

The Racial Geography of Teaching: Two White Teachers' Construction of Race

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BOSTON COLLEGE
Lynch School of Education

Department of Teacher Education, Special Education, and Curriculum and Instruction

Program of Curriculum and Instruction

**THE RACIAL GEOGRAPHY OF TEACHING:
TWO WHITE TEACHERS' CONSTRUCTION OF RACE**

Dissertation

by

KELLY ELAINE DEMERS

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ABSTRACT:

**THE RACIAL GEOGRAPHY OF TEACHING: TWO WHITE TEACHERS’
CONSTRUCTION OF RACE**

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In this study, I asked two questions: “How does the ideological stance of two White elementary school teachers inform their construction of race?” and, “How do teachers’ ideological stances and constructions of race influence teaching practice?” The purpose of this study was to understand the ways that White teachers negotiated the meaning of race and racism within their personal lives and professional practice. Using a critical ethnographic approach, I examined the experience of two White teachers from a variety of perspectives. Data included semi-structured interviews, participant observations and selected classroom artifacts. In order to look at the data, I developed a conceptual framework referred to as the “racial geography of teaching.” This framework emerged from Frankenberg’s (1993) conception of the sociology of race, Rousmaniere’s (2001) interpretation of racial biography, theoretical and empirical work about White teachers, and repeated readings of the collected data. Findings suggested that White teachers are worried about race, and this worry is negotiated through discursive repertoires such as color-blindness and race cognizance. For the color-blind White teacher, practice is shaped by avoidance and silence about race, which prevents him or her from fully knowing his or her students. For the race cognizant teacher, practice is

shaped by the idea that practice is far more expansive than what goes on in the classroom or the school community at-large.

For Andy, Zoe and Emma who
bring me so much joy.

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CHAPTER 1: THE RACIAL DISCOURSES OF TEACHING: UNPACKING WHITENESS IN THE CLASSROOM

Just months ago, Senator Barack Obama became the first African American in the history of the United States to be elected president. For many, this event inspired the hope that the country was moving away from centuries of racial strife towards a post-racial age in which the social and cultural meanings of race would eventually lose significance. Indeed, the ascendancy of a Black man to the highest office in the nation not only warrants a collective sense of national pride, it also, in many ways, indicates a profound shift within the ethos of the nation regarding race. Yet, even as we bask in the glow of this very real sign of social progress, it is premature to assume that we are transforming into a post-racial nation. For instance, during the presidential campaign, Obama's political opponents—both Democrats and Republicans—frequently used his racial and ethnic heritage to portray him as a beneficiary of affirmative action, as overly exotic, not completely American, potentially dangerous, and ultimately un-electable.

Thus, it appears that we continue to live in a racialized society in which “racial considerations” (Bonilla-Silva, 2003, p.1) impact the economic, social and educational lives of all U.S. citizens. For example, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2007, African Americans were three times more likely to live in poverty and tended to earn 40 percent less than their White counterparts. In terms of education, minority students continue to receive an inferior education compared to their White peers in that they are often relegated to lower tracked, non-college prep courses and/or over represented in

special education classes (Oakes, 2005). While school segregation was outlawed more than 50 years ago, many urban poor children of color currently attend segregated schools that are poorly maintained, neglected, and forgotten (Kozol, 2005).

During much of the campaign, Obama appeared to make every effort to avoid making his candidacy about race. However, due to racially-charged comments made by his long time African American minister and spiritual mentor, the Reverend Jeremiah Wright, Jr., Obama found it necessary to address the issue formally within a public forum. On March 18, 2008 at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Obama presented a speech about race in which he dealt with Wright's inflammatory comments by placing them within the context of our nation's troubling racial history. Obama began by referring to the contradiction written into the U.S. Constitution between the ideal of equal citizenship under the law and the acceptance of the enslavement of African Americans:

'We the people, in order to form a more perfect union.'

Two hundred and twenty one years ago, in a hall that still stands across the street, a group of men gathered and, with these simple words, launched America's improbable experiment in democracy. Farmers and scholars, statesmen and patriots who had traveled across an ocean to escape tyranny and persecution finally made real their declaration of independence at a Philadelphia convention that lasted through the spring of 1787.

The document they produced was eventually signed but ultimately unfinished. It was stained by this nation's original sin of slavery, a question that divided the colonies and brought the convention to a stalemate until the founders chose to allow the slave trade to continue for at least twenty more years, and to leave any final resolution to future generations.

Of course, the answer to the slavery question was already embedded within our Constitution—a Constitution that had at its very core the ideal of equal citizenship

under the law; a Constitution that promised its people liberty, and justice, and a union that could be and should be perfected over time. (Obama, 2008)

Obama eloquently argued that in order to move closer to the ‘core ideal of equal citizenship’ embedded within our Constitution—to perfect our union—as citizens, we must openly confront the racial tensions that have plagued our country for well over two centuries. To ignore them, he asserted, would mean that ‘we will never be able to come together and solve challenges like health care, or education, or the need to find good jobs for every American.’

Obama’s observation that the ethos of the United States had been shaped by a contradiction between equality and slavery aligns with the work of educational historian Joel Spring (2001). According to Spring, two dominant and contradictory themes have shaped the cultural, political, private, and educational lives of all citizens. The first is epitomized by the “quest for democracy and equality” outlined in the U.S. Constitution (p. 2). This commitment to the conceptions of equality, freedom, liberty, social justice and individual self-actualization is greatly admired around the globe and has served as a model of government for well over 200 years. The second theme—racial prejudice and racism—directly conflicts with the first and is a much older, far more painful aspect of American history. It emerged from the belief in the cultural and intellectual superiority of the White race held by early English explorers, colonists and settlers. This ultimately led to the legally sanctioned discrimination and often-violent mistreatment of African-American slaves, Hispanics, Native Americans, Asians, and other “non-Whites.” Indeed, for the first 300 years of U.S. history, until the late 20th Century, society was

strategically organized so that, for most people of color, access to social, educational and economic opportunities and privileges were severely limited.

Spring (2001) also notes that U.S. schools have played a historic role in perpetuating and reinforcing this contradiction between democratic principles and racism through the “educational practice of deculturalization.” Spring defines deculturalization as the “educational process of destroying a people’s culture and replacing it with a new culture” (p. 4). Historical examples of this process include the eradication of Native American cultures through educational practices that perpetuated the forced isolation of Indian children from their nations and families as well as language policies that forbade the use of non-English languages in public schools. As a result, U.S. schools have often been sites where “educators have preached equality of opportunity and good citizenship” at the same they have “engag[ed] in acts of religious intolerance, racial segregation, cultural genocide, and discrimination against immigrants and nonwhites” (p. 2). Many contemporary teachers in the U.S. act as agents of deculturalization in that they view the racial, cultural, and linguistic differences of their students as deficits that must be overcome before students can attain academic and social success. This type of deficit thinking is also reflected in state educational policies such as the replacement of bilingual education with English-only immersion classes in Massachusetts, California, and Arizona.

Racial Discourse in the United States

Over the past 400 years, the racial structuring of the United States has been influenced by several different discourses or paradigms (Frankenberg, 1993). As noted

by Frankenberg, the trends in these discourses can be described as “shifts from ‘difference’ to ‘similarity,’ and then ‘back’ to difference radically redefined” (p. 14). For example, the saliency of race in America first emerged as a “religious discourse” when, during the early 17th century, Western European explorers came into contact with the non-Western “other” living in the New World (Omi & Winant, 1994). This encounter represented a serious rupture within the conventional wisdom of the time because it put into question previously unchallenged Biblical descriptions of the origins of life. This state of uncertainty left “post-Renaissance Europeans” trying to reconcile the existence and “development of a multiplicity of races, cultures, and civilizations” (Vidich and Lyman, 2000, p. 41) in a way that would align with Christian values and fit into the Western “canon of knowledge and understanding” (p. 40). What emerged from this intellectual crisis was the idea that Western culture and its existing moral constructs were exemplars of cultural superiority, especially when compared to “primitive” non-Western cultures. Within this racial discourse, *difference* meant that the dark-skinned “other” was seen as morally and culturally inferior. As a result of this perspective, early intellectuals believed that non-Western cultures represented “living replicas of the ‘great chain of being’ that linked the Occident to its prehistoric beginnings” (p. 40). This viewpoint justified the conquest and economic exploitation of non-European cultures all over the world by means of slavery, genocide, and other forms of domination under the guise of helping to civilize the primitive savage.

According to Omi & Winant (1994), the dominant racial discourse or paradigm regarding race shifted from one based on religious beliefs to one rooted in science during

the late 18th century. As with other discursive shifts about race, this one was not a deliberate, linear event. It emerged slowly over time and existed simultaneously with the religious discourse. During this time European colonies ceased to be isolated outposts created for the sole purpose of “military conquest and plunder.” (p. 63). Instead they became thriving societies inhabited by transplanted Europeans deeply influenced by Enlightenment thinkers like John Locke who believed in the concept of “natural rights.” According to Locke (2000/1693), citizens contracted with the government to protect these rights and work in the citizens’ best interest. If this contract were violated and leadership became tyrannical, the citizenry had the right to rebel (Reed & Johnson, p. 52-53), an idea that helped to spur the American Revolution. It is important to note that when Locke referred to the natural rights of citizens, he was not referring to the natural rights of woman, the poor, or people of color. Instead, he was referring only to White males who had material wealth and educational experience.

The inherent contradiction of the notion of “natural rights” was reconciled through scientific claims asserting that race was a biological phenomenon, which signified the existence of different sub-species of human beings. People of color were thus defined as biologically and intellectually *different* in that they were inferior to White Western-Europeans. The alleged biological superiority of the White race inspired a discourse of “essentialist racism” (Frankenberg, 1993) that was used to further justify the enslavement of African-Americans, the systematic genocide of Native Americans, and subsequent appropriation of their lands. As a result, most African-Americans, Native

Americans, and Hispanic Americans have historically “faced blatant discrimination that was legally prescribed or permitted” (Feagin et al., 2001, p. 10).

At the beginning of the 20th century, many scientists and academic scholars began to reject essentialist views that conflated racial characteristics with genetically inherited biological traits. Instead, racial differences began to be seen as social and historical constructions (Omi & Winant, 1994) rooted in ethnicity, cultural practices, and politics; thus, membership within a particular “ethnic group” was based more on behavior than biology (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 14). Within this new racial discourse, all humans, regardless of race, were believed to be, underneath the skin, the *same*. Omi and Winant (1994) refer to this conception of racial difference as the “ethnicity paradigm,” which began as “an insurgent approach to race” during the 1920s and has shaped the “mainstream of the modern sociology of race” (p. 14). It became a dominant theory of the liberal progressive movement in the United States between the 1930s and the mid-1960s (p. 14). According to Frankenberg, also embedded within this paradigm was an “assimilationist analysis” in which the case was made that “like white (sic) immigrants...people of color would gradually assimilate into the ‘mainstream’ of U.S. society” (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 13). According to Frankenberg, this discourse, which can also be referred to as “color-blindness” or “color-evasion” represented a shift from “essentialist racism” to the notion of “essential sameness.”

During the later part of the Civil Right Movement, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, another racial discourse emerged that was inspired by “dominated groups who protested the domination of Protestant Anglo-American cultures” (Spring, 2001, p. 94).

Rather than assimilate into the White Anglo culture, formerly marginalized racial and ethnic groups (e.g., African American, Native American, and Hispanic/Latino Americans) demanded that their cultural traditions, languages, and experiences be respected and preserved. As noted by Frankenberg, this movement transformed “notions of the *differentness* of peoples of color” (p. 14), which emerged directly from people of color and not the dominant White-Anglo culture. Rather than subscribing to the notion that inequity was based upon individual characteristics, this discursive practice, which Frankenberg refers to as “race cognizance” (p. 15), suggested that inequity was shaped and perpetuated by social structures designed to maintain racial inequality.

While the racial discourses described above have been presented chronologically, it is important to note that the idea of shifting discourses does not mean that the emergence of one discourse overrides or eliminates the other. In fact, Frankenberg contends that examples of each discourse can be located within contemporary scholarship on race as well within the political language used to shape social policies that either support or fight against racism. It follows then, that when interpreting race and racism individuals are, to varying degrees, influenced by each of these racial discourses.

Discursive Repertoires: Color-Blind Ideology and Race Cognizance

One of the many ways that the term *discourse* can be defined is as a way to arrange various concepts, understandings, and experiences through linguistic means located within a specific historical, institutional, or cultural context. The term *repertoire* can be defined as a catalog or inventory of pieces available to a musical or theatrical performer. Given these definitions, the term *discursive repertoire* can be characterized as

a catalogue of discourses or discursive practices that are used as means of managing, viewing, or interpreting the knowledge and experiences embedded within the linguistic landscape of a particular social, institutional, cultural, or historical context. In terms of this dissertation, discursive repertoires serve as a lens for the ways in which individuals view, understand, and interpret the world in terms of race, racial difference, and racism. As noted by Frankenberg (1993), these repertoires represent a stock set of “strategies for thinking through race” that have been “learned, drawn upon, and enacted, repetitively but not automatically or by rote, chosen but by no means freely so.” (p. 16). Thus, discursive repertoires, which have the potential to reify, deny, hide, “explain, or ‘explain away’ the history of a given situation” (p. 2) are acquired through a conscious and unconscious process of racial socialization and enculturation.

One ideological or discursive approach that shapes the discursive repertoire of many White people regarding race is color-blind or color-evasive ideology. Embedded within color-blindness is the sincere belief that the problem of racism was solved during the Civil Rights Movement. As noted above, Frankenberg (1993) suggests that the public discourse regarding race shifted during the Civil Rights Movement from one of essentialist racism in which people of color were defined as biologically, intellectually, and morally inferior to Whites, to one of essential sameness which valued a color-blind approach to racial issues. The term color-blind refers to the notion that racial characteristics are an irrelevant factor in determining individual merit; therefore, race is to be ignored and people are to be judged by their character traits and actions rather than

by their race. Color-blindness tends to buffer Whites from existing racial inequality at the same time it perpetuates White privilege and power.

The illusion of color-blindness prevents many Whites from acknowledging the chasm between Whites and minorities and ultimately represents a hegemonic, cultural contradiction that is consciously informed by the Civil Rights Movement and unconsciously informed by “essentialist racism” (Frankenberg, 1993). Such a contradiction allows “Whites to avow American ideals of equality while avoiding responsibility for the unequal consequences of U.S. social policies and practices” (Bell, 2003, p. 15), and “to define color blindness from the ‘neutral’ stance of an unstated but presumed white cultural norm, in effect erasing the cultural contributions, perspectives, and experiences of people from other racial groups” (Bell, 2002, p. 239). Color-blind ideology is seductive for Whites. It allows them to have their culturally dominant cake and eat it too, in that they are able to maintain concurrently a position of cultural and social dominance over people of color at the same time they profess a commitment to racial harmony and equal opportunity.

