discussion of the phase 1 qualitative findings follows the overview of results.

The findings are discussed by generation cohort. The cohort discussion is further organized by data collection method. A chart illustrating the composition of the interview and focus group participants precede each discussion. The context for the discussion focuses on the three research questions.

Next, I discuss the results of the survey conducted in phase 2. A chart illustrating the demographics of the generation cohort precedes the discussion. I first discuss the commonalities across the generation cohorts, and then I discuss the items that showed a statistically significant mean score difference using ANOVA with post hoc tests. When appropriate, I discuss the items
that were statistically different using chi square. There were six statistically different items with the recoded chi square. Several items showed a pattern of interest but were not statistically significant. Those items are identified in the discussion of the results.

A discussion of the narrative survey results follows the statistical analysis of the survey items. The phase 3 discussion is organized by the focus group questions. A chart illustrating the composition of the final focus group participants precedes the discussion. The final section is a discussion integrating the qualitative and quantitative research findings. The discussion is organized by the commonalities and differences discovered in this study.

**Mediating Influences**

Both the survey and the final focus group occurred after an alleged murder case involving an African American male and a Caucasian male was televised. Cook and Campbell (1979) argued that there are 13 threats to internal validity. The internal validity threat relevant to this study is history. Cook and Campbell (1979) argued that history is a threat when an observed effect might be due to an unplanned event that happens between the periods of pre- and post-testing (p. 51). Within the context of this study, the murder case is an unforeseen event that may have had an effect on survey responses. There is a possibility that the survey and focus group participants were influenced by the media coverage of the case. Hannum, McFeeters, and Booysen (2010) used the term *spillover* to describe what happens when an external event influences an organization or in this situation a study. Hannum et al. (2010) argued that “what happens in society can spillover into organizations and what happens in organizations can spillover into society” (p. 10). Spillover is a phenomenon that can happen outside of the organization setting as referenced by Hannum et al. (2010). In the context of this study, a person may shift their thinking about the relevance of race as a result of the alleged murder case.
Because of this case, a question about racial profiling was added to the survey. It is not possible to determine the implications of the alleged murder case on this study. Specific references were made in the narrative portion of the survey about the African American male who was killed.

**Research Questions and Findings**

This section provides a brief overview of the research findings as it relates to the research questions. I provide links to the personal interview and focus group participant responses to demonstrate how the research questions were answered. Each person included in the audio file signed a consent form to include their voice in this dissertation. A copy of the consent form is located in Appendix K. Additional quotations to support the findings are reported later in the chapter by research method and generation cohort.

**Research question 1.** What are the generation differences in attitude among Black women about race? The findings suggest that the millennials perceive their experiences with discrimination differently than the baby boom generation. Millennials were less likely than baby boomers to indicate they experience discrimination in school, on the job, or in social settings. Negative stereotypes about African Americans surfaced as a relevant issue for the research participants. African American women in the millennial generation were more likely than baby boomers to indicate that society embraces negative stereotypes about African Americans. Jordan, a millennial, stated that African American women leaders are impacted by negative stereotypes. Follow [this link](#) (jordanauthority) to hear Jordan’s response to a question about the authority of Black women. Another generation difference appeared in the baby boomers’ focus on seeking information about African American community. The baby boomers expressed the importance of understanding their history. The baby boomers were more likely than the millennials to seek information about their race.
Research question 2. What are the generation differences in attitudes among Black women about gender and Black leadership? Generally, the research participants indicated a crisis in leadership exists. However, a crisis in follow-ship and activism was presented as a more pressing issue. The millennials stressed the importance of Black leaders having empathy for the people they lead. Generally, each generation cohort suggested that understanding those you lead is important. Additionally, leaders should reflect the diversity within the African American community. For example women and people from the gay, lesbian, transgender, bi-sexual, and queer communities should be embraced and respected as leaders. Darlene, a millennial, commented that leaders in her generation may be more inclusive in their leadership than baby boomers. Click on this link (darleneinclusive) to hear the response Darlene provided when asked about the perception of inclusive leadership in the Black community. The women in the study indicated that African American males adopt negative stereotypes about African American women. However, millennials were more likely than baby boomers to express this concern.

Research question 3. What are the generation differences in attitudes about social activism in the Black community? The millennials indicated that the African American community is moving towards an individualistic culture and moving away from the historically collectivistic culture where people helped one another. Communities are becoming more diverse. A geographically segmented African American community no longer exists. More baby boomers than Gen-Xers indicated that the segmented community presented a challenge for leaders. The Gen-Xers suggested that with technology the geographic location of African Americans becomes less of an issue. Tangala, a Gen-Xer, commented that the baby boomers need to embrace technology as a way to distribute information and get people involved in the community. Follow this link (tangalagenleader) to hear Tangala’s reaction to being rebuffed by
some leaders in the baby boom generation. The millennial generation is highly diverse when compared to the baby boom generation. The millennials indicated African Americans can experience racism and discrimination differently because of their multiple social identities. The millennials challenge the traditional views about the Black experience. Figure 4.1 illustrates the key findings from this study as it pertains to the research questions.

Figure 4.1. Research questions and key findings.

**Research Participant Profile**

A diverse group of women participated in the personal interviews, focus groups, and survey. There was a high concentration of African American women with graduate degrees in this study. Fifty-two percent (95) of the participants in this study held graduate degrees. Thirty-four percent (61) of the women earned in excess of $100,000, while 22% (39) earned $50,000 or less. Conclusions about the participant profiles and the impact on this study are discussed in chapter V. Table 4.1 describes the income and educational range of the research participants.
Table 4.1

Research Participant Income and Education Range

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Collection Method</th>
<th>Millennial N = 27</th>
<th>Generation X N = 71</th>
<th>Baby Boom N = 85</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Income Range</td>
<td>Education Range</td>
<td>Income Range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Interview</td>
<td>26,001 to 100,000+</td>
<td>Bachelor to Masters</td>
<td>26,000 to 50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0-26,000 to 50,000 - 75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group</td>
<td>0 – 26,000 to 75,000</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>0 – 26,000 to 100,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0-26,000 to 100,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>0-24,999 to 100,000+</td>
<td>Some college but no degree to Graduate Degree</td>
<td>0-24,999 to 100,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0-24,999 to 100,000+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Phase 1: Presentation of Qualitative Findings

This section discusses the themes from the personal interviews and focus groups. I first provide a demographic profile of each research participant to contextualize the research findings. A detailed description of the personal interview and focus group research participants is located in Appendix L. Generally, pseudo names are used for the personal interview and focus group participants. However, there are two exceptions. A Gen-X focus group member and all of the participants in the baby boom focus group requested I use their real names. Pseudo names are used where appropriate for the research participants’ organizations. It is also important to note that the words “Nigger” and “queer” are used when the term was actually used by a research participant.

Figure 4.2 describes how the discussion of the personal interviews and focus group is organized. I discuss the themes that emerged from the personal interviews and focus groups by generation cohort. I begin with a discussion of the personal interviews. I discuss the themes that
emerged for each participant, and then I summarize the themes for both personal interview participants. Then, I discuss the emergent themes for the focus group and provide a summary of the generation cohort personal interviews and focus group. A table that illustrates the themes by generation cohort which reflects the frequency of responses concludes each section. Direct quotes from the participants are included in the personal interview and focus group discussion.

Figure 4.2. Organizing principle for qualitative discussion.

Millennial personal interview profile (N = 2). Table 4.2 describes the demographic composition of the millennial personal interview participants. One of the two participants self-identified as an activist. One of the personal interview participants earnings are within a range of $26,000 - $50,000 for a family of five. The other participant has an income range in excess of $100,000 for a family of three.
Millennial personal interview themes. In this section, I discuss the research themes from the personal interviews. I discuss each interview separately, and then I provide a summary of the two interviews that discusses the overlapping themes that emerged from both interviews.

Carla Larson interview. Carla discussed racism at the individual level. She believes that her generation does not view race in the same way as her mother’s generation because the experience of race and racism is different. From her perspective, your attitudes about race are influenced by your personal experiences with racism. Carla feels she is more racially tolerant than her mother’s generation and more racially tolerant than some of her friends. Carla’s view on interracial dating and marriage are examples of her inclusive thinking. While she prefers for African American men to date within the race, it does not bother her if they do not.

Much of Carla’s value system comes from a foundation of Christian beliefs. She recognizes that racism is real. However, race is a manmade concept that influences “what we do and how we treat people.” Carla feels human beings are human beings and you should treat people with respect regardless of their race or gender.
Carla feels there are two conditions that influence social activism; social climate and a critical incident. Carla stated that it only takes one act of overt racism and people in her generation will become involved. A factor that influences Carla’s activism is her interest in the issue. If the issue is consistent with her interests and value system, she will consider becoming involved.

During the discussion about African American women as leaders, Carla indicated that when she thinks of leaders she thinks of men. African American males are more outspoken on issues than African American women. The one notable exception was Michelle Obama.

**Jordan Maxwell interview.** Jordan discussed racism from an institutional perspective. Jordan believes that African Americans have the capacity to be successful. However, because of the “hand we are dealt with” our race interferes with our ability to be successful.

Jordan emphasized the beauty in being African American. Jordan feels that African Americans who are not proud to be African American, choose not to associate with African Americans, or make disparaging remarks about African Americans are not really African American. According to Jordan, they may look African American but they are not socialized as African Americans. At the opposite end of the spectrum from racial unity is what was perceived as racial abandonment. Dating and marrying outside the race is a sign of abandonment. You lose your identity when you date and marry someone outside of the race.

Jordan feels White women are privileged when it comes to the interpretation of their behaviors. Jordan stated that “if a White girl is going off, she is not an angry White girl, [but] if a Black girl is going off she’s an angry Black girl.” White and Black women can behave in identical ways. However, their behavior is perceived differently by Black men and society in general.
Stereotypes influence how African American women leaders are perceived. Black male leaders who are aggressive are considered strong. However, strong Black women are considered “mouthy or an angry Black woman.” Jordan believes that the critical pieces missing in the leadership discussions in the community are the voices of the youth and the voices of those most impacted by social problems. In the next section, I summarize the salient findings from the millennial personal interviews.

Summary of personal interview themes. There were seven emergent themes from the millennial personal interviews. These themes were considered relevant based on the criteria discussed previously. The significant themes are as follows.

1. Personal experiences with race and racism influences attitude.
2. Social climate sparks involvement in social activism.
3. Think leader think men/lack of recognition of Black women leaders.
4. Black men dating and marrying outside of the race is considered racial abandonment.
5. Racial differences in the interpretation of Black women’s behaviors.
6. Youth voice in community problem solving is missing.
7. Include people affected by the problem to find solutions to community problems.

Millennial focus group profiles (N = 2). Table 4.3 describes the demographic composition of the millennial focus group participants. One of the participants self-identified as an activist. One of the participants has an income range of $0 - $26,000 for a family of two. However, this range does not reflect a combined family income. The other focus group participant has a combined household income range of $50,000 - $74,000 for a family of three.
Table 4.3

**Millennial Focus Group Participant Profile**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>Activist</th>
<th>Income</th>
<th># of people in household</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Darlene Burns</td>
<td>Black/Mixed</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Lives with partner</td>
<td>Anti-oppression Social Justice Consultant</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0-26,000</td>
<td>1 (self + partner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen Coles</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Customer Service Representative</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>50,001-75,000</td>
<td>3 (self, mother &amp; sister)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For a variety of reasons, the women invited to participate in the millennial focus group were unable to attend. Because of the challenges with scheduling rooms and personal calendars, I decided to continue with the focus group as planned. The data that emerged from the session was rich and added to my understanding of this cohort’s attitude about race. I provide a brief profile of the participants to contextualize their responses.

**Millennial focus group themes.** The relevant themes from the focus group participants include attitudes about African American leadership, interconnectedness of social identities, and the need for knowledge sharing from older African American women. Before discussing the themes, it is important to acknowledge the expertise Darlene brought to the discussion. Darlene has a very strong background in social justice and anti-oppression work. I was aware of how she could influence the discussion and Karen’s thinking. Generally, when a question was asked Karen responded first then Darlene. After hearing Darlene’s response, Karen did not change her position or alter her comments. Karen provided a practical framework to understand the theoretical responses Darlene sometimes offered.
African American leadership. There is not a crisis of leadership in the Black community. However, Darlene believes that there is shift in the ideological perspectives about leadership. Darlene explains her position in this way: “There is a lack of solidarity and a move towards individualism that is more pronounced than in the past . . . on a very basic level, like I care enough about you to have your back.”

The construct of the community is shifting from collectivism to individualism. Historically, African Americans supported one another in the community. There was a shared sense of responsibility for the people in the community. The sense of community is not as strong as it was in the past. Additionally, a re-visioning of leadership in the community is necessary because we have moved past the need for a singular leader. Darlene believes that relying on a singular leader “implies that you need leaders to synthesize Black communities in a particular way in order to utilize certain resources.”

Karen felt it was important for leaders to understand and relate to the daily challenges of the people in the community. Part of that understanding comes from living the experiences of those you lead, as Karen noted:

At times it takes you to get knocked off of your feet to understand [when] the people you are supposed to lead need you the most when they are at this point . . . you can actually say [I understand] because you’ve been there.

A challenge for leadership is the inability to speak directly to issues that affect the African American community. Current leaders avoid the suggestion of an issue having racial overtones or identifying inequities in social systems. In general, there is a “preoccupation with not appearing certain ways and not conforming to stereotypes that is so great it derails leadership.”

Social identities. Both Darlene and Karen felt the impact of being African American women. Additionally, Darlene felt her race and gender identity were interwoven into her queer
identity. Likewise, Karen felt her race and gender identity are interwoven into the fact that she is poor. They felt that they could not separate their multiple identities. Darlene commented that “there are few racial experiences I could say that I’ve had that are not also gendered or experiences that I’ve had as a woman that are not also raced.” There is a broad range of Black experiences and how people experience racism is shaped by their other identities.

**Knowledge sharing.** Karen feels she has learned what to do and not do as a leader from older generations. Connecting with leaders in the Black community in Colorado is difficult. Darlene mentioned the difficulty in finding elders in Colorado willing to share their wisdom with the younger generation. Karen and Darlene desire a two-way relationship with women active in social justice to learn from what they did well and learn what they would do differently. Darlene shared her feelings about building relationships with Black leaders:

I want to ask about things and I want to question things, and I want to push on things, and I often find that it’s not well received. I think that becomes gendered and aged [because] there’s certain ways to show respect.

Karen feels Black leaders should enter into a mentor relationship with an open mind and a willingness to learn something from the relationship.

**Summary of millennial focus group themes.** There were three relevant themes from the millennial focus group:

1. There is a shift in the African American community from collectivism—the collective needs of the community are intertwined with the needs of individual community members—to individualism where the needs of the individual takes precedence over the needs of the community, and that is becoming more pronounced.

2. Multiple identities make up the Black experience. The Black experience can no longer be based solely on racial identity.
3. It is difficult to find elders who are willing to share their wisdom and knowledge about social activism.

**Summary of millennial cohort themes (N = 4).** A total of 10 themes emerged from the two personal interviews and focus group for the millennials. The 10 themes are: (a) there is a shift in the African American community from collectivism to individualism; (b) it is difficult to find elders to share their wisdom about social justice; (c) include people affected by the problem in finding solutions; (d) the Black experience is not just race, multiple identities make up the Black experience; (e) personal experiences with race and racism influence racial attitudes; (f) Black men dating and marrying outside the race is racial abandonment; (g) racial difference in interpretation of Black women’s behaviors; (h) social climate sparks involvement; (i) think leader think men/lack of recognition of Black women leaders; and (j) youth voice in community problem solving is missing.

The themes were placed into the five broad categories of racial, gender, community, and social identity, and leadership. The sample size for the millennial cohort was small. The percentages reflect the number of participants raising the issue during the personal interviews or focus group. During the focus group, the participants tended to verbalize their agreement or disagreement with a comment. Table 4.4 illustrates the 10 findings that emerged from the personal interviews and focus groups.

Table 4.4

*Millennial Emergent Themes Grouped by Category*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relevant Finding Statement</th>
<th>Racial Identity %</th>
<th>Gender Identity %</th>
<th>Community Identity %</th>
<th>Social Identity %</th>
<th>Leadership %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collectivism versus individualism</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>75%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elders sharing wisdom</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include people affected by the problem to find solutions</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple identities make up the Black experience</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal experience influences racial attitude</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial abandonment</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial difference in interpretation of women’s behaviors</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social climate sparks involvement</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think leader think men/Lack of recognition of Black women leaders</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth voice in community problem solving</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I next discuss the themes from the Generation-X personal interviews and focus groups.

**Generation-X personal interview profile (N = 2).** Table 4.5 illustrates the demographic profile for the Gen-X personal interview participants. Both participants have an income range of
$26,000 - $50,000. One participant is single while the other lives with her son. One of the
participants self-identified as an activist.

Table 4.5

*Generation-X Personal Interview Participant Profile*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Age/Gen.</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>Activist</th>
<th>Income</th>
<th># of people in household</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theresa Dawson</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>Youth and Youth Adult Minister Mutual Fund Analyst – Financial Industry</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>26,001 - 50,000</td>
<td>2 (self &amp; son)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanessa Simpson</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>46/</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>26,001 - 50,000</td>
<td>1 (self)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Generation-X personal interview themes.** In this section, I discuss the emergent
themes from the personal interviews for Generation-X. Each interview is discussed separately.

The section ends with a summary of the two interviews.

**Theresa Dawson interview.** Theresa believes that race continues to be a relevant issue in society. The U.S. is not a colorblind society. When it comes to social change, Theresa believes that “if everyone does their part, then we as the collective will be able to address all of the lack and the challenges and the myths that occur in the poor and lower middle class communities.”

On the topic of leadership, Theresa feels leaders need to understand the experiences of the people they are leading. Therefore, having Black leaders in the Black community is essential at this point in time. Theresa believes she “can only lead from her experience and her context.” Theresa believes African American leaders have “lost their edge and seem to not want to make anyone mad.” Her view of African American women leaders is different. African American
women leaders are “edgy, outspoken, and respond to the needs of the community.” However, they are marginalized by their race and gender and do not receive the recognition they deserve.

As a victim of incest, Theresa feels strongly that the African American community needs to address social problems embedded in the community. She believes that “we don’t want to talk about systemic poverty or sexual immorality that starts at home with molestation.” Theresa feels community leaders would prefer not to discuss social problems in the African American community in the hopes they will go away. Theresa referenced a concept called “undifferentiated ego mass, which refers to a mass of people engaging in the same pattern of behaviors from generation to generation.” Theresa believes that by not addressing critical social problems, the same negative behaviors will occur from generation to generation.

*Vanessa Simpson interview.* Vanessa believes there is a cost to becoming part of mainstream America. In order to be mainstream, you must be willing to lose your connection to the African American community.

I’m not saying you’re not Black anymore . . . I’m just saying the connection [to the] community once you come over to this side of this economic level the connection is different. The way you communicate or connect with the African American community is different than when you would connect as a member of the community who doesn’t have money.

Vanessa feels that the potential loss of connection may be the reason people choose to remain poor. From her perspective, “people can choose to be chronically poor . . . it may be better, safer, and happier to be chronically poor.” The choice is either to remain in the community with its rich culture and maintain your Black identity or leave the community and become mainstream.

Vanessa’s brother married outside of the race. She believes that interracial dating and marriage is another variable that disconnects African Americans from the community. African American males gain “social economic advantages marrying White women.” In addition,
Vanessa believes that you “lose your racial identity when you become involved in interracial relationships.” On the other hand, Vanessa stated that she was not raised to see color. She believes she is colorblind. Therefore, a person’s character rather than their race is what is most important.

When discussing leadership, Vanessa recommends that African Americans who are detached from the community and are on a different social economic level collaborate with leaders in the community to create change. This tactic would invite different viewpoints and get more African Americans involved with the community. In addition, African Americans need to “look at the biggest picture and it’s not about your being Black.”

Vanessa believes that African American women leaders have power, a stronger voice, and a fight that is bigger than African American males. Vanessa commented that “African American women are the ones getting things done in the community.”

**Generation-X summary of personal interview themes.** Theresa and Vanessa have opposing views about race and social justice. Theresa takes a system view and Vanessa takes a personal view. Theresa holds the community and its leaders responsible for creating change. Vanessa holds individuals responsible for creating change in their lives. Theresa believes racism is a problem. Vanessa believes focusing on a person’s character is the solution to racism.

There were five relevant themes that emerged from the Gen-X personal interviews:

1. Lack of recognition for African American women leaders who get things done.
2. Black leaders are reluctant to address social problems like incest in the community.
3. Black leaders have lost their edginess. They are not as outspoken about injustices in the community.
4. A person’s character is more important than their race. It is the content of your character and not your race that is important.

5. You lose connection to the community when you become mainstream.

**Generation-X focus group profiles (N = 6).** Table 4.6 describes the demographic profile of the Gen-X focus group participants. All of the Gen-Xers in the focus group self-identified as activists. Three of the participants have an income range of $50,000 - $75,000, one participant has an income range of $0 - $25,000, another reported $50,000 - $75,000, and one participant indicated her income range was in excess of $100,000.

Table 4.6

**Generation-X Focus Group Participant Profile**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>Activist</th>
<th>Income Range</th>
<th># of people in household</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tangala Ash</td>
<td>Black American</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Educator/Massage Therapist</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Volunteer Activist</td>
<td>0-26,000</td>
<td>3 (self &amp; 2 renters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juanita Brown</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Education Administration</td>
<td>Juris Doctor</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50,001-75,000</td>
<td>1-Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diane Carson</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Director of Programs - Nonprofit</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>75,001-100,000</td>
<td>2 (self &amp; husband)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madolyn Holman</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Regional Operations Director</td>
<td>Associate Degree</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50,001-75,000</td>
<td>4 (self &amp; 3 children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lauren Leigh</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Settlement Specialist</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50,001-75,000</td>
<td>5 (husband &amp; 3 children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LaTonya Peterson</td>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Nonprofit Management/Development Director</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Over 100,000</td>
<td>2 (4 others in a communal setting. There is no connection between the participant and those in the living community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Generation-X focus group themes. The relevant findings from the Gen-X focus group include stereotypes of African American women, the one-drop rule and bi-racial identities, colorblindness, and qualities of leaders.

Stereotypes of African American women. The focus group participants believe that historical stereotypes of Black women continue to negatively affect African American women. If an African American woman raises her voice, she is considered angry. Music videos portray women as highly sexualized. The participants felt that White women do not carry the same labels for their behavior as Black women. Some of the participants feel the negative stereotypes of Black women are perpetuated both within and outside the African American community. Another aspect of gender identity was the relevance of race in relation to the relevance of gender. All of the focus group participants feel society reacts to them as African American women. Race is not more important than gender and gender is not more important than race.

One drop rule and bi-racial identity. There were two issues raised about racial identity. First was the one drop rule. If African American constitutes any part of your heritage, you will be treated as African American. Juanita said her bi-racial cousin identified as White, but there was a moment “when she realized that it didn’t matter because everybody saw her as [African American].” The second issue pertained to the preference to identity as something other than African American because “it’s cool to be exotic or multicultural or from somewhere else.” The underlying premise within this understanding of racial identity is physical appearance, for example light skin or long hair.

Colorblindness. The concept of colorblindness surfaced organically during the discussion about the relevance of race. The topic was discussed from three different vantage points. First, some participant’s perceived colorblindness as a way to circumvent crafting or
implementing legislation to benefit African Americans, Hispanics, and other racial and ethnic groups. Secondly, some participants perceived colorblindness as unrealistic and a way to say color no longer matters. Therefore, colorblindness is a way to erase the existence of African Americans. Third, some participants believe in the permanence of race. Race is embedded in social systems. Therefore, society will never be colorblind. For one participant, the evidence of race is the use of the “N” word within and outside the African American community.

Qualities of leaders. All of the participants said race drives their social justice work. Everyone has a responsibility to lead was the general thinking of the group. Having knowledge of other communities is an important quality of leadership. From their perspective, leaders should feel compelled to speak up on what is taboo. African Americans portraying Black women in a negative way are examples of what does not get discussed in the community. Tangala described a leader as someone who is able to “step back and look at things on a broader landscape and say this is what is happening here, here and here and put something into action that will benefit not only them but the community as a whole.” A concern was expressed that leaders in the Black community have lost the fire in their belly. This means the current leaders are reluctant to speak out about injustice in the Black community.

Summary of generation-X focus group themes. Eight themes emerged from the Gen-X focus group interviews:

1. Internal and external acceptance of negative stereotypes about African American women.
2. Relevance of race and gender identities. One is not more salient than the other.
3. People who identify as mix-race are treated as Black.
4. There is a racial difference in interpretation of Black women’s behaviors compared to White women.

5. The U.S. will never be a colorblind society.

6. The leaders in the Black community have lost fire in their bellies.

7. Leaders in the community need to discuss social issues like the negative stereotyping of Black women by African Americans.

8. The region of the country where you live and were raised influences racial attitudes

Summary of generation-X cohort themes (N = 8). The themes that emerged from the personal interviews and focus group are: (a) leaders in the community are not addressing social problems like the negative stereotyping of Black women and incest, (b) attitudes about a colorblind society, (c) you lose the connection to community when you become mainstream, (d) leaders are not edgy—they have lost the fire in their belly, (e) internal and external acceptance of negative stereotypes about African American women, (f) character is more important than race, (g) lack of recognition for African American women leaders who get the job done, (h) African Americans who are mixed-race are treated as Black, (i) racial differences in the interpretation of women’s behaviors, (j) the region of the country where you live or were raised influences racial attitudes, and (k) relevance of race and gender. There were two areas where there was an overlap in responses. First, both the personal interview and focus group participants felt the Black leadership in the community was not edgy, they are reluctant to speak forcibly about issues affecting the Black community. Second, both groups mentioned the importance of discussing issues that are considered taboo in the community. The two issues mentioned were negative stereotyping of Black women and incest. The sample size for the Gen-X cohort was eight. The percentages reflect the number of participants raising the issue during the personal
interviews or focus group. During the focus group, the participants verbalized their agreement or disagreement with comments made by the participants. Table 4.7 illustrates the emergent themes by the categories of racial, gender and social identity, and leadership.

Table 4.7

*Generation-X Emergent Themes Grouped by Category*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Themes</th>
<th>Racial Identity %</th>
<th>Gender Identity %</th>
<th>Leadership %</th>
<th>Social Identity %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Addressing social problems/ need to discuss the taboo</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ 88%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes about a colorblind society</td>
<td>✓ 100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection to the community is lost when you become mainstream</td>
<td>✓ 12%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgy leadership/ lost fire in belly</td>
<td>✓ 88%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal &amp; external acceptance of negative stereotypes about African American women</td>
<td>✓ 88%</td>
<td>✓ 88%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of character</td>
<td>✓ 12%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of recognition for African American women leaders who do the work</td>
<td>✓ 88%</td>
<td>✓ 88%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mix-race African Americans are treated as Black</td>
<td>✓ 88%</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ 88%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial difference in interpretation of women’s behaviors</td>
<td>✓ 88%</td>
<td>✓ 88%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region of the country influences racial attitudes</td>
<td>✓ 100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevance of race and gender</td>
<td>✓ 88%</td>
<td>✓ 88%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the next section, I discuss the findings from the baby boom personal interviews and focus group.

**Baby boom personal interview profile (N = 2).** Table 4.8 reflects the profile for the baby boom personal interview participants. There was some diversity amongst the research participants. Both women had two people in their household. However, one participant reported her income range as $0 - $26,000, while the other reported a range of $50,000 - $75,000. Both of the women self-identified as activists.

Table 4.8

**Baby Boom Personal Interview Participant Profile**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Race/ Ethnicity</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>Activist</th>
<th>Income</th>
<th># of people in household</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barbara Bronson</td>
<td>Bi-racial</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Facility/Catering/Fund Development Director for Church</td>
<td>Associate Degree</td>
<td>Yes, when necessary</td>
<td>50,001-75,000</td>
<td>2 (self &amp; spouse)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother: AA, NA, Spanish and Mexican Father: Italian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donna Wilkerson</td>
<td>Black American</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>CEO Design Building Management Firm</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0-26,000</td>
<td>2 (self &amp; son)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Baby boom personal interview themes.**

**Barbara Bronson interview.** Barbara views race as a systemic problem that is a factor in determining the success of African Americans. Barbara feels the legacy of oppression cannot be ignored when thinking about the current quality of life for African Americans. African Americans were not able to pass wealth down from generation to generation because “there are things that are privileged to White people that keeps their riches going on from generation to
generation that’s not privileged to African Americans.” Barbara provided examples of where land and other assets were stolen from African Americans. Her great-grandfather owned land in Tennessee but the “Whites ran him off, killed off his family members, and . . . took the property.” Barbara’s rationale is if it happened to her family, how many other African Americans had property taken away that would have passed from one generation to another. This is one reason African Americans were not able to amass wealth and pass wealth from one generation to another.

