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CROSS-RACE RELATIONSHIPS AS SITES OF TRANSFORMATION:
NAVIGATING THE PROTECTIVE SHELL AND THE INSULAR BUBBLE

KAREN AUDREY GEIGER

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the PhD in Leadership & Change Program
of Antioch University
in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

October, 2010

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled:

CROSS-RACE RELATIONSHIPS AS SITES OF TRANSFORMATION:
NAVIGATING THE PROTECTIVE SHELL AND THE INSULAR BUBBLE

prepared by

Karen Audrey Geiger

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

Approved by:

Dr. Lize Booysen, Chair Date

Dr. Elizabeth Holloway, Committee Member Date

Dr. Stella M. Nkomo, Committee Member Date

Dr. Laura Morgan Roberts, External Reader Date

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Abstract

The context of leadership has evolved to incorporate greater social identity differences. Therefore, learning ways to navigate differences in social identity becomes important work leaders must now do. Because these differences surface in relationship with others, examining a relational framework helps us understand the nature of what happens between people (Ely & Roberts, 2008). This study explored the processes by which Black African American and White European American women enact leadership by creating and sustaining cross-race relationships as they work to change unjust systems around them. Using grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), a model was developed using the metaphors of “insular bubble,” “protective shell,” and “ecosystem” that illuminates the processes and strategies Black African American and White European American women use to create and sustain effective cross-race working relationships. The findings also generated a typology of tools, described as “nurturing the ecosystem” that each person in the relationship can use to create space in which to demonstrate positive ways of expressing social identity. These tools can be used in intrapsychic, interpersonal, and extra-relationship arenas. Focusing on race and gender as primary social identity differences, this question also took into account the systems that create patterns of domination and marginalization around those identities. Therefore, this study contributed to the leadership and change literature by illustrating the processes by which leaders can effectively incorporate a focus on social justice into their work, specifically in cross-race working relationships. The electronic version of this dissertation is at OhioLink ETD Center, www.ohiolink.edu/etd.

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Chapter I: Introduction

“The connections between and among women are the most feared, the most problematic, and the most transforming force on the planet” (Rich, 1979, p. 279).

If leadership and society are to become fully inclusive so that United States ideals of liberty and equality can be realized, issues around socially constructed inequalities of power and privilege will need to be introduced and negotiated at all levels and among people from all social locations. As scholars, we must also examine our conceptualizations of leadership to be sure they are not based solely on the experiences of White men and women. As practitioners in social justice work, we must examine our practices so that they do not mirror the systems of dominance in society and so they can be effective in causing system change.

As a 56-year-old White middle-class, heterosexual, able-bodied woman, I am personally committed to working effectively toward social justice with others, particularly across the racial boundaries we have collectively co-created. I am also committed in my practice to use relevant scholarly tools to support others doing this work. I am part of the generation of White feminists who embedded their unconscious racism into the women’s movement and am now an academic on a business school faculty, a leadership consultant, and a community leader in Charlotte, North Carolina. As one of three sisters and a believer in women’s collective power and voice, I am particularly curious about and interested in how women can come together across these differences to cause change.

Situating the Researcher

I have several motivations for this inquiry. The first is a personal one. I want to continue the dynamic and visionary dialogue with the women of Color who have challenged the

assumptions behind the early feminist movement. As a White woman who spent a large part of my early professional life in corporate leadership working to affect culture change around women's issues, I experienced the tension of having one foot in privileged territory and one in marginalized space. I have seen from both perspectives how important it is for those in dominant positions to own their role in changing the system. As a woman in my mid-50s, I am also looking for hope and a sense of generativity around the issue of developing meaningful cross-race relationships—something I would like to participate in as one of the contributions of my life.

The second motivation is a professional one. As a business school faculty member, I continually work to incorporate inclusivity and social justice values into my leadership development curriculum and work on an ongoing basis to deepen my understanding of how my curriculum can be improved and how my own racial identity can help or hinder the design and facilitation of those classes. Part of this work is to model reflexivity around race as someone who has experienced a dominant racial perspective. I want to learn from and incorporate into my work the results of this scholarly investigation into cross-race relationships and, as an academic, join and contribute to the research community.

The last motivation relates to my commitment to the community in which I live. As a 30-year resident of Charlotte and someone who has seen its ability to come together for the common good, I care deeply about its capacity to sustain this as it grows into a larger, more diverse community. A recent study conducted by the University of North Carolina at Charlotte's Urban Institute (UNCC Urban Institute, 2009) reported that relatively low levels of inter-racial trust discovered in a 2001 Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey had

remained constant, while an increase was reported in diversity of friendships. My community's 2006 census data shows that its overall population has increased 11.2% in the past six years and that its racial majority consists of 58.3% identifying as White/Caucasian and 32.7% identifying as African American (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). In addition, we are facing serious issues regarding poverty, housing, immigration, public education, at-risk children and youth, infrastructure, public safety, and environmental quality. As an involved citizen and someone called on to facilitate discussions around these issues, I want to be as aware as I can be of how to create a productive environment for dialogue across differences so all voices can be heard. Thus, cross-racial trust, particularly with these specific racial groups, and attention paid to equity have become critical to both the community's social health and to me as a citizen and a professional.

My quest now is to integrate my own racial identity development with my ongoing commitment to act. This personal interest has led me to my research interest, which is to explore what happens when women engage in cross-race relationships as they work together as peers to cause change toward a socially just society.

Purpose of the Study

A study of how women work together across race to lead social change can contribute to the leadership literature in ways that have implications for both scholars and practitioners. First, the inclusion of social identity dynamics in the leadership literature will enable it to reflect social reality rather than perpetuating a hegemonic view of leadership practices, effectiveness, and change strategies. This will enable leaders to learn from that literature and practice multicultural competence given the increased demographic diversity in our workforces. Second, the

constructions of race and gender have traditionally been variables in the empirical literature and there is increasing exploration about the processes by which those identities are acquired and resisted. This study can contribute to that direction. Diversity efforts in organizations will benefit from increased understanding of these identity negotiation processes so that their workforces can communicate effectively across their differences. Third, this study will focus on what those who have been privileged by virtue of their race can change along with what those who are marginalized can do, thereby offering guidance on how to resist the limitations of racial ascription from either perspective and illustrate new ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving. In practice, the frequent absence of dominant group “affinity groups” as part of organizations’ diversity efforts is a symptom of this one-sided view of agency.

An examination of the mainstream leadership literature reveals the frequent invisibility of the processes of privilege, hegemony, exclusion, and domination, as well as a focus on the marginalized “other.” This has been noted by scholars for more than 30 years (Blauner & Wellman, 1973; Bowser & Hunt, 1981; Chesler, 1976; Frankenberg, 1993) and I wanted to see how it has responded to those challenges. Because leadership, per se, is not a raced or gendered concept, I am most interested in contributing to insuring that our field improves its discipline by reflecting, questioning, and studying the lived experiences of all people in society as it continues to develop concepts, theories, and themes around leadership and change. Its very definition as mainstream may assume this, but the implications for its widespread influence on society cannot be ignored and I would like to see critical theory be better integrated into the mainstream literature’s discipline. When multiple systems of domination are considered, the focus is often on the victims of these systems. This invisibility of privilege, along with the frequent focus on

those who are oppressed, is a clear gap in the leadership literature and offers a very productive direction for us as scholars. Weaving the realities of systematic power differentials into our conceptualizations of leadership will cause the field to become more useful and relevant to our pluralistic society. Examining and making visible the role racial identity plays in the process of creating productive and satisfying working relationships can also illuminate processes of leadership and change. I am very interested in asking questions that examine how privilege and marginalization can be surfaced, named, and negotiated; and how relationships across racial identities can be constructed so that, somewhat paradoxically, those same boundaries can be re-imagined to reflect a fluid kind of power sharing, rather than the fixed kind that hegemonic privilege assumes. These questions can include examining how power and trust can be mutually shared across traditional systems of privilege, and how leaders can work together across race to surface and remedy issues of inequity.

As I begin to explore the question of how women create relationships across race as they make change, I will echo Helms's (1995) treatment of race as a sociopolitical construction.

Racial identity theory evolves out of the tradition of treating race as a sociopolitical and, to a lesser extent, a cultural construction. In such theories, racial classifications are assumed to be not biological realities, but rather sociopolitical and economic conveniences, membership in which is determined by socially defined inclusion criteria (e.g., skin color) that are commonly (mistakenly) considered to be "racial" in nature. Thus, racial identity theories do not suppose that racial groups in the United States are biologically distinct, but rather suppose that they have endured different conditions of domination or oppression. (p. 181)

An even more dynamic conceptualization of race was offered by Omi and Winant (2002) who understood it as "an unstable and 'decentered' complex of social meanings constantly being transformed by political struggle" (p. 124). It is this struggle, as evidenced in dyadic relationships, that I am interested in exploring.

The dynamics and strategies I am interested in studying are those between African American and European American women. I can imagine replicating this study later with other racial combinations, but given the unique history between these two groups, I think it is more appropriate to narrow my focus. As Estlund (2003) said:

[Interaction between Black and White Americans] is not the only important line of social division, but it has historically been the most troubled, as well as the most studied, line of division. If “working together” works for Black-White relations, we can be reasonably optimistic that it can work across other lines of racial and ethnic identity as well. (p. 60)

It is also important to clarify the difference between race and ethnicity. *Ethnicity* is a different construct than *race* and can be defined as “a group classification of individuals who share a unique social and cultural heritage (customs, language, religion, and so on) passed on from one generation to the next” (Casas, 1984, p. 787). Race and ethnicity are both part of an individual’s identity and can differentiate one person’s racial experience from another. Cokley and Helm (2007) pointed out that racial categories that ignore enculturation are insufficient, and Richardson, Bethea, Haylong, and Williamson-Taylor (2010) stated specifically that:

In the psychological literature, few analyses address how different categories of Black, such as descendants of free and freed people or slaves in the United States, differ from recent Black immigrant (in the 1960s-2000s) and their descendants. African and Afro-Caribbean groups have been described with regard to racial identification in spite of the fact that many of the ethnic communities within the Black population remain distinctively separate with regard to culture and racial socializations. (p. 228)

Research Question

Therefore, I will specify that I am interested in studying relationships between White European American women and Black African American women, rather than the more essentialized designation of “White and Black women.” Throughout the literature review, however, I will respect the use of terms used by scholars; thus, terms may vary somewhat.

While Helms (1995) extended her theory of Black racial identity theory to include all people of Color, I think that narrowing my study according to ethnicity in this way will avoid assuming a collective identity among African Americans and Black women, or European Americans and White women, thereby controlling for the more unique socialization and experiences of racism and discrimination among these women.

If we accept that race is a socio-politically constructed identity, relationships become an important avenue where meanings about it are formed, negotiated, and resisted; and introduce us to possible avenues for expressing our humanity (Ely & Roberts, 2008; Schiff & O'Neill, 2007). While inequities based on race certainly have been put in place on a systemic societal level, changing those systems can begin at the more meso level of working relationships, where trust can be built and rebuilt so policies and practices can be changed through those partnerships. More specifically, I am interested in whether and how trust and authenticity play a role and what cognitive, emotional, and behavioral strategies these women employ. Helms (1995) hinted at this in her conceptualizations of the statuses “autonomy” (for White people) and “integrative awareness” (for people of Color) where she described their “flexible analyses and responses to racial stimuli” (p. 190) and I am interested in learning more specifics from those who practice them.

I specify the context of working toward social justice because I am interested in how it becomes a more intentional part of leadership development efforts, particularly in business schools. It has been embedded in the educational leadership field for many years (Ayers, 1998; Blackmore, 2002; Bogotch, 2002; Brown, 2004; Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005; Freire, 1990), but in my experience has not made its way into other sectors where leaders are developed.

In our business school MBA curriculum, we stress commitment to community (Queens University of Charlotte Office of Academic Affairs, 2010, p. 8) as one of three cornerstones of leadership, and I am interested in how to increase the visibility of social justice pedagogy into that curriculum.

Another reason I chose a social justice context for this study is my assumption that these women will be most conscious of and committed to dismantling racism at the personal, as well as societal level. This may also mitigate the mechanism of invisibility with which dominance is perpetuated; in other words, these White women may hold fewer subconscious or semi-conscious processes of dominance than others who may be less aware. In addition, relationships across race by definition are operating across socially constructed and institutionalized power differentials. If those power differentials are not contested, then change will not occur and the relationship cannot affect institutional change nor can it be satisfying, as the players will hold that sense of inequality inside the relationship. My sense of what social justice means follows Goodman's (2001):

Social justice also involves addressing issues of equity, power relations, and institutionalized oppression. It seeks to establish a more equitable distribution of power and resources so that all people can live with dignity, self-determination, and physical and psychological safety. It creates opportunities for people to reach their full potential within a mutually responsible, interdependent society. Working toward social justice requires changing unjust institutional structures, policies, and practices and challenging the dominant ideology. (p. 5)

When examining relationships, the issue of trust is central. Barber (1983) stated that it is “an integrative mechanism that creates and sustains solidarity in social relationships and systems” (p. 21). Trust clearly is problematic and fragile in relationships across power and privilege. However, if it has any chance at all, some important factors deserve attention. The

literature indicates that the powerful effects of the invisibility of privilege on the development of trust makes it important to surface that fact in order to work toward change at both the individual and system levels. This effort to make it visible does not come without difficulty because of the denial that often protects that discomfort. And, as Ignatiev (1997b) stated, because of the pressures from the system, it becomes ongoing work:

The White race does not like to relinquish a single member, so that even those who step out of it in one situation find it virtually impossible not to rejoin it later if only because of the assumptions of others. . . . So-called Whites have special responsibilities to abolition that only they can fulfill. Only they can dissolve the White race from within by rejecting the poisoned bait of White-skin privileges. (p. 608)

Second, reflexivity on the part of those privileged would cause them to come to relationships with more awareness and authenticity, thereby making them more worthy of trust and reducing or eliminating the pretense of homogeneity and equality. Finally, relationships of solidarity across lines of power and privilege likely require active and deep work on the part of both parties. The literature I will review that describes this specific arena, social justice ally development, refers to the courage to face the discomfort around the breaking down of illusions about self and merit; the courage to choose to name and question privilege; the willingness to create environments where differences can be discussed and welcomed, and opportunism can be resisted. It also requires the active resistance of White privilege, especially with other Whites where it is often most rewarded. For those marginalized, the literature indicates that this work requires patience with the surprising and disappointing ignorance of those newly aware of their privilege; the willingness to stay in relationship and experience the vulnerability of sharing private scripts for the sake of authenticity; and a willingness to co-create a new system. As I will point out, there is surprisingly little research in this growing field focusing on the practices of

this relationship work—most of the literature is prescriptive and based on the experiences of the authors who often are also activists.

A related goal I have is to interrogate the construct of authenticity, specifically how women can show up authentically in cross-race relationships. I am immediately aware that my first objective must be to begin to seek a definition of the construct of an authentic relationship, and how this may or may not be different from two authentic people coming together. I will examine the literature on authenticity to see how it helps us with a conceptualization of how authenticity works across race.

Scholarly areas that relate to this question and that will be reviewed here include critical race and gender theory, intergroup relations theory, and related social and racial identity theory, trust, authenticity, White critical studies, social justice ally development, and interracial communication. More specific research areas that inform this question have focused on cross-race dyads in counseling, supervisory, mentoring, and friendship contexts, and I will summarize what those fields offer us as well.

Summary of Chapters

I will begin the literature review in the next chapter with an acknowledgment of the absence of a consideration of race-and gender-based systems of power in the mainstream leadership literature, setting the foundation for the value and relevance of this study. I will then describe the context of structured systems of domination for cross-race relationships, followed by what the critical race and gender literature has set out as priorities to consider given my question. Literature outlining the resulting experiences of privilege and marginalization within those systems will then be included, followed by literature that explores the possibility of

developing trust and authenticity in those relationships. Most of the work on trust across differences has not focused specifically on race; with the exception of cross-race mentoring, counseling, and supervision. I found very little in the area of literature on peer relationships, particularly when social justice activism is the purpose of the relationship. I will conclude by summarizing what the literature offered as recommendations to those engaging in cross-race relationships and highlighting implications for my research based on what I found.

The subsequent chapter will summarize my use of grounded theory principles and methods, with specific explanation of methodological choices I made relative to my own positioning as a researcher. Following that, I will offer a summary of my pilot study with two participants, setting the stage for my findings, reported in detail after the pilot study description.

The discussion chapter and the chapter discussing implications for the leadership and change field close the dissertation. The discussion chapter links my findings to existing literature and notes the contribution they make to the field. Here, also, I will describe the implications of my study for practice and offer my ideas about areas for further research either in other areas or those that were beyond the scope of my study. And finally, I will describe what I think this study suggests for Leadership and Change and, because this study had a powerful impact on my own practice, I will also share what I learned here as a scholar, as a practitioner, and as a White European American woman.

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

The context of leadership has become much more diverse in terms of social identity differences (Chugh & Brief, 2008; Ospina & Foldy, 2009). Therefore, learning ways to navigate differences in social identity becomes important work leaders must now do. Because these differences surface in relationship with others, moving to a relational framework helps us understand the nature of what happens between people (Ely & Roberts, 2008). And, as a result of my interest in race and gender as primary social identity differences, I must also take into account the systems that create patterns of domination and marginalization around those identities. Furthermore, changing the way we think about and working to dismantle the systems that create and maintain social inequities can become a purpose of one's leadership and will have the most impact on change. Examining this sequence of realities and assumptions along with my interest in women as a force for change led me to focus on cross-race relationships between women whose focus is social justice.

Another reason I was interested in focusing on the context of social justice was to learn ways to incorporate my findings into business leadership curricula. I support Bell's (2007) assertion that "social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency, as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others, their society, and the broader world in which we live" (p. 2), and I am interested in contributing to the leadership education literature so that social justice purposes and processes can be incorporated into its practices.

My definition of social justice, used throughout this review, as well as in my research study, relied on that offered by Goodman (2001):

Social justice . . . involves addressing issues of equity, power relations, and institutionalized oppression. It seeks to establish a more equitable distribution of power

and resources so that all people can live with dignity, self-determination, and physical and psychological safety. It creates opportunities for people to reach their full potential within a mutually responsible, interdependent society. Working toward social justice requires changing unjust institutional structures, policies, and practices and challenging the dominant ideology. (pp. 4-5)

Therefore, I am interested in how the literature can help me learn about the foundations that support my research question. My journey through the literature began with my basic question, then followed paths that became relevant as the dynamics of these relationships became clearer to me. I was interested in understanding everything I could about this question, which took me to both mainstream and established literature, as well as less well-known and emerging areas. I will begin this section with a broad review of how the mainstream leadership literature has responded to the need for more attention on social identity differences, focusing particularly on how it has conceived of race and gender, how the systems of domination are structured and impact social identity, and how social and racial identities affect relationships.

I will then follow this path to my specific research question by focusing on cross-race relationships and examine what the literature describes as the dynamics of privilege and marginalization in them. Next, because both concepts are often mentioned as important elements to any relationship and because I hold trust and authenticity with high value in my own relationships, I turned to the more mainstream literature on trust and authenticity to see what it contributed to this question.

Next, because of my interest in the specific role those with race privilege can play, I chose to examine what the White critical studies literature contributed to my question. And, finally, because of the very specific relevance of the social justice ally development and interracial communication literatures to my question about what constitutes effective peer

relationships across race, I close the review with those. I was particularly interested in what previous scholars described as issues and dilemmas involved when women engage in cross-race relationships to work for social justice, and what is necessary to overcome obstacles, as well as what has contributed to success.

The Context: Mainstream Leadership Literature

It is necessary to define some terms before I begin. First, as Rost (1991) argued, we must know what we mean when we study leadership. I will use his definition: “Leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes” and discuss why elements of this are problematic given the context of multiple systems of domination. Second, I will follow the aims of critical social science by looking to “integrate theory and practice in such a way that individuals and groups become aware of the contradictions and distortions in their belief systems and social practices and are then inspired to change those beliefs and practices” (Schwandt, 2001, p. 45). I have chosen to use the term *mainstream leadership literature* to describe the literature that has been viewed as classic and supposedly applicable to our population as a whole. I chose more recent examples of this mainstream leadership literature with the only exceptions being works that are cited so often that they are considered foundational. While there are multiple systems of domination operating simultaneously in our society, I have chosen race and racism, and gender and sexism as context because they are powerful and unique ideologies that are embedded in the structures and institutions where leadership happens, and which are foundational to my research question.

As I look at leadership literature selected for this chapter, I will ask the following questions:

- How did the mainstream literature deal with race and gender?
- What role might this body of literature play in our society's discourse about democracy and meritocracy?
- What ideologies has it seemed to support?
- Are there social groups that have been presented as normative?
- If so, how have those who fall outside this norm been treated?
- How has the literature recognized these multiple systems of domination as a factor in the theorizing or practice of leadership?
- How have the terms used affected the studies and conclusions made?
- Who or what have and have not been defined as problems?
- Within the areas that have specialized in gender or race, how have the intersections of systems of dominations been treated?
- And finally, what impact do these observations have on my research question?

My observations of the mainstream leadership literature through a critical race and gender lens surfaced four themes: first, that it served a hegemonic political function; second, that it glossed over or ignored the multiple systems of domination that are part of the reality of leadership; third, that it frequently lacked precision in criteria and reflexivity; and fourth, that it struggled with its role in the context of democratic ideals and how they were carried out in practice.

Marable (1998) described Gramsci's term *hegemony*, which suggested that:

All intellectuals, whether or not they are personally involved in political organizations and activities, perform a political function. They provide an academic rationale for the dominant set of ideological, cultural, and social relations that exist within the social formation. . . . Part of their responsibility is to socialize successive generations to accept

the dominant ideology and power relations with the existing social order. . . . Education in this context becomes a method of obscuring rather than illuminating social reality. (p. 98)

With respect to gender and race, the mainstream leadership literature selected here revealed a White, male, privileged hegemony. Bass (2008) structured his *Handbook of Leadership* so that women take up one separate chapter and minorities take up another. These essentialized and isolated terms of *women* and *minorities* (the latter in which Bass included Blacks, Hispanics, ethnic minorities, Jewish Americans, Italian Americans, Polish Americans, Greek Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, physically impaired older people and gays/lesbians) inferred that the remainder of the book applied to all those who are not in these groups—therefore, in the mainstream. This phrase “women and minorities” can only mean those who are not White and male, and artificially separates two elements of African American women’s identities, thereby excluding their perspective and making them invisible. Another aspect of this hegemony is that those who originate the exclusionary practices are invisible and unstudied and those excluded are named, described as having to work harder to succeed, and are somehow responsible for any failure.

To be able to shatter the glass ceiling, it is necessary to understand the barriers to promotion of women to top positions and the strategies of women who succeed in overcoming the barriers. (Bass, 2008, p. 936)

Among the personal strategies that African Americans can adopt is to make themselves more valued. They can enhance their competence through higher education. . . . They can avoid resegregating themselves within White schools, to develop as much experience and comfort working in a White as in a Black world. . . . They can prepare themselves to be at the margin of two influences, accepting and maintaining both the desirability of their Black identity and the organization’s values. (Bass, 2008, p. 964)

A third sign of this hegemony is that the authors themselves, mostly White and male, consistently chose other White men as scholars and colleagues of note, thereby perpetuating the

visibility and illusion that somehow they were the most qualified to dispense their views (Bennis, 2000; Burns, 2003; J. W. Gardner, 1990; H. Gardner, 1995). This sponsorship mirrors the corporate system when men are informally mentored, recognized, and hailed as notable when it is often the trust generated from familiarity and similarity added to their achievements that is being rewarded. Minnich (2005) introduced the error of *circular reasoning* which described this tendency: “Particular past judgments of significance that are not recognized as such become so enshrined in definitions of a field that, in circular fashion, they turn around to justify continuing the old exclusions” (p. 108). If, out of the pool of outstanding leaders, only White men are chosen as exemplars, then it subtly perpetuates the myth that their race and gender are somehow part of their qualification. This is evidence of the use of “implicit leadership theory” (Hollander & Julian, 1969, p. 395), which posited that people attribute leadership capability to individuals whose personal characteristics match their ideas of what leaders are like. This is a prime area where female and male scholars alike can choose to actively sponsor women of any race.

It seems fitting that leadership as an area of study might be positioned as representing the ideals of a culture and those ideals that have surfaced as moral imperatives of leadership (Burns, 1978; Greenleaf, 1977; Rost, 1991) are useful and inspiring. However, the hegemony of the privileged White male as an ideal of leadership has been consistently assumed, thereby limiting the literature’s applicability to all leaders, as well as its ability to mirror actual practice. Ospina and Foldy (2009) made a similar observation in their recent extensive review of the leadership literature in terms of how it has handled race and ethnicity.

Our review suggests that [non-dominant] perspectives remain separate from the mainstream leadership tradition and are often ignored or dismissed as a source of theorizing. Indeed, some scholars have suggested that insights based on the study of non-

White groups are less likely to permeate the knowledge base of what is traditionally viewed as the leadership studies field. (p. 888)

American society operates through a web of different and interrelated systems of domination and exploitation, including sexism, racism, and economic exploitation (hooks, 1984) among others. One can simply observe housing patterns, public education, labor distributions, and disparate health statistics to see the results of these systems. The mainstream leadership literature has been surprisingly silent in surfacing the role these systems play as context for leadership. While context and situational variables were regularly acknowledged as part of the study of leadership (Bass, 2008; Goethals & Sorenson, 2006; Northouse, 2007; Rost, 1991; Yukl, 2006), the unique and constant context of racism and sexism were not given attention as important factors in determining who becomes a leader, what causes followers to accept leaders, how leadership effectiveness is defined, how change is carried out, and how leadership outcomes are evaluated.

A rare exception is Heifetz (1994), who paid attention to dominance and the role it plays in how leaders obtain authority from followers by pointing out that “deference over time may become authorization, even without deliberate decision” (p. 58). This had important implications for previous instances where leaders and those who study them assumed that they have earned their authority from followers. It also countered Greenleaf’s (1977) declaration that “a new moral principle is emerging which holds that the only authority deserving one’s allegiance is that which is freely and knowingly granted by the led to the leader in response to, and in proportion to, the clearly evident servant stature of the leader” (p. 10).

The White male hegemony perpetuated by our social structures and echoed in the leadership literature can confuse what is clearly evident, convincing followers that their leaders

deserve their allegiance without having to investigate their merit. This relationship of merit and privilege is rarely examined in practice, but is often an unstated qualification when candidates are considered for leadership. Analyses of how and why the social construction of White male is linked to leadership qualifications were missing in the mainstream literature, but would make visible a dynamic familiar to those who do not have that identity. This is a thought pattern error discussed by Minnich (2005) in which she named the mystifying of concepts, in this case, leadership excellence: “that which is mystified is simultaneously confusing, and because its opacity keeps us from seeing clearly how it reflects and serves powerful systemic interests, efficacious” (p. 169).

Furthermore, the term *follower* is in actuality more complex than has been presented. Followers are often following the requirements of the institution on which they depend for their livelihood by doing what is asked by a leader who has been assigned to them, rather than serving in a mutual influence relationship. Therefore, Rost’s (1991, p. 161) definition might be revised to read, “In a context of multiple systems of domination, leadership is an influence relationship among people who are on a continuum of earned to unearned leadership, and followers—voluntary and involuntary—who intend real changes and who must negotiate their mutual purposes.”

A second way these systems were concealed in the mainstream literature was when exemplars of leadership were chosen after they have been “processed” through those systems. This reflects the circular reasoning observed by Minnich (2005). It is a fundamental attribution error that assumes that these leaders earned their positions due to some achievement versus relying heavily on contextual variables such as being male and White to get the position. Burns

(2003) noted that “one broad generalization is possible—one-half of the population was almost always excluded from high office no matter what their kinship or abilities—women” (p. 38).

But, the system that perpetuates this generalization remains ignored and unaccountable. H.

Gardner (1995) added to the chorus of those who focused only on the results of these systems of domination when he justified his choice of a majority of White men for his study of leading minds by saying that “Both groups [women and African Americans] have spawned gifted leaders for at least a century, but no individual leader has successfully captured and held the national consciousness until the last half century” (p. 19). Questions not asked here include what systems of domination must be navigated to capture and hold the national consciousness, who is part of the national consciousness, how do White males master the mechanisms of support and visibility so that they do capture and hold that national consciousness, what processes of exclusion must be in operation so that women and African Americans are systematically unsuccessful at this, and what assumptions must be in place for women and African Americans to be held accountable for being unsuccessful?

A third observation of the mainstream literature revealed that, while oppression might be noted, those studied were the oppressed who were given the responsibility for remedying this injustice and the dominant group was not held accountable or studied. J. W. Gardner (1990) made the point that “conflict is necessary in the case of oppressed groups that must fight for the justice that is due them” (p. 16), and even the definition of “minority” included the element of “differential and pejorative treatment (discrimination)” (Dworkin & Dworkin, 1999). Once again, the burden of the effects of the majority’s actions was owned by the marginalized group. In neither case was there a subsequent statement of a possible area of further research or even a

seeming discomfort with this reality. As Essed (1991) stated, “the dominant group structurally benefits from racism. This holds true for all its members, whether or not they willingly accept this” (p. 43). Therefore, it is predictable that the dominant group, most of whom have been the authors of the mainstream leadership literature, had little interest in changing these systems despite our democratic ideals of liberty and equality. Burns (1978) acknowledged the conflicts between and within them:

Two fundamental values that, over the years, in varying degrees, have informed the American purpose. One is the pursuit of liberty as apotheosized in the Declaration of Independence, protected in the Bill of Rights, appealed to by the abolitionists, encoded and guaranteed, after many diversions and vagaries, by the Supreme Court. The other is equality, also proclaimed in the Declaration, reaffirmed by the struggle for emancipation, protected, as to race, in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, appealed to by workers, farmers, and other disadvantaged groups during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and embodied, more or less successfully, in the domestic programs of Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, and succeeding liberal Democratic Presidents. (p. 389)

The mainstream leadership literature seems to have idealized these values, rather than examine more closely whether and how they play out and affect actual leadership practices.

I now turn to the literatures that paid particular attention to gender and race as socially constructed dynamics that play an active part in the leadership process. Feminist approaches to leadership theory and practice were a result of the lived experience of this gap between theory and reality and questioned the nature and limits of knowledge itself.

The Context: Literature Focusing on Gender and Leadership

The realization that social science largely represented and studied the interests of men led to the women’s movement and feminist inquiry. D. Smith (1972) proposed that sociology colludes with the projects of dominant groups in mirroring its conceptual frameworks with men’s understanding of social life and social relations. This link between gender and the acquisition of

power was echoed by Miller (1986), who differentiated between temporary and permanent types of inequality in status and power and focused on the dynamics of the dominant-subordinate relationship especially as applied to women. Kanter (1977) followed with an ethnography of a corporation that made visible dynamics and structures related to gender that determine or hinder success for women and by the 1990s there was a well-established gender and leadership literature (Alvesson & Billing, 1997; Astin & Leland, 1991; Bem, 1993; Collinson & Hearn, 1996; Duerst-Lahti & Kelly, 1995; Ely, Foldy, Scully, Center for Gender in Organizations, & Simmons School of Management, 2003; Fischer & van Vianen, 2005; Kelly, 1991) that focused on three major propositions:

1. The notion of gender is central to and relevant to understanding all social relations, institutions and processes;
2. gender relations constitute a problem as they are characterized by patterns of domination/subordination, inequalities, oppressions, and oppositions;
3. gender relations are seen as social constructions. (Alvesson & Billing, 1997, p. 22)

The constructs of man and woman were inconsistent in this literature, but did reflect a growing awareness of the complications resulting from the introduction of racial difference. In some cases, the conceptualization of gender was seen as undifferentiated in that women and men of all races and classes were each treated similarly. In others, being White was inferred (e.g., Kanter's (1977) references to "executive wives" and phrases like "men were the many," and Astin & Leland's (1991) study of women leaders where race was not considered). In still others, the duality of women and minority was continued (the term women is contrasted with the term Black men), and in a comparison study referenced by one pair of authors, "woman" was specified but "man" was assumed by the word "engineer" (Alvesson & Billing, 1997, p. 108). In these examples, the definition of woman became White-centric, unless it was qualified. Miller

(1986) summed up the essentializing of gender when she stated, “at the level of humanity in general, we have seen massive problems around a great variety of differences. But the most basic difference is the one between women and men” (p. 3).

There are indications that these authors began to see that race was a differentiating factor in social relations. When Kanter (1977) referenced a University of Michigan study that identified a number of “non-ability” traits and social credentials that were substitutes for ability measures in management positions, “being White” was specifically mentioned although it was not further commented on (p. 61). Miller (1986) included racial and sexual inequality as examples of inequalities; Alvesson and Billing (1997) acknowledged that “variations between different classes, nations, occupations, ages, organizations, and ethnic groups are sometimes pronounced when talking about masculinity and femininity” (p. 83); and Duerst-Lahti and Kelly (1995) stated more emphatically that “clearly, race, class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation help determine the particular configuration of gender for any individual” (p. 17).

In other works, the consideration of race was made visible and when it was, it helped to reconceptualize leadership and enrich the framework of gender (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Erkut & Winds of Change Foundation, 2001; Hartman, 1999; Nnaemeka, 2005). Notable examples of the inclusion of race along with gender were in the inaugural publication of the Institute for Women’s Leadership of Douglass College at Rutgers University (Hartman, 1999), where 13 powerful women were interviewed, crossing several races and ethnicities. The intention of this study at the outset was to examine “shared female experiences that often cut across socioeconomic, racial, and national boundaries” (Hartman, 1999, p. 14), and the transcripts included provided rich examples of how race and gender interact. Some examples included (a)

experiencing a male-dominated household, but not experiencing a negative reaction regarding race until leaving the Caribbean, (b) questioning the matriarchy assumed to exist in Black families, (c) race being public and at a distance while gender was constantly present, (d) close friendships that formed between Black and White children during segregation at the same time women were taught to defer to men, and (e) learning that segregation meant Blacks could not aspire beyond the level set for them. What was notable was that the only references to their own race or ethnicity and how it was a source of strength or significance to their leadership process came from non-White women: Peggy Antrobus, Antonia Hernandez, Jacqueline Pitanguy, bell hooks, and Ruth Simmons.

Erkut and Winds of Change Foundation (2001) consistently acknowledged nuances in patterns identified as gender-related that are different depending on race. Some of these included the way mothering was viewed as either a metaphor for leadership (according to more women of Color) or a training ground for leadership (more Caucasian women); fewer leaders of Color resisting the traditional words of leadership than Caucasian leaders; and more leaders of Color reporting a privileged upbringing in terms of a legacy of activism and commitment than Caucasian women. As Nnaemeka (2005) stated:

The challenge to feminist scholarship to replace the analysis of women's lives based solely on the commonality of sex with a more inclusive methodology that recognizes the intersection of differences compelled feminist scholarship to widen its horizon, explore its possibilities, and gain a new lease on life. (p. 54)

What was significant and helpful about this body of literature is that it made visible the powerful dynamics of a gendered system of domination that is present in the practice of leadership, thereby causing the leadership literature to become more reflective of actual practice. It also introduced a workable concept of the dynamics around being a token and

expanded the framework of inequality to focus on the organizational system as a whole. Through the scholarship represented here, gender grew from being a sex difference to a stereotype, a system of domination, a structure of work, and a paradigm. This opened the door for the leadership field to examine the contexts, mental models, and systemic obstacles that cause or block women of all races to engage in and be successful at leadership. Hartman (1999) reinforced this point when she said, “by placing women, who have been marginal to traditional notions of leadership, at the center of the inquiry, it becomes easier to recognize the shortcomings of current approaches and to “denaturalize” leadership as a presumed exclusively male activity” (p. 22).

The Context: Literature Focusing on Race and Leadership

Turning my eyes to selected literature on race and leadership, I identified those works that set out to focus primarily on race as opposed to race and gender. Here, there was an important difference: gender and race were often seen as immutable facts of a person’s identity, but as Marable (1998) pointed out:

Race is an artificial social construction that was deliberately imposed on various subordinated groups of people at the outset of the expansion of European capitalism into the Western Hemisphere five centuries ago. . . . The subordinated racial group finds itself divorced from the levers of power and authority within the socioeconomic order. . . . Whiteness was fundamentally a measure of personal privilege and power, not a cultural statement. (p. 154)

So, while gender is socially constructed as well, it emerges as a result of a person’s sex which is undisputed in most cases. Race, on the other hand, becomes a social construction whose origin is also contested—how is it determined what counts as White, Black, or non-White? Omi and Winant (1994) reinforced this point by saying “in contrast to the other major distinction of this type, that of gender, there is no biological basis for distinguishing among

human groups along the lines of race” (p. 123). Therefore, the very use of race as a variable in leadership literature required a definition and reflexivity that it was not, heretofore, asked to provide. For example, when authors theorized about Whites or Blacks, how did they decide who would be included in those categories? Racial identity theorists (Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1989; Cross, 1978; Helms, 1990, 1994, 1995; Jones, 1991; Thompson & Carter, 1997) contributed important thinking that stressed the psychological choice involved in racial identity, as well as its interaction with ethnicity that called into question studies where participants’ race was named by the researcher.

This literature had some of the same limitations as the gender literature, but I also saw acknowledgement of the complexity of categorization here. While the intersection of these systems of domination was illustrated more completely, gender was often invisible, terms continued to be imprecise, and those in the dominant group continued to be exempt from study. The omnipresence of the system of racial domination in and outside of organizational life was more consistently mentioned here and the dynamics of how that domination occurs began to be made visible.

The binary sense of a White/Black dichotomy with gender absent predominated in the race literature (Gordon, 2000; Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Wormley, 1990; Marable, 1998; Thomas & Wetlaufer, 1997), but there was, at the same time, frequent mention of the limitations and gaps created by not including gender as a concomitant variable. D. Thomas and Gabarro (1999) included a section entitled “What about the Women” (p. 10), Gordon (2000) noted that “the lack of the gender variable in studies of leadership points to the gaps in existing research and theoretical models” (p. 4), and Omi and Winant (1994) posited that “race, class, and gender

(as well as sexual orientation) constitute ‘regions’ of hegemony, areas in which certain political projects can take shape” (p. 132). This reference to simultaneous multiple systems of domination was best summarized by Marable (2002), who stated:

Oppression in the United States—or anywhere else, for that matter—has been constructed around interlocking systems of prejudice, power, and White heterosexual male privilege in which the vast majority of the population has been defined outside the acceptable boundaries of the mainstream. (p. 11)

While there was an acknowledgement of this intersection of systems, it is curious that many of the writers did not further explore this line of thinking.

The clearest observations about the study of race in organizations were found in Nkomo’s (1992) article, which outlined how race is kept invisible in studies of organizations. She noted the mistaken assumption of universality of an “inadequate sample” (p. 489) and a resulting limitation in organizational theories; the integration of dominant theoretical, political, and social meanings of race in the research questions that are asked and not asked, as well as the chosen methodology; the mental models of capitalism which lead us to assume that individual opportunity is widely available; and oversimplifying race as a demographic variable in the literature. One of the most powerful points Nkomo made is that the literature also missed the contribution that racial minorities can make to organizations and how race can inform our understanding of organizations in other ways (p. 500). The race literature within leadership studies did illustrate what Essed (1991) outlined as methods of reproducing power relations: marginalization, containment, and problematization (p. 503), but now it led to the need for theory and research exploring what can be gained and what can inform the leadership literature from the standpoint of racial identity. This was central to Collins’ (2000) premise that African American women have a wealth of valuable perspective to offer leadership studies because they both bring

a new knowledge that is “gained at intersecting oppressions of race, class and gender,” (p. 8) and Parker’s (2005) deconstruction of masculine and feminine leadership and construction of a new model combining these aspects in her analysis of the experience of African American women.

Literature Focusing on Multiple Systems of Domination

In literature that acknowledged the significance of both race and gender, terms were quite a bit more precise. “People of Color and White women” began to replace “women and minorities” (Ely, 1995; Morrison, 1992) and feminists were differentiated as “White” or “of Color” (McCall, 2005). In addition to this clarity of language, I also found several important themes that served as corrections and redefinitions of previous literature, and that began to outline some of the important issues women must navigate when working together across racial differences.

The first significant theme I found in this integrated literature was the unbundling of the essentialized category of woman, particularly illuminating the differences experienced by women according to race. Holvino (2001, 2006) introduced the concept of simultaneity and Essed (2001) made the point that these multiple identities are interdependent and can be contradictory at times. In addition, these identities were posited as contextual, becoming “figural” at some times and “background” at others (Holvino, 2006, p. 2). Ely and Roberts (2008) offered a relational frame that paid attention to “the simultaneous—and potentially asymmetrical—effects of a person’s multiple identities” (p. 195), thereby generating ways individuals can act and react in workplace relationships so that diversity benefits can be realized. Examples offered by this area of literature were rich and varied. One illuminated how Black women navigate race oppression at the same time as sex oppression (Bhavnani, 2001). Another

pointed out that, when Black women are considered as Blacks among Blacks, they have higher status within their own group than do White women in White society (Bhavnani, 2001). This made assumptions about relations between men and women problematic and was one illustration of how the early feminist movement was not inclusive of all women's perspectives. A third example was how a Black woman in a racist and sexist society has a different, rather than an additive, burden of oppression (Spelman, 1988) and that calling it additive is a result of a political project focused on compartmentalization (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Additional work proposed that, while the family may be a locus of oppression for White middle-class women, for Black women it is more likely a source of resistance against White oppression (Spelman, 1988). Fifth, there was acknowledgement that Black men often feel disrespected because they are not receiving the full measure of benefits of being male in the workplace (Livers & Caver, 2003), and finally, that Black women see White women as not valuing Black women's issues and concerns and are likely to prioritize women's issues around White women's concerns (Livers & Caver, 2003). As hooks (1984) stated:

Women are divided by sexist attitudes, racism, class privilege, and a host of other prejudices. Sustained women bonding can occur only when these divisions are confronted and the necessary steps are taken to eliminate them. (p. 44)

A refreshing point of view that took simultaneous multiple identities into account was offered by Ely and Roberts (2008), who pointed out the costs that occur when people from both privileged and marginalized groups choose a defensive posture in response to perceived threats to their public images. Their focus on awareness and strategies individuals can use could only be developed with an eye toward multiple identities.

A second emergent theme I saw was the acknowledgment and analysis of the role of dominant identity in these intersecting systems of domination and marginalization. Ely (1995) made the point that, by understanding their own experiences as White people, White women can better understand the experiences of men (and I must assume she is talking about White men) (p. 165), and McIntosh (1988) operationalized this point by listing elements of her White privilege, thereby, making it visible. Moore and Betters-Reed (2008) offered a call to action to White women in organizations to be intentional about using their power and influence to remove barriers and support the advancement of women of Color. One of the key messages of this work was to stress the importance of White leaders' understanding that they have race. Frankenberg (1993) also joined the surfacing of racism for White women as important for antiracist work:

Racism was and is something that shapes White women's lives, rather than something that people of Color have to live and deal with in a way that bears no relationship or relevance to the lives of White people. For when White people—and I was especially concerned about White feminists . . . look at racism, we tend to view it as an issue that people of Color face and have to struggle with, but not as an issue that generally involves or implicates us. Viewing racism in this way has serious consequences for how White women look at racism, and for how antiracist work might be framed. With this view, White women can see antiracism work as an act of compassion for an “other,” an optional, extra project, but not one intimately and organically linked to our own lives. Racism can, in short, be conceived as something external to us rather than as a system that shapes our daily experiences and sense of self. (p. 451)

As scholars in the leadership field, we can stimulate societal awareness of these multiple systems of domination by naming, examining, and bringing to light those areas that are often absent in societal discourse. Holding ourselves to the high standards research requires also has the capacity to shape the tone of this discourse once it leaves the academy. Making the invisible visible in a respectful container is a powerful stimulus for change.

The Context: Structured Systems of Domination

Examining relationships in a context of structured inequality must take into account the systemic structures that drive behavior (Kim, 1996; Senge, 1990). Systemic structures are invented to operationalize mental models and produce the most dominant pattern of behavior in the system (Kim, 1996). These structures are often subtle and drive the assumptions that those within it often take for granted. Omi and Winant (2002) named racial projects as historically situated processes that interpret, represent, organize, and explain human bodies and social structures around a socially constructed concept of race and reorganize and redistribute resources along racial lines. Racial projects are, therefore, excellent examples of these systemic structures. These projects operate at a macro level in society including “large-scale public action, state activities, and interpretations of racial conditions in artistic, journalistic, or academic fora” (Omi & Winant, 2002, p. 60), as well as “the seemingly infinite number of racial judgments and practices we carry out at the level of individual experience” (Omi & Winant, 2002, p. 61). Given that race is given meaning at all of these levels, examining our perceptions and understandings of personal experience is relevant terrain.

As my thinking developed in preparation for this study, I realized there is a powerful dilemma that comes into play when examining relationships across race. Given that relationships between individuals are only one terrain where race is given meaning, we cannot ignore systemic racism. But, systemic racism is where some of the most powerful meanings and practices are created, which in turn impacts what individuals bring to their relationships. A circular circumstance therefore develops—in other words, racialization in relationships can support socially constructed systemic practices and that racialization happens as a result of those

social constructed definitions. This is supported by Essed's (1991) conceptualization of racism as a simultaneous structure and process of everyday practices. Therefore, I approach this study with some caution resulting from the realization that looking across race can continue to separate and define those meanings.

So if we continue, albeit cautiously, and take this a step further, we can view relationships across race both as a result of a systematic social construction and a site of either contestation or perpetuation. Omi and Winant (1994) noted the many ways a racialized social structure shapes racial experience and conditions meaning (p. 59), but given the social construction of that structure, this is not fixed. Therefore, relationships can be a site of destabilization and political mobilization and we can acknowledge that the meso level of relationships cannot be the only terrain examined when looking to destabilize racism, but it is where awareness, redefinition, and political alliances can begin. This chapter will examine the dynamics of those relationships and how the literatures on trust and authenticity, critical elements in high-functioning relationships, have dealt with them.

As I explored the literature to see how it approaches systematic inequality, I found an insightful set of sources. Hurtado (1996) called for an examination of the mechanisms of privilege as she deconstructed feminism using a lens of race and ethnicity:

The mechanisms used to conceal and perpetuate one kind of institutionalized privilege may have counterparts in the analysis of other kinds of institutionalized privilege. It is important to note, though, that the intersection of privilege and subordination will always complicate things. . . . Nevertheless, we must begin to identify and define the mechanisms so that we will be able to recognize them in the many forms in which they appear. (p. 146)

In an effort to describe the philosophical structure of social dominance, L. Roberts (1997) attempted to characterize the structure of oppression across all qualities upon which it is based.

Defining oppression as “institutionalized dominance of one part of humanity by another” (Roberts, 1997, p. 41), she supported Kovel’s (1984) claim that central to the existence of these systems is “the virtually unquestioned assumption that something in human nature and culture led men to dominate one another” (p. 15). One has to wonder if he meant “men” to signify specific people or all of humanity. This institutionalization is predicated on an economic, political, or social power differential between the victims and the victimizers. Some of the common features of this theoretical structure that have particular relevance for the development of cross-race relationships will be outlined below.

The first common features are invisibility and unspoken rules of practice (Hurtado, 1996; McIntosh, 1988; Morrison, 1992; Roberts, 1997; Rodriguez, 2000). This invisibility protects the privilege in place and permits those who are privileged to avoid the issue of inequality, while at the same time benefiting from it. Related to this is the absence of open discussion (Lorde, 2007) which prevents mobilization of joint power, limits understanding of problems and pitfalls experienced by someone in a different position in the matrix, and blocks learning from outsiders’ perspectives. This invisibility was made clear by D. Smith (1972) when she pointed out the collusion of the field of sociology with the projects of dominant groups in mirroring its conceptual frameworks with men’s understanding of social life and social relations.

A second feature of structured inequality is its epistemological power (Goldberg, 2000). The act of naming and evaluating those designated as Other exercises this power where “existence is refused or recognized, significance assigned or ignored, beings elevated or rendered invisible” (Goldberg, 2000, p. 155). This is supported by the construction of groups in binary terms, which create exclusions based on being “different, deviant or exotic” (Anderson &

Collins, 2007, p. 13). This practice is in evidence when corporate diversity efforts establish affinity groups around races and genders that are non-White and non-male, while there is no White male affinity group. This underscores the Otherness of those groups.

A third element of the theoretical structure of systems of domination is the existence of interwoven, mutually-reinforcing elements that restrict movement and limit those dominated (Frye, 2007; hooks, 1981). This network of forces crosses over socially constructed markers of membership and creates penalties for rules violated. Examples cited by Frye (2007) are competing expectations and judgments about women regarding dependence on husbands, sexual preference, loyalty to racial group, or whether or not she chooses to bear children (p. 31). Public discourse around women who run for office provides many examples of this (i.e., Hillary Clinton's life choices), revealing violations of some of those hidden rules.

A fourth aspect of systematic oppression is the double bind (Frye, 2007; Roberts, 1997), when those oppressed are faced with "situations in which options are reduced to a very few and all of them expose one to penalty, censure, or deprivation" (Frye, 2007, p. 30). An example would be the double bind faced by gays, lesbians, and bisexuals in a heterosexist society:

If gay persons remain closeted for self-protection, they live a lie and suffer quite profound emotional and psychological harm. However, on the other hand, if they come out and publicly live their lives as who they are, they risk insulting degradation, physical beatings, and even death. (Roberts, 1997, p. 44)

The last two characteristics of systematic structures of inequality that are relevant to the development of trusting relationships across race are assimilation and tokenism. Assimilation occurs when persons from an oppressed target group drop their own culture and differences and adopt the attributes of the dominant paradigm (Pharr, 1988). Along with visibility and contrast, this then creates the conditions for tokenism, where the few of the non-dominant type in a group

predominated by one significant social type are treated as representatives of their category (Kanter, 1977; Pharr, 1988). As Pharr (1988) described, this form of co-optation chooses certain members of assimilated target groups:

[Then] rewards them with position and money (though rarely genuine leadership and power), and then uses them as a model of what is necessary to succeed, even though there are often no more openings for others who may follow their model. (pp. 62-63)

This is relevant to cross-race relationships in that assimilation by those systematically marginalized will prevent their full expression in the relationship and limit learning by those who are dominant. This will also prevent the relationship from becoming a site of contestation of dominant messages. I then turned to the literature that examined the effects of this system of structured inequality on individuals within it: social identity, racial identity, and embedded intergroup relations.

Social Identity, Racial Identity, and Embedded Intergroup Relations Theory

The field of intergroup relations emerged out of a perceived need to distinguish between two forms of social behavior: interpersonal and intergroup (Sherif, 1966; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Interpersonal behavior was conceptualized as fully determined by relationships and individual characteristics and not at all affected by social groups or categories to which people belonged. On the other hand, individuals may interact not as individuals but as “members of their groups standing in certain defined relationships to members of other groups” (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 35). Intergroup behavior, therefore, was defined as “any behavior displayed by one or more actors toward one or more others that is based on the actors’ identification of themselves and the others as belonging to different social categories” (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 40). When this membership in a group reflects an explicit conflict of interest with another group, intergroup

conflict was said to exist. Furthermore, they introduced the concept of social identity to link the individual to those social categories and accepted as given that society is stratified and that social groups are associated with positive or negative value connotations.

Self-categorization theory (Brewer, 1995; Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) grew out of social identity theory, aiming to explain how people became a group and what the psychological bases of group processes were. They claimed that “when a shared social identity is psychologically operative or salient there is a depersonalization of self-perception such that people’s perceptions of their mutual and collective similarities are enhanced” (Turner & Reynolds, 2004, p. 261). Hence, when this self-categorization was triggered or became salient, actions between people could be explained more in terms of social rather than personal identity. Both of these theories attempted to explain how ethnocentrism could exist and play out in people’s behavior. Social identity theory was then applied specifically to the context of racism in U.S. society and racial identity theory emerged.

In response to the Civil Rights Movement, therapists began to look for a framework within which they could understand and be sensitive to racial issues that emerged in their practices. Cross (1971) and C. Thomas (1971) developed stage theories of racial identity development where each stage was characterized by self-concept issues about race, as well as attitudes about Blacks and Whites as reference groups. As the racism literature grew, White identity was seen to primarily revolve around Black people and Black culture because White racism seemed to have developed as a way to justify the enslavement of Black Americans during the 1700s and 1800s. Helms (1990) published the most widely cited book outlining the stages of both Black and White identity, both of which revolved around the development of a healthy

racial identity involving the acknowledgement and ultimate rejection of racism. She later amended her theory, supported by the work of Takaki (1993) and Zinn (1980), to expand her Black stages of identity development to apply to people of Color stages, making the claim that:

People of Color, that is, Native Americans, Blacks, Asians, and Latino/as of Color, have tended to be the deprived groups, though the nature of the deprivation may have varied slightly depending somewhat on how and when a particular group entered the collective societal awareness as a potential threat to the economic and political status quo of the White majority. (p. 184)

This set of theories is critical to my research question, as it began to lay out what it takes for women in relationships across race to work for social justice, beginning with their own identities. The following sections explore more specifically what I found in the literature that might predict how the women I studied might experience privilege and marginalization.