On the opposite end of the discursive spectrum is “race cognizance” (Frankenberg, p. 157). Whereas a color-blind discourse promotes the idea of essential sameness, race cognizance not only embraces racial differences, but also views it “in a historical, political, social, or cultural terms rather than essentialist ones” (p. 157). Thus, rather than not see or evade the social and cultural meanings of race and racism, those viewing race from a lens of race cognizance make every effort to name and critique the ways in which these meanings are socially constructed.

Color-Blindness and White Teachers

Because White teachers and educational policy makers are not immune to the seductiveness of color-blindness, the inherent contradiction of such an ideology plays itself out in many public school classrooms across the country. As a result, many (although not all) White educators believe that “pedagogy is an impartial, neutral, and technical process” separate from political and cultural influences (Gay, 1995, p. 164). To the contrary, many critical theorists, multicultural educators, and others suggest that this is not the case. Geneva Gay, for example, asserts that, in reality, “pedagogy [is] a form of cultural politics in which deliberate attempts are made to influence what knowledge is valued and learned, the quality of learning experiences students have, and the ways our social and natural worlds are understood” (p. 164). Therefore, color-blind ideology not only shapes the pedagogical practice of many White public school teachers, but it influences every aspect of classroom life such as the construction of curriculum, academic expectations, assessment, and relationships with students and their families.

In the end, rather than promoting a “neutral” curriculum many teachers end up promoting a “conventional” type of pedagogical practice that represents “a particular form of cultural reproduction which endorses, models, and transmits Eurocentric cultural values and ignores or denigrates other cultural heritages” (Gay, 1995, p. 164-165). Many White teachers uncritically accept institutional practices that promote racism (Schofield, 1986) such as tracking policies, the over-representation of black students in special education, or the large number of African-American students who are suspended. They often assume that the achievement gap between students of color and their White peers is

not due to inappropriate or culturally insensitive pedagogical choices; rather, student failure is attributed to the deviant cultural attributes of students of color such as the alleged devaluation of education and a lack of initiative. As many scholars have argued, at the same time White teachers claim color-blindness, they are defining racially and culturally different students as the deficient “others” who must overcome their cultural, racial, and linguistic background in order to efficiently assimilate into White American culture. The idea that these differences represent a deficit, coupled with a general ignorance about the impact of race on learning, may adversely affect the potential academic outcomes for children of color. Along these lines, Bell (2002) argues that whether they realize it or not, teachers

play gate-keeping roles in deciding how school resources are allocated, how students are labeled and served, and how different individuals and groups are represented in the curriculum...When they profess not to see race, they close out the possibility of critically analyzing and changing school practices that may in fact disadvantage students of color, and instead passively support an unjust status quo that perpetuates white privilege. (p. 237-238)

The cultural chasm between many White teachers and their students of color is further intensified by the changing demographic landscape of public schools in the U.S. Currently, children of color comprise 40% of the school population, and projections from a 1996 report from the U.S. Department of Commerce suggest that children of color will account for 57% of all students by 2050 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1996). Yet, as the student population is becoming more ethnically, racially, and linguistically diverse,

the teaching force is increasingly White and monocultural (Gay, 2000; Goodwin, 2001). This demographic difference represents a widening cultural gap between teachers and students in which many White teachers come from European-American, monolingual, middle-class suburban backgrounds and have little cross-cultural experiences. As a result, many White teachers have no idea what it means to grow up in an urban environment, live in poverty, or speak a language other than English.

In her ground breaking article about White privilege, Peggy McIntosh (1989) suggests that most Whites living in the United States—and this includes teachers—are “strategically oblivious” to the unearned privileges they receive from being White. Strategic obliviousness allows many Whites to remain guilt-free and innocent as they maintain their social, political, and cultural place in society’s winners circle.

It may well be the case that many teachers who engage in “strategic obliviousness” and color-blindness actually believe that they are serving all of their students fairly. However, all teachers (unwittingly or not) transmit powerful messages about race that influence all of their students. Although teachers’ messages may broadcast positive images of African Americans, immigrants, or people with linguistic differences, historically many of the messages, unconsciously or not have glorified the contributions of certain racial groups such as White European Americans at the same time they ignore the cultural contributions of others. Whether openly acknowledged or not, dominant ideologies and beliefs about race are important issues that directly affect every aspect of educational practice.

Several university-based teacher education programs have attempted to address the “strategic-obliviousness” (McIntyre, 1989) of White teachers by offering multicultural courses that focus on issues of race, class, and gender. The hope is that these types of courses will help preservice teachers learn to “see race” and therefore better understand racial and cultural differences (Zeichner, 1999). Unfortunately, many of these multicultural courses are electives and do not impact all prospective teachers within a given institution. Also at issue is the fact that 88% of collegiate teacher educators are White (Ladson-Billings, 2001). As a result, many teacher education programs appear to be based upon a White cultural perspective that, consciously or not, ignores the effects of race, class, gender, linguistic, and cultural difference on the schooling experience of children (King & Castenell, 2001). Thus, it is quite possible that many teacher education programs that claim to promote multiculturalism and celebrate diversity may well be perpetuating White power and privilege because they do not problematize the meaning and construction of Whiteness.

This study examines and analyzes the relationships among White teachers’ ideological stances, identities, conceptions of race, and the conscious and unconscious assumptions, beliefs, and perceptions. In particular, I am looking at how all of these aspects drive pedagogy and teaching practice.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to generate an understanding of how White teachers negotiate the often unacknowledged contradiction between a United States that is based on democracy and the country’s long history of racial intolerance that influences teaching

and learning in their respective classrooms. This purpose of this study is not to vilify White teachers or accuse them of racial intolerance, color-blind racism, or obliviousness. The economic, personal, and political costs of racism affect *all* of us who live in the United States and elsewhere, whether White, Black, Asian, Latino or Native American, although such costs tend to be much higher for people of color than for White people (Tatum, 1997). As Palmer (1998) suggests, speaking about all teachers, including himself, “we teach what we are,” and our identity as White teachers is comprised of what we know and do not know about and others and ourselves (Castenell & Pinar, 1993).

The study reported in this dissertation was shaped by two questions. The first focuses on the ways in which White teachers understand and make personal and professional meaning of race, racism, and the construction of Whiteness. The second question explores how these personal and professional meanings inform professional practice:

(1) How does the ideological stance (beliefs, attitudes, and values related to teaching and learning in schools) of two White elementary school teachers inform their construction of race?

(2) How do teachers’ ideological stances and constructions of race influence teaching practice?

This study builds three primary arguments. The first is that, rather than occurring within a social vacuum, identity development is a complex process that is influenced by the interrelationship between multiple sometimes-overlapping individual characteristics such as race, class, gender, and religion, and the various historical, institutional, cultural,

familial, political, and social contexts in which an individual resides. What this suggests is that the construction of identity is the result of a series of interactions between the internal (individual) and external worlds (social context) (Danielewicz, p. 11, 2001). Because of the intricate relationship between individual and contextual worlds, identity formation is a highly dynamic, volatile, shifting and unstable process. This conception of identity is quite different from stage theories or “process-oriented” (McAllister & Irvine, 2000) models of identity development. For example, stage-models of identity conceptualize development as a linear, step-wise process, that is more-or-less fixed and stable. Racial or ethnic identity models such as Helms’ (1990, 1992, 1995) theory of White racial identity development or Cross’ (1991) theory of Black racial identity development also tend to focus on individual attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs, while they generally avoid the way multiple contextual factors interact with and inform an individual’s identity. Another issue with stage models is that they generally focus on one aspect of identity—gender, race or ethnicity—without taking into account the interaction between various forms of individual identity such as social-class, gender, religion, or sexual orientation.

The second argument of this study is that the ideological stance and construction of race of White teachers are profoundly influenced by a racialized historical and social context in which White people are granted a variety of social, cultural, and economic privileges based on race, while people of color are not granted these unearned privileges. This means that every teacher’s life, whether he or she is aware of it or not, is determined in part by the racial history of the United States and the fact that we continue to live in a

racialized society. This racialized history and social context are informed and shaped by several discursive repertoires such as essentialist racism, color-blindness, and race cognizance that serve as potential lenses for interpreting the meaning of race within an individual's life. How a teacher interprets and negotiates racialized historical and social contexts play a powerful role in how his or her personal and professional life is shaped. For example, a teacher who interprets the racialized history and current social context through a repertoire of essentialist racism may overtly assume that students of color are less intelligent than White students. This teacher may also openly prefer to work with White students and frequently ignore the needs of their students of color. A teacher who interprets race through a lens of color-blindness, on the other hand, may not make a connection between the history of race and racism and contemporary forms of institutional, cultural, and structural racism that negatively impact the lives of students of color and their families. As a result of not seeing color, this teacher may also be unaware of his or her own negative assumptions about children of color and how they attribute their struggles to individual and cultural deficiencies rooted in family life or cultural practices. Unlike teachers' whose interpretations are filtered through either essentialist racism and color-blind, teachers who interprets race through a repertoire of race cognizance may see a connection between the history of racism and contemporary forms of institutional and structural racism, and may struggle to analyze and critique their own assumptions about children of color and their respective families.

The third argument of this study is that a conceptual framework centered on the racial geography of teaching provides a means of looking at how various material and

discursive aspects of a teacher's individual biography and professional context shape his or her sense of identity, ideological stance, construction of race, and professional practice. One purpose of this framework is to move beyond the existing empirical research on White teachers, which tends to focus on racial attitudes and beliefs, or on the unconscious racism found among preservice and inservice teachers. Instead, the concept of the racial geography of teaching and the framework provided here are much more expansive and multi-faceted. This framework accounts for many other aspects of teacher's life such as his or her family of origin, his or her own experiences in school, and the historical context into which he or she was born. This framework also works for the assumption that a teacher's identity, ideological stance, and construction of race emerge from an intricate, often-shifting, dialectical relationship between the individual and the multiple contexts which he or she inhabits. All of these aspects are so deeply interconnected that it is hard to tell where one begins and the other ends. To get at the meaning of this complicated interaction, it was necessary to construct a conceptual model that allowed me to look at how the interrelationships between the various internal and external aspects of teacher's life informed her personal and professional life in terms of race.

Organization of Dissertation

Chapter 2 provides a review of relevant literature for this study, including several bodies of theoretical and empirical work. The first area of theoretical work, *critical multicultural education*, briefly examines the historical roots of multicultural education and offers a description of specific multicultural approaches that have emerged over the

past several decades. It also discusses the relationship between multicultural education, critical pedagogy, and White studies. The second area of theoretical work focuses on *stage-models of racial identity development*. The final area of theoretical work looks at the ways *dominant ideologies* shape U.S. culture. This literature review also examines related scholarly work that explores preservice and inservice teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions regarding issues of multicultural education, race, and teaching for diversity; culturally relevant pedagogy; and the influence of teachers' race on teaching.

Chapter 3 outlines the research design and methods used for this investigation, which were based upon critical ethnographic approach. In selecting participants for this study, I sought two White urban elementary school teachers, working within different contexts, who had been teaching for at least two years and who served a majority minority student population. Data collection took place over a six-month period and included semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and various classroom artifacts. The collection, organization and analysis of data for the investigation presented in this dissertation was informed by a critical sociocultural perspective (e.g., critical multicultural education) and occurred through a method of analytic induction influenced by the work of Frederick Erickson (1986) and Bogdan and Bilken (1998). Because the purpose of this study is to uncover the conscious and unconscious perspectives of White teachers, a critical ethnographic approach is extremely appropriate and may well be the only kind of methodology that one can use in order to get at these issues.

Chapter 4 describes the racial geography of teaching. I developed this conceptual framework in order to understand the material and discursive factors that informed the

practice of the two participants in this study as well as highlight some of the contrasts between them. The framework is informed by Ruth Frankenberg's (1993) concept of the "social geography of race," Kate Rousmaniere's (2001) idea of "racial biography," and the literature outlined in Chapter 2. It is also based on the data collected for this study. This framework was designed to allow for investigation of the meaning of race in the teaching practice of two White teachers from the perspective of both environmental and historical contexts. Using this framework, each participant's life was analyzed chronologically, but also in light of the historical, physical, social, and environmental factors that informed each participant's construction of race.

Chapter 5 maps the racial geography of teaching of one White urban elementary schoolteacher, Megan DeAngelis¹. The chapter argues that this teacher's ideological assumptions, her identity, and her teaching practice were informed by a discursive repertoire of color-blindness and color-evasion that made it difficult for her to acknowledge the importance of race in shaping her students' identities or her own identity. In turn, this teacher's construction of race was made up of a number of tensions that wavered between seeing and not seeing the meaning of race. This struggle was, in part, for this teacher, a way to avoid being seen as a racist.

Chapter 6 maps out the racial geography of teaching of a second White urban elementary school teacher, Katherine Mackenzie². Chapter 6 argues that this second teacher's practice was shaped by an ideological stance informed by a discursive

¹ Participant name, the names of students and colleagues, city of employment, location and name of school, community of origin, and institution of higher learning participant attended are indicated by pseudonyms.

² Participant name, the names of students and colleagues, city of employment, location and name of school, community of origin, and institution of higher learning participant attended are indicated by pseudonyms.

repertoire rooted in anti-racism. In terms of practice, this stance manifested itself through high academic and behavioral standards for students. However, even though this teacher's personal life and professional practice were shaped by an understanding of the impact that race had on people's lives, she often found herself struggling with what she considered racist thoughts. In turn, this teacher's construction of race was structured around the struggle to name and then challenge her own assumptions.

Chapter 7 describes the contribution that the "racial geography of teaching" makes to the expanding body of research on White teachers and identity development. In particular, it highlights and analyzes what it is that can be seen by using the conceptual framework drawing on insights from the analysis of both teachers. The second part of the chapter addresses the implications of this study for research, practice and policy. Here, I make an appeal for research on White preservice and inservice teachers that moves away from attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs towards something more holistic, complex, and flexible. I also suggest changes to preservice and inservice teacher education programs that highlight how the racial history of the U.S as well as current cultural practices and institutional policies concerning race shape teachers' personal lives and professional practices. I also recommend that state and national teacher accreditation institutions work develop standards that focus explicitly on issues of race, racism, and the demographic divide between teachers and students.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In answering the questions, “How does the ideological stance (beliefs, attitudes, and values related to teaching and learning in schools) of two White elementary school teachers inform their construction of race?” and “How do teachers’ ideological stances and constructions of race influence teaching practice?” I drew on several bodies of theoretical and empirical work. The first area of theoretical work, *critical multicultural education*, briefly examines the historical roots of multicultural education and offers a description of specific multicultural approaches that have emerged over the past several decades. It also discusses the relationship between multicultural education, critical pedagogy, and White studies. The second area of theoretical work that informs this study are *stage model theories of racial identity*, particularly Janet Helms’ (1990, 1992, 1995) theory of White racial identity. The final area of theoretical work looks at the ways *dominant ideologies* shape U.S. culture. This literature review also examines related scholarly work that explores preservice and inservice teachers’ attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions regarding issues of multicultural education, race, and teaching for diversity; culturally relevant pedagogy; and the influence of teachers’ race on teaching.