If you do not do anything else, Barbara believes that you must speak out against injustice. This perspective informs her attitudes about African American leadership. Barbara views the current leaders as reactive rather than proactive. She does not perceive leaders have “that fight, that fire that the community needs.” Barbara has an expectation that leaders create a common agenda for the community. Barbara acknowledged the work of African American women leaders in the community. However, she expressed concerns about their reactionary leadership.

Barbara feels your racial beliefs are shaped by where you live in the country. Her son lives on the East coast and does not perceive race as a problem. In addition, Barbara believes you must personally experience racism to understand that it is a problem. When asked about the chronic problem of poverty in the African American community, Barbara believes that because the younger generation did not experience the struggle of moving from poverty to the middle class they have lost touch with what poverty looks like.

Donna Wilkerson interview. Donna discussed the tension she perceives between the African and Hispanic communities. As noted in table 1.1, the Hispanic community is the largest racial and ethnic minority group in Colorado. Donna believes that a racial hierarchy exists in Colorado that favors the Hispanic community. The racial identity of Hispanics is fluid. Donna
related an experience with a Hispanic woman “I’ve been in situations where Hispanic women will say when it’s convenient for them to be a minority they are a minority but any other time they are White.”

Donna believes baby boomers are the pioneers of civil rights and this has had an effect on the generation. Baby boomers carry the historical baggage of Jim Crow legislation, media portrayals of Black people, what they were taught in schools, and the legacy of being the first generation bussed. The resulting effect is “because we are fighting we are perceived as angry.”

Donna believes the racial identity of African Americans is being diluted by the number of people identifying as mixed-race. Although Donna recognizes her Native American heritage, she identifies as African American. Identifying as mixed-race on the census is a way to eliminate Blacks in America, trying to make Blacks invisible. She feels “it isn’t nice to be African American. If you can get away from that, then people are [choosing identify as something else].”

Donna feels the millennial generation is not socially or civically aware. Donna’s son, who is in the millennial generation, believes Donna is “absolutely a racist and that there are no racial problems out there in the world.”

**Baby boom personal interview summary.** Barbara and Donna believe in taking action to create social change. They both stressed the importance of recognizing the effect of the historical legacy of oppression on African Americans today. They both believe that this understanding is not present in the millennial generation. As a result, they believe their children and grandchildren do not see racial problems. Leadership in the African American community is a concern because leaders are not speaking out about social inequities.

The themes from the baby boom personal interviews include the following:
1. It is important to speak out against injustice because that is how change happens.

2. Racial beliefs are shaped by geography—the region of the country you reside or grew up shapes your racial attitudes.

3. A racial hierarchy exists in Colorado.

4. Millennials are not as socially or civically aware as baby boomers.

5. Leaders in the community accommodate rather than agitate.

While expressed differently, each of the women interviewed addressed the themes during the course of the conversation. The next section is a discussion of the baby boom focus group. At the request of the focus group participants, actual names are used.

**Baby boom focus group profiles (N = 6).** Table 4.9 describes the demographic profile for the baby boom focus group participants. All of the baby boomer focus group participants identified as activists. Two of the participants indicated their income range was $26,000 - $50,000, three reported an income range of $50,000 - $75,000, and one person indicated their income was in excess of $100,000.
Table 4.9

*Baby Boom Focus Group Participant Profile*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>Activist</th>
<th>Income</th>
<th># of people in household</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hanifah Chiku</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>Terminal Administration Analyst</td>
<td>HS Diploma</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>26,001-50,000</td>
<td>1 (self)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnita Groves</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Licensed Professional Counselor, Certified Addictions Counselor</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Over 100,000</td>
<td>3 (self, husband &amp; non-relative male boarder)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Di Holmes</td>
<td>Black African American</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Founder/Executive Director Harambee Family Services Consulting</td>
<td>Professional Degree</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50,001-75,000</td>
<td>2 (self &amp; husband)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daphne Rice-Allen</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Helpline Coordinator Alzheimer Association</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50,001-75,000</td>
<td>2 (self &amp; husband)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adriane Sanford</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>Business Owner</td>
<td>Associate Degree</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50,001-75,000</td>
<td>3 (self, mother &amp; son)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deborah Sims Fard</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0-26,000</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Baby boom focus group themes.** The emergent themes from the baby boom focus group include having clarity about your racial identity, African American leadership avoidance of naming issues as Black issues, generation tension between baby boomers and the next generation of leaders, and the need for racial solidarity.

**Clarity about racial identity.** Some participants identified with and expressed concern for all people of color who have been historically marginalized. Racial solidarity was evidenced by the affirmation of the group that they were pro-Black. It is important for African Americans
to be clear about who they are, where they stand, and what they want. Deborah makes distinctions between African Americans in the community. “There are Black folk and there are folk who are Black. . . . The difference is, Black folk tend to have a more historical . . . understanding of their history, the folk who are Black . . . that’s a breeding process.”

From Deborah’s perspective, these groups are distinctly different. Therefore, the commitment to the community is different.

**African American leadership.** Leaders are reluctant to focus on issues in the Black community. African American leaders always want to collaborate with somebody. Hanifah believes leaders are “always making an excuse to justify why we’re getting an organization specifically focused on Black people.” Other communities do not justify their organizations. Another concern expressed was the fact that the leaders in the community are dying off and a new generation of leaders has not been trained.

**Generation tension.** When asked to get involved in an activity, Hanifah’s son told her the older generation does not listen to the millennials “they think we don’t know anything . . . that we’re all into music.” Instead of working within established Black organizations, Hanifah’s son organized a coalition called Hip Hop for the Homeless. Daphne believes there will always be people in the community who are activists, because activists breed activists.

**Strategies for change.** The group offered strategies for change within the African American community and broader society.

- Maintain cutting edge data about African Americans.
- Foster how we problem solve as African Americans.
- Define our problems as a group and keep those issues separate from what everyone else says are our problems.
• Perpetuate our heritage and tell our own story.
• Transfer knowledge about our history to the next generation.
• Disseminate information to the community regarding employment and things that are happening.

**Summary of baby boom focus group findings.** Four themes emerged from the baby boom focus group interviews:

1. Racial solidarity.
2. Leaders reluctant to focus on Black issues.
3. There is tension between the baby boomers and the next generation of leadership. Additionally, new leaders are not being trained.
4. Leaders tend to accommodate more than agitate and fight for causes in the community.

**Summary of baby boom cohort themes (N = 8).** There are nine themes that emerged from the baby boom personal interviews and focus groups. The nine themes are: (a) leaders accommodate rather than agitate, (b) it is important to speak out against injustice, (c) racial beliefs are shaped by the where you live or where you were raised, (d) a racial hierarchy exists in Colorado, (e) millennials are not socially or civically aware, (f) clarity about racial identity, (g) African American leaders are reluctant to label issues Black issues, (h) there is tension between the baby boomers and next generation of leadership also the next generation is not being trained, and (i) racial solidarity is important. The total sample size for the baby boom generation was eight. The percentages reflect the number of people who raised the issue or agreed with the issue. During the focus group discussions, the participants verbalized their agreement or disagreement with issues as they were raised. I included two issues, importance of speaking out
against injustice and racial hierarchy in Colorado, because of their relevance to the research topic. However, the issues were raised in the personal interviews and not discussed in the focus group.

Table 4.10 reflects the key findings organized by the categories of racial and community identity and leadership.

Table 4.10

*Baby Boom Emergent Themes Grouped by Category*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
<th>Racial Identity %</th>
<th>Community Identity %</th>
<th>Leadership %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodate Leader</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity about racial identity</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of speaking out against injustice</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ 13%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millennials are not socially or civically aware</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ 100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial hierarchy in Colorado</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial beliefs are shaped by geography - the region where you live</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is tension between baby boomers and next generation of leaders</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying issues as Black Issues</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ 100%</td>
<td>✓ 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial Solidarity</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Integration of qualitative findings. In this section, I integrate and summarize the generation cohort findings from the personal interviews and focus groups. There were 27 themes that surfaced in the personal interview and focus group discussions. Within the 27 themes, eight emerged across all generation cohorts. This is an indication that the themes are relevant to the millennials, Gen-Xers, and baby boomers. However, this does not suggest that there was agreement within the generation cohorts. Table 4.11 reflects the themes from the personal
interviews and focus groups. The checkmark in the generation cohort column identifies where
the theme emerged.

Table 4.1

**Qualitative Themes Across Generation Cohorts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Interview and Focus Group Findings</th>
<th>Millennial</th>
<th>Gen-X</th>
<th>Baby Boom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodate versus agitate leader</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addressing social problems/need to discuss the taboo</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes about a colorblind society</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collectivism versus individualism</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity about racial identity</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgy leadership/leaders lost fire in belly</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding elders to share their wisdom and knowledge</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of character</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of speaking out against injustice</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include people affected by the problem to find a solution</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying issues as Black issues</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal and external acceptance of negative stereotypes about African American women</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of recognition of Black women leaders/think leader think men</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lose connection with the community when you become mainstream</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millennials are not socially or civically aware</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed-race African Americans treated as Black</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple identities make up the Black experience</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal experiences with race and racism influences</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attitude</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial abandonment—Black men dating/marrying outside of race</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial beliefs are shaped by geography—the region where you live—region of the country influences racial attitudes</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial differences in the interpretation of women’s behaviors</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial hierarchy in Colorado</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial solidarity</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevance of race and gender</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social climate sparks involvement</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tension between baby boomers and next generation of leadership ✓ ✓ ✓
Youth voice in community problem solving is missing ✓

Being connected to the community and understanding the experience of community members is important to the millennial personal interview and focus group participants. The millennials commented that the collective nature of the community is being lost. The millennial personal interview and focus group participants recognized they need to learn the lessons about social activism from the baby boomers. The millennials also believed they have knowledge to share. Darlene and Karen stated it is difficult to find elders in the community willing to share their knowledge and learn something from the millennials. The personal interview and focus group participants commented that they were aware of the social conditions in America and they believe that they are action oriented. One of the millennial personal interview participants commented that she started a non-profit organization to train youth on how to become civically and socially engaged. Another millennial indicated her volunteer activities focus on work to raise awareness about oppression. A comparison of the activities for the personal interview and focus group participants by generation cohort is located in Appendix M.

The Gen-X interview and focus group participants raised the issue of taboo topics in the African American community. The perpetuation of negative stereotypes of African American women by African Americans and the problem of incest were the examples of taboo topics that are not being discussed in the community. African American women need to challenge the Jezebel image in the music videos even if they are created by African Americans. One Gen-X interview participant was a victim of molestation by a family member, which informed her perspective about the topic of incest. Another issue for the Gen-Xers is the loss of connection to the African American community if you become part of mainstream America. Generally, the
Gen-Xers agree that you relinquish aspects of your culture as you integrate into the mainstream. Stated differently, the Gen-Xers commented that to achieve the American dream you have to “lose your culture to fit into . . . this idea of being an executive with a white picket fence.” When describing the activism of the millennial generation, a Gen-Xer described the dilemma of being caught between the generation that experienced the struggle of Jim Crow and the “know nothing” millennial generation. The millennials are not aware of what they do not know.

The historical legacy of African Americans was important to the baby boomers. More than the Gen-Xers and millennials, the baby boom interview and focus group participants were grounded in the history of African Americans in the U.S. and that knowledge informed their views about race and racism. The baby boomers were intentional about keeping abreast of issues by reading about current and historical events and through their group associations.

The millennials, Gen-Xers, and baby boomers agreed that negative stereotypes inform how the leadership of Black women is perceived. Additionally, each generation cohort commented that where you are raised and live influenced your attitudes about race. Vanessa commented that she did not feel connected to African American culture because she was born in Germany and raised in predominately White neighborhoods. Racial attitudes vary by part of the country. For example, colorism, or light skin preference, is stronger in the Southern states than in Colorado. Barbara commented that her adult nieces and nephews that live on the East coast in expensive homes believe that “we [African Americans] have, in certain ways, overcome racism.”

An area of commonality between the millennials and Gen-Xers was interracial dating and marriage. Both generation cohort groups perceived this as a lack of racial solidarity. The baby boom interview participants were bi-racial and the issue was not as pronounced among this
group. The issue of interracial dating and marriage did not surface in the baby boom focus group.

**Phase 2: Presentation of Quantitative/Qualitative Results**

This section discusses the results from the survey in relation to the research questions. The survey questions were grouped together under a general question that reflected the emergent themes from the personal interviews and focus groups. I looked at each item individually to gain an understanding of where differences may exist between the generation cohorts. Operating independently, the items are not representative of a scale. Survey topics were covered by both Likert-type scale response items and open-end questions. Survey questions four and five on the topic of discrimination, six and seven on the topic of race and racism, and questions eight and nine on the topic of racial identity were designed to address research question number one. Survey questions 10 and 11 on the topic of gender issues were designed to address research question number two. Survey questions 12 and 13 on the topic of African American leadership and 14 and 15 on the topic of generational views of leadership, and 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20 on the topic of community activism were constructed to address research question number three. The complete survey is located in Appendix N.

I start with descriptive analysis, describing some commonalities across generation cohorts within each survey topic. I then discuss the significant differences between generation cohorts. Included in this discussion are items that are not statistically significant but showed a pattern of interest or were a noteworthy finding. I used response category percentages to report items that were noteworthy but not statistically significant. I discuss the narrative responses to the questions at the end of each topic discussion by generation cohort. The responses to the narrative questions focus on what corroborated or contradicted the Likert-type scale responses.
Survey profiles. This section begins with a brief description of the survey respondents by generation cohort to put the Likert-type scale responses and narrative responses into context.

Millennial survey profile. Twenty-six percent (6) of the women surveyed identified as African American mixed-race. The remaining 74% (17) identified as African American. Of the 23 women completing the survey 70% (16), held a bachelor’s degree or higher and 35% (8) of the women earned $75,000 or more. Forty-three percent (10) of the women reported they had three or more people living in their household. Table 4.12 reflects the profile of the survey millennial participants.

Table 4.12

Millennial Survey Profile (N=23)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>High School or GED</th>
<th>Some College</th>
<th>Associate Degree</th>
<th>Bachelor Degree</th>
<th>Graduate Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>0-24,999</td>
<td>25,000-49,999</td>
<td>50,000-74,999</td>
<td>75,000-99,000</td>
<td>100,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of People in Household</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Generation-X survey profile. Nineteen percent (12) of the women who responded to the survey identified as African American mixed-race. The remaining 81% (51) identified as African American. Of the 63 respondents, 81% (51) held a bachelors degree or higher and 60% (38) reported incomes of $75,000 or greater. Sixty percent (38) of the women reported having three or more people living in their household. Table 4.13 reflects the profile for the Gen-X survey participants.
Table 4.13

*Generation-X Survey Profile (N = 63)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>High School or GED</th>
<th>Some College</th>
<th>Associate Degree</th>
<th>Bachelor Degree</th>
<th>Graduate Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>0-24,999</th>
<th>25,000-49,999</th>
<th>50,000-74,999</th>
<th>75,000-99,000</th>
<th>1000,000+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of People in Household</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Baby boom survey profiles.** Ninety-four percent (72) of the respondents identified as African American the remaining six percent (5) identified as African American mixed-race. Eighty-seven percent (67) of the respondents held a bachelor degree or higher and 61% (45) earned $75,000 per year or more. Thirty-three percent (33) of the respondents had households of three or more people. Table 4.14 reflects the survey profile for the baby boomers.

Table 4.14

*Baby Boom Survey Profile (N = 77)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>High School or GED</th>
<th>Some College</th>
<th>Associate Degree</th>
<th>Bachelor Degree</th>
<th>Graduate Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income*</th>
<th>0-24,999</th>
<th>25,000-49,999</th>
<th>50,000-74,999</th>
<th>75,000-99,000</th>
<th>1000,000+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of People in Household</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Three respondents did not provide combined income information
**Descriptive analysis.** The descriptive analysis is a discussion about the commonalities and differences in the quantitative Likert-type scale responses and the qualitative narrative responses for each survey topic.

Tables numbered 4.15, 4.16, and 4.17 reflect the mean scores across generation cohorts for survey questions number four, six, and eight, which correspond to research question number one: what are the generation differences in attitudes among Black women about race? The corresponding survey question appears beneath each table. I discuss the survey results under the topic headings of discrimination, race and racism, and racial identity.

**Discrimination.** Survey respondents from all three generation cohorts tend to somewhat agree that they received positive messages from their families about their racial identity, with $M = 4.96$ for millennials, $M = 4.82$ for Gen-Xers, and $M = 4.99$ for baby boomers. They also tend to somewhat agree that their families prepared them for living in a society that discriminates against you based on race, with $M = 4.65$ for millennials, $M = 4.56$ for Gen-Xers, and $M = 4.86$ for baby boomers. Additionally, the generation cohorts generally agreed that they were prepared to live in a society that discriminates against you based on your race and gender. There were slightly lower mean scores for preparedness for gender discrimination with $M = 4.04$ for millennials, $M = 4.00$ for Gen-Xers, and $M = 3.95$ for baby boomers. This may suggest that being prepared for gender discrimination was not as salient as being prepared for racial discrimination.

The millennials and baby boomers concur that they disagree that teaching children about race and racism limits their ability to interact successfully with people of other races, with $M = 2.48$ for millennials and $M = 2.03$ for baby boomers. The Gen-Xers ($M = 1.90$) strongly
disagreed with the statement. Table 4.15 illustrates the mean scores across the generation cohorts for survey question number four.

Table 4.15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question #4 Statements a</th>
<th>Millennial $N = 23$</th>
<th>Gen-X $N = 63$</th>
<th>Baby Boom $N = 77$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I received positive childhood messages from my family and community about my racial identity.</td>
<td>4.96 1.40</td>
<td>4.82 1.19</td>
<td>4.99 1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching our children about race and racism limits their ability to interact successfully with people of other races.</td>
<td>2.48 1.73</td>
<td>1.90 1.17</td>
<td>2.03 1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I experienced racial discrimination in school.</td>
<td>3.77* 1.48</td>
<td>4.08 1.53</td>
<td>4.61* 1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I experience racial discrimination on my job.</td>
<td>3.65 1.58</td>
<td>4.06 1.49</td>
<td>4.45 1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my personal life, I experience racial discrimination in social settings.</td>
<td>3.68 1.55</td>
<td>4.10 1.33</td>
<td>4.38 1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My family prepared me for living in a society that discriminates against you based on your race.</td>
<td>4.65 0.885</td>
<td>4.56 1.48</td>
<td>4.86 1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My family prepared me for living in a society that discriminates against you based on your gender.</td>
<td>4.04 1.30</td>
<td>4.00 1.49</td>
<td>3.95 1.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Mean scores are based on a six-point scale, with 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Somewhat Agree, 5 = Agree, and 6 = Strongly Agree.

a Survey Question: Thinking about your experiences, if any, with discrimination, how strongly do you disagree or agree with each of the following statements?

* $p < .05$

Descriptive analysis above discussed the commonalities across generations. An ANOVA with post hoc tests showed statistically significant mean score difference, $F_{(2,162)} = 3.87, p =$
.023 for how the respondents experienced discrimination in school. The significant difference was between millennials and baby boomers. The millennials ($M = 3.77$) were less likely to agree that they experienced discrimination in school compared to the baby boomers ($M = 4.61$).

There was not a statistically significant difference between how the generations indicated they experienced discrimination on the job and in social settings. However, an interesting pattern emerged. Millennials ($M = 3.65$) were less likely to agree they experienced discrimination on the job than Gen-Xers ($M = 4.06$), or baby boomers ($M = 4.45$). The same trend was true when asked about discrimination in social settings, with millennials ($M = 3.68$) less likely to agree that they experienced discrimination in this area than Gen-Xers ($M = 4.10$), and baby boomers ($M = 4.38$).

The next section discusses the findings from the narrative survey questions in response to discrimination. There were six millennials, 15 Gen-Xers, and 29 baby boomers that provided additional comments about their experiences with discrimination.

The millennial narrative responses corroborate the findings from the Likert-type survey responses. A survey respondent indicated that, as people interact with each other more, discrimination is less frequent. Of the 23 millennial survey respondents, six identified as African American mixed-race. Two of the African American mixed-race respondents provided narrative comments to the question. One of the African American mixed-race respondents indicated that the discrimination she experiences varies by the social setting. She explained her situation in this way “oftentimes I am too White, too Black, or just perfect because I am [either] ‘palatable’ for both sides or not enough of one-depending on the company I am keeping.”

Twelve of the Gen-Xers identified as African American mixed-race. However, there were no specific narrative responses from this group regarding discrimination. The Gen-Xers
tended to discuss how they were prepared by their families to deal with racial discrimination. Their parents offered strategies like you have to work harder to get ahead or discrimination exists and you should not let it stop you from being who you are or what you do. Several of the Gen-Xers also mentioned the subtle nature of discrimination.

There were five baby boomers that identified as African American mixed-race. One of the African American mixed-race respondents indicated that you are treated differently, generally more positive, if people are not sure what box to place you in. The baby boomers received positive messages and strategies to prepare them for living in a society that racially discriminates. For example, one respondent indicated she was not allowed to use race as a reason for not getting ahead, another was told you have to work harder, and another was told “no matter how hard you work you must be aware that you are a person of color and cannot expect to be accepted in our current society.”

**Race and racism.** The generation cohorts all strongly disagree with the statement that race is no longer a relevant factor in determining the life chances of African Americans with $M = 1.52$ for millennials, $M = 1.46$ for Gen-Xers, and $M = 1.53$ for baby boomers. All three generations also strongly disagree with the statement that since slavery and Jim Crow are in the past it serves no purpose to continue talking about the past with $M = 1.43$ for millennials, $M = 1.44$ for Gen-Xers, and $M = 1.35$ for baby boomers. The generation cohorts somewhat agree that discrimination against African Americans is woven into everyday life with $M = 4.78$ for millennials, $M = 4.68$ for Gen-Xers, and $M = 4.92$ for baby boomers. The Gen-Xers and baby boomers somewhat agree that racial profiling is evidence that racism still remains, with $M = 4.51$ for Gen-Xers and $M = 4.84$ for baby boomers. The level of agreement for the millennials is slightly higher with $M = 5.00$. 
The generation cohorts somewhat disagreed with the statement that African Americans lose their connections to the Black community as they become mainstream, with $M = 3.52$ for millennials, $M = 3.22$ for Gen-Xers, and $M = 3.66$ for baby boomers. Table 4.16 illustrates the mean scores across the generation cohorts for survey question number six.

Table 4.16

*Mean Score Results for Race and Racism*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question #6 Statements</th>
<th>Millennial</th>
<th>Gen-X</th>
<th>Baby Boom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race is no longer a relevant factor in determining the life chances of African Americans.</td>
<td>1.52 0.665</td>
<td>1.46 0.858</td>
<td>1.53 0.968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slavery and Jim Crow are in the past, it serves no purpose to continue talking about the past.</td>
<td>1.43 0.728</td>
<td>1.44 0.713</td>
<td>1.35 0.580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination against African Americans happens on a daily basis.</td>
<td>5.22 0.998</td>
<td>4.94 1.54</td>
<td>5.09 1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As African Americans become mainstream, they lose their connection to the Black community.</td>
<td>3.52 1.20</td>
<td>3.22 1.45</td>
<td>3.66 1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Americans believe the negative stereotypes about our race.</td>
<td>4.35* 0.885</td>
<td>4.19 1.05</td>
<td>3.72* 1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination against African Americans is woven into everyday life.</td>
<td>4.78 1.04</td>
<td>4.68 1.09</td>
<td>4.92 1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial profiling is the best example of everyday racism.</td>
<td>5.00 1.24</td>
<td>4.51 1.26</td>
<td>4.84 1.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Mean scores are based on a six-point scale, with 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Somewhat Agree, 5 = Agree, and 6 = Strongly Agree

*Survey Question: Thinking about race and your experience with racism, how strongly do you disagree or agree with each of the following statements?*

* $p < .05$
An ANOVA with post hoc tests showed a statistically significant mean score difference, $F_{(2, 162)} = 4.64, p = .011$, across generations when asked if African Americans believe the negative stereotypes about their race. A Tukey Post Hoc test showed the significant difference was between the millennials and baby boomers. The millennials ($M = 4.35$) were more likely than the baby boomers ($M = 3.72$) to agree that African Americans believe the negative stereotypes about their race. This finding is discussed within the results of the final focus group.

The next section discusses the findings from the narrative survey questions in response to race and racism. A total of five millennials, eight Gen-Xers, and 22 baby boomers provided additional comments about the existence of race and racism.

The millennial narrative survey respondents focused on the institutional nature of racism and the casual use of the “N” word by Black people. The respondents did not comment on the negative stereotype statement. An alternate response was provided by a millennial respondent that agrees that race is relevant. However, “African Americans look for racism in any situation.”

The Gen-Xers did respond to the statement about African Americans accepting negative stereotypes about our race. One Gen-Xer commented that “whether or not Blacks agree with stereotypes about our race depends largely upon how educated one has become. Generally, the more educated . . . the less likely they believe the stereotypes about race.” An alternate perspective was provided by a Gen-Xer who commented African Americans “live down to the stereotypes with so-called self expression.” There was also a comment about the importance of learning about the past to understand how the past affects us today.

Similar to the millennials, the narrative responses from the baby boomers focused on the institutional nature of racism. One respondent commented, “racism is woven into institutions,” another said “subjective normative injustices are the brick and mortar of institutional racism.”
and another commented, “race matters in America.” Some baby boomers also discussed the permanence of race in America: “racism is engrained in the fabric of America,” “racism will always exist.” None of the baby boomers commented on the statement that African Americans believe the negative stereotypes about their race.

**Racial identity.** The Gen-Xers and baby boomers agree that regardless of how you identify, if you are bi-racial and part of your heritage is African American, society will treat you as Black with, $M = 5.11$ for Gen-Xers, and $M = 5.13$ for baby boomers. The millennial response is slightly lower. The millennials somewhat agree with the statement with $M = 4.83$. Additionally, the generation cohorts somewhat agree that social acceptance in the African American community requires an understanding of and empathy for the plight of African Americans, with $M = 4.17$ for millennials, $M = 4.08$ for Gen-Xers, and $M = 4.31$ for baby boomers.

All three generations tend to disagree that African Americans must lose part of their racial identity to become part of mainstream America, with $M = 2.74$, for millennials, $M = 2.08$ Gen-Xers, and $M = 2.21$ for baby boomers. Additionally, they tend to disagree with the statement that African Americans are reluctant to identify as African American or Black with $M = 2.83$ for millennials, $M = 2.47$ for Gen-Xers, and $M = 2.40$ for baby boomers. Table 4.17 reflects the mean scores across the generation cohorts for survey question number eight.
Table 4.17

Mean Score Results for Racial Identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question #8 Statements c</th>
<th>Millennial N = 23</th>
<th>Gen-X N = 63</th>
<th>Baby Boom N = 77</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Americans are reluctant to identity as African American or Black.</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>2.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed-race people should be able to choose how they want to self-identity.</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>4.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regardless of how you self-identity, if part of your heritage is African American, U.S. society will treat you as an African American.</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>5.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Americans must lose their racial identity to become part of mainstream America.</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>2.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social acceptance in the African American community requires an understanding of and empathy for the plight of African Americans.</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Mean scores are based on a six-point scale, with 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Somewhat Agree, 5 = Agree, and 6 = Strongly Agree.

There were no statistically significant differences for any of the racial identity items. Generation cohorts tended to agree on this issue. The next section discusses the findings from the narrative survey questions in response to racial identity. There were four millennials, nine Gen-Xers, and 12 baby boomers that provided additional comments about racial identity. The narrative responses about mix-raced identity corroborate the survey findings.

Racial identity was the most salient issue in the narrative discussion for the millennial generation. A millennial respondent stated “to allow a mixed person to claim they are White is
untrue.” An alternate perspective was regardless of how a mixed-race person identifies society will identify you as Black. The attitude about how society defines people is best reflected in a comment from a millennial when she stated: “the right to choose is irrelevant because no one gets to choose, society places race on you regardless of your choice.”