Experiencing Privilege in a Cross-Race Relationship

The most significant result for those who are privileged within the system is the freedom to ignore that privilege. This freedom translates into the luxury of dismissing racial identity (hooks, 1981, p. 138), opting out of struggles against oppression (Wildman & Davis, 1997), and:

The privilege to ignore the reality of a White supremacist society when it makes us uncomfortable, to rationalize why it's not really so bad, to deny one's own role in it. It is the privilege of remaining ignorant because that ignorance is protected. (Jensen, 2005, p. 10)

McKinney's (2005) research found that Whiteness was a "prompted identity" (p. 20), which meant that most of her White respondents had not considered Whiteness until prompted by her research process. While, as Jensen (2005) stated, "we're all in the race game . . . either consciously or unconsciously" (p. 17), those with race privilege both construct and experience Whiteness by keeping it invisible (Altman, 2006; Dyer, 2005). In fact, the delay in the emergence of Whiteness studies, when theorists finally began to study Whiteness as a social

construct, reflects this same choice (McKinney, 2005). The overwhelming absence of a consideration of systematic privilege in the mainstream leadership literature reflected this as well (Bass, 2008; Bennis, 2000; Burns, 1978; J. W. Gardner, 1990; H. Gardner, 1995; Northouse, 2007; Rost, 1991; Yukl, 2006).

This paradox of constructing and experiencing Whiteness as invisible leads to a second result. The invisibility that is socialized within the structure leads to the freedom to choose whether or not to notice differences and inequality. This is evidenced in the early feminist movement where White feminists used the word “women” to refer solely to White women (hooks, 1981). This created a false illusion of alliance among all women and left the racism that was shared by White women and White men unacknowledged. When confronted with the reality of privilege, previous entitlement to invisibility can lead to surprise, acknowledgment, discomfort, or even denial. If racism is acknowledged, another choice remains: whether or not to act on it. McKinney (2005) introduced the term “directionless nonracism” (p. 200) to describe awareness combined with the choice not to act. And, finally, when the collusion in the solidarity of Whiteness and being a beneficiary of Whiteness is realized, there can be shame and “racial melancholia” (Suchet, 2007, p. 874). Some or all of these dynamics are likely to be in play in a relationship that crosses race privilege lines.

A third experience of privilege, related to the first two, is the accompanying myth of meritocracy. This myth is part of the U.S. capitalist system and promotes the assumption that those who succeed are the most qualified, without acknowledging the advantages that come with the markers of privilege. In fact, Sue (2003) defined White privilege itself as “the unearned advantages and benefits that accrue to White folks by virtue of a system normed on the

experiences, values, and perceptions of their group (p. 137). As McNamee and Miller (2004) described it:

According to the ideology of the American Dream, America is the land of limitless opportunity in which individuals can go as far as their own merit takes them. . . . Getting ahead is ostensibly based on individual merit, which is generally viewed as a combination of factors including innate abilities, working hard, having the right attitude, and having high moral character and integrity. Americans not only tend to think that is how the system should work, but most Americans also think that is how the system does work. (p. 1)

As Zane (2007) found in her study of senior White male managers' role in one company's diversity efforts, those privileged become invested in the notion that it is only their hard work, ingenuity, and skills that have earned their success. This combination of earned strength and unearned power (McIntosh, 1988) or social credentials (Kanter, 1977) is a result of excellence being conflated with exclusivity (Minnich, 2005). This myth then serves as a powerful source of resistance to the idea of unearned privilege for those who have it because it threatens their worldviews, egos, and bases for success. I was curious about how the White European American women in my study viewed their privilege and this prompted me to pay attention to interview data that referred to how they saw their privileged position, how they resisted it inside the relationship, and how they might have redefined it as a result of their interactions across race.

Experiencing Marginalization in a Cross-Race Relationship

On the other side of this invisibility and silence for those marginalized in relationships across lines of privilege is the experience of a pretense of homogeneity (Livers & Caver, 2003; Lorde, 2007), a greater awareness of how privilege is practiced (Collins, 2000; Miller, 1986), the need to strategically manage visibility (Roberts, Roberts, O'Neill, & Blake-Beard, 2008), anger

(Lorde, 2007), and feelings of being assaulted when there is a lapse in the maintenance of the polite ignoring of race (Hurtado, 1996). The invisibility also silences the open discussion of difference where information and perspectives might be shared. Furthermore, in the feminist movement, when White women assumed Whiteness when using the term woman, Black feminists rightly interpreted that as racism—that White women “were not willing to relinquish their support of White supremacy to support the interests of all women” (hooks, 1981, p. 136). This racism was also acted out in what was seen as a patronizing attitude on the part of White women:

Underlying the assertion of common oppression was a patronizing attitude toward Black women. White women were assuming that all they had to do was express a desire for sisterhood, or a desire to have Black women join their groups, and Black women would be overjoyed. . . . They could not see that their generosity was directed at themselves, that it was self-centered and motivated by their own opportunistic desires. (hooks, 1981, p. 143)

I became curious to see if this opportunism, reinforced in the perception that White women’s gains came at the expense of Black women (Amos & Parmar, 2001), would surface again as potential relationship issues for women in my study.

Those who are marginalized must also make the effort to resist being made invisible or correcting distortions or inaccurate accounts of their behavior (hooks, 1984; Livers & Caver, 2003; Lorde, 2007; Roberts et al., 2008) in order to speak for themselves and craft their own agenda (Collins, 2000; Roberts, 1997). A. Morrison’s (1993) naming of the invention of Africanism within the Eurocentric literary tradition was a powerful example of this kind of resistance, and Collins’ (2000) introduction of a Black feminist epistemology reframed this position to be one of privilege based on their unique view of the system as a whole. Within a relationship, this vigilance can be interpreted as a rational distrust, which serves as a protective

function. A variation on this dynamic was illuminated by Simons, Friedman, Liu, and Parks (2007), where they found that Black employees demonstrated a heightened sensitivity to what they called “behavioral integrity” (p. 650), defined as a manager’s alignment between word and deed. This sensitivity represented a period of suspended trust (or distrust) that was only resolved once action was taken to justify either one.

Finally, I found frequent references to distrust, betrayal, and suspicion between White women and women of Color as a result of this lack of awareness or acknowledgment of racism and privilege (Bell, Meyerson, Nkomo, & Scully, 2003; hooks, 1981). hooks (1984) described this relationship by saying:

White females discriminate against and exploit Black women while simultaneously being envious and competitive in their interactions with them. Neither process of interaction creates conditions wherein trust and mutually reciprocal relationships can develop. (p. 52)

Furthermore, those who are marginalized by the system begin relationships across race with a sense of wariness, betrayal, and a unique courage that those with privilege are often unaware of. As Francie Kendall described:

When you want to be very friendly you get up, you walk across the room, you say, “Hi my name is Francie Kendall, what’s your name? And you begin a relationship. When people of Color again say, “OK, we’ll try to be friends with a White person . . . we are crawling on our knees over the broken shards of relationships where we thought we could trust someone.” (as cited in Butler, 1998)

Instead of establishing trust as a dynamic in these relationships, I saw phrases like interracial cooperation (Lorde, 2007), crossover politics, and prickly coalition struggles (Caraway, 1991), and the simultaneous interplay of public performance and hidden transcripts (Scott, 1990) as a way for those dominated to interact with those privileged and vice versa.

This review of the literature with regard to cross-race relationships led me to questions about how women can establish trust and be authentic in those relationships. More specifically, is trust a realistic element of relationship in a context of multiple systems of domination? Can trust be developed across lines of power and privilege given these complex dynamics? What help might the literature on trust offer? What does authenticity mean in the context of a cross-race relationship, and what obstacles must women overcome if they seek to construct relationships? Because these areas of literature would be considered mainstream, I was also curious to see if and how they considered social identity dynamics.

The Trust Literature: Definitions

Definitions of trust in the social science literature varied, reflecting the complex and dynamic nature of this concept. In fact, Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, and Camerer (1998) stated, “to date, we have had no universally accepted scholarly definition of trust” (p. 394). Burke, Sims, Lazzara, and Salas (2007) summarized the definitions in the literature as falling into one of three categories: a trait, an emergent state, and a process. They outlined the key components of trust as:

A willingness to be vulnerable (Burke, 1991; Mayer & Davis, 1999), positive expectations that interests will be protected and promoted when monitoring is not possible (Dirks, 2000; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995; Read, 1962), and assessment of others’ intentions, sincerity, motivations, character, reliability, and integrity (Butler, 1991; Mayer & Davis, 1999; Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998). The literature further indicates that the willingness to accept vulnerability evolves over the course of a relationship through repeated interactions and a history of reciprocity (Baier, 1985; Govier, 1994; Jones & George, 1998; Lewicki, McAllister, & Bies, 1998; Stack, 1988). Therefore, for the purposes of the current effort, trust is defined as “a psychological state comprising of the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviors of another (Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 395).” (Burke et al., 2007, p. 610)

Lewis and Weigert (1985) posited “trust exists in a social system insofar as *the members of that system act according to and are secure in the expected futures constituted by the presence of each other or their symbolic representations* (cf. Barber, b)” (p. 968). They echoed Luhmann (1979), who defined it as:

The generalized expectation that the other will handle his freedom, his disturbing potential for diverse action, in keeping with his personality—or, rather, in keeping with the personality which he has presented and made socially visible . . . the way in which the self is presented is the means by which decisions about it are attained. (p. 39)

These definitions become problematic when characteristics of systems of domination are considered. The practice of assimilation is a key example. If, as Scott (1990) proposed, “with rare, but significant, exceptions the public performance of the subordinate¹ will, out of prudence, fear, and the desire to curry favor, be shaped to appeal to the expectations of the powerful” (p. 2), then the establishment of trust becomes inauthentic at the outset. The powerful experience of inequality being ignored limits that which is made socially visible so predictability is severely limited. The internal struggle of acceptance versus authenticity faced by those designated as tokens also creates a trust issue. What if those tokens opt for authenticity sometimes and assimilation other times? Can they be predicted and therefore trusted? The claim made by some corporate executives that women cannot be relied on because they may leave to care for their children becomes a trust issue of this kind.

¹ Scott (1990) defined “subordinate” as “those subject to elaborate and systematic forms of social subordination. . . , [including] a member of a subject race to one of the dominant race” (p. 2).

A second problem is that much of the literature assumed that trust develops between two equal and separate adults or parties. Luhmann (1979) stated that “one fundamental condition is that it must be possible for the partner to abuse the trust; indeed it must not merely be possible for him to do so but he must also have a considerable interest in doing so” (p. 42). Unequal power relationships create a greater chance for one partner to abuse the trust than the other, which causes the trust relationship to be unbalanced. Those who wield the power of epistemological naming, for example, have a much greater opportunity to abuse that power than do those who are the recipients of that naming. This is another indicator of the difficulty of trust in relationships across power and privilege.

A third problem relates to the inference that willingness to accept vulnerability is a choice. In a context of systematic domination, vulnerability is part of the power inequity and is not chosen. Related to this, mutual reciprocity assumes equal access to resources which is not a reality in a system of inequality. Trust in these cases is at risk of being a superficial “public performance” (Scott, 1990, pp. 45-69).

Another indication that trust is difficult across lines of power and privilege is the frequent inclusion of the resistance of opportunism in its conceptualization. As we saw earlier in the case of White feminism, the ignoring of race was motivated by a desire to align with White men, which created a greater advantage for White women. This was a form of opportunism which created a lasting breach of trust between White women and women of Color. Furthermore, this opportunism is likely when there is an asymmetric level of privilege in a relationship. The person holding greater privilege has more options and freedom of movement so the risk of their being opportunistic is built into the system, thereby causing a structural limitation to the

development of trust. In taking a close look at its definitions, the trust literature was, therefore, helpful in diagnosing the difficulties of establishing trust in relationships across lines of power and privilege. This led me to the question of whether that literature had considered these inequalities or whether it ignored them.

There was some recognition in the literature that the interpersonal level of relationships must be considered as part of an institutional context. As Rousseau et al. (1998) viewed the trust literature, they noted that “this body of work suggests that trust may be a ‘meso’ concept, integrating microlevel psychological processes and group dynamics with macrolevel institutional arrangements . . . trust is at once related to dispositions, decisions, behaviors, social networks, and institutions” (p. 394). Lewis and Weigert (1985) even noted that “institutional trust ‘underwrites’ interpersonal trust; therefore, we would expect to lose trust in other persons as trust in our common institutions erodes” (p. 974). This would support the impossibility of trust at an interpersonal level if one person in the relationship (i.e., the one marginalized) does not subscribe to the system of racism, for example. There was a remarkable lack of consideration of these systems of inequality in the literature on trust. While there is certainly research that uses race and gender as independent variables (Chattopadhyay, 1999; Demaris & Yang, 1994; Golesorkhi, 2006; Jeanquart, 1991; Jeanquart-Barone & Sekaran, 1994; Simpson, McGrimmon, & Irwin, 2007; Spector & Jones, 2004; Tsui & O’Reilly, 1989), there was little that incorporated this context into its theoretical framework. Hence, this initial analysis illustrates that, either it is largely unworkable as defined within a system of structured inequality, or that a new conceptualization of trust will need to be developed for use in this context. I, then, moved to the question of what the literature assumes is the purpose of trust.

The Trust Literature: Purposes of Trust

Luhmann (1979) posited that trust is required in social life because “if chaos and paralyzing fear are the only alternatives to trust, it follows that man by nature has to bestow trust” (p. 4). He proposed that chaos and fear are reactions to the unmanageable complexity presented by the world and went on to extend this complexity to social relations. “Since other people have their own firsthand access to the world and can experience things differently they may consequently be a source of profound insecurity for me” (p. 6). Therefore, trust in his framework was an antidote to the fear and chaos caused by complexity and to the insecurity of differences in perceptions between self and others.

What is very interesting here is that distrust also reduces complexity (Lewis & Weigert, 1985). It does that by “dictating a course of action based on suspicion, monitoring, and activation of institutional safeguards” (Lewis & Weigert, 1985, p. 969). If our purpose is to develop relationships of solidarity for social change, however, the literature was not helpful because it seemed to create a duality where trust tends toward solidarity and distrust toward atomism (Lewis & Weigert, 1985). My earlier interest in distrust as a realistic and functional part of these relationships was not often given attention despite its importance as a negotiated element of cross-race relationships.

Another purpose of trust, according to Fukuyama (1995), is to serve as a foundation for a nation’s well being:

One of the most important lessons we can learn from an examination of economic life is that a nation’s well being, as well as its ability to compete, is conditioned by a single, pervasive cultural characteristic: the level of trust inherent in the society. (p. 7)

These vague terms of well being and ability to compete beg further questions about whose well being and what it takes for a nation to compete. Capitalism assumes an acceptance of the legitimacy of economic inequality (Carruthers & Babb, 2000; Smith, 2003) and there is ongoing debate about whether or not markets are the best way to guarantee equality of opportunity. Well being, therefore, in a capitalist society assumes some level of inequality, whether of economic resources, opportunity, or both, and trust as Fukuyama (1995) described it may serve to support that. Baier (1995) is the only theorist I found who acknowledged this dark side of trust:

Exploitation and conspiracy, as much as justice and fellowship, thrive better in an atmosphere of trust. . . . But what is a trust-tied community without justice but a group of mutual blackmailers and exploiters? When the trust relationship itself is corrupt and perpetuates brutality, tyranny, or injustice, trusting may be silly self-exposure, and disappointing and betraying trust, including encouraged trust, may be not merely morally permissible, but morally praiseworthy. (p. 120)

Here, I found a paradox in current conceptualizations of trust as it they applied to its purpose. Trust as it was defined can serve to perpetuate a system of domination, actually contributing to marginalization and exclusion and/or can work to be developed despite it.

Luhmann (1979) approached this darker side when he talked about how trust can be deepened:

A similar deepening of trust, demanding even greater delicacy, sensitivity and tact, can be observed when illegal—or semi-legal—matters are concerned. Where involvement in espionage, in homosexual relationships, or in drug traffic is concerned, or even in the case of far less extreme instances . . . a series of tests has first to be gone through without those involved being betrayed, allowing them to retreat indignantly behind the screen which behavioural [sic] norms provide, or to explain away some harmless misunderstanding. The true character of the relationship only unfolds slowly when the candidate appears to pass the tests—and for this he must himself carry out counter-tests or even involve himself to such an extent in the situation that he too would then be guilty. (p. 44)

If we were to use racism as an example of illegal matters, Luhmann's (1979) description gives us an inside view of how trust might serve as a tool of its perpetuation. In fact, this could be one of the tests of assimilation—will one leave his or her advocacy of other marginalized people behind for the sake of earning the trust of those in a position to share privilege, access, or power?

For me, exploring the literature on trust surfaced the challenges of trust given the structural characteristics of systematic domination. The definitions included a choice about making oneself vulnerable, which is not possible when one is marginalized. Positive expectations that interests will be protected and promoted are also not likely for those whose interests in being treated equally and respectfully are not honored. A third component of trust often mentioned is the evolution over repeated interactions and a history of reciprocity. In a segregated society where integration is most common in the workplace or in some educational settings, repeated interactions become limited and, as we saw earlier, unequal access to resources limits reciprocity. Finally, the presentation of self in the definition purported by Luhmann (1979) becomes problematic for both the privileged and the marginalized. In the practice of assimilation, the self is bifurcated into a public self and a private self, where the public self mirrors the dominant group and the private self is more authentic. This echoes the “double consciousness” named by DuBois (1903, p. 5) where the marginalized person has two sets of awareness—one with their own eyes and one through the eyes of others. For those marginalized, the public self that is created may be trusted, but it comes at a cost of integrity and authenticity. For the privileged, the choice to ignore the existence of privilege presents a gap in the presentation of self so that presentation is incomplete and unaware at least, and deceptive at best.

These obstacles presented by the dynamics of relationship in systems of domination do not paint a hopeful picture for the development of trust.

Anthony Giddens' (1994) concept of active trust seems to hold promise for those wanting to work across difference for social justice. He set active trust in a context where it is not based on incumbency in a particular social position, but must be held between people who are highly reflexive about freedom and the oppression it might cause for others, the "biographical decision-making" (p. 188) resulting from class relations, and a skepticism about expert authority:

Active trust is trust that has to be energetically treated and sustained. It is at the origin of new forms of social solidarity today, in contexts ranging from intimate personal ties right through to global systems of interaction. . . . In the profound transformation happening now in personal life active trust is necessarily geared to the integrity of the other. Such integrity cannot be taken for granted on the basis of a person's incumbency of a particular social position. Trust has to be won and actively sustained; and this now ordinarily presumes a process of mutual narrative and emotional disclosure. An "opening out" to the other is the condition of the development of a stable tie. (p. 187)

The key elements of his concept for the context we have been considering are reflexivity, active sustenance, and emotional disclosure. This has some interesting implications for future research and for my study in particular.

Another useful concept, advanced by Caraway (1991), is crossover politics. She acknowledged the fragility and difficulties of reciprocity and rejected a goal of bonding. Instead, she suggested that this be exchanged for a goal of understanding other cultural life worlds and being accountable for misreadings that are likely to occur:

Crossover feminists try (but never truly succeed) to see and hear from "other" vantage points, perhaps sharing some of their experience and knowledge with someone else, some of whose own experience and knowledge might rub off. . . . Because it understands the fragility and limits of reciprocity and mutuality ("put yourself in my shoes"), a feminist crossover community does not draw on the affective models of "organic" collectivities. The histories of segregated "sisterhood" have made us all too wary of these metaphors. Although appealing, such visions of bonding often mask impulses toward conformity,

toward silencing differences, dissent, and even “deviance.” A crossover model of community is socially more modest; encouraging unassimilated others in somewhat distant, but ultimately more egalitarian structures. (p. 172)

Caraway’s (1991) acknowledgment of the limits of identity politics and her underscoring of the likelihood of misinterpretation and correcting that must occur echoed Giddens’ (1994) concept of the work involved in active trust. As I explored this literature on trust, there was frequent mention of authenticity as a related concept. This led me to the literature exploring how authenticity can be upheld in relationships that cross lines created by these systems of domination.

Authenticity

As I approached this topic, my first objective was to seek a definition of the construct of an authentic relationship and how this may or may not be different from two authentic people coming together. There is a relatively new focus on a construct called *authentic leadership* (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May, 2004; Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Cooper, Scandura, & Schreisheim, 2005; Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005; Harter, 2002; Ilies, Moregeson, & Nahrgang, 2005; Kernis, 2003; May, Chan, Hodges, & Avolio, 2003; Sparrowe, 2005; Terry, 1993), which provided a place to start. While the subject of authenticity has also been part of existential moral philosophy (Heidegger, 1962; Kierkegaard, 1959; Sartre, 1966), I will touch on that for some philosophic guidance, but will rely more heavily on the most recent literature. I will also look to this literature to see if it holds true in the context of crossing race lines to carry out the work of social justice.

The impetus for the development of the construct of authentic leadership seems to be in response to the recent exposure of corporate business leader behavior as unethical, as well as to

the need for a way to respond to a realization that societal challenges have increased (Cooper et al., 2005; Sparrowe, 2005). L. M. Roberts (2007a) described an “emerging psychological contract” in the 21st century workplace that is “based on a delicate balance of authenticity, conformity, diversity, and homogeneity” (p. 332). This emergence of the importance of authenticity in combination with diversity accompanies a dominant view that is only now observing itself as flawed, a context of increasing complexity, and a workforce of multiple social identities.

Its authors began to incorporate a continuum of sorts between inauthenticity and authenticity, as well as an assumption that authenticity on the part of individual leaders is necessary to handle these large scale challenges. Further examining the way it is defined, I saw some of the confusion that often accompanies the development of a new construct. An important observation to note here is that authenticity as a construct certainly is not new, but its specific application to the function of leaders and leadership is. There is, however, some clarification to be found in analyzing this confusion.

The first area that is not yet clear is how the definitions of authenticity work at different levels of analysis. Most of the more recent work on authentic leadership assumed that it is defined at the individual level and that it is a goal to be achieved (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Gardner et al., 2005; Harter, 2002; Kernis, 2003; May et al., 2003). It also seemed to me that there is an underlying desire to create a set of dimensions so that it can be taught, tested, or identified in leaders, thereby serving as a sort of authentic leadership assessment and, ultimately, helping to remedy problems referred to earlier. Another implication was that authenticity is inherently good, thereby excluding the consideration of how values interact with it. Avolio et al.

(2004) did begin to state generally that the phenomenon of authentic leadership can be found at “individual, team, and organizational levels” (p. 7), but their definition, “the essence of authenticity is to know, accept, and remain true to one’s self” (p. 4), did not easily encompass those levels. Alternatively, Terry (1993) also introduced the construct of “centers of authenticity” (p. 127) as being a person, an organization, or a society where one can explore the authentic relationships among these entities, but his definition did not reflect these levels:

Authenticity entails action that is both *true* and *real* in *ourselves* and in the *world*. We are authentic when we discern, seek, and live into truth, as persons in diverse communities, and in the real world. What distinguishes leadership from other forms of action, including other forms of authentic action, is that leadership calls forth authentic action in the commons. The commons are those public places and spaces where leadership lives, moves, and expresses itself. To call forth authentic action requires courage and hope for the human community. (p. 112)

Here was the first clarification I could find in the development of this construct: a definition that focuses on the individual to one that works also at a group or even an institutional or societal level. In other words, do individuals seek authenticity? Do groups? Can institutions? Societies?

Related to this focus on the individual was a focus on self-referenced values. Harter’s (2002) definition summarized the elements echoed in many others:

At one level, authenticity involves owning one’s personal experiences, be they thoughts, emotions, needs, wants, preferences, or beliefs, processes captured by the injunction to “know oneself.” The exhortation “To thine own self be true” further implies that one acts in accord with the true self, expressing oneself in ways that are consistent with inner thoughts and feelings. (p. 382)

May et al. (2003) even revealed a contradiction between acting ethically and being “true to oneself,” thereby inserting the variable of courage into the equation:

Decent people with admirable intentions may choose not to act ethically for a variety of very good reasons, including that of preserving their own career survival. Whether or not

leaders' intentions to act authentically lead to authentic moral actions is influenced by their courage to engage in these actions regardless of the social pressure to do otherwise. (p. 247)

Their construct, "knowing oneself and being true to oneself are essential qualities of authentic leadership" (May et al., 2003, p. 248), presents limitations if we put this into the context of multiple systems of domination. Assuming that those who are in the dominant position operate in a system where their privilege is invisible (especially to their own consciousness) and the rules of practice are unspoken (Hurtado, 1996; McIntosh, 1988; Morrison, 1993; Roberts, 1997; Rodriguez, 2000), then authenticity itself is limited by the individual's awareness. Therefore, this view of authenticity as defined solely from within oneself cannot be complete in a context where social justice is a high priority. Helms (1990) reinforced this notion of awareness as a necessary part of developing a positive White identity:

In order to develop a healthy White identity, defined in part as a nonracist identity, virtually every White person in the United States must overcome one or more of these aspects of racism. Additionally, he or she must accept his or her own Whiteness, the cultural implications of being White, and define a view of Self as a racial being that does not depend on the perceived superiority of one racial group over another. Thus, the evolution of a positive White racial identity consists of two processes, the abandonment of racism and the development of a non-racist White identity. (p. 50)

And, L. M. Roberts (2007a) provided three rich examples of female leaders with different racial identities for whom authenticity was "about more than self-expression or personal gratification . . . [but who] aspired to make a difference, not only for their own edification but for society as well" (p. 348). She provided an interesting view of how social identity can be mobilized to result in authenticity and leadership success. Thus, if we follow the thinking that authenticity means being true to oneself, then it follows that one's identity as (a) prejudiced or

not, or (b) one's focus on oneself or the collective would dramatically affect one's demonstration of authenticity.

This echoes even Sartre's (1965) linking of consciousness with authenticity:

Authenticity it is almost needless to say, consists in having a true and lucid consciousness of the situation, in assuming the responsibilities and risks that it involves, in accepting it in pride or humiliation, sometimes in horror and hate. (p. 22)

Therefore, authenticity itself is limited by our own consciousness.

Terry (1993) and Sparrowe (2005) captured this subtlety and expanded the definition of authenticity to include others. Terry cited Martin's (1986) contrast of sincerity and authenticity, stressing that sincerity only asks us to be true to ourselves, "ignoring that the self may be unreflective insensitive, or destructive" (Terry, 1993, p. 109), and stressed that authenticity must involve action that is both real and true in ourselves as well as in the world. Sparrowe extended this thought by adding that the authentic self is, in fact, constituted in relationship with others, and that "to the extent that contemporary perspectives on authenticity set the self over others, they risk undercutting the important ways in which the self is constituted in relation to others" (p. 431). Here, we can identify a second clarification in the construct—whether it is defined by the individual in isolation or if it is co-constructed in relationship with others. Again, this line of thinking followed Sartre (1966), who posited that we exist in a duality of living for ourselves and for others, and that we are free to form our own view of ourselves, but also are aware of and interested in being viewed by others (p. 100). He then outlined different types of self-deception that can result.

This brings us to a third difference in definitions in the literature—whether authenticity is a static state to be achieved or whether it is a process. Those who defined authenticity along the

lines of being true to oneself seemed to imply that this is something to be achieved, possibly renegotiated, but mostly in a static sense. Terry (1993) introduced a much more dynamic view of it, as a process that is continually informing the individual as she moves through the community in relationship:

For social selves—that is, persons in communities—the tasks of authenticity are even greater than for individuals. Both self and community continually face issues of authenticity. . . . Authenticity self-corrects. It contains within itself an impetus to change as it reveals what is denied, discounted, hidden, and misleading. In other words, authenticity entices us to recognize the ever-present possibility that the inauthentic lies just beyond our full awareness. Authenticity holds together what we know and do in living tension with what we do not know, avoid doing, or have misled in doing. (pp. 110, 127)

If we apply this view to cross-race relationships, the self-revelation involved in building trust can actually build authenticity in the other person.

By framing the concept of authenticity as a call, “the call to authenticity is not a call to perfection, it is a call to recognize and address our counterfeit selves” (Terry, 1993, p. 268), he thus helped us with a third clarification: that authenticity can be either a static goal for ourselves, or a process where we are constantly learning based on new information as we interact in a diverse community. Monahan’s (2005) focused conceptualization of racial authenticity took this view of authenticity as an active process a step further, including the component of requisite political action as part of the construct:

If racial membership is constituted by one’s position within the larger political practice of race-marking, racial identification, and racialized interaction, then racial authenticity may be thought of as a matter of understanding, recognizing, and *confronting* that position. Accordingly, one is racially authentic to the degree that one acknowledges, without over- or underemphasizing, the role that race plays in one’s own life and the lives of others. To be inauthentic, then, is not a matter of fooling others so much as fooling one’s self. Racial inauthenticity is a kind of *evasion* of race as a *real*, though contingent and socially constructed, element of the human condition. It is not about *performing* one’s race, but rather about politically (and, as we shall see, critically) *engaging* it. (p. 40)

This view may apply more to those who are privileged within the system, but provided a very dynamic view of authenticity as opposed to simply a static goal defined by the individual. This echoed Collins' (2000) dialogic view of Black feminist thought as being intertwined with action.

As the construct of authenticity is developed, the fourth and last clarifications we can investigate as researchers centers around how it is conceptualized and how it plays out as an independent, dependent, or mediating variable. It is alternately described as a trait, a behavior, an intention, or a calling, so in order for it to be studied, it must be more carefully bounded. In addition, throughout this literature it was seen as the end goal (dependent variable), a means to the end of sustainable high performance or a better society (independent variable), or as something that affects the interaction of other variables (mediating variable). Cooper et al. (2005) recognized this, and recommended that researchers focus on developing a “nomological network” (p. 481) where the relevant constructs and variables underlying authentic leadership are defined, and that “qualitative methods might be a particularly useful way of identifying these specific dimensions” (p. 479).

After reviewing this part of the literature, it seems that there were some helpful constructs in applying the construct of authenticity to the context of women working across race, particularly if we choose from among the continua we find in the literature. After this review, I tentatively propose that authenticity in this context becomes (a) a dynamic and ongoing process, (b) of defining what being true to oneself means, (c) in a context of a mutual commitment to social justice, (d) informed by new information gained in open and transparent relationships with

diverse others, (e) that serves to both expand our awareness of self in society, as well as (f) compelling us to act on that awareness.

Next, given that some of the obstacles listed earlier have to do specifically with White women's blind spots, fears, and limitations, I then turned to the White critical studies literature, which has looked directly at the role of those privileged by race in creating authentic relationships, as well as the literature that begins to focus on cross-race relationships. hooks (1981) stressed this point in her earlier and powerful work:

If women committed to feminist revolution, be they Black or White, are to achieve any understanding of the "charged connections" between White women and Black women, we must first be willing to examine woman's relationship to society, to race, and to American culture as it is and not as we would ideally have it be. That means confronting the reality of White female racism. Sexist discrimination has prevented White women from assuming the dominant role in the perpetuation of White racial imperialism, but it has not prevented White women from absorbing, supporting, and advocating racist ideology or acting individually as racist oppressors in various spheres of American life. (p. 124)

The responsibility of White women mentioned throughout this area of literature led me to the White critical studies literature, which focused on those with race privilege and what work is required of them.

White Critical Studies

The field of White critical studies emerged in the late 1980s and 1990s as a child of critical race theory, which emerged in the late 1970s. It represented "an effort to get beyond received wisdoms and ask basic questions about race, power, and society" (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997, p. xviii) particularly focusing on what it means to be White. By doing this, it set out to make Whiteness accountable:

Aside from the substantive content of group experiences (slavery vs. freedom, oppression vs. advantage), the major difference between Whiteness and Blackness is that Whiteness

has not been held accountable to the extent that Blackness has. I use the word “accountable” here in two ways: both in the nonacademic, ethical/moral sense, and in the academic/theoretical sense. (McKinney, 2005, p. 4)

It assumed a social constructivist ontology, taking for granted that individuals ascribe meaning to race and, by making practices visible, will work toward antiracist White behavior. Doane (2003) cited Gabriel’s (1998) claim that Whiteness studies serves to problematize the dominant group instead of the more common problematization of those marginalized.

What is new and unique about “Whiteness studies” is that it reverses the traditional focus of research on race relations by concentrating attention upon the socially constructed nature of White identity and the impact of Whiteness upon intergroup relations. In contrast to the usual practice of studying the “problem” of “minority groups,” the “Whiteness studies” paradigm makes problematic the identity and practices of the dominant group. (Doane, 2003, p. 3)

This field has generated some predictable controversy from within and around its scholarly walls. The primary debate about its value revolves around a difference of opinion about whether its aims have produced the desired results. On one hand, has its aim of examining how transparent forms of Whiteness reinforce the existing racial power structure of society been realized so that the reproduction of White dominance can be halted? On the other hand, has it instead worked to reify those social arrangements? Despite (or perhaps because of) its own acknowledgment that the analytic tools and research methods that were used to understand systems and experiences of oppression may not be as suitable for understanding privilege (Hurtado & Stewart, 2004), it has been criticized for its lack of empirical study (Doane, 2003), its overemphasis on confrontation rather than investigation (Roediger, 2006), as well as its potential misinterpretation. As Roediger (2006) pointed out:

We are reminded that critical studies of Whiteness are only now reaching adolescence. The field in the United States has no journals, no professional association (which it does

have in Australia), no book series, and no presence as an academic department anywhere. (p. B5)

For the purposes of this study, I will briefly examine this literature as a coaching source of sorts, meaning what help does it offer for White women as they engage in the work of creating authentic cross-race relationships?

One likely value of this literature as a whole is that it created a private dialogue and a naming of what is typically invisible in society's practices. Understanding how Whiteness came into existence (Allen, 1997), how it is lived (Alcoff, 1998; Suchet, 2007; Wise, 2008), how White people sustain it through the dynamics of power and privilege (Hurtado & Stewart, 2004; Roediger, 1991; Wise, 2008) and learning about issues such as trust, guilt, defensiveness, denial, dualistic thinking, blame, and how they are viewed by others (Helfand & Lippin, 2002; Iyer, Leach, & Pedersen, 2004; Kivel, 2002; Low, 2004; Wise, 2008) without being in the room with them provides an intrapsychic space to process these difficult issues before engaging in interaction. Kivel (2002) offered an example of how White people might react to feeling attacked in a group situation where race issues are being discussed:

There are some things we should remember when we feel attacked. First, this is a question of injustice. We need to focus on what happened and what we can do about it, not on our feelings of being attacked. Second, someone who has been the victim of injustice is legitimately angry and may or may not express that anger in ways we like. Criticizing the way people express their anger deflects attention and action away from the injustice that was committed. . . . Often, because we are frequently complacent about injustice that doesn't affect us directly, it takes a lot of anger and aggressive action to bring attention to a problem. Finally, part of the harm that racism does is that it forces people of Color to be wary and mistrustful of all White people, just as sexism forces women to mistrust all men. They have to be wary of all White people, even though they know that not all White people will mistreat them. They have likely been hurt in the past by White people they thought they could trust. . . . We must remember that although we want to be trustworthy, trust is not the issue. We are not fighting racism so that people of Color will trust us. Trust builds over time through our visible efforts to be allies and fight

racism. Rather than trying to be safe and trustworthy, we need to be more active, less defensive, and put issues of trust aside. (p. 100)

Obstacles to positive cross-race relationships were treated thoroughly in this literature, so it can be used as a preview of sorts of what this work entails for those new to it. For those more experienced, it can serve as a more distant support mechanism for those who have not found one in their immediate community.

Another value of this literature for White women interested in working across race is that it provided some possible ways to reframe what it means to be White. For example, Bailey (1998) presented the notion of a traitorous identity, where Whites can explore their identities in ways that do not depend on the subordination of people of Color; and Lawrence and Tatum (2004) outlined ways White educators can understand their own Whiteness and the meaning it has when interacting with students and parents of Color. Giroux (1997) emphasized the importance of establishing a “new ethnicity” (p. 298) pedagogy which allows students to “mediate critically the complex relations between Whiteness and racism not by repudiating their Whiteness, but by grappling with its racist legacy and its potential to be rearticulated in oppositional and transformative terms” (p. 301), and there are sources that provide specific ways to do that (Helfand & Lippin, 2002; Katz, 2003; Wise, 2008). Through this literature, there was a wealth of narrative about what has happened before in relationships across race, and what reactions have transpired from all sides, such as White participants not being prepared to acknowledge the legacy of racism that follows them into the room when working across race and how rejections and invalidations from people of Color can be interpreted as responses to despair and hopelessness. Parenthetically, this literature also provides some valuable guidance to White researchers around their own positioning when conducting research with participants of different

racism (Duneier, 2004; Morawski, 2004), such as the ethical issues involved in eliciting, recording, and deciding whether or not to challenge participants' racist views (Hurtado & Stewart, 2004). Two well-known studies (Frankenberg, 1993; McKinney, 2005) also provided useful and predictable issues of unawareness in conducting race-related research with White participants.

The most important contribution this literature made to my search for a working definition of authentic cross-race relationships is its blunt and direct focus on increasing the consciousness of White people. If authenticity is limited by our consciousness, then Whites who have not explored the shadow side of our hegemonic culture begin the relationship with a handicap that will affect both parties. This literature serves to stimulate Whites to realize how race affects them powerfully and to do the work of "interrogating their Whiteness" (Brown & Grande, 2005, p. 249) before engaging in the process of building a relationship.

Within the White critical studies literature, there was an area that specifically looked at authentic cross-race relationships. The area of authentic cross-race relationships is very relevant to my question, so I summarize it in the next section.

Obstacles and Contributors to Authentic Cross-race Relationships

The literature I found on cross-race relationships reflected diverse perspectives of social location, site of focus, and type of study. It has been created by a mixture of scholars, activists, poets, and writers (with many duplicating roles), which provided a useful combination of theory, practice, reflection, and spirit informing this issue. In many cases, the themes that emerged from the literature were based on the author's experience working across race either as an educator, facilitator, participant/activist, and/or researcher. Amid this wide range of perspectives and

approaches, some common themes emerged about the obstacles that must be overcome when beginning to work across race.

The first obstacle that often emerged is White women's desire for "unproblematic solidarity" (Thompson, 2003, p. 10) and personal reassurance. This impatience for solidarity from shared gender and supposed shared victimhood actually works to silence differences with women of Color and can paradoxically "render the history and structure of racial experience invisible" (Brown & Grande, 2005, p. 237). This obviously prevents an open discussion of differences which would lead to new understandings, can ultimately lead to the outlawing of disagreement and difference of opinion (Wyatt, 2004, p. 896), and therefore, provides a weak foundation if one is to be ally for social justice. L. Brown and Grande (2005) examined the possible motivations for this behavior and concluded that it is tied up with White women's socialized role:

Their assertion . . . that "I can only do this if I'm in relationship" is the ultimate White middle-class woman's condition—asserting the primacy of closeness and comfort, genuine relationships or real conversation, even as she gets to name the parameters of what makes a relationship genuine or a conversation real. Indeed, the litany of fears the White women express expose the knotted intersection of White privilege and conventions of White femininity: They fear "being close-minded," "thoughtless," "having someone angry at you," "being wrong," "being disliked," "being seen as the bad guy," "causing discomfort," "oppressing others," and "separation." (p. 241)

This avoidance of conflict can be evidenced behaviorally in the form of politically correct language, defensiveness, overpersonalization, or expressing guilt about privilege (Bunch, 1990, p. 54; Ely, Meyerson, & Davidson, 2006) that often keeps the focus on their agenda and blocks the very unity White women say they are seeking.

For people of Color, an encounter with a White person who knows what is right but has not processed it emotionally can be frustrating and exhausting. Every word, every signal

breeds confusion. Whites busily guarding a politically correct posture are impossible to reach on a human level, because they have an image to protect. (Rose, 1996, p. 33)

This illustrated the obstacles and resulting extra energy that must be spent by the other person in a relationship when one is unwilling or unable to be authentic.

A second theme about obstacles between White women and women of Color was described as an unacknowledged and persistent perpetuation of dominance on the part of White women (Alcoff, 1998; Anzaldua, 1990; Breines, 2006; Brown & Grande, 2005; Singleton & Linton, 2006). This appeared in the form of the essentialized “White solipsism” (Rich, 1979, p. 299) that comes from assuming that one’s view as a White person is universal, thereby preventing her from connecting with the experience of others. An example would be using “we” and “us” without realizing this is an assertion of racial privilege (Brown & Grande, 2005). Coming from the dominant racial culture, White women can assume this same dynamic in cross-race relationships and, while it may be unconscious, it perpetuates the intention of domination and communicates a lack of awareness or understanding to those with whom they are working.

Historically and to some degree today, racial discourse in the United States is governed by the cultural parameters of the dominant White population. Consequently, when discussing race and racial issues, White people tend to engage from a place of certain authority, even though they have quite often been remiss in conducting their own racial introspection. In contrast, people of Color initially tend to communicate in the interracial forum in a more cautious and tempered manner. (Singleton & Linton, 2006, p. 121)

A third theme that emerged was the unease and discomfort on both sides that arise when the real work begins. For White women, this discomfort can result when women of Color resist “the order, coherence, authority, and concept of White superiority” (Anzaldua, 1990, p. 226), when judgments are permitted to surface, when the fact that the denial of racism works against the desire to become allies emerges (Bell & Nkomo, 2001), and when they realize that their

experience, perceptions, and economic position have been profoundly affected by being constituted as White (Alcoff, 1998; Frankenberg, 1993). This disequilibrium and cognitive dissonance (Kendall, 2006) are to be expected and are a source of significant learning if viewed that way:

If we go back to the understanding that we live in a system that uses Whiteness as the standard and hold White people as normal, then we see that others are being assessed as not normal, as less than the standard. If we sit quietly for a moment with that level of clarity, without throwing up roadblocks of resistance, we might get to a deeper understanding of the costs of maintaining the system as it is: the costs to others and the costs to ourselves. (p. 40)

For women of Color, discomfort comes from different sources, but exists nonetheless. While the open discussion of difficult issues is likely to reduce the discomfort resulting from denial, women of Color must examine what it is they want from White women (Anzaldua, 1990, p. 222) and be willing to stay in relationship as they collectively do this work, even as frustrations mount. E. Bell and Nkomo (2001) pointed out that Black women must decide whether or not to reveal secrets, “especially the carefully guarded thoughts and feelings about Black life that African Americans rarely reveal to their White counterparts” (p. 256). This guarded watching was echoed by Lorde (1984) and Collins (2000) who described the dual consciousness in Black women as they become familiar with and sometimes adopt the ways of the dominant group, while “hiding a self-defined standpoint from the prying eyes of dominant group” (Collins, 2000, p. 97). This process of internal assessment can be viewed as a protection:

We carry internalized oppression around with us. It is an omnipresent, tenacious force that keeps us on the defensive, ready to jump into protective behavior at the slightest suggestion of remembered pain. The process that unlocks a buried pattern is called “restimulation.” (Rose, 1996, p. 33)

This protective armor (Bell & Nkomo, 1998; Greene, 1994) serves a socializing purpose so that African Americans can learn to cope with the debilitating effects of racism and to become physically and emotionally healthy despite society's negative connotations around being Black (Peters, 1985). E. Bell and Nkomo (1998) further extended the function of this armor to provide protection against sexism for African American women.

As the deep and honest work begins, it can involve examining "the history of betrayal, lies, secrets, and misinformation both have internalized and continue to propagate" (Anzaldua, 1990, p. 222) which certainly creates discomfort as realities are questioned on both sides. Finally, E. Bell and Nkomo (2001) described a potential difficulty on the part of Black women to be open to feedback and support, especially from White women, because of armor being left on too long. Risking this level of vulnerability is also likely to require additional effort and some uncomfortable releasing of coping mechanisms. The dynamics of this deep emotional work were illustrated beautifully in E. Bell et al.'s (2003) account of their cross-race research work as they concluded their narrative:

We realized that the alliance and friendships we developed grew when we were willing to bring ourselves into the room, to put it straight, and most difficult, to do battle with each other, in all directions. This meant letting each other into the shadow side of ourselves; into our fears, vulnerabilities, and expectations; into our assumptions about each other; and into the baggage we held about what each of us carried. We had to acknowledge our racial-group identities and how they influenced our thinking during the time we worked together. (p. 411)

Yet another obstacle White and Black women can face when working toward an authentic relationship is that their deeply held values must be surfaced and negotiated if the relationship is to be authentic. In this way, individual authenticity creates the ground for an inherent set of conflicts that must be navigated. As stated earlier, their focus areas, cultural

values, and type of activism have traditionally differed and their political issues have been different given their social positions. Thus, how each person defines social justice can be a point of tension in itself as the relationship is conceived.

The differences between the concerns of White feminists and those of feminists of Color are indicative of these distinct political grounds. White feminists' concerns about the unhealthy consequences of standard for feminine beauty, their focus on the unequal division of household labor, and their attention to childhood identity formation stem from a political consciousness that seeks to project private sphere issues into the public arena. Feminists of Color focus instead on public issues such as affirmative action, racism, school desegregation, prison reform, and voter registration—issues that cultivate an awareness of the distinction between public policy and private choice. (Hurtado, 1996, p. 18)

Another difference is between the cultural values of individual advancement and responsibility for the collectivity. According to Hurtado (1996):

[In communities of Color] there is a linkage between obtained privilege of individual ethnic/racial group members and the political struggles of the group. Therefore, group responsibility is assumed, and its absence has to be justified (hooks & West, 1991), whereas in the White women's movement individual advancement is assumed, and collectivity has to be socialized. (p. 27)

A third difference is in the size and shape of the web of support for their activism:

White feminists by definition have a more circumscribed community than feminists of Color because to include their community *as a whole* would entail including the White patriarchal order. Feminists of Color can, in fact, include their entire communities because their communities have also been subordinated by White patriarchy. (Hurtado, 1996, p. 27)

This relationship with their communities is also affected by their relationships with men. Breines (2006) pointed out that White women and women of Color, regardless of their sexual preference, have very different views of the family and their role within it. Furthermore, she added that their views on gender and families are complicated by race, as well as class. In her narrative about the Boston socialist feminist organization Bread and Roses formed in 1969,

Breines described White women's analysis of the nuclear family as a source of oppression where men functioned as a ruling class and where women were exploited. This is in contrast with the working-class radical Black women's view of their role as "protecting the family as a unique site of resistance to the ravages wrought by racism" (Breines, 2006, p. 91). Clearly, assuming commonality based on one's role as wife or mother was a faulty assumption.

And finally, several authors have observed a difference in communication style when discussing issues between women of Color and White women: "Women of Color have more urgency in their political activism; White women have become more academic" (Hurtado, 1996, p. 29). Singleton and Linton (2006) also described differences between White women and women of Color when discussing race: "White women are more verbal, impersonal, intellectual, and task oriented, while women of Color tend to be more nonverbal, personal, emotional, and process oriented" (p. 123). These differences may, in fact, express related differences in ways of knowing, but also are an interesting commentary about how privilege may be played out in behavior. Collins (2000) laid out the distinguishing features of a Black feminist epistemology, which prioritizes experience as a source of knowledge; resistance to the dominant power structure; and, among others, the dialogic relationship between changed thinking, changed action, and, therefore, a changed consciousness. If White and Black women's epistemologies are different, their communication patterns and purposes are likely to be different, so there are deep issues to be surfaced at the outset.

These obstacles are significant, challenging, personal, and require great patience and courage to overcome. As Breines (2006) stated, "crossing the Color line is messy, not just theoretical; it is snail-like in its pace; it is infinitely difficult; it requires personal interaction and

risk” (p. 14). Working through these obstacles on both sides brings up a wide range of emotions to manage at the same time as widely differing agendas are negotiated. And, given the elements of the struggle laid out by E. Bell and Nkomo (2001) of anxiety, discomfort, courage, vulnerability, trust, disappointment, compassion, pain, and honesty, it seems easier said than done to engage in these relationships where it requires strength and willingness to devote scarce time and energy to a variety of struggles (Alperin, 1990, p. 31). Ferdman (2007) reinforced this discomfort:

When we expand our individual and collective boundaries to incorporate new and different voices and therefore to consider possibilities beyond those we are already accustomed to or comfortable with, we need to deal not only with the possible discomfort of adapting to something new and unfamiliar, but also with the unease brought on by uncertain parameters and seemingly fluid boundaries that must continually be renegotiated. (p. 15)

Another area within the White critical studies literature that has relevance to my research question focused on how people can work across race to become allies for social justice. My interest here was to see how it might provide more definition around what authentic relationships across race look like at the individual and group levels, especially when those in relationship share a common purpose, as well as what questions may not yet have been answered.

Social Justice Ally Development

The literature focusing on alliance across difference for the purpose of social justice is a rich source of definition and guidance about what authenticity means in relationships across race, as well as how it can be created. Given the recent emergence of this field, it is understandable that there seem to be far fewer empirical studies than models, concepts, and intuitive wisdom from experience in the field. On the other hand, it provided some valuable direction for future research. This segment of the literature carefully defined its terms and laid out clear guidelines

for what it takes to have an authentic relationship. It does seem to focus more heavily on the White person's role as an ally, and this makes sense given the greater likelihood of unconsciousness around race as White identity develops.

Most of the writing on social justice ally development comes from White authors, which is perhaps a positive sign that White people were beginning to move away from relying on people of Color to teach them about race and racism. Breines (2006) noted:

The groundbreaking book *This Bridge Called My Back* . . . presented the backs of feminists of Color as bridges that others walk over, as unwilling links between White women and women of Color. Women of Color were tired of their bodies being used over and over again, "sick of being the damn bridge for everybody." The new *Bridge, This Bridge We Call Home*, published in 2002, found women of Color at home in themselves and actively pursuing new concepts of race. (p. 193)

She continued to point out that the new book reframed race as consciousness, meaning that some Whites can possess women-of-Color consciousness. This reflected the view of some women of Color that White women had done their own work on their own accord rather than relying on women of Color to educate them.

The outright goal of the alliance-building model for social justice was to "make it possible for people of diverse identities to work together to identify various forms of injustice in social institutions . . . and to join as allies to change these institutions" (Berlak & Moyenda, 2001, p. 47). Further clarifying the definition of an *ally*, Kendall (2006) emphasized that "rather than being allies to an individual . . . these individuals are allies to issues such as classism, racism, or religious oppression" (p. 51) that choose to be "change agents at both the personal and institutional levels" (p. 142). Allies' goals are to "seek to develop systems and structures to hold themselves accountable and be held accountable to members of oppressed groups, without placing the burden for accountability on the oppressed" (Kivel, 2002, p. 51). Brod, Terhaar,

Thao, Laker, and Voth (as cited in Edwards, 2006) made the additional point that “the most credible and authentic naming of social justice allies is done by members of the oppressed group” (p. 54). Authenticity in these relationships includes a willingness to “keep channels of communication open about power and privilege differences,” mutual respect, and “the determination not to make assumptions about one another and about the relationship” (Kendall, 2006, p. 144).

The authors in this segment of the literature went on to specify the conditions that must be present for this kind of alliance to flourish. Pheterson (1986) prioritized as a condition the identification and interruption of internalized oppression and internalized domination, and Reagon (1981) added that the discomfort mentioned earlier was a sign that authentic coalition work is being done:

I feel as if I’m gonna keel over any minute and die. That is often what it feels like if you’re *really* doing coalition work. Most of the time you feel threatened to the core and if you don’t, you’re not really doing no coalescing. (p. 356)

Another condition for authentic alliance work in this literature was that room must be allowed for “cultural blunders, rereading, reinterpretations, rethinking, and relearning without the fear of excommunication from the feminist universe if we ourselves happen someday to ‘get it wrong’ (and who doesn’t?)” (Caraway, 1991, p. 179). Interestingly, during my coursework, I asked my Antioch dialogue group a general question about what they think it takes to be authentic across race, and the most common response was making room for mistakes. The examination of forgiveness and its role in moving past institutional oppression (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2003; Krog, 2000; Lazare, 2004; Minow, 1998; Tutu, 1999) is a rich subject with

important nuances that can be captured in this work across race. For example, Minow (1998)

clarified the act of forgiveness as separate from acts of justice:

In theory, forgiveness does not and should not take the place of justice or punishment. Forgiveness marks a change in how the offended feels about the person who committed the injury, not a change in the actions to be taken by a justice system. . . . Yet, in practice, forgiveness often produces exemption from punishment. . . . This institutionalizes forgetfulness, and sacrifices justice in a foreshortened effort to move on. (p. 15)

How mistakes about racial understanding are handled in a relationship is a complicated task and this literature pointed out that making room for mistakes is a deep, personally challenging process.

Boundaries that honor women's differences are another condition (Caraway, 1991, p. 200), along with "the ability to shift our frames of reference, and to be able to understand and communicate from a place of personal integrity and intimacy" (Rose, 1996, p. 43). This implies that empathy is another critical element of effective relationships and may suggest that it must be considered along with authenticity.