Critical Multicultural Education

Multicultural education, which emerged during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and early 1970s, is often mistakenly portrayed as a static homogeneous paradigm (Sleeter, 1996a). Since the 1960s, it has grown into a highly complicated field of study that encompasses a wide range of approaches, dimensions, and genres (Sleeter & Grant, 1987; Banks, 1992; Sleeter, 1996a; Bennett, 2001; Cochran-Smith et. al., 2004; Grant et

al, 2004) that are driven by different epistemologies, assumptions, and goals. For example, Sleeter and Grant (1987) have identified five typologies, or approaches, to multicultural education that have emerged since the 1960s. The first approach, *teaching the exceptional and culturally different*, attempts to transition children from their own culture into the dominant culture. According to Sleeter and Grant, the primary goals of this approach are “to challenge the cultural deficiency orientation, to establish the importance of maintaining one’s own cultural identity, and to describe aspects of culture a teacher can build on” (p. 423). It is the educator’s job to help racially and ethnically diverse students “build bridges” between their own culture and the dominant culture while maintaining a positive image of their culture of origin. It does not, however, critically challenge the “unequal distribution of goods and power among racial groups” (p. 423), nor does it directly challenge racism. The second approach, *human relations*, seeks to “help students from different backgrounds get along better with each other and feel good about themselves” (Sleeter & Grant, p. 424), thereby improving communication between diverse schools populations. However, “issues such as poverty, institutional discrimination, and powerlessness are addressed little or not at all” (p. 427).

The purpose of the third approach, *single group studies*, is to generate an understanding of different cultures by focusing on a particular racial, ethnic, or gendered group. Much of this work is politically motivated and includes, among others, Black studies, Gay and Lesbian studies, and Women’s studies. The original intention of this approach was to teach “students explicitly about the history of [a particular] group’s oppression and how oppression works today, as well as the culture...groups develop

within oppressive circumstances” (Sleeter, 1996a, p. 6). This is done in order to inspire the “mobiliz[ation of] its members as well as sympathetic out-group members for social action” (p. 7). However, when practiced in schools, the political aspects of this approach are often watered down so much that it is reduced to a form of “cultural tourism” in which cultural experiences are reduced to isolated historical events, customs, holidays, or food that unwittingly essentializes the culture being studied.

The fourth approach, *multicultural education*, advocates for cultural pluralism and equality through a change in the ways schools are structured. This particular approach not only “examine[s] how race, class, gender, ethnicity, ability, sexuality, language, and religious inequities play out in the various areas of society,” it also “keep[s] power relationships at the forefront of . . . analysis in an effort to seek social justice goals” (Grant et. al., 2004, p. 188). The final approach presented by Grant and Sleeter is referred to as *education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist*. Like the previous approach, it is concerned with issues of power, social justice, and the interplay between society and race, class, and gender, but takes these issues one step further in that it is concerned with “the potential for social action” (p. 188). The ultimate goal here is to help students problematize, challenge, and transform unjust and inequitable social hierarchies by helping them critically “analyze inequality and oppression in society” (p. 188).

Much of the multicultural education currently practiced in public schools today has moved away from the antiracist theoretical and political origins that shaped the movement during the 1960s. Instead, most multicultural education claims political neutrality, which is driven by the assumption that social injustice will fade away when

people develop the ability to get along with one another (Sleeter & Bernal, 2004). For example, the first two approaches to multicultural education listed above—*teaching the exceptional and culturally different* and *human relations*—generally focus on learning how to get along with others or helping minority students learn to function within the dominant society. Rather than creating and developing curriculum that critiques the ways that structural inequities, racism, or White privilege and power manifest themselves in society, these approaches tend to develop teaching strategies that offer ethnically-inspired art projects, cookbooks, plays, and annual school festivals (Nieto, 1995). Certainly, some of these projects have value; however, by doing them in a superficial manner without making critical connections between culture and the structural inequalities of society at-large, educators run the risk of “decontextualiz[ing] multicultural perspectives by trivializing bits and pieces of the lived experiences of dominated groups” (Nieto, 1995, p. 195). Sleeter and Bernal (2004) suggest that the avoidance of racism and issues of power within such forms of multicultural education exist because “a great majority of classroom teachers and school administrators are White and bring a worldview that tacitly condones existing race and class relations” (p. 240). Most White educators have the option of ignoring their own racial identity and “proclaiming themselves as non-raced” (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998), whereas people of color are forced to confront their racial identity on a daily basis. As a result, some forms of multiculturalism end up tacitly supporting White dominance and privilege.

The last three approaches of multicultural education presented by Sleeter and Grant—*single group studies*, *multicultural education* and *education that is multicultural*

and social reconstructionist—are more closely aligned with the original theoretical origins of multicultural education in that the confrontation of racism, oppression, and issues of power, as well as the desire to transform schools into equitable institutions that promote social justice, drive all three approaches. However, as with the previous two typologies, in many schools the *single groups studies* approach is stripped of its political mandate and historical meaning. As a result, it is reduced to superficial aspects of a particular group or culture. Nevertheless, these three approaches to multicultural education currently serve as a theoretical foundation for critical multicultural education.

Critical multicultural education represents a theoretical attempt by radical multicultural education scholars (McLaren, 1991; Nieto, 1992; Sleeter, 1996a; Sleeter & Bernal, 2004) to combat the “growing trivialization of multicultural education” (Nieto, 1995, p. 192) in order to bring it back to its transformative and emancipatory roots. It “challenge[s] forms of multicultural education that are disengaged from questions of power, access, oppression, and domination” (Rodriguez, 2000, p. 15) by openly “naming and actively challenging racism and other forms of injustice, not simply recognizing and celebrating differences and reducing prejudice” (Berlak & Moyenda, 2001, p. 92).

Critical multicultural education is greatly influenced by the philosophical, methodological, and theoretical aspects of various critical traditions, such as critical pedagogy, critical race theory, and anti-racist education (Sleeter & Bernal, 2004). In particular, several multicultural educators and theorists (Gay, 1995; Nieto, 1995; Sleeter, 1996a; Obidah, 2000; Sleeter & Bernal, 2004) have highlighted links between critical pedagogy and multicultural education (Nieto, 1995). For example, Obidah (2000)

suggests that multicultural education that is critical is propelled by pedagogy “that enables educators to see [the process of schooling], not simply as sites of instruction or as arenas of indoctrination and socialization, but also as cultural terrains that promote and/or negate student empowerment and teachers’ self-transformation” (p. 1040). Critical multicultural education also borrows from critical pedagogy in that it makes connections between the micro-level aspects of schools and the “larger issues of social relations outside the school” (McCarthy, 1995, p. 43); at the same time, it analyzes the ways that existing power structures shape concepts like culture, identity, and experience.

Gay (1995) notes that, while multicultural education and critical pedagogy “represent different perspectives and variations on the imperative of achieving educational quality, access, and excellence, as well as social equity, freedom, and justice for culturally diverse groups” (p. 156), each share similar philosophical and methodological concerns. Gay describes these philosophies and methodologies as follows:

As philosophies they constitute a set of beliefs which value an educational process that celebrates and facilitates individual diversity, autonomy, and empowerment. As methodologies multicultural education and critical pedagogy are means of designing and implementing educational programs and practices that are more egalitarian and effective for diverse student populations. Both employ a language of critique, and endorse pedagogies of resistance, possibility, and hope. These are grounded in principles of personal liberation, critical democracy, and

social equality, and an acceptance of the political and partisan nature of knowledge, human learning, and the educational process. (p. 156).

In essence, both multicultural education and critical pedagogy are driven by the assumption that the realization of democracy means the attainment of social justice and empowerment for all citizens.

It is, however, important to note that, while similar, multicultural education and critical pedagogy differ in rather significant ways. For example, critical pedagogy openly explores ideological assumptions that influence and shape teaching and learning; at the same time, it explores the possibility of building the knowledge needed to challenge social inequity. Its ultimate goal is the empowerment of the oppressed, and social class is seen as the “main axis of oppression” (Sleeter & Bernal, 2004, p. 244). In general, issues of race and ethnicity are often ignored or relegated to the sidelines; and because critical pedagogy does not problematize race, it risks becoming a White project that unintentionally marginalizes voices of color (Sleeter & Bernal, p. 244). Multicultural education, on the other hand, focuses less on issues of class and more on race, difference, and ethnicity. However, as noted above, not all approaches to multicultural education challenge or critique structural inequalities. Depending on the approach, there is often minimal critique of social inequities and the existing power structures that maintain such inequalities. Instead, the practice of multicultural education in many schools simply endorses an assimilationist agenda that promotes harmony rather than empowerment.

Given these differences, it seems clear that a theoretical amalgamation between critical pedagogy and multicultural education could strengthen both areas of study.

Critical pedagogy could benefit from “an injection of considerations of race, class, gender, and difference” and a movement away from a White-bias. Meanwhile, multicultural education would benefit from “such constructs as empowerment, problem-posing education, and the social construction of knowledge” (Nieto, 1995, p. 192). However, in order to be a useful lens for this particular study, which is looking specifically at White teachers, critical multicultural education must also include elements of anti-racist education that critically analyze the historical, social, and political construction of Whiteness. To be truly critical, it must embrace Whiteness as a radicalized category and embark on a journey to “deconstruct” (Giroux, 1997) the ways that “Whiteness functions in society as a marker of privilege and power” at the same time it “rearticulates” Whiteness as a “condition for expanding the ideological and material realities of democratic public life” (Giroux, p. 297). According to Rodriguez (2000), such an analysis “provides...[an] important space...to understand the legacy of whiteness and how [white people]...benefit in the present because of that legacy” (p. 15). It also illuminates “the necessary tension between understanding whiteness as oppression as well as thinking through its potentiality.” In the end, a “dialectical approach to the study of whiteness pushes the boundaries of multicultural education not only by bringing whiteness inside multicultural education for critical analysis, but also by thinking through its potential as a progressive racial identity linked to a broader democratic project” (p. 15). It also allows White students and teachers the opportunity to view Whiteness as “an oppositional space to fight for equality and social justice” rather than the embodiment of “domination and racism” (Giroux, p. 296).

For the purpose of this study, a critical multicultural lens that incorporates the deconstruction and rearticulating of Whiteness offers an opportunity for the researcher and the researched to critique Whiteness in a way that does not demonize the White teacher. Instead, it allows participants to transform the racialized concept of Whiteness from a projection of “domination and racism” to one of collective social action and empowerment.

Like critical pedagogy and anti-racist education, Critical Race Theory (CRT) can strengthen multicultural education by pushing it towards a more critical orientation that challenges educational inequality. CRT, which emerged from Critical Legal Studies (CLS) scholarship, represents an analytic framework that speaks to the social and racial injustices embedded with U.S. cultural, institutional, legal, and political practices (Sleeter & Bernal, 2004). For Sleeter & Bernal (2004), CRT is similar to anti-racist education in that it also attempts to challenge racism at the same time it works to eliminate “all forms of subordination” (p. 245). Sleeter and Bernal also suggest that educational scholars who subscribe to CRT “theorize about ‘raced’ education in ways found too infrequently in multicultural education” (p. 245). According to Tate (1997) and Ladson-Billings (1999), CRT is built upon several tenets. First, CRT is based upon the idea that racism is a salient aspect of U.S. society in that it is embedded with the American psyche. Because of this, racism seems to be such an accepted and natural part of American cultural ethos that it represents a “permanent fixture of American life” (Ladson-Billings, 1999, p. 213). Second, as noted by Tate (1997), CRT also “crosses epistemological boundaries” in that it draws from a variety of empirical traditions, such as “liberalism, law and society,

feminism, Marxism, poststructuralism, CLS, cultural nationalism, and pragmatism to provide a more complete analysis of ‘raced’ people” (p. 234). Third, CRT also critiques the effectiveness of civil rights laws and the fact that such laws are often weakened before they have been fully implemented (Tate, 1997, p. 234). For example, Ladson-Billings notes affirmative action, which is constantly under attack, has generally benefited White women. Therefore, even Civil Rights laws designed to help people of color ultimately privilege White people. Fourth, CRT also points out that “mainstream legal scholarship” (Ladson-Billings, 1999, p. 213), is not neutral or value-free in that it serves the interests of those in power (Tate, p. 235).

White Racial Identity Theory

According to Tatum (1997), “the concept of identity is a complex one, shaped by individual characteristics, family dynamics, historical factors, and social and political contexts” (p. 18). Tatum also suggests that identity formation is “multidimensional” in the sense that all individuals embody multiple and interlocking forms of identity that are rooted in one’s gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, nationality, social class, and race. These aspects of an individual’s identity “mediate” and intersect with one another making identity formation an intricate, life-long process. Because the United States continues to be a highly “race-conscious society” (Helms, 1990, 1992; Tatum, 1997), racial identity development is an especially salient aspect of psychological development for all U.S. citizens. Over the past several decades, scholars working in psychology have offered a number of theories related to racial identity. Cross (1991), for example, has proposed a five-stage model of racial identity for African Americans. Phinney (1993) has

developed a three-stage model of ethnic identity development and Helms (1990, 1992) has created a model of racial identity development for Whites. Banks (1984), working within the field of education, developed a “Typology of Ethnic Identity” that involves six stages. Because it is not race specific, individuals of any race or ethnicity can utilize Banks’ typology.

Because this investigation focused on White teachers, Helms’ model of White racial identity development is the most relevant and informs this study for two reasons. First, it acknowledges the psychological implications of being a member of the dominant racial group by exploring “how...various forms of white racial identity reflect unexamined, subconscious, or conscious forms of racial knowledge” (Carter, 1997, p. 199). Although emerging from a post-positivist rather than critical epistemology, White racial identity theory is similar to the critical multicultural framework described above in the sense that it shifts the theoretical lens away from people of color towards White people, thereby providing a clearer, more detailed picture of the psychological aspects of race within U.S society. Second, Helms’ model is frequently cited in the empirical literature that explores the attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs of White preservice and inservice teachers (See Bollin & Finkel, 1995). Thus, it would inappropriate to conduct a study that focuses on White teachers without acknowledging the influence of Helms’ model.

For Helms (1990), racial identity “refers to a sense of group or collective identity based upon one’s *perception* that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group” (p. 4). For African Americans, racial identity development

“attempt[s] to explain the various ways in which Blacks can identify (or not identify) with other Blacks and /or adopt or abandon identities resulting from racial victimization” (Helms, 1990, p. 5). This means that African Americans, in order to develop a healthy racial identity, must learn to challenge and resist social and historical racial oppression. Because White people represent the dominant racial group in our society, racial identity development is quite different in that it “attempt[s] to explain the various ways in which whites can identify (or not identify) with other whites and/or evolve or avoid evolving a nonoppressive White Identity” (p. 5). For Whites, a healthy racial identity means learning to challenge notions of White cultural superiority and coming to understand the historic and cultural reality of Whiteness. Thus, for White people, a healthy racial identity means learning to recognize and overcome the ways that various forms of individual, institutional, and cultural forms of racism benefit them.