The focus of the Gen-Xers comments related to society defining who you are based on your physical appearance. One respondent commented “how society treats you depend on what you look like” another stated “if a portion of your identity is mixed with Black . . . society will see you as Black.” Two of the narrative respondents commented that losing your racial identity is part of becoming mainstream and another commented that it is easier to assimilate with other mainstream cultures if you are not African American. These comments were exceptions to the general Likert-type survey responses. The Gen-Xers ($M = 2.08$) disagreed that you must lose your identity to become part of the mainstream.

Generally, the narrative responses from the baby boomers fell into two categories. First several respondents commented on how society treats you based on your physical characteristics, people are judged by their color. This is consistent with the responses from the millennials and Gen-Xers. The second category was the reluctance to identify as African American. A respondent commented that some Blacks want to claim anything other than African American and others strongly identify with being Black.

**Gender and racism.** The survey respondents somewhat agree that African American women are portrayed negatively in the media with $M = 4.61$ for millennials, $M = 4.68$ for Gen-Xers, and $M = 4.64$ for baby boomers. Additionally, the survey respondents somewhat agree that the negative portrayals influence how Black women are perceived as leaders with $M = 4.74$ for millennials, $M = 4.84$ for Gen-Xers, and $M = 4.94$ for baby boomers. Similar agreement existed
for the statement that Black male leaders receive more noteworthy recognition than Black female leaders with $M = 4.39$ for millennials, $M = 4.21$ for Gen-Xers, and $M = 4.05$ for baby boomers. The millennials and baby boomers tended to agree with the statement African American women just push through it and make significant social changes that are felt throughout the community with $M = 5.13$ for millennials and $M = 5.07$ for baby boomers. The Gen-Xers ($M = 4.98$) somewhat agree with the statement. Table 4.18 reflects the responses to survey question number 10.
### Table 4.18

**Mean Score Results for Gender and Race**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>Millennials Mean</th>
<th>Gen-X Mean</th>
<th>Baby Boom Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is a social hierarchy that ranks Black females on the bottom rung of the social ladder.</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>4.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American women are portrayed negatively in the media.</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>4.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative portrayals of African American women influence how they are perceived as leaders.</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>4.84</td>
<td>4.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American women cannot escape society’s stereotypes of being angry, sexually promiscuous or “mammy.”</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>4.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black male leaders receive more noteworthy recognition than Black female leaders.</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>4.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black men adopt negative stereotypes about Black women.</td>
<td>5.09*</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>4.45*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.793</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American women are in need of healing because of a history of discrimination.</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>4.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>0.983</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American women “just push through it” and make significant social changes that are felt throughout the community.</td>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>4.98</td>
<td>5.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.815</td>
<td>0.924</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Mean scores are based on a six-point scale, with 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Somewhat Agree, 5 = Agree, and 6 = Strongly Agree.

dSurvey Question: Thinking about your personal experiences with gender and racial issues, how strongly do you disagree or agree with each of the following statements?

* *p < .05
An ANOVA with post hoc tests showed a statistically significant mean score difference when asked about Black men adopting negative stereotypes about Black women, $F_{(2,162)} = 2.89$, $p = .059$. A Tukey Post Hoc test showed the significant difference was between the millennials and baby boomers. The millennials ($M = 5.09$) were more likely than the baby boomers ($M = 4.45$) to agree that Black men adopt negative stereotypes about Black women. There are no statistically significant differences, but there is, however, a pattern in responses for two survey statements regarding gender and race. First, the responses show that millennials (52%) appear to be more likely than Gen-Xers (39%) or baby boomers (40%) to somewhat agree with the statement African American women cannot escape society’s stereotypes of being angry, sexually promiscuous, or “mammy.” Second, is the pattern of agreement between millennials and baby boomers regarding the recognition of African American women leaders. It appears that millennials (61%), more than baby boomers (43%), somewhat agree that Black male leaders receive more noteworthy recognition than Black female leaders.

In the next section, I discuss the narrative responses to the survey question. There were four millennials, nine Gen-Xers, and 18 baby boomers that provided additional comments about gender issues. Three of the four narrative respondents from the millennial generation addressed the negative stereotypes of Black women. Generally, the narrative comments focused on the relationship between Black men and Black women. The Likert-type survey respondents agree that Black men adopt negative stereotypes about Black women. However, one narrative respondent corroborated the survey result and one narrative respondent provided a dissenting response:

I wouldn’t agree with the . . . statement above that Black women are deemed to be promiscuous; in fact, I being a Black woman have had endless conversations with Black men who say one reason men started to flock to White women is because they deemed White women to be promiscuous and sexually free.
The narrative responses from the Gen-Xers varied. Several responses were similar to the millennials’ comments regarding the relationship between African American men and women, “the relationships between Black men and women are dysfunctional and so divided.” A respondent provided an alternate perspective when she stated “we as Black women do things that allow us to be in the media negatively.” Two of the respondents commented that Black men are the ones at the bottom of the social ladder and Black women are perceived as less a threat than Black men. A millennial respondent also commented that Black women are seen as less intimidating than Black men.

Generally, the baby boomers’ comments about negative stereotypes focused on Black women being labeled as angry. One respondent commented that “most Black women do what is required (necessary); therefore [they] are perceived as angry and hateful.” Another respondent commented, “African American women don’t really take ‘stuff’ from people and especially Black men. This gives them the reputation of being angry women sometimes.” Additionally, the baby boomers commented on the historical oppression of African American women “Black women have always been out in the workforce from the cotton fields to the kitchen . . . we are assertive and forceful because we had to lead families.” There were also comments about the image of being strong. One respondent stated it this way “we have to be strong for everyone . . . when do we get a chance to be celebrated . . . to lean if only for a moment.”

**African American leadership.** The respondents agree that it is important for Black leaders in the Black community to understand the lived experiences of Black people, with $M = 5.65$ for millennials, $M = 5.38$ for Gen-Xers, and $M = 5.49$ for baby boomers. There tends to be agreement across the generation cohorts that Black leaders are needed in the community to advocate for Black issues, with $M = 5.48$ for millennials, $M = 5.27$ for Gen-Xers, and $M = 5.29$
for baby boomers. The generation cohorts somewhat disagreed that African American leaders accommodate rather than challenge injustices in the community with $M = 3.86$ for millennials, $M = 3.62$ for Gen-Xers, and $M = 3.82$ for baby boomers. This result did not corroborate the general statements made in the personal interviews and focus groups. Table 4.19 reflects the mean scores for survey question number 12.

Table 4.19

Mean Score Results for African American Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question #12 Statements</th>
<th>Millennial N = 23</th>
<th>Gen-X N = 63</th>
<th>Baby Boom N = 77</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important for Black leaders to understand the lived experiences of Black people.</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>0.487</td>
<td>5.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black leaders are needed in the African American community to advocate for Black issues.</td>
<td>5.48</td>
<td>0.730</td>
<td>5.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Societal issues, like poverty, affect all races; there is not such think as an exclusively “Black issue.”</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>3.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American leaders accommodate rather than challenge injustices in the Black community.</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>3.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle income Black leaders should form coalitions with lower income communities to find solutions to problems affecting the Black community.</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>4.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a crisis of local leadership in the African American community.</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>4.98**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Mean scores are based on a six-point scale, with 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Somewhat Agree, 5 = Agree, and 6 = Strongly Agree.

c Survey Question: Social, economic, and political change happens at both the local and national level. Thinking about local community-based African American leaders and African American leaders at the national level, how strongly do you disagree or agree with each of the following statements?

**$p < .01$
An ANOVA with post hoc tests showed a statistically significant mean score difference for the statement that there is a crisis of local leadership in the African American community, $F_{(2, 162)} = 2.35$, $p = .098$. A Tukey Post Hoc test showed the significant difference was between the Gen-Xers and the baby boomers. When comparing the mean scores, Gen-Xers ($M = 4.98$) were more likely to agree that a leadership crisis exists in the African American community than the baby boomers ($M = 4.57$).

A discussion about the narrative responses to African American leadership is next. Four millennials, eight Gen-Xers, and 17 baby boomers commented on African American leadership. The narrative responses regarding the need for Black leaders in the community tend to corroborate the findings from the survey.

A millennial respondent commented that we are past focusing on having Black leaders in the community. From her perspective, our communities serve more than just African Americans. Similarly, a millennial commented that there are Black issues but they are not mutually exclusive of societal issues like poverty.

The Gen-Xers, like the millennials, tend to agree that the time has passed for a singular Black leader in the community “we need leaders who advocate for injustices done to people in general.” However, the narrative responses reflect a need for Black leadership in the Black community “I believe that there needs to be Black leaders who work to advocate for issues relevant to our community.” One Gen-X respondent commented on the disparate lives of African Americans and how that influences leadership in the community “depending on where you grew up . . . some Black Americans feel things are great and there’s no cause for dramatic leadership. Others feel completely let down and so call for extreme leadership.”
The baby boomers’ comments about African American leadership reflect sentiments that leaders tend to accommodate rather than take a stand on issues impacting the Black community. This response reflects many of the comments: “When some Blacks get in leadership positions, they feel they have to be careful because they don’t want it to be said that they are only helping African Americans.” The narrative responses regarding accommodating leaders were stronger than the somewhat disagree response in the survey. The baby boomers commented on the need to transfer knowledge from one generation to the next “the young Black leadership is clueless about the history of Black leadership in this county/state and needs to be ‘schooled’ in order to succeed.” While there is a sense that the pipeline for leadership is empty, the baby boomers acknowledge that “people are taking leadership into their own hands in neighborhoods, schools, families, and communities.” Regarding the statement about Black issues, generally, the baby boomers agree that there are Black issues that need to be addressed. While there are societal issues like poverty, the impact on the Black community tends to be more severe. The baby boomers provided an alternate perspective about a crisis of leadership. One respondent indicated that “the struggles African Americans face are not due to a lack of leadership in the community but due to a lack of African Americans taking on personal and community responsibility and accountability.”

**Generational leadership.** The generation cohorts agree on the necessity of intergenerational collaboration with $M = 5.17$ for millennials, $M = 5.41$ for Gen-Xers, and $M = 5.46$ for baby boomers. Additionally, the respondents agree that it is important for Black women activists to share their experiences and knowledge with the younger generations to prepare them for leadership with $M = 5.17$ for millennials, $M = 5.38$ for Gen-Xers, and $M = 5.39$ for baby boomers. While there is not a statistically significant mean score difference, there are patterns in
responses worth noting. First, fewer Gen-Xers (27%) and baby boomers (25%) than millennials (32%) perceive that the leadership of the older generation is innovative and inclusive.

Additionally, it appears that millennials (52%) are more likely to agree and strongly agree that the leadership of the younger generation is innovative and inclusive than the Gen-Xers (43%) and baby boomers (49%). Second, more millennials (22%) strongly agree that collaborating with other oppressed groups is the only way social change will happen than Gen-Xers (11%) or baby boomers (10%). Table 4.20 reflects the mean scores across generation cohorts for survey question number 14.

Table 4.20
Mean Score Results for Generation Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question #14 Statements</th>
<th>Millennial N = 23</th>
<th>Gen-X N = 63</th>
<th>Baby Boom N = 77</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intergenerational collaboration between African American leaders on community issues is important.</td>
<td>5.17 (0.778)</td>
<td>5.41 (0.710)</td>
<td>5.46 (0.701)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An important role for baby boom Black leaders to play is to bring the generations together by educating Gen-X and millennial generation leaders on how to create social change.</td>
<td>5.26 (0.810)</td>
<td>5.24 (0.928)</td>
<td>5.30 (0.745)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important for Black women activist to share their social justice experiences to develop the next generation of female leaders.</td>
<td>5.17 (0.778)</td>
<td>5.38 (0.658)</td>
<td>5.39 (0.713)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The younger generation of Black leaders is innovative and inclusive in their leadership.</td>
<td>4.48 (1.16)</td>
<td>4.26 (0.991)</td>
<td>4.37 (1.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The older generation of Black leaders is innovative and</td>
<td>4.05 (1.00)</td>
<td>3.56 (1.29)</td>
<td>3.65 (1.24)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Collaborating with other oppressed groups is the only way social change will happen.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mdn</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborating with other oppressed groups is the only way social change will happen.</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>4.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When Black leaders collaborate with other oppressed groups they lose sight of the specific needs of the Black community.</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>3.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is tension between baby boom Black leaders and Gen-X and millennial Black leaders about how to address issues in the community.</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>0.996</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Black church plays a key role in addressing social problems within the African American community.</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>4.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The historically Black social justice organizations play a key role in creating change in the African American community.</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>0.988</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>4.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Mean scores are based on a six-point scale, with 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Somewhat Agree, 5 = Agree, and 6 = Strongly Agree.

Survey Question: Thinking about past, present and future Black leadership, how strongly do you disagree or agree with each of the following statements?

There were no statistically significant differences for any of the questions pertaining to generation leadership. There tended to be agreement across the generation cohorts. The next section discusses the findings from the narrative survey responses in response to questions about Black leadership and generation leadership. Three millennial, six Gen-Xers, and 16 baby boomer survey respondents provided narrative comments about generation leadership.

The narrative survey responses from three millennials support the Likert-type item responses. A millennial commented, “our generation does not know how to protest.” Another comment stressed the importance of receiving wisdom from elders. The narrative responses from the Gen-Xers also supported the survey findings. A Gen-Xer commented that both the
Gen-Xers and millennials are “totally me, technical generations with little need to look out for the rights of others.” However, Gen-Xers generally agree that there is tension between leaders in the baby boom generation and younger generations. Gen-Xers also agree that it is up to the elders to “educate, learn from, and help prepare the millennials for the future.” A Gen-Xer commented on the difficulty the older generation has with giving up power and “help young people become leaders in our communities.”

The need for a transfer of knowledge from one generation to the next was a strong theme that emerged in the narrative responses from the baby boomers. A respondent commented that the baby boomers have an obligation to share the lessons of the past with Gen-Xers and millennials to avoid the mistakes of the past. Similar to the Gen-Xers, the baby boomers commented that a schism exists between younger and older leaders because of how each group chooses to address issues in the community, “generational differences create a greater divide than racial differences.” Additionally, one respondent suggested that part of the schism between the older and younger generation was due to a reluctance to embrace people from non-traditional sexual orientations. A baby boomer commented that she has heard members of older organizations being critical because “those young gay Black folks are trying to take over.”

Community activism. The millennials and Gen-Xers agree that their personal experiences informed why they became active in the community, with $M = 5.04$ for millennials, $M = 5.11$ for Gen-Xers. The baby boomers ($M = 4.92$) somewhat agree with the statement. The respondents somewhat agree that they learned about community activism from their family, friends, or people in the community with $M = 4.57$ for millennials, $M = 4.75$ for Gen-Xers, and $M = 4.95$ for baby boomers. The response to the statement “it is important for community activists to understand the legacy of oppression” was strong with $M = 5.09$ for millennials, $M =$
5.26 for Gen-Xers, and $M = 5.38$ for baby boomers. Another strong response emerged for the statement “it is important for activist to understand the lived experience of marginalized African Americans” with $M = 5.04$ for millennials, $M = 5.19$ for Gen-Xers, and $M = 5.40$ for baby boomers. Table 4.21 reflects the mean scores across generation cohorts for survey question number 16.
Table 4.21

Mean Score Results for Community Activism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>Millennials N = 23</th>
<th></th>
<th>Gen-X N = 63</th>
<th></th>
<th>Baby Boom N = 77</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I became involved in the community because of an injustice that directly affected my life or the life of family members, friends, or community.</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned about community activism from family members, friends, or people in the community.</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My personal experiences shape how I became active in the community.</td>
<td>5.04</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I actively seek out historical and contemporary information about my race.</td>
<td>4.17**</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>5.03**</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important for community activists to understand the legacy of oppression.</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>0.733</td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td>0.788</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>0.762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black community activists are challenged by the geographic changes in the African American community.</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>4.40**</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>4.86**</td>
<td>0.990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important for Black community activists to understand the lived experiences of marginalized African Americans.</td>
<td>5.04</td>
<td>0.976</td>
<td>5.19</td>
<td>0.743</td>
<td>5.40</td>
<td>0.674</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Mean scores are based on a six-point scale, with 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Somewhat Agree, 5 = Agree, and 6 = Strongly Agree.

Survey Question: Thinking about your activism or your thoughts about the activism you see in your community, how strongly do you disagree or agree with each of the following statements?

** p < .01
An ANOVA with post hoc tests showed a statistically significant mean score difference for the statement “I actively seek out historical and contemporary information about my race,” $F_{(2, 162)} = 4.39, p = 0.14$. A Tukey Post Hoc test showed the difference was between the baby boomers and the millennials. Baby boomers ($M = 5.03$) are more likely to agree that they seek historical and contemporary information about their race than millennials who tend to somewhat agree ($M = 4.17$). This result is consistent with the baby boom focus group discussion. The baby boomers discussed the importance of seeking information during the focus group meeting. This issue did not surface in the millennial personal interview, focus group, or survey narrative responses.

An ANOVA with post hoc tests showed a statistically significant mean score difference for the statement that Black community activists are challenged by the geographic changes in the African American community, $F_{(2, 162)} = 2.70, p = .070$. A Tukey Post Hoc test showed the difference was between the Gen-Xers and the baby boomers. Gen-Xers ($M = 4.40$) tend to somewhat agree and baby boomers ($M = 4.86$) more likely to agree that geographic changes are a challenge for community activists. In the next section, I discuss the narrative responses. There were six Gen-Xers and eight baby boomers that provided additional comments about community activism. The millennials did not respond to the open-end question.

The narrative responses for the survey question focused on the shift in the community from collectivism to individualism. One Gen-Xer commented that most millennials have a “WIFM (What’s In It For Me) mentality when it comes to activism and community.” Another commented that how active you are depends on your schedule, how strongly you feel your actions will make a difference, how strongly you identify with the cause, and your personal experiences. Three Gen-Xers agree that “social media is the future.” The Gen-Xers identified
social media as a way to receive and distribute information. Social media can bring the community together or further exacerbate the societal tension between individualism and collectivism. Social media was not raised as an issue with the millennials or baby boomers.

Two of the baby boomers commented on the need to teach and facilitate activism in the community, churches, and various other organizations. Most of the comments tended to reflect the tension between individualism and collectivism, “community activism requires that you care about the well-being of others.” Another baby boomer commented that “having a self-serving, personal agenda does not bode well” for community leaders.

**Level of community activism.** Survey questions 18, 19, 20, and 21 focus on community activism. The millennials, Gen-Xers, and baby boomers are engaged in the community in a variety of ways. Table 4.22 is a comparison of the activity level for each generation cohort. When comparing the percentage of people who are active or very active, Gen-Xers are the most active generation cohort. Fifty-one percent (32) of the Gen-Xers indicated they were either active or very active. The baby boomers were next with 42% (32), followed by the millennials with 35% (8).

Table 4.22

*Activity Level by Generation Cohort*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Level</th>
<th>Millennial N = 23</th>
<th>Generation-X N = 63</th>
<th>Baby Boom N = 77</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Active</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Active</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Too Active</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Active At All</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The activity each of the cohort groups engage in at the highest level is attending meetings to address issues in the Black community. The next highest is keeping informed of race issues by attending conferences, workshops, lectures, or reading literature. Table 4.23 is a comparison of the top 10 activities for the millennials, Gen-Xers, and baby boomers. This chart includes all responses regardless of how the respondents rated their activity level. A chart comparing the total 21 activities is listed in Appendix N.

Table 4.23

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparison of Activities by Generation Cohort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended a meeting to address issues in the Black community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kept informed of race issues by attending conferences, workshops, lectures, or reading literature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed others in the community about policies that positively or negatively affect African Americans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kept informed of gender issues by attending conferences, workshops, lectures, or reading literature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked with others on local issues pertaining to the Black community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joined or supported local, regional, or national organizations focused on race issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joined or supported local, regional, or national organizations focused on gender and race issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied to persuade others to vote for candidates with an understanding of race issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed others about gender and race issues in a public forum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where there was a need in the community, I stepped in to assist with addressing the need.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of quantitative/qualitative survey results. The millennials, Gen-Xers, and baby boomers tended to agree with most of the Likert-type response items. However, there are six out of the 76 survey items that generated statistically significant mean score differences using an ANOVA with post hoc tests. These items are: (a) personal experiences with discrimination, (b) negative stereotypes about African Americans, (c) negative stereotypes about African American women, (d) African American leadership, (e) seeking information about African Americans, and (f) geographic changes in the African American community.

The narrative responses from the millennials regarding personal experiences with discrimination at school supported the findings from the Likert-type response items. The millennials agree they live in a more diverse environment and their experience with discrimination is different than the experience of Gen-Xers and baby boomers. As a pattern of interest, fewer millennials agree that they experience discrimination on the job and in social settings than baby boomers. Thirty-six percent of millennials compared to 62% of baby boomers agree or strongly agree that they experience discrimination on the job. While 41% of millennials agree or strongly agree that they experience discrimination in social settings compared to 59% of baby boomers.

Negative stereotyping surfaced as an issue in the personal interviews and focus groups. The survey contained two statements about negative stereotypes. The first statement inquired about African Americans believing the negative stereotypes about their race. The results for the Likert-type response items were inconclusive. The millennials and Gen-Xers somewhat agree with the statement and the baby boomers somewhat disagree. The generation cohorts did not provide additional narrative comments. The second statement inquired about Black men adopting the negative stereotypes about Black women. The millennials agree and the baby
boomers somewhat agree with the statement. The millennial narrative responses support the survey results. A millennial respondent commented that she feels oppressed by everyone and in particular Black men. There were two items that emerged as a pattern of interest as it pertains to gender issues. First, there were more millennials than Gen-Xers or baby boomers that agree with the statement “Black women are not able to escape society’s negative stereotypes about Black women.” Second, there were more millennials than Gen-Xers or baby boomers that agree with the statement “Black men receive more noteworthy attention than Black women leaders.”

The narrative responses to questions about African American leadership corroborated the survey findings. Generally, the responses to the leadership questions were focused in four areas, (a) need to train next generation of leaders—leadership development/succession of leadership, (b) there is not a crisis in leadership but a crisis in activism—personal accountability and responsibility, (c) leaders are reluctant to speak out on Black issues—accommodate or agitate, and (d) while there is a need for Black leadership in the community, we should not look to one person or a few people to accomplish the goal of equality. There were three items that were a pattern of interest. First, the millennials (52%) tended to somewhat agree that younger leaders were more innovative and inclusive than older leaders. The narrative responses from the generation cohorts did not include a comment about this result. Second, a slightly higher percentage of millennials (32%) somewhat agree that the older generation leader is innovative and inclusive than the Gen-Xers (27%) or baby boomers (26%). It is interesting to note that the Gen-Xers and baby boomers actually tend to somewhat disagree with the statement that the older generation is innovative and inclusive. The narrative responses to the survey question are consistent with this result. The narrative comments from the baby boomers tend to be more critical of leaders in their generation and older historically Black institutions. Third, the
millennials agree that collaborating with other oppressed groups is the only way change will happen. The narrative comments regarding collaboration were consistent with this result. A Gen-Xer commented that it will be hard to collaborate with other groups until “we fix us.” A baby boomer commented that collaboration is useful when dealing with some issues but not all issues. While African Americans may be willing to collaborate with other groups, there was a concern expressed about collaborating with Hispanics. The Hispanic community is the largest racial and ethnic minority in Colorado. There is a perception that the Hispanic community has access to greater opportunities and has more political clout than African Americans.

The importance of tracking data and understanding social trends surfaced in the baby boom focus group. The survey results indicate that on average baby boomers ($M = 5.03$) are more likely than millennials ($M = 4.17$) to agree that they seek historical and current information about their race. None of the generation cohorts provided narrative comments on this statement. The last item of statistical significance pertains to the demographic changes in the African American community. The baby boomers tend to agree that the shift in the demographics of the community is a challenge for community activists. The level of agreement was lower for the Gen-Xers. The Gen-Xers agree that social media is a tool that can connect the community or further exacerbate the problem of an individualistic community.

When analyzing their community involvement, the generation cohorts were engaged in a number of activities not included in the survey response options. The millennials tend to be involved in sorority activities. The Gen-Xers tend to engage in activities focused on youth, they are politically active, they tend to be an advocate for issues in the community, and they belong to civic organizations. The baby boomers tend to be involved with youth related activities like mentoring; they provide financial support to organizations, are politically active and belong to or
join civic organizations. This tends to be consistent with where the generations fall along the life cycle.

The final question on the survey asked for additional comments about Black women leaders and social activism. A millennial commented that we should be past basing leadership on race because President Obama is evidence that Blacks can accomplish anything. The 11 responses from the Gen-Xers were related to the relevance of Black women’s leadership. A Gen-Xer captured the essence of the comments when she stated, “Black women rock!” The 19 responses from the baby boomers were related to the need to continue to work in the community and the lack of recognition for the work of African American women.

**Integration of Phase 1 and Phase 2 Research Findings**

In this section, I integrate the quantitative and qualitative findings and results from phase 1 and phase 2 of this study. The integration of data happened throughout the data collection process. Figure 4.3 illustrates the process of collecting, integrating, and interpreting the data. The arrows between phase 1 qualitative and phase 2 quantitative/qualitative indicate how the findings from the personal interviews and focus groups were integrated to inform the design of the survey. The arrows between the phase 2 quantitative/qualitative and the phase 3 qualitative reflect how the findings were integrated and used to inform the final focus group questions. The arrows between phase 3 and the integration and interpretation box reflect how all of the elements of the design are synthesized and interpreted. Each phase was designed and implemented based on the results from the prior phase.
Figure 4.3. Data collection, analysis, integration, and interpretation.

This section is organized by generation cohort. I integrated the findings from the personal interviews, focus groups, and surveys based on what surfaced as relevant themes within each generation cohort. The discussion of the themes is anchored in the five categories of racial, gender, community, and social identity, and leadership.

**Millennial cohort research findings and results.**

**Racial identity.** The personal interview, focus group, and survey participants agree that your personal experiences influence your attitudes about race. The millennials recognize that racism and discrimination exist. However, fewer millennials agree they experience discrimination in school, on the job or in other social settings when compared to Gen-Xers and baby boomers. One survey respondent commented, “I try to ignore race.” While the personal interview and focus group participants acknowledge there is a difference in experiences between the millennials and older generation, they also shared stories about being discriminated against in school, work, and other social settings. As it pertains to negative stereotypes, the millennials tend to believe African Americans in general believe the negative stereotypes about their race
and African American males in particular believe the negative stereotypes about Black women. Racial solidarity surfaced as an important issue for the millennial personal interview and focus group participants. Generally, the millennials agree that interracial dating between White women and Black men is a form of racial abandonment

**Race and gender identities.** The personal interview and focus group participants commented that their race and gender identities were equally salient. Society responds to them based on their race and gender. This is consistent with the conceptual framework of intersectionality theory, which is discussed in greater detail in chapter V. The personal interview and focus group participants agree that there is a difference between how the behaviors of White women are interpreted when compared to the behaviors of Black women. White women are privileged in the acceptance of their behavior. This issue did not surface among the survey respondents. The personal interview, focus group, and survey participants agree that it is important to find elders in the community to share their wisdom. The respondents that provided narrative comments to the question recognize they do not understand how to protest and take direct action to create change. A survey respondent commented that “during the civil rights movement they [baby boomers] did everything in their power to secure equal rights. Nowadays, we just complain over the internet.” The personal interview and focus group participants commented that there are things they want to learn from their elders. However, they also believe they have knowledge to share with their elders.

While the millennials agree that African Americans believe the stereotypes about Black women, they take exception to the race and gender stereotypes. A survey respondent exemplifies this point.

People have this notion that Black women should be strong at all times and that we are supposed to have tough girl roles and be submissive and available to men at the same
time. The whole being available to men thing angers me—it’s as if society is trying to make us insignificant.

**Community identity.** The social climate is what sparks activism in the millennial generation. Once the millennials get involved, they will remain involved. The millennials tend to agree that the African American community is shifting from a collectivist to an individualistic community. The focus group participants commented that there is not the sense of community that existed in the past. The millennial survey respondents did not comment on this issue. The millennials agree that the problems of the community should be resolved by people affected by the issue. The youth voice is missing when seeking solutions to community problems.

**Social identity.** The millennials, more than the Gen-Xers and baby boomers, agree that the Black experience is broader than race. Black people have multiple identities that inform and are informed by their racial identity. How people experience race and racism is influenced by the multiple identities a person holds. The millennial personal interview participants agree that a Black queer woman will experience racism differently than a Black heterosexual woman.