Finally, the authors in this area delineated behavior that allies should demonstrate in order to create the kind of authenticity that is empathic and open to difference. As stated earlier, all of these observations seem to come from their work as facilitators, participants, and activists rather than from empirical study. Some of them are as follows:

- Seeking out critique (Kendall, 2006, p. 52).
- Paying attention to the public interactions between both people, "because you can be sure that others are keeping a close watch," doing deep personal introspection about my role and experience as a person with privilege, respecting the other's interpretations of an action or situation as accurate, instead of doubting them based on

my own privileged perspective, acting as a spokesperson on the issue in the marginalized person's absence, willingness to get into trouble with the person to whom I have allied myself (Kendall, 2006, p. 146).

- In response to problems that arise, taking a matter-of-fact approach and assuming it is a result of negative results of growing up in a patriarchal culture rather than a moral judgment on one's personhood (Bunch, 1990, p. 52).
- Trying (but never truly succeeding) to see and hear from other vantage points (Caraway, 1991, p. 172).
- Empathy: "encourages individuals to respect and appreciate cultural differences instead of simply erasing or ignoring them, and encourages communication that is nonjudgmental and accepting of others" (Dace & McPhail, 1998, p. 435).
- Being able to challenge one another from the assumption that change is possible (Bunch, 1990, p. 55).
- Being clear about one's bottom line (Bunch, 1990, p. 55).
- Resisting White racism, "planting seeds of doubt in other Whites" (Wise, 2008, p. 105) and creating discomfort for other Whites (Ignatiev, 1997a, 1997b).

As Kendall (2006) pointed out:

There are many more things that people of Color need from White people in order to work to create authentic relationships; the pledge to observe with open eyes the experience of being of Color in the context of the institutionalized superiority of Whiteness; clarity about what one gets from an authentic conversation or relationship, understanding one's own interest; the humility not to have all the answers or not to be central, not the focus; and the strength to be vulnerable. People of Color need us always to see ourselves as White; to listen to anger about others like ourselves without taking it completely personally or getting defensive and thinking, "She's not talking about me when she says *White people*;" the assurance that we will get curious and ask, "What if it is me?" (p. 158)

These are helpful guides, but were not grouped into useful dimensions like behaviors, intentions, or attitudes and provide a useful direction for some empirical research. This dissertation will hopefully serve as a contribution to this body of knowledge.

The last area of literature I reviewed was that focusing on intercultural and, more specifically, interracial communication. This literature spanned the fields of communication, organization studies, and education. Some of the themes I found in this literature in answer to my questions repeated some of the earlier points, so in the next section I will summarize only the unique and most useful additions.

Intercultural/Interracial Communication

The first point I found in this literature that helped me in my research was Orbe and Harris's (2008) definition of interracial communication:

The transactional process of message exchange between individuals in a situational context where racial difference is perceived as a salient factor by at least one person. If racial differences are not central to the interaction, these individuals' communication may be more interpersonal than interracial. (p. 6)

This definition implies that if I set out to interview people in cross-race relationships, it is important not only for them to self-identify with regard to race, but also to pay attention to whether and/or how race became a salient factor in their relationship.

A second discussion in the literature that I found fascinating was around the issue of complications in considering empathy, which seemed to be a natural requirement for an effective relationship in this context. DeTurk (2001) stressed first that any conceptualization of empathy across social groups must "cautiously consider dynamics of power . . . [and that] the primary race and class difference among women, like the primary gender difference, is power" (p. 379).

While this may be intuitively obvious, it complicates the use of empathy in that it assumes that one can temporarily step in another's shoes, so to speak, and therefore, risk the potential of losing one's own perspective and thereby, disrespecting difference. Wyatt (2004) stated it this way:

[There are] two competing needs of a pluralistic community: on the one hand, hearing what the other says in her own terms requires temporarily adopting her perspective; on the other hand, hearing what the other says in her own terms requires some corrective to the imaginary tendency to draw the other into identification and so confuse her perspective (and interests) with one's own . . . if imaginary processes of identification were sufficiently tempered by symbolic functions and by an acknowledgment of the real as it operates in community, could identification be modulated so that one could identify with the other's perspective without usurping or distorting it? (p. 881)

Wyatt (2004) continued to stress that participants must realize that "cultural difference is ultimately unknowable" (p. 894) and her conclusion below presented a useful moderation of the two extremes of empathy and unknowing:

It would surely be useful to forging a common purpose if members of a cross-race alliance could understand each other to a degree—and identify with one another to the extent of being able to perceive things from the other's standpoint. The trick is to put into practice the idea of identifying and understanding "to a degree." (p. 894)

A third concept that emerged from this literature that is relevant for my research is that of the "third culture" (Casnir, 1999, p. 92). By creating this concept, Casnir (1999) named the new space that is created by two people with different cultures and I can see potential in using this framework to identify what is created when women work across race for social justice.

The construction of a mutually beneficial interactive environment in which individuals from two different cultures can function in a way beneficial to all involved, represents my attempt to evolve a communication-centered paradigm . . . a continuous, evolutionary process, focused on communication between human beings, not on etic categories which can be the result of preconceived paradigms. (pp. 92-93)

Breines (2006) hinted at this when she described the “journey from idealistic interracial community to separation and identity politics, to new definitions of identity and home” (p. 193) and I was interested to see if and how this may be created by the women in my study.

Wyatt (2004) presented another dilemma to confront and a tension to hold when working across race. She presented the dual needs for identification on the individual and the social level that work against each other in this type of relationship. The individual need for identification supports the expression of difference, while the social version of identification can turn into an “ethos of solidarity” (p. 896), which may unwittingly reduce the valuable expression of difference. This refers back to what was said about White women’s desire for solidarity when working across race and is a good reminder for any organizational work—that group solidarity which often emerges out of a social need for identification can work against individual difference. This is particularly important as those who do social justice work aim toward maximizing a plurality of identities in pairs, groups, and organizations.

A final point raised in this literature that has significance for my general area of interest is the significance of time in the development of a trusting and authentic relationship. Wyatt (2004) captured the importance of time and trust:

Women from different racial/cultural groups are more likely to invest energy and time in such cross-race conversations if they know they will be continuing to live and/or work together for an extended period of time. . . . To state the obvious, trust cannot be taken as a given between women of racial groupings formed by centuries of slavery, land theft, and racism. In my experience at a small college with a racially diverse faculty and student body, it is the continuity of relations over time that creates trust: the repetition of casual and serendipitous conversations between faculty members from different racial and cultural backgrounds—on stair landings, beside mailboxes, on the way to adjacent offices—builds trust gradually. Over time, conversations that go beyond work-related concerns to an exchange of personal experience become possible and can lead to a more immediate understanding of each other’s “lived experience”—including the material conditions that attach to being a woman of Color in the United States and the daily toll of

affronts and injuries inflicted by racism. I would argue that women of different racial groups have a better chance of learning about the specifics of each other's everyday experience when they participate in an ongoing community than they would if the alliance were known to be strictly strategic and temporary. (p. 898)

Wyatt's (2004) point is likely to become significant as I study these relationships. The level of time and energy invested may be an independent or mediating variable to consider as it affects relationship quality.

Research Specific to Cross-Race Relationships

The research that was most closely related to my question inquired into intra-relationship dynamics across race. These included the literature on multicultural counseling (Carter, 1995; Day-Vines et al., 2007; Estrada, Frame, & Williams, 2004; Knox, Burkard, Johnson, Suzuki, & Ponterotto, 2003; Kornegay, 2007; Lago & Thompson, 1997; Pedersen, Crethar, & Carlson, 2008; Ponterotto, Utsey, & Pedersen, 2006; Ponterotto, Casas, Suzuki, & Alexander, 2010; Willow, 2008), cross-race developmental relationships/mentoring (Murrell, Crosby, & Ely, 1999; Ragins, 1995; Schippers, 2008; Thomas, 1989, 1990, 1993); cross-race supervisor-subordinate relationships in organizations (Chrobot-Mason, 2004; Davidson & Proudford, 2008), cross-race issues in teacher training (McAllister & Irvine, 2000; Solomon, 2000), organizational group faultlines (Lau & Murnighan, 1998, 2005), and an emerging area that focuses on cross-race friendships, although this one tends to focus largely on students, adolescents, and children with some exceptions (Aboud, Mendelson, & Purdy, 2003; Granger, 2002; Rose, 2008; Tochluk, 2006). These areas of scholarship hinted at many dynamics that have proven significant given their context. These include tools in creating "inclusive empathy" (Pedersen et al., 2008, p. 3), the importance of establishing clear expectations and honoring individual complexity (Toporek,

Dodge, Tripp, & Alarcon, 2010), and laying out cross-cultural competencies (Connerly & Pedersen, 2005; Sue, 2001). However, most of them involved a structural power differential in the relationship (such as mentor-protégé, supervisor-subordinate, teacher-student, or counselor-client) that may not apply to my focus on peer relationships.

The most comprehensive studies I found specifically related to my research question were (a) Pheterson's (1986) narrative description and analysis of the experience of "The Feminist Alliance Project" which was organized in the Netherlands to study and interrupt psychological processes that divide women from one another, (b) D. Thomas' (1993) study of racial dynamics in cross-race developmental relationships, and (c) Breines' (2006) historical narrative about relations between Black and White women during the feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s.

In Pheterson's (1986) narrative, she provided additional elements with thorough definition from both perspectives that were necessary for success on the part of participants in that project. While she categorized this as a study, it may be more accurately termed a narrative analysis from the facilitator's experience of that project. Those elements necessary for success were:

Visibility is being oneself fully, openly, undefensively, and expressively. Visibility of the oppressed group contradicts self-concealment, isolation, subservience, and dominant denial or avoidance of oppressed persons. Visibility of the dominant group contradicts guilt, fear or exposure, projection, alienation from one's body, and detachment from others. (p. 148)

Pride is self-acceptance and self-respect; in particular, respect for one's identity, one's heritage, and one's right to self-determination. Pride carries with it an indignation against the abuse of any human being, including oneself, and a vast resource for perseverance and righteous struggle. Most fundamentally, pride derives from deep love for oneself and for life. Pride contradicts both internalized oppression and internalized domination. (p. 148)

Solidarity is knowledge of, respect for, and unity with persons whose identities are in certain essential ways common with one's own. Constructive solidarity requires pride in oneself. Internalized oppression isolates people from one another, especially from others like themselves, and thereby prevents solidarity. Internalized domination binds people together on the basis of their power to dominate others rather than on the basis of their respect for one another. Solidarity is essential to oppressed groups for liberation and to dominant groups for collective alliance. (p. 149)

Alliance is knowledge of, respect for, and commitment between persons who are in essential ways different but whose interests are in essential ways akin. For dominant groups, alliance is a process of sharing power and resources with others in society in order to create structures equally responsive to the needs and interests of all people. This process requires giving up one's drive to superiority, giving up one's prejudices against others, and embracing a more flexible relation to oneself, to others, and to society as a whole. For oppressed groups, alliance is a readiness to struggle with dominant groups for one's right to an equal share of power and resources. This readiness necessitates recognition of and indignation against oppression and it generates the collective confidence and strength to bring about change. Furthermore, readiness necessitates recognition and acceptance of, never gravitated for, true alliance. Both the readiness to struggle and the sharing of power and resources are suppressed by internalized oppression and internalized domination. Pride and solidarity prepare individuals to become partners in alliance against oppression. (p. 149)

In this literature, authenticity was seen as both a dependent variable—something that other elements foster—as well as an independent variable that strongly affects effective work for social change. Interestingly, Pheterson (1986) also posited that the building of alliance is a counterforce for the feelings resulting from social positions of dominance and oppression (p. 159).

D. Thomas (1993) was interested in the fact that in organizational life, racial difference was often an obstacle for White mentors in identifying positively with their African American protégés. He was interested in seeing how these pairs overcame this and what it looked like to do the work of managing this discomfort so that the mentoring process could be as successful across race as it was within it. His conclusions were very interesting to me in that while his

initial question was to learn how these pairs of people do the work, he found that not doing the work and actually not confronting race was also a successful strategy as long as both people in the pair preferred that strategy:

When two people join in a cross-race developmental relationship, their racial perspectives may or may not be complementary, a term I use to stress the idea of mutually supportive perspectives rather than sameness. . . . In complementary relationships the parties' racial perspectives are mutually supportive, and they prefer the same strategy for managing racial difference. In noncomplementary relationships, the parties have different strategy preferences. . . . The model indicates four possible variations of racial dynamics: (1) complementary racial perspectives and use of the denial and suppression strategy, (2) complementary racial perspectives and use of the direct-engagement strategy, (3) noncomplementary racial perspectives and use of the denial and suppression strategy, and (4) noncomplementary racial perspectives and direct engagement of race-related issues. Cross-race relationships are most likely to become mentor-protégé relationships when the parties have complementary racial perspectives and, therefore, similar strategy preferences. Each party is then engaged in a relationship that attends to racial diversity in a manner consistent with his or her preference. The result is that neither party experiences race as a factor that inhibits the development of the relationship and its ability to provide psychosocial support. Noncomplementary relationships can become only sponsor-protégé relationships, in part because the party for whom the enacted strategy is not preferred will feel race to be an obstacle to developing a close personal bond. (p. 177)

D. Thomas's (1993) findings were surprising to him and were unique among other studies in its proposal that racial identity and related issues can be ignored with positive results. Further, it did not offer depth about the processes by which the relationships that did acknowledge race were created and sustained.

Summary and Directions for Research

My aim in this literature review was to learn from the relevant literature about what constituted authentic relationships across race, particularly among African American and European American women. I also wanted to become familiar with the issues and dilemmas in the literature that are involved in the process of creating and sustaining them. In addition, I

wanted to explore what researchers have called for as next steps for investigation, gaps that can be usefully filled as we explore this question, and formulate a narrowed and workable research direction.

My synthesis of the strengths, weaknesses, contradictions, and unanswered questions offered by these areas of literature produce some observations I will summarize here and are outlined in Table 2.1. One observation is directed at us as scholars who seem to be in academic silos. These areas of study had a lot to offer each other and, in several cases, did not seem to reflect that. This is particularly true for the critical studies literature and the mainstream literature. The gap created by this isolation of silos brings up a more fundamental question about the viability of and rationale for a literature designated as mainstream. This designation as mainstream serves to perpetuate a hegemonic perspective and would be well served to redefine itself more inclusively. A second broad observation is that trust and authenticity were themes throughout these areas of literature and we, as scholars, would benefit from examining them together so constructs can be more clearly dimensionalized and applied to realistic contexts. Some interesting areas for future study emerged such as the functional role of distrust across intersections of social identity, the further conceptualization of the concept of active trust, and the definition of authenticity in light of racial identity development.

A third observation is simply recognition that some of these areas of exploration were new and empirical study would strengthen them. Specific examples included the White critical studies and social justice ally development literatures.

Table 2.1

Synthesis of Literature Review

Strengths	Weaknesses	Contradictions	Unanswered Questions
<u>Mainstream Leadership</u>			
Some attention to dominance and role it plays in how leaders obtain authority from followers (Heifetz, 1994).	<p>Serves a hegemonic political function.</p> <p>Ignores multiple systems of domination that are part of reality of leadership.</p> <p>Lacks precision in criteria and reflexivity.</p> <p>Struggles with its role between democratic ideas and practice.</p> <p>Focus on the oppressed rather than the oppressor.</p>	<p>Claims to represent everyone but as mainstream it only speaks to privileged.</p>	<p>Does “mainstream” perpetuate privilege?</p> <p>How can this literature incorporate learning from other areas of literature so it more fully represents reality for all social identity groups?</p>
<u>Gender and Leadership</u>			
<p>Acknowledgement of theory mirroring projects of dominant groups.</p> <p>Made powerful dynamics of a gendered system of domination visible.</p> <p>Introduced concept of token.</p> <p>Expanded framework of inequality to focus on organizational system as a whole.</p> <p>Expanded gender from being a sex difference to a stereotype, a system, a structure, and a paradigm.</p>	<p>Conceptualization of gender is undifferentiated by race.</p> <p>Dominance continues to be inferred.</p>	<p>Understanding of gender system of domination did not translate easily to awareness of racism.</p>	<p>How can awareness around gender domination lead to awareness of other dominance/marginalization systems?</p> <p>How can this literature, along with race literature, build into a robust literature on intersectionality?</p>

Race and Leadership

Race differentiated from gender as an artificially created social construction.

Race clarified as a variable, requiring definition and reflexivity.

Intersectionality between race and gender clearer.

Dominants continue to be exempt from study.

White/Black dichotomy with gender absent, while acknowledging limitations of this.

Acknowledgement of interlocking systems of domination, but little exploration of them.

Lack of connection between this literature and the mainstream literature about leadership from the standpoint of racial identity.

Essentializes race?

How can this literature, along with gender literature, build into a robust literature on intersectionality?

Multiple Systems of Domination

Precision of terms.

Unbundling of essentialized social identities.

Acknowledgement and analysis of role of dominant identity in intersecting systems of domination and marginalization.

Systemic perspective.

Clarified mechanisms of privilege.

Social/Racial Identity and Intergroup Relations

Differentiated interpersonal and intergroup behavior and conflict.

Accepted as given that society is stratified, with positive and negative value connotations.

Introduced racial identity as a dynamic, developmental process and factor in relationships.

Translation of systemic privilege/marginalization to the experience of privilege/marginalization.

Clarity needed around level of analysis and how they interact.

Early focus on Black/White racial identity, later attention given to other racial identities.

Frequent references to trust/distrust, but not a lot of analysis and some indication of impossibility-
-proposes substitute terms like interracial cooperation, crossover politics, prickly coalition struggles.

How do these racial identities interact?

What stimulates racial identity development?

How can this be applied to social justice work or organizational leadership?

Trust

Wide range of theory and models.

No universally accepted scholarly definition of trust.

Trust as a trait, an emergent state, a process.

Little attention paid to context of systems of inequality—assumes equality between parties.

Most empirical study based on laboratory experiments which do not mimic complexity of everyday life.

Trust as a positive trait vs. trust as a mechanism to perpetuate a system of domination.

Vulnerability as choice vs. no choice as marginalized.

Role of distrust.

Empirical studies of active trust.

What does trust look like in relationships that cross roles in systems of domination?

Authenticity

Thoughtful analysis of authenticity at the individual level.	Struggles with role of unconscious as one seeks to be true to oneself.	Static or dynamic? Independent, dependent or mediating variable?	Clarification on conceptualization and mechanics of authenticity at different levels of analysis. Definition of authenticity in light of racial identity stage. What is the role of values in definitions of authenticity? Dimensionalizing the construct of authenticity in the context of cross-race relationships. Development of a nomological network to define relevant constructs and variables underlying authentic leadership.
Recent inquiry into authentic leadership as a construct.			

Cross-Race Relationships

Clear about mechanisms and dynamics of cross-race relationships.	More theory and narrative than empirical study. Assumes static roles based on place in system.	Are these relationships a result of systems of dominance or can they be a site of contestation?	How does racial identity development impact the way one enacts their role as privileged or marginalized?
Surfaces uncomfortable realities which helps practitioners.	Essentializes those privileged and marginalized.		

White Critical Studies

Makes Whiteness visible and accountable.	Lack of empirical study.	Has this literature problematized Whiteness or reified it?	Surfaces issues of distrust.
Problematizes dominant group.	Emphasis on confrontation rather than investigation.		
Acknowledges that the analytic tools and research methods used to understand systems and experiences of oppression are not suitable for understanding privilege.	Little presence as academic field.		
Good source of coaching for readers, offers support for those doing cross-race work.			
Offers preview of what this work entails for those new to it.			
Reframes what it means to be White.			
Offers White researchers valuable guidance around positioning.			

Social Justice Ally Development

Provides definition around authenticity in cross-race relationships.	More models than empirical work, due to infancy of field.	Discomfort with positive results.	How can this field become more rigorous academically?
White teaching White.			How can this field view itself as a leadership field?
Clarifies ally to issue rather than to another person.			
Specifies conditions of effective alliances.			

Interracial communication

Complicates and clarifies role of power in processes of empathy.	Stays conceptual, needs application to come alive	Dual needs for identification on the individual and the social level that work against each other.	Trust and authenticity mentioned, not examined closely.
Introduction of “third culture” concept.			How can this field be informed by racial identity theory?

Another issue I faced when reviewing these areas of literature was that they each seemed to focus on various levels of analysis. I have done my best to capture what I found in each area, which also pointed toward some further areas for exploration to fill the gaps in differentiating levels of analysis. The clearest gap to be filled by further research is that of building the construct of authenticity to apply to more levels of analysis. And, while many of these research areas have focused on the dyad, the *cross-race dyad* is still an area for future study, given this summary. My study can hopefully contribute to filling that gap. This summary can be found in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2

Levels of Analysis of Literature Reviewed

Area of Literature	Individual	Cross-Race Dyad	Group	Organization	System/Society
Mainstream leadership	√		√	√	√
Gender and leadership	√		√	√	√
Race and leadership	√		√	√	√
Multiple systems of domination	√		√	√	√
Social/racial identity and intergroup relations	√	√	√	√	√
Trust	√	√	√	√	√
Authenticity	√				
Cross-race relationships	√	√			√
White critical studies	√	√	√	√	√
Social justice ally development	√	√	√		√
Interracial communication		√	√	√	√

My best summary of the challenges noted in the literature involved is that, as women cross racial lines to work together, gender may be one of the very few and rather insignificant bases with which to start on common ground. Not only do African American and European American women differ in history, social location, views about conflict, desire for openness in communication, vulnerabilities, support systems, and cultural values; but, given these

differences, the emotional investment required to renegotiate structural power differences is enormous. This does not mean that working together is impossible, but it does mean that setting the stage, preparing, and knowing when to take a break become much more important than in relationships with others where more commonality is shared.

I did glean very useful clarification of what authenticity might mean in the context of these relationships. Conceptualizing it as a process allows room for mistakes, corrections, and relationships to build, and also starts to define what it can mean as a quality of a relationship rather than an individual. The most significant element of the construct for me is its proportional relationship to the level of one's consciousness, and I imagine that this has to do with my perspective as a White European American woman. I think now, that for White European Americans, the challenge of authenticity around one's race is to open our consciousness so the work can then be done to redefine our identity and then align our actions with it. Helms (1990) added that this development of White consciousness would also reduce the likelihood of "feeling threatened by the actual or presupposed presence of racial consciousness in non-White racial groups" (p. 50). This may be different for Black women, which was very informally illustrated by the different answers I received from my Antioch dialogue group depending on the respondents' race when I recently asked what they thought "racial authenticity" meant. The women of Color seemed to think the question was redundant for the most part, while the White women had more to say about the meaning of the dual construct for them. I now see the importance of White people preparing themselves by "doing their White homework" before entering into cross-race relationships, so their lack of awareness does not add another burden to

the already challenging relationship work. The critical White studies literature certainly provided a basis for doing this work individually.

I found several issues that were either suggested as areas for further investigation or seemed to be relevant gaps in the research to be filled. The first is the construct of authenticity as it applies to relationships, particularly those across racial boundaries. The concept is still in a nascent stage and several researchers recommended further qualitative work on dimensionalizing the concept at any level of analysis. I found words throughout the reading describing relationships that need to be “real,” “honest,” “true,” or “open,” but how this looks or how they are created was less common. As E. Bell and Nkomo (2001) stated, “there were few models of alliance between Black and White women we could rely on” (p. 256) and Albrecht and Brewer (1990) stated 18 years ago, “we must look at models of successful alliances to try to analyze why they have succeeded” (p. 4). It would be useful, both inside and outside the academy, to paint a picture of what effective, satisfying, and change-producing relationships look like and how they were developed and sustained by the parties involved.

A second area that is a logical one for research is to either test some of the current thinking about what makes a cross-race relationship authentic or to use a grounded theory approach to build new thinking based on field experience. As stated earlier, there was much more guidance, opinion, and wisdom from author experience than there was empirical study and more empirical study would strengthen this line of research. Recommendations in the literature about confronting without disconnecting, listening, real and honest engagement, deliberately undoing the oppressive social order, and creating safety zones were lofty goals that need a reality

check by illustrating what these consist of in terms of efforts or behaviors, what they require from both sides, and what they look like when they are negotiated and accomplished.

A third suggestion offered by this review of the literature was for me to concentrate on women who are focused on action, not just close relationships. I began intuitively wanting to focus on women who are working together for social justice, and I am now clearer about why coalitions or alliances are a meaningful site for my research. This is because of the self-reinforcing cycle of thought and action that Collins (2000) stressed, and because the construct of authenticity involves acting, not merely being true to oneself.

A final comment about how this research focus is relevant to the leadership field is I suspect that learning from those who have committed their professional lives to social justice would be a useful source for those who may want to begin the journey of doing that. Learning from those who have gone before about what is ahead, what obstacles are there, and how they might be avoided would be useful inside the academy as a way to sharpen this question's research base, and also outside the academy for use within organizations, in community organizing efforts, in social justice movements, and in any effort where inclusiveness and working across race are critical tools for success. This kind of work can inspire others to join efforts to cause social change and learn how to combine their personal, social, and institutional lives with their political lives. Given the demographics that have produced pluralist societies and global villages, I can imagine this to be relevant and rewarding work. This literature review has offered me some sensitizing issues to keep in mind as I explore the question, "What happens when African American and European American women work in relationships to make positive change for social justice?" using grounded theory methods. Some of these are:

- What did African American and European American women who were working for social justice do, think, and feel as they navigated the challenges of cross-race relationships?
- What challenges did they experience in developing a high functioning cross-race relationship?
- How did they rebuild trust if that became necessary?
- What did each woman do to develop a positive racial identity before entering the relationship? How did their racial awareness contribute to the quality of the relationship?
- How did they create safety zones for emotions and frustrations that might have emerged?
- How did they listen to each other?
- What did real and honest engagement look and feel like to each of them?
- How did African American and European American women create working relationships where they each showed up as fully authentic?
- How did they each define authenticity in this context? What elements were present in a highly functioning cross-race relationship among women working toward social justice?

The next chapter describes the method I used to explore this question, the specific research design, and my positioning as a researcher.

Chapter III: Grounded Theory Methodology

My research question focused on the processes by which Black African American and White European American women create and sustain cross-race relationships with each other as they work to change aspects of the systems in which they live. More specifically, I was interested in the behaviors, strategies, cognitive schemas, and emotions that arise out of those experiences and how they are navigated. Accepting the view that race is socially constructed led me to grounded theory, which allowed me to inquire into how people construct race, how that construction affects their relationships, and how social inequalities may play out at interactional levels (Charmaz, 2006).

The ability to be both flexible and focused in the data collection process also matched this study's purposes. As I developed the picture of what was going on in these relationships from the inside, by "enter[ing] their settings and situations to the extent possible" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 14), I wanted to be able to follow leads that emerged to produce new, rich, and substantial data reflecting an "intimate familiarity" (Lofland & Lofland, 1995, p. 42) with what the participants described. The constant comparative methods (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) in grounded theory allowed me that flexibility, as well as an increasing focus as I compared data within and among interviews, codes, memos, and field notes.

Situating My Study Within the Philosophy and Theories of Science

This research is based on constructivist, interpretivist, and phenomenological paradigms which assume that reality is co-created, that meaning in human action is inherent in that action, and that knowledge about things can only be described as one experiences it (Schwandt, 2001). Constructivist ontology reflects the position that:

A goodly portion of social phenomena consists of the meaning-making activities of groups and individuals around those phenomena. The meaning-making activities themselves are of central interest to social constructionists/constructivists, simply because it is the meaning-making/sense-making/attributional activities that shape action (or inaction). (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 197)

My question revolves around how meaning is made and shaped by these participants as they co-construct their working relationships.

An interpretivist view of theory development emphasizes that “the very understanding gained from the theory rests on the theorists’ interpretation of the studied phenomenon” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 126), and aims to show patterns and connections rather than causality.

Theory that emerged from this study was based on interpretive frames used by the participants to view and shape their reality, as well as my own and my coding partners’ frames as we interpreted those data.

From a phenomenological standpoint, this study focused on careful exploration and description of how the participants’ social world is made meaningful and how they experience their life world (Holstein & Gubrium, 2008, p. 175). Furthermore, the pragmatist philosophical tradition provides a foundation for assumptions behind this research. This philosophy holds that reality is always in a state of flux and can only be partially determined in any given situation. Dewey (1972), James (1955), Mead (1932), and Peirce (1877) are considered to be architects of pragmatism and as James (1955) posited: “For rationalism, reality is ready-made and complete from all eternity, while for pragmatism, it is still in the making” (p. 167). This view, then, sees reality as something that is made meaningful and interpreted by people as they interact with each other.

The world of everyday life is not only taken for granted as reality by the ordinary members of society in the subjectively meaningful conduct of their lives. It is a world that

originates in their thoughts and actions, and is maintained as real by these. (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, pp. 19-23)

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism is a perspective in social psychology (Charon, 2004) that stresses the symbiotic relationship between the individual and society: “Society is a society of individuals and the individual is a social individual” (Dewey, 1972, p. 55). It is in this dialectical circle of sensemaking (Shalin, 1986) that I assumed the meanings of and relationships involving race reside and became the basis for my inquiry. With this perspective, the socially constructed concept of race may be interrogated by individuals in their relationships and, therefore, may begin to be re-imagined. Echoing Hewitt (2007):

People are not thoroughly and passively socialized to accept and reproduce culture and society, for under many circumstances they resist and rebel, finding ways to escape from the patterns of conduct that are urged upon them. They are not merely agents of an existing social order but are also active agents who create and change that order. (p. 5)

This hints at the view of racial consciousness as additive to racial identity suggested by Anzaldua and Keating (2002) and referenced in my earlier literature review.

Symbolic interactionism enables us to further explore the view of race as socially constructed. Blumer (1969) described the foundations of this perspective, which can be applied to the process by which racism develops:

Symbolic interactionism rests in the last analysis on three simple premises. The first premise is that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them. . . . The second premise is that the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one’s fellows. The third premise is that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters. (p. 2)

If we apply this to the development of racism, we might say that first, race is given meanings and people then act toward others on the basis of those meanings. Second, these

meanings are derived from the social interaction people have with each other. And, third, these meanings about race are handled in and modified through interpretive processes used by people in dealing with the people they encounter. I am interested in identifying exactly these processes by which Black African American and White European American women co-construct their own realities by developing meaning, acting on the basis of those meanings (or resisting those meanings), and conducting their interactions to change those meanings.

Grounded theory is a research method that emerged from the perspective of symbolic interactionism for the purpose of studying social phenomena. Its research methods focus on inductively developing theory that is grounded in data, rather than deducing hypotheses from existing theories that can be later tested (Charmaz, 2006). The theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism can be found throughout its process of data collection and analysis, development of research questions and relationship between the researcher and the data (Bowers, 1988; Charmaz, 2001, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Rennie, 1995, 1998).

Grounded Theory: Development of the Method

Grounded theory developed in the 1960s as a result of Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss's research on dying in hospitals (as cited in Walker & Myrick, 2006) and presented an alternative to the hegemony of quantitative logico-deductive development of theory that was prevalent at the time. While Glaser and Strauss (1967) focused on qualitative data, their frequent references to data, evidence, facts and accuracy, and the ability of the researcher to rely on them as the basis for the development of theory seemed to indicate an objectivist ontology. As Charmaz (2001) stated:

Objectivist grounded theory . . . assumes that data represent objective facts about a knowable world. . . . In this view, the conceptual sense the grounded theorist makes of the data derives from the data: Meaning inheres in the data and the grounded theorist

discovers it. . . . Objectivist grounded theorists believe that careful application of their methods produces theoretical understanding. Hence their role becomes more than of a conduit for the research process than that of a creator of it. (p. 677)

Strauss then joined with Corbin (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) to present another version of grounded theory that diverged from Glaser's (1978) worldview in both paradigm and epistemology. While the techniques they outlined remained consistent, Strauss and Corbin (1990) diverged from Glaser and Strauss's (1967) initial conception of grounded theory in the processes of data analysis and interpretation. Glaser's model stressed that theory generation emerges directly and rigorously out of the data without interpretation by the researcher; where Strauss and Corbin (1998) allowed, and even called for, researcher involvement in producing theory:

Thus, when we classify like with like and separate out that which we perceive as dissimilar, we are responding to characteristics, or properties inherent in the objects that strike us as relevant. The images that are provoked in our minds may or may not be different from common cultural perspectives or notions about things. If our imagery differs from the usual or standard ways of thinking about things and we are able to see objects, events, or happenings in new ways, then we can create novel theoretical explanations. That is why we, as theorists, are called on to do such detailed analyses of data. We want to see new possibilities in phenomena and classify them in ways that others might not have thought of before. (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 105)

Another key difference is their view of the role of a literature review and theory before beginning study. With Glaser's influence, Glaser and Strauss (1967) proposed that the researcher should be knowledgeable of the literature about the phenomenon under study and learn to use it to interact dynamically with the data:

The sociologist should also be sufficiently *theoretically sensitive* so that he can conceptualize and formulate a theory as it emerges from the data. Once started, theoretical sensitivity is forever in continual development. It is developed as over many years the sociologist thinks in theoretical terms about what he knows, and as he queries many different theories on such questions as "What does the theory do? How is it conceived? What is its general position? What kinds of models does it use? . . . This theory that exists within a sociologist can be used in generating his specific theory if, after study of the data, the fit and relevance to the data are emergent. A discovered, grounded theory, then, will

tend to combine mostly concepts and hypotheses that have emerged from the data with some existing ones that are clearly useful. (p. 46)

For my study, the existing literature clearly helped sensitize me to the concepts relevant to my question and helped me to formulate probing questions based on what emerged during the data collection. Therefore, I have viewed it as a tool that prepared my thinking, but I bracketed this thinking to allow myself to view potential surprises and new information in the data. This hermeneutical relationship with existing thinking and the emerging data helped me develop an explanatory framework for what happened in the relationships I studied.

When participants provide their understandings, they speak from meanings shaped by social interaction with others and from their own personal histories. In this form of inquiry, research is shaped “from the bottom up:” from individual perspectives to broad patterns and, ultimately, to theory. (Creswell & Clark, 2007, p. 22)

Scholars have more recently weighed in on the objectivist and constructivist undertones in grounded theory (Boychuk & Morgan, 2004; Charmaz, 2005; Fendt & Sachs, 2008; Greckhamer & Koro-Ljungberg, 2005; Heath & Cowley, 2004; Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006; Suddaby, 2006; Walker & Myrick, 2006), and Charmaz (1973), in particular, began to outline a clear constructivist brand of grounded theory after her dissertation research.

Grounded theory’s greatest contribution may be the credibility it brought and continues to bring to qualitative inquiry. Developed during a time where positivism was clearly dominant, its clearly outlined standards for gathering and analyzing data gave qualitative research greater status in the scientific community. Second, it presents a healthy counterpoint to the development of grand theories based on supposedly highly intelligent minds, but not data. Glaser and Strauss (1967) claimed that theory generated from data would not need verifying, would not be easily refuted by more data, would not be easily replaced by another theory, and would not be subject to the post-theory practice of *exemplifying*, where instances are conveniently sourced to prove a theory

already developed. Third, it operationalizes symbolic interactionism and serves as a way to illustrate the significance of socially constructed processes as precursors to institutionalized structures. When issues like structural power or systems of dominance are examined, the social processes that create them and the meanings that indicate both cause and effect of them can be illustrated and given more focus. Furthermore, as a method, it reflects an accounting for the complexity of social interaction—rather than simplifying to form a predictive theory, it serves to explain complexities and helps us to understand social realities. It seems to beautifully fit a constructivist paradigm in that the view and meanings from the social actor's standpoint become the exploratory goal. And finally, its introduction of middle-range theories seems to be an effective way to present multiple understandings of social processes rather than to seek common denominators. Its methods seem to fit closely with the view that reality is socially constructed, is based on meanings created by its actors, and it offers an alternative to absolute or simplistic theoretical development.

Fit of Grounded Theory to this Study

My question is best positioned within the literatures on social identity, trust, authenticity, social justice ally development, and White critical studies. Its foundation is the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Williams, 1947), which proposes that unfamiliarity between groups feeds hostility and separation, and that, under the right conditions, contact between people of different groups can reduce this hostility and promote more positive intergroup attitudes. Because many previous studies were done in controlled laboratory conditions, client-therapist relationships, or under common organizational conditions, I was looking for new leads that these participants might surface in the field as they negotiate these aspects of their identities in

relationship. The constant comparative method within grounded theory offered me the opportunity to surface those leads.

I also chose grounded theory because of my interest in surfacing and naming processes and mechanisms that women use to establish and sustain cross-race relationships. Because I wanted to be open to surfacing unanticipated processes or mechanisms not captured in existing literature as well as future directions for research, a focus on emergent theories in the data seemed to fit.

And based on my aim to describe the reality of building these kinds of relationships as closely as possible to those who are in them, I follow the assumption of Strauss and Corbin (1998) who said that “theory derived from data is more likely to resemble the ‘reality’ than is theory derived by putting together a series of concepts based on experience or solely through speculation” (p. 12).

Research Design

This section will review my research design from start to finish, with special attention given to how grounded theory methods were used and what unique design elements were put in place given the nature of my question, its social justice focus, and my positioning. Grounded theory methods can be viewed as a set of principles, practices, and flexible guidelines, rather than rigid practices that must be followed (Charmaz, 2006). The most basic characteristics include:

- (1) Simultaneous involvement in data collection and analysis phases of research; (2) creation of analytic codes and categories developed from data, not from preconceived hypotheses; (3) the development of middle-range theories to explain behaviour [sic] and processes; (4) memo-making, that is, writing analytic notes to explicate and fill out categories . . . (5) theoretical sampling . . . for theoretical construction . . . to check and refine the analysts’ emerging conceptual categories; and (6) delay of the literature review. (Charmaz, 1995, p. 28)

I chose to bracket my literature review as described above by Glaser and Strauss (1967) rather than delay it as Charmaz stated.

Purposeful sampling and participant selection. My sampling strategy was purposeful (Creswell, 2003; Maxwell, 2005) because my research question suggested there were particular women who could provide information about this question that could not be obtained as well from others (Maxwell, 2005, p. 88). In this case, the relevant participants were White European American and Black African American women who have worked across race in relationships for the purpose of making change in a context of social justice. This specificity of focus around race was there because of the unique history of Black and White race relations in the U.S.

I intentionally specified “have worked” because if they focused on current circumstances there was a risk the interview itself could become an intervention into their relationship. Participants confirmed their own involvement by signing a document verifying that the following were true for them: (a) self-identification as either Black African American or White European American, (b) having been in a working relationship of at least one year with a woman of a different race (either White or Black), (c) any phase of that working relationship existing within the last five years, (d) that working relationship considered to be positive, and (e) acknowledgment that their work focused on social justice, as defined by Goodman (2001). This document can be found in Appendix A. For the sake of brevity, I will hereafter refer to these participants as BAA (Black African American) and WEA (White European American).

The timeframes were indicated to provide enough time in relationship to increase the likelihood of depth, but not so long ago that the participants would be relying on their memories for data. I used the word “positive” (after considering several others) so that they would focus on what works, to make the results more useful to other practitioners, and because this term is being

used to frame similar issues in the burgeoning positive organizational scholarship field (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003; Dutton & Ragins, 2007; Roberts & Dutton, 2009).

The social justice context was specified for several reasons. First, if that is the goal of these women's work, I assumed they would be motivated to participate and contribute to building the literature. Second, I thought the likelihood would be higher that the WEA women in this sample would be more aware and conscious about race than their peers in different kinds of work. I wanted to see how they experienced race and how it played out in their work relationships, producing data about how WEA racial identities can be enacted to work toward a just society. Third, I highly value social justice work and those who engage in it and wanted to contribute to their ongoing success. I did not find anything in the literature indicating that the context or sector in which these women work would be a variable of difference, so I did not use this as a qualifying variable, but most of the participants worked in the non-profit sector where much of social justice work occurs.

I did not specify an age range or region of the country in which they were raised, but because these characteristics were noted as significant by many participants, I asked for that information after the interviews were over. The age range resulting from my purposeful sampling was 31 to 84. See Table 3.1 for a summary of participant characteristics.

Table 3.1

Participant Characteristics

Part- ici- pant	Job Title	Sector	Issue focus	Region of childhood	Age
<u>BAA</u>					
1	Consultant	Non-profit	Equity in education	Midwest	55
2	President, Law and Community Foundation, Owner, Conference Center	Non-profit, service	Law, community	Southeast (SC)	58
3	Management Consultant	Government, Higher education, non-profit	Leadership development and minority health	Southeast	46
4	Vice President, Quality Improvement	Non-profit	Quality education for all children, leadership in the child care field, mentoring and coaching youth	Southeast	68
5	Writer and project consultant	Non-profit, for- profit	Arts and culture, education	Southeast	45
6	Director	Non-profit, government, corporate	Collaborative leadership, process design and management, leadership development	Southeast	58
7	Director, Donor, and Business Relations	Non-profit	Public education	Midwest	54

8	CEO And Co-Founder	Non-profit	Women and Diversity issues	NE and SE	60
9	Organizational and management consultant/ I/O Psychologist	For-profit, Non-profit, Government, Higher education	Training design, development and evaluation, job analysis, selection, community development and capacity building, succession planning, executive coaching, org. change, strategic planning, community asset mapping	Southeast	48
10	Managing Partner	Corporate, government, non-profit	Leadership development, systems change, executive coaching, diversity intervention	Northeast	61
11	Activist, Community Leader	Non-profit	Race relations	Southeast	84

WEA

12	Executive Director	Non-profit	Closing the educational achievement gap	Southeast	52
13	CEO	Non-profit	Poverty	Florida (“not really the South”)	50
14	Communication consultant, education advocate	Non-profit	Educational equity, anti-prison-privatization	Midwest	52
15	Executive Director	Non-profit	Health care access for uninsured and underinsured	South (Mississippi) and Midwest (Ohio)	37

16	Consultant	Government/non-profit	Homelessness, affordable housing, domestic violence, workforce development, social support systems	East (W. Va.)—"never considered it South"	56
17	Chief Executive Officer	Non-profit	Eliminating racism, empowering women	DC (South?)	42
18	President/CEO	For-profit	Diversity/women's issues	South	49
19	Consultant	Non-profit	Non-profit organizational development, AIDS	Indiana, Houston, Charlotte	66
20	Executive Director	Non-profit	Access in Charlotte community	Southeast	37
21	Advocate	Nonprofit grassroots	Civic participation—education, women's issues	Midwest	69
22	Associate Executive Director	Non-profit	Ending homelessness	Southeast	31

I used a modified snowball technique to identify women who qualified for this study, beginning with BAA women whom I knew and who have indicated that I am trustworthy. I gauged this in several ways—first and most obviously, if they had told me explicitly at some point that they trusted me. A second criteria I used was if I had been in a working relationship with them and had signals that they trusted me such as telling me they relied on me to keep something confidential or if they chose to share something with me only. And third, if the level of conversation we have had was one where we mutually shared closely held thoughts,

perceptions and values, I made the initial judgment that they were likely to have this level of trust in me. This was my first effort to manage credibility issues that may have arisen from cross-race interviewing. I will treat this issue in more depth in this chapter's section on criteria that may affect my study's quality and rigor. I explained the purpose of my study, stressed the importance of trust, assured confidentiality, asked if they would like to participate, and asked for names of others they would recommend both before and after each of their interviews.

After each of those interviews I invited them to name WEA women with whom they have worked who would be good sources for interviews and met the qualifications I outlined. This follows the earlier point made by Brod et al. (as cited in Edwards, 2006) as advocating that "the most credible and authentic naming of social justice allies is done by members of the oppressed group" (p. 54). After observing the effect of trust on the early interviews with WEA women, two interesting issues emerged at this point in the selection process. One was that I interviewed two WEA women whom I did not know very well, but who were suggested by some of the BAA women. Because I felt that in those interviews the participants seemed hesitant to share some deeper reflections, I then filtered that list of suggestions and for the remaining interviews chose WEA women who I have reason to believe have a high level of trust in me. For the resulting sample, eight of the WEA participants were recommended by two BAA participants and I personally identified the remaining participants.

My learning here is that it turned out to be important to have a high trust level between me and *all* participants, not to assume that the same-race relationships between me and the WEA participants would assume openness. Another interesting pattern that emerged here was that two of the BAA women suggested several WEA women who I knew to be difficult to work with, so when I went back to them for clarification, they indicated that they forgot that this was focused on

positive relationships and removed those names from the list. Both of them had recently experienced frustration in a working relationship with a WEA woman, and several questions came to my mind after reflecting on this. First, did they want me to know of the difficulties they see in these relationships? Second, despite the focus on positive relationships, did the frustration they experienced come to mind more immediately than those that were positive? And third, after the interview, many of the WEA participants commented that it was good to reflect like this, and did that relate to a desire on the BAA women's part to prompt these women to reflect with me? I followed up on these questions by asking one of the primary sources of referrals what was going through her mind as she thought of people to suggest to me. Her response was that in order to produce realistic data, she had wanted to suggest WEA women who represented a range of awareness about race. This is borne out in the resulting data and gave me an interesting opportunity to see the range of awareness among WEA women as BAA women likely experience them, even when the relationships are reported to be positive. On the other hand, this became an obstacle to one of my goals, which was to learn how WEA women successfully enact their racial identity toward a socially just purpose. I ultimately decided that exploring the dynamics of this range of behavior would be more realistic and instructive, and noted that my initial intent would be a useful area of future study.

I worked with this combined sample of two subgroups—one of BAA women who have worked with WEA women and one of WEA women who have worked with BAA women. After discussing this with my committee, I chose not to identify matched pairs of women to avoid intervening in their relationships. After obtaining approval from Antioch's Institutional Review Board, I contacted the initial BAA women by phone and in person to describe the purposes of the study, why I was conducting it, the characteristics of the participants I was looking for, what it

would involve for them, and how their confidentiality would be protected. If they agreed to participate, I e-mailed them an informed consent statement and scheduled the initial interview. The informed consent statement that was signed by each participant can be found in Appendix B.

Interview locations. The interview locations were sites of participants' choosing, within the parameters I set of being (a) a comfortable, quiet place for reflection, (b) private, with few distractions or interruptions, (c) a place where they felt they could be candid, and (d) convenient for them. There was an interesting observation I found here in the choice of place. Several of the BAA women I interviewed mentioned that BAA people are expected to visit WEA people's homes, but that WEAs are less eager to visit theirs. When I look over the location choices (left completely up to the participants), I noticed that there were some differences in choice of turf for the interviews—something that surfaces in the data as important. Only one BAA woman chose to have the conversation at my home compared to six of the WEA women, and six of the BAA women chose either their home or workplace compared to only three of the WEA women. Table 3.2 documents the interview locations chosen by the participants.

Table 3.2

Participant Interview Location Choices

Participant	Race	Interview Location
1	BAA	KG home
2	BAA	Participant office
3	BAA	Coffee shop
4	BAA	Participant office
5	BAA	Participant home
6	BAA	Coffee shop
7	BAA	Participant home
8	BAA	Participant home
9	BAA	Restaurant
10	BAA	Queens University of Charlotte
11	BAA	Participant home
12	WEA	Participant home
13	WEA	Coffee shop
14	WEA	Participant home
15	WEA	KG home
16	WEA	KG home
17	WEA	Participant office
18	WEA	KG home
19	WEA	Queens University of Charlotte
20	WEA	KG home
21	WEA	KG home
22	WEA	KG home

Data gathering. These 22 interviews, each lasting between 35 and 90 minutes, were scheduled between January and May, 2010, and were recorded and transcribed. I used primary and back-up digital transcription equipment to record the interviews, which were transcribed either by my mother, a professional transcription service, or me. This was made clear in the informed consent statement. Everyone was given the option of asking me to transcribe the interview myself, but no one did. I, then, edited each transcript for accuracy and sent it back to the participant for their content editing. I accepted all changes without question. Only one (WEA) participant made substantial content changes.

Design elements unique to this question. In addition to sampling to maximize the likelihood of trust in the research relationship with me, other design elements that were significant given my research question were (a) the use of a research buddy and coding team, (b) administering a short survey asking for feedback on each interview, and (c) presenting preliminary findings to participant focus groups. My research buddy was a BAA female colleague in the Antioch program who was willing to code and/or read every transcript, as well as my theoretical modeling to give me her perspective on what emerged. This was a significant time commitment and the conscientiousness and consistent support she provided was something both the research and I benefitted from greatly. Her interpretation of what was important to note, her wording of codes, and her view of the data from the perspective of someone who had not experienced the interview dynamics was an excellent way to mitigate my blind spots. As I had questions, she had very useful suggestions and proposals, which helped lead me to the findings. The coding team served to give me additional perspectives as I analyzed the data, and my research buddy became an excellent sounding board for questions and observations I developed as the research process progressed.

The short, confidential, online post-interview survey served both as a valuable source of ongoing feedback for me from the participants and a potential data source. This enabled me to learn of any dynamics that surfaced which may have been a result of our respective racial identities and to adjust my interview style in future interviews based on this feedback.

Participation in this survey was 100%. The questions were as follows:

1. Please describe factors that caused you to feel comfortable or uncomfortable in the interview with Karen Geiger.
2. What about the interview setting worked or did not work for you?
3. What did Karen Geiger do or say that affected your willingness to be candid?
4. What other feedback do you have for Karen in future interviews?
5. If you would like to suggest other possible interview participants, please write their names and e-mail addresses here.

I used this feedback in a reiterative, ongoing process as I progressed through the interview phase. Participants would typically respond within a week to the request for feedback, and I would read over their comments prior to the subsequent interview. Their feedback became part of the research process in that it shaped my interview skills by intentionally continuing behaviors they reported as conducive to candor and comfort, and discontinuing behaviors that were not.

The analysis of the interview feedback produced results that mirrored both the literature on quality interviewing in qualitative research (Kvale, 1996; Lee, 1999; Schatzman & Strauss, 1973), as well as some of the findings. Most of the feedback indicated that a positive environment was created for candor, privacy, and comfort in the interview, and participants noted the following specific things that contributed to that:

- Comfort and layout of the setting;

- my communicating support and a calm, non-judgmental attitude;
- knowing me from previous interactions;
- having confidentiality issues covered and assured;
- sharing in my research purposes and passion for the subject;
- my taking the time beforehand to talk informally and build rapport;
- my questioning being probing but not intrusive;
- assuring privacy for the interview;
- trusting me (some through “checking me out” with friends) and gauging me as authentic, candid, and compassionate;
- having chosen the setting themselves; and
- feeling heard.

Some factors they reported as difficult, albeit mildly so, were the distraction of the microphone, a sense of inadequacy in formulating answers because of the complexity of these issues, being asked to take time to read over their transcript, and coming to some realizations during the interview that were uncomfortable for them. The aggregate results from this survey can be found in Appendix C.

I invited all participants to hear my preliminary findings on June 28 and 29 in order to do a test of face credibility of my results and a test for my developing model. I decided, with my Chair’s help, to structure these meetings so that the women would be in same-race groups to keep the conversation within groups as safe as possible. We felt this would assure that their reactions to the data would be open, honest, and uncontaminated by the reactions of others. As I presented these early findings, I asked them to give me feedback on the following questions:

- Do you agree that this describes your experience? Can you see yourself in this data?

- Do you think what the other group said reflects accurately how you experience them?

The meeting was optional and was attended by seven of the WEA participants and seven of the BAA participants, constituting 64% of participants. The meetings were quite different in tone and level of conversation. Both groups were very curious about what the other had to say and found the findings rich, interesting, and in one case “heartbreaking” (WEA participant), but there was more active discussion, questioning, and identification of discrepancies among the data from the BAA women. All of the feedback was extremely helpful and caused me to go back and clarify some of the codes, re-interrogate some of the data, and organize it more clearly. My notes from their feedback are summarized in Appendix D.

Data collection. Grounded theory data collection can involve tools such as field observation, document review, and in-depth interviewing. This study utilized interviewing. Because I was targeting relationships that had existed in the past, field observation was not feasible, and document review was not relevant.

I began each interview with open-ended questions about their experience of working in a cross-race relationship such as: “Tell me about the times you have worked with a BAA/WEA woman. What projects did you work on?” and “As you thought about the confirmation of participation you just signed, what came to mind?” The grounded theory method dictated that I not rely on a set of predetermined questions, rather to begin with an open question and probe their answers to learn the meanings they were communicating.

During the interview process, I recorded details about my observations during the interviews, periodic conversations with my research team, and peripheral conversations that had an impact on me during this time frame. This chronological diary of memos captured my

reflexive thinking, feeling, experiences, and perceptions throughout the research process. My reflection based on those memos will be discussed in more detail in the chapter on implications for leadership and change.

Simultaneous data collection and analysis. My research process began with my research problem and probing questions that were based on sensitizing concepts from the literatures on trust, authenticity, social identity, and social justice ally development. As I collected my initial data, I began the constant comparative method (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), coding each transcript line-by-line. This allowed me to capture participant views as they were reported. As I coded each line, thoughts or questions would surface that I would memo about and which generated emerging questions to explore in subsequent interviews. I noticed, in early interviews, that trust and respect were frequently mentioned in a general way, so in subsequent interviews, I probed for more specificity on the messages the participants attributed to those words and how those concepts played out in practice. This produced some very interesting data, particularly around authenticity, trust, and respect that will be useful to explore in future studies. More detail about this will be provided in the discussion chapter.

Coding was accomplished with the use of NVivo 8 (QSR International, 2008), a qualitative data analysis software program. This program allowed me to import, sort and analyze interview transcripts, capture memos, develop graphic models, and share files with my research team.