Helms’ (1990) initial theory of white racial identity development was divided into two primary phases of development. The first phase addressed the abandonment of individual racism while the second phase addressed the development of a positive, non-racist identity. Each phase was divided into three sequential stages, although it was not necessarily expected that individuals would move through this sequence in a neat step-wise fashion. White racial identity development was considered to be an ongoing and flexible process in which several stages could overlap and coexist within the same individual at different levels of intensity. It was also suggested that, depending on the context, individuals could be in various stages of development throughout their lives, making racial identity a life-long endeavor process.

It is important to note that in response to criticisms of her original theoretical model, Helms (1995) made significant revisions to her theory of White racial identity. For example, she moved away from the concept of developmental stages to one of identity statuses. Rather than describing racial identity as a sequential or linear process, Helms' theory now suggests that an individual can be, at any given moment, influenced by several identity statuses at once. However, while Helms' modified the underlying theory shaping her model, she did not alter the measurement instrument, which accompanies her theory—the “White Racial Identity Attitude Scale.”

Helms model is comprised of six status-levels—*contact*, *disintegration*, *reintegration*, *pseudo-independence*, *immersion-emersion*, and *autonomy*—which are evenly divided into two phases—movement away from racism and the formation of a non-racist White racial identity. According to Helms (1992), a person who displays a dominant *contact* status-level is generally ignorant and in denial about race, does not identify with being White, views him- or herself as “raceless,” and assumes that race is also inconsequential for people of color. When asked about his or her racial group, the contact person tends to focus on nationality or ethnicity instead. Whites in this stage often claim to be color-blind and assume that all racial groups want to (and should) aspire to White cultural values and culture. Even if they live within a racially mixed environment, they are able to isolate themselves so that they have little interaction with people of color. A person can stay at this level for as long as he or she is able to remain isolated from people of color. In the United States, where Whites are currently the dominant racial group, they are able to avoid contact with people of color.

At the second status-level, *disintegration*, the White person can no longer live in denial about his or her Whiteness, and begins to develop awareness that being White affords him or her unearned privileges and social advantages at the expense of people of color. The person in this stage is quite confused and is “caught in a moral dilemma, to be loved, valued, and respected by other White people, he or she must subscribe to immoral social practices, but to conform to them denies the common humanity of all people” (Helms, 1992, p. 30).

The next status-level, *reintegration* status-level, is shaped by the spoken and unspoken notion that White people are superior to people of color. Such beliefs are in response to the guilt and subsequent psychological tension caused from the acknowledgement of White racism that occurred in disintegration. For the person in this stage, racism is not longer a problem caused by Whites; rather, people of color are to blame. This status-level can only be interrupted when the White person is “forced to exist in a multi-racial environment from which escape is not possible, and the person’s stereotypic views of Whites and other racial groups are actively challenged” (p. 55). If this occurs, the person’s “moral conscious” is “re-awakened” and the person has the potential to enter into the second phase of racial development.

The *pseudo-independence* status-level represents the initial entry into the second phase of racial development—the emergence of a non-racist identity. Here, the White person begins to “unlearn one’s racism” (Tatum, 1997, p. 106); however, he or she still unconsciously maintains a belief in the superiority of White culture and believes it is his or her responsibility to “help” people of color become more like White people so they

can overcome “cultural deprivation” caused by oppressive environmental factors (Helm, 1992, p. 59). Tatum states that people in this stage can be referred to as “guilty White liberals” (p. 106). People within this status-level deal with racism in an intellectual manner and are not sure what actions should be taken in order to ameliorate the situation (Tatum, 1997). They also look to people of color for validation that they are “good” Whites.

The second status-level found within this phase is *immersion-emersion*. Here the White person begins to develop a new definition of what it means to be White that is based upon reality rather than assumed superiority. While this stage is similar to pseudo-independence, the major distinction is the idea that racism does not emerge from people of color; instead, its origins lay within White culture and social attitudes. The White person takes personal responsibility for racism and openly confronts the accompanying guilt, shame, and embarrassment. According to Tatum (1997), Whites begin to develop a new definition of White identity and, as a result, these “feelings of guilt and shame start to fade” (p. 111). Other important aspects of this status-level include the “[t]he moral re-education of other White people” as well as the search for other like-minded White people who are willing to find “other Whites that will help her or him understand the meaning of being White” in order to help the person “grow beyond racism” (Helms, 1992, p. 33).

At the final status-level, *autonomy*, the White person begins to “actively confront racism, as well as analogous forms of oppression in her or his environment” (Helms, 1992, p. 33). He or she is able to integrate “the newly defined view of Whiteness”

(Tatum, 1997, p. 112) within his or her personal identity. Whites at this level continuously seek out interracial experiences “that permit the person to develop a humanitarian or equalitarian attitude toward people regardless of race” (Helms, p.33), and work to incorporate these efforts into their daily lives. This process is life-long and continuous in that it is constantly evolving and reshaping itself.

While White racial identity development informs this study, there are some important issues with Helms’ model that must be addressed. For example, Helms’ white racial identity theory generally focuses on individual attitudes. According to Kellington (2002), such a focal point is problematic for the following reasons:

The concept of attitudes has been critiqued in the critical psychological literature for reifying the phenomenon about which the attitude is held, for ignoring the role that discourse, discipline, and social relations play in the regulation and production of individual attitudes, and for the assumption that attitudes are more or less enduring ideas located within self-contained, rational, and bounded individuals. (p. 156)

It would seem then that by focusing solely on attitudes, Helms ignores the interplay between the individual and the social, cultural, and institutional discourses that construct the meaning of race, racism, and Whiteness. It can also be argued that, even though Helms has attempted to move away from a stage model of racial identity, the fact that she continues to use the same measurement instrument suggests that, while she has moved away from the idea that racial identity does not necessarily occur along a linear or sequential continuum, she has not fully abandoned it.

Ideology and Teaching

In his book *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in Discourses*, James Gee (1990) notes that, for many people, “ideology is what other people have when they perversely insist on taking the ‘wrong’ viewpoint on a (sic) issue” (p. 3). There is a negative connotation associated with the term ideology that implies a denial of factual evidence driven by an inflexible loyalty to one’s own rigidly held belief system; thus, the term is used as a rhetorical strategy that is designed to discredit one’s opponent. Cochran-Smith (2006) has suggested that the use of this form of ideology is quite common within current debates about teacher education in which “reformers have implied or asserted that their positions were neutral, apolitical, and value free,” at the same time, they use “the term *ideological* to cast aspersions on, undermine, and ultimately dismiss positions that compete with [their] own” (p. 40).

For Cochran-Smith (2006), ideology is far more complicated than a rhetorical strategy bent on discrediting an opponent. Instead she believes that ideology and ideological practice are based upon political and cultural values. Therefore, they are not “neutral and apolitical” (p. 40). This study is looking at definitions of ideology that are rooted in political, sociological, and psychological scholarship. Gee (1990), for example, defines ideology as a “*social theory* (tacit or overt, primary, removed, or deferred) which involves generalizations (beliefs, claims) about the *way(s) in which ‘goods’ are distributed in society*” (p. 23). Along similar lines, Rene Galindo (1999) describes ideologies as “systems of ideas that function to create views of reality that appear as the most rational view, a view that is based on ‘common sense’ notions of how the social

world ought to be” (p. 105). These notions are so deeply embedded within the psychological thinking of a society that their validity remains unquestioned and unchallenged. They are as natural as the air we breathe and are often used unconsciously as a lens to interpret the world around us. They are also taken to be unchangeable aspects of a given society that have always been and always will be.

As noted by Cochran-Smith (2006), ideologies are anything but value-free. In most societies, dominant ideologies “serve particular interests which they tend to present as universal interests, shared by the groups as a whole” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 167). These “particular interests” emerge from the dominant social group. As a result, cultural beliefs, ideas, traditions, accepted norms, and values reflect the desires and needs of the ruling classes, and thus work to maintain a specific hierarchical status quo that benefits a small minority of individuals. In order for the non-ruling classes, who almost always represent the majority of a population, to buy into such ideologies, which may work against their best interests, reality must be distorted so that it appears that all citizens benefit from the ways things are (Ryan, 1981). Sometimes these distortions manifest themselves as contradictions. For example, color-blind ideology suggests that the recognition of race is a racist act; therefore, the best way to avoid being racist is to ignore it and insist it does not matter. However, by not openly acknowledging race, racism and White supremacy, racism is perpetuated and inequitable power structures that benefit White people are maintained, while people of color continue to be discriminated against.

In the United States, ideology is shaped by a belief in “equality.” In general, the term *equality* is often associated with the notion of *fairness* and *sameness*. For example,

many Americans believe that all citizens should be offered the same opportunities, educational experiences, and access to material and social goods. However, interpretations of equality are far more complicated and “[e]quality may [actually] mean inequality; equal treatment may require unequal treatment; and the same distribution may be seen as equal or unequal depending on one’s point of view” (Stone, 1997, p. 41).

In his book from the early 1980s entitled *Equality*, Ryan (1981) suggested that there are two very different and conflicting stances regarding the term equality that have shaped the ideological landscape of the United States. The first stance, which represents the dominant ideology of the United States, is referred to as the “Fair Play” ideology. This ideology is built upon a three-pronged framework that includes three general principles. The first principle focuses on the “primacy of the individual” and the belief that “human life” can be defined as “the behavior of discrete individuals” (p. 47). Implicit within this principle is the assumption that communal or collective “groupings” “are seen as being, in a sense, less ‘real.’” As such, they do not have a “legitimate...place in discourse about human affairs” (p. 47). The second principle assumes that “individuals differ significantly from one another.” After all, it is only natural that some individuals are more intelligent, artistic, or talented than others. Because of this, some people are better equipped to “occupy the preeminent positions in society and receive the most rewards” (p. 47), while those who are less gifted should be relegated to a lower station in life and receive minimal rewards. The third principle looks at the “source of these differences,” which calls attention to the “differences in qualities of mind, motivation, character...that may be thought of as being somehow ‘inside’ the

person,” while “paying little or no attention to...social or environmental factors...such as racial and sexual prejudice, income, family background, and stressful or beneficent life events” (p. 47). Implicit within this principle is the assumption that external and contextual factors do not affect individuals—it is what is on the inside that counts. Therefore, socioeconomic class, racial and linguistic difference should make no difference.

Given this focus on the “internal, individual differences,” the Fair Play interpretation of equality “stresses the individual’s [unencumbered] right to pursue happiness and obtain resources” (p. 8). However, the right to pursue happiness does not guarantee individual happiness and success—these are dependent on internal characteristics such as intelligence, ambition, and the willingness to work hard. Personal character traits and individual merit are the only way individuals can attain success—luck, family influence, racial discrimination, and social-class have no influence whatsoever. It is this notion of meritocracy, which “insure[s] that the ablest, most meritorious, ambitious, hardworking, and talented individuals will acquire the most, achieve the most, and become the leaders of society” (p. 9), that drives the Fair Play ideology.

There is nothing more “American” than the belief in merit and personal ingenuity; yet, Fair Play ideology, which promotes “equal opportunity,” does not necessarily mean equality. For every individual who succeeds, there is someone who has failed; thus, there are always winners and losers. This is considered to be the natural order of things and

“[a]ny effort to achieve...[an] ‘equality of results’ is seen as unjust, artificial, and incompatible with the more basic principle of equal opportunity” (p. 9).

Ryan refers to the second stance regarding the term equality as the Fair Shares ideology. Rather than being focused on the “individual-different-internal” paradigm, this ideology rests on the opposite side of the continuum rooted in a “collective-sameness-external” paradigm. Unlike Fair Play, which, as noted above, “focus[es] on the individual’s pursuit of...happiness,” Fair Shares “concerns itself...with equality of rights and of access, particularly the implicit rights to a reasonable share of society’s resources, sufficient to sustain life at a decent standard of humanity, and to preserve liberty and freedom” (p. 9). So, while Fair Play ideology acknowledges the right to life, Fair Shares insists that the right to life also includes the “appropriate distribution throughout society of sufficient means for sustaining life and preserving liberty” (p. 9). Fair Shares, which does not represent the dominant ideology, has periodically emerged as a challenge to Fair Play ideology throughout U.S history. The most recent example of this challenge occurred during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s when, as noted in Chapter 1, formerly oppressed minority groups began to demand equal access to society’s goods. Unfortunately, Fair Play ideology reasserted itself during the Reagan and Bush administrations in the 1980s and early 1990s (Feagin, et al., 2000), and led to the watering down and/or eradication of various social programs implemented in the 1960s and 1970s that were designed to improve the educational and employment opportunities of people of color.

Ryan (1981) and other scholars such as Stone (1997) suggest that, in general, the ethos of American beliefs, values, ideas, and cultural practices leans towards Fair Play ideology. As a result, social institutions like public schools focus on an “internal, individual difference” framework. This means that choices about curriculum – what knowledge is of most worth, best practices, and teaching and learning – are not made within a value-free, neutral vacuum, but instead are based on a specific set of beliefs. As part of this system, teachers are the conduit for such beliefs and often approach their practice with unacknowledged biases.

The purpose of this study was to unpack both the conscious and unconscious, spoken and unspoken “political and ideological dimensions” (Bartolomé & Truebe, 2000, p. 279) that influence the pedagogical choices two White teachers make within their professional practice. In order to achieve this, participants will be provided with the opportunity to expose and analyze the “hidden value systems and cultural ideals” (Cochran-Smith, 2006, p. xxx) that shape teaching and learning in their classrooms. The intention of this study is to develop political and ideological clarity about teachers’ pedagogical choices and practices.

White Teachers Attitudes, Beliefs, and Perceptions towards Race

While there is a small body of research that looks at the attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of inservice teachers, most of the research that has been conducted on this topic over the past 16 years has focused on the preparation of White preservice teachers for diverse student populations. Since 1990, several syntheses have reviewed this growing body of work (Grant & Secada, 1990; Sleeter, 2001a, 2001b; Cochran-Smith, et.

al., 2004; Grant, et. al., 2004; Hollins & Guzman, 2005) and have drawn very similar conclusions. Starting with Grant & Secada's 1990 review, the syntheses mentioned above have noted a persistent marginalization and under funding of multicultural teacher preparation. In many teacher education programs, this marginalization has meant that "issues of diversity" are often "separated from the rest of teacher education" (Hollins & Guzman, 2005, p. 480). Rather than infusing the principles of multicultural education across the teacher education curriculum, multicultural education is often relegated to the margins of the curriculum as "add-on" courses that are offered as electives, leaving the rest of the teacher education curriculum unchanged (Bollin & Finkle, 1995; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

As noted by Cochran-Smith, Davis, and Fries (2004), the marginalization of multicultural teacher education provides an explanation as to why there are a lack of longitudinal studies and an overabundance of small studies carried out by "individual teacher educators" (p. 946). According to Hollins and Guzman (2005), most of these small-scale studies focus on what preservice teachers learn from particular courses, in particular: "how their knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs may change; how they interact with program content; and how particular pedagogies provide different kinds of learning opportunities" (p. 510). Critics have questioned the generalizability and methodological rigor of some of these studies and suggest that there needs to be more longitudinal work that looks at the long-term influence of multicultural teacher preparation on teaching and learning (Sleeter, 2001; Hollins & Guzman, 2005).