**African American leadership.** The millennials have definite views about African American leadership. First, the personal interview, focus group, and survey participants agree that Black men receive recognition for their social justice work more than Black women. Second, more millennials agree that collaboration with other oppressed groups is a way to make change happen than the Gen-Xers or baby boomers. Third, millennials agree that the leadership in the older generation is innovative and inclusive. However, the focus group participants commented that a re-envisioning of leadership is needed. Instead of a crisis in leadership, there is an ideological difference in what leadership should look like in the community.
Generation-X cohort research findings and results.

Racial identity. Gen-Xers agree that colorblindness “is a crock.” Colorblindness was discussed as a way to avoid drafting legislation or implementing legislation that would benefit people of color. Some Gen-Xers commented that colorblindness was a way to say color no longer matters. This is unrealistic because race is embedded in social systems. A survey respondent commented that African Americans believe that we are in a colorblind society because we have a Black president. As it pertains to stereotypes, the Gen-Xers agree that there is an internal and external acceptance of the negative stereotypes about African Americans generally and about Black women specifically. More Gen-Xers (39%) somewhat agree that African Americans believe the negative stereotypes about their race than baby boomers (26%). The baby boomers tended to somewhat disagree with the statement. A Gen-X focus group participant commented that the community inflicts pain on itself when it portrays women in a negative way. The negative portrayals perpetuate the image of Black women as Jezebels. The Gen-Xers also agree that racial attitudes vary by geographic region. A focus group participant commented that the issue of light skin preference over dark skin is more prevalent in the South than in Colorado. Gen-Xers agree with the millennials that mix-raced African Americans are treated as Black. The Gen-Xers shared personal experiences around the treatment of bi-racial relatives. Gen-Xers agree that regardless of how you self-identify, society will identify you as Black if you have any pigmentation in your skin. The survey narrative comments are consistent with these comments about mixed-raced individuals and how society will define you. The Gen-Xers somewhat disagree with the statement “African Americans lose their connection to the community as they become mainstream.” This result did not substantiate Vanessa’s claim that a connection with the community is lost as you cross over to what she termed “the other side.”
Additionally, the survey respondents disagree that you lose your racial identity as you become part of the mainstream. However, two of the nine narrative survey comments state that you lose your identity as you become mainstream in part to fit in and avoid playing out the stereotypes of Black people. The importance of a person’s character as suggested by Vanessa did not surface in the narrative comments.

**Race and gender identities.** The focus group participants commented that race was not more salient than gender. A Gen-X survey respondent commented that gender issues depend on whether or not a woman identifies herself as a woman, an African American woman, or a Black woman. This was the only comment in this study that prioritized race over gender or gender over race. The Gen-Xers tend to agree that Black men adopt negative stereotypes about Black women. The narrative comments did not include this issue. An interesting pattern emerged in the narrative comments from the Gen-Xers. Some Gen-Xers made references to the poor treatment of African American men and commented that African American women are less of a threat than African American men to society. Conversely, a Gen-Xer commented that “Black women have been programmed to deal with it . . . no one cares about African American women and no one will listen to us.” The Gen-Xers tend to agree that there is a difference in interpretation of behaviors exhibited by White women and Black women. The narrative survey responses did not include a comment on this issue. The Gen-Xers, like the millennials, tended to agree that there is a lack of recognition for African American women leaders. The narrative responses to the survey were consistent with the comments made by personal interview and focus group participants.

**Community identity.** Gen-Xers tend to be more civically active than the baby boomers and millennials when comparing the involvement of the personal interview, focus group, and
survey participants. Gen-Xers keep informed of issues and share their knowledge with others in the community. The Gen-Xers are more vocal than the millennials or baby boomers about addressing social problems and, in particular, addressing social problems that are considered taboo. Fewer Gen-Xers than baby boomers perceive a problem with geographic shifts in the African American community. Gen-Xers agree that social media can bring the community together. They tend to agree that the baby boomers are slow to use technology to communicate and create social change. The Gen-Xers are split on the issue of millennial activism. Some Gen-Xers believe there is a lack of activism on the part of millennials while others believe that the millennials are active.

**Social identity.** The Gen-Xer focus group participants commented on the perception of beauty and the trend towards the exotic. Stated differently, Gen-Xers agree that the perception of beauty is trending towards looking exotic or being something other than African American. The narrative responses from the survey did not address this issue.

**African American leadership.** More Gen-Xers than the baby boomers and millennials agree that there is a crisis of leadership in the African American community. The Gen-X research participants tended to compare current leaders and their leadership to the leadership of the civil rights leaders. From their perspective, leaders in the African American community are not as edgy and as outspoken as they were in the past. Additionally, the Gen-Xers agree that leaders in the community do not address issues like incest that are prevalent in the community.

**Baby boom cohort research findings and results.**

**Racial identity.** The baby boomers, like the Gen-Xers, do not believe we live in a colorblind society. One survey respondent commented “I’m not sure why some Whites think racism is ‘over’. Such an opinion takes the easy way out.” The importance of racial solidarity
and having clarity about your racial identity were themes that surfaced in the baby boom focus group. An example of racial solidarity is the claim made by Hanifah, a baby boom focus group participant, when she commented, “I’m not anti-White, I’m just pro Black.” The survey narrative comments corroborate the theme of racial solidarity. The baby boomers agree that institutional racism exists. The narrative responses to the survey question are consistent with this theme. In terms of stereotypes, fewer baby boomers agree that African Americans believe the negative stereotypes about their race than the millennials and Gen-Xers. Racial hierarchy was a theme that surfaced in the personal interviews. However, it did not surface in the narrative comments on the survey.

**Race and gender identities.** The salience of race and gender did not surface among the baby boom personal interview, focus group, or survey participants. The survey corroborated the findings regarding the differences in perception about Black and White women’s behaviors. One respondent suggested Black women are perceived as angry because they do what is necessary. White women, even if they are aggressive, they are still perceived as sexy and beautiful. Generally, the baby boomers agree that the negative stereotypes about African American women influence how their behaviors are interpreted. A narrative survey respondent commented that Black women are under siege. The stereotype of the angry Black woman is perceived as a reason that Black men date outside the race. A baby boom interview participant commented that the baby boomers in general and Black women in particular are perceived as having too much baggage and as being angry because they fought for their rights.

**Leadership.** Baby boomers have strong views about leadership in the African American community. Among the survey participants, fewer baby boomers (23%) than Gen-Xers (43%) strongly agree that there is a crisis in local leadership. The personal interview and focus group
participants tend to be more critical of the leadership in the community. Baby boomers agree that leaders accommodate more than they agitate and they are reluctant to focus on Black issues or identify an issue as a Black issue. Baby boomers feel it is important to speak out against injustice. These comments were consistent among the personal interview, focus group, and survey participants. The baby boomers agree that leaders should focus on developing a common agenda for the community. The respondents to the narrative survey question acknowledge the difficulty of getting everyone on the same page. Regarding women in leadership, more baby boomers (40%) than millennials (35%) somewhat agree that the negative portrayals of African American women influence how they are perceived as leaders. The baby boomers are divided on the activism of the millennials. Some baby boomers think millennials are active while others do not.

**Summary of community activism.** In phase 1 of this research, the personal interview and focus group participants were given a Community Involvement Matrix (CIM) to complete. This tool was used to determine the different activities millennials, Gen-Xers, and baby boomers engaged in when conducting their social justice work. A copy of the combined CIM for the survey respondents is located in Appendix O.

When comparing the responses from the survey to the CIM, I discovered the Gen-Xers who participated in the personal interviews and focus group were more civically involved than the millennials and baby boomers. The types of activities the personal interview and focus group participants engaged in were the same as the activities for the survey participants. However, the rank order of the activities was different. For example, attending a meeting to address issues in the Black community and keeping informed of race issues by attending conferences, workshops, lectures, or reading literature were the top activities for the millennials, Gen-Xers, and baby
boomers who responded to the survey. The top item for the millennials personal interview and focus group participants was working with others on local issues pertaining to the Black community. For the Gen-Xers, the top item was informing significant others about race and gender policies that positively or negatively affect the African American community. For the baby boomers, it was keeping informed of race and gender issues by attending conferences, workshops, lectures, or reading literature.

To add interpretative validity to the themes that emerged from the personal interviews, focus groups, and survey, I conducted a final focus group that included the participants from the initial round of focus groups. Focus group questions were developed based on the integration of the themes and results from the qualitative and quantitative/qualitative phase of this study.

**Phase 3: Presentation of Qualitative Results**

In this section, I discuss the findings from the final focus group. This phase of the qualitative portion of this study serves as a member checking point. While an important component of the data collection process, phase 3 was intended to provide interpretative validity to the findings from phases 1 and 2 of this study. Table 4.2 reflects the demographics of participants in the final focus group. The final focus group participant personal profiles were provided in the phase 1 focus group section. All of the women held college degrees. In their personal profiles presented earlier, all of the women self-identified as activists. Their income ranged from $0 - $26,000 to $75,000 - $100,000.
Table 4.24

**Final Focus Group Participant Profile (N = 4)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Income Range</th>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th># in Household</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Darlene Burns</td>
<td>Millennial</td>
<td>Bi-Racial African American/White</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Anti-oppression Social Justice Consultant</td>
<td>0-26,000</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>2 (self &amp; partner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diane Carson</td>
<td>Generation-X</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Director of Programs-Nonprofit</td>
<td>75,000-100,000</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>2 (self &amp; spouse)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangala Ash</td>
<td>Generation-X</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Educator Massage Therapist</td>
<td>0-26,000</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>3 (self &amp; 2 renters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daphne Rice-Allen</td>
<td>Baby Boom</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Helpline Coordinator Alzheimer Association</td>
<td>50,001-75,000</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>2 (self &amp; spouse)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Final focus group participants.** Due to a variety of personal reasons, only four of the 14 people eligible to participate in the focus group actually participated. I elected to move forward with the session because there was representation from all generation cohorts. Because the session began late, the focus group questions were modified to ensure key questions were asked within the allotted time.

**Final focus group research findings.** The purpose of the final focus group was to explore any contradictions in the data that surfaced in the survey results and further investigate any inconsistencies between the qualitative and quantitative/qualitative phase of this study. The format of the final focus group questions was aligned with the format of the survey. In this phase of the study, relevant findings mean those items that showed a statistically significant difference using either an ANOVA with post hoc tests or chi-square analyses. I organized this section by providing the focus group question then the responses from the participants.
Personal reflections on racial identity. Question #1: Fewer millennials than Gen-Xers and baby boomers report they experience discrimination in social settings. What do you make of that finding and what does this suggest to you?

Four perspectives were provided in response to this question. First, millennials are growing up in a more integrated environment and they may not be aware of the tone of discrimination. Second, discrimination is not as overt as what it was for the baby boomers. Third, the way we think about discrimination remains unchanged, we may be “expecting . . . overt displays of racism and not considering the stuff that are the more undercurrent pieces.” Fourth, there actually has been movement in people’s thinking about race as a result of the civil rights movement. One respondent suggested that the millennials are either ignorant or they choose to ignore race. The millennials “ignore [race] more. Baby boomers may have had White friends but they knew when that White friend was doing something inappropriate.”

The participants agreed that all of these factors working together may account for the difference in responses between the generations.

Question #2: More millennials than Gen-Xers and baby boomers agree or strongly agree that African Americans believe the stereotypes about our race. Similarly, more millennials than Gen-Xers and baby boomers agree or strongly agree that Black men adopt negative stereotypes of Black women. How do you interpret this finding? What significance does this finding have for you?

One of the respondents felt we are moving into a situation where racism is becoming more normalized and internalized. There is “the propensity to internalize more racism because there’s less discussion [about race] and vigilance around [discrimination].” There are more negative visualizations of African Americans now than in the past. Baby boomers were exposed
to “Ebony [magazine] and other visuals that shaped their aspirations.” Millennials are exposed to music videos that portray Black women, in particular, in a negative way. One respondent commented “I wonder . . . if the millennials have some conscious recognition of [what] they see in the videos?”

The participants discussed what they believe is a shift in attitudes towards Black women from the baby boom era until now. One person commented, “I think Black men loved Black women more then.” The issue of interracial dating was discussed from two vantage points. First, the participants discussed the challenges that dating outside their race posed for them. One person commented “that’s not my orientation . . . I can appreciate how you look, but I’m not attracted to a White male.”

Second, the participants discussed Black men dating outside of their race. The issue is not as simple as you love who you love. One person commented that her father married a White woman because he felt it was a step up to be with a White woman. Conversely, her mother had self-esteem issues. Therefore, her mother felt that “what she deserved was a Black man.” This participant believes that there are societal influences that shape interracial relationships. In any relationship there are influencing factors, “there are reasons why your friends are your friends.” There are “unintended consequences of integration when there is not an on-going consciousness-raising around race.”

All of the participants felt this finding was relevant because millennial African American women face a situation “where half of the race does not value the other half as much as it did in the past.” A potential consequence is “the African American community may not exist after a certain period of time.”
African American leadership. Question #3: Everyone agreed that there is a crisis of local leadership in the African American community. Is this finding consistent with your perception? In addition, more millennials indicated the younger generation of Black leaders is innovative and inclusive. Conversely, less Gen-Xers and baby boomers indicated the older generation of Black leaders is innovative and inclusive. How do you interpret this finding?

Millennials and Gen-Xers are not afraid to think outside the box. The way leadership needs to happen in the community has shifted. The baby boomers are less likely to take into consideration all facets of the Black community. Women have been leaders but have not received recognition for their work, queer folks have not been recognized, nor have people from different socio-economic classes.

Ageism was another reason cited for the reaction to older leadership. Tangala commented that she was ignored because she was not old enough. Tangala felt that while she may not be old enough and have the wisdom of the baby boomers she does have a set of useful skills. A criticism of the older generation was the resistance or inability to use technology. The Gen-Xers and millennials have skills in this area that are not being used.

Some of the participants felt there is a crisis in following, getting behind our leaders, and supporting them. There is a crisis in activism rather than a crisis of leadership. We have leaders, what we are missing is the ability to push forward as a collective group “regardless of what you believe . . . just stand and get to it.” These comments corroborate the findings from the survey.

Question #4: More baby boomers indicated it is important for leaders to understand the lived experiences of marginalized African Americans. What does this suggest to you?

The current urban camping legislation passed in Denver criminalizes and denies the human rights of a group of people. In Denver, there is an African American mayor and an
African American person on city council. Some of the participants questioned what these leaders were doing for the Black community. For them, the question is “must a leader understand the lived experiences or should they have empathy for and recognize the situations of other people and take action accordingly?”

There was a general sense that people do not forget where they come from instead “when you cross over into a certain territory . . . you have to . . . give up pieces of your identity in order to gain other privileges.” The focus group participants corroborated the thinking of Vanessa, one of the Gen-X personal interview participants. Vanessa feels you lose your connection to the community as you become more mainstream. Juanita, a Gen-X focus group participant, also made the same point. From Juanita’s vantage point African Americans lose their culture as they strive for the American dream.

**Summary of phase 3 findings.** The final focus group added meaning and clarification to the results of the survey. The participants specifically provided insights in seven areas: (a) differences in how generation cohorts experience discrimination, (b) internal and external acceptance of stereotypes of African American women, (c) interracial dating and marriage, (d) crisis in follow-ship and activism rather than a crisis of leadership, (e) diversity in leadership, (f) empathy for those you lead, and (g) the loss of identity or connection to the community as African Americans become mainstream.

The focus group participants offered four potential reasons for the differences in experiences with discrimination that were discussed in the previous section. Three of the four reasons: (a) millennials are growing up in a more diverse environment, (b) discrimination is not as overt as in the past, and (c) discrimination must be overt to be considered discrimination; are supported by survey findings. The generation cohorts recognize that the United States is
becoming increasingly diverse. Additionally, the generation cohorts acknowledge the subtle nature of discrimination. The millennials may ignore an act of discrimination that would not be ignored by the Gen-Xers or baby boomers. One millennial survey respondent indicated that they try to ignore race by “dating outside my race and having friends outside my race.” Within each data collection method, the generation cohorts believe institutional racism exists.

The focus group comments about African Americans believing the negative stereotypes about the community offers a level of understanding to the survey findings. The participants feel in the past there were counter-balancing images of African Americans that do not exist today. Additionally, the participants feel the music videos influence the thinking of the millennial generation. The stereotyping of African American women was offered as a reason Black men prefer to date and marry outside the race. This finding corroborates the narrative survey responses to the question about Black men adopting the negative stereotypes about Black women.

The final focus group participants perceived the issue of African American leadership differently than the Gen-X survey respondents. The participants believe that there is a crisis in activism and follow-ship rather than a crisis in leadership. Stated differently, people are not choosing to follow the leaders in the community. There is the feeling that older leaders in the community are not as inclusive. The contributions of African American women; African Americans who identify as members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) community; and younger leaders are not recognized. The participants felt younger leaders are more open to difference than the older leaders.

The participants made a slight distinction between understanding the lived experiences of marginalized people in the community and having empathy for people on the margins. While
not a statistically significant finding with $M = 5.04$ for millennials, $M = 5.19$ for Gen-X, and $M = 5.40$ for baby boomers, the survey participants agree that understanding the lived experience is important. The final focus group stated that it was also equally important to have empathy for people who are marginalized.

The final focus group participants commented that to fit into the mainstream society and have access to privileges, a person must lose certain aspects of their identity. It is not a matter of forgetting who you are but instead making a conscious decision to fit in to gain acceptance.

In this next section, I integrate the three phases from the exploratory sequential mixed-methods design.

**Integration of Qualitative, Quantitative/Qualitative, and Qualitative Research Findings**

In this section, I discuss the commonalities and differences between the generation cohorts based on the integration of the themes and results from phases 1, 2, and 3 of this study. The section is organized by the categories that emerged after the analysis of the personal interviews and focus groups. Those categories are racial, gender, community, and social identity; and leadership.

**Agreement in responses across the generation cohorts.** Generally, there was more agreement across the generation cohorts than disagreement. The research participants believe that race remains a relevant issue. Additionally, the research participants reject the idea that we live in a colorblind society.

**Racial identity.** A person’s racial beliefs are shaped in part by the geographic region where they live. A person living in the South may view race differently than a person living in the North. The participants believe that a person’s physical characteristics influence how a person will be treated in society. If a person is bi-racial with pigmentation in their skin, they will
be treated as Black regardless of how they choose to self-identify. Colorism remains an issue within the African American community, meaning there are African Americans who perceive having lighter skin and European-like features as more attractive than having darker skin.

Racial solidarity was a theme where there was agreement among all generation cohorts. The participants in the personal interviews and focus group underscored the importance of racial solidarity. Additionally, the survey narrative corroborated the findings in the personal interviews and focus groups. It was considered racial abandonment if a person dated or married outside the race. Some of the final focus group participants viewed dating and marriage outside the race as a sign of internalized oppression. From the viewpoint of the final focus group participants, what this means is the people involved in mixed-race relationships are internalizing the racist attitudes held by the dominant culture. It is never as simple as you love who you love.

The finding related to assimilating into mainstream America is inconclusive. The Gen-X personal interviews and focus group participants commented on having to lose the connection to the community and part of your culture when you become mainstream or strive for the American dream. The Likert-type response items indicated that the respondents disagreed with the statement. However, the narrative question responses corroborate the findings from the Gen-X personal interviews and focus group. The final focus group participants also agree that a person will lose part of their identity as they move into the mainstream. This is driven by the need to fit into the dominant culture.

*Race and gender identities.* There was agreement among the generation cohorts regarding the impact of negative stereotypes. The generation cohorts agree that African American women leaders are not recognized for the work they do in the community. Another area of agreement is the perception that White women do not encounter the negative stereotypes
for exhibiting the same behaviors as Black women. A final focus group participant suggested that the image of beauty remains White women. This is corroborated by a Gen-X focus group participant who commented “how many White women do you know that are Jezebels? But do they get called Jezebels . . . they don’t carry the stigmata of being a whore or a Jezebel because it has not been written in that way . . . it’s been hidden.” As noted previously, the historical Jezebel stereotype continues to be perpetuated through the media and music videos. The stereotype of an angry Black woman is another image that continues to shape the perception about Black women. However, the survey respondents only somewhat agree that Black women cannot escape society’s stereotypes of being angry or promiscuous, with $M = 4.30$ for millennials, $M = 4.05$ for Gen-Xers, and $M = 4.04$ for baby boomers.

The survey respondents agree that Black women just push ahead to get things done. A survey respondent commented that Black women have had to be strong for everyone. Another commented that “since the burden of child rearing falls on the shoulders of Black women there needs to be a paradigm shift around how we engage our children. The men in the community must be held to a higher standard.”

**Community identity.** The millennials and Gen-Xers expressed concern that the Black community is losing its sense of collectivism. A shared sense of responsibility for people in the community where, “at a very basic level, people in the community have your back” is missing. It is perceived that the community is becoming more individualistic where the concerns of the individual take precedence over the concerns of the community. It is perceived that historically the African American community worked collaboratively to problem solve. In the opinion of the participants, the African American community is fractured. The baby boomers did express concerns about the community particularly as it relates to the movement of African Americans
into other communities. From the vantage point of a baby boomer, it is becoming increasingly difficult to connect and take care of community needs.

There was agreement across the generation cohorts about how they became involved in the community. The survey respondents indicated that their personal experiences shape their involvement. Some of the Gen-Xers and baby boomers who participated in the personal interviews and focus groups indicated that a family member was an activist. Daphne believes that activists breed activists and as a result there will always be activists in the community.

There was also agreement across the generation cohorts about the need to understand the legacy of oppression experienced by the African American community with $M = 5.09$ for millennials, $M = 5.26$ for Gen-Xers, and $M = 5.38$ for baby boomers. A millennial interviewee commented that it is important for the baby boomers to provide a historical framework for the younger generation. Slavery or the civil rights movement should be discussed from the vantage point of lessons learned about activism that can be applied today.

**Leadership.** There was agreement across the generation cohorts that leaders in the Black community are reluctant to speak directly to injustices in the Black community. Stated differently, Black leaders are reluctant to label an issue a Black issue. The Gen-Xers and baby boomers perceive leaders in the community as accommodationists. Leaders are not as edgy as they were in the past; they tend to want to go with the status quo. However, across the generations survey respondents somewhat disagree with the statement that African American leaders accommodate rather than challenge injustices in the community with $M = 3.86$ for millennials, $M = 3.62$ for Gen-Xers, and $M = 3.82$ for baby boomers. The narrative question responses corroborate the personal interview and focus group findings. A baby boom respondent commented that “we need leaders who are not afraid to speak out!”
Another area of agreement across the generation cohorts was the need to transfer knowledge from one generation to the next. The millennials in particular would like to work with the elder women in the community to learn more about what worked and what does not work when working on social change. This finding is corroborated by the Likert-type response items. The millennials (M = 5.17), Gen-Xers (M = 5.38), and baby boomers (M = 5.39) agree that it is important for Black women activists to share their social justice experiences to develop the next generation of female leaders. Additionally, the generation cohorts agree that a role for the baby boom leaders to play is to bring the generations together by educating Gen-X and millennial generation leaders on how to create social change with M = 5.26 for millennials, M = 5.24 for Gen-Xers, and M = 5.30 for baby boomers.

The generation cohorts somewhat agree that Black male leaders receive more noteworthy recognition than Black female leaders with M = 4.39 for millennials, M = 4.21 for Gen-Xers, and M = 4.05 for baby boomers. The strength of agreement was more pronounced in the personal interviews and focus groups. The final phase 3 focus group participants cited examples of how Black women were not recognized for their contributions to the civil rights movement. Jordan, a millennial interviewee, commented on how only a few women, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, and Rosa Parks, are recognized for their activism when other women contributed to social movements. Carla indicated that when she thinks of leaders in the community she thinks of men because women are not as visible and outspoken as the men. The responses to the narrative question were stronger than the Likert-type response items.

**Social identity.** Each generation cohort felt a strong connection to the African American community. The baby boomers exude race pride with their affirmation of being pro Black. The generation cohorts agree that there are people in the community who may be African American,
but they do not work for the good of the Black community. Jordan described this as being Black but not socialized as Black. Debra, a baby boom focus group participant, described it as being bred Black but lacking the historical understanding of what it means to be Black. The survey narrative responses addressed this issue from the perspective of people working in the community to advance their personal interests.

Darlene, a millennial focus group participant, commented that the Black experience is broader and more complex than just identifying as Black. The Black experience is different based on a person’s multiple identities. This finding was corroborated by the final focus group participants.

In this next section, I discuss the differences that surfaced amongst the generation cohorts.

**Differences in responses between the generation cohorts.** There were six Likert-type response items that showed statistically significant mean score responses between the generation cohorts. First, a difference in response exists between the millennials and baby boomers about experiences with discrimination in school. The millennials did not experience discrimination to the extent of the baby boomers. Second, the millennials are more likely to agree that African Americans believe the negative stereotypes about their race than the baby boomers. Third, more millennials agree that Black men adopt negative stereotypes about African American women than baby boomers. Fourth, the Gen-Xers more than the millennials agree that there is a crisis of leadership in the Black community. Fifth, the baby boomers, more than the millennials, actively seek out historical and contemporary information about their race. Sixth, more baby boomers agree that Black community activists are challenged by the geographic changes in the African American community than Gen-Xers.
The difference in experiences with discrimination in school was corroborated by the narrative responses to the survey questions, personal interviews, and focus groups. However, the participants in the personal interviews indicated while they did experience discrimination, it was not as overt as what may have been experienced by older generations. There are two negative stereotype findings: (a) African Americans believe the negative stereotypes about their race, and (b) Black men adopt negative stereotypes about Black women. The personal interview and focus group participants agree that African Americans and Black men in particular, believe the negative stereotypes. However, the narrative responses to the survey question were not as robust.

As noted previously, leadership in the African American community is perceived differently by the generation cohorts. An interesting finding is Gen-Xers, baby boomers, and millennials all somewhat agree that millennials are more innovative and creative in their leadership than the older generation with $M = 4.48$ for millennials, $M = 4.26$ for Gen-Xers, and $M = 4.37$ for baby boomers. I compare this to the mean scores for the question the older generation of Black leaders are innovative and inclusive in their leadership with $M = 4.05$ for millennials, $M = 3.56$ for Gen-Xers, and $M = 3.65$ for baby boomers. There is a difference between the generation cohort’s perception of the innovation and inclusiveness of leadership between the generations.

**Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I discussed the findings from the three phases of this study. I began with a discussion of the qualitative phase of the study that includes the six personal interviews and three focus groups. At the conclusion of the qualitative section, I integrated the qualitative themes. Then, I discussed the quantitative/qualitative results of the survey. In this section, I
highlighted the commonalities and differences that surfaced in the data. I provided a summary of the quantitative/qualitative findings at the end of each topic. I then discussed the findings from the final focus group followed by an integration of the data collected from phase 1, phase 2, and phase 3 of this study.

Chapter V presents a thorough summary of the major findings from this study. A discussion of the relevance of these findings to leadership practice and scholarship is presented. Recommendations for future research are also presented.
Chapter V: Discussion

We must strive to “life as we climb.” In other words, we must climb in such a way as to guarantee that all of our sisters, regardless of social class, and indeed all of our brothers, climb with us. This must be the essential dynamic of our quest for power—a principle that must not only determine our struggles as Afro-American women, but also govern all authentic struggles of dispossessed people. Indeed, the overall battle for equality can be profoundly enhanced by embracing this principle. (Davis, 1989, p. 5)

Overview of Chapter

A rich legacy of social activism among Black women extends from the 17th century slave revolts to 21st century marches and demonstrations. African American women have been involved in the creation and maintenance of Black civil society. Davis (1989), as noted above, adopted the mantra of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) and implored African American women to work towards enhancing the quality of life for all marginalized groups. Historically, the activism of Black women has been rooted in race, gender, or class oppression. Early activists understood that Black women’s experiences were informed by multiple systems of oppression. However, at the turn of the 20th century, the focus of oppression became race and the primary object of oppression became men (White, 1999).

The purpose of this study was to investigate the differences in attitudes about race, gender, and Black leadership, and social activism among three different generation cohorts: millennials, Gen-Xers, and baby boomers. Because of their personal experiences, each generation cohort believes that race is a relevant factor in determining the life chances of African Americans. I discuss this finding in more detail later in the chapter.

Organization of Chapter

The first section is a summary of the research findings. I then discuss: (a) the findings as they relate to the conceptual framework, (b) the gap in literature this study fills, (c) the
limitations and strengths of this study, (d) recommendations for future research, (e) recommendations and implications for leadership, and (f) personal reflections.