I coded the data from all interviews in one data set, but kept a close eye on differences between the two subgroups using queries of the data enabled by the software. This allowed me to see differences in the codes according to race and which views were shared by both sets of participants.

The coding team coded the first five interviews with me, and we had weekly conference calls to go over commonalities, differences, and questions I had generated from reviewing our collective codes. After those first five were complete, I combined codes that seemed to be expressing similar ideas to make the coding more efficient and coded the next three transcripts along with my research buddy. We also had weekly phone meetings to discuss our perceptions of what was emerging. As we progressed, I noted that the wording of her coding often was preferable to mine in its specificity, questioning our assumptions about our codes kept me close to the data, and her perspectives on the overall sense of the interview's messages clearly added depth to the analysis. After the first eight interviews were coded, I engaged in the process of focused coding (Charmaz, 1995), which allowed me to begin to synthesize the codes as I moved toward explaining what the data were saying and followed that with axial coding, where I began to explore the relationships between the categories emerging in the previous phase with some that seemed to be subcategories. This is where I looked at the data as a whole and asked, "What 'all' is involved here?" (Schatzman, 1991, p. 310). Here, I began developing an explanatory matrix that seemed to capture what the data were telling me. This process produced some questions that caused me to go back to the data and see if the answers were there. It was at this point that I began to see the themes emerging around the metaphors of "bubble" and "armor" (the precursor to "shell"), and explored how those might be depicted by the codes I had.

Memo writing. As I coded the transcripts, I wrote frequent memos that I used to elaborate on properties, characteristics, assumptions, and actions that seemed to be in the data. This enabled me to see emergent codes as processes to explore, rather than simply sorted data. It also helped me develop an explanatory analysis and form a basis for making decisions about theoretical sampling (Charmaz, 1995, 2006). I differentiated memos from field notes. While

there was some overlap, I saw memos as specifically having to do with data and connections between them, and field notes as incorporating my own personal reflections after each interview or consultation with my research team. I would periodically review the field notes to see if there were new connections emerging that would either support existing memos or create new ones. At the point where I felt we had reached theoretical saturation, I had 33 memos, some examples including (a) stories we were taught about race and the ladder of inference, (b) categorizing relationships to accommodate differences, (c) upsetting the apple cart of one's own thinking, (d) ignorance versus prejudice and implications for authenticity, and one called (e) nice. These helped me see the systemic way race is socialized, how assumptions are developed and resisted, how relationships are navigated, and how the view is remarkably different based on one's perspective. All of the memos were very helpful in the interpretation process.

Theoretical sampling. Theoretical sampling is the process by which I identified codes that seemed to be reinforced by much of the data but that needed more description. For example, after the first five interviews, there were many codes related to trust which needed more explanation. This involved more intentional probing in subsequent interviews about this emerging category. As the interviews continued, other codes that asked for more explanation were those having to do with authenticity and respect because they were often mentioned as generalities and my subsequent probing produced much more interesting nuances.

I often found that participants would begin with an assumption that these relationships were no different than others with same-race colleagues, but upon further examination, they would acknowledge that there were interesting differences here. When I felt that I had categories that seemed to best describe the data and seemed to have adequate and relevant detail, they were treated as concepts (Charmaz, 1995) and enabled me to see a story emerge from the data. After

coding 22 interviews and reviewing the data that emerged, my Chair and I tentatively decided that theoretical saturation had been achieved, as grounded theory dictates (Glaser, 1978, pp. 124-126; Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pp. 61-62, 111-112). This decision was based on the observation that (a) no new or relevant data was emerging regarding each category other than additional illustrations of those categories, and (b) the categories were well developed in terms of their properties and dimensions. I confirmed this decision after the focus groups, which I felt validated the relationships among categories that I had presented (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 212). Based on the data I had gathered at this point, no information was emerging around new categories, and for the last few interviews, there were no new properties, dimensions, conditions, or consequences (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 136).

Development of middle-range theories. At this point, I developed a “middle-range theory” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 7), which involves “abstract renderings of specific social phenomena that were grounded in data . . . [and] contrasted with the ‘grand theories’ of mid-century sociology that . . . had no foundation in systematically analyzed data” (p. 7). These middle-range theories began to demonstrate relationships between the conceptual categories that emerged from my data and began to describe the conditions under which these relationships were formed, changed, or were sustained.

After drawing several theoretical models that seemed to express aspects of what I saw in the data, I saw an integrated “story” (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973, p. 118) emerge as a result of the coded social processes (Clarke, 2005). These models were revised several times after consultation with my Chair and with the participant focus groups. I revisited my memos and field notes several times in this process as well to see if there were any thoughts I had had along the way that helped me depict what I was seeing.

Ethical Issues

There were several benefits for participants in this study, which, of course, must be weighed along with risks. Those benefits included (a) the opportunity to reflect on and learn from the cross-race relationships they developed, something frequently mentioned by the participants, (b) acknowledgement of their success in creating a relationship that was positive, (c) sharing their wisdom so others who want to do this work can learn from them, (d) validation resulting from reading and reviewing their own transcripts, and (e) contributing to the literature that advances the elements of effective social justice work. Many of the participants referenced these benefits, while also reporting self-consciousness resulting from reading their transcript and noticing unconscious habits of speech. After my note of thanks for her part in the focus group, one BAA participant responded that the discussion was “cathartic and therapeutic” for her. There seemed to be a universal acknowledgment of the importance of this research at many levels among the participants, as evidenced by what they said and the seriousness with which they took the interview, the transcript editing, the post-interview survey, and the subsequent focus group.

Risks I anticipated included (a) questions around confidentiality, (b) revisiting difficulties in past relationships, and (c) exposing behaviors participants may have regretted or thoughts that participants had previously kept hidden with regard to racial awareness. Participants had several checkpoints in place to protect them from these risks. First, I made it clear that no one else would see the transcripts except my research team and me. Second, all participants had the opportunity to review the transcripts before they were coded and were given the right to disguise their names or projects they mentioned in the interviews. Several participants used this opportunity. And third, the informed consent statement assured them that the recordings and all related research

materials will be kept in a secure file cabinet in my office indefinitely, as stipulated by Antioch's IRB Committee.

The risk of revisiting difficulties in past relationships did surface and it seemed that the level of risk differed according to the participant's race. The BAA women seemed to relay these issues clearly and many of them mentioned that they had discussed this with others before the interview. For the WEA women, surfacing these difficulties became part of their reflection and was often combined with the third risk, which was to surface thoughts that had previously been hidden. The process of reflection about these relationships seemed to occur more often in the interview and for the first time for them. I saw this as data in itself, but for the purpose of the interview, I did my best to mitigate this risk by allowing plenty of time for them to process their new awareness by communicating supportiveness and acceptance.

An additional risk raised by my research question was how the women were identified as WEA or BAA. It would be unethical and inappropriate for me to identify them by race, so when I invited them to participate I included this in the description of the appropriate candidate and asked them to self-identify by agreeing to participate.

Criteria Relevant to My Study's Quality and Rigor

Credibility. As a qualitative study, the quality of my findings has more to do with accuracy, confirmability, trustworthiness, and credibility than with more positivist criteria of reliability, validity, and generalizability. The primary credibility threats to my study had to do with the use of interviews and the resulting reliance on participants' memories for accurate data, assurance of confidentiality, my positioning as a WEA woman, the level of trust between me and each participant, and the level of the participants' social identity awareness. I will elaborate on each of these in the discussion chapter and explain how I mitigated them.

Plausibility. The issue of generalizability of this qualitative study can be more helpfully viewed as plausibility (Maxwell, 2005). To increase the likelihood that these results are plausible, I inserted several mechanisms during the course of my data gathering and analysis that tested for plausibility. I will also explain this further in the discussion chapter.

To prepare for my research, I conducted a pilot study of two participants in April, 2009. The next chapter outlines the design and findings from that pilot study.

Chapter IV: Lessons Learned from My Pilot Study

In preparation for this study, I conducted a small pilot study involving one Black African American and one White European American woman, both of whom focus their work around issues of social justice. I used a grounded theory approach to interviewing and analyzing the resulting data, and my description of the process and its results can be found in Appendix E. I include it here because of the lessons I learned that shaped my dissertation research design.

The first lesson I learned was the wisdom of avoiding matched pairs as interview participants, even if they assured me that they would be appropriate for my study. While I sought an unmatched pair for this pilot study, two of the women I talked with felt strongly that they had worked out potential conflicts and would be willing to participate. Because of their certainty and my Advisor's approval, I chose to interview them as a learning experience. What I encountered was an interview dynamic in both cases where they were curious about what the other had said; a possible hesitance to be completely candid because they knew I was interviewing the other; and a post-interview request by one of them to see the other's transcript. I witnessed several of the cautions against intervening in the relationship that my Advisor had mentioned.

A second lesson was in handling the interview site, particularly if the participants did not have an office. I learned that it is more effective to provide some parameters around the characteristics of the ideal place and have an option to suggest if they do not have one. In these two cases, a coffee shop was suggested which I vetoed because of noise or privacy issues.

I learned a lot about interview techniques in these pilot interviews that I applied in my study. I learned to encourage them to tell stories rather than asking for examples or specifics which generated different kinds of answers and less rich data. I also learned the consequences of

asking compound questions, which, as my Advisor had predicted, generated only an answer to the latter question.

Another critical lesson was in capturing the telling of rich stories when the formality of the recording was over. In the pilot interviews, I noted these in detailed memos, but I thought of two alternatives that I used in my full study: one was to make the recording equipment less visible so as to reduce the formality, and/or to ask if I could continue to record if this happened.

While I noted the value of transcribing the interviews myself in these pilot interviews, I had to balance the benefit of this with the reality of conducting 22 interviews. Because there was value in my awareness of what I had missed during the actual interview, I transcribed the first few interviews myself, but listened to all interviews as I edited subsequent transcripts that were transcribed by a third-party transcriber. Reading them offered the same benefit, and doing the first few sharpened my listening in subsequent interviews.

As in the BAA woman's case, I also saw the value of asking participants for feedback after the interviews so I could learn how my style and approach affected their candor positively or negatively. I developed a more specific set of questions to ask them in the full study and planned to use the feedback in two ways: first, as an ongoing source of feedback for me as an interviewer to adjust subsequent interviews; and second, as additional data for my research question to weave into my findings as a separate source of data.

During the data analysis phase, I learned not to worry about managing the quantity of data by creating axial codes that paralleled the questions asked. Instead, I allowed the data to speak to me and coded what emerged. I also learned to use very specific open codes and not to conceptualize at this early stage.

An additional lesson I learned was from the emphasis on both women's parts that the context of the South plays an important role in how racial identity plays out in relationships. I listened carefully for references to this in subsequent interviews and probed to get more specifics about how this impacts cross-race relationships.

A final and critical lesson I learned which shaped my research was using my reflexive notes as a key part of the data, not as afterthoughts or supplements. How we all related in the interviews was as much a way to explore this question as what the interview transcripts revealed. Foldy (2005) said it best:

Research and identity reverberate through each other, affording both caution and promise. Caution, in that researchers should be mindful of how our identities are present in every aspect of our work. Promise, in that such awareness can lead to new insights about ourselves, our areas of inquiry, and the world we both inhabit and shape. (p. 50)

The next chapter presents my findings in detail, offering a model that is based on my interpretation of these participants' experiences in cross-race relationships.

Chapter V: Findings

My interest in exploring this research question was to learn what my research participants' lives were like and what occurred in the research setting I joined as I sought to understand "what all is going on here" in these relationships (Schatzman, 1991, p. 310). Following the principles of grounded theory, I will share here my interpretation of this phenomenon in the form of an explanatory matrix (Schatzman, 1991), telling the story that emerged as I synthesized the data. I will continue to use WEA when referring to White European American participants and BAA to refer to Black African American participants.

I honor the 22 participants in this study for their candor and commitment to exploring this phenomenon with me. What was discussed occasionally brought up discomfort, pain, and new awareness; all of which were treated by them as part of the overall purpose of moving this issue forward. I also acknowledge my own subjectivity in this interpretation, which was a filter for the understanding I am about to share.

The reporting of this data, because of the nature of the social construction of race, cannot rest simply at the meso level of the relationship. As the resulting theoretical propositions will show, there was an ongoing and fluid interaction between the macro level of societal experience and socialization, the intrapsychic work each participant chose to do, and the resulting meso level of relationship conditions, processes, and consequences. This study illuminated how cross-race relationships can be sites of constructive change, while also incorporating that fluidity.

Context and Conditions

This study is bounded by several contextual elements that were named by participants and which led to conditions that shaped the ways they approached, navigated, and thought about these relationships. Kools, McCarthy, Durham, and Robrecht (1996) explained these terms:

The explanatory matrix represents an organizational prototype that further differentiates the innate characteristics of identified dimensions into various conceptual components such as context, conditions, process (actions and interactions), or consequences. Context indicates the boundaries for an inquiry—that is, the situation or environment in which dimensions are embedded. . . . Conditions are dimensions of a phenomenon that facilitate, block, or in some other way shape actions and/or interactions—the processes of a given phenomenon. (p. 318)

The South. Many of the participants in this study placed their experience of race relations in the context of the Southeastern United States and, more specifically, which part of the Southeast one was in. References were made to the “old South,” “deep South,” “Southern hospitality,” and “Southern Whites” to distinguish the uniqueness of this context. More specifically, women of both races reported that where one grew up had an effect on one’s level of racial awareness, that WEA women in the South are more concerned about appearing racist than in other regions of the country, that Southern hospitality means being nice and not saying what you really think, and that childhood experiences across race live on, even when they are unconscious.

I grew up in Augusta, which means that I was probably 20 years ahead of her in terms of perceptions of things, perceptions of race-related things. (BAA participant 3)

And I think in the South because there have been so many issues around race, White women would be probably concerned that someone would think they were racist or someone would think that they don’t care or don’t understand. So the risk is being judged that you’re a racist or you’re insensitive to racial issues or really you don’t really know what’s going on. (BAA participant 10)

I think a definition of nice is sometimes what we call Southern hospitality, that you go along to get along, sometimes. That there are times really what you want to say is not what you can say. And I’m going to say it’s not necessarily good to be politically correct. (BAA participant 8)

I mean, my Grandma had Lizzie who worked for her, and she was a Black woman and she’d say “we took care of her like she was our family.” So that mentality’s still in the South now. (WEA participant 1)

A more specific contextual element here was the historical relationship between BAAs

and WEAs, and the fear and distrust that remain from the history of slavery.

Her fears come from a history and they're not 100% accurate, but I also think there's a valid reason for these fears to exist, particularly in racial relationships and the history of not keeping your word. (WEA participant 11)

And I think that's because White people are still blamed for slavery, for what was handed down to them. (BAA participant 11)

And so when I raised my hand once I was even told I was making trouble, which was very old South. Will you stop making trouble. It's just the legacy of making trouble. It's basically saying you don't have a voice and it's controlling what's appropriate to say. And when you talk about being authentic or genuine it's really kind of shutting that part of you down. (BAA participant 7)

Finally, the specific location of this study in Charlotte, North Carolina, was raised as significant, as its culture affects race relations within the community. There were several common observations about its culture that were mentioned. First, participants observed low levels of willingness to talk about race or to trust across race.

At one time we did not have that problem, but now it seems like everybody wants to be in their own little niche, and not trust the next person to go into that, go to that next step. (BAA participant 4)

Second, there was a shared perception among many participants that, in Charlotte, access to power and other resources is gained through reliance on informal networks.

I think that there's power in networking and I think the way that generally happens is that people know people and you have to know people beyond your circle in order for that to be effective. Particularly in Charlotte, that is so true here. You hear about jobs, you hear about opportunities, you get invited to serve on boards, all that happens because of networking. That's not because someone puts out an ad and says we're looking for somebody to do a particular job or we're looking for somebody to sit on the board. Here in particular it's knowing other people and having an expansive network. (BAA participant 7)

Third, participants noted an increasing distance between the "haves" and "have nots."

I mean here we're in a world with some people being the "haves" and some people being the "have nots," or at least in the last 20 years in our community, it's gotten really bad. (WEA participant 2)

Another observation was a norm of being politically correct.

The project needed to be the role model for the community and it just wasn't. I mean if the leadership is all White, it looks bad I think from my standpoint. There was some tokenism in terms of buy-in from the Black community but I really think the Black community never really engaged in it. There might have been some Black people in the banks or whatever that said "yeah Bank of America will be involved" because it was the politically right thing to do, but at the grassroots level, people in the Black community were not giving it a whole lot of thought and a lot of credence. Here it is, here comes another thing the White community's coming in to tell us. (WEA participant 5)

Finally, the effects of urban renewal on the Black community in Charlotte were also recognized as providing a backdrop for these relationships.

I don't know if you've ever read any of the history of Brooklyn in Charlotte, and the urban renewal, the urban cleansing. I ended up finding every newspaper article that was written on urban renewal from the first inklings of it in the late '50s through the entire second ward project. And read as the city council promised that Second Ward High would not be moved or destroyed. And promised that such-and-such church would not be done this. And promised that this'll happen, and every single promise was broken. I mean every single one. And that's only a few years ago, you know. And so, you read that history, how can you not think those broken promises and those betrayals absolutely have an effect on people even if somebody doesn't know that story? (WEA participant 7)

As is evident here, the conditions this context produced are distrust, a sense of betrayal, frustration, and despair before these relationships are even formed.

Social justice work. The strong and sometimes lifelong commitment to advancing social justice is another element that is embedded as context in this study. This is to be expected because it was an explicit focus of my research design, and the participants' level of personal and professional commitment to social justice was clear throughout these interviews. The following excerpts illustrate just a small part of why I was so inspired by each and every participant, and why the work is a strong motivator to learn from these relationships.

I worked in the criminal justice system and even though it's about laws, a lot of it is about social justice because people come in who have, for the most part, lived in depressed areas. They are under-privileged and most times under-served. So, it was

more than sitting making decisions affecting the law, but it was making decisions impacting and affecting people's lives—the day-to-day activities, what they did and how they lived and how their families lived. (BAA participant 2)

It's an alignment with my life and who I am as a person. I can say for certain in my first career, I didn't care how much I enjoyed being with someone during the day, there was not a high probability that I would have any interest with being with them in the evening because who I was during the day did not have anything to do who I was as a person. So now the job is so connected to what I think and breathe and dream about every minute. (WEA participant 2)

Most of what I have done over the last 40 years has been in the early childhood field, I guess it's because it's attached to education. And given my experience as a 15-year-old, I said okay, what happened to you, you want to make sure that it doesn't happen to somebody else. (BAA participant 4)

So when I started in that I remember saying "I'll tell you it's a holy privilege as a White woman to be here in a struggle that I can never really know." (WEA participant 1)

A related observation some participants made was that the macro social justice issues they faced in their work were mirrored in the groups that carried out that work. This was recognized, but no one reported that it was surfaced and dealt with openly.

And they were also very mindful of the fact that this whole project was about being inclusive by the very design of the whole [project]. The irony was just amazing that it was a project about inclusivity and it was run by two White people. (WEA participant 5)

If this group, the core group who has the most at stake, the most motivation for doing things differently, to break down whatever barriers, if we're not doing it, why the heck will it ever take hold? Why would we ever expect whatever we deliver to change other people if, with all the incentives that exist in this core, it cannot happen exponentially. And that just, it's hard to see that, I mean we're the experts, we know what this should look like and we aren't practicing it at all. (BAA participant 5)

Patterns of segregation and discrimination. Both BAA and WEA participants also noted the past and present patterns of segregation and discrimination that shape their and others' lives, leading to a lack of familiarity with people who are different and to a sense that the system based on race is set up to treat people differently.

They hired me, and we went to the restaurant—there was one little restaurant in a

cinderblock building. We went in for lunch, and the staff took me in. I had just finished Chapel Hill graduate school then. They served us on paper plates because they weren't going to serve Black people on the china plates. And what we found is at that time, nobody Black lived inside the city limits. Nobody would rent to anyone; they all lived in trailers in the fields of tobacco, basically cotton, some cotton, but tobacco primarily. The Black people in that town went to a back window and had take-out from that restaurant in 1975, so to me one of the things that you find is the impact of change is completely relative. (BAA participant 6)

Our world is set up to be divided. (WEA participant 11)

Barack Obama. The recent election of an African American President was noted by several BAA participants as having both positive and negative effects. Some reported that they see White people being more willing to bring up race issues, while others point out that his election has brought up new waves of racist behavior.

So I ended up riding with somebody who's a fairly new member of the organization and she said, which was real interesting to me, that since Obama has been President more African Americans who are in the service industry like in restaurants are looking her in the eye more than they ever did before. It gives them kind of permission. (BAA participant 7)

I mean, with an African-American President in office, I am seeing race and racism issues all over. I mean it's like here we are again, you know? Whatever has gone dormant has now flourished one more time and it reminds us. (BAA participant 9)

These contextual elements were so rich that exploring any one of them individually could have been a study in itself. In combination, these contextual elements point to the inseparability of the macro level of these systems on the meso level of relationship, as well as the power of history, community, culture, and even current events as a mediator of perceptions and beliefs. I will reflect on how they may have influenced the findings in the discussion chapter.

Generative Metaphors

If one considers the socialization around racism and the resulting beliefs and assumptions as a function of human cognition, we can describe the thought processes of racism as schemas, which are "top-down, conceptually-driven, or theory-driven processes, which simply means

processes heavily influenced by one's organized prior knowledge, as opposed to processes that are more bottom-up or data driven" (Fiske & Taylor, 1991, p. 98). As participants will demonstrate, these schemas are those beliefs and assumptions that are socialized by family and society around racial differences. In the case of racism, these schemas are the basis of negative stereotypes, self-perpetuating attributions, and defensive routines (Barrett & Cooperrider, 1990) and have a tendency to persevere even when discrediting information is presented (Anderson, Lepper, & Ross, 1980). Changing these defensive routines, disrupting these stereotypes, and interrupting their perpetuation has been explored by those in the organization development field who work with groups that face these obstacles.

To release these groups from their defensive routines, Schon (as cited in Barrett & Cooperrider, 1990) introduced the concept of "generative metaphors . . . [as] a way of supporting the cultivation of fresh perceptions and the acquisition of new schemas" (p. 222). The principles they present can be very useful to those of us who are interested in the social deconstruction and re-imagining of race. The first principle offers metaphor as an invitation to see the world in a new way: "Good metaphors provoke new thought, excite us with novel perspectives, vibrate with multivocal meanings, and enable people to see the world with fresh perceptions not possible in any other way" (p. 223). In this way, the fixed schemas around what we were taught about the other may begin to be loosened.

The second principle is that metaphors facilitate the learning of new knowledge. Through playful experimentation and testing, expansion of cognitive frames begins to occur. While racism is certainly not playful, the use of metaphors can distance people from the defensiveness and impression management that may surface as the subject is raised. The third principle of metaphor is that it "provides a steering function for future actions and perceptions" (Barrett & Cooperrider,

1990, p. 223). As a visionary tool, the use of metaphors can help us to re-imagine social constructions.

Related to this is the fourth principle, that “metaphor invites active experimentation in areas of rigidity and helps people overcome self-defeating defenses” (Barrett & Cooperrider, 1990, p. 223). This provides an indirect way to deal with the issues around racism, without confronting sensitivities directly. In their view, the use of metaphors can transform thinking, especially when rigid schemas are involved.

As I reviewed the findings before developing an explanatory matrix, I saw two metaphors emerge from the words of some of the participants that seemed to capture the dynamics each group of women was describing. I offer each metaphor below along with its properties as a way to think about the dynamics of race and as a tool for people to consider seeing the world in a new way, expand their thinking, overcome areas of rigidity, and create new ways of thinking and acting (Barrett & Cooperrider, 1990, p. 224). In this way, I offer my first explanatory matrix using these generative metaphors.

The Insular Bubble of Privilege

One of two central dimensions that emerged from the data was the metaphor of an “insular bubble,” representing the experience of systemic privilege according to perspectives both in and outside that bubble. The word “bubble” was used by several BAA participants and became a useful construct to organize data about the WEA perspective. I chose to present this dimension first, because the second key dimension, the “protective shell,” seemed to me to be largely in reaction to the insular bubble. In her focus group, one BAA participant commented that these terms might be too static and do not capture the movement or the situational nature of the experience, and also have the potential to be trivialized. My purpose in using them is to capture

in a shorthand and graphic way what can be a powerful term to work with on both sides. The language of these terms may help to name dynamics in interactions that can be discussed, learned from, and reconstructed. Therefore, I see them as necessarily quite dynamic in their application.

These two perspectives complicate the questions grounded theory caused me to ask, such as “*What* do people assume is real?” and “*How* do they construct and act on their view of reality?” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 127). There were strikingly different and often opposing assumptions between these subgroups about reality and how they acted on it, which will be delineated here. I will begin with how this insular bubble is created.

Socialization and life experience. While the focus of the interviews was on cross-race relationships, at some point, most participants referred to messages they were taught about race as a result of either childhood socialization from family or community or experiences they remembered that had messages about race embedded in them. These presented additional conditions that had an impact on the interactions they experienced.

Types of messages. Messages about African Americans reported by WEA women were *implicit, indirect, and negative (about the other)*. In addition, messages were often either incongruent with observed behavior or said in a different intonation than was usual.

And you slowly kind of start to peel it back and you realize oh, that’s what you mean by when you say that, or that’s what you mean when you’re whispering about, well, they’re different. It’s so hidden that it doesn’t really slap you in the face as much because everyone’s nice and kind until you really are old enough to understand what they’re saying. (WEA participant 9)

These messages begin to shape the subject of race for WEA women as one that is kept hidden and that triggers one’s efforts to maintain a non-racist image.

Role of parents in communicating messages about Black African Americans. The role of parents in teaching the WEA participants about race was usually by example, as in the

excerpts above, and what was taught was to avoid labeling people by race and to speak respectfully.

I was told as a child that you never describe anybody by their physical characteristics. And I have a feeling that's just deep in me so I'll cringe when someone says, "she's the large one, or she's the small one, or she's the Black one, or she's the short one, or she's the old one"—I mean anything that describes you. It's like fingernails on the chalkboard. And it may be because I was told that as child, I wonder. But I cringe to this day when I hear somebody say—and it's shocking how common, and it's mostly around race that you'll hear someone say "the Black guy." (WEA participant 2)

Public school and teaching folk tend to call themselves by the last name. Like, I would call you Geiger. Not Karen or not Ms. Geiger, just Geiger. Or they'd call you Miss Karen. It happens in every school in CMS and I think it's annoying because I grew up with this very liberal family in the DC area where as long as we spoke respectfully, it was appropriate to call an adult by their first name. (WEA participant 6)

Contact with Black African Americans. WEA participants frequently described their childhood as growing up in a "White world" where the majority or all of their contact was with people of the same race. The only cross-race childhood experience that was mentioned was a negative integration experience, and that one reinforced the lack of ongoing cross-race contact.

I mean because the way we are wired with society, and my life, and background, and grew up in a White world, and I live in a White world. (WEA participant 2)

I never really had the experience, the opportunity, to have a deeper relationship, an ongoing, longer term relationship with people individuals and groups of people that are basically different than what I come from, which is a small town, middle class, White, European, almost Catholic and Lutheran. I mean half the town was Catholic, half the town was Lutheran. So there wasn't a whole lot of difference there. (WEA participant 10)

I know growing up, for example, my parents deliberately had my brother and I bused into a different school to help make it more integrated and it was a terrible experience because it wasn't well planned and I had pregnant fifth graders in my class. It was not great and they would wonder, my mom would say I had lots of friends at school of all different backgrounds but the girls that I became close to, and I'm still close to now, are White. (WEA participant 6)

Resulting beliefs and assumptions. Participants then revealed beliefs and philosophies resulting from these learned messages. The primary beliefs the WEA participants reported that

they continue to struggle with were not to be closed-minded, to set a standard to be less racist than their parents or community, not to label people by their physical characteristics and to speak respectfully.

Every generation we shave off a little bit more. I think about my Mom and how she was raised in [hometown], Southern woman. She'd like to tell you she's not a racist, but she's certainly biased against Blacks and then her mother much more so. And so as much as I like to think I behave in a certain way, something goes through my mind that makes me realize I'm putting that person in a box because of their race. I still listened and I still made changes, so that tells me that I'm slightly more evolved than my seven generations of women going back. (WEA participant 7)

What is significant here is that most of those lessons learned from their socialization may later result in a handicap in navigating cross-race relationships.

Properties of the insular bubble. Both subgroups of participants referred to what the insular bubble looks like from the inside and the outside, creating an interesting set of properties that can be used to describe the insular bubble of privilege as a whole, its boundaries, and what properties make up its interior. In this section, I will unpack the construct of the insular bubble as a metaphor to capture dynamics around privilege and discuss its properties.

The primary properties of the insular bubble of privilege that emerged in this study are that it is *polarizing, socially constructed and perpetuated, tenacious*, and reveals *high stakes when burst*. These are depicted in Figure 5.1.

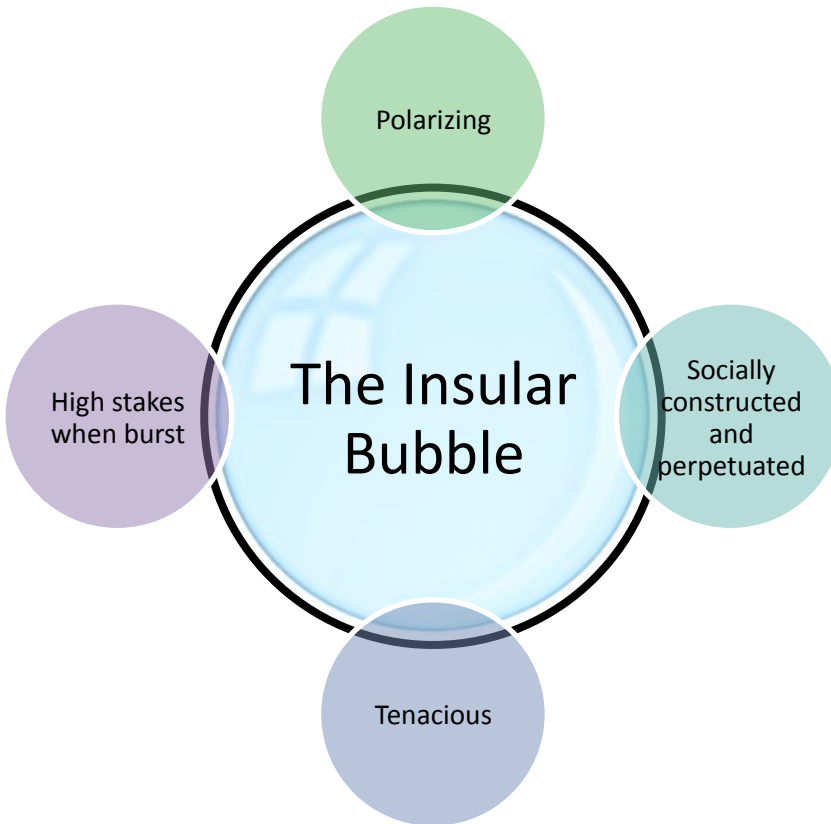


Figure 5.1. Properties of the insular bubble.

Polarizing. Power and entitlement are perceived to be inside the insular bubble, regardless of which perspective was taken. Authority is assumed by those inside, deference is given to those inside, and qualifications for success for those who are both inside and outside the insular bubble are designed by those inside.

All the White people need to get out of the way and not feel like they need to be in charge of everything and we don't do a very good job of that. If we want health disparities to be taken seriously, then we have to get White people to think that it's an issue because as long as the Black community are the only people who think health disparity is an issue then it's really not going to ever be elevated. It doesn't matter if we have a Black President from now until the end of the world. If White people have most of the power, which they still do, and they don't think it's a problem, then it's not going to be a problem. (WEA participant 4)

I think that this person's entire professional career and civic career has been one of presumption of authority, entitlement, I'm right. (BAA participant 1)

What I see frequently is maybe a group that's trying to work together and the White women are prima donnas, liberal prima donnas, or they think they're liberal prima donnas. They think they're in this environment and working on this cause, but the Black women around the table are devalued. It seems in some way that their contribution or their presence is not valued at the same level. (BAA participant 10)

Socially constructed and perpetuated. Participants agreed that this insular bubble of privilege is supported by society's ongoing programming, and that all races seem to collude in perpetuating its existence. As socially constructed boundaries, they saw them as being fueled by beliefs, ignorance, attitudes, misinformation, choices, and cultural values that mask inequities.

I think White privilege is really hard to acknowledge because our culture is all about how I pulled myself up by my own bootstraps. (WEA participant 3)

I don't think anybody's living in a vacuum, but I don't always think that a White person is prejudiced because they behave a certain way. I think many of my friends feel that that's just the way it is. It's just the way that they have been socialized and it's their privileged upbringing. (BAA participant 10)

That's one example of where continuously we see these things happening and nobody says anything to each other. You are just going and you're accepting that that's just the way it is, but then on the other hand it happens also on the other side. (BAA participant 10)

Tenacious. A third property of the insular bubble is its tenacity. Participants noted its resistance to change, and observed people inside who are unwilling and/or unable to do the hard work to dissipate it.

Down to the smallest/ least influential person, if they had to make a choice between you and somebody else, you [White woman interviewer] and Barack Obama, guess what they'd choose, you. That's still operating. That's the context we're in, guys. (BAA participant 9)

I think it's scary because of what it would really mean [for our workplace] to be a truly integrated place and a truly comfortable place for people of different backgrounds. They are not things that we're willing to do or it would just be such a tremendous amount of work. But it's very worthwhile work, we'd serve people better. But it would take a lot of broken relationships. I think it would take a lot of hurtful things being said and heard. And so we ask people of Color to assimilate. (WEA participant 11)

High stakes when burst. “Bursting the bubble” refers to the experience on the part of those privileged of having that privilege surfaced and made explicit, or when they become suddenly aware of the larger system of dominance and marginalization of which they are a part through information from the outside. This can include receiving new information about how one is perceived, about how one comes across, about the existence of the insular bubble, or about how the other sees reality. The stakes for having one’s bubble burst were reported as high, with both positive and challenging outcomes.

Positive outcomes were reported by both WEA and BAA participants. WEA participants reported that, once their insular bubble had burst, they were much more willing to invite people to call them on things they would say or do, more willing and determined to bring up race issues with other Whites, more interested in getting to know and organize with those outside the bubble, better able to own what Whites have historically done to Black people, and more capable of owning one’s privilege and identity as a White person.

But I went up to [White male community leader] and I said “Wow. This is a great event. If I were looking for a date, this would be a really good place for me right now. But, don’t you think we should be looking at more diversity in our future?” And, I was thinking about both women and Hispanics, and so on. (WEA participant 7)

I could talk with her about the White/Black problem that I was in from a power position and she could say, “Yeah I don’t know what you’re going to do about that. You’re the White lady here and that’s tough.” And as hard as you try, you cannot ever get out of your White self. You hope you are in grace-filled places where people will accept that OK, but you need to just say “OK this is the White lady speaking, you can call me on it if you need to.” (WEA participant 1)

BAA participants reported that when WEAs’ insular bubbles are burst, things get real, and, for one BAA, it was reported to be a deeply emotional experience when the WEA woman she was talking about took responsibility for making herself aware of her place in the insular bubble.

Whenever it even tried to reappear she would seek out opportunities to really keep it real and burst it. And that was really one of the only White women, when I think about it, that I know who was willing—and I'm getting emotional thinking about it—who's willing to sort of go through that. (BAA participant 5)

Bursting the bubble was reported as being challenging for WEA participants, as well.

They reported horror, shame, sadness, guilt, fear, and having to question what they thought was true. One woman captured several of these reactions when confronted by a BAA woman at an event after not remembering that woman's name.

I was horrified. I felt a lot of things. I was angry, but I felt shame at the same time. I got angry about the racial remark because I knew in my heart that if she were White I would have forgotten her, too. There was some anger in the fact that I wanted to say to her, "You know, you might just not be memorable to me." (WEA participant 7)

From the BAA perspective, when they experienced a WEA's bubble burst, they experienced abandonment by the one inside the insular bubble and observed nostalgia for being inside it even though the WEA woman would move ahead. This was paradoxical in that there seemed to be contradictory feelings that resulted from the bubble bursting from both perspectives. In addition, BAA participants reported anticipating surprise, pain, and taking offense on the part of the WEA as they questioned whether or not to be the one to burst her bubble. Finally, they saw WEA women struggling with not knowing what to do about the new reality they saw. One BAA woman told a story about reporting the results of a study that explored inter-racial trust among local women:

The experience I had with the White women initially is most of them were quite shocked at the results, specifically the results around the trust. They were quite shocked about it, and they wanted to do something about it, or know more about it, but when we pulled the Advisory Board together and they sat together right in this living room, the White women said "We understand that this is a problem, but we don't have a clue of what to do about it." (BAA participant 10)

Another set of properties describes the experience inside the insular bubble. From both perspectives, the inside was described as being *well-insulated and comfortable*, offering *limited race fluency*, and *infused with guilt*. These are depicted in Figure 5.2.

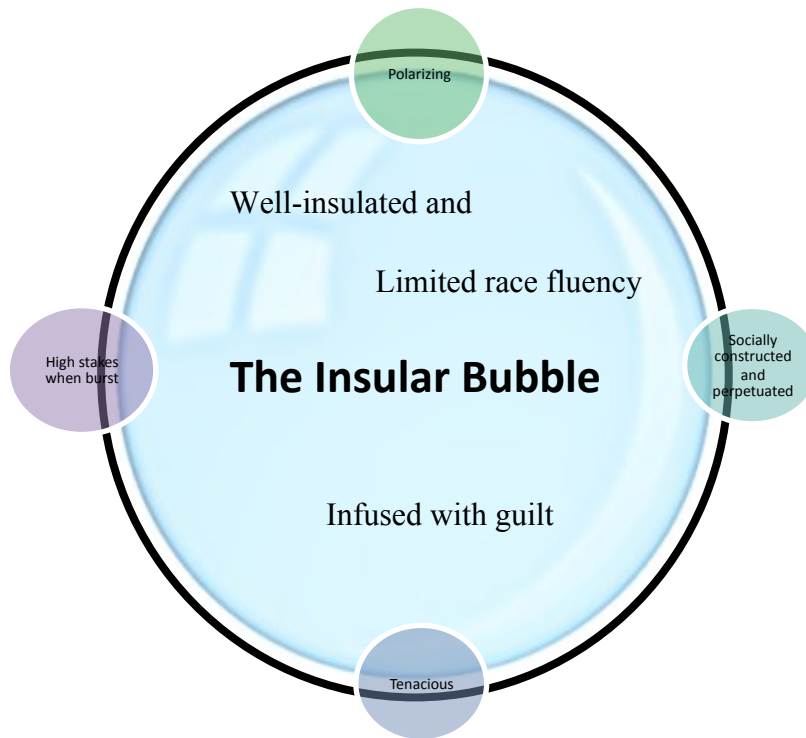


Figure 5.2. Inside the insular bubble.

Well-insulated and comfortable. Because for WEA participants race was not discussed openly in their childhood households or communities and because they had the freedom to associate almost exclusively with other WEAs, the experience inside the insular bubble became well insulated and did not challenge their perception of reality. In addition, both participant subgroups observed that while diversity is claimed as a goal or a value inside the bubble, there is little accountability for it.

I think that's the privilege of being White, is that you don't think about race. (WEA participant 11)

But African Americans have known that for a long time—I mean that’s not new to us. So often I’m in situations where I’m one of a few African Americans who are part of a group or in the room. I cannot tell you how many events I go to where I’m the only person of Color in the room. I cannot tell you how many jobs I’ve had where I’m the only person of Color at the table. I mean it just happens all the time. So I think I’m expected to be okay with that. But nobody’s pushing anybody else. Nobody’s pushing White women, that’s assumed to be okay. (BAA participant 7)

Limited race fluency. Both participant subgroups recognized WEAs’ lack of comfort and familiarity with discussing race issues based on the insulation mentioned above. Because they are infrequently, if ever, in a minority in group situations and have not had to notice their own race in a world that assumes it, they do not have a language that comes easily for discussing race.

One of our consultants was an African-American male, and was a good friend of all three of us. If the four of us were together, and I was the lone White person there, they would do a lot of joking around in a way that I didn’t understand. Now that could be generational, although [colleague] is about my age, or it could be racial. And they would even say we’re going to have to bring Miss [First Name] along on this, which I think is racial. (WEA participant 8)

It’s a Black woman’s point of view that when working on issues of race, because of how I’ve experienced things as a Black person, a certain awareness and depth and fluency occurs that really is beyond most White people’s capacity. Not all, but most. (BAA participant 5)

Infused with guilt. Whites’ feelings of guilt for collective wrongs to others have been acknowledged by many scholars (King, 1969; Spanierman & Heppner, 2004; Steele, 1990; Swim & Miller, 1999) and was reflected in participants’ responses here. What was noticed by both subgroups is that White guilt prevents race from being fully discussed, prevents self-examination, but can become a motivator for change.

Any amount of programmed guilt which I think White women hold a lot of, unnecessarily, but it’s there, gets heightened, so you cannot hear anything that’s happening. This occurs versus “can you take a look at your own story and what is it about it that told you anything about race whatsoever? (BAA participant 9)

Maybe White guilt the rest of my life, I want to just do my one little piece to make sure that I don't add one more thing to add to the pile of judging and stereotypes that's taken place over the last how many years. (WEA participant 2)

The last properties of the insular bubble can be captured by describing its membrane. This is significant because the membrane is what is seen from the outside, and for insiders, key to bursting their own bubble. Based on participant experiences, its membrane can be described as *semi-permeable*, *constructed of one-way mirror*, having a *polite façade*, and *amorphous* (see Figure 5.3).

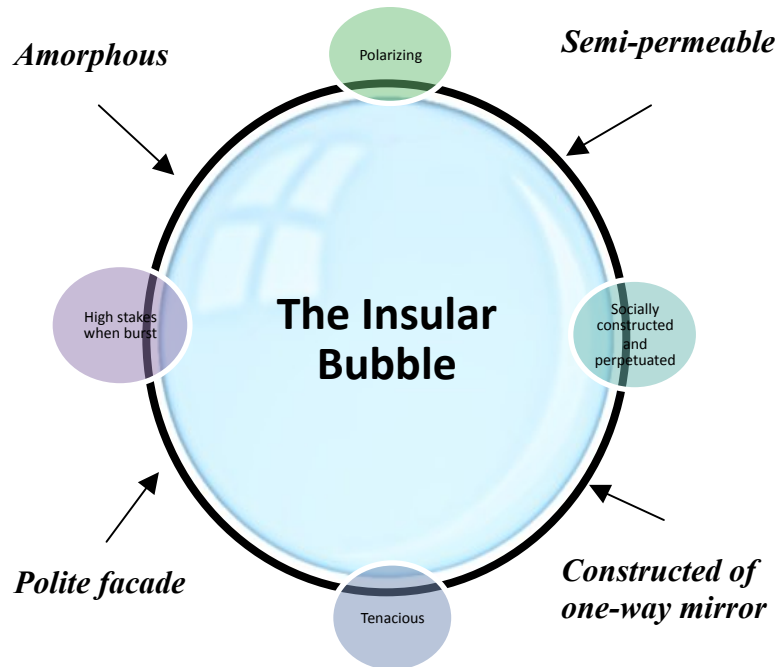


Figure 5.3. The membrane of the insular bubble.

Semi-permeable. The semi-permeability of the insular bubble's membrane results from information not getting in, perceptions being limited, and the inside of the bubble therefore

becoming confused with the whole of reality. Defining the world as a “White world” can result in blindness to other experiences and perceptions.

It never would have occurred to me that somebody would think the [community leader situation] had anything to do with race. So what that says to me is that there’s a sensitivity that I’m lacking for not recognizing that somebody might think that. (WEA participant 7)

I don’t think that they see me as being all that different, versus being a gift to me, which is how a lot of privileged people view it. They see that as, well, let me invite you to this cocktail party at my beautiful home to raise money, and I know you cannot give that much, but it’s nice to have you there, versus we’re all at dinner talking about something that we’re all engaged in. It’s just that they don’t see that it’s not as wide a circle as they think they perhaps have. (BAA participant 6)

Constructed of one-way mirror. The uniqueness of this membrane is also in its one-way reflective glass. Those who are inside cannot see outside clearly, but those outside have a clear view to the inside. This results in limited vision for those inside and blindness to their own privilege. This blindness was reported as being in evidence when WEA women do not see the need to help BAAs, when they are unaware of their own contribution to the race dynamics in a room, when they do not notice the skewed race distribution in a group, and when they do not realize the effect they have on others emotionally.

And there’s disbelief, I mean you know that, you’ve been in those groups where White women go “What are you talking about?” And African-American women go “Where have you been?”(laughs) “Do you read the paper every day?” (BAA participant 9)

In this case, the African-American women that I was working with, I think they had a very deep understanding of White women, much deeper than I would have of African-American women. (WEA participant 1)

This one-way mirror exists despite WEA participants’ many mentions of witnessing tokenism, discrimination, and marginalization, which is a testament to its tenacity.

Amorphous. The boundaries of this membrane, from the perspective of those on the outside, appear and disappear arbitrarily. Marginalization, in both overt and subtle ways, was

noted by the BAA participants as not always obvious, but present nonetheless.

We were held back in subtle ways and blatant ways and but you saw the tables turn and it was just such a double standard, it was just “Are you kidding?” Seriously. (BAA participant 5)

I just think it’s about assumptions. I don’t think it’s an overt thing. I don’t think you can say—because you also cannot make the assumption that gee I know nobody ever said you should go to college. (WEA participant 3)

Polite façade. As a way to overcome the guilt accompanying new awareness or a desire to present a positive view of self, impression management as non-racist and polite by WEA women was noted by the BAA participants. This polite façade appears when WEAs are superficial, formal, or cautious. The context of the South as having the value of being nice was mentioned here as well.

And when we talk we talk about this surface stuff, the cellular memory around the woman in the plantation having the vapors shows up. (BAA participant 9)

A lot of Black women feel that when you are in a party or at a social gathering that White women want to be proper, that the deal is to smile, you know, how are you doing, and give you all these positive kinds of accolades or whatever, but maybe they don’t really feel that way about you. But I was saying that I felt that some of that was brought into our group discussions. I guess I was really being cautious about what they said. Not knowing how somebody was going to react to it. (BAA participant 10)

Experiencing awareness of the insular bubble. After the feelings of having one's insular bubble burst are processed, most of the subsequent reactions on the part of the WEA women were reported to be cognitive. They reported wishing things were different, believing that awareness leads to commitment to act, struggling with the dilemma of not wanting to see race, but being hyperconscious of it at same time, and not being sure how to manage boundaries or to deal with those outside the bubble. One WEA illustrated this dichotomy when she described her experience on a mixed-race panel:

The other thing I was obsessively sensitive to the whole time was when we did the answers. If I had an idea before anyone else answered, that I would not always say it first. Or a better way to say it, what happened towards the end is whoever wants to answer this, answer this. And so they asked questions and if a White woman made the first answer, I wasn't going to open my mouth until an African-American got her answer in. So it is odd again, for someone who says they don't see race, I probably see race more than most people from the other side. (WEA participant 2)

Resulting choices. Resulting choices for WEA women reflected their new awareness and reflected a range of intentions. While some spent energy upholding the image of non-racism, the vast majority spent their energies reading body language, trying to make sense of others' behaviors, and committing themselves to becoming an advocate for change.

I forget what that line is, I think it was Erma Bombeck, "When I stand before God at the end of my life, I don't want to have an ounce of talent left. I want to be able to say I used all that you gave me." And by that principle, this quest to work towards social justice and racial trust, it's clear to me that it may happen person by person but it's going to be a many, many, many moons to come for us to change that. It will not be in our day. And so it is a lifelong seeking to understand and trying to get better at hearing someone else's perspective. Just being mindful that there is another perspective. (WEA participant 6)

If I keep giving my very best to help insure that poor children and in our case largely African-American children do well in school because I'm busting my butt to help them come along, then their Mamas and their teachers and Black women who don't even have poor children believe that I'm serious about that and it's not an issue of race it's an issue of justice. And that makes me trustworthy I think. (WEA participant 1)

The existence of the insular bubble and the effect it has on those outside it can be captured in a second metaphor, the protective shell of marginalization.

The Protective Shell of Marginalization

Beliefs about being guarded, wary, vigilant, and cautious can be translated into a view of the BAA women as constructing and sustaining a protective shell around them as they navigate in a world where they need protection. This metaphor extends the term *armoring*, which emerged from the racial socialization literature (Faulkner, 1983; Greene, 1990, 1992, 1994; Peters, 1985), and was mentioned by one of the WEA participants when she talked about the difficulties in “getting beyond the surface armor” of her BAA colleague. When I presented this metaphor along with several others, including the “shell” alternative suggested by the WEA participants in their focus group, some members of the BAA group expressed a preference for the shell because it was less harsh, easier to take on and off, seemed less war-like, and seemed to capture the protection of a living being best.

Socialization and life experiences. BAA participants also described the socializing messages they received. These messages were different in quality and quantity than those reported by the WEA participants, and produced quite different perspectives.

Types of messages. The racial messages about self and other reported by the BAA women were *explicit*, *negative (about the other)*, and *direct*. The key points were that WEA people cannot be trusted to look out for your best interests, and you must be vigilant so that you can anticipate and protect yourself.

I remember one time when I was in high school my Dad said something to me. I don't know if he was right or wrong but I had been invited to Macon, Georgia, for something called Governor's Honors interviews. I had to go up to Macon for an interview and there were 6-8 of us from my high school who were going up that day for their interviews as well. My Dad had to work or something, there was some problem with how I was going

to get there. And he asked me who else was going. All the other students that I knew of that were going were White students and it became not an option for him to think about me riding to Macon with one of them. He just felt like they would not be interested in helping me get there. His basic assumption was that they would not be interested in helping me get there if they were White. (BAA participant 3)

We grew up in an integrated neighborhood and all these little friends were Black and White. We had a Black and White girl scout troop, we'd have these pajama parties—maybe it was two Black girls and the rest White girls, and this is when I was around 10, 11. “Oh, me and [WEA friend] are gonna do this and [WEA friend] is going to call me and we'd spend the night and we'd come over to my house and this and that. Momma told me just before junior high school, “you know, just be prepared that when y'all get to junior high school, [WEA friends] may not be your friends in the same way.” I'm like, “Ma!” It was in a gentle kind of loving way, just planting a seed. In retrospect I look back and it played out just like my Mom said. (BAA participant 5)

Role of parents in communicating messages about White European Americans.

Parents for these participants took a more active, direct role in preparing them for interactions with WEA people and for building the resilience required to survive with one's identity intact.

There is a proud part of this that you need to damn well know and hold onto because there's going to be a lot of this. And so with parents who were directly having us be in the good and bad parts of how others held our race, I think I had more of the ability to work through it. (BAA participant 9)

Contact with White European Americans. As illustrated in the excerpts above, contact with WEAs was frequently discussed in the home environment, so when situations involving mixed-races occurred, these participants tested what they were taught.

Resulting beliefs and assumptions. Messages that were internalized by the BAA participants, often tested in adulthood, were to distrust WEAs until proven differently, limit how much you reveal, be vigilant, resist negative messages from society about our race, and maintain our resilience and identity strength in the face of this systemic marginalization. BAA participants described many microaggressions (Sue, 2010) in their experience of everyday racism (Essed, 1991) as they worked with WEA women. Some examples included having to be in the background when working on projects together, experiencing double standards, being doubted

and questioned more than the WEAs, having incorrect assumptions being made about them, having to educate WEAs about race and not being seen or acknowledged.

There was a group that was put together and it was supposed to be leaders in the community to address a major issue. And there were White women and Black women in this group working together. There was a company that came in that was to do a feasibility study because they were really trying to raise some huge money. And two Black women in the group who were at very senior levels in their organization and senior levels in the community were to do a separate event because everybody on the committee is doing these things around the community to raise the visibility of this issue and to help collect funds. So the Black women proceeded to put their list together of who they're going to invite to this event. And naturally there were a large number of Blacks on the list because they were to target that particular population. Well, the women were treated very poorly, in the sense that it was assumed that they did not know how to go out and put on a function like this. They were also told that nobody on that list had money. (BAA participant 10)

Everything else is better than, you're going the extra mile, you're paying the tax, you're doing all of those things, and still it's just not good enough. And there is no other way you can tell me it's anything other than it's because of my race. (BAA participant 8)

These beliefs were evident as one BAA participant described what she tells her daughter:

Professionally, what I do tell my daughter is that you've got to work harder; you've got to keep records of your own achievements; you have to figure out a way to promote yourself when you can, because you may not be promoted by others. I also tell her to watch her back, that not everybody has you in a place that they want to see you be successful. And to really conduct yourself in an ethical way that you're not ever in a position where someone can accuse you of misconduct in any way. So, that's what I tell her. (BAA participant 6)

This begins a new cycle of socialization for her daughter.

Properties of the protective shell. The properties of the protective shell, as reported by these participants, were that it is also *socially constructed and perpetuated* and serves to create *self-protection* and *exclusivity* (see Figure 5.4 below).



Figure 5.4. Properties of the protective shell (reprinted by permission) (Vaughan, 2001).