White Resistance to the Realities of Racism

In general, much of the research that has investigated the attitudes, beliefs and perceptions White teachers have towards racial and cultural diversity suggests that many (although not all) White teachers have little knowledge or first hand experience about racism (King, 1991; Bollin & Finkle, 1995; Sleeter, 2001a, 2001b). Like many White Americans in the general population, White preservice and inservice teachers tend to use a color-blind ideology as a way to insulate themselves from the reality of racism and their own role in sustaining such inequity (McIntyre, 1997; Bell, 2002, 2003). This, of course, is not surprising since Whites are the dominant racial group in the United States and, as a result, have the choice to ignore the issue of race while people of color have to deal with it on a daily basis (McIntyre, 1997). Joyce King (1991), who has worked with White preservice teachers for several decades, refers to this state of being as

“dysconscious racism.” Dysconscious racism can be defined as a

form of racism that tacitly accepts dominant White norms and privileges. It is not the *absence* of consciousness (that is, not unconsciousness) but an *impaired* consciousness or distorted way of thinking about race as compared to, for example, critical consciousness. Uncritical ways of thinking about racial inequality accept certain culturally sanctioned assumptions, myths, and beliefs that justify the social and economic advantages White people have as a result of subordinating diverse others. Any serious challenge to the status quo that calls this racial privilege into question inevitably challenges the self-identity of White people who have internalized the ideological justifications. (p. 135)

Because these deeply ingrained “ideological justifications” define the “self-identity” of White teachers, any challenge to them is often met with a great deal of conscious and unconscious resistance (McFall & Cobb-Roberts, 2001). For example, in a series of self-studies conducted by teacher educators, researchers found that many White pre- and inservice teachers insist that race does not matter (Bollin & Finkle, 1995) and, as a result, deny the existence of racial discrimination at the same time they resist an exploration of their own racial identity and personal assumptions of people of color (Bollin & Finkle, 1995; Cockrell, 1999; Williams et. al. 2000; McFall & Cobb-Roberts, 2001; Gillespie, 2002; Lawrence, 2002).

Having looked at the literature, I have noted that White teacher resistance can be divided into four, sometimes over-lapping, categories: (1) Internalized White ideological stances that allow White teachers to rationalize individual, cultural, and institutional forms of racism in order to maintain White privilege and power; (2) White discourse strategies such as “White talk” (McIntyre, 1997) and “Colormuteness” (Pollack, 2004); (3) Silencing the voices of educators of color; and, (4) Blaming the victims of racism.

Internalized White ideologies. Three studies focused directly on the ways that internalized White ideologies, such as color-blindness, unconsciously perpetuated racial discrimination at the same time keeping White power and privilege intact. In all three of the studies summarized below, White pre- and inservice teachers subscribed to the notion that Whiteness represented a neutral cultural norm that all citizens needed to aspire to in order to be fully accepted into U.S. society. The culture of students of color was seen as a deficit to student learning and something that needed to be overcome.

In her ethnographic study of racially desegregated Wexler Middle School conducted over 20 years ago, Schofield (1986) noted that the faculty took great pains to adopt a “color-blind perspective” in which “racial ethnic group membership [was seen] as irrelevant to ways individuals are treated” and “group membership in decision-making [was] perceived as illegitimate and likely to either lead to discrimination against the minority group or reverse-discrimination in its favor” (p. 232). Because of this perspective, it was important for the staff to see “themselves and to a lesser extent their students as oblivious to the race of others” (p. 238). Therefore, race was viewed as taboo topic amongst staff and students. Also evident within the school “was the tendency to conceptualize social life as a web of interpersonal rather than intergroup relations, and to assume that interpersonal relations are not much influenced by group membership” (p. 340). As in Fair Play ideology, individual experience was privileged over group interactions. This led the teaching staff to believe that race did not matter to students. However, this was not the case, as race did appear to influence peer relationships. For example, students tended “to group themselves by race in a variety of settings,” such as the school cafeteria during lunch-time. (p. 241).

While the staff believed that a color-blind perspective was the best way to ensure educational equity, Schofield discovered that it actually had several unintended negative consequences for students of color. First, by making race a taboo subject, staff was discouraged from challenging the discriminatory behavior of some of their colleagues. This meant that, as long as it was not overt, staff was free to engage in discriminatory behavior towards students of color without consequence. Second, because staff often

“den[ied] the possibility of cultural differences between white and black children,” they were oblivious to the possible ways that such differences might influence the school-based behavior of students. Schofield suggests that this lack of cultural understanding was responsible for Black students being suspended more often than their White peers. Third, in general, the Wexler staff did not attempt to “respond to and capitalized on diversity” (p. 248). This meant that the historical and cultural contribution of African Americans was often ignored or omitted.

Even after 20 years, the problem of color-blind ideology remains an issue for contemporary educators. In her analysis of 65 interviews transcripts of White educators and Whites working in the field of human services, Bell (2002) uncovered several instances of color-blindness throughout the interviews. For example, many of the White interviewees “espouse[d] a position of innocence, adopting an individualist approach that evades broader social patterns and practices that reinforce racism.” Interviewees claimed to “see people as they are, not by their nationality or the color of their skin” and had a tendency to “define color blindness from the ‘neutral’ stance of an unstated put presumed white cultural norm.” However, according to Bell, this stance negated “the cultural contributions, perspectives, and experiences of people from other racial groups (p. 239). Like the teachers at Wexler, the Whites interviewed for Bell’s study believed that noticing the color of someone’s skin is a potentially racist act. In fact, other Whites took this idea a step further and believed that ‘those who insist upon discussing race are the source of the problem’ (p. 240).

Yet, even in spite of White claims of innocence in regards to racism, the White people in Bell's study (2002) appeared to have had an "implicit knowledge" of the different unspoken rules that shape the lives of people of color and Whites. When asked what the unspoken social rules would be for a "newcomer to the U.S." (p. 240) who was a person of color and what would these rules be for a White newcomer, a vast majority of the interviewees noted that the rules would be different for each group. In general, they suggested that "[p]eople of color have very narrow latitude for acceptable behavior. They should not assert themselves, their culture, or their views. They should not call attention to themselves but rather conform and fit into 'our society'" (p. 241). Meanwhile, the rules that would apply to a White newcomer provided individuals with more flexibility and "freedom of expression." Bell notes that even the two participants who thought the rules would be the same for people of color and Whites "affirmed a white cultural norm as the frame into which all newcomers fit" (p. 241).

For Bell, this study illustrates how difficult it is to "get beneath the rhetoric of color-blindness, to explore the implicit knowledge about race and racial hierarchy that lies beneath the surface." She suggests that a "focus on White discourse can hold up a mirror that allows White students to see their reflection more clearly" (p. 241). Marx (2004), who examined the beliefs of nine White, female, monolingual English-speaking preservice teachers ranging from the ages of 20-35, attempts to do this in her study. All nine of the participants, who volunteered to participate in this study, were taking a teacher preparation course taught by the researcher entitled "Second Language Acquisition." One of the requirements of this course was to tutor English language

learners of Mexican origin ten hours per week. Through the use of journal, interviews, and observation during these tutoring sessions, Marx learned that, in spite of the fact that all of these women defined themselves as “open-minded,” “tolerant,” and “without prejudice, they were still deeply “influenced by Whiteness and white racism” (p. 35). According to Marx, “[s]ome of these influences proved to be detrimental to the children that they tutored” (p. 35). For example, all of the participants, like the White interviewees in Bell’s study, “described whiteness as a ‘neutral’ or ‘normal’ *non*-ethnic identity.” Eight out of nine of them “illuminate[d] whiteness by subtly or obviously contrasting it to color” (p. 35). This belief in the neutrality of Whiteness led participants to view the students they were tutoring as “sadly inhibited by extraordinary deficits” (p. 35). The participants seemed to be completely unaware that this type of thinking was, in fact, rooted in White racism and continued to see themselves as strongly antiracist. Marx found it necessary to intervene in this study by sharing the data she had collected with her participants and pointing out incidences of White racism. Marx concluded that this intervention allowed most of the participants to begin to understand the ways in which White racism influenced their teaching; however, without it, these teacher candidates may not have realized how they were continuing to perpetuate racist practices within their classrooms.

White discourse and race talk. In her participatory action research study that investigated how thirteen White, middle-class, undergraduate, preservice teachers made meaning of Whiteness, McIntyre (1997) uncovered a form of White discourse she labeled as “White Talk.” White Talk is consistent with color-blindness and McIntyre suggests

that it allowed her participants to distance themselves from their role in the perpetuation of racism at the same time it provided them with the illusion of being tolerant. She noticed that White Talk occurred during group discussion sessions and that several “speech-tactics” were used as a means of distancing participants “from the difficult and almost paralyzing task of engaging in a critique of their own whiteness” (p. 46). These tactics included the following: “derailing the conversation, evading questions, dismissing counterarguments, withdrawing from the discussion, remaining silent, interrupting speakers and topics, and colluding with each other in creating a ‘culture of niceness’ that made it very difficult to ‘read the white world’” (p. 46). Such tactics enabled the female participants in her study to maintain myths regarding people of color. at the same time “privileg[ing] their own feelings and affect over the lived experiences of people of color in our society” (p. 47).

In her three-year ethnographic study of a racially diverse, comprehensive high school located in California, Pollack (2004) analyzed the “race talk” used by school-based faculty, students, and district-wide administrators. She discovered that the talk around race was highly contradictory and paradoxical in that the staff was unwittingly “reinforcing racial distinctions and racialized thinking by using race labels” at the same time they were “reinforcing racial inequality by refusing to use them” (p. 4). This meant that while teachers and administrators perpetuated racism through the “careless” use of race words, they would also perpetuate racism through the omission of race words (p. 4). Pollack refers to the suppression of certain racial topics as colormuteness and, over the

three years that her study took place, she identified six complicated “fundamental dilemmas” that emerged from her study.

For Pollack, the most “vexing” of these dilemmas had to do with the way administration and faculty at “Columbus” High School chose to talk and *not* talk in racial terms regarding the problem of a large number of African American students cutting class and wandering the school hours halls during the school day. According to Pollack, many of the teachers in her study, in order to avoid being labeled as racist, “self-consciously deleted the very word ‘black’ from their public talk of the hall wandering ‘problem’” (p. 16). However, the term “black” frequently came up when discussing the problem privately. Pollack suggests that the public deletion of racial terms had unintended consequences that “served daily to *increase* the perceived relevance of blackness to these problems” (p. 16). She also felt that by “knowingly saying nothing publicly about the overrepresentation of ‘blacks’ in the hallway...Columbus adults effectively *ignored* black students in *racial terms*. In the end, such silence itself was a form of racializing action: for black students themselves remained both wandering disproportionately and quietly reviled” (p. 16). As result of this public silence, the adults at “Columbus” were actually “institutionalizing the very racial patterns they [claimed to] abhor” (p. 16).

Within “White Talk” and “colormuteness,” what is said is just as important as what is *not* said. After all, just because one is silent about a racial problem does not make it disappear. As Pollack notes in an earlier article from 2001

Silence about [racial] patterns, of course, allows them to remain intact: Racial patterns do not go away simply because they are ignored. Indeed, once people have *noticed* racial patterns, they seem to become engraved on the brain. They become, most dangerously, acceptable – a taken-for-granted part of what school is about. (p. 9)

For many White educators, being silent eases the discomfort of having to challenge deeply held ideological beliefs, such as the notion that we live in a meritocratic society and education is the great equalizer (Henze et. al., 1998). However, silence around the issues of racism, power, and White privilege perpetuates and nurtures racism (Kailin, 1999).

Silencing teachers of color. As noted in chapter 1, well over 80% of the teacher education and K-12 teaching force is White. Because of this “overwhelming presence of Whiteness” (Sleeter, 2001b, p. 101), many pre- and inservice teachers of color feel that the knowledge they bring to classroom is dismissed and/or undervalued by their White colleagues (Delpit, 1988; Burant, 1999). They often feel silenced (Agee, 2004) and believe their White colleagues “just don’t get it” (Burant, p. 3). According to Delpit, teachers of color often respond to being repeatedly dismissed by ‘silencing’ themselves. Unfortunately, many of their White colleagues “are seldom aware that the dialogue has been silenced” and interpret their colleagues of color’s silence as tacit agreement (Delpit, p. 281).

An example of this type of silencing can be found in Burant’s (1999) case study that focused on one White Latino teacher candidate who was participating in an early

field experience (EFE) located at a Southwestern middle school. Monica was a working-class wife and mother who was attending a full-time, university-based teacher preparation program after 17 years of full-time employment as a clerical worker. Monica's voice initially emerged in her journal and class discussions during the first part of the semester. Once her voice began to emerge, she spoke a great deal in her class and became involved in a variety of schools and district projects. However, she eventually became frustrated by the narrow perspective of many of the White professionals with whom she interacted within both the school and her teacher preparation class. Conflicts around "linguistic diversity and multicultural education turned her thoughts and voice decidedly underground" (p. 215). By the end of the semester, she only shared her thoughts with colleagues she trusted.

Blaming the victim. The literature reviewed for this study also suggested that White teachers attempted to distance themselves from White privilege and power by "blaming the victim." An example of this resistance strategy can be found in Kailin's (1999) case-study of a "liberal" Midwestern school district. Using an open-ended questionnaire, Kailin investigated the perceptions 222 White teachers had about racism. Through analysis, she discovered teachers' perceptions could be categorized into three major themes: (1) Attribution of Racial Problems to Blacks; (2) Attribution of Racial Problems to Whites, and: (3) Attribution of Racial Problems to Institutional/Cultural Factors (p. 731). According to Kailin, a majority of the White teachers reported that Blacks were the major cause of racism at their respective schools and cited several reasons for this belief. For example, several respondents claimed that African American

students come from poor home environments and, therefore “do not value education” (p. 732). Other responses suggested that Black students received preferential treatment in that they were not “held accountable for their actions or behavior; that they were “intimidating;” and Black parents were actually the ones who were racists. Kailin also noted that a majority of respondents who attributed racial problems to Whites tended to remain silent when witnessing racial acts. Thus, even though these teachers recognized White racism, they perpetuated it through inaction.

Reducing White Racial Prejudice

Several studies investigated how specific pedagogical strategies reduced the level of racial prejudice among White pre- and inservice teachers. In an experiment with 124 mostly White undergraduates at a Southwestern university who were taking two sections of the same multicultural education course, McFalls & Cobb-Roberts (2001) explored how “cognitive dissonance” could reduce White resistance to diversity. According to cognitive dissonance theory, “an individual can experience psychological tensions, or dissonance, when new knowledge or information is incongruent with previously acquired knowledge” (p. 166). Psychologically speaking, this sense of dissonance is such an “unpleasant” experience that “people are motivated to reduce the dissonance in a way similar to how they would be motivated to reduce a drive such as hunger.” For White undergraduate students, the information presented in multicultural education courses is often “inconsistent with their prior beliefs and experiences.” As a result, “they are likely to experience dissonance that may be expressed outwardly in the form of resistance.” McFall & Cobb-Roberts suggest that such dissonance and resistance end up “defeat[ing]

the very purpose of multicultural education courses” (p. 166). They wanted to find out if knowledge about cognitive dissonance would reduce the amount of resistance their students experienced in their classes. In the first section of the multicultural education course, students were asked to read about White privilege. Following a general discussion about the reading, they were then asked what they had learned from the readings. The second group was given the same reading; however they were also given a lecture on cultural dissonance theory and then asked to write about the possible link between the article they read and cognitive dissonance theory. According to the researchers, the lecture on cognitive dissonance appeared to reduce the amount of resistance to the issue of race and diversity.