Integration of Qualitative and Quantitative Data

The fifth building block in the research design for this study is the synthesis, integration, and interpretation of the research findings. The synthesis of the relevant findings enabled me to tell the stories of the millennials, Gen-Xers, and baby boomers as it pertains to their attitudes about race, gender and Black leadership, and social activism. I integrate the literature to provide a theoretical framework for interpreting and understanding the research findings and results. A synthesis of the research findings and results by generation cohort is located in Appendix P. Figure 5.1 illustrates the architecture of the research design for this study.

Figure 5.1. Exploratory mixed-methods research design.

Summary of Research Findings

The millennials, Gen-Xers, and baby boomers tend to have similar perspectives about race, gender, social activism, and leadership. Their perspectives are shaped by their location along the generational timeline and the social conditions of the day. Baby boomers’ perspectives are shaped by Jim Crow legislation and the beginning of integration. The Gen-Xers are shaped by the residual effect of the transition from segregation to integration. The millennials are
shaped by being part of the most racially diverse generation in history. While different social forces shape their perceptions, each generation cohort agrees that race remains relevant.

The millennials, Gen-Xers, and baby boomers agree that race informs their social justice activities. Forty percent of the participants in the personal interviews and focus groups indicated that a parent or family member was an activist. The millennials ($M = 5.04$) and Gen-Xers ($M = 5.11$) agree and the baby boomers somewhat agree ($M = 4.92$) that their personal experiences influenced how they became involved in the community. Additionally, Gen-Xers ($M = 4.06$) and baby boomers ($M = 4.16$) somewhat agree that they became involved with the community because of an injustice that impacted them directly. These findings are similar to what was found in the Apollon (2012) study that reported 81% of the study participants cited personal or family experience as the reason they were involved in social activism. Race was also a lens applied to their social justice activities (Apollon, 2012). The Apollon study focused exclusively on the millennial generation. However, it is relevant to this study because it illustrates the influence of historical activism and the modeling of activist behaviors.

Race influences the generation cohorts’ perceptions about community. An African American community with designated boundaries no longer exists in Colorado. However, beyond the designated boundaries is the concern that the traditional collectivistic nature of community has changed. Black solidarity is important and the generation cohorts agree that the community is not as cohesive as it was during the civil rights era. The millennials are experiencing a community that is noticeably different from what existed for the baby boomers. As a result, a new ideology of leadership is needed to adapt to the new construct of community.

The millennials, Gen-Xers, and baby boomers agree that Black leaders are needed to advocate for the needs of the community. However, leadership should be shared rather than
residing in a singular person. The community has a collective responsibility to create change. Therefore, there is a perceived crisis of follow-ship and activism rather than a crisis in leadership. Leaders are in the community, the will to follow and become active in the community is the missing ingredient. It is important to note that the participants in this study, with few exceptions, were engaged in the community. They agree that more is needed to address community concerns. The generation cohorts agree that community concerns are societal concerns. However, the Black community along with other communities of color experience things differently because of their legacy of oppression.

The legacy of oppression lingers for African American women who are plagued by negative stereotypes. However, the women in this study agree that you must move forward to work for the benefit of community.

**Research Findings and Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework of social identity theory, standpoint theory, intersectionality theory, and generation theory proved an effective model for analyzing the data. Each generation cohort exuberated pride about their racial identity and belonging to the African American community. This is emblematic of social identity theory consistent with Booysen (2007) and Nkomo (2010). The millennial and baby boom study participants expressed specific views about who should be included and excluded from the racial category of African American. This is consistent with the discussion of in-groups and out-groups in social identity theory (Booysen, 2007; Hogg, 2001; Nkomo, 2010; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010; van Knippenberg, 2011). Additionally, the millennials commented that African American women have multiple identities that influence their attitudes about race and racism. This is consistent with the theme of an individual social identity structure, “or a repertoire of identities chosen from those available in a
given society” referred to by Booysen (2007). Some of the participants stated that a queer African American female will experience race and racism differently from a heterosexual African American female.

While the three generation cohorts experience discrimination differently, they each agree that discrimination exists. A key factor in how the generations experienced discrimination may be attributed to the difference in social climate, a Jim Crow ideology versus a colorblind ideology. This is consistent with Bunche (1992) who argued that social climate influences attitudes about race. Racism was codified within Jim Crow legislation, which to a certain extent has been dismantled. A colorblind ideology lessens the relevance of race (Gallagher, 2007; Guinier & Torres, 2007). D’Souza (1995) argued that race can no longer be used to explain the underperformance of African Americans in social systems. Consequently, because of their lived experiences, the research participants developed a standpoint influenced by their generation location. When asked about the salience of race and gender, the baby boomers, Gen-Xers, and millennials agreed that all of their social identities intersect to inform how they are perceived and treated in society. This finding confirms the research of Gay and Tate (1998) and Settles (2006). The intersection of race and gender was particularly evident in the belief that White women are treated differently than Black women when both groups exhibit the same behaviors. This is consistent with hooks (1981). The study participants perceive the negative stereotypes of African American women as raced and gendered. This finding confirms the work of Collins (2000a), Davis (1983), and Parker (2005).

From a generation perspective, the millennials share a common view that collaboration is a critical element in social change. The millennials operate in a different social context than the baby boomers or Gen-Xers. As a result, the millennials have a greater expectation for social
change movements to have more collaborative processes and include a broader array of people. This is consistent with the findings of Blackwell et al. (2010). Figure 5.2 illustrates some of the key findings as they relate to the conceptual framework. The arrows in the center of the diagram depict the relationship between the conceptual theories. Strong identification with the African American community, personal experiences with discrimination, and an awareness of racism informed the participant’s standpoint. While the participants were highly educated and somewhat economically secure, they experienced the affects of negative stereotypes. Negative stereotypes reflected the convergence or intersection of race and gender. How the women interpreted the negative stereotypes was influenced by their generation location. I provide a link to the responses from the study participants to further illustrate the integration of the findings and conceptual framework. The first link (daphneproblack) is the voice of Daphne, a baby boomer, who strongly identifies as African American. Her perspective about being Black typifies the core concept of social identity. The second link (vanessamainstream) is the voice of Vanessa, a Gen-Xer, who expressed her views about racial identity when responding to a question regarding chronic poverty in the African American community. Vanessa’s perspective is illustrative of the dynamic between social identity and intersectionality theories. The third link (darlenerace) is the voice of Darlene who is bi-racial and from the millennial generation. She identified her father as a Black Jew and her mother as White. Darlene identifies as Black and shares a childhood experience, which informed her worldview and attitudes about race. The fourth link (laurenabw) is the voice of Lauren who describes her reaction to her supervisor calling her “street.” This exchange illustrates gendered racism and how intersectionality theory is experienced in the lives of African American women. The fifth link (tangalagenrace) is the voice of Tangala, a Gen-Xer who believes she is chastised by some members of the baby boom generation because of her
attitude towards and relationships with people outside the Black community. From her perspective, this distinguishes her from the baby boom generation. Figure 5.2 summarizes the key discoveries that emerged from this study.

![Diagram](attachment:image.png)

**Figure 5.2. Summary of conceptual framework and research findings.**

**Research Findings and Gap in Literature**

I reviewed literature from a variety of disciplines: Black social justice leadership, racial attitudes, generation literature, and the historical role of Black women in social change. There were two studies undertaken by Apollon (2011, 2012) that related directly to my research. In the first study, Apollon (2011) focused on the racial attitudes of the millennial generation. In the second study, Apollon (2012) focused on the millennial generations’ attitudes about activism and race. Generally, generation studies focus on generation differences in the workplace or generation difference as it pertains to immigration. For example, the differences in attitudes and
behavior between first and second generation immigrants. Apollon’s (2011, 2012) studies were different because they focused on racial attitudes within a particular generation. A gap in literature this study fills is the generation differences in racial attitudes among a specific gender and racial group.

Figure 5.3 illustrates how the study fills a gap in the literature. The survey results provided insights into the activities Black women engage in by generation cohort. The baby boomers tended to engage in historic social justice organizations. A millennial in this study started an organization focused on social justice training for youth. This filled an unmet need in the Black community. The personal interviews, focus groups, and survey also provided insights into how different generation cohorts perceive African American leadership. Finally, this study provided insights into what influences social activism among the African American women who participated. Jordan, a person from the millennial generation expressed frustration with the leadership of the baby boom generation. The first link (jordanactivism) reflects her comments about leadership and activism in the Black community. Diane, a Gen-Xer provided a different perspective that relates to a crisis in followship and activism rather than a crisis of leadership. The second link (dianeactivismcrisis) is the voice of Diane sharing her perspectives about this point. Darlene, a millennial, provided another perspective about the nature Black community. For Darlene, there is a lack of cohesiveness, which concerns her. The third link (darleneindividualism) is Darlene speaking to this point. Carla, another millennial believes that the social climate influences social activism. Her comments are similar to the writings of Bunche (2005). Carla shares this perspective in the fourth link (carlaactivism).
Figure 5.3. Research findings and gap in literature.

**Limitations of Study**

There were five discreet limitations to this study. First, this study focused on African American women within a specific age range. The age range was confined to the parameters of the generally accepted definitions for millennials, Gen-Xers, and baby boomers. Second, this study was geographically bounded. All of the study participants were from the Denver metropolitan area. While the survey was available online, people outside the state of Colorado were excluded from participating. Third, the sample population for this study could have been more diverse in terms of education and income level. This is particularly evident in the profile of the survey participants. There is a high concentration of African American women with graduate degrees (52%) earning in excess of $75,000 a year. Fourth, a racial incident occurred during the data gathering process which may have influenced the survey responses. I discussed the mediating influences in chapter III. It is possible that spillover from the highly publicized incident influenced the thinking of the respondents, thus skewing the results. Fifth, research design is influenced by the worldview of the researcher (Creswell, 1998). It is impossible for a
researcher to be completely objective as they conduct research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). While a member checking process was implemented, there remains a possibility that the way a question was phrased or the way I responded to an answer may have informed how the participants responded.

Because of the small sample size, it is difficult to generalize the findings to a larger population. The final focus group was designed to provide interpretative validity. However, only four of the 14 potential participants were engaged in the process. While the final focus group clarified contradictions in the data, added meaning, and offered provocative interpretations to the findings, the small sample size of the group jeopardized the process. Generally, the number of participants for a meaningful focus group ranges from six to 10. The sample size of the millennial focus group compared to the Gen-X and baby boom focus groups was problematic. Additionally, the low number of millennial survey respondents in comparison to the number of survey respondents for the Gen-Xers and baby boomers presented a problem. The results may be skewed towards the larger population groups.

**Strengths of Study**

The strength of this study is in the implementation of a multi-methods research design. Conducting a sequential three phase study allowed me to explore the research question in depth through personal interviews and focus groups, test the emergent themes with a broader audience through a survey, and engage the study participants in corroborating the findings or interpreting contradictions in the data through the use of a focus group. There were five steps taken to ensure the strength of the research design. First, the number of participants for the personal interviews was expanded from three to six. This enabled me to obtain diverse perspectives to discover relevant themes and inform the design of the focus group questions. Second, a member checking
function was embedded into each phase of the qualitative portion of the research design. Member checking included asking follow-up and clarifying questions during the personal interviews and focus groups, sending copies of the transcribed notes to the personal interview and focus group participants inviting their input, and conducting a final focus group to solicit their interpretation of the data. Third, at the onset of the project, I conducted a pilot test of the potential personal interview questions with a person from each generation cohort. Fourth, I conducted a pilot test of the survey questions with representatives from each generation cohort. Fifth, the emergent themes from the personal interviews and focus groups were reviewed by two external readers. The external readers were African American women with Ph.D.s and experience in quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods research design.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

This study investigated the perceptions of Black women from three generation cohorts about race and social activism. How women think about race in relation to gender, leadership, and social activism was explored. There were four interesting and unexpected discoveries from this study that are areas for future research. First, the African American community is changing. There is a perception among the women participating in this study that the community is not as cohesive and as unified as in the past. The terms individualism and collectivism were used to describe the perceived shift in the community. I recommend further research including African American males to examine the perceived changes in the community and the effects of individualism and collectivism on social activism.

Second, the impact of stereotyping emerged as an important finding for the focus group participants. Stereotypes influence the perceptions of African Americans generally and African American women specifically. The stereotypical images of African American women influence
how they are perceived as leaders and how they are perceived in interpersonal relationships. The behavior of Black women is judged and evaluated based on internal and external stereotypes. I recommend further research be done to determine how racial stereotypes affect African American women who are community activists. Additionally, further research is needed to determine if a relationship exists between African American men adopting negative stereotypes of African American women and interracial dating and marriage.

Third, social identity was part of the conceptual framework for the study. Booysen (2007) characterized a crisis in social identity as a mass change in awareness within a particular group. Preliminary findings suggest that the research participants perceive a shift in social identity among African Americans. From the research participants’ perspective, the Black experience should be thought of in a more comprehensive way than in the past. African Americans have multiple identities that inform their experiences with race and racism. Because this study was limited to African American women, I recommend conducting further research to investigate the perceptions of the Black experience that includes both African American men and women.

Fourth, the millennials called for a re-envisioning of leadership. The process of leading should include people who are on the margins of the African American community. For example, leaders need to include people who are poor, people who are from the LGBTQ community, and young people in the decision making process within communities. Each generation cohort agreed that having a singular leader is no longer effective. Additionally, the generation cohorts agreed that leadership is a shared responsibility. I recommend further research be done to investigate leadership for social change in the 21st century African American community. I further recommend that this research include both African American men and
women from different socio-economic groups, age ranges, and sexual orientations. Historically, other racial and ethnic groups were involved in the creation of social justice organizations in the African American community. The civil rights movement included a coalition of individuals outside the African American community. An imperative for the millennial participants involved in this study is coalition building. Based on these results and the history of social change, I recommend that any future research on leadership in the African American community include a broad base of people from different racial and ethnic groups.

**Leadership Training and Coaching**

The dissertation journey transverses from conceptualizing an idea to developing a research question and moving forward with a research design and methodology that ultimately answers the question that resonates in your soul. This is just one way to generate new knowledge. However, once the research is complete the next phase of the journey begins, which involves applying what was learned from the research. It is at this point a person must transition from researcher to a research-practitioner. Jarvis (1999) argued that practitioner-researchers use practice to inform research and the knowledge gained from research ultimately informs practice. Collins (2009a) challenged researchers to share what they learn not just with a community of scholars but instead take their work into the field to create social change. In this next section, I discuss how to integrate what was learned in this study into practice for consultants, coaches, and trainers.

This study has practical application for consultants working to create change at the community level. Generally, community interventions involve complex problems that affect a diverse group of people. Community meetings are comprised of a broad spectrum of people from different generations, racial and ethnic groups, sexual orientations, religious beliefs, and
other social categories. It is incumbent on the consultant to create an environment that is sensitive to the perspectives, needs, and voices of diverse groups of people. This can be accomplished in a number of ways. First, prior to engaging in a community intervention, it is important to identify who needs to be part of the process to ensure diverse voices in the community are heard. Millennials expect an integration of the identities that shape their experience to be included in any social change process (Blackwell et al., 2010). Soliciting input about who should be included in the process is a way to model inclusiveness and demonstrate a commitment to listening to the concerns of the community. As Jordan suggested during the personal interview, if the concerns of the millennials are not addressed, they will disengage and start their own organizations. Second, prior to convening a large community meeting, it may be advantageous to convene smaller listening sessions where the consultant meets with different groups in the community to listen to their interpretations of the presenting issue. Listening sessions may invite a more candid discussion while at the same time ensuring the voices of a broad spectrum of people in a safe environment are heard. Third, it is advantageous to the outcome of any meeting to have a setting that is conducive to the audience you want to attract. For example, making provisions for people with mobility needs, providing on-site childcare, or providing a light meal increases the likelihood of attendance from a broad spectrum of people.

Engaging the participants in leading their change process is the next step. One way that this can be accomplished is by creating diverse intergenerational groups to discuss community concerns. These groups should be designed with co-leaders from different generations that work collaboratively to facilitate a discussion and guide the work of the group. The role of the consultant is to serve as a resource and help the community participants construct a process that holds the group together. Serving as a resource involves working with the community to place
their concerns into context. For example, when engaging in community dialogues, a consultant can provide a historical perspective about race and racism based on research that can inform the discussion. Additionally, a consultant is attentive to the dynamics around differences. For example, how African American men and women communicate with one another may be influenced by the unconscious stereotyping of women. Having the knowledge of how the stereotyping of women can influence the perception of their leadership can inform a diagnosis of a problem and lead to a potential solution. Another example is being attentive to ageism and the perception that millennials are the “know nothing” generation. Being aware of the attitudes about millennials and social justice can facilitate a conversation about transferring knowledge to ensure the next generation is equipped with the tools to engage in community activism.

In an organization setting, there are practical applications for human resource consultants, coaches, and managers that work with diverse groups of people. This study offers insights for human resource (HR) professionals confronted with employment problems between people from different cultural backgrounds that include Africa American females. Knowledge about the implications of race and gender stereotypes can inform the diagnostic process. I provide an example to explicate how an awareness of gendered racial stereotyping can facilitate dialogue within an organization. In this example, the presenting problem is a communication issue between a White male manager and African American female subordinate. Something to observe closely is the use of language to describe the situation. Words and phrases like “she is angry” or “she is too emotional” may be clues to a deeper concern that involves gendered racial stereotyping on the part of the White male manager. The White male manager may alter his behavior when engaging with the African American female because he does not want to make her angry. The result is the African American female never receives the feedback needed to
improve her performance. The African American female involved in the situation may be unclear about what she is doing to illicit the response she is receiving from her manager. She may receive feedback that she is unable to communicate effectively but does not know what that means in terms of the execution of her responsibilities. Consequently, she may internalize the treatment she receives from her manager and make the assumption that she is doing something wrong, which further complicates the situation. In this scenario, the African American female can become the problem when in fact she may be the recipient of gendered racial stereotyping.

A manager, consultant, or coach can draw attention to the possibility that the White male manager may be interpreting the behaviors of his employee using the lens of historical stereotypes specifically the stereotype of the angry Black woman. Integrating organization development principles like the ladder of inference (Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross, & Smith, 1994) and inclusion and diversity theories like micro-inequities (Rowe, 2008) managers, consultants, or coaches can facilitate a discovery process for the White male manager. Additionally, managers, consultants, or coaches can also work with the African American female in this example to interpret the environment and develop strategies for engaging with her boss. This could involve integrating organization development techniques with concepts like miasma (Livers & Caver, 2003) to help the African American female employee contextualize her experience.

Understanding the implications of gendered racial stereotypes in the workplace can open the door to conversations about difference based on unconscious bias. Human resource managers and other key leaders can gain tools to assist with correctly evaluating behaviors that interfere with the performance of diverse employees. The organization benefits from engaging in conversations about unconscious bias because employees gain an awareness of how to create a welcoming and inclusive environment.
Another practical application from this study is in the area of leadership development. Using social justice leadership as a framework, community leadership development programs can integrate tactics and strategies from the civil rights movement into current day social justice initiatives. This study can provide a framework for discussing what is expected of leaders and what leadership needs to look like in the African American community. Integrating what was learned from how leaders operated in the past can inform what leadership looks like in the future. Additionally, discussing the past within a historical framework will provide the millennials with a perspective about the struggle for civil rights that the baby boomers perceives as missing in the millennial generation. The generation cohorts also agree that the neighborhoods in which they live are changing and community leaders need the ability to work across difference to create change. Leaders are challenged with the task of negotiating how to bring groups together that are in conflict over significant issues (Blackwell et al., 2010) while not losing sight of the needs of the African American community. Additionally, there is a call for leaders who are more grass roots and communal oriented. As a trainer or consultant working in the area of leadership development, the findings in this study can be used as a starting point of inquiry to design leadership programs for community activists.

**Reflections on Study Participants**

Conducting community based research is interesting because it places the research and the researcher in a dynamic and diverse environment. As a novice researcher, I was overwhelmed with the desire to reflect the participant’s perspectives with integrity, dignity, and respect. The research participants entrusted me with their stories. I felt compelled to listen without judgment and to discern the subtleties of what was being shared. Initially, the responses from the participants appeared negative. However, after spending countless hours listening to
the tapes and re-reading the transcripts, I heard a different message. African American women are community trustees willing to do what is necessary in the fight for social justice. Their collective request is to have their work acknowledged, respect their intelligence, which is not necessarily based on academic credentials, and honor their femininity.

The participants were supportive, engaged, and appeared to enjoy participating in the study. The thirst for knowledge and the desire to express their opinions was impressive and the participants made personal sacrifices to assist with my dissertation research. Two interesting observations emerged from conducting this study. First, the participants were highly educated and well informed on issues of race and gender oppression. Their knowledge was a blend of personal experiences and personal research on the topic. Second, the participants were not afraid to vocalize their opinions. In fact, they felt honored that someone would ask what they thought. One Gen-X focus group member commented that no one ever asked her opinion, yet everyone writes about what she thinks. The participants spoke with passion and power. They were not intimidated by the topic or each other if in a focus group setting. My prepared comments about stopping the tape should something be said that is upsetting was not necessary. I did stop the tape on one occasion because the language the participant planned to use regarding her reaction to being called a “Nigger” was not appropriate to capture on tape. As a result of this research experience, it appears that women involved in social justice work may be somewhat unique because they have developed a way of communicating their concerns about inequality and oppression. Additionally, women involved in social justice work may have greater opportunity to engage in critical conversations about race and racism. Several of the participants provided feedback regarding their experience with participating in this study. The next section captures some of the comments from the participants regarding this study.
The women shared their thoughts about participating in the study or the study questions at the end of the personal interview or focus group. Additionally, the respondents to the narrative questions shared their thoughts about this study. I provide their comments here to offer insight into the relevance of the research topic for the participants.

Carla: When asked about her reaction to the questions she was asked Carla commented “I think you asked all the right questions. I don’t think you missed anything.”

Jordan: When asked a question she would generally respond with “wow, that’s a really great question.” At the conclusion of the interview, she commented “I think you had great questions actually. It was very insightful . . . [and] pretty potent.”

Vanessa: At the end of the interview, Vanessa commented “that was fun!”

Gen-X focus group: At the end of the focus group, they exclaimed, “thank you for the opportunity, you are amazing!”

Barbara: When asked about her initial thoughts about participating in the study, Barbara commented, “I didn’t know what the questions were gonna be, but if in anyway it’s gonna help you then you know, then that’s great.”

Baby Boom focus group: When asked how they felt about the focus group, Carnita commented “I just loved hearing everybody’s voices and everybody’s story . . . Carolyn; I just have to so applaud you and salute you for this magnificent event.”

Conclusion

I recently had the opportunity to spend time with Dr. Vincent Harding, a long-time social justice activist. I shared with him my dissertation work and he asked the one question that brings the entire dissertation process together. What did you learn? While I provided a response at the
moment, the question continues to linger in my mind. In addition to the research findings, I leave the dissertation process with three discreet things that I learned.

First, I learned that there will always be social justice advocates because there will always be oppressed groups of people. Whether based on race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, income, or any combination of your social identities, at some point in your life you will be oppressed. I also discovered that oppression is experienced differently based on an individual’s constellation of social identities. A low-income heterosexual African American female experiences race and racism differently than an African American female who identifies as a member of the LGBTQ community. Paradoxically, in a world that is becoming increasingly diverse, social systems have little flexibility or capacity to embrace difference.

Second, while the millennials did not experience Jim Crow segregation, the women in this study are aware of its legacy and the impact Jim Crow has on their current reality. I gained a deeper respect for and understanding of the millennial generation as a result of this study. The women were thoughtful, compassionate, and had a strong desire to reach out to people who have not traditionally been included in conversations about community change. The millennials acknowledged that leaders need to have a universal concern for all of the people in the community. The millennials may be the generation to bridge the class divide within the African American community. Growing up in the information age, it appears that the millennials may have an understanding and awareness of issues at an earlier age than the Gen-Xers and baby boomers, and they are not afraid to act on their knowledge. It is predicted that the millennial generation will be the most socially active generation since the 1960s (Apollon, 2012).

Third, social activists are vital to the creation and sustainability of civil society. The great democratic experiment remains in the experimental stages. Great strides have been made
towards a democratic America. However, more remains to do to ensure racial equity. Harding (2007) posited that as Americans we must dream of a “nation that does not yet exist” (p. 11).

Harding stated his point in this way:

   It is we African Americans—when we have been at our best—who have insisted that the most authentic American dream is of a nation that does not yet exist, a transformed one whose complex riches we have occasionally sampled in harsh struggles for a new nation, one sometimes yearned for as “a more perfect union.” (p. 11)

   It is the efforts of grass roots people protesting injustice and inequality that will keep the experiment of democracy on a fruitful course. African American women have played and will continue to play a vital role in civil society.
Appendix
Appendix A: Personal Interview Guide


Research Purpose: The purpose of this study is to explore the generational differences between Black women’s attitudes about race and their leadership of social justice issues.

1. Opening Comments
   a. Restate the purpose of the study and the importance of the interviewee’s role in the process.
   b. Inform the interviewee of the potential risk involved in the study. Remind each person that they can stop the interview at any time without any harm. Also remind the interviewee that the interview will be taped and professional transcribed. Their identity will remain anonymous unless permission is provided to use their name.

2. Background Information
   a. Where were you born and where were you raised?
   b. What do you do for a living?
   c. Do you consider yourself a community activist?

3. Race and/or Gender Related Questions
   Orientation to race and gender related issues
   How relevant do you think race is today?
      a. Do you think race is a factor in determining how successful African Americans can be in life?
      b. Who do you think should be included in the category of African Americans and who should not?
      c. How do you feel about African Americans who are poor?
   How did your family, friends, and community talk about race when you were growing up?
      a. What were the messages and attitudes regarding race and gender issues you heard?
      b. What did these messages mean to you?
      c. How did these messages and attitudes affect you?
   How did your family, friends, and community talk about gender when you were growing up?
      a. What were the messages and attitudes regarding gender you heard?
      b. What did the messages mean to you?
      c. How did these messages and attitudes affect you?
   What did you learn from your family about social activism?
      a. How do you feel about your family’s involvement in race and/or gender problems?
      b. What did this mean to you?
c. How did your family’s involvement in social activism affect you?
d. What was the impact of your family’s social activism on others?

4. Race, Gender and Leadership of Social Justice Issues Questions

General questions related to race, gender, and social justice issues
Tell me about the first time you felt you were discriminated against because of your race and gender.
   a. What were the circumstances?
   b. What actions did you take?
   c. How do you feel this experience shaped your commitment to social justice?

Describe how you are involved in social justice issues related to race and gender [Refer to Community Involvement Matrix]
   a. Has your involvement in social justice issues changed over time? If so, what has changed for you?
   b. What is the impact of your actions on others?
   c. What is your involvement in organizations focused on social justice in the Black community? Why are you a social activist?

How do you feel about the organizations focused on social justice in the Black community?
   a. How do you feel about the way historically Black organizations are addressing the needs in the community.
   b. Do you feel that the contemporary Black organizations do a better job relating to the issues of the community?
   c. Do you feel that social justice organizations are making a difference in the Black community?
   d. Do you feel that Black women leaders receive the same level of respect as Black men leaders fighting for social justice?

5. Generational Questions about Racial Attitudes

a. Do you feel your generation sees race and gender in the same way as older or younger generations?

b. Do you think you are more racially tolerant than people who are older than you? Do you think you are more racially tolerant than people younger than you?

c. How do you feel about interracial dating?

d. How do you feel about the one drop rule? Do you think that mixed-race people (African American with some other racial/ethnic group) should identify as African American? Do you think lighter skinned African Americans are treated better than darker skinned African Americans?

e. When you talk about race with your friends, what do you talk about?

6. General Questions about Race, Gender, and Leadership
a. How do you feel about the leadership Black women are providing in the community? How do you feel about the leadership Black men are providing in the community?

b. How important is it to you that there are Black women leaders working on Black issues in the community?

c. How do you feel about working with other racial/ethnic groups to seek solutions to social problems in communities of color?

7. Closing Thoughts and Reactions

   a. What do you think Black leaders need to do to create change in the community?

   b. Please share any thoughts you have about racial attitudes and social activism.

   c. What were your initial thoughts about participating in this study

Briefly discuss what happens next in the process and ask the interviewees if they have any final questions.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful comments.
Appendix B: Sample E-mail: Personal Interview Solicitation

Thank you for being willing to participate in my research. My research is a generational study of Black women’s attitudes about race and social activism. I want to interview African American women, who are at least 21 years of age and at least a second generation US born citizen, to find out what they think about race, social activism, and leadership in the Black community.