Socially constructed and perpetuated. BAA women noted that, as a result of beliefs passed on by families as well as ongoing societal programming, energy is put into this protection and is reinforced by experience. One BAA woman described how the shell has to be examined closely to see if there is always a need for it.

And I think it has to happen one-on-one, until you think, “Oh! Well you know what? I’ve got these 10 friends who are White that aren’t like that so maybe all White women aren’t like that.” And that’s the conflict that I see with some of the people that talk to me about this. And sometimes I say it. But it’s a conflict, because these are the same people that have five close White friends, so how do you have those friendships if all White women do this? And I think it’s just a saying, I don’t even think that they believe it sometimes. I mean they do believe it but I think they’re just generalizing. (BAA participant 10)

Protective. The WEA participants noted guardedness in their interactions with BAA women, which came across to them as caution and hesitance to claim their own power, while the BAA participants acknowledged the resilience that can be nurtured with that protection in place.

When someone at a meeting says something to the effect of “Well what I’m hearing in my community is such-and-such, and what concerns me about this is such-and-such, and I’m not saying it, mind you, but other people are saying it,” it usually means that’s what that person thinks. And that they’re kind of deflecting their own opinion from behind what others are saying in the community. And every once in a while I would get that feeling from [BAA colleague] as we were kind of tracking a certain issue. (WEA participant 7)

[BAA female colleague] is one of those brilliant African-American women who is so smart and has so much ambition, and still does not want to take the number one spot. She wants to lead from behind. She wants to lead, but she doesn't want the mantle of responsibility on her. That was the first time I'd ever seen that dynamic with somebody so smart, and so obviously ambitious—had all the answers, did not want to be held accountable for them. (WEA participant 8)

So, I guess what I'm saying is that your whole life gets defined by color and sex. And you really have to learn how to cope, and you can be a person that gets angry, which I have known lots of people to do, or you can be a person that says, "Okay, how do I manage to have a life within it?" (BAA participant 6)

Exclusive. Regardless of their own race, participants recognize a comfort level inside the protective shell and a closer bond between BAAs. One BAA woman referred to the freedom to bring up race when in a group of exclusively BAA women.

And she was saying, "Everybody knows that there are conversations that Black women have among themselves and then there's conversations that Black women have with White women." (WEA participant 6)

We talk about our jobs; we talk about our families; we talk about our husbands, or boyfriends; or we talk about some issue that's been on the front page of the paper. What may be a little bit different, I think, is the acknowledgement of race when it's all African-American women. That you can say things, like if you're talking about foster children or something like that. It's again the macro and the micro. If I were in one group, perhaps, we'd be talking about foster care, and we'd solve the world's problems, but when you talk about it in the group, it's clearly an acknowledgment that 80% of these kids are African-American, and how do you have to deal with that as an African-American? (BAA participant 6)

Like the insular bubble, the protective shell also has a surface, but with a different set of properties. These can be described as *impervious*, *prickly*, *tenacious*, *transparent*, having a *filtered lens*, and *shiny* (see Figure 5.5 below).

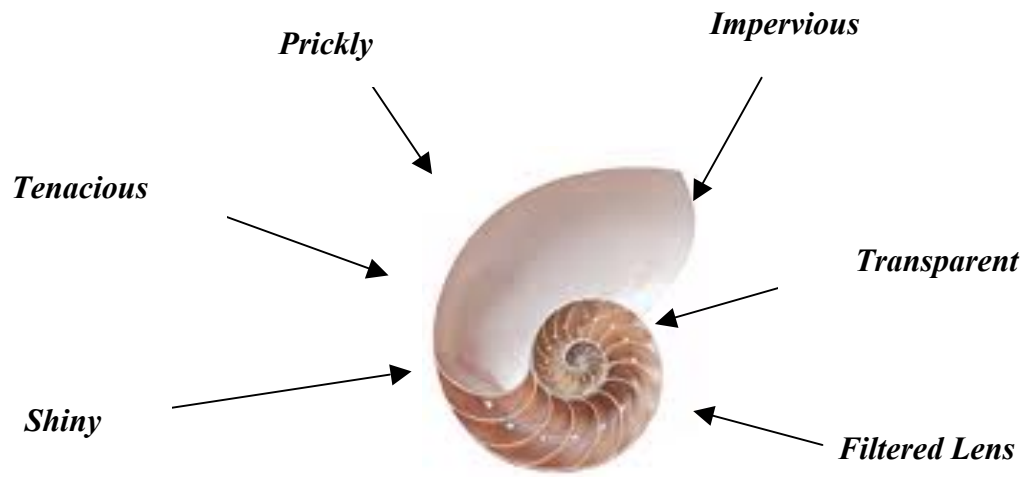


Figure 5.5. The surface of the protective shell.

Prickly. WEA participants described interactions with BAA female colleagues where they observed defensiveness, a lack of warmth, frequent contrariness, judgment, and distrust; and found themselves wondering what to do with that.

I've known her longer, she's closer to my age, we frankly just have more in common. We've probably worked more together than me and [other BAA colleague] and I have worked together, even though we're in the same office. [other BAA colleague] is just pricklier. With her I'm not sure if her reaction to something I say is race, class, or [her name]. Is it me or is it just that your first response to anything is just, "No, we cannot do that"? (WEA participant 3)

Having that information makes me feel in some ways just more guarded when dealing with women of Color. It gets back to this slight feeling of distrust. Like do they really trust me? I mean, do they really trust me? And how can they if they suspect that I may treat them differently because they're Black. How can they really trust me? (WEA participant 7)

Tenacious. BAA participants noted that given their experience and the tenacity of racism (Tilly, 1998), this protective shell is likely to be necessary as long as racism exists.

That just goes back to what I was saying about bringing race first into most every situation and being paranoid. There are many situations where you're going to walk in there and

you're not going to be treated fairly. So here's what I have to do to make sure that I'm treated fairly. And some of it is real and some of it's not, but the real part for me is that I have had to prove myself frequently as I came up the line in my career and I had to work doubly hard to get the promotions and the accomplishments that I got because many people were moving in directions because they were part of the good old boy network. From my own experiences I have seen that happen but I also feel that there are a lot of people that just walk in, Black women particularly, with this already built in, that this is what's going to happen. (BAA participant 10)

Impervious. Related to the guardedness mentioned above, both BAA and WEA participants noted that BAA women put a distance between themselves and WEA women resulting in some interactions staying professional, more formal and less personal. This imperviousness seems to be a way to activate the protectiveness of the shell.

So, I don't think that the casual nature of relationships is as easily shared among Whites and Blacks, because of some of those tensions around, "Will I be respected? Will I be trusted? Can I be myself? Can I say what I want to say? (BAA participant 6)

[BAA female colleague] is interesting to me because she has more of a guard and so sometimes it's difficult for me to join with her. And I think she rocks. And I don't know that that's always about race, her guardedness. (WEA participant 6)

She's a very guarded woman, particularly when it comes to White people and White people of means. (WEA participant 11)

Transparent. WEA participants see a comfort on BAA women's part to surface race issues, and to acknowledge race openly. This observation is likely a result of the awareness and race fluency differential between BAAs and WEAs, and the "invisible Whiteness of being" that is socialized into Eurocentric society (Sue, 2010).

She talks a lot about race. I mean, she's not scared to talk about race. And talk a lot about what it is to work with [White male supervisor] and how he is a White man and how she feels. She talks a lot in racial terms. I guess she's not always talking systematically about the history of race in America but she identifies people by race. She identifies herself as a Black woman and what it feels like, deeper than the general questions that you might get. (WEA participant 11)

Filtered lens. Those on the outside of the protective shell see its surface as having a filter of race that causes those behind it to interpret circumstances as race related rather than power or performance related. One WEA woman discussed her view of recent events that involved BAA leaders:

There was a population of people questioning whether or not it was because she was a woman of Color that the community, or the [organization] Board, behaved in the way they did. And recently there was an article in the paper where the Chamber publicly stated that they were not in agreement with the way the [other organization] was executing their duties, and [its leader] is a Black man running that, and race came up with that. It's interesting and I don't know the answer to the question. My gut would say absolutely it's got nothing to do with that. Why cannot we, or anyone, question somebody's professional decisions without it resorting to a racial question? (WEA participant 7)

Because of the assumption of authority and lack of race fluency on the part of insular bubble residents, this is likely a property that will raise controversy, but would provide the basis for a valuable discussion for both sides.

Shiny. Both sets of participants noted the pride BAA women have in their racial identity.

I think it helped me that I had a solid grounding in my Dad's family that has been there for generations. He had a strong family unit, an extended family unit, so you felt a very strong sense of who you were. (BAA participant 5)

As in the excerpts, this pride was often part of the socialization they received as a necessary antidote to living with racism.

Experiencing awareness of the protective shell. For these BAA participants, the experience of having to maintain this shell as a protective device was accompanied by angst and emotion, a sense that they must bear the burden of race awareness, energy drain, despair, and discouragement. They reported an awareness that they simply have to expend more energy than the WEA women in relationships with them because of their own increased awareness, increased vision into the insular bubble, and the higher stakes involved for them.

I often feel that in these working relationships that the Black women bear a lot of the burden of the patience and understanding and overlooking and excusing, apologizing or the mediation kind of thing in the relationships. I know from my personal experience this kind of work is really hard for Black people in particular because of all that stuff and what we see. It's really hard to see more, observe more, what we see as unfairness or injustice or not right stuff. (BAA participant 5)

This participant went on to say that this work has resulted in “wounds” for her, and stressed the struggle that accompanies the work, even when the results were positive.

I've had wounds, I guess, in this work across race. Working on social issues with women across race, we, I survived it. Positive things were done. Relationships are still intact. But it wasn't with a lot of angst over the process and a lot of work. (BAA participant 5)

This example points to the need for and the vulnerability behind the protective shell. Coming out of the shell can be a result of a commitment to make change, but the outside is a vulnerable place for the living being making that choice.

Resulting choices. As a result of the feelings that accompany the need to maintain this protective shell, the BAA participants reported choosing between one of two alternatives: (a) to reinforce the shell, or (b) to emerge from the shell and be an advocate for change. The most common ways they reported reinforcing the protective shell included:

- watching racial dynamics carefully, assessing the permeability of the insular bubble around those with whom they interact;
- weighing whether to (a) give up or minimize their commitment to the work or the relationship, or (b) persevere and stay in relationship despite frustration;
- getting support from and being responsible for like others;
- remaining guarded, cautious about revealing and setting boundaries for self;
- planning and strategizing about how to deal with the insular bubble; and
- resisting WEA leadership and their definitions of the other.

There are some relationships that even though I consider them to be friends, there are certain things I just would never say to them, because I think, based on what I've seen and how I've seen them react and interact, that it would not go well. (BAA participant 2)

I'm self-aware enough to know that this is a woman of privilege, and I see how she is going to say your name, or how she's going to kind of always invite you to her home, or her space, or even how they touch you, how they reach out for your shoulder, as if there's some intimacy there. (BAA participant 6)

The examples BAA participants gave to illustrate the choice to advocate for change included challenging the status quo, keeping the issue of racial injustice alive, demanding diversity and organizing for change at the grassroots level.

In the work environments that I have been in I just believe in honesty, so I will get there. Personally, whether it was a supervisory role or whether it was a peer, in order to work with that person I would have to go there. I just feel it is incumbent upon me to do that, to let them know what's happening. Especially if I'm going to work together with them. I just cannot walk around and see somebody doing something that is detrimental or destructive to anybody, their own race. I would have to say something. (BAA participant 10)

Navigating the Insular Bubble and the Protective Shell: Women Working Across Race

Given the significant differences in perspective, distrust, and potential conflict embedded in the space between insular bubble and protective shell, an initial question that might be asked is why these women come together and what about the other was initially appealing. Here is where the subgroup data began to merge in some ways; most notably the *acknowledgement that social justice work cannot be done alone, race being a subject that both were able to discuss openly*, and seeing in the other an *openness to new perspectives*. In addition, there were many commonalities reported that drew these participants to someone of a different race, but *sharing goals/purpose, vision, passion, and interest* were most often reported. This points to the significance of social justice work (or possibly work in general) as a reason to connect across racial lines (Estlund, 2003). The greater number of criteria used by BAA women to assess WEA women's

compatibility may be related to the protective shell and the expressed need for BAA women to test the permeability of the WEA women's insular bubble.

Attraction to each other. There was a range of reasons for BAA participants to be drawn to work with WEA women, and many reflected individual or personality-related preferences (see Table 5.1). Not surprisingly, BAA participants reported being drawn to those WEA women who were clear about themselves, had worked to dissipate their own insular bubble, and who demonstrated that they did not require being in front all the time.

To see this woman who had really made those changes and seemed to have lots of relationships across race with other Black women who seemed to respect her. So early on I got that data. (BAA participant 5)

That to me is the honor, and the respect is the same thing. You're not required to constantly put them in front of you, because they helped you in some way. And that to me is being respectful, that you allow the person to maintain their core even though you helped them, or you got them out of a bind, that you don't walk up to everybody and say, "Well, I knew her when." You know? That kind of thing. (BAA participant 6)

There was also a signaling that was recognized when WEA women communicated that they were comfortable with BAAs.

Well there's some coding that people kind of disclose. I think about one person for example who told me that she grew up in DC, that most of the people in her school were African American. That's a code to say, "I'm comfortable with African Americans." I got that. And actually she and I clicked right away and have become really, really good friends. (BAA participant 7)

For the WEA participants, attractiveness was less about racial awareness. They reported that the relationships happened partly because one or the other reached out and asked for help or advice, or demonstrated a sense of humor.

And I felt like she sort of took me under her wing. I don't know if she saw something in me that was worthwhile or what, but I always sort of felt like she looked out for me a little bit even when she did not have to and we weren't like the super best of friends. (WEA participant 4)

It's just I feel very, very comfortable with her and, I enjoy her humor and her sense of adventure and who she is. (WEA participant 5)

A significant finding, however, was that among the many reasons they shared for coming together, commonalities around the work for both sets of participants was a primary reason they chose to work across race. Citing shared goals, purpose, vision, passion, interests, organization, and work in general; these participants clearly saw the nature of the work as a primary reason to join together.

I try to get them to understand in order for things to be better for all children, we're not doing it just for these children. What we do is for *all* children. And in order for us to do it for all children, what we're going to have to do is work, we're going to have to work across all lines. (BAA participant 4)

You have to want to make it work, both sides, and you have a common bond. We had a common bond through the organization and the mission of the organization that I think everybody kind of tied together. (WEA participant 10)

Table 5.1

Attractions to Each Other

What WEA women looked for in BAA women	Shared	What BAA women looked for in WEA women
Mutual choices as mentor, reached out to me	Shared commitment to purpose, vision, goals, passion, interests	Clear about herself, has done her own work around race, doesn't require being in front all the time
Working in same issue	Cannot do this work alone	
Had a sense of humor	Can initiate and discuss race	Signals comfort with AAs
WEA was treated as an equal	Can speak directly with each other	Competence
Seeing her listen and process	Had an out of the box perspective	Experience with limited resources unrelated to ability or skill
	Was compassionate, open to others' views	Has earned respect from other BAA women
	Showed intellectual curiosity	
	Demonstrated respect	
	Was hard working, gets results	
	Had an intact ego, not threatened by me	
	Mutual admiration	

The experience of being in relationship. These women described the processes they are aware of as they engage with the other—either from their position inside the insular bubble or behind the protective shell. Because of the high quantity of categories here, I grouped them into several larger categories. Their responses can be grouped into categories of *observing*, *thinking*,

feeling, or *behavior*. I captured the responses of each subgroup separately, and when they reported the same experience, it is noted as shared. Because of the wide range of responses, I highlight here only those mentioned most frequently and present the rest in Table 5.2.

The processes that were mentioned most often were shared by both sets of subgroups. The process with the highest number of codes was a mental (*thinking*) process of defining the level and type of relationship they were in and, related to that, assessing the other person against their own criteria for friendship versus a respectful professional relationship. One of the WEA participants thought out loud during the interview about whether or not the BAA colleague she was discussing was a friend:

She's gotten to be a friend through this process, but I would not call her a best-buddy-girlfriend. It's not a close girlfriend kind of relationship. I don't really know a lot about her. I guess now that I'm thinking about it, I don't know much about her. I don't know about her personal life. I don't know if she's married. So, can you call that a friend? She just doesn't talk about her life that much. She doesn't open up a lot. And again, is that just her and her personality, or is that being guarded because of race? I don't know.
(WEA participant 7)

The BAA participants were much clearer about what the criteria were for friendship. One BAA participant talked about the difference in her mind between an associate and a friend:

When people move from associate category to friendship category, I expect certain things. I can see them overlapping. But I think I can have a close working relationship without really having a friendship. I would be friends to a certain degree, but I don't think that I would be friends that I felt that I could say anything and do anything and be anybody I want to be. I think friendship is something that you recognize when you see it because over time you have the opportunity to share time, experiences, to learn if that person has integrity, if that person has respect for you. (BAA participant 2)

As is described here, the data revealed that they are negotiating definitions of friendship that seem to be different, so calling someone a friend cannot be done casually.

The next most common process mentioned by both subgroups was acknowledging the hard work and effort required to be in cross-race relationships (*behavior*). And, depending on the

nature of the work, it may disproportionately fall on one or the other's shoulders. For example, both subgroups talked about the work WEA women need to do:

And as the people of power, because of race, age and socioeconomics, we're the ones who've got to do the most reaching across, the most putting aside what I am to understand the who you are. (WEA participant 1)

She invited me to do it and 18 months of just kind of working together, because she wanted to explore it further and again she went and it stirred up a lot of things for her. Perhaps a thing that made her different was she went there when it was really hard and really painful. All that angst I feel like I've experienced sometimes, it seemed like she was going through that. (BAA participant 5)

A third frequently mentioned process was navigating the intersection of class and race (*thinking*). Of all the intersections mentioned, this was noted most often.

I think I'm going to have a hard time separating race and class issues because there's a distinct education and class divide in addition to the racial divide. So it's a little tricky to tease out what is White privilege based on education and class and what is race and what—where issues rise. (WEA participant 3)

This is much more about class, this is not race, this really is class. (BAA participant 1)

The intersection of these two systems was viewed as both a potential source of commonality across race and an acknowledgement of how racial injustice translates to class differences because of the way resources are distributed.

The next most frequent process both subgroups of women reported engaging in was noticing the others' assumptions about them (*observing*). This is not surprising, given the power of socializing messages reported earlier.

I think some of it is not necessarily on my part but on their part in terms of trusting who I am. Not me, necessarily as an individual, but me as a Black female. And one of the things that I have found that sometimes the expectation is that we don't have the knowledge, we don't have the skills, there are certain things we cannot do, and so therefore they are sort of, well, they don't trust us. (BAA participant 4)

I think some people have an attitude. They think you think you know, even if you're saying "I don't know, but I know this is real." (WEA participant 1)

The fifth most frequent work done in these relationships was described by WEA participants as they described the process of trying to figure out whether or not the dynamics they were observing had to do with race or not (*thinking*).

And I've watched sometimes—the African American man is completely neutral. He has been neutral in every single meeting—very neutral. But whenever he says something I notice what I think is the dynamic, where she is connecting with him and taking his point to support her point, where I heard his point as equally supportive of mine. And I'm kind of just wondering from a racial standpoint, is anything going on? (WEA participant 2)

To me it was more about personality than it was about race because I just really just liked who they were as people and there was no pretense at all with any of them. I was not as close to [BAA colleague] as I was to the other two, I felt really comfortable with them. I liked her but that was more of a personality thing. Again that, to me, wasn't anything about race, but could have been, I don't know. (WEA participant 5)

This is not surprising given the well-insulated nature of the insular bubble, producing the lack of race fluency mentioned earlier.

The last most frequently mentioned process for these participants was navigating pain and hurt in the relationship (*feeling*), whether it was experienced by themselves or the other person in the relationship. These processes make sense given the nature of the protective shell and the insular bubble—there is pain in the reason for the protective shell, and stepping outside the insular bubble produces awareness that is uncomfortable at least and very painful at most. BAA women reported the pain of seeing the other's blindness to race dynamics and pain resulting from previous work across race.

That was tough at an intellectual level and professional level. Then also sometimes it would just really break down into just really painful ways in the sense that we'd gear up for an event, a meeting, a presentation or whatever, and the whole team, Black and White, were setting up for the meeting like we were doing the work. That happened for a number of reasons—one, we were just trying to get ready and wanted the presentation to be, or the room to look right or set up right and nobody else is pitching in. The administrative team members who had that responsibility were women of Color so to come in and see this woman doing all this manual labor, you know, you're pitching in. She's a friend, she's a

sister, so even if it were a young White woman, you just help. Especially if she's frantic. You see that and you go to help. And somehow oftentimes that need or that effort was just oblivious one to the White men on the team but also the White women. Just oblivious. (BAA participant 5)

This pain and hurt also led to the reported need for self-protection (and hence the need for the protective shell) by BAA participants.

WEA participants reported the pain of acknowledging what “their” people have done to BAAs and others.

Some of it really is painful about the Civil Rights Movement. But some of it is very painful to know that people of any race were capable of doing what has been done. (WEA participant 8)

And both subgroups reported seeing pain as a result of bursting the bubble, seeing assumptions continue, and seeing old patterns continue.

Acknowledging some of her experiences, her life in the bubble, what it was to burst it and the pain she experienced when she burst it, even though she might have been nostalgic about being back in it, a part of her forged ahead and wasn't going back and she gave concrete examples—it wasn't just talk. (BAA participant 3)

And part of me also wants to get past it, I want to see people as who they are and not keep focusing on all that past, but part of me understands that it's not healed. It's not healed. (WEA participant 8)

These results express the depth and breadth of mental and emotional energy that is spent in these cross-race relationships, and how much is happening in the “left-hand column” (Ross & Kleiner, 1994, p. 246) as these relationships are enacted. The majority of what these women experience is difficult, uncomfortable, challenging, and requires effort—most of which is around negotiating differences in racial perspectives. The pain and hurt these women bring to the relationship from both individual and shared perspectives is notable. Table 5.2 summarizes their experience of being in relationship.

Table 5.2

The Experience of Being in Relationship

BAA experience of being in relationship with WEA	Shared	WEA experience of being in relationship with BAA
<u>Observing</u>		
Seeing hurt feelings of another.	Noticing others' assumptions about me.	Sensitivity to other's trust issue with my race.
Seeing WEA women claim gender is a unifying commonality, then excluding BAAs because of lack of race commonality.		Seeing other prejudices come from other side.
Only some thoughts are valued, by the other, it's "my way or the highway."		Encountering resistance.
Seeing other avoid the real race work.		Noticing that different family commitments make it hard to socialize.
Seeing the other person think the relationship is deep when there are big race questions.		Seeing other not want responsibility, accountability.
Different comfort level.		Being teased for being the token White.
Wanting to say I have a Black friend.		Observing and talking about racial dynamics in the community.
Observing mutual belief that we are separate and uniting is not possible.		
Conflicting values.		

Feeling

Pain, hurt as a result of...

- Seeing each other's blindness.
- Wounds from previous work across race.
- Sharing another's pain.

Pain, hurt as a result of...

- Bursting the bubble.
- Assumptions about each other.
- Seeing old patterns continue.

Pain, hurt as a result of...

- Knowing what my people did to others.
- Saying something that caused another pain.

Feeling need to protect self

- Not wanting to admit I don't know.
- Not wanting to say I need.
- Not being able to crumble in front of another.

Not wanting to be vulnerable.

Feeling intimidated by sharpness of responses.

Humiliation from being questioned more than others.

Feeling excluded.

Physical symptoms of stress.

Not wanting to be exposed as racially unaware.

Resentment.

Frustration with working hard on inclusion, then being told it's not enough.

Feeling like I am intruding.
Comfortable.

Thinking

Other bonds make the bubble less of an issue.

Navigating intersectionality

- Socioeconomics.
- Style, personality.
- Power, position.
- Regional differences.
- Age.
- Career stage.

Wondering/questioning if dynamics are racial or not.

Defining levels of relationship as behavior is assessed:

Definition of friendship.

- Learning if that person has integrity.
- Learning if that person has respect for you.
- Working on life's issues.
- Sharing values, views on life in common.
- Can pick up right where we left off after a lot of time not talking.
- Time outside work not talking about the business we're engaged in.
- Knowing what makes me tick.
- Sharing time and experiences.
- Willing to come to my home.
- Always being there for whatever happens in my life.

Terms used to describe relationships:

- Close working relationship without friendship.
- Friends during bus hours vs. authentic friendship.
- Working relationship turned personal.
- Friendship vs. professional colleague with respect.

Observations about work relationships with other:

- Seeing WEA call me a friend but my definition is

Learning about our differences.

Defining levels of relationship as behavior is assessed.

Negotiating power, control.

Defining levels of relationship as behavior is assessed: Definition of friendship.

- Two-way give and take.

- different.
- Expectations change when relationship moves from associate to friendship.

- Boss/mentor/friend – merging, differentiation.

- Listening without judgment.
- Being comfortable, enjoying her, wanting to hang out with another socially.

Terms used to describe relationships:

- Friend vs. best-buddy-girlfriend.
- Working friendship.
- Friendly professional relationship.
- Respect as choice rather than friendship.
- Working relationship with personal.
- Personal relation in a work world.
- Professional personal relationship becomes more personal.
- Boss vs. friend vs. sessions.

Observations about work relationships with other:

- Questioning what a friend is, not knowing whether I can call her a friend.
- Wanting to call coworkers friends.

This is tedious, laborious, not fun.

Trying to make sense of another's behavior, figuring out what to own.

Questioning other's loyalty, sincerity, commitment.

Assuming commonality (wrongly).

Realizing importance of being sponsored.

Wondering how White men would

react.

Behaving

Hard work, effort.

Disagreeing, fighting, arguing.

Competing, fighting
among ourselves.

Choosing own behavior, resisting
instincts.

Nurturing the Ecosystem

This section describes what these participants reported as important tools for navigating the challenges that emerged in the previous section. These processes are based on what worked for these women, as well as advice they would give to others beginning cross-race work. And because the investigation of how women can successfully navigate race was the purpose of my study, I propose adding a final metaphor to describe this space, that of an ecosystem.

If one considers that our social world is shared by everyone, consists of diverse social identities, and is dynamic; the metaphor of an ecosystem as the space between all of us can help to capture the elements of what a sustainable positive environment can be.

All living beings form and are part of ecosystems. They are diverse and always changing. Within an ecosystem, all aspects of the environment (both living things and their non-living settings) interact and affect one another. Every species affects the lives of those around them. (Heritage Community Foundation, 2005, para. 4)

Ecosystems will fail if they do not remain in balance. . . . Each organism has its own niche, or role, to play. (Oracle Thinkquest Education Foundation, 2010, para. 3)

In nature, both bubbles and shells live in an ecosystem and must depend on each other for the health and balance of the overall system. The level of effort and deliberateness across intrapsychic, interpersonal, and extra-relationship levels can serve to describe what it requires to create a balanced and healthy ecosystem in cross-race relationships. What can be taken from

these participants' shared wisdom is that process is very important in these relationships, given the number and depth of issues to be negotiated. According to participants in both groups, individual work that can be done before engaging in the relationship will increase each person's flexibility in examining and/or letting go of some received assumptions; and will increase the level of consciousness around racial dynamics so that they can be surfaced and dealt with intentionally. A second level of effort to create a healthy ecosystem is intentional processes in interacting so that the relationship remains in balance with regard to power, safety, and learning. And, a third level of effort participants recommended could affect the ecosystem as a whole, which involved actions taken outside the specific interaction space of the relationship and focused on the larger system. Finally, the interaction between the macro, meso, and micro levels of cross-race relationships is significant here. These women did not assume that all of the work happens in the interaction space between them, but that there is important work to do inside oneself, as well as important actions to take outside the relationship. See Figure 5.6 below for a graphic representation of this ecosystem, inhabited by the shell and bubble, and the ways these findings indicated can nurture that ecosystem.



Figure 5.6. Creating a healthy ecosystem for a cross-race relationship.

Intrapsychic. Before each person enters the relationship, these participants felt it is important to “do one’s own work” to be able to be ready to fully engage. The following sections outline the individual, intrapsychic work these participants recommend be done by anyone setting out to be part of a positive cross-race relationship. Because of the unique positioning of each person’s race, some of the guidance is directed at one or the other and some are directed at both.

Set mental stage. Participants in both subgroups stressed the need to set one’s mental stage in order to be ready to engage in cross-race relationships. In order of frequency, this included (a) maintaining a learning orientation—remaining open, being willing to consider new perspectives, and seeking to understand; (b) acknowledging that you do not know the other’s perspective; (c) choosing one’s own actions, behavior, attitudes, or beliefs; (d) persevering and believing things can change; (e) being deliberate and intentional; (f) being vulnerable, taking personal risk and asking for help; (g) accepting different lenses as a result of different experiences; (g) seeing the other as a human being as opposed to a representative of their race; and (h) cultivating patience.

It is a lifelong seeking to understand and try to get better at hearing someone else’s perspective. Just being mindful that there is another perspective. (WEA participant 6)

Having some kind of awareness of it is the most important thing and to say, “Oh this is interesting, what is going on here?” The most important thing that helped me was number one, being aware and being sensitive to it and having it matter. Some people can be aware and they just, “So what? I got my life, you have yours, and we’ll just go on.” Wanting to learn from it and broaden my experiences and things like that. (WEA participant 10)

Because if I can be clear about who are my people and the messages I got from them I can figure out whether I’m still operating off of that in a knee-jerk way or I can bring it up to consciousness and realize “Oh I can make a different choice.” So I think for the two of us it’s about helping people make different choices, and having them see the data that’s out here differently and understand the data within, which causes them to continue to be triggered. (BAA participant 9)

Do own consciousness-raising work. The second area that both subgroups of participants felt was important to do within oneself was to raise one's own consciousness by (a) resisting judgments and preconceptions in order to listen fully, (b) reflecting on an ongoing basis about how one's racial story affects one's current thinking, (c) allowing surprises and new information to change old ideas, (d) (for WEAs) being conscious of the insular bubble and one's place in it, (e) knowing one's own triggers around race, and (f) examining what one's role is and where one's power is to change things.

You cannot assign meaning to it. And you cannot know what it is, especially if you just show up in your first meeting. You know, we all have judgment, and history, and baggage, and assumptions, we all have all of that that we make, and so for any demographic, it's hard to turn that off. (WEA participant 2)

I think that what we do is hold race and racial dynamics as a context in which we both exist, so we then discover what it means for our relationship. (BAA participant 9)

Really I think I felt like I could trust her because she was enlightened probably beyond your average Southern White woman, or what I would have expected of your average Southern White woman. (BAA participant 3)

Take risk, practice courage. Both subgroups stressed the importance of leaving the baggage of racial history, egos, and sensitivities at the door.

I think it's important for us to recognize that there's an end goal in sight, that we have to take the excess baggage and the egos and the sensitivities and all of the need to be in charge, we have to leave them at the door for the greater good of the project. (BAA participant 8)

BAA participants had some reminders for themselves, some aimed at WEA women and some directed at both. Suggestions for themselves and other BAAs were (a) to balance the common feeling of resignation ("that's the way it is") when they see unproductive racial dynamics with a commitment to speaking up and voicing concerns, (b) take the calculated risk to step outside the protective shell by bringing their full personality rather than just professional

skills to the table, (c) when giving feedback, remember to leave the choice of what to do with the information up to the receiver, and (d) find teachable moments.

There are times where I wish I could but maybe I hold back. Because being human I sometimes take the position that “that’s just the way it is” and I think that many of my peers have that attitude. I’m not so sure that sometimes it doesn’t rub off. (BAA participant 10)

Suggestions they had for WEA women included understanding that giving someone space to reflect and not respond at the moment does not threaten the relationship; and reminders for both were to have the courage to risk being willing to “upset the apple cart of your own thinking” as new information is processed. This is a critical point in the process of resisting the socialized messages of racism.

Be conscious of power. Power is a critical element of these relationships, because systemic inequities define their uniqueness. Therefore, working to equalize power dynamics in the relationship signals respect, provides a laboratory of sorts to practice resisting dominating and marginalizing messages and begins to shape change at the meso level.

Not surprisingly, the recommendations here differed by racial perspective. WEA women had messages for fellow WEAs, including (a) realize that turf matters, (b) understand that we have to do more reaching across because of the power associated with being WEA, and (c) acknowledge our history of domination and betrayal.

On my turf and on your turf matters. Do we always meet in my building? Do you always pick the lunch place? And as the people of power, because of race, age and socioeconomics, then we’re the ones who’ve got to do the most reaching across, the most putting aside what I am to understand the who you are. (WEA participant 1)

BAA women had a message for themselves, as well as for WEA women. For themselves, they noted the importance of taking WEA women “off the pedestal of being the enemy” so they can remain engaged in the process.

I'm not saying what she did wasn't hurtful but I let's take her off of the pedestal of the enemy and put her into some human context for a minute. (BAA participant 9)

And, their challenge to WEA women was to use their inroads to WEA men in order to heal these rifts.

You have a unique position. I think also that's why the weight is placed on you and you don't rise to the occasion. It's like a circular thing that happens. Because you know White men and you have an inroad into them, and they have not treated you well either, but you collude with them. I think that being aware of that collusion can help you change some of who they are, the powers that be. I also think that because you are women, you are programmed in gender to understand, be compassionate and empathetic and all those kinds of things, to understand the pain of being discriminated against in that way and how that needs to change. (BAA participant 9)

Be conscious of the system of racism. Both subgroups stressed the social construction of race, which proposes that we all are programmed with stories that define racial boundaries.

Listening to these stories with that in mind becomes another important effort.

My church is an African American Baptist church, her church is Baptist too which was real interesting. But my church is on Beatties Ford Road and she said when she grew up she was always told not to go on Beatties Ford Road. So she had to really, really process that but she came to church with me and then afterwards we went to dinner and we had a nice time. It was just real interesting to me that she had to process it. Now she was comfortable asking me to come to her church. But reciprocating, she had to kind of work through that. And she did. I was really pleased that she did. (BAA participant 7)

BAA women had additional guidance to offer to themselves, WEA women as well as both. For both, they stressed the importance of understanding that the system is working on us all the time and that we must separate ourselves from the system at the same time we are part of it.

And what's the system doing? That's old stuff but it still holds. If I have some sense of what that is and if I have some time to talk about what that is and understand what that is, then I can open up my mind a little bit to something different. I can understand myself in a different way. I don't have to hold everything as "me personally"—I'm thinking up all this hateful stuff to do something intentionally to someone else. (BAA participant 9)

They reminded themselves to distinguish between prejudice and ignorance on the part of WEA women who are in the insular bubble. If they assess it as ignorance, this produces a need to burst

that bubble to decrease ignorance rather than respond defensively to perceived prejudice.

And there are many times that I go to that place also, because I do think just because someone has been privileged and I really feel that it's not a negative, when you're brought up a certain way and you don't know any different, I don't think that that is necessarily prejudice. I think sometimes people are doing what they know best to do but there are very few of us at this point that haven't been exposed to racial issues and problems that are caused and racism and that kind of thing, so I don't think anybody's living in any kind of environment where they're, being sheltered from anything that's going on. (BAA participant 10)

BAA women recommended that WEA women take the view that our futures are tied together and that the collective choices one race makes affects another, and reminded WEA women that gender is not a unifying identity for BAA women.

We're locked into a life with one another. We cannot get away from each other. If we go down, ya'll are goin' down. I mean, I understood that. If Black people go down, White people are going to go down. It may take awhile but they will. (BAA participant 9)

WEA women offered the recommendation to other WEA women that they must realize that despite their individual choices, the negative actions of WEA people continue in society at large.

Self care. One BAA stressed the need for BAAs to nurture themselves to minimize the burden of cross-race work.

So if we're going to do this, we need to give special attention and sort of nurture that and be aware to try to minimize what plays out has been sort of a burden on us. We need to. We have to work this. (BAA participant 5)

Overall, there were some areas where the women differed in their descriptions of the intrapsychic efforts required to make the ecosystem balanced. A significant area of difference was in suggested ways for handling conflict. While participants from both perspectives did stress that conflict should be expected and that norms for handling it should be created, more was said about this by the BAA women, and what was said reflected more direct experience with it than

from the WEA women. One of the WEA women referred to having to be willing to “get smacked,” and their comments reflected a need to stop, reflect and get help when necessary. Both, however, have had experience bringing up and resolving race issues through direct conversation, and both stressed that there should be an acknowledgement that it will not affect the relationship if surfaced. Furthermore, according to these women, conflict can happen intentionally by surfacing an issue someone has with the other or with the process underway, or unintentionally by “just happening.”

It is not surprising that the BAA women have more consciousness around issues related to the context of the system in which race lives, power issues, and the need for courage and self care due to the depth and length of experience they have dealing with race. On the other hand, it is hopeful to see that the WEA women in this study report the need to do a lot of personal work as they engage in these relationships, and that they are becoming aware of power issues as they do so. It is not clear whether it is due to naiveté, lack of experience, or some other reason that the WEA participant did not talk more about the need for self care, but given the level of commitment and personal work they report is involved, it will likely become important as they continue in these relationships.

Another observation is that WEA women seem to have less experience outside their insular bubble, but in this relationship, seem to be moving into the space between bubble and shell. In this study, participants report becoming aware of the insular bubble through these relationships, but the different levels of awareness and “race fluency” continue to be negotiated. Therefore, these relationships may be a site of change for WEA women, but it is important to not assume they will rely on BAA women to educate them. It is clear from looking at the pattern in the upcoming recommendations that the level of effort made in relationship shifts much more to

WEA women or both women, as opposed to the burden mentioned earlier falling on BAA women.

Table 5.3 below summarizes these messages about intrapsychic efforts for women engaging in cross-race relationships, by race and together.

Table 5.3

Nurturing the Ecosystem: Intrapsychic Work for Women Engaging in Cross-Race Work Relationships

Intrapsychic Work for BAA women	Intrapsychic Work for Both	Intrapsychic Work for WEA women
<u>Setting One's Mental Stage</u>		
Be willing to stick head out of the protective shell.	Maintain a learning orientation. Know what you don't know. Choose our own actions, behavior, attitudes and beliefs. Persevere, believe things can change. Be deliberate, intentional. Be vulnerable, take personal risk. Accept that different lenses are a result of different experiences.	Be willing to stick head out of the bubble. Be curious and attentive.
<u>Personal Consciousness-Raising</u>		
Work with disappointment resulting from unmet expectations.	Resist judgments and preconceptions in order to listen fully.	Be conscious of the bubble and one's place in it
Reflect on our own segregated life choices	Reflect on an ongoing basis about how one's racial story affects one's current thinking.	

and implications.

Watch others' behavior.

Allow surprises and new information to change old ideas.

Know one's own triggers around race.

Examine what one's role is and where one's power is to change things.

Question if we are ready to listen to each other's stories and resist old beliefs.

Don't get into another's mind or speak for others.

Acknowledge our own agendas.

Don't give energy to unsubstantiated rumors.

Get educated to correct misconceptions of each other.

Accept the discomfort of hearing things you don't want to hear.

Courage, Risk

Balance "that's the way it is" with speaking up.

Assess willingness to bring up race.

Know that giving space doesn't threaten the relationship.

When giving feedback, leave the choice of what to do with the information up to the receiver.

Be willing to "upset the apple cart of your own thinking."

Leave baggage, egos, sensitivities at the door.

Bring full personality to the table, not just professional skills.

Power Consciousness

Take WEA off the pedestal of being the enemy.

Be aware of collusion with White men.

Acknowledge history of dominance and betrayal.

Realize that turf matters.

Understand that those inside the bubble have more reaching across to do because of power associated with being White.

System Consciousness

Distinguish between prejudice and ignorance on the part of WEA women.

Realize that each other's stories come from a long line of programming.

Remember that our futures are tied together.

Understand that the system is working on us all the time.

Remember that gender is not a unifying identity for BAA women.

Separate ourselves from the system at the same time as we are part of it.

Realize that the negative actions of WEA people continue.

Be aware that BAAs bring race first, that gender is not enough to have in common.

Self Care

Nurture self.

Interpersonal. The next category of guidance focuses on the space between the women in relationship. Once the intrapsychic work is done, there are opportunities to demonstrate these awarenesses as the relationship is enacted.

Make the invisible visible. All participants reported the value of frequent, honest, and direct feedback; both asking for it and giving it when in cross-race relationships.

I think there's a trust that I'm not trying to pull something over on her and she's not trying to pull something over on me. If I think she's got a good idea or a bad idea, I will tell her and vice versa. I think there's a fair amount of, "No way,[name]" or kind of stuff. We don't pussyfoot around each other. We're pretty frank. (WEA participant 3)

When I did something that I should not have done, she would be the first one to sit me down and tell me. She was very honest with me, very positive with me about it, and then we'd move on. (BAA participant 4)

We're able to say "well that wasn't quite nice what you said" or "I think you might want to think about how that might come across if you're saying it like that" or "have you ever considered doing it this way?" So it's not one of those situations where you're always going along and always agreeing even though you may disagree with what was said or how something was said. It really is when you take the opportunity to call people on things that they need to be called on and allow them to do the same with you. And so, it's "Here I am, I'm a friend, you're a friend to me. Let's be totally honest with each other." (BAA participant 8)

In addition, both subgroups reported that challenging assumptions is inherent to cross-race relationships.

However, if you're White, and people assume things like, well, you don't have to work, because you're White, or you're just working till your husband can get a better job, and these were women that, perhaps, did not have that as an option, but just to be taken for granted that way, that's one thing. (BAA participant 6)

WEA women are advised by BAA women to (a) raise the subject of race first and to signal they are interested in talking about race, (b) explicitly notice the race distribution in the room, and (c) show what is uncomfortable to show. This is an antidote to the burden of race awareness BAA women reported carrying and to the impression management WEAs were taught.

There are just many qualities that person would show that would make me understand that they are interested and that they care. Because I don't think I would be talking about issues of race if I did not think the person cared about it. (BAA participant 10)

Come on let's go. Because this is it. This is what we don't want to show to the world. Let's put it all on the table and figure out how we're going to do this because if we don't, this is a nice exercise again. (BAA participant 9)

For both sets of women, participants recommend that they pay attention to each context they are in for its racial dynamics.

And you don't have the need to continually recycle to say "Are you remembering that I'm a Black woman?" "Do I remember that you're a White woman?" That's an automatic. But we hold that because that's the context that we're in. So the challenge actually is being able to hold the system's context which hasn't changed that much. I mean, it's changing, slowly but surely, but we have to test every context that we're in and know that the dynamics that we wish would not show up will, often, and are we still paying attention to that. (BAA participant 9)

It is interesting that WEA participants recommended that both people in the relationship, when bringing up race, assess willingness to talk about it first. This may be a hesitation that is a result of being in the insular bubble, because it is contradicted above.

I would definitely say you got to start by getting to know any co-worker, even if they are of a different race. When a new opportunity presents itself to talk about it, to take advantage of it, but do it slowly to see if there is willingness to discuss this at all, that there are differences, and that's not a bad thing. (WEA participant 8)

Build the relationship. Cross-race relationships were no different than any other relationship in that participants recommended things that are foundational to many working relationships such as getting to know each other personally, spending time working together, and expressing compassion for each other. On the other hand, getting to know each other personally and expressing compassion were mentioned by a majority of participants as a way to offset the tendency to act according to assumptions and to not want to risk being vulnerable.

I think we need to get together more and have more conversations where you can express and I can express and then we can at least get to know who we are. And then

say, okay, how are we going to, and then sit down and work in terms of doing it. (BAA participant 4)

She speaks to you in the eye and cares about who you are, and cares about who these people in the room are in very loving ways. (WEA participant 1)

Equalize power in the relationship. The power consciousness mentioned in the intrapsychic category was reinforced here, to be modeled by relationship behavior. Efforts to equalize power in this relationship are critical, so that the practices of dominance and marginalization in the larger system of society are not duplicated inside the relationship. Participants stressed that this relationship, as a microcosm of change, must model a level playing field of power. The specific ways they have experienced this, as well as what they recommend are a rich source of direction.

Recommendations for both women in the relationship included (a) listening without interruption and insuring all voices are heard, thereby equalizing air time and voice; (b) reciprocally working at the relationship, thereby equalizing effort; (c) showing interest in each other's world and their story, equalizing value; (d) doing one's fair share of the work, equalizing effort; (e) the person experiencing a racial "bump" getting to tell their story, equalizing air time; (f) asking how we can support each other, equalizing voice; (g) pooling resources equally, equalizing resources contributed; (h) making space for each other's success, equalizing recognition; and (i) being willing to compromise, equalizing authority.

We have to be able to come together and feel comfortable coming together. We have to know that you are listening to me and I'm listening to you and we're learning from each other. (BAA participant 4)

You need to be able to listen to everybody's story if they have one, at the moment, at the time, or you need to at least acknowledge the fact that everybody has one. (BAA participant 9)

For WEA women, priorities were to (a) submit to BAA leadership, (b) seek to understand, (c) be collaborative, (d) invite people to call them on their bubble behavior, and (e) go into BAAs world when invited.

There were people who invited me as part of a group maybe to their home and then there were people who invited me individually to their home or said, “Let’s have lunch” or “Let’s have drinks after work” or “Come by and I’m having a party.” One person on the board is a sculptor and said, “I make pottery. Let me show you my pottery. I want to show you the work that I’m doing.” So it just moved to a different level of friendship and relationship. And you know she said, “I like to walk. We don’t live far from each other and we live in the same neighborhood almost.” And so we start walking together about once a week. (BAA participant 7)

Educate and learn from each other. Maintaining a learning orientation has been recommended in the literature on positive work relationships (Davidson & James, 2007) and these participants corroborated that. For both people in the relationship (a) seeking to understand (with a special note to WEA women to avoid confusing this with assuming commonality), (b) educating each other considering the awareness level of the other, and (c) allowing each other to ask about the other’s own racial perspective were all mentioned as ways to maintain this learning orientation.

It is a lifelong seeking to understand and try to get better at hearing someone else’s perspective. Just being mindful that there is another perspective. (WEA participant 6)

And one of my African American woman friends said that you do not have enough African American art in your house, and you do not have enough African American authors in your house. So she started giving me authors that I should read. And some of it’s very hard reading. She told me it would be. (WEA participant 8)

In addition, WEA women were recognized for visibly changing their own behavior as a result of what they learned, and were cautioned against trying to assume commonality among women.

Our relationship has never been one where somehow we tried to meld each other together and fail to recognize the importance of differentiation. (BAA participant 9)

It's more than tolerating people. It's valuing people really, for who they are, what they do, their life experiences have value to them. They're important because they build who we are and how we view things. (WEA participant 10)

Set and facilitate ground rules, especially around "bumps." Bumps were defined by one participant as those experiences resulting from racially-based actions that get our attention and require emotional energy to process.

Bumps are, perceived conflicts, offenses. Somebody will do something, say something, run over you in a meeting, interrupt you, etc. For example, what we tracked over time with this consulting group is that when African American women, in particular, were presenting some piece, all the consultants would interrupt more often than if any other consultant was up. We tracked it. Now, tracking for us is just paying attention to behavior and tracking the pattern. So when any one of was up we are number one, aware of the difference that's now presenting, we know that certain groups will not hold as much attention depending upon the group in the room. White men will listen to White women and White men a lot more and a lot harder than they'll listen to people of Color. They will interrupt them every two minutes. So if the clients are doing that, the group in the room is doing that, which we expect, and then our consultants pile on to that or interrupt or somehow feel as though I'm not explaining this in a way that this group is understanding me, well there is a thin line between this intent and the unconscious impact of interrupting because you think the person needs help or is incompetent. Ok so that's a bump. (BAA participant 9)

Participants in both subgroups agreed that conflict and bumps are to be expected, ground rules should be created for how they will be handled; and when they occur, direct discussion about what happened and related feelings are critical. Additional suggestions were given to clarify the source of the conflict, to make the time as short as possible between the bump and the conversation about it, and to use dialogue techniques (Isaacs, 1999) such as inquiry in the ensuing conversation.

I think in any cross-racial dialogue, there are going to be people who say "the wrong thing" whatever that is and that's in quotes, or do the wrong thing, or who don't agree. Just because everybody's working toward some kind of interracial understanding doesn't mean everybody has to agree on what the road is to get there or even on what the outcome and so the dialogue is the important part to me. (WEA participant 4)

I think we have to see each other as being a team, and then take the time out to really understand what we bring to the table as opposed to placating and saying cannot we all just get along and really going into it blindly to say that we're not going to have some disagreements, we're not going to have some issues. It's important for us to know how we're going to go about resolving those issues. (BAA participant 8)

Based on their experiences, suggestions from WEA women to both parties in the relationship were (a) to know when to stop and postpone part of the discussion, and (b) to get outside facilitation when necessary.

When I get a hold of an issue, I just want to settle it then and there and talk it until I convince everybody I'm right (laugh) and get it settled. And people who are wiser than me are saying, "okay, well, let's come to an agreement about here, and we'll mark our place and then we'll talk more about getting it to here at another time." And so [name of BAA colleague] was good at doing that. Because that's what helps defuse a situation, helps people get used to an idea. (WEA participant 7)

We finally decided to bring this facilitator in to help us and she did a great job in getting people to own their stuff. (WEA participant 4)

This is another interesting point of potential negotiation—the difference in how much support from the outside one feels is necessary, and whether or when breaks are needed.

Bring the outside in. Because the societal context around these cross-race relationships both affects and is affected by these relationships, participants stressed that it is important to integrate into the relationship what is going on outside.

Whatever it is you're espousing in the broader sense, to really try to bring home and practice it in a micro level between. (BAA participant 5)

But how can the macro be so bad, and the micro be okay? (BAA participant 6)

This reinforces the reciprocal relationships between the micro, meso, and macro arenas of race relations.

Create a safe container. Isaacs (1994) proposed the metaphor of a container that describes the shared environment created by people who move through a dialogue process.

Participants in this study focused on this as well, stressing the importance of a sense of safety, comfort, and respect as the relationship progresses and conflict occurs.

Then race is in the conversation and it's safe. Then if you need to you can talk about more significant things that really do divide people. You've already had some safe territory where nobody got hurt. (BAA participant 8)

We've sat down and had a discussion about I'm direct and you're direct. She'll come in and tell me I'm direct, and this how I'm going to be. And I said, "I don't want you to be anything but direct. That's what I value about you. I know that when you tell me something, it is what you believe, it is what you think. I'm not saying that what you tell me may be right, but I know that you're giving me the honest answer, and you're not trying to sugarcoat it. I know what you're telling me is either factual or what you believe, or whatever." And I know I can trust that, and I told her "I value your directness." And you know, she said "I value your directness." And so it kind of gives us both the opportunity to be open and honest. (WEA participant 9)

Based on the way each subgroup described safety, yet another area for negotiation is surfaced—what makes an environment safe for each. The free and open expression of feelings for the BAA women may constitute safety for them, but the WEA women reporting that breaks are necessary may indicate a different definition. Both subgroups noted the priority to keep people in the conversation without alienating them, and to allow mistakes from both oneself and the other.

Again, that's how you develop fluency in anything. You can read a lot of stuff but you've just got to immerse yourself and just be free to sort of stumble or step on toes to a degree but just go through it. (BAA participant 5)

As conflicts and bumps occur, participants suggested that both parties (a) recognize explicitly that the relationship is going to remain intact, (b) make space to articulate felt pain, (c) offer support, (d) allow anger to be expressed, (e) stay engaged even when uncomfortable, and (f) signal upcoming conflict when possible.

It's really about clarifying where the disagreement is coming from and always recognizing that the friendship is always going to remain intact. It is not going to be challenged, it's not going to be threatened because of some professional disagreement. And it's for a

moment. Let's clarify it, and always the goal for us is let's get beyond it. We've got so much history behind us and so much that we have accomplished together that there's absolutely no way anything can threaten this relationship. (BAA participant 8)

Keep perspective. Both subgroups acknowledged that the greater good of the work they are doing together should be the focus and the context for any difficulties that might emerge.

So we're working towards success in school and that's the goal and we've got some stuff that's in the way like, as White people we do this, or as Black women we do that or something, then maybe you can deal with it but you're dealing with it because of this other thing. (WEA participant 1)

So anticipate that often times personalities might clash, but we don't threaten, we don't leave those particular issues unresolved to the detriment of the greater good of the project. (BAA participant 8)

Table 5.4 summarizes the interpersonal recommendations for each and for both.

Table 5.4

Interpersonal Work for Women Engaging in Cross-Race Work Relationships

Interpersonal Work for BAA Women	Interpersonal Work for Both	Interpersonal Work for WEA women
<u>Make the invisible visible</u>		
	Ask for and give constructive feedback directly and honestly.	Raise the issue of race first, signal interest in talking about it.
	Pay attention to each context we are in for its racial dynamics.	Explicitly notice the race distribution in the room.
	Assess willingness to talk about race.	
	Challenge assumptions.	Show what is uncomfortable to show.
<u>Build the relationship</u>		
	Get to know each other personally.	

Spend time working together.

Express compassion for each other.

Equalize power in the relationship

Listening without interruption and insuring all voices are heard.

Reciprocally work at the relationship.

Show interest in each other's world and their story.