In their study, Lawrence and Bunche (1996) investigated the extent to which a multicultural education course influenced the racial identity development of five White female preservice teachers ranging in ages from 20-43 years. Helms’ (1990) theory of White racial identity development was used as a framework to gauge participants’ development. Multiple pedagogical strategies, which included various readings, written assignments, projects, and class discussions, were employed in an attempt to elicit students’ progression through the stages of Helms’ model. Data included interviews with students conducted by someone outside of the course before and after the course took place, as well as written class assignments. At the beginning of the course, all five participants were at the initial “contact stage.” However, by the end of the course, it appeared that all of the participants movement beyond this first stage—two moved to the “reintegration stage” and three moved onto the “pseudo-independent” or “immersion”

stage. According to the authors of the study, the two students who moved into the reintegration stage were unable “to abandon their racist personas by the end of the course” (p. 540). It was also unclear as to whether the three participants who had reached the second phase of Helms’ model of White racial identity development would be able to continue to move “further along Helm’s continuum” (p. 540). As a result of this concern, the authors suggest that, in order for White teachers to develop an anti-racist identity, more than one multicultural education course is necessary.

Rather than focusing on one multicultural education course, Bollin & Finkel (1995) used Helms’ model of White racial identity development as a framework for evaluating the program offered at the School of Education at West Chester University over a three-year period. During this time, several strategies were developed to help White preservice teachers gain a greater awareness of issues of race and diversity as they moved through Helms’ continuum. In order to assess these strategies, students’ experiences with issues of diversity were examined through the use of structured interviews, a random sample of questionnaires, reaction papers, and student logs. Findings from an examination of the data “suggest that multiple teaching strategies should be used that match levels of students’ development” (p. 29). According to the authors, many of the White students were in the “contact-stage” of Helms’ model when they entered the program. As a result, most were very “naïve” and “innocent” about issues of racism. This state of innocence was slightly challenged by reading specific texts about racial issues. However, after analyzing the data mentioned above, they discovered “that it was not reading itself that challenged students naïve thinking. Instead

it was the class discussion based on the readings” (p. 27). Such discussions only prompted students to move from the contact stage to the second stage— “disintegration/dissonance. In the end, the White teacher candidates who advanced the furthest along Helms’ continuum were those who had field experiences that brought them in direct one-to-one contact with students of color. The authors recommended that such field placements must “be accompanied by opportunities for personal reflection” (p. 29). All in all, Bollin & Finkle suggest that “curriculum integration across several courses would be more effective for preparing preservice teachers for diversity than trying to deal with the issues in a separate course” (p. 29).

While the studies mentioned above suggested positive results in dealing with White teacher candidates’ resistance to issues of race and diversity, several studies suggested mixed or negative results. For example, McIntyre (1997) investigated how thirteen White female preservice teachers who were participating in a “pre-practicum” field experience made meaning of Whiteness. All of the participants volunteered to be part of the study, and data included semi-structured interviews and group sessions that were audiotaped. McIntyre found that participants believed that multicultural education had little to do with Whiteness, racism, and issues of power and privilege; instead, they thought it only focused on different cultures. Participants also continued to believe in cultural myths regarding people of color and saw themselves as “White Knights” ready to save children of color from their home cultures.

Other studies offered mixed results. In an action research study that investigated the beliefs and experiences of 128 students taking a multicultural foundations course,

Cockrell et. al. (1999) wanted to investigate why students, in general, had such a negative response to the course. Data for this study included a demographic questionnaire, a position paper, journal entries, and a Capstone assignment that asked students to “evaluate and recommend solutions to a school district’s problems with chronic underachievement among African American students” (p. 354), as well as focus groups. Cockrell et. al. discovered that most of their students had little experience with diversity, and could be divided into three subgroups. In the first group, students believed the purpose of schooling was the “transmission of a common American culture” (p. 356). In the second group, students held a related position in that they believed schools should act as “cultural mediators” between ‘the dominant culture common to ‘all Americans’ and other non-dominant cultures” (p. 356). The third group, which was smaller than the first two, believed that schools should be sites of cultural transformation and “argued that education” should be “a means to achieve social equity and schools could be designed to reach this goal” (p. 357). Cockrell et. al. came to the conclusion that their students held “different, sometimes opposing positions on multiculturalism, based on personal experience, political ideologies, and beliefs about the roles of schools and teachers” (p. 362). Much of the resistance students had toward multicultural education emerged from these beliefs, especially those rooted in the notion of individuality.

Along similar lines, Sleeter (1996b) investigated inservice “teachers’ understanding of multicultural education and society in general” (p. 66) through a two-year professional development workshop. Thirty teachers from two “contiguous school districts” and 18 different schools voluntarily chose to participate in this workshop.

Twenty-six of the teachers were White, three were African American, and one was Mexican American. Twenty-six of the participants were female, while only six were males. Sleeter found that participants' perceptions of multicultural education could be divided into four categories: "those who saw it as irrelevant, those who saw it as human relations, those who saw it as building self-esteem among out-groups, and those whose perspectives defied classification" (p. 70). Sleeter concluded from this that, rather than "reconstructing" new knowledge, participants tended to "integrate information about race provided in [the workshop] into knowledge they already [had]" (p. 65). Thus, much like the preservice teachers in Cockrell et. al.'s study, attitudes about multicultural education were shaped by previous experience and beliefs.

Based upon Cockrell et. al. (1999) and Sleeter's (1996b) studies, it would appear that White teachers' attitudes, beliefs, values, and perceptions of racial awareness are strongly influenced by previous cultural and life experiences (Hollins, 1996). Using a life history approach, Johnson (2002) analyzed the narratives of six White teachers who served a racially diverse student population and were identified as being acutely "aware of race and racism." Johnson discovered that these White teachers' perceptions regarding race were influenced by several factors. For example, these teachers tended to have experiences that "disidentified" them from mainstream White culture or they possessed specific spiritual or philosophical beliefs in which morality was conflated with issues of social justice. Johnson also noted that cross-cultural experiences where Whites lived and worked with people of color within an equitable context allowed them to see the direct

effects of racism. Other studies (Sleeter, 1996a; Howard, 1999; Bartolomé, 2000) have also echoed the importance of cross-cultural experiences.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

In this study, I am investigating the ways that two White teachers' ideological stances regarding race and culture shape teaching and learning in their respective classrooms. An important part of teaching and learning are the pedagogical choices teachers make when presenting academic content area. Because such choices are rooted in the personal beliefs, perceptions, and values of each individual teacher, pedagogy can reflect an ideological position. For many White teachers, implicitly or explicitly influenced by color-blind or "Fair Play" ideology, the acknowledgement of "any students differences...particularly racial differences" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 31) can cause a great deal of discomfort. Thus, many of these teachers often avoid this discomfort by taking on a color-blind, assimilationist approach when choosing a pedagogical method that reflects "dysconscious racism" and maintains the current White dominated status quo (King, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 1994). However, the results of this type of approach can be academically harmful to students of color. Ennis (1998), for example, looked at the impact of federally forced desegregation and coeducational programs on the pedagogical choices of twelve veteran, middle school physical education teachers who had been teaching since the 1960s. Through a succession of three interviews with each of the twelve participants, Ennis noted teachers made very few curricular changes to the physical education curriculum in response to the federal mandates. They did not appear to possess any awareness or sensitivity regarding the individual identities of girls or

minority students nor did they attempt to find out what interested these children. In general, they continued to do what they had always done – create a curriculum that appealed primarily to White boys. Because of this, girls and minority students tended to avoid participation in physical education classes and, as a result, did not receive equitable physical education instruction.

According to Gay (2000), culturally relevant pedagogy can be described “as [the use of] cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them” (p. 29). Rather than defining cultural differences as a deficit, culturally relevant pedagogy “teaches *to and through* the strengths of these students” (p. 29). What this means is that culturally relevant pedagogy views each student’s culture of origin as a foundational resource for learning. Lee (1995) offers an example of the use of students’ culture of origin in her investigation of the use of “signifying” (also referred to as “the Dozens” or “Sounding”) as a cultural resource to help African American high school students develop interpretive literacy skills. Signifying is a complicated, highly figurative form of word play that requires verbal agility and excellent interpretive skills. It is highly prized by many African American adolescents. Lee discovered, through the implementation of an experimental literacy unit, that adolescents who were good at signifying were able to transfer skills used in interpreting signifying to specific African American literature. The results of this study suggest that, by gaining an understanding of students’ cultural and linguistic knowledge and using them as a resource to learning, diverse students will receive more equitable instruction.

Ladson-Billings' (1994, 1995) theoretical model of culturally relevant pedagogy, which emerged from her landmark ethnographic study of eight exemplary teachers (two White and six African American) for African American students, is critically oriented in the sense that it “not only addresses student achievement, but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate” (1995, p. 469). Because of this perspective, teaching that is culturally relevant “must meet three criteria: an ability to develop students academically, a willingness to nurture and support cultural competence, and the development of a sociopolitical or critical consciousness” (p. 483). However, in her study, Ladson-Billings notes that, while all of the teachers in her study met these criteria, they did in different ways—some used a progressive approach, while others were more structured and authoritarian.

Several other empirical studies have investigated the connection between teacher beliefs, values, and perceptions and culturally relevant pedagogy. In her qualitative case study of three White primary school teachers who were identified as effective instructors of Black children by Black administrators, Cooper (2003) noted a similarity between these teachers' beliefs and practices and the beliefs and practices of successful Black teachers. Many of the beliefs and practices described by Cooper also align with those of the teachers who participated in Ladson-Billings' study. They included a focus on helping African American students gain the necessary skills to read, write, and speak in Standard English, the use of multiple teaching strategies, a respect for the Black community, as well as a deep love for the children that they served. The teachers in

Cooper's study were racially conscious and had spent a great deal of time thinking about their own Whiteness. Consequently, they had a great deal of empathy for their Black students and expected them to do well academically.

Powell (1997), uncovered similar beliefs and values in her five-year case study of one "second career" White teacher—"Amy"—who, over time, worked to implement a culturally relevant practice within her classroom. Powell noted that over the five-years of her study, Amy developed a heightened sense of cultural sensitivity that altered her teaching so that, like the teachers in Ladson-Billings' study, she was inviting her students to learn in a way that allowed her to pull from, rather than transmit, knowledge to her students. According to Powell, Amy "continuously explored students' cultural backgrounds and families, linked students' backgrounds to school culture, and assumed various leadership roles at school that were related to racial minority students" (p. 473). Like Ladson-Billings' teachers, she had great love and respect for the Hispanic students she worked with on a daily basis. Powell argues that the case of Amy proves that Ladson-Billings' theory of culturally relevant pedagogy can be applied across "ethnic and racial boundaries" (p. 481). However, because the "teaching qualities demonstrated by Amy are firmly and deeply embedded in her biographical experiences" (p. 481), Powell feels that "a more comprehensive theory of culturally relevant pedagogy might include an explicit dimension that deals with the reality of biography, and explores how biography might or might not predispose teachers to create culturally relevant curriculum and instruction for their students" (p. 481).

The purpose of Howard's (2001) "study was to describe and examine the pedagogical practices that four elementary school teachers used with African American students in urban settings" (p. 181). The four participants, who were all African American women who had been teaching between 5-20 years, were defined as effective teachers of African American students by parents, administrators, and peers. Data included three formal interviews, classroom observations, and informal discussions that occurred during the observation period. Howard discovered that the four teachers in his study exhibited characteristics which are similar to the one's Ladson-Billings' teachers exhibited. For example, Howard's teachers engaged in "holistic instructional strategies" that focused on both the academic achievement of students and their social and emotional development. These teachers also believed that what happened outside the school was just as important as what happened in the school. They also "understood the salience of language for their students and used culturally consistent communicative competencies to facilitate communication in their classrooms" (p. 189-190). What this meant was that the teachers in Howard's study incorporated African American speech practices that were used at home within their classrooms, thereby connecting school to the community outside of the classroom. Like the teachers in Ladson-Billings' and Cooper's studies, Howard's teachers were deeply committed to teaching their African American students the skills they needed to attain academic success.

The Influence of Teachers' Race on Teaching

A final area of relevant literature reviewed for this study investigates the influence of teachers' race on teaching. According to Irvine (1990), many White teachers believe

that African American children come from poor environments and suffer from inferior parenting. Emerging from this deficit view is the valorization of specific types of “knowledge, skills, values, and norms” (Irvine, 1990, p. 2) that are based upon White European cultural norms and practices. Thus, many of these teachers do not see what children can do; they only see what they cannot (Delpit, 1993). Much of the research on White teachers also suggests that many White teachers suffer from a general lack of knowledge about other cultures (Bennett, 2001; Sleeter, 2001a). This lack of awareness can result in unconsciously driven and/or unquestioned discriminatory school and classroom practices (Su, 1996), such as tracking policies that relegate students of color into lower tracked classes (Schofield, 1986; Irvine, 1990; Oakes, 2005) and a disproportionate numbers of students of color being suspended (Schofield, 1986). Other studies have noted that White teachers do not challenge school-wide inequities; instead, they view themselves as good-hearted saviors or “White Knights” (McIntyre, 1997) who will help children of color overcome their cultural and linguistic handicaps (Harper, 2000). Given these disturbing findings, many educators believe minority students more likely to excel educationally when matched with teachers who share their race or ethnicity” (Dee, 2004, p. 195). In fact, the findings from Dee’s recent randomized experiment, strongly suggest that same race pairings between students and teachers significantly increased student outcomes in reading and math for both Black and White students (Dee, 2004).

Many African American and Latino teachers view teaching as a personal and political endeavor in which African American children are prepared to challenge and

transform existing social inequities (Foster, 1995; Gordon, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Sleeter, 2001a; Bernal, 2002). Teachers of color, who often have bicultural knowledge of their own cultural experience and the dominant culture, attempt to help their students understand and challenge the cultural norm through pedagogical tools such as “counterstorytelling” (Bernal, 2002; Bell, 2003) and “critical translation” (Martinez-Aleman, 1999).

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN: A CRITICAL ETHNOGRAPHY

For this dissertation, I investigated how the ideological stance of two White Elementary schoolteachers informed their construction of race as well as how these constructions influenced teaching and learning within their respective classrooms. The primary purpose of this dissertation was to get at the spoken *and* unspoken attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs each participant held about race and its meaning within their practice, their students, and their schools. In order to do this, I utilized a critical ethnographic approach that allowed me to examine the experience of two White teachers from a variety of perspectives. This approach enabled me to uncover the silent and often unconscious beliefs they maintained about race – beliefs that may have challenged or perpetuated social inequities within the classroom and school at-large.