The birth year range for the generations I am studying is baby boom (1943-1964), Gen-X (1965-1981) and Millennial (1982-1991). The last criterion is that the women I interview must be involved in social justice initiatives. This includes serving on boards, commissions, task forces, committees for social justice organizations. It would also include volunteering for an organization, serving as an advocate for marginalized communities or work on social justice issues as part of your profession. The key point is I want to interview women who are involved in creating change in the community.

At the conclusion of the three focus groups I will develop a survey to distribute to a larger audience of Black women.

As a final test of my data I will facilitate a final focus group interview with all of the groups together. So, anyone participating in the initial focus group must be willing to participate in the final focus group session. I estimate the total time will be 5 hours over 6-weeks (2.5 hours for the first focus group and 2.4 hours for the second). I plan to hold a drawing for a $100 Kings Soopers gift certificate at the end of the second focus group session.

If you meet the criteria, could we schedule an interview for Tuesday January 3rd at 10:00? I’ve attached a draft of a consent form for you to review.

Please feel free to pass this information along to anyone and everyone you think might be interested in participating in the study.

Research Summary

Since the beginning of slavery in the United States, Black women have been actively involved in the creation and formation of Black civil society. The abolitionist, civil rights and Black women’s club movements challenged White supremacy and created institutions that fought for political, social, and economic justice. Historically, Black women have engaged in the struggle for group survival while at the same time fighting for institutional transformation to eliminate or change discriminatory policies, practices, and procedures. With each passing generation Black women have lead efforts of resistance against racial discrimination, class exploitation, and gender bias. However, with each passing generation the construct and meaning of race has changed. Immigration, color-blind ideology, post-racial, and post-civil rights influence the
meaning and relevance of race. While some Black women have moved into the middle class and beyond, the majority of Black women remain poor and the objects of gender discrimination. The purpose of this study is to examine how race influences the activities of Black women in search of political, social, and economic justice. The study design is an exploratory sequential mixed-methods model to investigate the generational differences in racial attitudes among Black women and how their attitudes influence the leadership of social justice issues. Given Black women’s role in the creation of Black civil society, what are the contemporary attitudes about race held by this population? How relevant is race in their role as leaders of social justice issues? How are Black women’s leadership behaviors influenced by their attitude about race?
Appendix C: Pre-Interview Questionnaire


Research Purpose: The purpose of this study is to explore the generational differences between Black women’s attitudes about race and their leadership of social justice issues.

➤ What is your racial/ethnic identification?

➤ What is your age?

➤ State highest level of education obtained e.g. High School/GED, Associate Degree, Bachelors Degree, Master Degree, Professional Degree

➤ What is your occupation?

➤ Do you identify as a community activist?

➤ Please indicate if you are single, married, divorced, widowed, living with a partner.

➤ Please indicate the number of people in your household and describe their relationship to you.

➤ Please indicate the combined income for your household

$0-$26,000  $26,001-$50,000  $50,001-$75,000  $75,001-$100,000  over $100,000

Research Purpose: The purpose of this study is to explore the generational differences between Black women’s attitudes about race and their leadership of social justice issues.

Please read each activity and place a check mark by all of the activities you are currently engaged in or have engaged in over the past five years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Justice Activity</th>
<th>Check All That Applies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participated in a protest addressing issues in the Black community.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended a protest meeting to address issues in the Black community.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated in any form of political activity pertaining to the African American community that could lead to an arrest.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was a candidate for public office who promoted the concerns of the African American community.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tried to persuade others to vote for candidates with an understanding of race and gender issues.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contacted local officials regarding the concerns of the African American community.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contacted local, state, or federal officials about a particular personal problem related to race and gender.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked with others on local issues pertaining to the Black community.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kept informed of race and gender issues by attending conferences, workshops, lectures, or reading literature.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed others in the community about policies that positively or negatively affect African Americans.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed others in the business community about race and gender policies and practices that negatively affect African Americans.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Informed others about race and gender issues in a public forum.

Informed significant others (family members, children, relatives, close friends) about race and gender policies and practices that positively or negatively affect the African American community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Justice Activity</th>
<th>Check All That Applies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wrote a letter to an editor of a magazine or newspaper about race and gender issues.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrote an informational essay, article, white paper, or fact sheet about issues affecting the African American community.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used the creative arts (visual arts, poetry, theatre, music, etc.) to communicate race and gender messages to the public.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducted professional research on issues pertaining to race and gender.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged in volunteer work for organizations committed to racial and gender equity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joined or supported local, regional, or national organizations focused on race and gender issues.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you engaged in social justice activities that are not listed in the chart above, please feel free to list additional activities or comments in the space provided below.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
Appendix E: Informed Consent Statement

PhD in Leadership & Change
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Human Participant Research Review

Informed Consent Statement

You have been asked to participate in a research project conducted by Carolyn Love as part of her dissertation studies at Antioch University’s Ph.D. in Leadership and Change Program. The focus of the study is to explore the racial attitudes of African American women and how their attitudes influence leadership of social justice issues. Women involved in the study will represent three discreet generational groups; baby boom, Gen-X, and millennials. In addition, the women involved in the study will reflect different socioeconomic statuses.

As a leader in the community, I am interested in learning about your perceptions of race, ethnicity, and age and the affect these variables have on your involvement in social justice issues.

Your participation would involve taking part in a two hour interview at my office located at 3775 Colorado Boulevard, Suite 575 East Denver, Colorado. The date for the interview is January 16, 2012 from 10:00-noon. Your input is important, so I would ask that you notify me immediately should you elect not to participate or you are unable to attend the scheduled meeting.

Your participation in the interview will be kept confidential. Your identity will be known only to me. Your name will not be used in the study unless you provide written permission to use your name in the dissertation results.

The interview will be tape recorded and sent to a transcriptionist. The transcribed notes along with the notes taken during the interview will be analyzed and used as the basis of discussion in my dissertation. Any data collected during the interview will be stored in a locked cabinet indefinitely and may be used for future scholarly presentations and publications. Your identity will remain confidential in the event any data is used in future research.

As a participant, the risks to you are considered minimal. You may withdraw from this research project at any time (either during or after the interview) without negative consequences. Any data collected will be destroyed. There is no financial remuneration for participating in the interview.

Please feel free to contact me at 303.438.0953, 303.601.4439 or at Kebaya@msn.com with any questions you may have. If you have any ethical questions or concerns about this project, please contact Dr. Carolyn Kenny Chair of the Institutional Review Board, Antioch University PhD in Leadership and Change, e-mail: ckenny@antioch.edu, telephone: 805.618.1903. Two copies of
this informed consent form will be provided before the interview begins. Please sign both, indicating that you have read, understood, and agreed to participate in this research. Return one copy to me and keep the other copy for your files.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Researcher</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name of Participant</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signature of Researcher</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Signature of Participant</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F: Focus Group Interview Guide


Research Purpose: The purpose of this study is to explore the generational differences between Black women’s attitudes about race and their leadership of social justice issues.

1. Opening Comments
   1. Tell a little bit about yourself (Moderator)
   2. Restate the purpose of the study and the importance of the interviewee’s role in the process.
   3. Review the Consent Form
   4. The goal is not to reach consensus.
   5. Inform the interviewee of the potential risk involved in the study. Remind each person that they can stop the interview at any time without any harm. Also remind the interviewee that the interview will be taped and professional transcribed. Their identity will remain anonymous unless permission is provided to use their name.

2. Background Information
   a. Can each of you share a little bit about how you were raised and how you were raised influenced your racial attitudes?
   b. One definition of social justice is “social justice is the engagement with and advocacy for those in our society who are economically, socially, politically, and/or culturally oppressed and intentionally taking action.
   c. Does this definition capture your thinking about social justice?

3. Race and/or Gender Related Questions
   Orientation to race and gender related issues
   1. Since the Regan Administration the thinking in America has been shifting about race. Some believe we live in a colorblind society. How do you feel about that?
      a. Do you feel that your race can determine how successful you can be in life?
      b. There is a belief in America that African Americans are the cause of their own poverty. How do you feel about African American families that are chronically poor?
   2. Traditionally African American women have been characterized as Mammy’s Jezebels, or Sapphires. Do you feel these stereotypes about Black women exist today?
      a. Were there any messages you received growing up that shaped your attitudes regarding your race and gender?
      b. What did these messages mean to you?
c. How did these messages and attitudes affect you?

3. Growing up did you learn anything about social activism from your family or community?
   a. Did your family’s involvement or noninvolvement affect you in any way?
   b. What makes you want to be involved with social justice issues?

4. **Race, Gender and Leadership of Social Justice Issues Questions**
   General questions related to race, gender, and social justice issues
   1. Do you feel there is a need for Black leaders who represent the needs of the Black community?
      a. How do you feel the leaders of national Black organizations focused on social justice are addressing the needs of African Americans?
      b. How do you feel about the way local Black leaders are addressing the needs in the community.
   2. Do you feel that Black women leaders have as much authority as Black men who are leaders in the fight for social justice?
      a. Do you consider yourself a leader?
      b. What are the causes that are important to you?

5. **Generational Questions about Racial Attitudes**
   1. Do you feel your generation sees race and gender in the same way as older or younger generations?
   2. Do you think you are more racially tolerant than people who are older and/or younger generations?
      a. How do you feel about interracial dating?
      b. How do you feel about the one drop rule? Do you think that mixed-race people (African American with some other racial/ethnic group) should identify as African American?
      c. Do you think lighter skinned African Americans are treated better than darker skinned African Americans?
   3. How do you talk to younger generations about race?

6. **Closing Thoughts and Reactions**
   1. Is there a question I should have asked but didn’t?
   2. What were your initial thoughts about participating in this study

Briefly discuss what happens next in the process and ask the interviewees if they have any final questions.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful comments.
Appendix G: Final Focus Group Interview Guide


Research Purpose: The purpose of this study is to explore the generational differences between Black women’s attitudes about race and their leadership of social justice issues.

Note: The session is scheduled from 6:00-8:00. The library closes promptly at 8:00. The focus group will conclude at 7:45 to allow for acknowledging the women who participated in the study, raffle the grocery gift card, give out gift bags, and clean up the room.

6:00 Opening Comments (2 minutes)
1. Review purpose of the study
2. Review purpose of the focus group: to discuss the key findings from the survey and gain your perspective of what these findings mean to you.
3. Remind the group the session is being recorded
4. Survey Handouts will be collected at the end of the session

6:05 Introductions (5 minutes)
1. State your name
2. State your generational cohort

6:10 Discussion of Key Survey Findings (65 minutes: 6:15-7:20)
Overview focus group process: We will begin with a discussion about the findings related to how the generational groups view race. Then we will discuss the findings about African American leadership and conclude with a discussion about community activism.

I. Personal Reflections on Racial Identity
   a. 41% of millennials, 44.2% of Gen-Xers, and 56% of baby boomers report they experience discrimination in social settings.
      i. Question #1: What does this finding suggest to you
      ii. Question #2: How significant is this finding?
   b. 48% of millennials, 44% of Gen-Xers, and 25% of baby boomers agree or strongly agree that African Americans believe the stereotypes about our race. Similarly, 67% of millennials, 51% of Gen-Xers, and 47.4% of baby boomers agree or strongly agree that Black men adopt negative stereotypes of Black women.
      i. How do you interpret this finding?
      ii. What significance does this finding have for you?
   c. 61% of millennials, 61.3% of Gen-Xers, and 71% of baby boomers indicate their family prepared them for living in a society that discriminates against you based on race. Similarly, 35% of millennials, 48% of Gen-Xers, and 43% of baby boomers indicate their families prepared them for living in a society that discriminates against you based on your gender.
      i. What does this finding suggest to you?
ii. How relevant is this finding for you?

II. African American Leadership
   a. 61% of millennials, 65% of Gen-Xers, and 60% of baby boomers agree or strongly agree that there is a crisis of local leadership in the African American community.
      i. Is this finding consistent with your perception?
      ii. What does this finding mean to you?
   b. 52% of millennials, 43.4% of Gen-Xers, and 49% of baby boomers indicate the younger generation of Black leaders is innovative and inclusive in their leadership. Conversely, 32% of millennials, 27% of Gen-Xers, and 26% of baby boomers indicate the older generation of Black leaders is innovative and inclusive in their leadership.
      i. How do you interpret this finding?
      ii. What is the significance of this finding?
   c. 61% of millennials 48% of Gen-Xers, and 43% of millennials agree or strongly agree that Black male leaders receive more noteworthy recognition than Black female leaders.
      i. What does this finding say to you?
      ii. What does this mean to you?

III. Community Activism
   a. 78.2% of millennials, 91% of Gen-Xers, and 92.1% of baby boomers agree or strongly agree that it is important for Black women activists to share their social justice experiences to develop the next generation of female leaders.
      i. How do you interpret this finding?
      ii. How significant is this finding?
   b. 48% of millennials, 68.2% of Gen-Xers, and 74% of baby boomers indicate they actively seek out historical and contemporary information about our race.
      i. What does this finding suggest to you?
      ii. How important is this finding?
   c. 52.2% of millennials, 56% of Gen-Xers, and 75% of baby boomers agree or strongly agree that Black community activist are challenged by the geographic changes in the African American community.
      i. What does this finding say to you?
      ii. How do you interpret the meaning of this finding?

IV. Survey Findings (25 minutes: 7:20-7:45)
   a. As you look at the results of the survey, what stands out for you?
      i. What surprised you?
      ii. Why do you think there were not greater differences of opinion between the generations?
   b. What do you think are the most important themes from tonight’s discussion?

V. Acknowledge the Women (5 minutes: 7:45-7:50)
   a. Thank people for participating and have a drawing for the $100 grocery gift card.
   b. Give everyone a gift bag

VI. Clean Room (7:50-8:00)

VII. Library Closes at 8:00PM
**Appendix H: Final Focus Group Survey Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Statement</th>
<th>Millennial N=23</th>
<th>Gen-X N=63</th>
<th>Baby Boom N=77</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree/ S Agree</td>
<td>Agree/ S Agree</td>
<td>Agree/ S Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>I experienced racial discrimination in school</em> [4.3]</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>51.0%</td>
<td>62.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>I experienced racial discrimination on my job</em> [4.4]</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>42.0%</td>
<td>57.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>I experience racial discrimination in social settings</em> [4.5]</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
<td>59.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>African Americans believe the negative stereotypes about our race</em> [6.5]</td>
<td>48.0%</td>
<td>44.0%</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Discrimination against African Americans is woven into everyday life</em> [6.6]</td>
<td>60.8%</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
<td>78.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Regardless of how you self-identity, if part of your heritage is African American, U.S. society will treat you as an African American</em> [8.3]</td>
<td>78.2%</td>
<td>74.6%</td>
<td>81.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>It is important for Black community activists to understand the lived experiences of marginalized African Americans</em> [16.7]</td>
<td>74.0%</td>
<td>84.0%</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Black men adopt negative stereotypes of Black women</em> [16.7]</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>51.0%</td>
<td>47.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>There is a crisis of local leadership in the African American community</em> [12.6]</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td>65.1%</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>African American women “just push through it” and make significant changes that are felt throughout the community</em> [10.8]</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td>68.2%</td>
<td>82.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>There is tension between baby boom Black leaders and Gen-X and millennial Black leaders about how to address issues in the community</em> [14.8]</td>
<td>26.1%</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Black community activists are challenged by the geographic changes in the African American community</em> [16.6]</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Intergenerational collaboration between African American leaders on community issues is important</em> [14.1]</td>
<td>78.2%</td>
<td>91.0%</td>
<td>95.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The younger generation of Black leaders is innovative and inclusive in their leadership [14.4]  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Statement</th>
<th>Millennial N=23</th>
<th>Gen-X N=63</th>
<th>Baby Boom N=77</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An important role for baby boom Black leaders to play is to bring the generations together by educating Gen-X and millennial generation leaders on how to create social change [14.2]</td>
<td>87.0%</td>
<td>89.0%</td>
<td>85.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important for Black women activist to share their social justice experiences to develop the next generation of female leaders [14.3]</td>
<td>78.2%</td>
<td>91.0%</td>
<td>92.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black male leaders receive more noteworthy recognition than Black female leaders [10.5]</td>
<td>60.9%</td>
<td>48.0%</td>
<td>43.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I became involved in the community because of an injustice that directly affected my life or the life of family members, friends, or community [16.1]</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>54.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My personal experiences shape how I became active in the community [16.3]</td>
<td>74.0%</td>
<td>84.1%</td>
<td>76.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Societal issues such as poverty affect all races, there is no such thing as an exclusively “Black issue” [12.3]</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
<td>42.0%</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My family prepared me for living in a society that discriminates against you based on your race [4.6]</td>
<td>61.0%</td>
<td>61.3%</td>
<td>71.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My family prepared me for living in a society that discriminates against you based on your gender [4.7]</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As African Americans become more mainstream they lose their connection to the Black community [6.4]</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millennial</td>
<td>Gen-X</td>
<td>Baby Boom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race is no longer a relevant factor in determining the life chances of African Americans [6.1]</td>
<td>91.3%</td>
<td>90.5%</td>
<td>83.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Americans are reluctant to identify as African American or Black [8.1]</td>
<td>52.1%</td>
<td>64.5%</td>
<td>66.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>African Americans must lose their racial identity to become part of mainstream America</em> [8.4]</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
<td>74.6%</td>
<td>70.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix I: Pilot Test Questions: Feedback from Millennial

Hi Carolyn!

Hope all is well. I did receive your survey and completed it this evening. The survey took approximately 13 minutes to complete. In my opinion the instructions were very clear and relevant. The only question I had to re-read is the question about being involved in an organization that works on race, gender, or race and gender. It wasn't unclear, but it did require me to slow down to assure the appropriate selection was marked.

Hope that helped and congratulations!

Joyce

Sent from my iPad
Appendix J: Survey Solicitation Focus Group Participant

Hi Carolyn, Yes. I'll be happy to send this along to my African American girlfriends. Hope things are going well and congrats on the work so far. Vanessa (Not real name)

From: "Carolyn Love" <Kebaya@msn.com>
To: vsimpson@hotmail.com (not real email)
Sent: Friday, April 6, 2012 6:28:24 PM
Subject: Dissertation Research

Hi Vanessa,

Thank you again for being part of my dissertation research. When we last met, I mentioned I would be designing a survey to get a sense of how wide spread the issues you raised in our discussion was in the community. I am asking for your help again. Would you be willing to send the link to the survey to your network of African American women?

I included the link along with a message from me (if that would be helpful) to pass along to women you know. The survey is open to all African American women living in the State of Colorado who are at least 21 years of age. Unfortunately, you cannot participate in the survey because you participated in the personal interview. Essentially, I am testing your comments to see how other African American women think about race and social activism.

I plan to put a summary of my findings on my web page early next year. I will let you know when that is complete.

I could not have made it this far without your willingness to meet with me in January. I deeply appreciate your support.

Please don’t hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have.

Thank you in advance for distributing the survey link.

Message:

My name is Carolyn Love and I am conducting research on African American women in the State of Colorado. I am interested in knowing if there are any generational differences in attitudes about race and social activism among African American women. I invite your participation in the study by completing a brief survey. Please use the link below to connect to the survey.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/QXRRJQH
Appendix K: Consent to Use Voice in Dissertation

PhD in Leadership & Change

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Human Participant Research Review
Informed Consent Statement

You participated in a research project conducted by Carolyn Love as part of her dissertation studies at Antioch University’s Ph.D. in Leadership and Change Program. The focus of the study was to explore the racial attitudes of African American women and how their attitudes influence leadership of social justice issues. The women involved in the study represented three discreet generation cohorts; baby boom, Gen-X, and millennials and different socioeconomic statuses.

Your participation in the study was invaluable. Consequently, you are being asked to give permission to use your voice in the final copy of the dissertation. This would be in the form of transferring your comments to a MP3 file and linking your responses to the dissertation. I use a pseudo-name (enter person’s name) to refer to you in the dissertation. This pseudo-name will be used in the MP3 file as well.

The risks to you are considered minimal. There is no financial remuneration for the use of your voice in the dissertation.

Please feel free to contact me at 303.438.0953 or at Kebaya@msn.com with any questions you may have. If you have any ethical questions or concerns about this project, please contact Dr. Carolyn Kenny Chair of the Institutional Review Board, Antioch University PhD in Leadership and Change, e-mail: ckenny@antioch.edu, telephone: 805.618.1903. Please read and sign the consent form. This indicates that you have read, understood, and agree to allow me to use your voice in the final copy of my dissertation. Please fax the signed form to me at 303.438.0737. This is a private fax that goes directly into my office. Please keep a copy for your files.

Carolyn D. Love 12/03/12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Researcher</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name of Participant</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<td>Carolyn D. Love</td>
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Signature of Researcher Date Signature of Participant Date
Appendix L: Personal Interview and Focus Group Profiles

Personal Interview Profiles: Millennial (N = 2).

Profile #1 Carla Larson. Carla is a 24 year-old college student living with her parents. She recently completed a master’s program at a private university and is seeking employment to gain experience prior to applying to medical school. She does not identify as a community activist. However, while in undergraduate school in Louisiana, Carla participated in protest activities pertaining to the Jena Six trial. Carla participated in activities organized by the campus chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Carla believes that “social conditions dictate involvement in social activism.” It is the social climate that will start or spark her generations’ interest in social justice.

Profile #2 Jordan Maxwell. Jordan is a 27 year-old college graduate, wife, and mother of three small girls. Jordan is bi-lingual and works in a nonprofit organization focused on youth. Jordan also works with her husband in a nonprofit they founded that teaches youth how to become socially and politically active. Jordan describes herself as a community activist. She worked on several political campaigns – local, state, and national, worked with the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) and serves on the Diversity and Outreach Committee for the Democratic Party. Jordan believes that institutional racism still exists and cites incarceration rates and gaps in education as evidence of racism. Jordan defines institutional racism as “covert, almost racist acts or laws that are manifested in a manner that affects a certain group of people overwhelmingly more than other groups of people.”

Personal interview profile summary: Millennial.

Both Carla and Jordan are self-assured and confident young women. They believe that race is relevant and racism remains a problem in the United States. When they experienced
racism in elementary and middle school they received positive messages from their parents about their racial identity. When younger, their parents informed their views about racism, as they became older they formulated their own opinions. Carla feels race can be one of many factors that can influence your life chances. Jordan feels that race is relevant because institutional racism still exists. Carla does not get involved with social justice issues too much. However, if a situation arises that is of interest to her she will do research on the internet to find out more about the topic. Carla’s activism is episodic or short in duration. Jordan is a grassroots organizer and teaches young adults how to organize to create change. Jordan is more interested in creating systemic change.

Focus Group Profiles: Millennial (N = 2).

Profile #1 Darlene Burns. Darlene, an anti-oppression and social justice consultant, is 29 years-old. Darlene has a bachelor’s degree. While Darlene identifies as Black, her mother is White and her father is a Black Jew. When Darlene was younger she specifically identified as biracial. However, “I found that there just came a point when it seemed pointless, the acknowledgement was in having light skin privilege.” As a mixed-race child Darlene’s mother struggled with her racial identity because Darlene does not look like her mom. Darlene also identifies as queer which she feels adds another layer of complexity to her multiple levels of identification. Darlene describes herself as a community activist. Her mother was a feminist. While growing up Darlene and her mother engaged in conversations about gender issues. She also observed the relationships between her mother and father and mother and African American stepfather. Darlene stated she was pretty attuned to gender roles, gender norms and the link to heterosexuality at a very young age.
**Profile #2 Karen Cole.** Karen, a 22 year-old customer service representative, is a college graduate who lives with her mother and sister. Karen does not consider herself a community activist. However, in the past five years she engaged in protests, attended protest meetings, and informed people in the community about policies that affect the African American community. Karen’s father, who was addicted to crack cocaine, has been in prison for most of her life and her brother is also currently in prison. Karen’s maternal grandparents helped her mother raise her and her sister. Karen’s maternal grandmother taught her that “there is no such thing as mediocrity, in order for you to be on the same page as your White counterparts you have to be better.” Her maternal grandfather taught her that “it is important that you know who you are in spite of anything that happens.” These and other values instilled in Karen by her mother and maternal grandparents helped shape her behaviors and her attitudes about race.

**Focus group profile summary: Millennial.**

Darlene and Karen had vastly different childhood experiences. As a bi-racial person, Darlene felt she was not claimed or did not have a strong sense of belonging to a particular racial group. Darlene was not claimed by her White family members, including for a period of time her mother, nor was she fully claimed by her Black Jewish family. Darlene believes her queer identity adds complexity to being accepted. Karen provides a different perspective about the sense of belonging. Karen’s maternal grandparents positively influenced Karen’s racial identity and character formation. However, Karen encountered problems in the school environment. Karen selected her high school based on its academic history and strong athletic program. As an athlete, Karen was not accepted by her team, the coaching staff, or other students in the predominately White school. While Darlene and Karen’s childhood experiences were different in their respective ways, they each struggled with having a sense of belonging.
Personal Interview Profiles: Generation-X (N = 2).

Profile #1 Theresa Dawson. Theresa is a 41-year-old divorced mother of two and a grandmother. She is the Youth and Young Adult Minister at one of the oldest African American churches in Denver. Theresa describes herself as a community activist because of the advocacy work she engages in on behalf of youth and young adults. Her father was a community activist involved in the labor movement, civic organizations, and his church. Theresa acknowledged how her father’s activism influenced her to become a community activist. Theresa defines social justice as “supporting and advocating for the victim as well as approaching and facing the victimizer.” This definition of social justice influences her social justice work and activities.

Profile #2 Vanessa Simpson. Vanessa, a 46-year-old college graduate is a financial analyst. She has never been married and does not have children. Vanessa was born in Europe while her father was doing his military tour of duty. Her family traveled extensively before moving to Colorado when she was ten years old. Vanessa believes that Jim Crow is over and Martin Luther King did his job. Vanessa believes that your character is what is important. Racism may exist but you’ve got to keep moving forward regardless. Vanessa feels that as a citizen of the country “it is within our ability and our [African American’s] power to move the country beyond Jim Crow racism.” Vanessa does not consider herself a community activist. However, in the past five years she participated in the planning of cultural events in the community. Her engagement is episodic and she prefers not to become involved with chronic social problems. Vanessa believes that as African Americans move up the socio-economic ladder they lose their connection to the community. African Americans can decide if they want to become mainstream Americans or remain in the community.
Personnal interview profile summary: Generation-X.

Theresa and Vanessa had completely different life experiences. Theresa grew up in Harlem and Vanessa grew up in predominately White neighborhoods. Theresa advocates for a social justice paradigm that works with both the victim and the victimizer. Vanessa argues that African Americans can choose to leave Jim Crow thinking behind and become part of mainstream America or maintain their Jim Crow thinking and remain a victim in the neighborhood.

Focus Group Profiles: Generation-X (N = 6).

Profile #1 Tangala Ash. Tangala, 37, has a master’s degree and is an educator and a massage therapist. She is single with no children and lives with two renters. Tangala identifies as a volunteer activist. She informs others about race and gender issues in a public forum and supports local, regional, or national organizations focused on race and gender issues. Tangala also uses the creative arts to inform the public about race and gender issues. While Tangala experienced racism as a child, she does not consider all White people racist. She has close friends who are not Black. Tangala does not want to intentionally put people at a disadvantage and strives to balance her perspectives about other racial and ethnic groups. Tangala does have a specific frame of reference for how she measures her White friends.

The measure of their friendship commitment to me is do I think this person would stand up for me in a Klan meeting and get strung up with me in a Klan meeting, or would they fade into the White and let me get hung by myself?

Profile #2 Juanita Brown. Juanita, 30, is single and does not have any children. She has a Juris Doctor degree and works in education administration. Juanita considers herself a community activist. Juanita participated in protests that addressed issues in the African
American community. In addition she contacted local, state, and federal officials about a particular personal problem related to race and gender. She also keeps informed on race and gender issues by attending workshops, conferences, lectures, or reading material. Juanita was taught at an early age to give back to the African American community. Juanita, born and raised in Florida, emphasized how where you live influences your racial attitude. Because of where she grew up Juanita’s parents recognized that she would never go through a day without understanding who she was and where she came from. Juanita felt prepared to handle racist situations and in middle school when a racist incident occurred she said “I don’t remember being surprised or angry.”