Do one's fair share of the work.

The person experiencing a racial "bump" gets to tell their story.

Ask how we can support each other.

Pool resources equally.

Make space for each other's success.

Be willing to compromise.

Educate, learn from each other

Seek to understand.

Educate each other at the awareness level they are in.

Allowing each other to ask about the other's own racial perspective.

When seeking to understand, realize you cannot put yourself in another's shoes.

Change own behavior as a result of what is learned.

Value difference, don't assume sameness.

Set ground rules, manage "bumps"

Expect conflict.

Set ground rules for bumps and disagreements.

Clarify where disagreement is coming from.

Shorten time between “bump” and conversation about it.

Know when to stop and postpone discussion.

Get outside facilitation when necessary.

Use dialogue techniques.

Bring the outside in

Integrate macro context into the relationship—recognize mutuality of micro and macro.

Create a safe container

Create safety, sense of comfort.

Keep people in the conversation, avoid alienation.

Communicate value of each other.

Allow mistakes of self and other.

Signal upcoming conflict if possible.

Stay engaged when uncomfortable.

Make space to articulate pain.

Allow anger to be expressed.

Offer support.

Recognize explicitly that relationship is going to remain intact.

Keep perspective

Focus on the greater good of the work.

Actions outside the relationship. Because the racial dynamics are embedded in societal systems as well as relationship dynamics, these participants suggested that additional actions be taken that strengthen these relationships, broaden awareness outside of the relationship, and affect greater change.

Cross-race mentoring and networking. Many participants from both subgroups mentioned being chosen, identified, mentored, sponsored, helped, advised, guided, and being taken under someone's wing by a woman of the other race. These experiences had a deep and meaningful impact on them.

She wanted to help to guide me through the things that I was going through, because even though she's a Caucasian, she's Jewish, and had experienced some of the things that I experienced as a woman, and I experienced as a person of Color. She was able to give me guidance on a lot of things that, say, if I have an issue regarding employment, or if I have an issue where I feel that something has happened where I was treated differently, I could always go to her and talk to her about it. (BAA participant 2)

And then our personal relationship kind of developed because I needed to rely on her for some personal things, and some personal help, and trying to make some personal decisions, and she was certainly one that you could talk to about issues outside of work as well. So that again just kind of helped drive the personal relationship outside of the professional one. (WEA participant 9)

Many of these relationships were important vehicles for deconstructing and modifying previously formed assumptions about each other. From these experiences emerged some useful advice for all cross-race relationships: (a) intentionally identify people of a different race to mentor, (b) intentionally connect each other to those who are different than oneself, (c) provide

entrée into one's own racial community to those of a different race, (d) build one's own network so tokens are not used as access to their racial community, (e) be a racial intermediary—translate between cultures, and (f) intentionally network across race.

Seek support. These relationships were admittedly difficult and while the guidance offered previously steers one toward developing skills and capacities while engaging in the relationship, these participants also found valuable support outside the relationship. These outside sources provided a sounding board, a second opinion, valuable expertise, and a way to check one's own assumptions.

She's an African American woman that I have worked with in some real confidence about a problem relationship that I'd been having with another African-American woman. I could talk with her about the White/Black problem that I was in from a power position and she could say, "Yeah I don't know what you're going to do about that. You're the White lady here and that's tough." (WEA participant 1)

Because it's not natural in how we engage across race that to draw on what kind of tools you need to help you with that because I think that is crucial. (BAA participant 5)

Become a lifelong race learner and discussant. Several participants were given books or articles to read and had intentionally learned skills that would help them in cross-race work.

[My mentor], a White woman, had this really interesting piece. A sort of list of things, cultural things which I just really wish I had a copy of. It was something like, "As a White woman, I can go to the grocery store dressed in my sweatpants and not have anybody bat an eye. But as a Black woman, if I go to the grocery store dressed in my sweatpants, I will be followed and considered a street person or whatever." I would love to get a copy of that. But that kind of stuck with me. (WEA participant 3)

And I think that there needs to be skill building. There hardly ever is. We don't enter these situations often with skilling up White women, skilling up African-American women. There are some skills here, there's dialogue skills, there's eye contact, there's some skills that short and sweet, not a lot, to help people talk to each other and hear each other and understand their stories. So it starts with themselves, starts with some skill building. (BAA participant 9)

This led to the suggestion that to further support these relationships, books can be passed along, skills can be built, and opportunities can be intentionally created for oneself to work across race.

Based on the comments from one BAA participant, a suggestion for WEA woman specifically is to use these opportunities to build what she called “race fluency” so that they can build more equal capacity to use when discussing race with BAA women.

Model effective boundary crossing. These participants felt that it was important, both as a result of what they learned from their experiences and in what they would advise others, to model the ability to talk about race across race. This included visibly acting on learning, supporting one’s partner publicly, and creating more safe, structured settings in which to bring up race. Perhaps because these women were so committed to social justice, they clearly felt it is important to multiply these efforts wherever possible.

A part of her forged ahead and wasn’t going back and she gave concrete examples—it wasn’t just talk. She gave concrete examples of changes she made in her life as a result. (BAA participant 5)

I think the two of us are headed in that direction, both in modeling who we are and in being able to talk about it with folks and also be able to put it in our work in some way. (BAA participant 9)

We say it. It’s explicit. It’s yeah we’re always friends. If we’re co-facilitating people in the classes, our team members know. It’s we’ve been friends for X amount of years, we’ve known each other, we’ve been through this we’ve been through that, we’ve had similar projects, similar experiences, on our projects we’ve done X Y and Z together and so we say it. We say it to each other, we say it to other people. So it’s a known. The families know. The spouses know. The friends know that they have a genuine relationship or they’ve had a long history with each other and they have a great deal of respect for each other. (BAA participant 8)

A final observation was arrived at in an interview with one of the BAA participants where she reflected on the conversations she has with her BAA friends. In those conversations, WEA women are discussed and often generalized about, and she commented that she should probably

model different behavior with them so that she might create some holes in the protective shell.

Just thinking of conversations that I have on the phone with Black women they always go to, somewhere in the conversation, if we're talking about women, somebody will say "well you know this is the way White women respond." And they may say something about how Black women respond this way too but they definitely separate them. There are notions about White women and some of the people that I talk to I guess maybe I should work harder on maybe getting them to look deeper. I may ask them a question and say "tell me why you feel that way" or "tell me what's happened in your life that causes you to think that" but they go to that place. (BAA participant 10)

Work inside the insular bubble (for bubble residents). Because of the semi-permeable property of the insular bubble, there is an opportunity for those who regularly interact with other residents of the bubble to work to dissipate it from the inside. Participants from both subgroups suggested that there is work to be done that is unique to WEA women given their positioning in the insular bubble. First, WEA women can be a bridge between BAA women and WEA men given their commonalities of race or gender in each relationship. This can involve advocacy, sponsorship, or networking.

But [WEA colleague] was in the room, and when she saw that I was not able; I mean, I was one, embarrassed, and probably not as steady as I needed to be, because he was who he was. And she spoke up, and in her most direct way, basically said to him, "What you've done is inappropriate; what you've said is not correct." (BAA participant 6)

This may lead to a second observation, that being a bridge may risk the connection WEA women have with WEA men. Therefore, the second suggestion was for WEA women to let go of that connection, which one BAA suggested may be more illusory than they think. Third, when they are in a conversation inside the insular bubble, WEA women can disrupt assumptions voiced by other bubble residents. This can be in situations where there is either outright prejudice behind humor, dismissive comments that need correction, or any assumptions that need examination.

I had had lunch with a donor, an older White man who's probably in his seventies and he wants so much to be a servant leader. He wants to be of service to people who are downtrodden but he's so dialed into the "worthy" poor. So, we were having a

conversation over lunch and he was telling me that he's from near Jackson, Mississippi, where the book's based, and he and his wife were having two friends come in from that area where he'd grown up, stay with them, and they were all going to hear Kathryn Stockett. And he was telling me about how when he was growing up, they had servants and he was best friends with the children and that he played together all the time and they just felt like family. And I listened for awhile and I said, "You know, Ben, I don't think they thought of you as family." And he said, "No, they probably did not. I don't even know what happened to them." (WEA participant 6)

This is linked to a fourth suggestion—to surface race issues inside the insular bubble, which is constructed to keep them out. Simply causing awareness that those inside the insular bubble have a racial identity is an example.

I think it's been a helpful thing, not necessarily with other people of Color, but with other White people for me to talk about race and to open that door to say we need to think about as an agency of almost all White people serving almost all people of Color, what does that mean? It means we need to be able to break that down and make that safe for us to really think realistically about. (WEA participant 11)

Table 5.5 summarizes the actions that are necessary outside the relationship.

Table 5.5

Actions to be Taken Outside Cross-Race Work Relationship

Actions to be Taken by BAA Women	Actions to be Taken by Both	Actions to be Taken by WEA women
<u>Cross-race Mentoring and Networking</u>		
Disrupt assumptions with like others about those inside the bubble.	Intentionally identify people of a different race to mentor.	
	Intentionally connect each other to those who are different than oneself.	
	Provide entrée into one's own "racial community" to those of a different race.	
	Build one's own network so tokens are not used as access to their "racial community."	

Be a racial intermediary – translate between cultures.

Intentionally network across race.

Seek Support

Find others to be sounding boards.

Get help, invite in expertise.

Become a Lifelong Learner and Discussant

Read, pass along, and discuss books and articles to gain insights. Build race fluency.

Create opportunities for self to work across race.

Model Effective Boundary Crossing

Model ability to talk about race across race.

Act on learning, new awareness.
Support partner publicly, have their back.

Create more structured, safe settings to bring up race.

Work Inside the Bubble

Risk losing connection with other bubble residents.

Be a bridge across the racial divide--from BAAs to WEA

men.

Disrupt assumptions of other
bubble residents.

Stand up for cross-race
partner inside the bubble.

Surface race issues inside the
bubble.

These findings substantiated, extended, or in one case contradicted what I had found in the literature. In the next chapter, I will interpret these findings and link these to the literature I reviewed. As indicated earlier, I will also elaborate on my study's credibility, plausibility, and limitations.

Chapter VI: Discussion

This research question was born in me as I was finishing my reading of E. Bell and Nkomo's (2001) book, *Our Separate Ways*. The last section in their epilogue, "Black and White Women Together," laid out the painful realities of "the fragile bond of gender" (p. 259), as well as their hope that "sturdy bridges" (p. 261) can be built and the rewards for doing so for both Black and White women. This resonated with my experience, my curiosity, and my desire to pursue that vision.

My curiosity took me to a wide range of literatures. While there seemed to be quite a bit of description about what happens in these relationships and what should be done about that, especially by WEA women, I did not find a solid base of empirical study focusing specifically on the cross-race peer dyad, especially for those who did not share organizational membership. Questions I began with that are woven throughout the first chapters of this dissertation include the following, and I will assess my findings here to see how these questions are informed by my findings or merit further examination.

- How can social identity and related power dynamics be better represented in the leadership literature?
- If race is socially constructed, how can it be treated in the empirical literature as more than a variable, but explored as a process of acquisition and resistance?
- How can this study contribute to making the enactment of privilege visible in the leadership and related literatures?
- How can privilege be problematized?

- Is trust a realistic element of relationship in a context of multiple systems of domination?
- What does authenticity mean in the context of a cross-race relationship and what does it take to develop it?

And more specifically:

- What do Black African American and White European American women who are working for social justice do, think, and feel as they navigate the challenges of working across race?
- How can these relationships become a site for contestation of racial definitions?
- What does each need to do in order to produce the “sturdy bridges” E. Bell and Nkomo describe? (2001, p. 261)

My hope is that this study will contribute to the literatures I reviewed, as well as to arenas of practice for those also committed to resisting racism. After bracketing the literature review to conduct this grounded theory study, I come back to it now. In this chapter, I will assess my findings’ contribution to the literature and how they can inform practice. I will then outline the limitations of this study and how I worked to mitigate them. I will close with what I see as interesting areas for future research.

I will examine key aspects of my findings in light of existing literature, beginning with the metaphors I offer as an explanatory matrix. I will focus first on the protective shell and the insular bubble, then move to the interaction space between them, followed by the recommendations for minimizing the protective shell or dissipating the insular bubble. Before moving to limitations and recommendations for future research, I will summarize what I think this study contributes to specific areas of the literature, as well as implications for practice.

The Protective Shell

Armoring is a process described in the psychotherapy and racial socialization literatures to describe the process by which African Americans cope with racism (Bell & Nkomo, 1998; Faulkner, 1983; Greene, 1990, 1992, 1994; Peters, 1985). Faulkner (1983) defined it as “specific behavioral and cognitive skills used by Black and other people of Color to promote self-caring during direct encounters with racist experiences and/or racist ideologies” (p. 196), and E. Bell and Nkomo (2001) observed it in their study of Black female corporate executives (p. 96). Armoring, as an image of substantial protection, seems appropriate given the painful, daily experience of racism for those oppressed.

However, in relationships with WEA women where synergies are sought, where racism is being resisted together, and where mutual support is the goal, armor may be a less useful term. This was discussed in the second level of my data gathering, when participants were shown my preliminary findings. Both groups felt that armor was too harsh, war-like, rigid, and static to describe what they experience in their relationships. The word “shell” was proposed in the group of WEA women as an alternative, and when I shared that with the BAA women, it was generally viewed as the best alternative among the terms that had surfaced in the data.

As I pursued the possibilities of this term as a useful metaphor, I found that the scientific literature described properties of shells that translate well to this application. Rubner (2003) described the properties of a seashell as follows:

Over many millions of years, nature has devised schemes to combine seemingly incompatible building-blocks—“soft” organic proteins and “hard” inorganic particles of calcium carbonate—in a manner that produces composite materials with the unusual combination of high strength, hardness, and toughness. (p. 925)

This combination of a protective function and properties such as toughness, ability to absorb energy, capacity to respond flexibly to the environment, and acknowledgement of a living being inside seem to be more descriptive of what the participants in my study described as the BAA women's experience. Therefore, my study offers "protective shell" as an extension of the term "armor" that may be more useful and descriptive for BAA women in the context of positive cross-race relationships.

Much of the experience inside the protective shell reported by the BAA participants in my study corroborated what the literature described, but in combination, supports the uniqueness of this dyad as a level of analysis. The guardedness described by E. Bell and Nkomo (2001), Collins (2000), and Lorde (1984) was primary in my findings as well. This guardedness was accompanied by the vigilance, monitoring, and assessment of integrity the WEA women also described (hooks, 1984; Livers & Caver, 2003; Lorde, 2007; Roberts et al., 2008).

BAAs' urgent, activist, and emotional response to racism that was contrasted in my findings with WEA women's more impersonal and cognitive response was also substantiated by the literature (Collins, 2000; Hurtado, 1996; Singleton & Linton, 2006). This supported the existence of an arena of practice outside the academy that produces knowledge of equal value to scholarship produced inside (Collins, 2000).

The initial distrust BAA women reported bringing into the relationship as something to be disproven echoes what the literature described (Bell et al., 2003; hooks, 1981). This social-identity-based assumption of distrust also makes these relationships unique as a unit of analysis. The experiences of assimilation and tokenism in my findings also echoed what Kanter (1977) and Pharr (1988) proposed. My findings provide an extension of those concepts by describing the experience of them and how they affect cross-race relationships. And, finally, the role of the

family as a buffer to a racist environment was described by my BAA participants, echoing Greene (1990), who described the role of the Black family as “prepar[ing] its children to live among White people without becoming White people, and to mediate between two often contradictory cultures” (p. 214). For these relationships, this becomes yet another area where assumptions about commonality must be interrupted.

Elements of the protective shell and its properties of protectiveness, social construction and perpetuation, tenacity, exclusivity, transparency, shininess, a high level of race fluency, a filtered lens, and imperviousness are substantiated throughout the literature and its contribution can be seen as an organizing construct. The property of the filtered lens, however, presents an important and likely contested area for further investigation. One’s vision of reality becomes complicated by the perspectives of the protective shell and insular bubble. Because race is so tightly coupled with power, because performance is usually evaluated according to standards developed inside the bubble, and because those inside the bubble have less race fluency than those outside; perceptions of what is race-related and what is not must be carefully analyzed. For practitioners, the intersection of these three dynamics around that property within their organization are a useful area for exploration.

The Insular Bubble

The term bubble has been used in the literature to describe privilege, the lack of awareness of those given it, and even narcissism (DeCuir-Gunby, 2007; Goldstein, 1995; Rosenbloom & Cortes, 2008). To my knowledge, however, its properties as applied to the experience of privilege, particularly White privilege, from the outside and within have not been specified nor has it been used consistently to make this dynamic visible. This was a word introduced by one of my BAA participants to describe her experience of some WEA women, and it was acknowledged

as appropriate by both sets of participants in their focus groups. While the properties of a bubble in nature are less transferable here in terms of a metaphor describing the experience of privilege (for example, it is not as easily burst as real-life bubbles), the properties offered as a result of my findings can be an imaginative substitute.

As was the case of the protective shell, my findings also serve to corroborate much of what is in the literature about the dynamics of privilege. The lack of awareness of the existence of the insular bubble on the part of those inside it substantiates the invisibility of privilege reported by Altman (2006) and Dyer (2005), as well as Whiteness being a “prompted identity” (p. 20) as described by McKinney (2005). In fact, the process of prompting one’s racial identity for those inside the insular bubble can be used here as the first step in dissipating that bubble.

Related to that, the BAA women in my study could see into the insular bubble and noticed the tendency of WEA women to continually assume dominance, which supports what I found in the literature (Alcoff, 1998; Anzaldua, 1990; Breines, 2006; Brown & Grande, 2005; Singleton & Linton, 2006). This combination of disproportionate awareness and assumption of dominance led to the extra effort reported by the BAA participants in my study.

The reactions to “bursting the Bubble,” as my participants described it, references the same reactions of surprise, discomfort, or denial described by McKinney (2005) and the “racial melancholia” (p. 874) described by Suchet (2007). While information surfacing in these relationships can burst one’s bubble, the reactions are likely best processed individually; again reducing the emotional burden of witnessing them reported by my BAA participants. BAA women also noticed the “unproblematic solidarity” (p. 10) that Thompson (2003) talked about and the pretense of homogeneity described by Livers and Caver (2003) and Lorde (2007). This was an earlier critique of the feminist movement and continues today.

In addition, my findings corroborate the existence of guilt on the part of WEAs reported by Bunch (1990) and Ely et al. (2006). This presents an additional quality that makes these relationships unique-the processing of guilt related to one party's racial identity. And, finally, the cognitive processing of racism by WEA women in my findings also echoed the conclusion advanced by Singleton and Linton (2006) that "White women are more verbal, impersonal, intellectual, and task oriented while women of Color tend to be more nonverbal, personal, emotional, and process oriented" (p. 123). This becomes still another area of difference to be negotiated.

Therefore, I introduce the insular bubble of privilege as a useful metaphor along with its accompanying properties of polarization, social construction and perpetuation, tenacity, high stakes when burst, insulation, having limited race fluency, guilt, amorphousness, semi-permeability, surrounded by one-way mirror, and a polite façade. This organizing construct can become another tool to make the dynamics and experience of privilege more visible in the leadership and related literatures, and as a stimulus for discussion in practice. It also serves to identify these relationships as unique and requiring a different lens when relationship constructs are applied to them.

Intersectionality

Throughout the data were references about race intersecting with other social identities, supporting the emphasis in the literature on the consideration of intersectionality when examining social identity.

First, while people can identify exclusively with one identity category (i.e., only as Blacks, only as women, only as gays, etc.), their concrete social location is constructed along multiple axes of difference, such as gender, class, race, and ethnicity, stage in the life cycle, sexuality, ability, and so on. Second, the intersecting social divisions cannot be analysed [sic] as items that are added up but, rather, as constituting each other. Although

discourses of race, gender, class, etc. have their own ontological bases that cannot be reduced to each other, there is no separate concrete meaning of any social division. To be a woman is different if you are middle-class or working-class, a member of the hegemonic majority or a racialized minority, living in the city or in the country, young or old, straight or gay. (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 200)

References were made most frequently to the intersection of race and class, followed by personality style, region of the U.S., position, power, and age. The striking frequency of the intersection of race and class deserves special attention here because participants often observed that class similarities assisted in crossing race boundaries, that privilege between race and class was difficult to distinguish, and that representation in decision-making happened less often around class than it does around race. Furthermore, the majority of these participants according to my assessment—not theirs—could be identified as middle class, so this data must be seen as bounded in that way.

Significance of Context to These Findings

As stated earlier, the context of this study as having been conducted in the South and more specifically in Charlotte, North Carolina, along with participants' experiences with segregation may either underscore or localize these findings. The property of the insular bubble as having an amorphous membrane and one that moves from subtle to obvious without warning, may be linked to the description of Charlotte as a city where access to power occurs through informal networks. It is this informality that can disguise systematic exclusion or inclusion. The polite façade, as well, may reflect the observation that Southern hospitality means being nice and keeping interactions superficial. And the memory of a painful history of slavery may contribute to the tenacity reported by participants of both metaphors.

The properties of the protective shell and insular bubble as separate experiences of BAA and WEA women described in my research are well documented in the literature. The updating

of these properties provided by this study only serves to reinforce the intractability of racism. How they interact together, however, has received less attention. The cross-race dyad as a level of analysis is an emerging focus in the literature, which is where my research is best placed.

Summary of Differences Between Protective Shell and Insular Bubble

The interrogation of how racial identities are formed was not an explicit focus of my study, but participants consistently referred to it when telling me their stories. This is not surprising, because their racial identities became salient as they prepared to discuss these relationships. These differences can be contrasted as a foundation for the differences that emerged in their experiences of these relationships.

As a social construction, race began to have meaning for all participants as they received socializing messages about race from their families and society at large. They then had experiences across race that tended to confirm these beliefs and assumptions about themselves and about the other race. As the data point out, these messages were quite different in quality and quantity and produced quite different perspectives.

Participants then revealed beliefs and philosophies resulting from these learned messages. What is significant here is that there was more of a collective learning from the BAA women (more people saying similar things) as a result of race and coping being an explicit subject while the WEA women's learning was more sporadic and resulted from individual choice given that the messages they received were more implicit and indirect. Table 6.1 summarizes these data.

Table 6.1

Differences in Socialization/Life Experiences and Resulting Perspectives

Socialization and Life Experiences		
	<u>BAA</u>	<u>WEA</u>
Type of messages	Explicit, negative, direct re other.	Implicit, negative, indirect re other.
Learned view of race relations	Having to accept way world is (present view).	Can work to change the world (present + future).
Role of parents	Parents as guides.	Parents as examples.
Coping mechanisms taught	Turn negative to positive. Know your history, but you are not your history, limit how much you reveal, hope, don't fall apart, get it done, work within the system.	None.
Messages about other learned from socialization and experience	Distrust, Be vigilant, Don't fall apart, don't let Whites take over, know that Whites see us as less competent to begin with.	Don't label, speak respectfully.
<u>Resulting Perspectives</u>		
	<u>BAA</u>	<u>WEA</u>
Hope for society.	Some comfort due to positive experiences with integrated education	Not wanting to be closed-minded.
Resilience of self.		People's experiences do matter.
Distrust in other.		Idealism for society.

Pride in self.

Unawareness of people who are different due to lack of contact.

Resistance of dominant messages.

One's awareness leads to commitment to act.

Self-doubt.

Importance of preparing next generation for racism.

These beliefs and assumptions constitute the origin of the insular bubble or the protective shell. They are both protective in a sense—the insular bubble protects those inside from seeing what is outside, and the protective shell protects those inside from the negative messages and treatment that are outside. Until both parties collectively process our painful history and perpetuation of domination, mutual fear, and marginalization; this protection is likely to be necessary. This would indicate the value of learning from the work done in South Africa around forgiveness and reconciliation (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2003; Krog, 2000; Lazare, 2004; Minow, 1998; Tutu, 1999). The differing experiences of one's position in the racial structure also point to the potential need for different types of work. Notable observations here are that the experience of marginalization is personal and pervasive, while the experience of power is more impersonal and more unconscious. Hence, some of this work can be done together, but much of it requires a same-race focus and support system.

Racial fluency varied between perspectives as well. Race was central for those who are protected by the protective shell, while, in the insular bubble, there was an uncertainty about how race plays a role in various circumstances with a concomitant acknowledgement of their own lack of fluency around race. One's energy was also spent differently depending on one's place behind the protective shell or in the insular bubble. The shell represented energy spent being vigilant and

being sure one is heard, while, inside the bubble, energy was spent upholding an image of non-racism and creating a norm of niceness and politeness. Figure 6.1 summarizes the respective characteristics of the protective shell and the insular bubble, and reinforces the proposal that different efforts must be made in the process of deconstructing and re-imagining racial identity.



Characteristics of Protective Shell	Characteristics of Insular Bubble
<i>Protective.</i> Guarded, slow to offer opinions	<i>Polarizing.</i> Power perceived to be inside, deference to insiders, qualifications for inside and out designed by insiders
<i>Exclusive.</i> Comfort behind the shell, has a closer bond with like others	<i>Socially constructed and perpetuated.</i> Supported by ongoing programming, collusion
<i>Socially constructed and perpetuated.</i> Supported by ongoing programming and suspicion	<i>Tenacious.</i> Resistant to change
<i>Tenacious.</i> Resistant to change, lasts even when exceptions disprove the rule	<i>High stakes when burst.</i> Positive and negative
<i>Prickly.</i> Contrary, defensive, not warm, distrusting	<i>Well-insulated and comfortable.</i> Vacuum regarding race and accountability for racism on inside, comfort with other insiders
<i>Impervious.</i> Distance, professionalism	<i>Limited race fluency.</i>
<i>High level of race fluency.</i>	<i>Infused with guilt.</i>
<i>Transparent.</i> Not afraid to talk about race, power issues	<i>Semi-permeable membrane.</i> Little feedback coming in from outside
<i>Filtered lens.</i> Interprets issues as racially motivated when others perceive they may be power or performance related	<i>One-way mirror.</i> Outsiders can see in clearly, insiders cannot see out unless they are informed
<i>Shiny.</i> Proud, identity strong	<i>Amorphous.</i> Boundaries move from subtle to obvious without warning

Figure 6.1. Characteristics of the protective shell and the insular bubble.

Another testament to the intractability of racism was offered by participants in this study. They noticed, whether from the perspective of being insulated by the bubble or needing the protection of the shell, that there are two patterns that work together to limit progress on racial justice. They all reported acknowledging the existence of racism, either experiencing it from the BAA perspective or witnessing it according to the WEAs. At the same time, they all noted that race is usually a taboo subject. These two shared experiences are what constitutes the elephant-in-the-room syndrome that people often sense, but often do not have the courage or willingness to surface. These paired observations are noted in Figure 6.2.

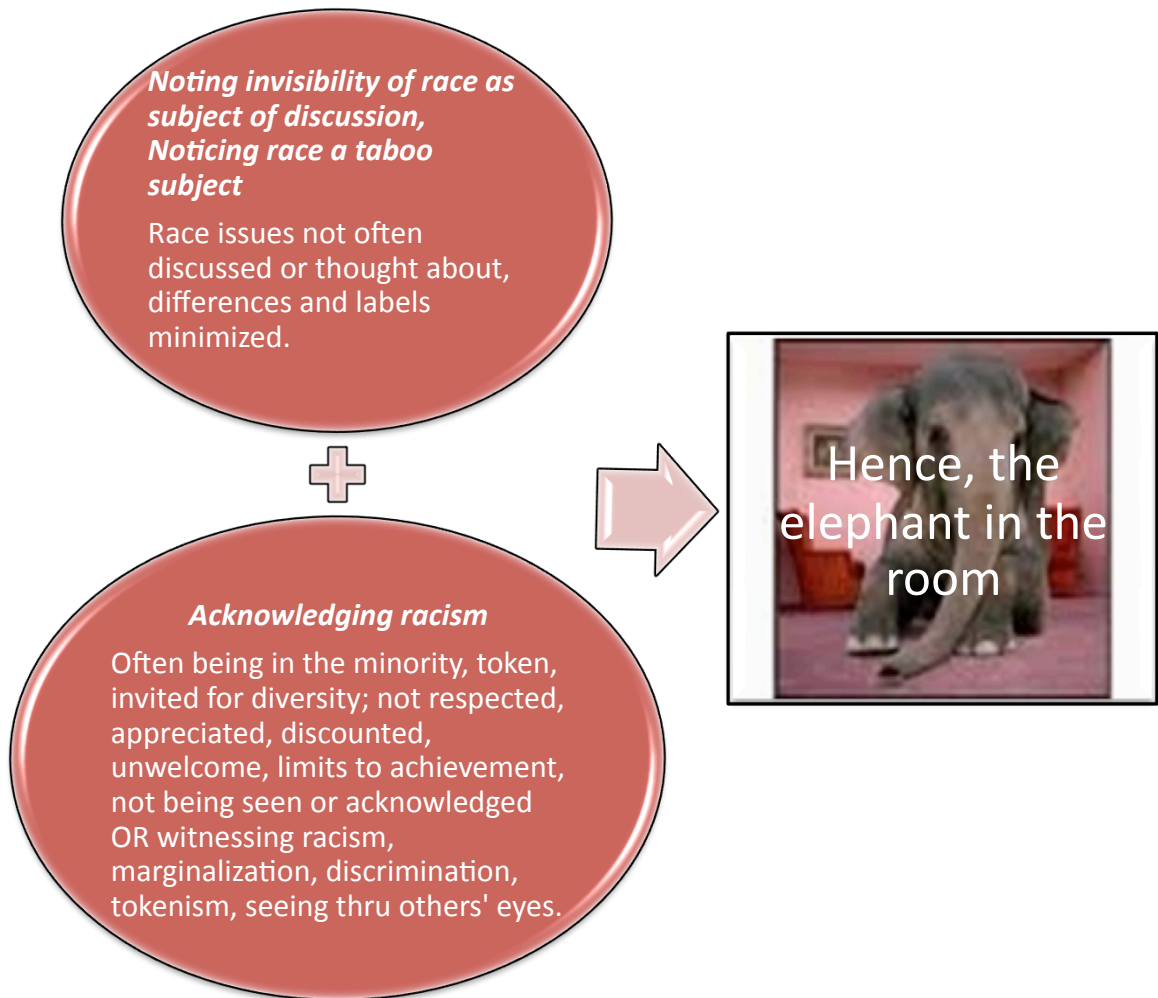


Figure 6.2. Shared qualities of the protective shell and the insular bubble.

As a result of these experiences, these participants reported resulting thoughts and feelings (see Figure 6.3). It is interesting to note that the quality of those reactions differed by race—the BAA women reported almost exclusively affective responses to life behind the protective shell, while the WEA women reported more cognitive reactions to their experience inside the insular bubble. This is likely due to the much more intense awareness, frustration, and coping skills necessary to be developed for those needing the protective shell as opposed to the more comfortable position inside the insular bubble. Furthermore, responding cognitively to what they see is a distancing mechanism in itself. On the other hand, the lack of familiarity with race-related dynamics produces a positive intention, but a lack of capacity to navigate them. This produces the frustration reported by the BAA women about the combination of their intense emotions about the experience and WEA women's uncertainty in engaging in discussion about it. One might also conclude that, given the energy it takes for the BAAs to reinforce their protective shell, the WEA women might be in a better position to advocate for change, especially since they likely have more leverage as a holder of systemic privilege.

An area for future study will be to explore this question with WEA women and to learn how they see their connection with WEA men and how they can use levers available to them. This would likely coincide with a set of portraits I am interested in publishing, focusing on WEA women who demonstrate evidence of being at the autonomy stage of racial identity development (Helms, 1990) and how they demonstrate that identity in the interest of eliminating racism.



Resulting Feelings (Affective)	Resulting Thoughts (Cognitive)
Angst, emotion, anger, fear	Dilemma of not wanting to see race, but being hyperconscious of it at same time
Another level of work	Feeling sabotaged
Bearing the burden	Wishing things were different
Despair, discouragement, losing hope, wondering why	Not sure how to manage boundaries, how to deal with outsiders
Feeling excluded	
Tired	

Figure 6.3. Reactions to awareness of the protective shell and the insular bubble.

As a result of differing positions in life and resulting experiences and reactions, these women make choices about how to cope with their awareness (see Figure 6.4). As is clear here, the BAA women reported many more choices, likely because of the importance of creating a protective shell as a response to perceived threat or danger. There are not as many choices to make when life is comfortable and safer. Another observation is that the effort to manage emotions on the part of WEA women was conspicuous in its absence, likely due to the cognitive reactions noted above and the lack of race fluency inside the insular bubble.



BAA	Shared	WEA
<i>Reinforce shell:</i>	Read body language	<i>Reinforce bubble:</i>
Be guarded, cautious about revealing	Spend energy trying to make sense of behaviors of others	Spend energy upholding image of non-racism
Credentialing		<i>Be an advocate for change:</i>
Invest in double consciousness		Assessing progress of outsiders re discrimination
Give up, quit, minimize commitment.		Commitment to being an advocate for change
Hold things together, not having luxury to fall apart		
Notice increased identity strength		
Manage emotions		
Spend energy planning and strategizing how to deal with the bubble		
As defense mechanism, bring race as primary in relationships		
Resist White leadership, definitions of me, personal relationships		
Respect becomes critical		
Set boundaries for self		
Stay in relationship despite frustration		
Acknowledge superior race fluency		
Get support from like others, be		

responsible for each other

Succumb to victimhood

Watch, be aware of racial dynamics in
the environment, assess permeability of
the bubble

Be an advocate for change:

Challenge, keep issue alive, demand
diversity

Organize for grassroots change
model desired behavior

Figure 6.4. Choices resulting from awareness of the protective shell and the insular bubble.

Another use of this study is in causing WEA women to become aware of the internal observations, assessments, and choices BAA women are making as they engage in relationships across race. This will likely cause much fewer assumptions of commonality on WEAs' part. As this data indicate, when they do interact, there is a significant need to read each other and make sense of each other's behavior, as a result of the significantly differing perspectives they have developed. Until skills and willingness are developed that enable them to engage in dialogue about each other's behavior, much of this sensemaking occurs intrapsychically.

I now turn to my interpretation of the findings that described the interaction space between the protective shell and the insular bubble. This space was the focus of my initial question, which was to learn what happens when BAA and WEA women work together. As participants reported, the nature of this space is unique compared to other interactions and must be nurtured intentionally.

The Ecosystem: Interaction Between Protective Shell and Insular Bubble

The interaction space between women working together across race is a unique one and, as the findings indicated, require targeted efforts to navigate issues related to race. The fields of complex adaptive systems (Holland, 1995; Kauffman, 1993), chaos theory (Gleick, 1998), and autopoiesis (Maturana & Varela, 1980) have led to an examination of principles that apply to human systems and organizations (Mitleton-Kelly & Papaefthimiou, 2002). In linking complexity theory to social ecosystems, Mitleton-Kelly and Papaefthimiou (2002) offered an explanatory framework of how relationships work within social ecosystems:

The intricate inter-relationships of elements within a complex system give rise to multiple chains of dependencies. Change happens in the context of this intricate intertwining at all scales. We become aware of change only when a different pattern becomes discernable. But before change at a macro level can be seen, it is taking place at many micro-levels simultaneously. Hence micro-agent interaction and change leads to macro system evolution. (p. 253)

Given this description, the relevance of a metaphor of an ecosystem to describe the paradoxical fragility and power encompassed by cross-race relationships can be established.

In this section, I will review how my findings corroborate, extend, and/or contradict some of the work of other scholars. One of my findings contradicted or perhaps updated an observation made by Hurtado (1996). As reported in my literature review, she contrasted the political concerns of White feminists and feminists of Color as focusing separately on private versus public issues. The overwhelming commonality of work and commitment to anti-racism reported by my participants did not support this. While vast differences remain, my findings would indicate that WEA women who are committed to social justice and are feminists are now sharing interests with BAA women. The importance of the time in and social justice purpose they reported sharing also corroborates what Wyatt (2004) said is critical to sustaining these

relationships and supports the instrumental investment Davidson and James (2007) posited is part of what it takes to remain connected in these relationships where conflict is likely. These findings highlight the effort required on several levels to fully engage in these relationships and stress the importance of balancing that with a shared larger purpose and investment.

Another observation in the literature (Brown & Grande, 2005; Caraway, 1991; Thompson, 2003) was that WEA women struggle with wanting closeness and comfort in their relationships across race but do not find it. This was corroborated by my findings. WEA women in my study struggled with the definition of friendship in this context, wanting to call their BAA colleagues friends, but upon examination, realizing that definition did not always match the reality of their experience. In this way, these relationships can problematize the solidarity they may have assumed at the outset.

The BAA participants were much clearer about what a friend is and how standards increase when one moves from colleague to friend. BAA participants reported that, to have an authentic friendship, WEA women need to treat them the same way regardless of the setting they are in. This supports Kendall's (2006) clarification of the difference for WEA women between being an ally to a person and being an ally to a cause. As she stated:

Focusing my alliance on a person leads me to relationship and friendship. I make certain decisions and act in specific ways because I am in relationship with her or him. Concentrating my alliance-building on issues pushes me to a very different place. I have to study, to learn, to refine what I know and what I need to know so that my actions and behaviors move us closer to the social and institutional change we, as allies, are striving for. (p. 146)

This also relates to the one-way mirror property of the insular bubble in that WEA women can reconstruct that membrane so they can define what a friend is by including criteria from the other person in the relationship.

A third theme that emerged from interpreting the findings was that the perspective of protective shell and insular bubble shapes the way one views safety, continuity of engagement, and conflict in the interpersonal space. This becomes another level of negotiation as these women structure their interactions.

Nurturing the Ecosystem: Recommendations for Navigating Cross-Race Relationships

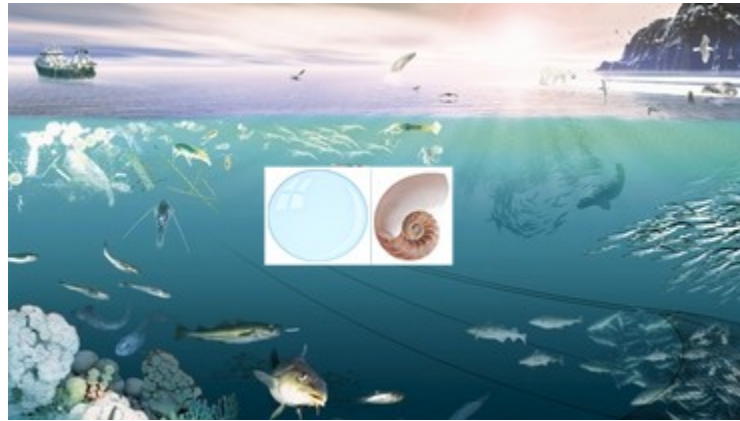


Figure 6.5. Nurturing the ecosystem of cross-race relationships.

If these relationships are to be positive, the interaction space between women working in cross-race relationships must be intentionally nurtured. Like an ecosystem, these women create dynamic interactions so they can work together as a unit and these relationships will fail if they do not remain in balance. While each woman has her own unique role to play, each also affects one another and the lives of those around them, participating in an ecosystem that can sustain and foster each other's growth, as well as transform racial constructions. In this section, I will summarize what my findings indicated were ways to nurture this ecosystem and to cause positive cross-race relationships to occur.

These participants described the challenges in these relationships as formidable. Therefore, they indicate close attention should be paid to guidance on how to navigate them within a co-created ecosystem (see Figure 6.5). While a handful of these recommendations were

mentioned in the literature as useful mechanisms to produce positive cross-race relationships, my findings produce additional guidance. They echo the mutuality of respect (Kendall, 2006), making room for mistakes (Caraway, 1991), seeking out critique (Kendall, 2006), nurturing oneself (Jackson, 2001), and mutual visibility, pride, solidarity, and alliance (Pheterson, 1986).

More recently, in the emerging work on positive relationships at work, Davidson and James (2007) outlined what it takes to demonstrate “learning competency” (p. 149) as a response to the inherent conflicts in relationships across difference: “(a) processing emotions associated with conflicts that emerge, (b) acknowledging a superordinate purpose in the relationship, (c) fostering openness to the other by self-disclosing, (d) practice inquiry, and (e) giving and receiving feedback” (p. 150). My findings about interpersonal tools for navigating these relationships of managing bumps, keeping perspective, building the relationship, using dialogue techniques, and asking for and giving constructive feedback directly and honestly closely mirror these learning competencies. This scholarship and my findings begin to specify the work required which both illuminates earlier concepts and provides specific direction to practitioners.

Ely et al. (2006) also presented five principles for handling identity abrasions in relationships across difference in the workplace, in addition to offering suggestions to leaders. These “Principles for Constructively Engaging Differences” (p. 82) include (a) pausing, (b) connecting, (c) questioning oneself, (d) getting genuine support, and (e) shifting one’s mind set (pp. 82-85). These are useful, mostly intrapsychic efforts and offer some helpful specificity. My findings build on them and link these efforts to others. For example, their description of “connecting” (p. 83) involves seeking to learn and understand, rather than taking a stance of anger and defensiveness. This is echoed in my findings in the interpersonal category of “educate and learn from each other,” but there are additional nuances my participants mentioned in that

category (such as changing one's own behavior as a result of what is learned) which build on their principles. In addition, the linkages among intrapsychic, interpersonal, and actions outside the relationship deepen this valuable acknowledgement of taking a learning orientation.

These represent two of the few scholarly works I found that dealt specifically with peer relationships that cross systems of privilege. My findings build on them by offering a more comprehensive set of competencies and behaviors that can be considered by the research community, as well as those in the field. In particular, the ways both parties in this relationship can resist racial power differences adds a focus on multiple systems of domination to the literature. My findings put a spotlight on noticing the distribution of power inside the relationship and illustrate specific ways that can be done. Examples from these participants included listening without interruption from both sides and reciprocally working at the relationship to assuring that the person who felt the racial bump gets to speak first. Another way my findings extend this area of exploration is to make visible the dynamics of the insular bubble and challenge those inside to step outside of it. For example, by removing WEA women's freedom to not notice the racial distribution in the room (the property of one-way reflective glass), there is decreased tolerance to the ignorance perpetuated by the insular bubble, and therefore, less need for the burden and frustration accompanying the protective shell.

Finally, the distribution of relationship work between intrapsychic, interpersonal, and extra-relationship levels adds a new perspective to those interested in cross-race relationships and creating a sustainable ecosystem. My findings indicate that building trust and positive relationships does not only happen in the interactional space, but must be accompanied by individual intrapsychic work, as well as a commitment to behave consistently outside of the relationship. The focus on action outside the relationship may have emerged out of these

participants' collective commitment to social justice, and offer a provocative challenge to other cross-race dyads. Furthermore, these actions have higher leverage to make change at a systemic level, which in turn affects these relationships. This attention given to the micro, meso, and macro levels of focus that must be navigated simultaneously complicates these relationships and makes a unique case for multi-level analysis of all constructs in a positive relationship across difference.

Cross-Race Relationships as a Site for Transformation

A question, then, may be asked about whether or not transformation can happen at the relationship level of analysis. According to these participants, cross-race relationships can be a site of significant change across several levels. Participants reported transformation in self, in their relationships, and in the larger system. It seems to be a high risk, high effort, high payoff process. What is notable here is that the BAA women were clearer than the WEA women about the potential of these relationships to change the system at large, and clearer about the fact that, when these relationships are successful, they are relieved of the burdens of monitoring themselves so tightly and holding the racial dynamics in the room—both part of the experience of the protective shell, and likely due to the disproportionate effects of racism on them. All of the changes noted below were reported by both sets of participants, unless indicated otherwise. While these are observations made by participants in this study, another potential follow-up study would be to examine the visible and measurable effects of cross-race relationship work.

Changes in self. One of the effects of both the insular bubble and the protective shell is to limit human potential. These metaphors can help to specify these limitations. The insular bubble limits a full range of vision and awareness of a complete reality, and also limits an ability to be one's full self. In this way, the metaphor of insular bubble problematizes privilege. The

protective shell limits the full utilization of human potential, and siphons off energy spent maintaining itself, rather than excelling at one's life pursuits. Therefore, if one of the consequences of these cross-race relationships is to burst or dissipate the insular bubble and minimize the need for the protection of the shell, then several positive benefits result. The richness of difference among people can be appreciated and built upon, race can become less of a polarizing identity, awareness of a more complete reality can be achieved, and the intrinsic human benefits of being included and fully accepted on both sides can be appreciated. These refer to the obvious limitations racism presents, but in organizational life, these ideals usually remain at the level of stated values rather than actual interrogation in practice. Therefore, the relationship level of learning may be a useful place to start.

The learning reported by participants as occurring in these relationships included allowing assumptions about race to be changed, learning from discomfort, learning about other lenses, learning about oneself and learning as a leader about what is going on in one's organization.

[With her] I feel I can do anything, say anything, be anybody I want to be. (BAA participant 2)

I think in my relationships with the women that I think about as trusting the most, those are relationships where you've been honored, and respected when you needed them. You've been included in the things that are important to them. And by those experiences you build those relationships that are deep. (BAA participant 6)

Some of my best learnings have come through being in an uncomfortable place, like the whole situation with the [example], and then the [example]. Both started off very negative but I was proud that I did not just keep it in a box and stomp off and say "No, I'm right." (WEA participant 7)

These indicate great potential for transformation at a micro, personal level.

Changes in relationships. High-quality connections between people may produce many positive benefits (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003), such as feelings of vitality, positive regard, and felt

mutuality, in addition to positive physiological changes (p. 267). The characteristics of these high-quality connections, such as emotional carrying capacity, tensility, and degree of connectivity (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003, p. 266) were reported by these participants with some nuances unique to racial context. BAA participants reported that with the freedom to bring up race in a relationship, they can come into the relationship more fully and more relaxed, knowing that the burden of surfacing race issues does not fall on their shoulders. Participants in both subgroups reported that, as a result of the increased trust in these relationships, they can experience closeness, depth, and growth with people to whom they may not have had access before. Finally, when networks are expanded to cross-racial lines, they can then more powerfully serve the causes women want to see advanced, or the organizational objectives they set out to accomplish.

We can start differentiating and saying, you know, in this instance, we don't have to have a conversation about race all the time. That's not uppermost. What happens is then you become friends, whatever that means. You are in relationship. There's an intimacy. And I think that is the track of intimacy. When we are able to trust we then enter the path of intimacy and when we get into the intimacy track then you're more seeing the essence of the person in front of you rather than just being the White woman and the African-American woman. (BAA participant 9)

I'm more apt to be honest or engage in those or share my observations in a similar light. I'm able to talk more freely across race without feeling self-conscious that I'm making them feel uncomfortable or that I'm perceived as an angry Black woman because I observed this or that. Just a more of a comfort and, I guess, more openness, in having those exchanges, not feeling compelled to have to burst the bubble or not or even to question what I should say. I don't have to wonder if I'll make them too uncomfortable or too self-conscious, or see me in a different way. I can think of three White women that I definitely engage in those kinds of conversations, that kind of freedom where in the time that I've known them we've never had to. I guess it's during that point where you're uncertain, but for the most part, never have the, that angst across race that other times I've had. (BAA participant 5)

These outcomes are more specific to cross-race relationships and build more nuances into that construct.

Changes in system. As a result of learning about participants' experiences of these relationships, one can infer the potential of these relationships to effect change in the societal systems—or ecosystems, to continue the metaphor—around us. A logical argument can be made as follows.

- As generalizations become less true and hold less weight, social constructions around race can shift.
- An increased ability to articulate each other's contexts and programming can cause shared understanding of the system as a whole so it can change.
- With new awareness, people in these relationships can choose to pass down different messages to their children and, therefore, disrupt the reinforcing cycle of socialization into a racist system.
- The ripple effect as a result of our modeling and others observing us can produce more boundary crossers in the world.
- Power can be redefined as a collective (of women, in this case) as opposed to a connection with WEA men.
- If all of the above occurs, then social justice is more likely.

As two of the participants put it:

What you have also helped me to remember not that I had forgotten it is how frequently Black people that I talk to refer to “well you know that’s just the way White women are,” “I don’t trust White women” because this is what happens. And it’s sad. I guess really deep down it’s sad, but it’s kind of something that I don’t know when that’s going to break. And I think it has to happen one-on-one, I guess. I guess it has to happen gradually one-on-one until you think “Oh! Well you know what? I’ve got these 10 friends who are White that aren’t like that so maybe all White women aren’t like that.” (BAA participant 10)

And also it’s a reminder to say that when we were in slavery we were considered less than human. If we continue to operate with everybody exactly the same way, then if you

always do what you have always done, you'll always get what you've always got. Social justice will not happen unless we work this hurt and heal the hurt that has challenged this country and continues to do so. (BAA participant 9)

This led me to an observation about the social construction and perpetuation of racism, a property of both the protective shell and the insular bubble. Investigating how this cycle works was not a focus of my study, but I was interested in whether or how these relationships could be a site of contestation of societal programming and resistance to racism, and this data emerged unprompted. A description of the cycle of social construction and perpetuation as participants described it is depicted in Figure 6.6 below.

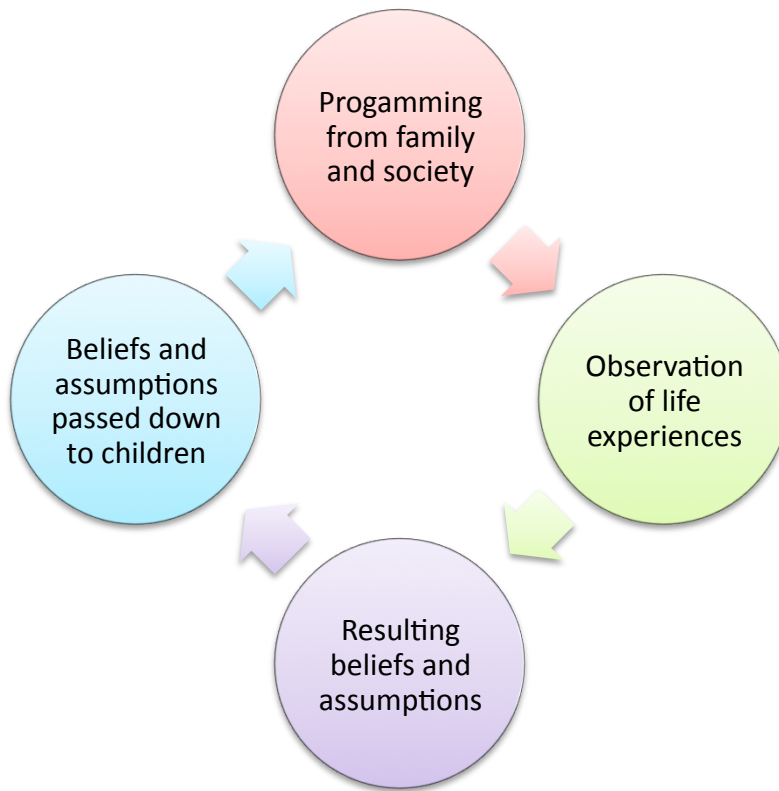


Figure 6.6. The perpetuation of racism.

Based on this data, bursting the insular bubble can disrupt the connections between programming and experience, and re-imagined relationships across race can disrupt the evolution

of beliefs and assumptions resulting from unchanged experiences of the insular bubble and protective shell. This is depicted in Figure 6.7 below.

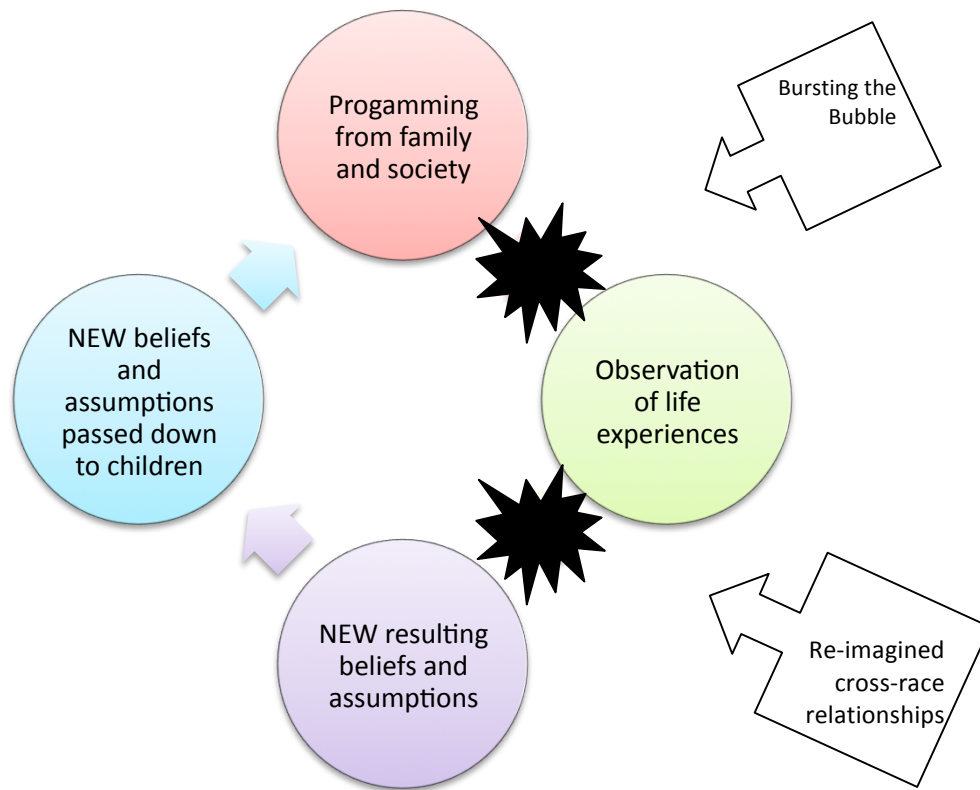


Figure 6.7. Disrupting the cycle of racism.