Critical Ethnography: A Theoretical Framework

To situate this study within a historical context, this chapter explores the historical formation and methodological assumptions that pertain to ethnography in general and this study in particular. Because ethnography is about the study of culture, this chapter includes a definition of culture that pertains to and shaped this study. This chapter also includes a brief discussion of trustworthiness in ethnography, followed by a discussion of my role as researcher.

Historical Perspectives on Ethnography

According to Vidich and Lyman (2000), the origins of ethnography are in the 15th and 16th centuries when Western-Europeans first encountered the “non-Occidental,” (p.

38) non-Christian “other” living in the New World. Since these early beginnings, ethnographic research has gone through several significant epistemological and methodological changes. However, no matter what the form or genre, most ethnographic research conducted today “refers both to the research *process* and to the customary *product* of that effort – the written ethnographic account” (Wolcott, 1997, p. 328, italics in original). In general, such written accounts focus on the way that a particular group of people living within a specific place and time “lead their routine, [un]remarkable, and ritual lives with each other in their environment and the beliefs and customs that comprise their common sense about their world (Muecke, 1994, p. 189-190). Most ethnographic research is driven by key epistemological assumptions. For example, it is assumed that there is not one objective experience but multiple perspectives, positions, and realities that are socially constructed within specific times and places and, as a result, cannot be replicated in the ways experimental or quasi-experimental research designs are. These perspectives, positions, and realities are “different for each individual” and “for each culture that ethnographers come into contact with as field-workers” (Tedlock, p. 471). According to Atkinson and Hammersley (1994), all ethnographic research shares the following features:

- a strong emphasis on exploring the nature of particular social phenomena, rather than setting out to test hypotheses about them
- a tendency to work primarily with “unstructured” data, that is, data that have not been coded at the point of data collection in terms of a closed set of analytic categories

- investigation of a small number of cases, perhaps just one case in detail
- analysis of data that involves explicit interpretation of the meanings and functions of human actions, the product of which mainly takes the form of verbal decryptions and explanations, with quantification and statistical analysis playing a subordinate role at most. (p. 248)

While there are many similarities between different forms of ethnographic research, there are also significant methodological differences. Marjorie Muecke (1994) has identified “at least four major schools of thought about ethnography” (p. 188) within the field of anthropology: *classical* ethnography, *systematic* ethnography, *interpretive* or *hermeneutic* ethnography, and *critical* ethnography. According to Muecke, classical ethnography is the “product of a prolonged sojourn during which the researcher resides with the community being studied and observes and documents while directly participating in selected activities” (p. 191, italics in original). Within this school of thought, trustworthiness is based upon the “credibility” of the ethnographer, who is required to keep his or her subjectivity in check so he or she is able to provide as objective description as possible.

The systematic school of ethnography, which first emerged within the social sciences after World War II, promotes a “formalized” approach to data collection steeped in a positivistic “rhetoric” (Denzin, 1997, p. 17). Like classical ethnography, the systematic ethnographer defines culture as a bounded system that can be defined objectively. The purpose of this form of ethnography is “to define the structure of culture,

rather than...people and their social interaction, emotions, and materials” (Muecke, 1994, p. 192) in order to gain a life-like picture of a particular group or culture.

The interpretive or hermeneutic school of ethnography emerged during the 1970s and is exemplified by the writings of Clifford Geertz (1973). Geertz believed that “positivist” forms of investigation “were giving way to a more pluralistic, interpretive, open-ended perspective” (Denzin & Lincoln, p. 15). In interpretive ethnography, culture is not seen “as a group’s distinct pattern of behaviors.” Instead it is viewed “as ‘webs of significance,’ or meanings partially shared and manipulated by those who knew them” (Eisenhart, 2001, p. 209). It is a form of “cultural analysis” (Muecke, p. 193) that is not based upon “experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning” (Geertz, p. 5). Rather than “locating culture in people’s minds” as the systematic ethnographer does, the interpretive ethnographer presents “thick descriptions” of human events that offer an “analysis of the myriad inferences and implications of the embeddedness of behavior in its [local] cultural context” (Muecke, p. 192).

Like interpretive ethnography, the critical school of ethnography rejects the assumption made by the classical and systematic schools that culture can be defined as an objective truth. However, it also takes interpretive ethnography to task “for excluding contrary voices that keep culture alive and ever-changing” (Muecke, p. 194). For many scholars, critical ethnography starts with “an ethical responsibility to address processes of unfairness or injustice within a particular lived domain” (Madison, 2005, p. 5). This means that critical ethnography, like other forms of critical research, subscribes to the epistemological notion that all aspects of research – from data collection to analysis –

should challenge and transform inequitable power structures. Such a transformation occurs through a dialogic, reflexive process between the researcher and the researched that embraces multiple voices and perspectives “at the same time [it places] them in a historical and ideological framework” (Quantz & O’Connor, 1988, p. 108). In general, critical ethnography also “allows...for the relationship of liberation and history, and...its hermeneutical task is to call into question the social and cultural conditioning of human activity and the prevailing political structure.” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000, p. 299). Those engaged in critical ethnography endeavor to unpack and expose the unconscious and conscious ways that ideology influences research and the construction of knowledge. It is ultimately an emancipatory endeavor that calls for “the creation of movement for personal and social transformation in order to redress injustices, support peace, and form spaces of democracy” (Smith, 1997, p. 181).

The purpose of this study is to get at things that are conscious and unconscious by openly examining and critiquing the “common sense” beliefs about race held by two White teachers. Because of this, a critical ethnographic approach was most appropriate and may well be the only kind of approach one could use to get at these issues. Having said this, as a critical researcher, I have been careful not to judge my participants even as I attempt to expose their ideological beliefs about race and its meanings within their classrooms. As Brtizman (2003) writes in her critical study of two student teachers learning to teach:

To assume a critical voice...does not mean to destroy or devalue the struggles of others. Instead, a critical voice attempts the delicate and discursive work of

rearticulating the tension between and with words and practices, or constraints and possibilities, as it questions the taken-for-granted knowledge shaping responses to everyday life and the meanings fashioned for them. A critical voice is concerned not just with representing the voices of oneself and others, but with narrating, considering, and evaluating them. (Britzman, p. 35)

Critical Ethnography and Definitions of Culture

In critical ethnography, conceptions of culture are informed by a wide range of postmodern, feminist, and post-structural scholars who have rejected the traditional definition of culture as a bounded system. These scholars argue that conventional approaches to culture have been rendered obsolete by several factors such as efficient new forms of transportation, fast paced informational technologies, and migration patterns that are changing the demographic landscapes of industrialized countries such as the United States. This situation has “created mixed or mixed-up social relationships by traditional anthropological standards” (Eisenhart, 2001, p. 213) in which “culture recedes into the conceptual background, while identity moves center stage” (p. 215). Thus, the focus of inquiry moves away from culture alone towards that of identity and “the ways individuals construct and use meanings of self within historically specific contexts” (p. 215).

Given this focus on identity, some scholars have argued that the notion of culture should be completely abandoned in ethnographic research. Abu-Lughod (1991), for example, claims that traditional definitions of culture “enforce separation that inevitably carry a sense of hierarchy” (p. 138) in which the “Western self” is viewed as superior to

the non-Western “Other.” The focal point of anthropological study is on potential differences rather than potential similarities. As a result, anthropologists engage in a “professional discourse that elaborates on the meaning of culture in order to account for, explain, and understand cultural difference” at the same time it “also helps construct, produce, and maintain it” (p. 143). Abu-Lughod argues that this emphasis on cultural difference essentializes non-Western cultural groups and encourages the domination of these groups through forced assimilation. She believes an antidote for this situation is to write “against culture” by exploring the similarities between individuals who inhabit different social contexts.

Sherry Ortner (1991) believes that culture will always remain a relevant part of identity development and, as a result, must always be considered. She acknowledges that cultures will always be “riddled with inequality, differential understanding, and differential advantage.” However, she also contends that cultures “remain for the people who live within them sources of value, meaning, and ways of understanding – and resisting – the world” (p. 187). Eisenhart (2001) provides the following rationale for culture:

Individuals are not free to choose for themselves any view of the world, any way of acting in class, any definition of success, or any identity. In practice, such choices are constrained by intersubjective understanding of what is possible, appropriate, legitimate, properly radical, and so forth. That is, they are constrained by culture and the enduring social structures that culture mediates. (p. 215)

Thus, identity is deeply embedded in, fashioned by, and inseparable from cultural experience. It is a resource “in the sense of what it provides in the way of order, salience, and value, while at the same time attending to how it is both constituted by and contributes to the reproduction of enduring structures” (Eisenhart, p. 216).

For the critical ethnographer, there is not one absolute definition or conception of culture that applies to all critical ethnographic research. Therefore, each critical ethnographer is forced to make a well-reasoned, principled choice regarding the cultural framework he or she wishes to utilize in his or her investigation. This particular study was driven by an “expanded view of culture” (Eisenhart, p. 216) that acknowledges the relationship and tension between individual identities and socially agreed upon patterns that structure society. Rather than viewing culture as a bounded and predetermined structure, it examines the ways identity is molded by larger cultural contexts such as the society-at-large as well as more localized cultural contexts such as individual classrooms. The purpose was to examine how the interaction between these context and identity create, alter, and/or transform the individual.

Trustworthiness in Critical Ethnography

Howe & Eisenhart (1990) argue that it is not useful to judge the value of qualitative and interpretive methods like critical ethnography using modified positivistic standards based upon an epistemological framework that values and promotes isolated objectivity, generalizability, and quantifiable outcomes. This is because quantitative and interpretive or critical researchers ask different types of questions and each is driven by different epistemological and methodological assumptions. For example, within this

positivistic view, subjectivity is considered antithetical to the process of knowledge production because it allows bias to enter into the overall picture and taints the search for truth. On the other hand, critical ethnographers, like other qualitative researchers, believe the primary instrument of data collection and analysis in ethnographic research is the researcher. As a result, all conclusions drawn from analysis are filtered through the researcher's own personal, cultural, political, class, and racialized lenses (Merriam, 2001, p. 22).

The primary purpose of critical ethnographic research is to represent multiple subjectivities or identities (Eisenhart, 2001) at the same time that it challenges existing inequalities; therefore, it cannot be assessed the same way that experimental research designs are. To do so would open any such study up to the "charges that it is hopelessly subjective, unscientific, relativistic, and virtually without any standards at all" (p. 3). There are, however, several ways that the value, authority, and trustworthiness of ethnographic research can be assessed. For example, many ethnographers adhere to the notion of cultural relativism. Cultural relativism means there is not one standardized way to assess and interpret all cultures. This is because there are multiple and complex interpretations of truth within every cultural context and/or situation. Therefore, the ethnographer is only able to present "partial truth" (Clifford, 1986) of what he or she observes, as it is nearly impossible to present all perspectives. Trustworthiness aligns with cultural relativism when the ethnographer can describe this aspect of the ethnographic process as well as reflexively state the way his or her personal background and experience have impacted the study.

In this study, I have incorporated Lather's (1986, 1991) concept of validity for critical, emancipatory research that includes the following concepts: triangulation, face validity, catalytic validity and systematized reflexivity. In general, *triangulation* refers to multiple forms of research methods such as field notes, interviews, and archival data sources that are used to crosscheck information and support conclusions made by the researcher. Lather (1986) refers to an "expanded" notion of triangulation that moves "beyond the psychometric definition of multiple measures to include multiple data sources, methods, and theoretical schemes" (p. 270). This means that the researcher must "utilize designs that allow counterpatterns as well as convergence if data are to be credible" (p. 270). While interviews were the primary data source for this investigation, additional types of data such as field notes from participant observations, informal interviews, and archival data (e.g., curriculum materials and school-wide information) were also collected. All of the collected data has been analyzed from several different lenses (i.e. chronological readings, reading by data type, and reading by theme).

In order to ensure the trustworthiness of their data, researchers must bring initial findings back to the participants for review. Lather (1986, 1991) refers to this reciprocal process as *face validity* and believes that it enables both the researcher and the researched to participate in theory building. It also supports systematic reflexivity in that it prevents theoretical imposition by the researcher. In this study, data collection was a participatory process in that there was an open dialogue between the participants and researcher throughout the entire data collection process. Participants were also asked to read and

comment on chapter drafts. Participants' comments were then included in the final version of this study.

According to Lather (1991), researchers engaged in critical research must be sure that “the research process re-orient, focuses and energizes participants toward knowing reality in order to transform it” (Lather, p. 68). The term *catalytic validity* refers to this process. Because data collection in this study was a dialogical, reflexive, and participatory process, participants had ample opportunities to reflect upon and analyze the underlying assumptions that shaped their personal construction of race. Through this process, the two White teachers who participated in this study uncovered some of their unspoken beliefs that drive their classroom practice.

In order to promote dialogical theory building and combat theoretical imposition by the researcher, Lather suggests that *systematic reflexivity* must be built into the research design so that the researcher can critically question his or her research practices. This must be done so that the researcher does not inflict his or her personal interpretations onto participants. Lather (1991) offers several questions that can assist the researcher as she questions her own practice:

- (a) Did I encourage ambivalence, ambiguity, and multiplicity or did I impose order and structure?
- (b) What has been muted, repressed, or unheard?
- (c) Did I create a text that was multiple without being pluralistic, double without being paralyzed? (p. 84)

The point of this study was to try to understand how the ideological stance of White teachers plays out in classrooms, particularly in relation to race. This means that, as I examined and problematized the meaning of Whiteness for participants, I also, as a White researcher and former classroom teacher, had to do the same for myself. It required continuous reflexivity and a willingness to explore how my own personal racial background impacted this investigation. Thus, it was important for me as the researcher to be keenly aware of how my experience and subjective views impact the research process and to be sure that all biases are made explicit throughout the research process.

Role of Researcher

Because this study is about exploring the ways that two White elementary school teachers' spoken and unspoken beliefs and values about teaching and learning shape their constructions of race and culture, it was important for me as the researcher to understand fully the ways in which my role outside of the research environment shaped the outcomes of this investigation. However, it was not enough simply to provide an emotionally charged confessional account of my own demographic background and experiences. Such autobiographical aspects are "only interesting if [one is] able to draw deeper connections between personal experience and the subject under study" (Behar, 1996, p. 13). Therefore, it was not necessary for me to present a comprehensive autobiographical account of my life experience—to do so would have been overly indulgent and compromise the integrity of the study. Instead, I worked to develop "a keen understanding of what aspects of the self are the most important filters through which [I] perceive[ed] the world and, more particularly, the topic being studied" (p. 13). Once

having identified and acknowledged such filters, it was important for me to fully unpack the potential benefits and possible pitfalls they offer for a given study.