Profile #3 Diane Carson. Diane, 40, is the Director of Programs for a nonprofit organization. Diane is married and has a master’s degree. She describes herself as a community activist. However, she did not provide detailed information about the nature of her activism. Diane was born and reared in the south. Diane said her mother and her mother’s sisters had issues with White people. As a result she felt challenged feeling a connection with other races. Her personal experiences with blatant racism did not occur until she was a young adult and relocated to Alabama to pursue a career opportunity. That is when she developed an issue with White people. Diane feels “it’s a tough place to be, being an African American woman.”

Profile #4 Madolyn Holman. Madolyn is a 31-year-old divorced mother of three children. She has an associate degree and is a Regional Operations Director for a local company. Madolyn experienced racial bullying by White students in elementary school and learned at a very young age to fight back. Madolyn was the only person to mention bullying as part of her childhood experiences. One of her early discoveries was that the African American students were far more accepting of White students in predominately Black schools and not jumping on
them because they were White. Madolyn believes the video images of African American women perpetuate the stereotype of the jezebel woman. She acknowledges the fact that music videos are entertainment. However, she questions why we are “still inflicting the image of Black women being this sexual thing on ourselves.”

Profile #5 Lauren Leigh. Lauren, 38, is a college graduate and works for the State of Colorado. She is married with three children. Lauren describes herself as a community activist. She attends protest meetings to address issues in the African American community; she keeps informed on race and gender issues and will inform others in the community about issues that affect African Americans. Lauren was exposed to racism in elementary school. She believes that race and racism are deeply rooted in American society. The system is not designed for African Americans to succeed. Lauren perceives herself as a leader. Lauren believes that “everyone has a God-given purpose and my purpose is leadership. I can care less about what you say about me, I’m here to lead something.” Lauren believes that race plays a part in leadership. However, it is important to understand leaders and people in different communities.

Profile #6 LaTonya Peterson. LaTonya, 30, has a master’s degree in nonprofit management and currently serves as a development director for a local nonprofit organization. She is married and lives in a communal setting with four other people. LaTonya describes herself as a community activist. She volunteers for organizations committed to race and gender equity, keeps informed of race and gender issues by attending conferences, workshops, lectures, and reading literature and she uses the arts to educate the public about racial and gender inequities. LaTonya did not experience blatant racism as a child nor did she have the expectation of experiencing any. LaTonya stated that “the most racism I think I’ve ever experienced was the racism within my own family against others around us.” LaTonya believes that African
Americans, individually and as a group of people need to learn how to navigate the system to be successful. Instead of saying that the system is against us LaTonya believes that “we need to learn how to as a people and as a group of individuals learn how to manage and navigate through the system.”

**Focus group participant profile summary: Generation-X.**

Five of the six women in the Gen-X focus group shared similar life experiences. Each of them experienced racism at an early age. While the African American women in this focus group shared similar experiences they each responded to their experiences differently. In addition, although they understood the different positions taken on race and racism they were not always in agreement with the comments shared.

**Personal Interview Profiles: Baby Boom (N = 2).**

*Profile #1 Barbara Bronson.* Barbara is a 65-year-old wife, mother, and grandmother. She and her husband owned a restaurant in what is considered an African American neighborhood. Barbara now serves as the facility, catering, and fund development director for her church. Barbara holds an associate degree. She was born in Centerville, Iowa and was raised in Des Moines Iowa. She and her husband moved to Colorado when their children were young. Barbara identifies as bi-racial because “I was always taught at a young age you claim all your heritage, all your culture.” While she has a rich cultural heritage Barbara’s mother told her she would always be perceived and treated as an African American. Barbara describes herself as a community activist when needed. Prior to her husband’s illness, Barbara was very active in the community. She helped form a community task force in Northeast Denver, created programs and activities for youth and parents in Northeast Denver, worked with the community policing project and worked with the Community Relations Division for the U.S. Department of Justice.
As a young adult in Iowa, Barbara was involved with the Black Panther Party, NAACP, and the Junior Democratic Committee. Barbara’s mother was a community activist and a caucus woman. Barbara was a delegate for President Barack Obama during the 2008 election. Barbara was taught to stand up and fight for her rights.

Profile #2 Donna Wilkerson. Donna, a 58-year-old business woman, is one-eighth Chitimacha Indian. However, she identifies as African American. Donna is divorced and has a college-age special needs child living with her. Donna works in the construction industry, “which is a male-dominated industry” as a subcontractor and a material supplier. Currently she does 3-D modeling for prime contractors in the construction industry. Donna considers herself a community activist because of the work she did to bring race and gender discrimination in the construction industry to the attention of government officials. Donna also provided testimony before local government officials on the discriminatory practices of the banking industry. Because of a history of fighting discrimination, Donna believes that within the construction industry, “it is perceived that African Americans have too much baggage.”

Personal interview profile summary: Baby boom.

Both Barbara and Donna are bi-racial. However, they identify as African American in part because U.S. society will not see them and treat them as anything else other than Black. For both women their race and gender was equality salient. They felt they experienced discrimination as African American women. Both women have extensive legacies of community activism. Barbara, born in the north, was self-confident and learned how to fight for her rights at an early age. Donna, born in the south, struggled with low self-esteem and gained confidence as an adult after participating in the African American Leadership Institute’s leadership program.
Focus Group Profiles: Baby Boom (N = 6).

**Profile #1 Hanifah Chiku.** Hanifah, 55, is a terminal administration analyst. Hanifah, a high school graduate, was born and raised in Summerdale, New Jersey. She describes herself as a community activist. Race was not a topic of discussion while growing up until the death of Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968 and the riots that followed. Around age 18 Hanifah left home and became involved in the All African People’s Revolutionary Party founded by Kwame Ture (also known as Stokley Carmichael). Hanifah became immersed in Pan African studies and became angry that the information she was reading was not available to her in High School. Hanifah has a deep passion for what she terms her people, “I don’t want to say Black people, but my people all over the world.” Hanifah changed her name and stated that “I’m not anti-White, I just am pro Black.”

**Profile #2 Carnita Groves.** Carnita, 49, is a licensed professional counselor and a certified addictions counselor. She has a master’s degree. Carnita is married and lives with a non-relative male boarder. Carnita describes herself as a community activist. She is a radio and local TV interview guest discussing issues and concerns as an officer of the Association of Black Psychologists. She has conducted professional research on issues pertaining to race and gender, engages in volunteer work for organizations committed to racial and gender equity and wrote a letter to the editor about gender and race issues. Carnita is a native of Colorado. Her attitudes about race were influenced by her involvement with the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations. She said that “I started going to those conferences that just sparked a wild fire in me that mushroomed into an atomic bomb, and it’s been that way ever since.” Carnita objected to the questions asked during the focus group by commenting “I swear to God we are so
allergic to having conversations about what is working [in the community]. There are a lot of things out there we need to be talking about.” Carnita believes that not enough attention is paid to what is working in the community. In her opinion, the focus is always on what is not working.

Profile #3 Di Holmes. Di, 52, is the founder and executive director of Harambee Family Services Consulting, a company that provides domestic violence and victim services to women and children. Di identifies as a community activist. She attends protest meetings to address issues in the Black community, contacted local officials regarding concerns in the African American community, and joined organizations focused on race and gender issues. The assignation of Dr King was a defining moment in Di’s life because it helped her put into context her personal experiences with racism. In addition, Di believes that African American women are in need of healing because of their history of oppression. African American women were set free and “we had to go about the business of existing, living, and creating. When did we ever have time to just sit and say I’m pissed?”

Profile #4 Daphne Rice-Allen. Daphne, 59, has a bachelor degree and is a helpline coordinator for the Alzheimer Association. She is married and considers herself a community activist. Daphne participates in community events and other activities designed to address issues in the African American community. Daphne was born in the Philippines. He father was one of the Tuskegee Airmen and her mother was a Talladega College graduate. Daphne attended Denver Public schools and while in high school she, along with a group of White kids and two White males, got on a bus and went to Greenwood Mississippi to register people to vote. Daphne feels that with her parents coming from the south there were unspoken rules about how African American women should behave and conduct themselves. Daphne remembers being
told that “ladies didn’t leave the house unescorted.” Daphne grew up learning about what she termed, “upwardly mobile southern Black behavior.”

Profile #5 Adriane Sanford. Adriane, 55, is a business owner. She is divorced and lives with her son and aging mother. Adriane, who holds an associate degree, identifies as a community activist. She conducts professional research on issues pertaining to race and gender, she also volunteers with organizations committed to racial and gender equity and will inform others in the community on policies that positively and negatively affect African Americans. Adriane is a strong advocate for economic justice for African Americans. Adriane feels racial solidarity is important. She “grieves over the way we treat each other.” As a minority business consultant in the construction industry, Adriane feels the African American community is fractured and African American business owners have difficulty acknowledging the success of other business owners in the community. When we “hear someone has won a contract or they’re doing well, or they’re on the next level, we put each other down.”

Profile #6 Deborah Sims Fard. Deborah, 48, is a community activist. She coordinates cultural events and activities in the Historic Five Points neighborhood in Denver. Deborah did not provide information about her marital status or educational level. Deborah’s mother was a Christian and her father was a Muslim. She attended Muslim schools during the week and attended a Christian church on Sunday. Deborah’s family opened a bakery in the neighborhood because of the need to have fresh baked goods in the community. In addition, her parents began a freedom school. Deborah was raised in an environment where conversations about social justice and activism occurred on a regular basis. Deborah does not care if the traditional stereotypes of African American women exist, what other people think is not a barrier for her. Deborah said “if you choose to see me as an angry Black woman, more power to you, but I don’t
care.” Deborah further commented “you might be right, because I don’t think there’s anything wrong with being angry and Black. I’ve got a lot of reasons to be angry about what has happened to my people.”

**Focus group participant profile summary: Baby boom.**

The baby boom focus group was dynamic because four of the six participants knew one another prior to joining the focus group. With the depth and breadth of their activism and their historical knowledge of the African American community, several members of this group had a strong desire to focus the discussion on what is working in the community. The contrasting perspective was framed in this way “I know we ponder on the whys, but I personally believe if we don’t get to the root of the problem then we’re not gonna be able to turn [things] around.”
## Appendix M: Personal Interview and Focus Group Activities by Generation

Comparison of Activities by Generation Cohort – Personal Interview and Focus Group Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Millennial N=4</th>
<th>Generation X N=7</th>
<th>Baby Boom N=6</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Worked with others on local issues pertaining to the Black community.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contacted local officials regarding the concerns of the African American community.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kept informed of race and gender issues by attending conferences, workshops, lectures, or reading literature.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed others in the community about policies that positively or negatively affect African Americans.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed significant others (family members, children, relatives, close friends) about race and gender policies and practices that positively or negatively affect the African American community.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged in volunteer work for organizations committed to racial and gender equity.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joined or supported local, regional, or national organizations focused on race and gender issues.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tried to persuade others to vote for candidates with an understanding of race and gender issues.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed others in the business community about race and gender policies and practices that negatively affect African Americans.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed others about race and gender issues in a public forum.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrote an informational essay, article, white paper, or fact sheet about issues affecting the African American community.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated in a protest addressing issues in the Black community.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended a protest meeting to address issues in the Black community.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was a candidate for public office who promoted the concerns of the African American community.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contacted local, state, or federal officials about a particular personal problem related to race and gender.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used the creative arts (visual arts, poetry, theatre, music, etc.) to communicate race and gender</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>
messages to the public.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Conducted professional research on issues pertaining to race and gender.</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participated in any form of political activity pertaining to the African American community that could lead to an arrest.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrote a letter to an editor of a magazine or newspaper about race and gender issues.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Respondent Comments:

1. Millennial: It is relevant to note that while I do a lot of anti-racism work in combination with other anti-oppression work, I rarely focus on the Black community. The majority of the racial advocacy I do is for people of color as a whole, and I often layer with gender (including gender identity), sexual orientation, classes etc. Disrupting racism and other forms of oppression is what I do for a living, and is also what I do in all three of my volunteer positions.

2. Baby Boom: I provided testimony at a public hearing before a government municipality about the discriminatory conduct of a banking and lending institution, which prevented equal access to capital, whereby prohibiting my ability to provide for my family in a manner equal to my abilities.

3. Baby Boom: When we moved to Denver in 1977 up to about 2004, I was very much involved in social justice activities. Help form Community Task Force, created programs and activities for our youth and parents, worked with Community Policing Project 9Weed & Seed), worked with DPS (Denver Public Schools) on BEAC (Black Educators Advisory Council), and worked with Community Relations for US Department of Justice. Member of Colorado Black Women for Political Action, worked on several Black candidates campaigns.

Appendix N: Survey Questions

Page 1: Introduction

You have been asked to participate in a research project conducted by Carolyn Love as part of her dissertation studies at Antioch University’s Ph.D. in Leadership and Change Program.

The purpose of the survey is to understand the generational differences in racial attitudes among African American women. Historically, African American women have been in the forefront of racial struggle and social change. We do not know if this inclination holds true for younger generations. Do African American woman in the baby boom generation think differently about race than African American women in the Gen-X or millennial generations?

The purpose of the study is to investigate the differences and similarities in attitudes between African American women living in Colorado from the baby boom (born between 1943-1964), Gen-X (born between 1965-1981), and millennial (born between 1982-2003) generations.

The time to complete the survey is approximately 20 minutes. Please note that all survey responses will be reported in aggregate and your name and personal information will be kept anonymous.

Throughout the survey the terms African American and Black are used interchangeably.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey.

Carolyn Love
Kebaya@msn.com
www.kebayaconsulting.com

Page 2: Personal Participant Information

The criterion for participating in the study is as follows:
1. Participants identify as African American/Black American female.

2. Participants are involved in social justice in some way, for example, serve on boards/commissions, task forces, or committees that focus on social justice. Or, perhaps volunteer for an organization focused on social justice, or participates in protests, marches, sit-ins etc., or advocate on behalf of people who are marginalized.

3. Participants are at least 21 years of age and live in the State of Colorado.

Q1: Please indicate the racial group that best describes your racial identity.

African American/Black
African American/Mixed-race
White
Another Racial Group
Another Mixed-race Group

**Q2:** What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Other

**Q3:** Do you live in Colorado?
- Yes
- No

**Page 3: Personal Reflections on Racial Identity and Discrimination**

As an African American woman, please take a moment to reflect on your experiences with discrimination. It is okay if you have not experienced discrimination.

**Q4:** Thinking about your experiences, if any, with discrimination, how strongly do you disagree or agree with each of the following statements.

- I received positive childhood messages from my family and community about my racial identity.
- Teaching our children about race and racism limits their ability to interact successfully with people of other races.
- I experienced racial discrimination in school.
- I experience racial discrimination on my job.
- In my personal life, I experience racial discrimination in social settings.
- My family prepared me for living in a society that discriminates against you based on your race.
- My family prepared me for living in a society that discriminates against you based on your gender.

**Q5.** What, if any, additional thoughts would you like to share about your personal experiences with discrimination?

**Page 4: Race and Racism**

Some people argue that race is no longer a factor in determining the life chances of people. They may feel that the Civil Rights movement made it possible for everyone to share in opportunities equally or that engaging in discussions about race serves to perpetuate the problem.
Q6: Thinking about race and your experience with racism, how strongly do you disagree or agree with each of the following statements.

Race is no longer a relevant factor in determining the life chances of African Americans.

Slavery and Jim Crow are in the past, it serves no purpose to continue talking about the past.

Discrimination against African Americans happens on a daily basis.

As African Americans become mainstream they lose their connection to the Black community.

African Americans believe the negative stereotypes about our race.

Discrimination against African Americans is woven into everyday life.

Racial profiling is the best example of everyday racism.

Q7: What, if any, additional thoughts would you like to share about the relevance of race and the existence of racism?

Page 5: Racial Identity

The demographics of the United States continue to change. The 2010 Census showed that the United States population on April 1, 2010 was 308.7 million. Within the total population, 38.9 million people (13%) identified as Black alone and an additional 3.1 million people (1%) identified as Black in combination with one or more races. Blacks who reported more than one race grew at a much faster rate than the Black alone population.

Q8: Thinking about racial identity, how strongly do you disagree or agree with each of the following statements.

African Americans are reluctant to identify as African American or Black.

Mixed-race people should be able to choose how they want to self-identify.

Regardless of how you self-identify, if part of your heritage is African American, U.S. society will treat you as an African American.

African Americans must lose their racial identity to become part of mainstream America.

Social acceptance in the African American community requires an understanding of and empathy for the plight of African Americans.

Q9: What, if any, additional thoughts would you like to share about racial identity?

Page 6: Gender Issues
Historically, African American women have been discriminated against because of their race and gender. African American women and other women of color experience discrimination differently because of their race, gender, and social conditions. Sometimes discrimination and oppression can occur within and outside of the Black community.

Q 10: Thinking about your personal experiences with gender and racial issues, how strongly do you disagree or agree with each of the following statements?

There is a social hierarchy that ranks Black females on the bottom rung of the social ladder.

African American women are portrayed negatively in the media.

Negative portrayals of African American women influence how they are perceived as leaders.

African American women cannot escape society’s stereotypes of being angry, sexually promiscuous or “mammy.”

Black male leaders receive more noteworthy recognition than Black female leaders.

Black men adopt negative stereotypes about Black women.

African American women are in need of healing because of a history of discrimination.

African American women “just push through it” and make significant social changes that are felt throughout the community.

Q. 11: What, if any, additional thoughts, if any, would you like to share about gender issues?

Page 7: African American Leadership

African American leadership continues to be a topic of discussion both within and outside of the Black community. Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Rosa Parks, and Ella Baker, just to name a few, have been the most noted models of leadership and community activism. Contemporarily, President Obama and Michelle Obama are people who come to mind when thinking about Black leadership. The next series of questions invite your thoughts about African American leadership at the local community-based and national level.

Q.12: Social, economic, and political change happens at both the local and national level. Thinking about local community-based African American leaders and African American leaders at the national level, how strongly do you disagree or agree with each of the following statements?

It is important for Black leaders to understand the lived experiences of Black people.

Black leaders are needed in the African American community to advocate for Black issues.
Societal issues, like poverty, affect all races; there is no such thing as an exclusively “Black issue.”

African American leaders accommodate rather than challenge injustices in the Black community.

Middle income Black leaders should form coalitions with lower income communities to find solutions to problems affecting the Black community.

There is a crisis of local leadership in the African American community.

**Q. 13:** What, if any, additional thoughts would you like to share about African American leadership?

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**Page 8: Generational Viewpoint of Leadership**

Social conditions in the United States continue to change. A difference may exist in how leaders of the baby boom generation lead in comparison to leaders of the millennial generation.

**Q.14:** Thinking about past, present and future Black leadership, how strongly do you disagree or agree with each of the following statements?

Intergenerational collaboration between African American leaders on community issues is important.

An important role for baby boom Black leaders to play is to bring the generations together by educating Gen-X and millennial generation leaders on how to create social change.

It is important for Black women activists to share their social justice experiences to develop the next generation of female leaders.

The younger generation of Black leaders is innovative and inclusive in their leadership.

The older generation of Black leaders is innovative and inclusive in their leadership.

Collaborating with other oppressed groups is the only way social change will happen.

When Black leaders collaborate with other oppressed groups they lose sight of the specific needs of the Black community.

There is tension between baby boom Black leaders and Gen-X and millennial Black leaders about how to address issues in the community.

The Black church plays a key role in addressing social problems within the African American community.

The historically Black social justice organizations play a key role in creating change in the African American community.
Q. 15: What, if any, additional thoughts would you like to add about generational leadership?

Page 9: Community Activism

Since arriving in the United States in 1619, African American women have been at the forefront of social change. Shirley Chisholm, Marva Collins, Ruby Dee, and Fannie Lou Hamer are just a few of the women whose life stories leave a legacy of activism.

Q. 16: Thinking about your activism or your thoughts about the activism you see in your community, how strongly do you disagree or agree with each of the following statement?

I became involved in the community because of an injustice that directly affected my life or the life of family members, friends, or community.

I learned about community activism from family members, friends, or people in the community.

My personal experiences shape how I became active in the community.

I actively seek out historical and contemporary information about my race.

It is important for community activists to understand the legacy of oppression.

Black community activist are challenged by the geographic changes in the African American community.

It is important for Black community activists to understand the lived experiences of marginalized African Americans.

Q. 17: What, if any, additional thoughts would you like to share about community activism?

Page 10: Community Involvement

This next section provides an opportunity for you to indicate how you are involved in the community. Please feel free to check all boxes that apply to your activities over the past five years.

Q. 18: Please indicate ALL of the activities you have been involved in within the past five years.

Attended a meeting to address issues in the Black community.

Contacted local officials regarding concerns within the African American community.

Informed others in the community about policies that positively or negatively affect African Americans.

Informed others about racial issues in a public forum.

Informed others about gender issues in a public forum.
Informed others about gender and race issues in a public forum.

Joined or supported local, regional, or national organizations focused on gender issues.

Joined or supported local, regional, or national organizations focused on race issues.

Joined or supported local, regional, or national organizations focused on gender and race issues.

Kept informed of race issues by attending conferences, workshops, lectures, or reading literature.

Kept informed of gender issues by attending conferences, workshops, lectures, or reading literature.

Participated in a protest addressing issues in the Black community.

Participated in any form of political activity pertaining to the African American community that could lead to an arrest.

Tried to persuade others to vote for candidates with an understanding of race issues.

Tried to persuade others to vote for candidates with an understanding of gender issues.

Tried to persuade others to vote for candidates with an understanding of race and gender issues.

Used the creative arts (visual arts, poetry, theater, music etc.) to communicate race and gender messages to the public.

Worked with others on local issues pertaining to the Black community.

Worked with others in my church on issues pertaining to the Black community.

Where there was a need in the community, I stepped in to assist with addressing the need.

Other

Q. 19: Please select your level of activism within your community.

Very Active
Active
Somewhat Active
Not Too Active
Not At All Active

Q. 20: What, if any, additional thoughts would you like to share about your activism in the community?

Page 11: Change Strategies
African American women have an historical legacy of forming organizations and taking other steps to fight racial and gender discrimination. The National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs and the National Council of Negro Women are two examples of organizations formed to uplift the race and advance issues of concern to African American women.

Q. 21: Please describe the actions you take to create change in the Black community.

Page 12: Demographics

Personal information is collected to understand the profile of the individuals completing the survey. Please remember, the survey is anonymous and only aggregated data will be reported.

Q. 22: Were you primarily raised in Colorado?
Yes
No

Q. 23: Were your parents born in the United States?
Yes, one parent was born in U.S.
Yes, both parents were born in U.S.
No

Q. 24: Which category below includes your age?
21-29
30-39
40-49
50-59
60-69
70 or older

Q. 25: What is the highest level of schooling you have completed?
Zero to Eighth Grade
Some High School
High School Diploma or Equivalent (e.g., GED)
Some College but no Degree
Associate Degree
Bachelor Degree
Graduate Degree

Q. 26: What is the total number of people living in your household?
One
Two
Three
Four
Q. 27: What is the total combined income all members living in your household earned in 2011?

0-24,999
25,000-49,999
50,000-74,999
75,000-99,000
100,000 or more

Q. 28: Is there anything else you would like to share about Black women leaders and social activism?
## Appendix O: Comparison of Activities by Generation

Comparison of Activities by Generation: Survey Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Millennial N=23</th>
<th>Generation X N=63</th>
<th>Baby Boom N=77</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attended a meeting to address issues in the Black community.</td>
<td>14 60.9</td>
<td>52 82.5</td>
<td>63 81.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kept informed of race issues by attending conferences, workshops, lectures, or reading literature.</td>
<td>14 60.9</td>
<td>45 71.4</td>
<td>57 74.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed others in the community about policies that positively or negatively affect African Americans.</td>
<td>11 47.8</td>
<td>48 76.2</td>
<td>50 64.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kept informed of gender issues by attending conferences, workshops, lectures, or reading literature.</td>
<td>9 39.1</td>
<td>37 58.7</td>
<td>37 48.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked with others on local issues pertaining to the Black community.</td>
<td>9 39.1</td>
<td>40 63.5</td>
<td>50 64.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joined or supported local, regional, or national organizations focused on race issues.</td>
<td>8 34.8</td>
<td>41 65.1</td>
<td>46 59.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joined or supported local, regional, or national organizations focused on gender and race issues.</td>
<td>8 34.8</td>
<td>27 42.9</td>
<td>36 46.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tried to persuade others to vote for candidates with an understanding of race issues.</td>
<td>8 34.8</td>
<td>25 39.7</td>
<td>36 46.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed others about gender and race issues in a public forum.</td>
<td>7 30.4</td>
<td>25 39.7</td>
<td>25 32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where there was a need in the community, I stepped in to assist with addressing the need.</td>
<td>7 30.4</td>
<td>33 52.4</td>
<td>43 55.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed others about racial issues in a public forum.</td>
<td>6 26.1</td>
<td>26 41.3</td>
<td>38 49.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tried to persuade others to vote for candidates with an understanding of race and gender issues.</td>
<td>6 26.1</td>
<td>28 44.4</td>
<td>38 49.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used the creative arts (visual arts, poetry, theater, music etc.) to communicate race and gender messages to the public.</td>
<td>6 26.1</td>
<td>13 20.6</td>
<td>17 22.1</td>
</tr>
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<td>Worked with others in my church on issues pertaining to the Black community.</td>
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<td>26 41.3</td>
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<td>26 41.3</td>
<td>31 40.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participated in any form of political activity pertaining to the African American community that could lead to an arrest.</td>
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<td>10 15.9</td>
<td>17 22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contacted local officials regarding concerns within the African American community.</td>
<td>4 17.4</td>
<td>28 44.4</td>
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<td>24 31.2</td>
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</table>
Participated in a protest addressing issues in the Black community.

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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>4 17.4</td>
<td>16 25.4</td>
<td>20 26.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix P: Synthesis of Research Findings and Results

Integration of millennial findings and results.

The sample size for the millennial generation was relatively small in comparison to the Gen-Xers and baby boomers. A total of 27 African American women fell within the age range of a millennial. Although the sample size was small, the millennials provided a provocative perspective about race, gender and Black leadership, social activism, and an ideal about community and what this means for leadership. Based on their personal experiences, the millennials believe that race remains an issue in America. This is consistent with the research findings of Apollon (2011). In that particular study, millennials indicated race and racism remain a significant factor in our society especially as it pertains to education, housing, health care, and criminal justice systems (Apollon, 2011, 2012). Jordan, one of the personal interview participants, specifically cited the criminal justice and educational systems as locations for institutional racism. While all four women that participated in the personal interviews and focus group shared specific stories of experiencing racist or discriminatory acts targeted towards them, they agree that they do not experience discrimination in the same way or at the level as the Gen-Xers or baby boomers experienced during the period of Jim Crow and the time immediately following the Jim Crow era.

Fewer millennials agreed that they experienced discrimination in school than the Gen-Xers and baby boomers. The final focus group participants attributed this to the fact that gains were made since the civil rights movement that positively impacted the quality of life for African Americans. The civil rights movement allowed African Americans to gain greater access to privileges and opportunities. Some African Americans live in integrated neighborhoods and
attend integrated public and private primary and secondary educational institutions and integrated colleges and universities. The theme in K-6 educational systems is to treat people as you would like to be treated and there is rhetoric around equality and fairness. Individual acts of prejudice are punished. As a result, it may be more difficult to discern acts of discrimination unless they are overt. The perception of discrimination may be influenced by the environment in which the millennials were raised. The millennials were not raised in a society that codified racism and racial discrimination (Robinson, 2010). A respondent to the narrative survey questions commented that as cultures merge discrimination is less frequent but it definitely exists. Another perspective is that the millennials perceive themselves as global citizens living in a multi-cultural world. The millennials’ ideas about race, ethnicity, and culture are “much broader and more nuanced than those of any generation in history” (Irving, 2004). The final focus group participants also questioned how the millennials interpret discrimination and discriminatory acts. According to Mannheim (1968), the younger generations always fight different adversaries than the older generation because the younger generation’s orientation to the situation is different. The findings from this study do not suggest that the millennials perceive a different adversary, to use Mannheim’s words. Consistent with the findings of Apollon (2011), the millennials in this study recognize the existence of racism and discrimination. However, their experiences differ from the Gen-Xers or baby boomers.