This is a superficial indicator of the power of these relationships as a site of resistance and reconstruction, and would be another useful area for exploration.

Another set of themes emerged in the findings that were not a direct focus of my study, but were embedded in the questions. As I analyzed the data from the interviews, I noticed the themes of trust, authenticity, and respect were woven throughout participants' descriptions and assessments of these relationships. After my analysis of the data was complete, I returned to the literature I had reviewed earlier around those constructs to see if there was anything my data had surfaced that might inform them. What I found is reported in the next section.

Concepts Central to Cross-Race Relationships: Nuances that are Unique

The themes of authenticity, respect, and trust were woven throughout the data reported in this study. When probed, the way the terms were used revealed some nuances that can be helpful for scholars in the existing literature to consider. These nuances add the dynamics of systemic privilege and marginalization (insular bubble and protective shell) to those conceptual frameworks.

Authenticity. Not surprisingly, BAA participants had more to say in terms of both quality and quantity when it came to defining authenticity. Their assessment of WEAs' authenticity relied on several criteria that, interestingly, parallel insular bubble behaviors reported earlier. First, showing your true self versus who you want to be captured authenticity as the opposite of presenting an image of non-racism. Second, the ability to speak freely about race without needing structured conversation refers back to the differential in race fluency mentioned earlier, and was a nuance added to BAAs' assessment of WEAs' entitlement to authority. Third, demonstrating that you want to hear what I have to say reinforces the power equality that was stressed as a high priority. Sharing your life and significant others reverses the superficiality and formality of the bubble. These BAA participants also watched to see how WEAs treat others outside of the relationship, echoing the concept of behavioral integrity proposed by Simons et al. (2007) and mentioned in the literature review. Along with this, they appreciated when WEAs checked for feedback about whether or not the changes they intended to make as a result of feedback were recognized. BAA participants also included the ability to initiate conversations about race as part of authenticity, echoing Monahan's (2005) concept of racial authenticity also mentioned in the literature review. And finally, behaving in such a way that mistakes are learning tools rather than reasons to blame was included in some of their definitions of authenticity. This

may be a way to dispel the suspicion embedded in the protective shell that standards created inside the insular bubble are higher for them, and to create a container where vulnerability can be shown. Some examples of participants' thoughts about authenticity are below.

It's this is your way of being, this is your authentic self. This is who you say you are. But what I see you doing time and time again in so many different situations is this, so it makes me wonder who your authentic self is. And I'm left with nothing else but to land on your authentic self is who you show me, not who you say you are but who you show me you are. (BAA participant 8)

I think there's a, you know, eye contact, less talking, intuitive feel you get about someone's authenticity. Do you really want to listen to me? I mean, I kind of know that. It's a lot in body language, it's a lot in timing, how much do you wait for this? (BAA participant 9)

If you're just kind of like a friend in passing, then it's OK you get a phone call, and something has occurred and you say I hope you're doing OK, or it's only that we're friends during business hours. But it's when you do the personal visits in the home, and you're friends with not just the individual but the children and the spouse, the spouses, that to me is authentic friendship. (BAA participant 8)

And with [WEA colleague], if she says something's going to change, it changes and she'll check. She'll put the check in. I don't put the check in around "all right I'm going to check you on this," you know? She'll put the check in. And again, it is a reality check for her in a sense authenticity around "I'm going to do what I say I'm going to do. (BAA participant 9)

Both subgroups defined authenticity as being genuine, and "what you see is what you get," which likely apply to a broad range of relationships. But, two nuances seemed more specific to this study. One was related to the context of this study as being bounded in the Southeast United States, where they contrasted "nice" with authenticity.

And I think that complaining with each other is also part of the building trust. That you feel comfortable saying something authentic, and not trying to always be nice. (WEA participant 8)

I think when you are able to have those let's get beyond the superficial, let's get beyond the "oh bless your heart," let's get beyond the genteel, let's get beyond the "oh we gotta be nice" and we can begin to talk on a level of where people really live and what really matters to you. I think that's what makes it easy when you transition from the superficial

to the real genuine. (BAA participant 8)

The second offered by both was that authenticity means showing up the same way regardless of circumstances. This was related to the insular bubble and protective shell in that participants wanted to see that the person they saw in their relationship was the same person that appears with others inside the bubble or behind the shell.

If I determine that this person is authentic, if I observe that this person . . . I mean there's so many things that go into building a relationship with a person, but just some examples might be. . . . You know that they're really authentic, how do they treat me when another White person is around or if it's a socioeconomic situation and we're dealing with upper class people or whatever, how do they treat others, I mean how do they treat others that aren't on their same level? (BAA participant 10)

Be yourself? Well, just be comfortable. I mean the who you are with you is the same as who you—you know, it's kind of an integrity thing. Just be yourself wherever, it doesn't matter who you're with. (WEA participant 5)

These nuances seem to indicate that the position one has related to privilege, one's position inside the insular bubble or behind the protective shell, can invite scholars to extend current conceptualizations around authenticity. This is being explored in the emerging field of positive organizational scholarship (Roberts, Cha, Hewlin, & Settles, 2009) and would benefit from further dimensionalizing in future studies.

Respect. By definition, systematic marginalization is disrespectful. As a result, respect becomes central in cross-race relationships. One of the BAA participants stressed the centrality of respect in the BAA culture and what BAA women bring to cross-race relationships.

Because respect is very, very important in the African-American community, be it among women, each other, or people that are older, or younger. I mean, you hear of people being killed in a lot of our neighborhoods because, "He disrespected me." "He looked at my woman," or, "She called me a name," or, "She put my work down." Those are all things that I think as a people when there's so little to grab onto, you grab on to what you can hold for yourself as your head being high. So, when you don't have the education or the experiences that often we don't have as a people, you know, some of

those things like being respectful are the things that you do grasp and hold onto, and that is absolutely key. (BAA participant 6)

Similar to the construct of authenticity, these participants' thoughts about what constitutes respect brought more clarity to its role in cross-race relationships. First, the mutuality of respect was mentioned by both subgroups, echoing the experience of equality that must occur in the relationship. Second, both groups also included in their definition there being no hierarchy of human value, which would create a microcosm that resists the system of domination in the broader social context. Third, not having to be beholden to a WEA for a favor they did was mentioned by one BAA participant as a way to not mimic deference to the inside of the insular bubble. Having respect for the different experiences due to life behind the protective shell was something mentioned by a WEA participant, adding another unique element to the definition. Also embedded in several other references to respect was the equalization of power mentioned earlier. Examples are respecting another's time, listening, and valuing what another brings to the table. And finally, giving space was mentioned by both subgroups as a respectful way to allow each other to do the significant intrapsychic processing described earlier.

That's another whole level of baggage that folks carry and, I think that we should all have a good deal of respect for that and sensitivity to that. (WEA participant 11)

That to me is the honor, and the respect is the same thing. You're not required to constantly put them in front of you, because they helped you in some way. And that to me is being respectful, that you allow the person to maintain their core even though you helped them, or you got them out of a bind, that you don't walk up to everybody and say, "Well, I knew her when." (BAA participant 6)

We all know we're accomplished. We all know that we bring a lot, we have a mutual respect, professionally and personally for each other. (BAA participant 8)

And I say, okay, we'll talk tomorrow. And just having that respect for each other, and to be able to say we're having a bad day instead of just kind of grinning and bearing it. (WEA participant 9)

Therefore, the primary nuances here of power and equality will hopefully provoke other scholars to consider these dynamics as they explore the construct of respect.

Trust. Trust was central to this study, both in the frequent mention of the word, as well as the double coding that resulted from data analysis. Many of the codes for experiencing either the insular bubble or the protective shell, as well as tools for minimizing and dissipating, were frequently double coded in a separate category I called “trust.” The participants also seemed to be saying that trust is central to minimizing the protective shell and dissipating the insular bubble and, therefore, was central to the success of these relationships.

Examining the examples in Table 6.2 of the effects of trust reported by participants reveals a link between trust and its effect on the ability to build and sustain these relationships. Exploring the effect of trust as a mediating variable on the work of these relationships and whether it can serve as a booster of sorts, will be another area for future study.

Table 6.2

Effects of Trust on Protective Shell and Insular Bubble

Effects of Trust on Minimizing Protective Shell	Effects of Trust on Dissipating Insular Bubble
Ability to delegate	Ability to listen
Admiration in return	Learning her perspective on race
Can take relationship to a deeper level, be more candid	I tell the truth, too
Knowing she will not undermine me	Knowing someone has your back and that they will stand with you
Knowing you will not be seen differently if you express your true feelings	Knowing we will be OK at the end of the conversation
Not feeling vulnerable with her	Lobbying for each other's issues
Race becomes less central	Can share feelings about race

Some examples of how central trust was for these participants are found in the following excerpts.

I say listening, but, you almost have to have the trust for people to talk, so it's not just about listening, there's things that precede the listening. (WEA participant 11)

So what does that say about this person? At least she trusted me to know that I was going to do the right thing, and that just made me even admire her more because she did not have to do that. (BAA participant 4)

The only major difference in BAA and WEA responses was that BAA participants reported a difference in the need for trust between two types of relationships: short versus long-term and personal versus professional. This is an additional level of analysis they constructed as they determined their level of commitment to these relationships. This echoes the earlier finding that they spend mental energy assessing whether their expectations are being met in order to allow

the relationship to deepen. There was also a hint of the centrality of trust in their descriptions of why trust was important to these relationships. Table 6.3, which summarizes what was said about this, is low in quantity but rich in quality and indicates the need for further exploration.

Table 6.3

The Importance of Trust in Cross-Race Relationships

BAA	WEA
Becomes the reason to engage	Have an ally when crossing racial boundaries
Is critical to be able to get the work done together	So the truth can be told

One of the BAA participants summarized the critical role of trust with regard to cross-race relationships:

I think we have to come together, to work together, to be able to do this. I cannot do it by myself, you cannot do it by yourself. We have got to be able to trust each other and come together, be able to work to try to get this solved. So maybe that will be my next piece to put some teeth into. There are some things we have been able to accomplish, but that's one piece that we just cannot. But in order to do it, we've got to work together. (BAA participant 4)

And finally, as an area of future study, the role of trust as a variable can be examined more specifically. I found that trust was used as an antecedent, a moderating variable, and an outcome throughout these participants' data. It may, in fact, be all three, but fleshing out the processes for each would be a useful addition to the existing literature.

Figure 6.8 summarizes the nuances in cross-race relationships that serve to complicate the constructs of authenticity, respect, and trust, and offers a closer look at how they are operationalized in cross-race relationships. These nuances can be considered in current constructs so they can encompass a wider range of relationships.



Figure 6.8. Unique nuances of concepts central to cross-race relationships.

Contributions of This Study to Specific Areas of Literature

The findings of this study have a contribution to make to several of the areas of literature I reviewed. First, the properties of and dynamics between the metaphors of protective shell and insular bubble can be introduced into the mainstream leadership literature to see if constructs and assumptions found there hold up given these systemic power differentials. It can provide a way to integrate some of the work around social/racial identity, multiple systems of domination, critical White studies, and social justice ally development with the leadership literature as a whole. In a recent review of the leadership and race/ethnicity literatures, Osprey and Foldy (2009) called for making race-ethnicity the dependent variable in studies exploring its association to leadership and my study can begin to answer some of the questions they lay out:

How do people define and understand both leadership and race-ethnicity? How do these understandings help people draw on their race-ethnicity as they create leadership practices? To what extent do social actors use their race-ethnicity, that of their leaders or followers, and social identity in general to create, negotiate and navigate leader-follower relational dynamics and the ongoing demands for “organizing” and “structuring” that require leadership? These questions are first and foremost questions about the how of leadership. (p. 893)

The more specific unit of analysis of the cross-race dyad has enormous potential in the general organizational, as well as the leadership literature, especially given the realities of a diverse workforce and flatter organizational structures. There has been exploration of cross-race mentoring and supervision as noted in my literature review, but very little among colleagues or peers outside of the laboratory.

This study also adds several useful elements to the controversial field of critical White studies. For this field, it adds a focus on interaction to the singular focus on problematizing the dominant group, which Doane (2003) criticized in addition to adding to its empirical base. And

the intrapsychic work specifically laid out here for WEA women provides examples of how interrogating Whiteness can be accomplished both individually and in relationship.

Furthermore, this study fits quite nicely into the emerging field of positive relationships at work. This field “examines the conditions, processes, and mechanisms in organizational relationships that increase the capacity for growth, learning, generativity, and resilience in individuals, groups, and organizations” (Ragins & Dutton, 2007, p. 3). My exploration of work relationships that do not have an organization in common may help to expand that context to include work relationships that share a common purpose, but not a common organization. My research also helps to explore how the construct of a high-quality connection (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003) describes relationships across racial identities and will enrich that concept for those examining positive relationships at work. Kopelman, Chen, and Shoshana (2009) offered a definition of a positive relational identity that has promise for cross-race relationships: “a coherent and constructive shared narrative, in which both parties in a role relationship view their relationship as one that is likely to overcome future relational challenges and remain effective despite threats to the relationship” (p. 266). My findings support this definition and encourage the continuing exploration of the effects of systemic inequality on those relationships.

L. M. Roberts’ (2007b) work on positive identities and how they shape one’s own self-definition offered an interesting foundation for how racial identity can be shaped through relational experience with another. Her reference to Cooley’s (1902) looking glass self and how others’ reactions to our behavior constitute the viewpoint from which we define our own attributes (Roberts, 2007b, p. 31) parallel how the protective shell and insular bubble metaphors evolved out of participants’ views of their cross-race colleagues, and how discussion of them can increase awareness and dissipation on both sides. The concept of the construction of one’s

reflected best self portrait (Roberts, Dutton, Spreitzer, Heaphy, & Quinn, 2005) will be a nice way to operationalize how the insular bubble and protective shell, in relationship, affect each person's racial self portraits, and possibly move people along the continuum of racial identity development. The discrepancy between others' perceptions and one's own image of the "reflected best self" is particularly relevant in cross-race relationships, particularly for WEA women. These findings provide an example of boundary moments (LeBaron, Glenn, & Thompson, 2009) when identities are prominent.

The construct of authenticity is being examined from the perspective of the positive scholarship field (Roberts et al., 2009), as well as those works reviewed in my earlier chapter. The concept of relational authenticity is emerging, "when two parties experience one another as engaging with transparency and mutual commitment to understanding and appreciating one another's strengths, limitations, and unique social location" (Roberts et al., 2009, p. 151). This definition hints at incorporating cross-race relationships and will benefit from more investigation. These authors cite increasing scholarship around this construct, but there has yet to be attention paid specifically to systemic power differentials in those relationships, with the exception of Eagly's (2005) work around gender. My interrogation of the construct of authenticity and how it shifts based on one's own racial consciousness, which is inherently limited for those inside the insular bubble is a contribution to this area of study.

My study's focus on cross-race relationships complicates the study of trust as well. In fact, Kivel (2002) proposed that, for these relationships, trust builds only through White people's "visible efforts to be allies and fight racism" (p. 100). This point of view was mirrored in my findings in that distrust was inherent to these relationships, and that positive relationships were built through the three categories of intrapsychic, interpersonal, and actions outside the

relationship. My study found that trust is being negotiated continually in these relationships, but it was unclear whether or not it was an end state or a process. As in the literature, trust was mentioned as an antecedent, a process, and an outcome of positive relationships. And, my findings imply that if trust is at all possible, it is through these three simultaneous avenues of intrapsychic work, interpersonal process, and a commitment to act in consistent ways outside the relationship. A summary of how my study contributes to these areas of literature is in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4

Summary of Contributions of this Study to the Literature

Findings	Contribution
Protective shell metaphor and properties	<p>Extends the concept of armor (Greene, 1990, 1992, 1994; Faulkner, 1983; Peters, 1985) for African Americans.</p> <p>Corroborates existing literature describing experience of those marginalized (Collins, 2000; Hurtado, 1996; Livers & Caver, 2003; Lorde, 2007; Miller, 1986; Roberts et al., 2008).</p> <p>Provides an organizing construct for responses to systematic marginalization.</p> <p>Can be a tool to integrate social/racial identity, multiple systems of domination, critical White studies, social justice ally development, and mainstream leadership literature.</p>
Bubble metaphor and properties	<p>Ties insular bubble tightly to White privilege, summarizing its elements.</p> <p>Provides a tool to make dynamics of privilege more visible in the literature.</p> <p>Corroborates existing literature on those with privilege (Altman, 2006; Dyer, 2005; hooks, 1981; Jensen, 2005; McKinney, 2005; Wildman & Davis, 1997).</p> <p>Can be a tool to integrate social/racial identity, multiple systems of domination, critical White studies, social justice ally development and mainstream leadership literature.</p>

Cross-race dyad as level of analysis	<p>Complicates other areas of literature that examine dynamics at the dyadic level (Six, 2005; Sparrowe, 2005; Terry, 1993).</p> <p>Provides a more specific unit of analysis to all areas of literature.</p> <p>Contributes to the definition of “high-quality connection” (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003) by incorporating dynamics around racial identity.</p> <p>Adds to work on positive identities by exploring how racial identity can be shaped through relational experience across race (Dutton & Ragins, 2007; Roberts, 2007b; Roberts & Dutton, 2009; Roberts et al., 2005).</p> <p>Illuminates boundary moments that produce identity awareness and development (LeBaron et al., 2009).</p>
Interaction between shell and bubble	<p>Contradicts previous generalizations about differing concerns of White feminists and feminists of Color (Hurtado, 1996).</p> <p>Builds on proposal that instrumental investment is required to stay connected in cross-race relationships (Davidson & James, 2007).</p> <p>Adds to critical White studies field by adding a focus on how Whites can interact with others across race and how Whiteness can be interrogated in that context.</p> <p>Interrogates the level of trust that is possible in cross-race relationships given the history of betrayal and distrust (Simons et al., 2007).</p>
Recommendations for navigating cross-race relationships	<p>Corroborates some findings in social justice ally literature (Albrecht & Brewer, 1990; Breines, 2006; Kendall, 2006).</p> <p>Provides more specificity and comprehensiveness for positive scholarship field’s interest in what it takes to navigate these relationships (Davidson & James, 2007; Ely et al., 2006; Roberts, Cha, Hewlin, & Settles, 2009).</p> <p>Contributes to trust literature by making the case for multi-level analysis between intrapsychic, interpersonal, and extra-relationship efforts.</p>
Focus on cross-race dyads	<p>Adds nuance to positive organizational scholarship field</p>

that cross organizational lines	(Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003; Dutton & Ragins, 2007; Roberts & Dutton, 2009).
Authenticity in cross-race relationships	Provides more data to explore relational authenticity, (Roberts et al., 2009) especially giving attention to systemic power differentials. Interrogates the construct of authenticity given one's own racial consciousness (Monahan, 2005).

Implications for Practice

My study contributes to the arena of practice for two audiences. First, for those who like me are educators, the two metaphors of the protective shell and the insular bubble can be useful as an organizing structure for anti-racism training or leadership curricula. Because this issue is a sensitive one to surface and one where there is sometimes perceived risk to those in the classroom who are in relationship with each other, these metaphors provide a way to relate to the experience from either side of privilege in a more indirect and less personal way. The metaphors and the study itself can be presented for reaction and discussion as a way to broach the subject. As a qualitative grounded theory study, this is a way it can also be reiteratively tested for plausibility. The properties can also be presented along with exercises to stimulate discussion, sensemaking, and review; thus, integrating into a diversity or anti-racism curriculum.

A second use of this study is in the specific and thorough guidance it gives to those in the field, especially those working for social justice. It complements the rigorous body of work in the education and diversity education fields (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 2007; Derman-Sparks & Phillips, 1997; Helfand & Lippin, 2002; Hannum, McFeeters, & Booysen, 2010; McFeeters, Hannum, & Booysen, 2010; Singleton & Linton, 2006) by outlining the work those in cross-race dyads can do without the benefit of curricular or training structure. For any pair of people who

are in a BAA/WEA cross-race dyadic relationship, this can be a useful relational tool that may not require facilitation. The metaphors and their properties can be read and reflected on together, and new awareness and agreements can surface based on the ensuing discussion. It can also be used as a set of guidelines for those about to engage in cross-race work, focusing on them before race-related interactive work begins. In addition, the different categories of work can be sequenced so the intrapsychic work can be built into a course structure to precede the interpersonal work followed by a plan to take actions outside the relationship. This can increase the readiness for participants to accept each successive level of work or to order them sequentially to suit their own preferences and circumstances. Again, it can serve as a stimulus for discussion, disagreement, and application as it gets tested for plausibility. Because I imagine reading this dissertation will be unwieldy, I plan on turning it into several articles that will be easier to put into practice.

An important note here, as I will review in more detail in the implications for leadership and change chapter, is that this study's bounding in the Southeastern United States may become an important factor to discuss. I now turn to an assessment of some of the limitations of this study.

Limitations of This Study

As a qualitative study, the quality of my findings has more to do with accuracy, confirmability, trustworthiness, and credibility than with more positivist criteria of reliability, validity, and generalizability. Maxwell (2005) presented a concept called a *validity threat* that is relevant to my study, and I will refer to those in my study as credibility threats. As he stated:

A key concept for validity is thus the validity threat: a way you might be wrong. . . . Validity, as a component of your research design, consists of the strategies you use to identify and try to rule out these threats. (p. 106)

The threats to credibility in my study can be found in all phases, and I will outline them here along with the ways I handled and integrated them into the research.

First, as described by Schatzman and Strauss (1973), using a grounded theory interview technique may have some inherent limitations. Participants were likely to vary in their ability to remember, describe, or relate their experiences, especially since they were in the past. I limited the timeframe of the relationships they could discuss to a maximum of five years in the past to increase the likelihood of remembering incidents, feelings, and details related to my questions. This may not have affected participants' ability to remember, but at least limited the range of focus and kept the historical context constant.

Second, the interview itself and my presence there may have affected the data in that participants may have idealized the relationships they described. I mitigated this by asking about past relationships so there was less reason to present a positive image. I did not find any evidence of idealizing. In fact, it was quite the opposite—many of these relationships often were described as positive in the long run, but very challenging in the short run. Related to this was the inability for me to test whether or not they do what they say they do. A question that emerged from my conversations with my research buddy was whether or not the WEA women I interviewed knew the politically correct things to say or behaved in ways that matched their words. Because I was working to avoid intervening in relationships and because they were not asked to focus on current work relationships, I could not triangulate their words with their actions.

And third, my own positioning was likely to have an effect on the choices the participants may have made about what they were willing to share, especially regarding race. Acknowledging their commitment to social justice work may have caused a subtle pressure, especially on the WEA women's part, to claim more comfort or awareness than they had. And, as I mentioned

earlier, the well-documented distrust BAA women have for WEA women may have affected those participants' candor with me. As Best (2003) stated:

I continue to question whether meaningful and open conversations about race are possible within the context of in-depth interviewing, aware that people of Color have historically engaged in a form of self-censoring in the presence of those with power (largely as acts of self-preservation) and White folks rarely see themselves as racial meaning-makers. (p. 909)

This is a significant credibility threat and I will discuss it in depth here.

As Best (2003) stated, a unique risk for the BAA women I interviewed is that my race may have affected their comfort in disclosing to me. There is a well-known debate in this field about the credibility resulting from data involving cross-race interviewing. There are some who have taken the position that cross-race interviewing produces less authentic data (Alderfer, Alderfer, Tucker, & Tucker, 1980; Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Cannon, 1991; Reissman, 1987), and that reflexivity is not enough because of the dynamics that are out of the control of the researcher. For example, Best (2003) stressed “the idea that women of Color must often adjust their speech when talking with White women to be understood is not an especially new insight in feminist qualitative research” (p. 902). In addition to this set of risks, I also observed a parallel dynamic with same-race participants. In my field notes during the course of interviewing, I observed that trust felt by the WEA participants for me seemed to be just as important to allow them to admit things their self-images were reluctant to admit. Their self-identification as someone who is committed to social justice work may have added to their reluctance to admit racially biased thoughts.

Accepting these risks around trust and, therefore, risks to the quality of my data, I worked to understand it and how it may have affected my data collection. This refers back to the feminist epistemology undergirding my study which is based on the position that all knowledge must be

recognized as situated, and many scholars now acknowledge that the social position of the researcher and the researcher/participant relationship must be made visible, reflected on, and understood to affect all phases of the research (Anderson, 1993; Best, 2003; Bourne, 2007; Dunbar, Rodriguez, & Parker, 2001; Duneier, 2000; Foldy, 2005; Gallagher, 2000; Haraway, 1988; Hertz, 1997; Lal, 1996; Naples, 1997, 2003; Reissman, 1987).

The sampling process was the first way I maximized the likelihood of trust. Choosing participants whom I had reason to believe trusted me (see chapter on grounded theory methodology), asking them to choose the location for the interview, allowing them to edit their transcripts, soliciting their feedback on how candid they felt they could be in the interviews, and reviewing preliminary findings with them were part of my intentional design. And, because negotiating differences along racial identities was the focus of my research, I utilized my field notes, memos, and interview feedback as additional data with which to explore this question. I learned from these field notes, much like Foldy (2005), who reinforced this mutuality in the impact of the research on the researcher's racial identity. In the interviews with WEA women, I saw aspects of myself mirrored in their responses, as well as being able to see the range of awareness around racial identity described by the BAA women. I also learned a great deal about how WEA women are perceived in the interviews with BAA women, which was eye opening for me. All participants took time to give me feedback after their interview, which I read before each subsequent interview so I could intentionally continue to do what they indicated was working, and discontinue anything which they reported was not.

Another way I worked to mitigate this bias was to use respondent confirmation or member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maxwell, 2005). During the course of the interviews, I regularly solicited feedback from my participants about my interpretations and conclusions, as well as from

my research buddy throughout the data gathering and analysis phases. I also built “host verification” (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973, p. 134) into the methodological design. After my initial model and findings had been developed, I invited all participants to hear and react to my preliminary findings. In this way, I could offer to them the major propositions that I had seen in the data and check those propositions against their own understandings of their experiences.

Phenomenon recognition is another way to establish credibility. As Schatzman and Strauss (1973) described it, the questions to ask here are “Do people recognize the phenomenon?” and “Does the researcher’s analysis, which was probably based upon a different perspective or framework from theirs, actually help the audience explain—albeit in a new way—their own experience?” (p. 135). I relied on my research team for these criteria, but also had several informal discussions with people having nothing to do with this research, and in all cases, it has been a stimulus for active discussion.

While there has been significant debate in the field about the insider-outsider status of the researcher and its effect on the data, more recent arguments propose that limitations associated with the researcher’s social location and resulting outsider status can be overcome or managed through several means (Young, 2004). I focused on the following intrapsychic methods for myself.

First, I retained a high degree of self-consciousness as I approached this study. This topic has significant meaning and personal investment for me, which generated passion and motivation, but also produced cautions and methodological concerns I consciously navigated. First of all, my interest in integrating my own racial awareness into my professional work caused me to check to be sure I did not become distracted during the interviews by mentally applying the data to a setting I was in, which may have caused me to miss participants’ intended meaning. As the

interviews progressed, this was an unnecessary precaution because I did not find this to happen much, if at all, in the interviews.

Second, while I worked to be as reflexive as possible, I reminded myself that my reflexivity is limited by my own awareness, and that racial identity, for me, is a lifelong learning process. In addition to gathering data, my own WEA identity was continually affected by this research by interrogating my own social relations and learning more and more ways I can effectively work across differences; but blind spots in my WEA identity were likely to shape my judgments and interpretations. This risk was mitigated by working with my research buddy, who was a BAA woman, and the early work with my research team.

Third, I began this journey with a critical stance. I wanted to work to correct the political direction I and others took as White women in essentializing women's issues, and this research may have an element of the atonement Foldy (2005) talked about. I was aware of the tendency to want to be accepted by BAA interviewees, but as the interviews progressed, I became more accepting of myself and think I was successful in focusing on the quality of my interviewing.

Finally, I came to this study with an expectation that the WEA women would be more aware of their racial identity than they were. In the process of the interviews, I realized that this time and space to reflect was a way for them to increase their own awareness, rather than what I expected, which was for me to see an advanced White racial identity in action. This became an unanticipated learning opportunity for me and showed me the value of intra-bubble reflection.

As the interviews progressed, I could feel other identities, or "multiple selves" (Young, 2004, p. 191) of mine becoming more or less salient. For example, in several interviews with those much older or younger than me, I was very aware of my age, and when participants mentioned anything about my own career, I tried to stress how much of a learner I am in this case.

I also noticed my lack of familiarity with plantation life, which contrasted with those participants who had been raised in the Southeast. This prompted me to explore that further by reading some accounts of that so I could better understand the dynamics that one BAA participant said were “embedded in their cellular memory.”

Another way I explored the effects of this outsider status was to utilize the short survey following each interview to gather feedback about factors that impacted their ability or willingness to be candid with me. I had considered an alternative option, which was to employ a BAA woman partner to conduct matched-race interviews. I decided not to use this approach to maintain interviewer consistency and because it is my dissertation, but I will consider this approach when I conduct further research around race and will work with a multi-racial research team. A third option I considered was to invite a BAA female colleague to conduct the interviews with me which might have increased the chance for same-race rapport, but I rejected this idea because of the risk of intimidating participants by having two interviewers.

Another critical credibility issue arose with the effect of my social location on the data analysis process. As Charmaz (2005) stated:

Social justice studies require data that diverse audiences agree represent the empirical world and that researchers have given a fair assessment . . . we need to identify clear boundaries and limits of our data. Locating the data strengthens the foundation for making theoretical insights and for providing evidence for evaluative claims. Critics can then evaluate an author’s argument on its merits. (p. 511)

I acknowledged my limited perspective and relied on my research buddy, as well as another WEA colleague on my research team during the coding process to test my perspectives and generate alternate views of the data. While acknowledging that even their experiences were unique to them, these additional perspectives increased the confirmability and trustworthiness of

my data. I also hope that my own social location produced some unique findings around the nature of privilege.

Related to credibility is the issue of generalizability of this qualitative study, more appropriately viewed as “plausibility” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 107). Hammersley (as cited in Maxwell, 2005) and Weiss (as cited in Maxwell, 2005) listed several features that lend plausibility to generalizations from nonrandom samples:

Respondents’ own assessments of generalizability, the similarity of dynamics and constraints to other situations, the presumed depth or universality of the phenomenon studied, and corroboration from other studies. All of these characteristics can provide credibility to generalizations from qualitative studies. (p. 116)

The first way I increased the likelihood of plausibility was to present my preliminary findings to my research buddy, who responded as both someone familiar with the coding and also as a BAA woman. Her positive reaction to the link between the findings and her coding experience increased their plausibility and encouraged me to continue to develop them.

A second way plausibility was tested was in the way these early findings sparked active discussion in both focus groups. The term shell, in fact, was surfaced when the term armor was seen as less descriptive by both sets of women. But, the properties of the primary dimensions seemed to be taken at face value and stimulated several excellent discussion questions among each group, which indicated to me that there was no disagreement with the properties of the metaphors and how they captured participant experiences.

Finally, going back to the literature to see how these findings mirror what was there produced a lot of substantiation for the properties of both the protective shell and the insular bubble. This corroboration increased the plausibility of those findings, and the data that produce

newer findings or extend existing literature will continue to be tested for plausibility as I submit articles to scholarly journals, as well as use them in my practice.

A significant plausibility issue for this study, which I recognized at the outset, is the geographic location of the sample. This study was located in the Southeastern United States, which has a unique and painful history of race relations. This has been acknowledged throughout the study as context, but may limit its applicability to other regions.

My intent is for this study to be viewed as a discussion document of sorts, to stimulate conversation about its potential applicability or difference from the reality of the readers. The models and recommendations included in the findings will hopefully offer a place to begin discussions and serve as a roadmap to test for others working in cross-race relationships. This will provide an ongoing test of plausibility.

Recommendations for Further Research

I see many possibilities for further research, but will focus on the four that generate the most interest for me, and summarize the remainder in Table 6.9. There are many areas for further exploration, including unpacking constructs as they occur in cross-race dyads, replicating this study in other regions or across other lines of difference, investigating outcomes of positive cross-race relationships, and pursuing the application of existing research into business school and organizational contexts.

The first follow-up study would be a series of portraits of cross-race relationships in which both women are enacting their racial identity at the most evolved levels of the Black and White identity development models—internalization-commitment for Black women and autonomy for White women. While acknowledging the challenges in identifying these participants, I would be very interested in unpacking and depicting how the resistance and re-imagination of racial identity

plays out at all levels: intrapsychically, interpersonally, and in the actions taken outside the relationship. I would pay special attention to the role of trust and authenticity in these portraits.

Another follow-up would be to conduct a longitudinal study of women in cross-race relationships to see the dynamic ways these relationships affect their racial identities, as well as outcomes at a macro system level. In my study, there seemed to be a dialectical circle among the intrapsychic, interpersonal, and extra-relationship levels of work, and I would be interested in exploring this connection further.

A third would be to use the critical incident technique (Flanagan, 1954) to examine ways in which White European Americans were made aware of the insular bubble by other Whites. This would begin to make more visible the ways those inside the insular bubble can cause it to dissipate for others, and more empirically portray how Whiteness as a dominant identity can be resisted.

And finally, a fourth would be to replicate this study to expand the consideration of racial identities. It would be interesting to me to see what emerges in relationships across different racial identity boundaries.

As a result of my initial questions, as well as some questions that emerged during the research process, there are several possibilities for future research that are more generally described in Table 6.5. I have indicated the potential research question, the area of literature to which it might best contribute, and specific authors who are beginning to explore related questions.

Table 6.5

Possibilities for Further Research

Research Question	Area of Literature and Existing Research	Related Scholarship
What are the dimensions of the construct of relational authenticity as it applies to cross-race relationships?	Authenticity, Positive Scholarship	Roberts et al., 2009; Monahan, 2005; Lopez & Rice, 2006
How does racial identity development play a role in the variance of group satisfaction and effectiveness among members of the same racial group?	Racial identity development	Jackson, 2001; Helms, 1995; Swann, Milton, & Polzer, 2000
What are the dimensions of the “third culture” construct in cross-race dyads?	Trust	Casrnir, 1999
What is the functional role of distrust in cross-race relationships?	Trust	Kramer, 1999; Kramer & Cook, 2004; Lewicki, McAllister, & Bies, 1998; Reina & Reina, 2006
Replicate studies of current conceptualizations of dyadic trust in cross-race relationships to see if constructs hold up.	Trust	Kivel, 2002; D. McAllister, 1995
How does trust operate as an intervening variable in building and sustaining positive cross-race relationships?	Trust	D. McAllister, 1995; Pratt & Dirks, 2007
How do organizations with a stated commitment to diversity resist patterns embedded in multiple systems of domination?	Organization development, Diversity, Multiple systems of domination	Konrad, Prasad & Pringle, 2006; K. Thomas, 2008
What are outcomes of successful social justice ally dyads?	Social justice ally development	Kendall, 2006; Broido, 2000

How can business school curricula disrupt racial assumptions?	Education	Ely et al., 2006; Ferdman, 2010
How can this study be replicated across other racial identity groups?	Race and Leadership, Social Justice Ally Development	Helms, 1995; Wijeyesinghe & Jackson, 2001
How can this study be replicated in different regions of the United States?	Race and Leadership, Social Justice Ally Development	Helms, 1995; Kendall, 2006
Can the emerging definitions of “high-quality connection” and positive relationship be tested for cross-race dyads?	Positive Scholarship	Dutton & Heaphy, 2003
How does the culture of a community affect race relations within it?	Positive Scholarship	Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003; Putnam, 2000

In the last and final chapter, I will summarize implications of this study to the field of leadership and change. I will close with a reflection on what I have personally learned from this study.

Chapter VII: Implications for Leadership and Change

I began the journey of this dissertation with several motivations. The first was to participate in the scholarly discourse, which challenges assumptions behind the early feminist movement. I was interested in understanding what has been studied and theorized that would advance an understanding of how women might overcome the rifts that exist as a result of racial identity negotiation. As I progressed through this doctoral program, I observed that race and gender are used as unquestioned research variables, but I was more interested in their social construction and how they might be re-imagined. After reviewing the mainstream leadership literature, I also became interested in contributing to it so racial identity dynamics can be included in its discourse. And, because trust and authenticity seemed to be part of positive relationships as I had experienced them, and because those concepts were often mentioned in literature on cross-race relationships, I was interested in seeing how they might emerge in the experience of my participants. I decided to begin with the dyadic level of analysis, which I hypothesized was a site where contestation of systemic messages could occur and where power could be redistributed. All of this led to my research question, which combines these interests with my ongoing commitment to social justice.

The second motivation was a professional one. I was also looking for hope and a sense of professional generativity around the issue of developing meaningful cross-race relationships, both as a scholar and as a practitioner. I wanted to add my voice to the already impressive field of scholars that are committed to anti-racism work. In addition, as a business school faculty member I incorporate inclusive leadership scholarship into my curricula and am committed to increasing my understanding of how my own racial identity can help or hinder the design and facilitation of

those classes. As a consultant, I knew that this research would increase my insight into corporate diversity efforts, coaching client experiences, and community dialogues. In all of that work, I have learned how important it is as a WEA person to model reflexivity around race. I also wanted to learn from and incorporate into my work the scholarly investigation into cross-race relationships and, as an academic, join and contribute to the research community.

The third motivation related to my role as an involved citizen and a community leader. I continue to observe the effects of a lack of trust across race on my community's health, and my standards for myself as a facilitator and leader drive me to create space to surface dynamics of privilege and marginalization so they can be dealt with openly and negotiated. This was another way I was looking to integrate my own racial identity development with my ongoing commitment to act.

Therefore, my motivation grew out of my new identity as a scholar, my professional identity, and my goals for personal growth. In this chapter, I will summarize implications this study suggests for the literature on leadership and change, then review what I have learned.

Implications of My Research to the Leadership and Change Literature

As I reviewed the literature, I saw the invisibility of dynamics of multiple systems of domination in the mainstream leadership literature. When exploring positive cross-race relationships, this invisibility limits the usefulness of that literature, particularly those that have to do with trust and authenticity. While I appreciate the powerful work in the critical theory literature, I am looking now to contribute to better integrating those areas of literature. And while my findings about the dynamics resulting from racism are not new, the metaphors that can be used to capture them are. By exploring areas that straddle the critical theory literature as well as the mainstream, I hope that my study can introduce additional tools that can be used to test

developing constructs in the mainstream literature. Because I did not make trust, respect, and authenticity the focus of my study, there is still further exploration to be done, but their frequent mention by most participants indicates their relevance.

The emerging positive scholarship literature offers an opportunity to incorporate those dynamics. Because it is a more recently developed area of literature, there is an opportunity to make dynamics around socially constructed identities part of its mainstream, and I see a place for my research there as well. Its examination of the role of authenticity is a particularly rich area for future study and its emerging definitions of “positive” have promise for the study of relationships that cross social identity boundaries.

The most relevant application for my findings resides in the social justice ally development area. This literature seems to me to have grown out of activist experience, and the specificity of my focus on women working across race for social justice contributes to this literature by offering an empirical corroboration of much of what has been described from that experience. In addition, the typology generated by my findings of the work required by both parties in a relationship builds on what has been written by providing more detail, as well as an organizing structure for that work.

My research question did not specifically ask how these relationships could be sites for contestation and re-imagining of racial identities, but I was interested in this as a longer-term question and some early hints of relevance emerged given the open processes of grounded theory. The interpretation of the cycle of socialization into racism was an emerging theme that deserves further study to see whether and how it can be interrupted given the persistence of racism.

I have provided a summary of how well my findings answered my initial questions in Table 7.1 below.

Table 7.1

Assessment of Findings Against Initial Questions

Initial Question	Insights Contributed by my Study or Further Exploration Needed
How can social identity and related power dynamics be better represented in the leadership literature?	Use of the insular bubble and protective shell can be organizing constructs that can be used to apply systemic power dynamics to existing constructs.
If race is socially constructed, how can it be treated in the empirical literature as more than a variable, but explored as a process of acquisition and resistance?	The insular bubble and protective shell depict how race is learned and enacted, and the ecosystem illustrates how the space between can be recreated as a positive one. Further exploration is merited to explore how it can be resisted.
How can this study contribute to making the enactment of privilege visible in the leadership and related literatures?	Use of the insular bubble and its accompanying properties to introduce to existing literature.
How can privilege be problematized?	The insular bubble begins to problematize privilege and indicate shortcomings, limitations, and blind spots that come with it.
Is trust a realistic element of relationship in a context of multiple systems of domination?	Inconclusive in my study. More exploration needed around trust as a temporary or permanent process, levels of trust that are realistic as an outcome, the forms trust takes as a variable, and the functional role of distrust in this context.
What does authenticity mean in the context of a cross-race relationship and what does it take to develop it?	Inconclusive in my study, but some interesting threads to follow. Begin to build on relational authenticity construct, and link authenticity to level of racial consciousness.
What do Black African American and White European American women who are working for social justice do, think, and feel as they navigate the challenges of working across race?	My study provides a comprehensive set of experiences that are organized around the properties of the ecosystem, the protective shell, and the insular bubble.
How can these relationships become a site for	Some insights in my study, but further

contestation of racial definitions?

exploration needed around this specific process.

What does each need to do in order to produce the sturdy bridges E. Bell and Nkomo (2001) describe?

Builds on earlier work, providing a metaphor of the ecosystem to provide a symbol of the comprehensive set of processes described by my findings.

As I have grown as a new scholar, this study has ignited further curiosity and a strong commitment to continue research in this and related areas. I have enjoyed the creative process of formulating a research question, the challenge of constructing a research design, the interview process, the emergence of new insights from the data, and the process of writing. I welcome lifelong learning about this and related issues. My first priority after completing this degree will be to look for an arena and a research team. The next section captures my reflections on specific insights I have gained as a scholar.

My Learning as an Emerging Scholar

The research process was a powerful learning experience for me as a developing scholar, and more particularly, a WEA scholar. In addition to learning the tools of grounded theory and improving my interviewing skills, there was significant learning for me around racial dynamics during the data collection and analysis phases.

Before I started my research, I was in a conversation at the 2009 International Leadership Association where I was asked by a BAA female scholar about my upcoming study. When she learned of my question, she cautioned me about the complicated issue of “who speaks for whom” as a result of the research. This reinforced for me the importance of my reflexivity during the processes of research, especially around how to balance the tension between owning my own interpretations and acknowledging the social power difference in the interview phase (Smith, 2005; Wasserfall, 1997). I continue to use this awareness as I think about presenting this research

and will continually work to stress the co-creation of this data between participant experience and my analysis and interpretation.

I began this study being very cognizant of the potential complication of racial identity differences between the BAA participants and me, and initially structured my snowball sample around that precaution. What I learned during the interview process was that same-race dynamics are just as sensitive, albeit in a different way. I observed that trust is just as important, if not more, between me and the WEA women I interviewed. This was critical in creating the safe space for them to question themselves, admit fear and feelings of inadequacy, and to admit their participation in racism. I have experienced those feelings along my journey, and took from this the importance of creating same-race environments to discuss race and balance cross-race work; and have carried this awareness with me into the classroom. This was mirrored in the shift I felt during the interviews from wanting very much to learn from the BAA women to balancing that with resonating with the learning that the White women have been doing. In this way, I witnessed a balanced perspective of the insular bubble from the inside and the outside.

Another lesson I learned from the interview process, both explicitly and implicitly, was the symbolic importance of turf. Where the interviews were held seemed to reflect the relative trust level the participant had with me or with this issue. Two of the participants specifically mentioned their observations that WEA women assume that their homes are comfortable places to BAA women to visit, but do not reciprocate. This reinforced my design element that they choose the interview location, but has also made me much more aware of where meetings or informal events are held, and I now suggest different settings that I would have before or gently resist those who leave the choice to me.

During the interviews, I also observed that part of privilege is experiencing and being able to choose comfort. For those inside the insular bubble, it is a choice to be made uncomfortable due to the nature of privilege, where the protective shell is there because of constant discomfort outside of it. The WEA women, when talking about conflict, referenced the lack of comfort and seemed to find that difficult, where the BAA women welcomed it. Surfacing comfort as an entitlement of privilege is a new insight for me, and one that helps me design and facilitate classes and seminars.

I had another observation that I am not sure was conscious for the WEA women. I observed that, when they had a perception of the BAA woman they were talking about, they did not feel the need to check that perception's accuracy with the other woman. It seemed that if they chose a behavior and it seemed to be effective, then that was enough. This seems to be another piece of data that can be tested in a future study, but reinforces the authority that exists on the inside of the insular bubble. I also ask more questions in my own cross-race relationships now.

The last and perhaps most significant learning came from the partnership with my research buddy. Her observations and what she noticed in the data were occasionally different than my own and reinforced for me the value of incorporating another set of eyes on the data. Examples of these different insights included her noticing the use of humor when angry or cynical (for the BAA women) and when uncomfortable or admitting something negative (for the WEA women). Her comment that "laughter is not innocent" was powerful for me. Another example is her noticing that the WEA responses to becoming aware of the insular bubble seemed more cognitive, and that intellectualizing results in fewer choices to make. This became an important finding of this research, and something on which I continued to reflect. A third example was when she asked a critical question about whether these participants actually do what they recommend, or

just advise others to do them. The answer to that was not answerable due to my research design and became an explicit limitation of this study.

In addition to her value as a thoughtful, conscientious, and highly intelligent human being regardless of her racial identity, she also brought a focus to the regional context of this study because of her race. In a subsequent discussion where we debriefed the role of research buddy for her, she commented that her experience of being taught about race did not include the level of suspicion and perpetuation of history that these BAA participants reported. She commented that it was “jarring” to hear these other perspectives, which underlines the need to bound this study in the Southeast and to carefully explore its plausibility outside that region. My relationship with her has shown me the value, as well as enjoyment of working with a research buddy. We will look for opportunities to work together again.

My Learning as a Practitioner

My learning from this research has also caused changes in the way I design and conduct classes at my business school and in my consulting practice. Because of the increase in my own racial identity awareness, I surface race as a dynamic much more often and feel more capable of conducting a classroom discussion when it arises from students. Realizing from the data that I can signal the allowing of race as a subject to be discussed has caused it to be surfaced much more often in my mixed-race classes and I have experienced some robust discussions that I think add high value to my leadership curriculum. My philosophy has always been not to isolate diversity as a curricular topic, but to integrate it throughout, and my ongoing learning around this will hopefully help me to make race visible in more business situations. I have also had the opportunity because of this research to design and facilitate seminars around cross-race issues, which I now feel more qualified to accept.

Related to this, I have also experienced the dilemma of having very “race fluent” BAA students in my classes along with much less “race fluent” WEA students. This research has shown me the strong contrast between the lived experience of BAAs and the learning mode and, sometimes, resistance of WEAs. It has caused me to adjust my curriculum so that before we begin classes, I provide assignments where students can do some intrapsychic work individually to better prepare themselves for the discussion. In sessions where we discuss race directly, I have learned that this difference creates a tension that must be acknowledged at the outset and negotiated throughout the discussions. I have also learned the limitations of conducting these classes alone, just as I have learned the limitations of conducting this research alone.

Another related awareness I have is the opportunity to surface privilege in same-race groups. As a recovering resident of the insular bubble, I see the invisibility of privilege around me on my current faculty which leads to a blind spot and a limitation of our school’s teaching capacity. This is, of course, a view not necessarily widely shared. Becoming an influencer around this awareness has been an ongoing goal of mine, and this research provides me with a useful set of tools with which to raise this issue strategically. I also see the reactions to having one’s insular bubble burst and am learning how to calibrate my desire to burst others’ insular bubbles with the wisdom, respect, and caution of offering tools to dissipate it oneself.

My Personal Journey as a White European American Woman

I began this doctoral program with several areas I was interested in pursuing. The one that had the most energy for me was to explore the feminist literature to see what had happened over the last 20 years. My life circumstances had caused me to direct my energies on more immediate issues and I felt I had lost touch with feminism. Thanks to Dr. Philomena Essed, who became my advisor, my inquiry into gender studies immediately took me into the intersectionality of race and

gender and I began to more deeply understand the rifts in the feminist movement and why WEA women have made more progress in corporate life than our BAA counterparts.

Dr. Essed also helped me see and experience the value of reading about race issues, which prevents the reader from having to spend energy saving face. I can appreciate this now as a scholar, a professor, and a learner.

During the research process itself, I saw aspects of myself mirrored in the WEA responses. I could see how my well intentioned, but naïve assumptions about how processes that work in same-race relationships cannot be smoothly transferred to cross-race relationships, and that there is great value in creating discomfort for myself on an ongoing basis so I can continue to dissipate my own insular bubble. I am working now on forming a cross-race book club that will focus on books about race issues.

Another valuable awareness resulting from this research was the opportunity to see WEA women, and perhaps myself, through the eyes of BAA women. This echoes the process of creating a looking glass self offered by Cooley (1902) and a way I have grown in my own reflected best-self portrait (Roberts et al., 2005). The view of WEA women qualifies in my mind as a “challenging jolt” (Roberts et al., 2005, p. 716), but it has led me to greater humility and a broader view of who I am and who I can be as a WEA woman. I have been reflecting on my experience of the paradox of my positioning as a WEA woman in that I was socialized to defer to and support WEA men, then learned to be assertive around them in order to succeed in corporate life, and now that assertiveness is sometimes seen as an assumption of authority by BAA women. On the other hand, staying engaged in conflict is a skill I learned along with way, which is an asset in these relationships. I have also reflected on the challenge issued to WEA women in one

of my interviews to let go of the connection to WEA men to redefine power as a collective with BAA women.

Another aspect of learning for me was in tempering my idealism with the sobering reality of racism's tenacity and power. Some of my idealism may have resulted from life in the insular bubble, and it has been healthy for me to balance that with the BAA views I heard in this study. My reaction at this point is that political alliances across race are most immediately possible and productive, and that the macro system level must be given the same level of attention as the meso level of relationships.

Some of the learning embedded in my roles as scholar and practitioner is also learning that advances my own racial identity. From this research, I have learned that behaving in a trustworthy manner is not enough in developing cross-race relationships, but that there may need to be another layer where I am "sponsored" by BAA women as trustworthy. In two cases, I was only accepted as an interviewer by BAA participants because I was sponsored by another BAA participant. I now honor this and will seek out that sponsoring where I might not have before. I have a level of understanding of and a respect for the need for the guardedness I have experienced that I did not have before. I also have a deeper level of self-acceptance around my racial identity and the accompanying feelings of discomfort, curiosity, anger, sadness, and peace I experience as I work through what it means to me.

Another reaction I had several times during the interviews and during the presentation of preliminary findings to the BAA women was a sadness and a sober reflectiveness about the history of and potential for cross-race relationships. At the close of the presentation of preliminary findings, one of the BAA women asked the group if it was worth the time and effort to engage in cross-race work and there was no consensus that the answer was affirmative. This

was a surprise to me after hearing the interview data, which I had naively assumed was work they thought was valuable. My own privileged view that things can be changed if one focuses on them is now much more respectful of the hard work involved for everyone and once again reinforces the importance of helping other WEA people prepare for cross-race work by raising their own levels of awareness.

I subscribe to the view that people study or teach what they most need to learn, and I am no exception. This has been a life-changing crucible for me and I am deeply grateful for the learning this research has provided me.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Confirmation of Participation

Antioch University PhD in Leadership & Change INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD Human Subjects Research Review

Confirmation of Participation

Given the focus of this study, the following characteristics have been defined as important for participants to self-identify as descriptive of them. Please review these characteristics and indicate below by your signature that they all apply to you.

€ I identify as either a Black African American woman or a White European American woman.

€ I have had a working relationship of at least one year with a woman of a different race than my own.

€ I view this relationship as a positive one.

€ That working relationship existed not more than 5 years ago.

€ The work we did focused on issues of social justice, as defined below:

Social justice...involves addressing issues of equity, power relations, and institutionalized oppression. It seeks to establish a more equitable distribution of power and resources so that all people can live with dignity, self-determination, and physical and psychological safety. It creates opportunities for people to reach their full potential within a mutually responsible, interdependent society. Working toward social justice requires changing unjust institutional structures, policies, and practices and challenging the dominant ideology. (Goodman, 2001, p. 5)

If these five characteristics apply to you please sign below, indicating your confirmation of that. Thank you very much.

Name of Participant/Date

E-mail address

Signature of Participant/Date

Phone number

Appendix B: Informed Consent Statement

Antioch University PhD in Leadership & Change INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD Human Subjects Research Review

Informed Consent Statement

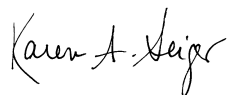
You have been asked to participate in a research project involving the interview method conducted by Karen A. Geiger as part of her dissertation in Antioch University's Ph.D. in Leadership and Change. The primary purpose of this interview process is to explore how relationships are developed across race among women working on issues of social justice.