Another finding related to race is the perspective that the Black experience is more dynamic than perceived in the past. The Black experience is no longer just about being Black but instead it is about recognizing other social identities that create a comprehensive Black experience. The millennials are redefining the Black experience to include a broader range of identities. Frable (1997) argued that an individual’s identity is the psychological relationship one
has to a particular social category. Identity is the part of self that is situated in relationship to social groups or categories of which an individual is a member (Frable, 1997; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). Darlene, Jordan, and Karen shared experiences with racism based on their membership in different social groups. The millennials recognized that a uniform Black experience does not exist (Collins, 2009). Instead, what racism looks like and how it is experienced varies depending on the constellation of social identities. Depending on the context, one social identity may be more salient than another (Booysen, 2007). The focus group participants provided an alternate perspective about the salience of identities. Darlene and Karen felt that their identities were equally salient. Race, gender, and class roles are all intertwined and cannot be separated. Darlene, Karen, and Jordan agree that their multiple identities intersect and inform how society responds to them. Their perspective provides an alternate viewpoint to the additive approach towards multiple salient identities. Acknowledging the significance of multiple identities is important because the community is diverse and how people experience racism is shaped by their multiple identities. Darlene, Jordan, and Karen commented that activists must work in collaboration with other communities. Stated differently, African American community activists and leaders should work with the Black gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, and queer (LGBTQ) community, African Americans who are poor, and other marginalized groups within the Black community to create social change. This is consistent with the thinking of Blackwell et al. (2010). They argued that the millennials want social movements that are more inclusive of the identities that shape their experience. Without working across the multiple identities, a leader can inadvertently marginalize groups within the African American community.
The millennials were outspoken about the status and portrayals of African American women in society. More millennials (35%) than Gen-Xers (19%) or baby boomers (21%) strongly agree that Black women are on the bottom rung of the social ladder. They also agree that Black women are viewed negatively by African American males and they are not recognized for their contributions to social justice. These factors combined may suggest that the millennials believe that Black women continue to face oppression and are slighted based on their race and gender.

This viewpoint was particularly evident in the millennials’ comments about interracial dating and marriage. The millennials counted interracial dating and marriage as racial abandonment or a form of internalized oppression. For the final focus group participants, this was a significant finding because it framed the challenges young African American women may face with finding a lifelong partner. Darlene, a millennial, felt that over time the desire to marry outside the race may signal the end of the African American race as it exists today.

The negative portrayal of Black women signaled another area of concern for the millennials. The millennials ($M = 4.30$) somewhat agree that Black women cannot escape the historical stereotypes that continue to inform how they are perceived in society. For Darlene, Jordan, and Karen, an area where the negative stereotypes of Black women manifests itself in two ways: (a) how Black men interpret the behaviors of Black women and (b) the perception of Black women as leaders. Generally the millennials agree that Black men interpret the behaviors of Black women negatively when compared to White women. The perception that the behaviors of White and Black women are not interpreted in the same way has historical roots in the understanding of femininity and who fits the model of good womanhood. From slavery to the civil rights movement, the imagery of femininity did not include Black women (Davis, 1983;

The negative portrayals of Black women also influence how they are perceived as leaders. Carla, Jordan, Darlene, and Karen agree that the contributions of African American women, historical or contemporary, are not adequately recognized. The recognition of African American women is informed by their race and gender which renders them invisible. Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach (2008) described this phenomenon as historical invisibility that occurs as a result of intersectional invisibility. People with intersecting disadvantaged identities “will tend to be deemphasized or misrepresented in the mainstream historical record” (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008, p. 384). The responses to the narrative survey questions and the final focus group participants corroborate this concern. The documentary Miss Representation speaks directly to the gender bias that exists in the media against women. “The Path,” a monthly newsletter published by the Center for Legal Inclusiveness commented that the negative portrayals of women and girls contribute to their under-representation in leadership positions (Center for Legal Inclusiveness, 2012). In an organizational setting, Booysen and Nkomo (2010) argued that “Black men and White men are less likely to attribute successful managerial characteristics to women” (p. 285). The lack of recognition and invisibility of African American women leaders led the millennials in this study to conclude that Black men receive more noteworthy recognition than Black women.

When analyzing the civic engagement of the millennials, I discovered that the millennials are involved in the community but to lesser extent than the Gen-Xers or baby boomers. The millennials emphasized the importance of transferring knowledge from one generation to
another. This theme was consistent among the personal interview, focus group, and survey participants. The millennials are deliberate in their thinking about what they want to learn and from whom. Jordan, Darlene, and Karen stated that it is important for the older generation to share knowledge with the younger generation. They specifically want to learn from elder women in the community who are willing to share their rich experiences of community activism. The survey respondents corroborate this finding with $M = 5.17$ for the millennials. Collins (2009) argued that there is a mothering of the mind relationship that develops between African American women. In this relationship, African American women seek “to move toward the mutuality of a shared sisterhood that binds African American women as community othermothers” (p. 207). Generally, the millennials are interested in knowing what community activists learned from being active in the community that can inform their activism. Darlene and Karen’s desire to connect with older women is consistent with Collins’s (2000) assertion that “having access to a Black women’s standpoint, especially one dedicated to reproducing African-influenced, gender specific resistance traditions, is essential” (p. 206). The millennials are interested in the knowledge generated through the struggle of Black women that can “clarify a standpoint of and for Black women” (Collins, 1986, p. 105). This finding is corroborated by the responses to the narrative survey questions. The survey respondents were interested in receiving knowledge from older activists in the community. Looking at the historical role women have played in the transfer of knowledge, Carothers (1990) argued that knowledge based on the lived experiences of mothers and grandmothers is passed down from one generation to another to equip them for what they may experience in life. This concept, while discussed within a familial frame of reference, is consistent with the millennials need for a transfer of knowledge from the elder generation to the millennials.
The millennials provided interesting insights about the representation of community. There is a perception that the African American community is ideologically moving away from collectivistic culture and towards a culture of individualism. This may be a pattern in other communities, but it is more pronounced in the African American community because of the historical way the community operated. A strong sense of Black solidarity existed because people were connected to a common oppression and shared purpose. The community cohesiveness was stronger because people relied on each other for their survival. Darlene and Karen think that the Black community has moved away from its foundational roots of community caring and sharing. This shift in direction can influence how people engage in the community and how leaders lead in the community. Community activist and leaders may seek individual gratification and acknowledgement rather than working in the best interest of the common good. Darlene commented that leadership should be communal rather than relying on a singular individual. The survey respondents agree with this point. Collective leadership means exercising influence as part of a community of equals where everyone’s voice contributes to the whole and everyone stands together in support of mutually agreed upon goals (Baker, 1972; Preskill & Brookfield, 2009). Within this framework of leadership, there is not a charismatic leader but instead leaders that support ordinary people in leading themselves (Preskill & Brookfield, 2009). Stated differently, leaders are interested in developing the leadership of others to bring about change in the community. A respondent to the narrative survey question provided another perspective about leadership when she commented that leadership is broader than serving the needs of African Americans; it is the ability to serve the needs of a community that is diverse. This point of view recognizes the need for inclusive thinking. Understanding the community in which you lead was also a point of agreement for the millennials (M = 5.04). The
millennials agree that it is important to understand or at least have empathy for the lived experiences of marginalized African Americans and others in the community. Karen felt it is important to understand what people are going through to advocate for change. Darlene participated in the final focus group and commented that leaders need to have empathy for people on the margins, which in turn informs their policy making.

Integration of generation-X findings and results.

The Gen-Xers provided the greatest contrast in thinking about race within a generation cohort. Generationally, the Gen-Xers are situated between the harsh living conditions of Jim Crow legislation and the most racially diverse generation in the history of the United States. The range of responses reflects the divergent perspectives about race and gender within the generation cohort. Attitudes about race and the perception of African American women leaders were two differences that emerged among the Gen-Xers. The Gen-Xers also provided interesting perspectives about race, gender, leadership, and community activism.

The divergent viewpoints that emerged from the personal interviews centered on the relevance of race. On one end of the spectrum is the belief that race is a consideration when people engage with you on a daily basis, it is what people see and it influences how people respond to you. On the opposite end of the spectrum is the belief that color is no longer relevant and everybody is equal. While race remains relevant, it is your character that defines who you are not the color of your skin. When these divergent viewpoints were tested in the survey, the Gen-Xers ($M = 1.46$) strongly disagree with the statement that race is no longer relevant. The Gen-Xers agree that society continues to judge people on the basis of their race.

The personal interviews provided another divergent perspective about race. Vanessa believes African Americans lose part of their cultural identity when they become more
mainstream. She further stated that you lose your connection to the African American community as you “cross over to the other side.” Interestingly, the survey respondents disagree with the statement African Americans must lose their racial identity to become part of mainstream America with $M = 2.08$ for Gen-Xers. However, the respondents to the narrative survey question and the focus group participants agree with the statement. Additionally, the final focus group participants agree that when you “cross over into certain territory . . . you have to give up pieces of your identity to gain other privileges.” Marable (2003) argued that the “price for admission into the White establishment is to denounce Blacks in stereotypical terms” (p. 174). Rollock, Gillborn, Vincent, and Ball (2011) argued that Blacks in the middle class “must become racially palatable and unstereotypically non-White to gain acceptance into White society” (p. 1090). Acceptance in the White community necessitates adopting “secondary characteristics” like using proper English, dressing in a certain way, or engaging in activities reflective of middle class status (Rollock et al., 2011, p. 1085). One possible explanation for the difference in perspectives is the statement as written may be objectionable to the survey respondents. However, when given the opportunity to discuss the issue or provide clarifying comments, the Gen-Xers may view the statement as something that actually happens in real life.

The Gen-Xers’ viewpoint on mixed-race identity is worth noting because of how the issue was framed. Mixed-race individuals are perceived as exotic. The underlying text is women who are mixed-race are more beautiful and attractive than Black women. Womack (2010) argued that music videos tend to portray light-skinned and bi-racial African American women. There is a shift from cherishing Black women to cherishing what is perceived to be exotic (Womack, 2010). The Gen-Xers commented that it is now fashionable to ask what are you and the more racially mixed you are the better. This is relevant when considered in
conjunction with how women in this study perceive interracial marriage. Gen-Xers may be concerned that Black women may be overlooked in the dating process because of their skin color.

As it relates to leadership, the Gen-Xers provided a perspective that did not surface in other generation cohorts. Generally, the Gen-Xers agree that incest and the negative portrayals of Black women are not being addressed by African American leaders. Several scholars speak to the silence in the community around incest, battering, and sexual abuse in the African American community. While not a phenomena exclusive to the African American community, Cole and Guy-Sheftall (2003) argued that incest is a topic the Black community is reluctant to address publicly. The women in this study felt it was important to break the code of silence and address the issue directly. Traditionally, African American women have subordinated their interest to the greater good of the community (Collins, 2009). Consequently, issues pertaining to Black women generally receive minimal attention from social justice organizations and Black leaders.

The Gen-Xers’ perspective about the absence of recognition for African American women leaders is consistent with the other generation cohorts. Historically, African American women have not been recognized as key leaders in social change movements (Cole & Guy-Sheftall, 2003; McGuire, 2011; White, 1999). African American women and women of color in leadership positions in the workplace continue to be challenged by a lack of acceptance and recognition (Booysen & Nkomo, 2006; Parker, 2005). The leadership behaviors of women are not interpreted in the same way as the leadership behaviors of men. Vanessa provided an alternate perspective. Vanessa commented that African American women are more respected than African American male leaders. African American women have a stronger voice and are
more intuitive and instinctive than their male counterparts. Vanessa stated that the women are the ones getting things done and making change happen. The focus group and respondents to the narrative survey questions agree that Black women are in the forefront of change and are getting things done in the community. The final focus group discussed the contributions of women to social justice initiatives. However, the absence of recognition for African American women who are community activists and leaders was a consistent theme throughout the personal interviews, focus groups, and survey.

In the analysis of the data concerning community activism, I discovered the Gen-Xers tend to engage in activities that create systemic change, they are involved with the political process, and they align themselves with social justice organizations. Gen-Xers tend to volunteer for nonprofit organizations serving the Black community. Generally, Gen-Xers are more involved in nonprofit work than millennials. This may be explained by where the Gen-Xers are along a life cycle. Some of the Gen-Xers may not have small children to care for thus enabling them to work more closely with nonprofit organizations. The Gen-Xers are affiliated with historically Black social justice organizations. While millennials join organizations, they did not reference the historically Black social justice organizations. The Gen-Xers are also the direct beneficiaries of the civil rights movement, which may explain the difference in involvement. Family members and community leaders modeled social activism. As a result, the Gen-Xers may be more inclined to become civically engaged than the millennials.

**Integration of baby boom research findings.**

The baby boomers were more grounded in the history of the African American culture and community than the Gen-Xers or millennials. They did more research and took additional courses to gain additional knowledge about historical and contemporary issues confronting the
African American community. An interesting observation was the futuristic nature of the baby boomers’ comments and how that was blended with the history of activism.

The discussion among the baby boomers tended to focus on racial solidarity and training the next generation of leaders. Racial solidarity means having a historical understanding of and empathy for African Americans and other people of color who are marginalized. There is a shared struggle that requires a strong sense of group identification (Harris & Khanna, 2010).

The baby boomers brought their historical perspective to the discussion of race and racism. The fact that the baby boomers experienced more racial discrimination than the Gen-Xers and millennials is related to the social conditions in place during the baby boomers’ formative years. Because of their encounters with Jim Crow segregation while growing up, baby boomers’ perception or standpoint is based on that lived experience. Strauss and Howe (1991) argued that “events shape the personalities of different age groups differently according to their phase of life, and how people retain those personality differences as they grow older” (p. 34). Some of the baby boomers, those individuals born between 1943 and 1964, grew up in a segregated system or were born as segregation legally ended and grew up in an America striving for racial equality. With either scenario, race and racism were significant factors in the development of baby boomers. Hence, as Strauss and Howe (1991) posited the events or social moments influence their perception of the world today. Race and racism provides a framework for how baby boomers perceive their world. The social context was different for the millennials, those individuals born between 1982 and 2003. The society was focused on integration instead of segregation. Consequently, the social expression of race for the millennials tends to be anti-racial rather than post-racial and the message is “race doesn’t matter” (Robinson, 2010, p. 182).
The baby boomers provided interesting insights about the future of leadership in the African American community. First, the baby boomers raise the issue of an absence of accountability in the African American community rather than a crisis in leadership. A respondent to the narrative survey question commented that “the struggles African Americans face are not due to the lack of leadership, but due to a lack of African Americans taking on personal and community responsibility and accountability.” Within this ideological framework, African Americans do not take personal responsibility for creating change in the community nor do they hold their leaders accountable for their decisions. This is an interesting observation in light of the fact that the leaders they refer to are part of the baby boom generation and to a certain extent, the Gen-Xers. One potential explanation may be the fact that baby boomers are at a different stage in their life cycle and they have conformed to certain social systems rather than protest change. Another explanation reflects the historical debate that exists within the African American community that is the second insight the baby boomers provide about leadership. Bunche (1992) argued that African American worldviews operate within two paradigms: accommodationism and escapism. The accommodationist paradigm is the one most germane to this discussion. Bunche (1992) argued that African Americans “adjust their thinking and behavior to conform to the mores of the dominant group while at the same time suffering the least inconvenience themselves” (p. 2). Bunche’s (1992) characterization of accommodationism captures the comments of the respondents to the narrative survey question. A respondent said “I believe it is the mentality of our Black leaders that they should not speak out so profoundly.” Marable (1998) argued that “the ‘post-Black politicians’ are irrelevant to the problems of the oppressed” (p. 158). Third, there is a concern among the baby boomers that the future generations of leaders are not being prepared to take on the responsibilities of leadership. They
acknowledge the lack of training for the next generation of leader and the reluctance of baby boomers to transfer power to the younger generation. Fourth, while the baby boomers acknowledge the lack of training, they are critical of the millennial generation because their lack of social awareness and civic engagement. The baby boomers commented that the millennials are missing the historical context of the struggles under slavery and Jim Crow. Therefore, it is difficult to understand and contextualize the plight of African Americans today. The baby boomers have a higher propensity towards gaining historical information about African Americans. They have a stronger interest in and connection to the past than the millennials. The baby boomers participating in this study place a great deal of emphasis on education.

Another interesting finding was the perceptions the baby boomers held about the Hispanic community. This issue was more prominent among the baby boomers than the Gen-Xers or millennials. There is a perceived tension between African Americans and Hispanics in Colorado. According to a recent study, one source of the conflict is the scarcity of jobs, resources, and opportunities (Hanna, Sunwoo, & Vitello, 2012). As marginalized groups, African Americans and Hispanics are in competition for jobs and resources. Immigrants from Mexico and other Spanish speaking countries are moving into Colorado and living in some areas that were historically considered African American. Vaca (2004) argued that a “racial divide exists between Blacks and Latinos” (p. 186). As a remedy to the situation, Hanna et al. (2012) argued that African Americans and Hispanics should unify and identify mutually beneficial goals. However, in this study, the baby boomers were less likely to agree that collaborating with other oppressed groups was the best way to create social change. The reluctance to collaborate on the part of the baby boomers may be due to unsuccessful attempts to work with leaders in the Hispanic community. Another explanation may be the perceptions held by some African
Americans in Colorado that more benefits accrue to the Hispanic community because of their population size and perceived power.

The baby boomers are active in the Black community. However, they are not as engaged as the Gen-Xers, which may be attributed to the lifecycle stage of each generation cohort. A high priority for the baby boomers is the mentoring of youth. This is consistent with the fact that 43 out of the 77 survey respondents held graduate degrees and 24 held bachelor’s degrees. This may also be attributed to the legacy of Jim Crow and the struggle some of the baby boomers encountered living in a racially segregated country. The baby boomers tended to have an affiliation with the historical social justice organizations and will volunteer in local nonprofit organizations through board service and other activities. Similar to the kind of activism during the civil rights movement, baby boomers participate in protest rallies and boycotts more than the millennials. They will also raise money to support local African American organizations.

**Integration of Generation Cohort Findings**

**Generation cohort differences.**

There were four areas that proved to be statistically different between the generation cohorts: (a) experience with discrimination at school, (b) perception that African Americans believe the stereotypes about their race, (c) perception that Black men believe the stereotypes about Black women, and (d) the fact that millennials do not seek out contemporary and historical information about their race at the same level as Gen-Xers and baby boomers.

There was a statistically significant mean score difference between how the millennials and baby boomers experienced discrimination. There are a number of factors that can explain this finding. First, the baby boomers’ childhood experiences were informed by Jim Crow legislation. Therefore, legally and as a practical matter, baby boomers might be expected to
experience more racial discrimination than the millennials. Second, what the millennials identify as discrimination may be based on an old construct of Jim Crow legislation. Within this framework, unless the discriminatory act is overt, it may not be received as discrimination and the subtle acts Rowe (2008) identified as micro-aggressions are ignored by the millennials and go unnoticed by the perpetrator. Third, the United States is more racially aware and tolerant now than during the time baby boomers were children.

The millennials were more likely to agree that African Americans believe the stereotypes about their race than baby boomers. Additionally, the millennials are more likely to agree that Black men adopt the negative stereotypes about Black women than the baby boomers who somewhat agree. These findings might suggest that the portrayals of African Americans in general and Black women in particular in the media create and maintain negative stereotypical images of African Americans. These images, produced within and outside the African American community, are illustrative of gendered racism. The millennials and Gen-Xers assert that organizations that traditionally opposed the negative portrayals of women no longer speak out on this issue. Without a counter narrative to challenge negative stereotypes or strong opposition against the groups that produce them, they are allowed to persist unchallenged and African Americans are internalizing racism. African Americans who move into mainstream America relinquish aspects of their identity to become racially palatable (Harris & Khanna, 2010; Rollock et al., 2011). This creates a bifurcated social identity within the community that separates the mainstream African Americans from the other. Stated differently, within the African American community, there is an in-group and an out-group. The in-group is characterized by what is considered stereotypical behaviors. The out-group is characterized by African Americans that do not look or behave in what is considered stereotypical ways. Vanessa, a Gen-Xer personal
interview participant, commented when describing what it means to become mainstream that “when you’re poorer . . . there’s more of a community. When you’re on this side [mainstream America], I think . . . it’s less of a community.” Vanessa believes once you cross over to the other side, you no longer talk like other African Americans or dress and act like other African Americans. Vanessa’s perspective illustrates how the other African American category is created and labeled “ghetto” or “Uncle Tom” depending on your frame of reference. This thinking may be emblematic of the survey finding.

This study also revealed that the millennials do not seek out historical and contemporary information in the same way as the Gen-Xers or baby boomers. This finding, when analyzed with the baby boomers’ perception that the millennials are not socially aware or civically engaged, may be emblematic of the baby boomers’ emphasis on education. Paradoxically, this is consistent with the millennials’ request to receive information from the elders in the community. Jordan, Darlene, and Karen were specific about what they wanted to learn from women in the community that are activists that align with the concern expressed by the baby boomers. The most valuable contribution the baby boomers can make is to share their wisdom with the younger generations. The millennials and Gen-Xers realize they will never gain the knowledge of the baby boom generation. The baby boomers experienced Jim Crow legislation that created knowledge the millennials or Gen-Xers will not have because their experiences are different. The final focus group corroborated this finding.

My impression from conducting the personal interviews and focus group is the millennials are well read and conversant on the topics of race and social justice. They are not as actively engaged as the baby boomers or Gen-Xers. One explanation for this finding may be time constraints. The millennials are seeking employment or building a career. While the
participants in the study were community activists, working in the community is a volunteer activity rather than a paid job.

**Generation cohort similarities.**

While there were some differences in thinking between the generation cohort groups, there were a number of ways the thinking was the same or similar. In this section, I discuss the similarities within the categories of racial, gender, social, and community identity, and leadership. This discussion is an integration of the data collected from the personal interviews, focus groups, and surveys.

**Racial identity.** Generally, the women in the study believed there is value in strongly identifying as African American. Black solidarity was evident amongst all of the study participants. Although Vanessa, the Gen-Xer in the personal interview, does not want to be associated with the history of Jim Crow, she does not deny her heritage or disrespect the race. The strong sense of identity informed the women’s community activism. The women are engaged in a number of grass roots activities individually and will join organizations to work collectively to create change.

Dating and marrying outside the race is perceived to be a sign of racial abandonment. All of the cohorts viewed dating and marrying outside the race as problematic because of what they perceive as the reasons for not dating within the race. First, men who date and marry outside the race do so because they have adopted the racial stereotypes about African American women. African American women are angry or they are the “Jezebels revived” as described by one of the millennials. It is believed that Black men specifically and society in general perceive the behaviors of Black women differently from White women who may be engaged in the same behaviors. Consequently, White women seldom are portrayed in the same negative ways as
Black women. Secondly, dating and marrying outside the race is a sign of internalized oppression. African American men who date and marry outside their race may believe that this will improve their social, economic, or political status. African American men dating and marrying outside the race is a challenge for African American women, especially women who choose to date within the race. Most of the participants in this study strongly believe interracial dating and marriage is a significant issue in the African American community.

The African American population in Colorado is shrinking to a certain degree because of the number of people who identify as mixed-race. Although society will treat African American mixed-race people as Black, it is perceived that mixed-race individuals receive benefits that do not accrue to darker skinned African Americans. Additionally, being mixed-race is perceived as exotic, something that is better than being Black. The underlying theme is it is better to be something other than Black. Donna captured this in her statement “it’s tough being an African American female.”

Race and gender identities. The treatment of Michelle Obama by the media was a consistent theme that surfaced in nearly every encounter with research participants. It was problematic for the participants that the focus is on “her body parts instead of the work she does in communities.” The leadership of African American women is filtered through the historical stereotypes of Black women. The study participants also believe African American women leaders encounter discrimination within the race. The model of leadership within the African American community is men and in some situations men from the religious community. African American women plan, organize, and implement change, yet their work goes unrecognized. The civil rights movement surfaced frequently as an example of the treatment of African American women and their exclusion from the history books. There are notable exceptions like Rosa Parks
and Sojourner Truth. However, the participants believe that more women were involved in social change than the few names that consistently receive mention in history books.

**Community identity.** There is a concern that the African American community is moving towards an individualistic community whereby the concerns of the community are secondary to the concerns of the individual. Traditionally, the work of African American women consisted of engaging in activities to fight racist policies and practices, empower their community to survive and grow in a hostile society (Gilkes, 2000; Parker, 2005). African American women have struggled for “group survival and institutional reform” (Collin, 2009, p. 219). The women in this study feel the sense of community is shifting and the commitment to the collective is not as strong as in the past. As a geographic location, a Black community with specific boundaries does not exist in Colorado. The historic Five Points neighborhood was the defined Black community. However, over the past 20 years, gentrification has changed the community and the residents are predominately White. Several of the participants commented that there needs to be a re-envisioning of what community means when space and location changes.

**Social identity.** The millennials challenged the current thinking about the social identity of the African American community. The Black experience is vast and includes multiple identities beyond race and ethnicity. Consequently, the way African Americans experience race and racism is different on an individual level because of their multiple identities. The women in this study feel they live at the intersection of all of their identities because their encounters with society are raced, gendered, classed, and hetero-sexualized. This is consistent with the conceptualization of intersectionality theory. The women in this study experienced simultaneous forms of oppression as a result of the intersection of their marginalized social identities (Collins, 2009; Crenshaw, 2000; Holvino, 2008). One woman in the study was described by her White
boss as professional and “street” (meaning streetwise) and was labeled angry when she questioned the meaning of street. Generally, the women in the study felt they experienced their identities equally. Stated differently, gender was not more salient than race and race was not more salient than gender. Another woman commented her queer identity is influenced by her race and gender identities. Race is no longer perceived as the only factor that defines the Black experience. The millennials in particular agree that multiple identities shape and are being shaped by race.

**Leadership identity.** Each generation cohort identified leadership as an area of concern for the African American community. There were five themes that emerged: (a) generally leaders in the community accommodate rather than agitate, (b) the baby boomers are not as inclusive and innovative in their leadership as the millennials, (c) leaders are reluctant to address social problems like incest and violence against women in the community, (d) the baby boomers need to transfer knowledge to the Gen-Xers and millennials, and (e) there is a crisis in activism not in leadership.

There is a feeling that leaders in the community have become comfortable with the status quo and are reluctant to give voice to issues of concern to the African American community. Traditionally, voice was a resistance strategy used during the era of slavery (Parker, 2005) and during the civil rights movement (King, 1963). The absence of voice is indicative of leadership being apathetic rather than interested in creating change in the community. Generally, the leadership provided by African American women was considered edgy. However, the stereotypes of African American women shape the perceptions about their leadership and the exposure they receive as leaders in the community.
Leaders in the baby boom generation are perceived as having an exclusive rather than inclusive leadership style. Baby boomers are reluctant to relinquish power and allow the younger generations to assume leadership roles in community organizations. Leadership should be shared with the community and the members of the community should be held responsible and accountable for change. It is important to hold leaders accountable for their action or inaction. Additionally, there were concerns expressed that leadership held by one person or a select group of people can potentially lead to corruption. From the women’s perspective, leadership in the community is dominated by men. This is an interesting finding because African Americans in Colorado currently hold two seats in the state legislature and both seats are held by women. Nonetheless, the millennials are more likely than the Gen-Xers and baby boomers to feel men are primarily in leadership roles.

Discussing issues that are considered taboo in the Black community is important to the Gen-Xers. Violence against women, incest, and the negative portrayals of Black women within the Black community are issues that the women feel should be addressed in the community. Historically, the National Council of Negro Women and the National Colored Women’s Clubs tackled issues of concern to Black women. The millennials and Gen-Xers indicated that there is not a response to the negative portrayals of Black women. The portrayals of women in music videos and other entertainment outlets were disturbing to all generation cohorts.

As it pertains to leadership development, the millennials and Gen-Xers would like to have access to the elders in the community to learn how to lead change initiatives. Jordan feels a role for leaders in the baby boom generation is to put historical moments like the civil rights movement into context to understand how change happens. Tangala commented there are things she will never understand in the same way as the baby boomers because she did not live the
experience. Therefore, she needs the baby boomers to share their experiences. Additionally, the survey respondents agree that sharing knowledge between the generations is greatly needed in the community. The study participants believe that elder activists need to train younger activists on how to create change in the community.

An interesting finding was that some of the women feel there is a crisis of activism rather than a crisis in leadership. There are leaders but the followers are missing. It is difficult to push forward as a collective group. Some of the participants in the study feel that the African American community needs to develop a common agenda, while the other participants do not believe in a common agenda because it ignores the diversity that exists within the African American community. This is seen as a historical dilemma within the African American community. The debates between W. E. B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington are examples of leaders with conflicting views about the “Black agenda.” Marcus Garvey provided another example of divergent perspectives about the race problem. There is historical tension between race based and state based solutions (Marable, 1998) that served as a foundation for disagreement among earlier generations of leaders. The argument concerning a common agenda, while it appears contemporary, tends to be a long-standing argument.
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