After confirming that you meet the criteria for participation in this study using the attached form, the process will involve 1-2 recorded and transcribed interviews with you at the setting of your choice. You will receive a copy of the transcription for review and editing if you choose, you will be given the opportunity to offer feedback on preliminary interpretations, and once the final report is written, you will receive a summary of what was learned from the interviews. You will also be invited to give feedback to the researcher on the interview itself after your first interview is finished. A list of those questions is attached. Your interview data will also be kept confidential and will not be shared with anyone except a third-party transcriber who does not reside in Charlotte. If you prefer that the researcher transcribe your interviews personally, you may request that and she will honor your request.

Your name will be kept confidential, unless and only if you give express permission for me to use your name in the dissertation. You may choose not to answer any interview questions, and will have the opportunity to remove any quotations from the transcribed interview. In addition, the recordings and all related research materials including the Informed Consent Forms will be kept in a secure file cabinet indefinitely and may be used for future scholarly presentations and publications. And finally, your participation is voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time without penalty.

My hope is that through this process you will have the opportunity to reflect on your cross-race work relationships and possibly build a greater personal awareness of your own experience as a result of your participation in this research. The risks to you are considered minimal; although unlikely, there is a chance that you may experience some discomfort in the telling of your experiences. The learning from this report, with your permission, has the potential to become a stimulus to other women who are interested in how to create effective cross-race relationships in their work for social justice.

Karen Geiger can be reached at her office, 704-372-9842, or at kag@mindspring.com. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact Dr. Lisa Kreeger, Chair of the Institutional Review Board, Antioch Ph.D. in Leadership & Change, Antioch University, lkreeger@phd.antioch.edu, 937-319-6144.

Karen A. Geiger <hr/> Name of Researcher <div style="text-align: center;">  4.21.10 </div>	<hr/> Name of Participant <hr/>
Signature of Researcher/Date	Signature of Participant/Date

Appendix C: Presentation of Preliminary Findings

Presentation of Preliminary Findings to WEA Women: 6.28.10

KG notes from Feedback:

- Re-examine use of “realistic” and “idealistic” – is it more “questioning” and “hopeful”, “acknowledgment of challenge vs. hopeful? Present or future? Is it about present race relations or future race relations?
- Several reported implicit, *negative* messages about race
- Be clearer about who is talking for or about whom – in the organization of the material. Some of the slides were confusing in this way
- Go deeper into the “humor” codes – the WEA have seen BAAs use humor between themselves around race and were curious about why that wasn’t reported.
- There was some discussion/disagreement about feelings vs. thoughts that result from the different experiences – some said they were both feelings (wistfulness, uncertainty) but different in level of intensity, others felt that this is a significant distinction and that if one is a step removed from the issues, they can be more intellectual about it.
- Possible metaphors: shell and bubble. They liked the bubble best, because of the boundary. Cloud doesn’t do that. Discussion of how the problem with the bubble is that it’s clear and they liked the observation that you cannot see out as well as you can see in.
- Asked the question about whether WEAs reported any commitment to being an advocate for change as a “resulting choice”?
- One participant asked me to come speak about the results to her organization
- One participant talked afterward about how her experience is that Black people will assume she has more power/access than they do with she sees it the other way around.
- One participant asked for more information and detail about what the collusion consisted of between White women and White men that was referred to in the data.

Presentation of Preliminary Findings to BAA women: 6.29.10

- Noted discrepancy between early and frequent contact with “others” for the BAAs and “later and rare” contact for the WEAs – in that they wonder if those they had contact with noticed them or if it would be symmetrical if I interviewed them. They surmised that there is a different definition of “contact”, and that they wonder if AAs are invisible until there is an incident or an impression (usually negative) made. They noted the different level of racial consciousness of Whites.
- They noted a discrepancy between the perception of them as “not afraid to talk about race” but that boundary crossing requires competence. In the subsequent discussion, we talked about how being “not afraid” may be relative. They questioned that from their perspective, saying that they don’t always bring it up because they are always assessing whether or not the environment is right for that.

- Question: “how is the preservation of wealth, privilege and power” not on the list?
- They, too, were confused by the layout of the slides (!)
- They asked what the “use of humor when talking about race” meant – when? In what way? One participant immediately assumed it was because BAAs have historically been used to entertain White people, and some of the others went to racially disparaging jokes? There was a lot of sensitivity to that and I will go into that code and clarify it.
- One woman asked for more detail about “fear”, “exhaustion”, “humiliation”. She also commented that she would like the opportunity to be the boss and be on the left hand column with that – I will go into the codes because I remember one of the African American participants saying something about that.
- They noted the discrepancy in the WEA data about distrust being expected, then later being a surprise. This may be because of different people saying them. I will re-examine the references in those codes.
- They also noted that the WEAs did not report angst, but the lists of the work and the feelings they have IS angst. Why did not they describe it that way? We wondered if it is because they can go away from it.
- One participant commented on the lack of ownership WEAs have of their race, and in making the point, noted that I had referred to race as “it” whereas BAAs don’t see it as an “it”.
- They wondered why it did not come up that BAAs see that when they are liked they are an exception, like the WEAs. This wasn’t in the data, but they talked about how often it is that people are surprised by their competence and how they are described as “different than” others of their race. I will re-examine the transcripts to see if I may have missed this.
- One participant asked if the WEAs said anything about risks they have taken and the pain or loss that has resulted. E.g. ostracism, what the costs are of the risks they have taken? What are the costs of maintaining racism? Was it talked about? This would be an interesting element of a future study.
- One woman then asked if there are costs to them if they commit to live cross-racially, i.e. is it worth it to them to engage across race? The cost is high and the payoff is low.
- They had a discussion about the WEA Civil Rights comment – some supported that point and we went into a discussion about the next generation. This reinforced a point that the last slide makes which is that BAAs have questions about the value of integration.
- They agreed that a future study would be useful to test regional differences since the South is so unique when it comes to race. They see the South as holding slavery in its cellular memory, but they wonder if power and socioeconomics would be seen as more significant in other regions.
- When we talked about the metaphors to use, they were OK with the bubble after some discussion, but did not like the term “armor” because it is too harsh/hard. They thought a metaphor that describes self-protection would work best. One participant commented that armor and shield are too static and don’t capture the movement, or the situational nature of the experience. She also doesn’t want to trivialize either side. They ended up talking about the “shell” metaphor and getting more comfortable with it, but did not land on any unanimity. They talked about turtles, crustaceans, etc. They concluded by saying that was my job!

- Afterward, I spent some time talking with one of the participants, and asked her what she thought about the session. She said that she thinks sometimes Black women are so tired of the work that they hold White women to a higher standard than they hold themselves.
- I did see why it would have been different if the groups were together. The BAAs were much more ready to challenge and summarize the WEA results, and I saw the WEAs as much more tentative.
- During the session, one participant asked me what I learned, and I told her that I had the opportunity to see WEAs through their eyes, and I was somewhat disappointed because I had expected higher awareness, but now know how much work there is to do within “privileged” boundaries. I left the meeting feeling more discouraged about the potential of cross-race work, but know that because of their feedback that WEA folks need to get to work and I need to do my part to stimulate that.

Appendix D: Aggregate Feedback from Participants on their Interview

1. Please describe factors that caused you to feel comfortable or uncomfortable in the interview with Karen Geiger.

-Although I had not met Karen prior to the interview I know her by name and support the work she is doing.

-Comfortable and relaxing location Comfortable demeanor of the interviewer Supportive, calm, communication style of the interviewer

-Felt comfortable--good at explaining set up and expectations.

-Home is warm and inviting--good spot for the discussion. It felt like it was just a visit. Any discomfort was caused by me--the realizations I was having about my own filters while I was talking. She also did a great job of nodding, asking probing questions but not interrupting my thought-flow. Also, I did not feel "judged."

-I felt comfortable because I have known Karen for a long time. But putting that aside, she was gentle and allowed the interview to move at my pace. The only discomfort was in anticipating not being able to articulate well what I know is very complex and also very important to Karen in her research. Her encouragement to "tell stories" made it more comfortable and her willingness to listen through my rambling and wandering thoughts. The little mic was not obtrusive; her test of the recording equipment was good & made us know that we were at ease just to talk & listen. Karen is a good listener.

-I felt comfortable knowing that everything that I told Karen would be held in confidence. The setting was also very comfortable and conducive to an open, honest conversation.

-I felt comfortable with Karen because (1) I was familiar with her from past interactions, (2) Karen informed me of the rules/guidelines for the interview beforehand as well as how the information I provided could/would be used (3) I trusted Karen.

-I felt very comfortable--here are some factors that helped: It was in a home setting the door was closed, so there was privacy we had good conversation before we began the interview I got to take off my shoes -I felt very comfortable with Karen and the interview. She gave great information prior to the interview (when setting it up) that made me feel comfortable to what I was agreeing to and then the paperwork further explained the process and what she was looking for. She was very inviting and felt like we were just having a chat. . . I enjoyed it tremendously and felt she did a great job of explaining set up, what she was looking for and asking questions that probed but weren't too intrusive. The questions built nicely on each other.

-I had spent time with Karen before and found it to be a pleasant and open experience

The amount of guidelines for confidentiality, openness as to who would see the raw data, ability to edit and actually direct the set the stage for safety with adequate boundaries.

-I never felt uncomfortable. Knowing Karen and her character and credibility led to me being comfortable. The assurance that the information I was providing was confidential and Karen's approach made me quite comfortable in the interview.

-I was very comfortable during my interview, largely because I have spoken with Karen before on similar topics.

-It was a good day for the interview. I was open because of the trust that I have from our relationship. The space was great. And I felt heard.

-Karen explained the process both before and at the beginning of the interview, and she explained how she was going to use the equipment. All of these measures made me feel comfortable in the interview.

-Karen Geiger came to my door with the biggest beautiful smile and a bouquet of beautiful pink roses. I immediately connected with her and felt very comfortable.

-Karen puts people right at ease. She is comfortable with herself which helps her make others comfortable.

-Karen took time to talk informally before beginning the formal session. Made for a very comfortable interview. She probed as appropriate, demonstrating clearly that she was listening.

-Karen, explained the purpose and gave me a clear understanding of the process moving forward. In addition to the process, I was made to feel very comfortable, in the environment that we had chosen and the questions that were asked allowed me to share my passion on the subject. I felt that Karen listened, and there were times when she repeated the answers to make sure that she understood what I was trying to convey on the subject. I also felt that I could be honest with my answers.

-Setting was very comfortable Explained the project purpose and rationale for my interview very well made the microphone seem like a non-issue. Did not feel uncomfortable at all

-Several people (that I trust) suggested that I participate in the interview. Spoke highly of Karen, so felt that I could trust their recommendation. Prior to the interview, Karen took the time to establish rapport. I felt comfortable throughout the interview.

-Things that made me feel COMFORTABLE include: Knowing Karen and having a trusting relationship for 12+ years, having a general knowledge of Karen's research topic, intent, process and methodology, thorough and thoughtful overview of the process and opportunities to seek further clarification, trust and confidence in the process, as explained

by Karen, comfort, safety and privacy of being in my own home.

-While I did not know Karen personally prior to this session, I have many colleagues who hold her in high regard. I felt completely at ease with her and welcomed her patience as I sometimes took time to find the better way to say what I wanted to express.

2. What about the interview setting worked or did not work for you?

-We chose an area that we would not be disturbed. Also, we sat close to each other in the interview which made me feel very comfortable with the conversation. I felt more as if I were having a conversation than being interviewed.

-What worked was a clear and concise explanation of the technology and a pleasant room. There was nothing that did not work for me.

-I liked doing the interview at my home. The topic included personal views, and it was comfortable expressing my views in a comfortable and familiar environment.

-I really liked it; the only thing---it reminded me of being in a therapy setting

-Interview setting was accessible and in close proximity to my office/home. We were able to meet without being interrupted, so undivided attention was given to the interview. Also liked being able to enjoy a meal and beverages prior to the interview.

-It was a comfortable setting and worked fine for conversation.

-It was a home, so was very comfortable. The door was shut, so there was a sense of privacy. —

It worked well. She kindly brought water--allowed for me to re-think situations and re-frame as needed. Was informal yet controlled and professional interview.

-Not applicable. -See #1 The process and plan for the interview was clearly explained. I did not feel rushed or under any pressure to respond in any particular manner.

-See my answer to #1. Very comfortable and relaxing setting.

-Setting worked perfectly- I was in my home in a very safe environment.

-The interview setting was warm, inviting and in a room with a closed door, which put me at ease.

-The interview setting worked perfectly for me--it was done in my place of business where I felt completely at ease. Also, I felt comfortable having my conversation recorded.

-The interview was held in my home, smiling approvingly as I talked endlessly.

-The setting was appropriate, and one that I chose. It was quiet and private.

-The setting was fine. It was my choice so I was comfortable.

-The setting was great. Her home and office are very inviting and comfortable and thought it was a nice place to conduct interview. It did not feel sterile but rather inviting which I think is important for the subject matter.

-The space was fine; I am accustomed to being taped in interviews so I was comfortable in the setting.

-We met in my office which is a very comfortable space; no complaints. Afterwards, Karen made the time for us to tour, as I introduced her to practically every staff member at the YWCA! I believe that she and I both felt a great rapport from the start, actually from the phone calls prior even to meeting.

-Worked great.

-Worked.

3. What did Karen Geiger do or say that affected your willingness to be candid?

-Karen has an open and authentic manner, she described a bit about what she was learning, and my knowledge of her background and her interest in doing a study of this nature, opened the doors to candor

-A) Karen is candid herself; B) She can handle hearing most anything; C) I don't hold back.

-After explaining the project to me, she told me to just talk about anything that I could remember. She asked questions, gave me feedback and I knew she was listening to me. We talked about people that I have adopted. I became so impressed with her honesty and compassion for people, I adopted her!

-Again, the encouragement to tell stories. Her prompting was good--picking up on a word and asking what that meant. The fact that I have known her for some time made it easier to be candid than if I had not, and/or if it had been someone that I had just met. I don't think I can separate that out.

-Asked good questions that caused me to be reflective and move beyond speaking in clichés, listened without judgment. Had good conversation beforehand, which helped put me at ease.

-Clear confidentiality, "matched pairs" not both interviewed.

-Her explanation of how the entire process would unfold was very detailed, and I was assured that I had control of what was shared at steps along the way. Her quiet listening allowed me to continue to share as my thoughts streamed. Her simple probing questions followed our conversation very naturally.

-Her explanation of the process, the topic and the fact that I had was referred to her. I also believe in the importance of the research.

-I am a researcher myself and she gave great overview of the process, thinking and purpose; I wanted to help her discover something new in the field. She was also very genuine in the way she related to me.

-I have known Karen for many years and admired her passion and the work that she had done in this community. Also, this was a topic that I felt needed to be discussed therefore I wanted to be able to contribute to the work that she is trying to do.

-I was willing to be candid from the outset in an effort contribute to her research. It helped to know my input would be anonymous, but that wasn't a deal-breaker.

-Karen assured me that my conversation with her would be held in confidence, and that names used could be changed in the final document if that made me more comfortable. Also, when she asked follow-up questions, those questions were appropriate to help her clarify what she believed I was saying.

-Karen explained to me in detail the transcription, review and coding process, which reassured me that I would be afforded the opportunity to review it for accuracy and to protect my identity and the identity of individuals about whom I spoke candidly. Also, Karen's candor with me about her own experiences was reinforcing.

-Karen has a way of making people feel trust. Just being who she is and knowing her for such a long time helped me to be perfectly candid.

-Karen informed me of the parameters of the interview and its potential use(s). She also told me that once my interview was transcribed, I would have an opportunity to review it to make corrections as I deem appropriate.

-Lots of positive non-verbal responses. Openness and non-judgmental tone. She looked interested in what I had to say!

-Our prior work together and my knowledge of the program contributed to my willingness to be candid.

-See #1, see #2

-Several things. . . one and probably most important is her reputation and prior knowledge & respect of her. Two, was how she originally set up the call and her ability to be very

forthcoming in what she was doing and what she was after. Three, was her openness when we sat down and telling me why she was interested in her work and what my role was. She helped me see my role and the bigger picture and she invited me to be candid and was open that I would have the opportunity to edit, change names, etc.

-She asked probing questions and seemed to listen well. Because I felt she was listening to me, it was easy to be candid. Also, she did a good job explaining how the research will be used, which affected my willingness to be candid.

-She projects a sense of trustworthiness so it makes it easy to be candid. Additionally, I think she truly is non-judgmental. I would have no reason to believe that she is not willing to hear candor, so have no reason not to be candid.

-Took the time to establish rapport--cannot overstate the importance of this to my willingness to be candid.

Already had an understanding of the IRB process, but I was still glad that Karen sent the pre-interview email to explain the purpose of the research, etc. The fact that Karen asked others to refer prospective participants was a great idea. Those making the referrals had introduced Karen in a very positive manner and had explained the ease of their interviews. Assurance of coding using group responses and common themes, confidentiality review, and the sensitivity to those conducting graduate research all affected my willingness to participate and be candid in my responses.

4. What other feedback do you have for Karen in future interviews?

-Stay with the intense listening, and opening for deeper, more experienced based questions. Asking for specific examples was helpful.

-Cannot think of anything.

-Don't let birds in the house! Seriously, I don't have any criticisms. She did a great job at explaining the process, especially the level of confidentiality, and making me feel safe to share my thoughts.

-Given the length of the transcript of my interview I don't know if it is practical for me given time constraints to read it through and comment. I would prefer if she would identify particular points that she finds relevant and ask for my feedback on those.

-Great job. Time flew by. Thank you for including me in your work.

-I am not one who thinks fast on my feet. It may have been helpful for me to have known more about the project intent before I came into the interview. I realize because of the research methodology that she did not have prescribed questions to ask in advance, but had I known a little more detail about the premise of the work, I may have been a little more

prepared and able to better articulate my thoughts during the interview. Perhaps a one-page summary of the research intent. I realize I have an opportunity to add something after the interview to fill in gaps, but unfortunately, I am under a tremendous deadline and do not have time to devote to it at this time. I do think the future session with those interviewed would be helpful and interesting to participate in.

-I believe my previous comments have covered my feedback.

-I do not have any other feedback for Karen except to continue to permit the interviewee to choose the location for the interview.

-I focused on one particular situation that I thought was relevant to her research. If time allows, I would encourage Karen to allow other study participants to share multiple experiences from their rich backgrounds of working towards social justice across racial lines.

-I honestly believe that Karen did a phenomenal job and it works.

-I think I took too much time--nearly 2 hours--so she might consider being more directive about time control, if that is an issue for her. But if that works for her--and she has the 2 hours for each interview great. I just felt bad because I had expected one hour and thought she had planned for that. I was happy to discuss these important topics with her though.

-I thought it was great. Thank you for including me in your research.

-If all of them are like this one, I do not have any suggestions at this time. This interview allowed me to be open and honest and I am looking forward to sharing my passions and helping women move forward with this agenda.

-If you sense the interviewee is at all anxious about being recorded, explain the equipment right away or even in advance. The round ball in the white box thing was something I had never seen before. It was fine for me, just something new which could be off-putting for some folks. And not for the interview, but this feedback system has been problematic. Maybe it's my computer or just cyberspace this morning, but the server keeps timing out, Firefox unable to connect. Fortunately, I haven't lost any answers, but there has been lots of "spinning". Just an FYI. Thank you!

-Interesting interview and interview process. All aspects of the process worked well for me.

-I've been busy with several other projects so I haven't had a lot of time to think about future interviews.

Maybe when I receive the transcript I'll start thinking again.

-Keep up the good work!

-Keep up the good work. I felt at ease to answer the questions throughout the process .

-Not now--if I think of anything, I will send an email.

-None.

-Very positive experience and cannot really think of anything that was missing or should have been done differently.

5. If you would like to suggest other possible interview participants, please write their names and e-mail addresses here.

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(names and e-mail addresses omitted for confidentiality purposes)

Appendix E: Detail of Pilot Study

Note: The names of these participants were changed because I did not have express permission to use them in this dissertation.

Participant Selection Process

Because my participant profile was so specific, purposeful sampling seemed to be the appropriate vehicle for identifying them. I began the search for interviewees in mid-March, 2009 by calling an acquaintance named Cynthia Anderson (a European American woman), telling her about my interest and needs, and asking for her ideas about who I might approach as possible participants. Cynthia has been a coach, trainer, and facilitator around diversity issues in both the private and non-profit sectors, and I have crossed paths with her frequently in my own work in Charlotte. As I described my research question and the upcoming process, she offered to be a participant, as well as help me identify people who would fit the profile of the ideal participant. She suggested both specific women, as well as pools of women who would likely qualify. As we talked, she added that she has “worked out lots of stuff” with the Black women she’s worked with and would be very interested in contributing to this research. She also suggested that I interview Naomi Barnes with whom she has worked in the past and continues to work with on a current community-wide initiative. I told her about my hesitation to interview matched pairs, but she responded that if I interview Naomi she would be fine with that. I did not want to commit to calling Naomi which might set up an “intervention,” so I told her I would be interested in talking with her further (she was on her cell phone) and that we would talk again the next week.

I then called Naomi (self-identified as an African American woman) to ask for her help in finding interview participants. As I described my research question, she also offered to be a

participant, as well as help me identify future participants. I decided on the spot to consider this option, and asked her what her thoughts would be about my approaching Cynthia as a participant since they work together. She said “that would be fine with me—we’ve worked out lots of stuff along the way.” My thinking was that, on the plus side, the process of interviewing her would do two things: first, it would increase her understanding and buy-in to this research which would enable her to help me find appropriate participants, if she still wants to, for my dissertation; second, if she and Cynthia do this kind of intensive diversity work they are likely to have already handled some of these tough issues; and third, I had every confidence that she would be blunt and direct with me about our interview, so I would learn even more about what might get in the way for me across race.

When I described the process we had designed where an African American woman interviewer would follow up with her to get post-interview feedback, she became quiet. When I asked how she was reacting, she said:

I seem like an extravert but I process things internally, so I am processing what you just said. Here’s what I think: I am OK with you calling back and asking for feedback. I’m more prone to give you feedback, and talking behind my back is not my style.

She totally supported the design of an African American woman interviewing other African American women, and she said that my challenge would be to find the “right African American woman” and the “right White woman” to do the interviews. At the end of our conversation, she gave me the dates on which she would be available to interview. I appreciated her openness and directness and now had the question of whether the opportunity of interviewing her personally violated the protocol we last discussed.

I discussed this possibility and its pros and cons with Dr. Elizabeth Holloway, my faculty methodologist, who agreed that the benefits would outweigh the potential risks, so we decided to

proceed with Cynthia and Naomi. I phoned Cynthia and left her a message saying that we were approved to move forward with that plan and to let me know when would be convenient for her.

Scheduling and Preparing for the Interview with Naomi

Both Naomi and Cynthia waited until the last minute before they confirmed appointments, which made me a bit nervous, but my first interview was confirmed with Naomi to be on April 9. She originally suggested we meet for lunch at Panera Bread, but I e-mailed her saying I would rather find a place with fewer distractions, so I offered to buy lunch at Panera for Naomi and meet in a conference room at Queens University of Charlotte, which I felt would be a place that connotes seriousness and respect and would offer us privacy. I noted in my memos that the choice of Queens as a site is an academic location, located in an “old Charlotte” section of town (mostly White and wealthy). While I did not think this would be a good site for all interviews, I know these two women and knew they frequent the campus for various reasons, and given their schedules on the day of the interview, it seemed convenient. For others, it might denote a class level that may make them uncomfortable, or be intimidating because of the academic nature of the setting. Naomi seemed to like that idea, made her choices immediately from the menu I sent and seemed appreciative. I think this equalized the power in the relationship a bit and made it less of an inconvenience.

I over prepared for the interview somewhat, outlining a protocol that helped my thinking, but as Dr. Holloway pointed out, having it in front of me would probably cause me to focus too much on my questions and not enough on tracking with her thinking. In our Monday night conference call before the interview, it was also recommended that I should delete my first question, which was to ask what they thought social justice meant. This could get her “in her head” and might have derailed the conversation to a cognitive place. I, then, prepared a one-page

chart of words and phrases that I could use as a reference point in the interview and sent her the informed consent statement, along with a campus parking pass.

The Interview with Naomi

The night before the interview, I checked to be sure I had fresh batteries in my digital recorder and that my snowflake microphone was working with the Audacity software. I had recently interviewed a group of physicians with my new digital recorder and had forgotten to press record for one of the interviews, so I was grateful that I had learned that before this particular interview. I had a small conference room reserved at Queens University of Charlotte and arrived 30 minutes early to set up the equipment. The snowflake microphone was not registering on Audacity, so I fiddled with it until it began functioning. I, then, realized that I had forgotten to pick up utensils from Panera and without them we would have to eat lunch with our hands. I finally found some plastic utensils in a nearby kitchen. Now I was ready. I felt a strong desire to have everything ready when Naomi came to respect the time she was giving me. I felt nervous, mostly about how I was going to be authentic and relaxed, while focusing on the data I needed and the questions I would ask.

Naomi arrived on schedule, and while it had been several years since we had seen each other, we gave each other a warm hug which seemed like a good start in establishing rapport. The interview seemed to me to go very well. I had to work a bit to encourage her to be specific, and when I asked her for what seemed like the 10th time what “fighting” meant, I felt as though she became impatient with me—her phrasing sped up and she seemed more forceful. She had a way of talking where, when she had an important point to make, she slowed down and said the word(s) quietly. That was hard to capture in the transcription, and I made a note of this in my memos. I noticed that she did not eat much because she was self-conscious about her chewing being

recording by the lapel microphone. She seemed to want to demonstrate her respect for and the importance of this issue by speaking very carefully and thoughtfully. I found that I only glanced at my list of prompts a couple of times just to compare what I was hearing with my questions, and it seemed as though she was tracking right along with them.

When the recording stopped we talked for another hour (and finished eating). She talked about how her grandmother told her that marriage is like a garden and has to be tended, and that she carries this into her cross-race relationships as well. She also spoke of the process of buying a home in an all White neighborhood in Charlotte, and how the realtor told them the neighbors had complained. Then, as they moved in, all the neighbors sat on their porches and watched, but no one came over to speak to them. When some teenage boys next door (who were living alone—both parents had moved out) misbehaved, one of her neighbors called the police and later said that Naomi had made the call. I asked her why, after learning about the protests, she and her husband still wanted to live there. She responded in a way I did not expect—while they were not afraid, they never walked alone in the neighborhood, always in pairs. She referred to the KKK coming to her hometown every month. I found myself wondering why they would want to move into an area where they would not likely have a warm community around them, but that was not an issue for her and likely reflected my own experiences of privilege.

Another story was revealed after the recording stopped. She told a story about a time she attended a teacher meeting at her son's middle school and the teacher assumed she had taken the bus. She responded very sharply, citing the make and year of her SUV. She pointed this out as a trigger for her and that she has to watch that. This amplified her earlier point, during the recorded interview, that it is very important for both parties to know their triggers when working across race.

It was interesting for me to get these more personal stories offline, and I left with the question of whether or how I can use that information in my data summary. In Naomi's case it added more richness to what she had said earlier, and I captured the data in memos, but I would prefer to either get her permission to use it as data or record this part of the interview if it occurs.

We stayed together for about another hour, finishing our lunch and talking, and then walked to our cars together. I remember it was a beautiful day, and I felt a kind of joy about what she had shared with me—that it was sacred.

Scheduling and Preparing for the Interview with Cynthia

A few days after Naomi's interview, I still had not heard from Cynthia about an interview date, after phoning her several times. My knowledge of her indicated a resistance of commitment of any kind, especially about her time, so I did not read this as resistance to the subject of this interview. In a different instance, that might be the case. I decided to telephone her on April 13 and left the message that I did not want to be a pest, but that I needed to confirm a time with her by the end of the day or I would need to find someone else, and if that happened, I would love for her to participate in the dissertation interviews. She called back immediately saying that she had sent me an e-mail the previous weekend confirming April 14 at 4:00 p.m. and e-mailed a copy to me for verification. I sent her the informed consent statement and a parking pass and booked a room at Queens which is near her house. When we talked about locations for the interview, she mentioned that she would be on her way home, so I offered the possibility of meeting at her house. She immediately said no, that her house was a mess and I felt a little uncomfortable that I had put her in the position of having to share that. Then, she suggested a coffee shop. I said I would hate for us to be interrupted, so I suggested Queens because it is right down the street from her house. That seemed fine with her.

The Interview with Cynthia

Cynthia arrived a few minutes late and seemed relaxed. She knew several people who were setting up in the classroom next door, so we had a chance to have some informal conversation. Interviewing her was a challenge for me in that she would stop talking and I would interpret that to mean she was finished with a thought, but after I asked the next question, she would continue on the original thought. Her sentences would frequently trail off, right at the place where it would “close” the thought. I found myself adapting by allowing a lot more time after she stopped talking so she could think and finish her thought completely. I asked follow up questions so I could find out what the unsaid word or phrase was at the end of the previous sentence. She shared the strong issues she has with not wanting to be associated with other White women, needing to have control in most situations, valuing her independence, and being aware that she does not try to adapt to those with whom she is partnering. She has very strong opinions and showed emotion when talking about longing to be accepted by Black women. To me this seemed very authentic. I appreciated her honesty and willingness to share herself and found her bluntness refreshing. Her issues seemed to me to be as much about relationships in general as working across race. I was disconcerted by her discomfort with being White and her tendency to freely interpret Black women’s actions through her own frames. I made a mental note that I cannot assume anything about one’s level of racial awareness because they do diversity work. Cynthia and I stayed and talked awhile, then walked to our cars together. She was still musing about some of these issues as we walked to our cars.

Analyzing the Interviews

I transcribed the interviews myself, which I found extremely valuable. I found I had missed some nuances while I was in the room, so listening to it again helped me hear them more

completely. Then, when I proofread the transcripts I found even more information. I am impressed with how much I apparently miss in regular conversations. I immediately sent the transcripts to Naomi and Cynthia for their review, and Naomi sent hers back a few weeks later with some minor word and phrase changes, but Cynthia did not find anything that needed changing. As I began coding, I became worried that I would forget the question that had been answered so, in the middle of my coding, I decided to create some “parent” tree nodes that represented the category that node was in, and put my free nodes in there as “children.” I would not do this again, because I now see that if I name the free nodes specifically enough, I will not need this and, in fact, I had to move many of the nodes around when I began the axial coding stage. I started seeing some interesting observations about the data from Cynthia versus the data from Naomi when I began coding. I decided to print out a list of coding references by case, naming Cynthia and Naomi each as a case. It was critical to review this chart before beginning the axial coding process because it kept me from combining nodes that should be kept separate because of the perspective they came from. In several cases, Naomi noted things that were conceptually and consistently different from Cynthia, which is important data given my question. In order to capture this in the axial codes, I indicated “(Naomi)” or “(Cynthia)” after those codes which had only references from that interview.

Interpreting the Data

As I coded the interviews, I began to see a different flavor emerge from Cynthia’s data than from Naomi’s. While both women reported facing and handling challenges in the relationship, Cynthia seemed to be dealing more with power issues, toning herself down, making space for, and having to alter her style for Naomi. Naomi seemed to be dealing much more with testing her assumptions about White women and how to have the conversations that inevitably

came up and less about what she needed to do differently. As I broke out the code by person, I could see where there was convergence and where there was divergence. Here are the themes that emerged after axial coding. Acknowledging the tiny sample here, Figure A.1 depicts an emerging explanatory matrix.

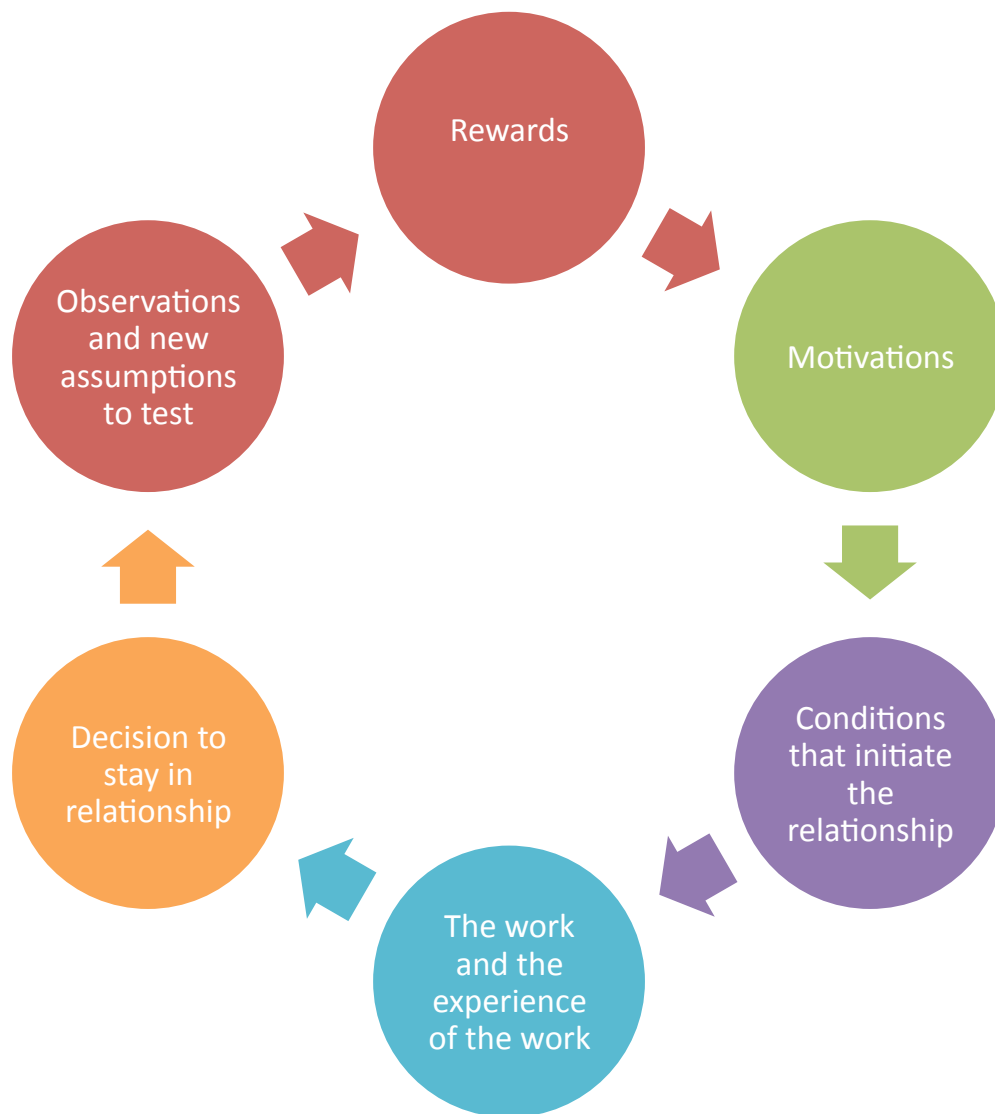


Figure A.1. Conditions, processes, and outcomes of cross-race relationship interview pilot.

Motivations and Rewards

Motivations to engage in a cross-race relationship like this one for a purpose related to social justice include the opportunity to influence the larger community, learning about the interaction between one's self and societal messages, the chance to re-envision the world as a more just place, wanting to understand differences and injustice, the opportunity to follow a predestined spiritual path, and the opportunity to model constructive cross-race relations. These motivations become blurred with the rewards of the work, which feed each other. In this pilot study, the Black woman seemed to report significantly more motivation (and reward) related to influencing and changing the world, whereas the White woman seemed to focus on increased self-awareness and seeing women come together to take on White men.

Conditions that Initiate the Relationship

Both women reported that a third party was a catalyst for the forming of their working relationship, and it was not the same third party. They had had a previous coaching relationship and both felt that it was a constructive one where there was a strong bond and an appreciation of each other. It is interesting to note that Naomi reports that it was a White man who suggested that they work together, where Cynthia says she was asked to work with Naomi, but that she initiated their working relationship.

The Work of Building a Cross-Race Relationship

The most commonly mentioned process by both women was that of managing assumptions around race—for themselves and for the other woman. This process was rich with detail, including the ability to reflect on who they were and the assumptions they had, to naming assumptions about each other, preventing themselves from acting on conscious or unconscious assumptions about each other, questioning themselves to see if old assumptions were being

retained, and apologizing for acting on them. This represented a fascinating exploration of how societal messages were incorporated into their views of self and other, and how the process of letting go of those assumptions occurs.

A second important focus of this “work” for these two women was the courage to have what they referred to as “the tough conversations” about the “bumps.” This courage is demonstrated by sharing feelings, naming and discussing disagreement, tending to the relationship, inviting the other to talk, and setting the terms of the relationship. It also includes not being afraid to “fight,” which, to them, meant expressing anger and disagreement; and not avoiding the issues about race by being silent, pretending it is not happening, or staying in their own comfort zone.

A third process for building this relationship for Cynthia and Naomi involved ongoing questioning and learning about each other and their human complexity. They acknowledged that race blurs with style, preferences, and values, and they must stay open to learning about each other, as well as themselves.

A fourth process that emerged was being authentic, which was discussed only by the Black woman in this case. She defined this as an ongoing process of resisting negative messages about her race, defining success for herself, and not allowing others to define her.

Another piece of the work involved in a meaningful cross-race relationship is the surfacing and negotiating of power issues. These issues were mentioned only by the White woman in this pilot study. This process involves negotiating air time (as trainers), respecting boundaries, letting go of the need to do things “their way,” and other power issues as training partners.

Finally, both of these women stressed they had to behave intentionally to develop candor and trust. This included specific behaviors such as demonstrating support tangibly by advocating publicly for the other person, being consistently respectful, keeping information between them and not gossiping, having conversations in advance as much as possible to set expectations, and fighting for issues that are relevant to the other, but not immediately to them.

The Experience of the Relationship

Both women talked enough about the feelings, sensations, contextual effects, and decisions to be made about the relationship that I thought it merited a separate category. Here again, there were differences across race about point of view. Cynthia reported having a heightened vigilance around making space for Naomi, paying attention to process and being hyper-alert to racial and relationship issues—more than she would in same-race relationships. Both acknowledged the higher stakes involved for two trainers who are modeling cross-race relations while doing diversity work, pointing out the personal and reputational risks of exposing one's blind spots in front of a group. Cynthia reported words like “depressing,” “excruciating,” “daunting,” “tense,” “feeling put down,” and having to manage her fear of appearing racist, which she defined as not being aware, taking control too often, not giving space to Naomi, assuming her way is best, talking over her, and not giving her credit. She also spoke quite emotionally about her own rejection of Whiteness and longing to be accepted by Black women and how this gets in the way for her. In contrast, Naomi reported having a low need for inclusion, and only said that the nature of this process is slow and required patience. Naomi also reported spending energy on assessing whether or not she wants to continue in this cross-race relationship—kind of an ongoing trust bank that she is monitoring. When I asked what she is looking for, she included (a) the willingness to hang in there through the “bumps,” (b) acting on what is said, (c) acknowledging

what she brings to the table, (d) being open and candid, and (e) standing beside her wherever they are.

Finally, both women referred to the importance of the Southern culture in shaping cross-race relationships. Naomi made the observation that White women in the South tend to “make nice,” which was an obstacle to surfacing issues that arise. Cynthia reinforced that by mentioning the racial history as a backdrop that has existed in this work.

Observations and New Assumptions that Emerge from the Relationship

It was interesting for me to see that, in these two cases, some new assumptions have been birthed as a result of working across race that would benefit from testing. While Cynthia verbalized many more assumptions than Naomi, they both seem to be in a constant process of making, testing, and either proving or disproving assumptions. For Naomi, this centered on White women’s tendency to “make nice.” Cynthia has a strong opinion that Black women will not apologize in situations where White women will, that White women assume that discrimination is the same for all women, and that White women do not “get” the role of race in their identity. Her experience, so far, has shown her that Black women are unwilling to expose vulnerability with White women, that they come on stronger to establish themselves than White women do, that they identify as Black first and woman second, and that they have an easily tapped anger about being historically ignored, stepped on, and overlooked. Cynthia also had some observations she was forming and testing about Black and White women’s relationships with Black and White men. It seems to me that these two women are forming hypotheses and new assumptions, and I can only assume that their priority on the surfacing and questioning of these assumptions with each other keeps them from solidifying them too quickly. This process of

learning may start the decision to invest all over again and the cycle of the relationship building continues.

Feedback from Naomi

As we had agreed, I followed up with Naomi to get her feedback on how the interview went for her, with a particular interest in how my race might have affected her experience. She told me she would e-mail me the feedback and I received it a few weeks later. Her feedback is as follows:

Interview assessment.

- I felt very comfortable in the interview.
- You appeared to be prepared.
- The room was set up when I arrived, which communicated professionalism.
- You were ready to ask the questions.
- The pace at which you asked the questions was good.
- I found you to be attentive and restating my words numerous times to have me say more.
- You probed when you felt it necessary.
- I left feeling excited about being a part of this.

This helps me see that being prepared was important and that my initial interview skills were off to a good start. In our phone conversation, she did ask for my help on something. Cynthia apparently called her to ask that she send her transcript to her, and she would do the same. Naomi did not feel comfortable doing that and wanted to know what I thought. I told her that she should feel no pressure to comply, that her informed consent statement states that the transcripts will not be shared. I did offer that, if they both want to meet and talk about the

interviews, I would be glad to join them, and Naomi seemed to like that idea. This is another example of how interviewing matched pairs can get complicated.

Closing Thoughts

This experience was rich with learning for me—conceptually and logistically. I learned how to design an interview, structure questions to stimulate the data I am interested in, find and use the appropriate equipment, go with the flow of an interview, begin to see myself as a research interviewer, and observe what I do when I am in the moment. I learned I have a habit of asking compound questions, which I can be aware of and correct as I move forward. I have learned a lot about NVivo (Version 8), particularly how to code, use cases, and create queries, thanks both to Kristy Jackson’s excellent training and using it again here. The practice coding taught me that specific free code names will help discipline me to stay close to the data, and I particularly appreciated the perspectives of our GT group when we were coding and giving feedback on questions.

I also really like the discipline of grounded theory in listening fully to the voice of the interviewee. I liken it to a Zen activity where I have to empty my mind of all preconceptions and assumptions and be open and curious about what the data are telling me. It has helped me listen better in other interviews and conversations, and I am using NVivo to code 360-degree feedback reports and other interviews, which is increasing the quality of my consulting practice.

These two interviews gave me some insights into preparing for my dissertation work. I realize I cannot make the assumption that, because two people lead intensive diversity training, they are not at different points in their own racial identity development. Second, I was fascinated to see the similarities and differences in the work each woman was doing to build a relationship—it is hard work for both, but different work. I am particularly interested in the process of how

each one became aware of, named, managed, and let go of assumptions because this is where the macro societal messages about race connected with the micro processes of relationships and where they have the power to be changed. Third, the matched pairing presented interesting dilemmas and opportunities. One of the advantages of talking to Cynthia and Naomi was the opportunity to see if and how they view things differently, but I was able to see the risks of intervention first-hand. And finally, I saw the power of grounded theory to capture what women in these relationships did, thought, and felt as they navigated the macro and micro assumptions and beliefs that surfaced.

Reflections on my Positioning as a WEA Researcher in the Pilot Interviews

As discussed in the literature review, there is a well-known debate in this field about the credibility of cross-race interviewing. As the interviews progressed, I made some observations about some ways my racial identity might have affected the interviews.

My first observation has to do with my question about whether or not Naomi (African American woman) was adjusting her speech during the interview. I have seen her in other circumstances, and when I listened to her speak during the interview, I noticed that she seemed to be choosing her words more carefully and speaking more formally than in other settings. It was not a dramatic change, but I remember wondering if it was either the lapel microphone or the academic setting that influenced her demeanor. Upon further reflection, it may have been because she was talking to a European American woman or because she wanted to show respect for the research process. She also edited her transcript after the interview and made some grammatical changes, where Cynthia did not. While I sense she has a deep commitment to advancing the issue of inclusivity in community conversations, whether or not this formality was related to that or my race is one of those things I will not know.

In feminist research, the perspectives we have developed as a result of our social locations must be acknowledged.

Contrary to the scientific image of the knower as a neutral and objective party, feminist epistemologists have argued that the relationship between the researcher and her subjects is a social relationship, and is bound by the same patterns of power relations found in other social relationships. (Anderson, 1993, p. 51)

I noticed several ways my interviewees equalized the power relationship between us.

Both Naomi and Cynthia confirmed the time and date of their interviews just before the scheduled time, thereby assuming I would adjust my calendar to theirs. My experience with Cynthia's interview was that she directed the majority of it. I noted in a memo that she would trail off at the end of a sentence then pause for a while which I interpreted as a finished sentence. When I would ask the next question, she would continue the original thought, and several times, I could see that she was going to answer the question she wanted to answer rather than the one I was interested in focusing on. An example of this is below:

OK. OK. Well, Naomi is my partner with [project]. I learned some not-so-good things about myself from that juvenile justice partnership project because either they came to me to do the work, I needed to run it through [organization] for several reasons because I felt like I owed it to them and it just made it easier and [supervisor] wanted me to work with a woman of color which I did. And then with [organization] there's two or three or four women of Color that had been involved with that. One man of Color as a consultant early on. So those three are the most recent, because some of the work I've done by myself . . . I'm just trying to think for a minute. . . . Yeah a lot of the other stuff is more straight OD. Those are probably the richest in terms of some of my learning. (LONG PAUSE)

KG: Well tell me about. . .

Just one other . . . I've designed this process for the [local organization], their dialogue process for their [name of exhibit] exhibit and in that case I'm getting facilitators on board to facilitate that. So in a way they're colleagues and in a way I'm supporting them to do this and I also did that with [second project]. And that was also a learning experience about working across race.

KG: Well why don't you just tell . . . I mean I want to hear those stories and how those relationships developed, but you've said several times now that you've learned a lot from

working across race, so maybe, you know, tell me moments that you're thinking of about when you learned a lot.

Oh, and the other thing I should mention is just the guy that I worked with for so long, my colleague, that's a man. You're not interested in my working with men?

KG: For now.

I experienced what Bourne (2007) described as a kind of mutual shifting of power:

I am acknowledging that the women are actively engaged in the research process. The women resist the research by limiting my involvement, by not answering certain questions. The women respond to the research by answering questions I have not asked, by presenting themselves as they wish to be represented. They act in relation to me and I act in relation to them. Together we define what constitutes "research" through our mutual, and often unequal, interactions and conversations as we encounter one another. (p. 131)

I was very aware of the choice of our interview location at the university where I teach, particularly for Naomi. She seemed to like that location and I am guessing that is because it has an air of dignity about it for her, but it is also in a very White, old-wealth part of Charlotte, and I wondered if that contributed to a power inequality for her that may have served to underline an old racial order. Cynthia resided in that neighborhood and felt positive about its convenience to her.

Related to this shifting dynamic is how participants let me know whether I was an insider or an outsider. As described by Best (2003), "it is often the case that researchers are at once insiders and outsiders. We must, then, be ever attentive to the shifting positions we occupy and the part context plays in generating these shifts" (p. 907). I felt this shifting throughout both interviews. First, there was an initial commonality based on our shared corporate experience from the early 1980s. Later in the interview, both women made a point to express what the context of the South means for cross-race relationships, and I imagine they did this only because they know I am not from the South. Naomi said:

There is a culture in the South, and there was a culture in [corporation] about making nice, which I think runs rampant in both.

And Cynthia, at one point, said:

I may have told you this story when we talked, but when I first came back and was doing that work at [corporation], and started out doing some diversity work one of the things that really popped for me was I was doing some focus groups and I was also paying attention to what I was seeing. It struck me that these White women were in this mode of doing two things with the men in [corporation]. And they were working with these power men, because I think most of these women were in Human Resources that I was looking at initially. So the White women were doing a combination of caretaking and flirting. And then when I met with the African American women it became very clear to me that they could not do that. They could not do those two things in the same way that the White women could. They could not get away with flirting in the same way. They cannot even get away with caretaking in the same way. So it put them at a disadvantage because the culture was built around that's how it worked and that's how those White women got ahead. So I think that's very Southern. I did not see that in the North, not in the same way.

I felt, at the time, that they were telling me about something I may not already know, which may have been a statement to me that I was an outsider in that way. Naomi's formality may have been another way she was expressing my outsider status. Another example was when Cynthia began to talk about her distaste for White women:

When [colleague] and I would be doing this work and we'd have the Black women get together and the White women get together in these groups, he would say "Get on over there with your people," pointing over to the White women. I would think "nooo, anything but there, please! I don't want to go there!" I always wanted to get over with those Black women because they were so direct and they were so expressive and I mean these White women were sitting over there talking about God knows what but it was just pathetic. And I just never, and I mean this is a long history of this; I just never wanted to identify with them.

And when she talked about how White women flirted to get ahead (in the earlier excerpt), I remember noticing that I felt included in that generalization and felt a defensiveness for fellow White women that we were being painted with a negative brush by one of our own. This was an outsider status I had not expected.

I noticed my own needs for acceptance from Naomi in my relief when the first thing she did upon arrival was give me a warm hug, and a couple of times during the interview, I seemed to want to let her know that I “get” how White women can be limited:

I don’t see evidence of it, I actually evidence that they’re not coming to the relationship and they want to stay in a safe cocoon. And that doesn’t work for me.

KG: I’m guessing you’re not in that cocoon as well.

No.

KG: So they’re staying in their safe cocoon, right?

Right. I may have been as a child, I think I grew up in a safe environment, I know I did. But that allowed me to step out and begin to create who I was without the safety of that and to be willing to take risk. And then I got burned. And being so trusting because I thought everybody was like me. And then I realized they weren’t. So then I had to figure out, OK how do you do be who you are and still have trusting evolving relationships? It’s about being able to have that kind of conversation with individuals who you come in contact and then making a decision about how far you want to take that relationship.

And

KG: I think about what you said about how you think African American women fight easier than White women.

I think we don’t buy into the make nice as much, so it’s a little different from how you just said it. And I think it changes per generation. Because if you think about me, I’m 62. I grew up in an arena where we, as African Americans, weren’t seen as bright, that we weren’t smart, that we could not necessarily get things done, we were the blunt of jokes, we could not be trusted. So it’s all of those things. Fortunately for me, I grew up with parents who gave us just the opposite message. The message we got from them was we could do whatever we wanted to, but we had to work for it. This meant we had to study, we had to be prepared, we had to be students, we had to be good students, in fact we had to be better than the best because that’s what was going to be required of us. And most of all we had to believe in ourselves and we could not buy into the negative messaging. And here is one of the other pieces that shaped who I am which was all of that was presented in a very positive light which was that individuals who were doing those things or seeing those things weren’t necessarily mean. They just did not have a real picture, and not to always hold it against everybody, that was one individual.

KG: So if you come, you Naomi, come into a relationship where you can fight and if something happens you call it out, and the White woman is kind of handicapped because

she's making nice, how do you create an environment where she can overcome her handicap?

With Naomi, I felt that I wanted to show that some White women (me) are interested in working on this issue, and it was important to me to communicate to her that I get it. I introduced the word "handicapped," which was not a word she had used to describe White women. This was likely overcompensation on my part. And finally, I had an awareness throughout the interview with Naomi that my "naïve questioning" about what fighting meant to her (which I asked several times because she did not get specific until I pressed her) may have been interpreted by her as a question from an outsider and I was tempted to express the fact that I am not afraid of conflict.

My racial identity also affected my expectations about from whom I would learn the most. I expected that Naomi had a lot to teach me because of my lack of extensive conversations about this with Black women, but it was Cynthia who surprised me. She gave me an alternate view of being White that, in some cases, resonated with me and, in some cases, did not, but her interview caused me to reflect as much or more than Naomi's on the issues she faces with wanting to be accepted by Black women, needing to temper her control needs, her view that Black women do not apologize as much as White women, and wanting to model a successful Black/White partnership. I am now much more aware that White identity can be interrogated by mirroring with someone of the same race to see what is similar and what is not, and not only by listening to someone's perception from another racial point of view. This is more evidence to support the point that Whiteness is not monolithic. On the other hand, I found myself wanting to challenge Cynthia's assumption of authority. This surfaced again when Naomi told me a few weeks after the interview that Cynthia had asked to see her transcript and wanted permission from me to tell

her no. I felt protective of Naomi and counseled her to use the IRB consent agreement as a reason not to, but, again, I noticed Cynthia's tendency to dominate or to be accepted.

A final observation I had was in the process of asking for feedback about the interview from Naomi. While she gave me feedback that indicated it went well for her, in retrospect, I would have done two things differently. First, I would have asked her more specific questions about the interview as opposed to a general request for feedback. Foldy (2005) outlined five questions she sent via e-mail to her Black informants that would have generated more specific information for me. Secondly, I would have asked Cynthia for her feedback as well. I think there is interesting feedback to gain from White interviewees to see if I assumed similarity inappropriately, if they felt constrained in any way in presenting themselves as a White person to another White person, or if there was anything else in the way I conducted the interview that may have affected their comfort or willingness to share.

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