My experiences as a White, elementary-school teacher who has served a diverse student population represents a powerful filter for the interpretations and analysis of this study as it parallels the racial and professional experiences of participants in many ways. Like both of my participants, I grew up in a racially isolated community, believing that most people were Catholic. Like Katherine, one of the teachers in this study, I believed that being Jewish was exotic and strange. Like Megan, the second teacher, I felt deeply connected to my mother's large extended family and looked forward to holiday gathering and family reunions.

Certainly, these similarities provided me with an empathetic understanding of the day-to-day life in Megan and Katherine's classrooms. For example, I recognized the pressures of preparing linguistically and culturally diverse students for high-stakes testing, and I remembered how hard it was to non-judgmentally negotiate one's own cultural experience with the home culture of one's students. There were, however, fundamental dangers lurking within this state of empathic understanding and similarity; if not careful, I could easily have fallen prey to what Hurd and McIntyre (1996) refer to as the "seduction of sameness." Hurd and McIntyre describe this seduction as follows:

There has been much discussion in feminist research of the inherent problems of representing the 'Other' in ways that distance the participants from one another, positioning one as subordinate, and therefore one as privileged...What has been ignored is the problematic dynamics of representing the other that are manifested

in research in which the participants are marked more by similarity than by difference. We suggest that *sameness* distances the participants (researcher and the researched) from a critical reflexive research process and privileges one point of view over another. This often results in the misrepresentation of the research participants' stories. (p. 86)

In the instance of this study, I worked hard to avoid being seduced in three ways. First, there were times when I was dangerously close to over-identifying with the participants and found myself projecting my own experiences as a teacher onto them. While this had the potential of building a relationship between the participants and me, it also had the potential of overly influencing the data in that I was focused more on myself than the two teachers.

Second, because their classroom experiences and their beliefs about race at times aligned with my own, I was at risk of accepting without question my "participants' lived, *but critically unexamined*" (Hurd and McIntyre, 1996, p. 88) interpretations of their ideological stances and the choices they made in their classrooms regarding race. Leaving this unchecked would have put me at jeopardy of colluding with participants' potentially unexamined racism and biases. In order to combat the seduction of sameness, I spent a great deal of time interrogating them in order to stay centered on the task of uncovering the hidden assumptions the participants had about race. Third, as data collection progressed, I came to like and admire both participants very much, as they proved to be very committed and dedicated teachers dealing with a variety of difficulties on a daily basis. Because of my warm feelings towards these women, I had to be

extremely careful not to allow that those feelings to cloud my analysis or soften my findings.

Another aspect of my life experience that serves as a filter for this study is the way my own personal assumptions about race have changed over time. When I first began to teach over a decade ago, I had very little understanding of my own constructions of race. As I worked with more students of color, I began to realize I had lived a racially isolated life and began to examine the meaning of my own racial privilege within the context of my classroom and school community. Once I became aware of this privilege, I became quite frustrated with contemporary forms of institutional and cultural racism embedded within many school environments. As a result, I often experienced a great sense of righteous indignation over any perceived racist act. In order to conduct this study, I had to keep this tendency in check so I did not alienate or project my own experiences dealing with Whiteness onto respondents as they shared their stories with me. Overall, I kept reminding myself that I still had a great deal of personal work to do regarding issues of race and, like my respondents, I, too, was learning how my ideological stances inform my own constructions of race.

The major challenge for me as a researcher was finding a balance between the seduction of sameness and the critical theory that supports this study. I worked hard to avoid being blinded by similarities between participants and myself at the same time that I encouraged them to critically examine their own personal constructions of race in a non-judgmental manner. This meant that the participants struggled to uncover issues that

might have caused cognitive dissonance in a manner that was supportive and educative rather than combative.

Not only did I have to balance the seduction of sameness with a critical perspective, I also had to acknowledge that the actual experiences of participants and my own interpretation of those experiences were not the same thing. My narrative account is at least a reinterpretation based upon participants' telling and my re-telling of their experiences. According to Britzman (2003), this process of reinterpretation is not clean and tidy; it is wrought with two important tensions. First, not only is the researcher speaking for participants, he or she is also "re-read[ing] her words through the prism of cultural critique" (p. 76). This is an extremely delicate task, as the researcher must walk a tightrope between the relationships forged during data collection and subsequent critique of participants' experiences. Second, the researcher is also, "theorizing [participants'] identities, and in so doing constructing a textual identity that springs from...different narrators: [my participants] and me" (p. 76). What this means is that, through the interview process, participants and I, co-constructed (Mishler, 1986) a narrative that could have only emerged through our interactions (Kvale, 1996). Without these interactions, which were designed to address the research questions driving this study, the ways that White teachers' ideological stance informed their construction of race may never have been addressed.

Research Site

At the time of this study, both participants taught in schools located within the North East City Public School (NECPS) district. The most significant aspect of the North East City Public Schools to this investigation is a history of racial discord that continues to resonate throughout the district even today. In the early 1970s, a federal judge declared that the schools were unconstitutionally segregated. As a result, many children were reassigned and bused to schools outside of their neighborhoods in order to make the city schools more racially balanced. In many city neighborhoods, conflicts over busing inspired a great deal of racial tension, protests, and violence. Such clashes gave the city a national reputation as a place of racial intolerance and White bigotry. As a result of this crisis, many middle and upper-middle class White residents fled the city schools, either sending their children to private schools within the city or simply moving to nearby suburbs.

During the early 1990s, the federal judge who oversaw the city's desegregation plan turned the task over to the North East City School Board. Once the board had this responsibility, it implemented a new desegregation plan that was centered on the idea of "controlled choice." Controlled choice meant that city schools were separated into three separate zones created to maintain racial balance at the same time it allowed for well-established neighborhoods to remain as intact as possible. Through controlled choice, students were able to attend any school within their respective zone. School assignments were based on such things as choice, location, and the racial make up of the school.

While generally successful, many families were unable to get their first, or sometimes, second choices of schools. In 1999, a case was filed against the NECPS claiming that White students were being unfairly denied access to their neighborhood schools. As a result, the city school board eliminated the policy of race-based assignments in September 2000. Race is no longer a deciding factor in determining school assignments and, like other urban communities across the United States, the NECPS are becoming more and more segregated (Kozol, 2005; Tatum, 2007).

When this study began, there were 77,000 school-age children living in North East City; however, 20,000 of these children attended private schools, charter schools, or other institutions outside of the city. The NECPS served the remaining 57,000 K-12 students. The demographic make up of the NECPS student population was majority, minority in that 41% of students were Black; 35% were Hispanic; 14% were White; 9% were Asian; 1% was multi-racial, non-Hispanic; and, less than 1% was Native American. Over 70% of the student population was eligible to receive free or reduced meals at school. Roughly 18% of the NECPS student body was defined as English Language Learners (ELL) or Limited English Proficient (LEP), and 20% of NECPS students were enrolled in various special education programs across the city.

The demographic make up of the teaching staff was quite different. Of the nearly 5,000 teachers hired during the 2006-2007 academic year by the NECPS, 25% were Black, 9% were Hispanic, 5% were Asian, and 61% were White. In order to increase and maintain the number of African American and minority teaching and administrative personnel within the system, a racial hiring quota has been in place since the early 1970s.

Historically, this situation has caused a great deal of tension between African American and White teachers. For example, 16 years after the first court-ordered desegregation plan, the same federal judge who declared the NECPS “unconstitutionally segregated,” ruled that teacher lay-offs could not be based upon seniority alone. This meant White teachers with greater seniority could be let go before African American teachers who had been working within the city for less time. Even though the desegregation crisis occurred over 30 years ago and the racially-based school assignment policies of that time have been completely dismantled, the continuation of racial hiring quotas have kept its memory alive amongst some NECPS staff members.

What this means for this study is that although the two participants each taught at a different elementary school within the city, they both worked in a system where the specter of racial tension was deeply embedded within the landscape of both teachers’ professional lives. However, the two teachers did not necessarily have the same level of awareness about the origins of this racial tension. As the next chapters show, for one teacher, the struggle over desegregation occurred well before she was born. As a result, she did not interpret the contemporary racial tensions that occurred in her building within a historical context. On the other hand, the second teacher, who was a young child during the desegregation crisis, made several connections between historical events and current attitudes about race at her school when she talked about her experience.

Research Access and Participants

In selecting participants for this study, I sought two White urban elementary school teachers who had been teaching for at least two years and who served a majority

minority student population. In order to generate as much variation as possible, it was also my desire that each participant worked within a different school context.

To locate potential participants, I elicited the help of the director of the practicum office at a local area university. After hearing the purpose of my dissertation, she agreed to provide me with the contact information of a dozen White elementary school teachers who had previously served as cooperating teachers for her institution. I then corresponded with each person on the list through an email in which I introduced myself, explained how I got his or her name, and described the purpose of my study. I received a positive response from two teachers—Megan DeAngelis and Katherine Mackenzie. Each agreed to meet with me so that I could share more details about my study in person. During the first meeting I provided each woman with more details about the purpose of my study as well as a description of the data collection process. After this initial meeting, both women agreed to participate in my study.

Before I could begin collecting data I was required to submit a research proposal to the North East City Public School system that included a problem statement, literature review, research questions, an outline of my research design and analysis strategy, how I would be maintaining participant confidentiality and the potential impact of my study. I was also required to submit an executive summary of my research proposal along with a letter of approval from the chair of my dissertation committee. It was also necessary to receive approval from each teacher's building principal. Once I received the authorization from the district and building principals, I met with each of my participants again to schedule interviews and classroom observations.

While there were minimal risks associated with this research, it did require extra time on the part of both teachers. In addition, given the sensitivity of the topic being researched, it was anticipated that there would be times when participants uncovered things about their practice that made them feel uncomfortable. In order to prevent participants from feeling emotionally over-exposed, I made it clear that they could elect not to answer particular questions or withdraw from the study at any time during the data collection process. In order to protect the confidentiality of participants, pseudonyms were used for the teachers, the schools and communities where they taught.

Megan DeAngelis, who had a master's degree in special education from a well-respected Jesuit University, was an earnest White woman of Italian decent. At the time of this study Megan was 25 years old, unmarried, and in her third year of teaching at the James-Elliott Elementary School, which was located in a commercial-residential North East City neighborhood. She was teaching in a particularly challenging fourth grade, integrated classroom comprised of 18 children, 16 of whom had Individual Education Plans (IEPs). After receiving an email from me, which outlined the purpose of my dissertation and meeting with me in person, she agreed to participate in this study during the fall of 2006.

Katherine Mackenzie was an energetic White urban schoolteacher who wore a variety of professional hats at the school, district and university-based level. Katherine, who was also unmarried, was 33 years old and in her twelfth year of teaching at the Pierce Elementary School, located in a quiet working-class residential neighborhood only a mile away from the James-Eliot. Like Megan, Katherine was working with a

challenging group of children. Because of Katherine’s many professional commitments, I was initially reluctant to ask her to participate in this study, although she was one of the teachers recommended to me by the director of the practicum office. Thus, instead of directly asking her to participate, I sent her an email asking if she knew anyone at the school who might be willing to help me out with this investigation. Katherine immediately responded by saying that she herself would like to participate.

Data Collection and Sources

Interviews were the primary data source for this study. However, I also conducted several sessions of classroom observations and collected various classroom artifacts such as teacher generated worksheets and literature used within the classroom. In order to get a sense of the school at-large, I interviewed each of the building principals. By triangulating this assortment of data, I was able to explore the ways in which each teacher viewed race and its meaning with the classroom from a variety of perspectives.

Table 3.1 provides a summary of the collected data.

Table 3.1
Data Sources

DATA SOURCES	PURPOSE	FREQUENCY per PARTICIPANT	TOTALS FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS
Teacher interviews	(a) To uncover the tacit assumptions, ideological stances, beliefs, and perceptions that White elementary teachers have regarding the construction of culture and race. (b) In conjunction with participant observations,	(a) One exploratory interview during sample selection (b) 3 formal interviews taped and transcribed (30-90 minutes each). (c) 3-7 informal interviews/conversations conducted during the observation period.	(a) Two informal exploratory interviews with field notes (b) 6 formal interviews taped and transcribed (30-90 minutes each). (c) 6-14 informal

	expose possible ruptures between teacher awareness and action.		interviews done throughout six-week observation period.
Principal Interviews	To gain a greater understanding of the school context at-large.	One 45 minute interview	2 interviews
Participant Observations w/ field notes	To observe interactions between (a) Teacher and Students (b) Students and Students (c) Teacher and Teacher (d) Teacher and Curriculum (Also, to compare observations to what is said in interviews)	Two 2-hour visits every other week for 12 weeks. 12-13 classroom observation visits per teacher.	24-26 classroom observations.
Classroom artifacts	To investigate the interaction between teachers' ideological stance and the materials used in class. What types of materials were being used? What types of materials were not being used?	Student work, curriculum materials, school notices, etc.	2 sets of artifacts

Teacher Interviews

Data collection took place between January and July of 2007. During this time, each participant participated in a total of four semi-structured interviews – one informal introductory interview and three formal interviews– that ranged from 30-120 minutes.

Because interviewing allows the researcher to enter the private world of individual

experience and uncover “settings that would otherwise be closed to us” (Weiss, 1994, p. 1), it is a useful tool in uncovering the tacit assumptions, ideological stances, beliefs, and perceptions that my two participants had about race both within and outside the classroom. In conjunction with participant observations, the use of interviews also helped to expose ruptures between teacher awareness and action.

In order to support the participants as they uncovered tacit beliefs about race in the most collegial and non-judgmental way as possible, interviews were designed to be more like structured conversations rather than question and answer sessions. What this meant was that each interview began with a loose set of predetermined questions; however, room was allowed for elaboration or tangential musings as long as these were related to the questions driving this investigation. Interviews were supplemented by a handful of email correspondences, some initiated by participants and some by me.

The informal introductory interview took place immediately before the observation period began. The purpose of this relatively short interview was to get a sense of the institutional structure of each participant’s school with regard to race, diversity, and the relationship between teachers and the administration. I also wanted to get a sense of each teacher’s classroom in terms of how the day was structured as well as the demographic information about students (See Appendix A). The first formal interview occurred immediately following the first two observation sessions and it focused on each participant’s familial and cultural background as well as past experiences with racial, ethnic, and religious differences. I also asked for clarification about specific events that I had witnessed in the classroom (See Appendix B).

The second formal interview took place half way through the 12-week observation period. The purpose of this interview was to begin to get at participants' ideological stances, how these shaped their view of race as well as how these views were enacted within the classroom. Questions for this second interview were based upon the two previous interviews and classroom observation up until that point. This meant that, while there were similar questions, the interviews were different for each participant. The third formal interview took place roughly two months after the observation period was completed. The final interview, which lasted between 90-120 minutes, was divided into two parts. During the first part of the interview I checked in with participants about the biographical information they had shared with me during previous interviews. I then asked them to comment on what I thought might be emergent themes and motifs related to their ideological stances and constructions of race that I had begun to uncover through multiple readings of the data. I used Janet Helms' (1990, 1992, 1995) stage theory of White racial identity development as means of structuring the second half of this final interview. I began by outlining the underlying the assumptions that drive Helms' theoretical model for participants. I then provided a description of each status-levels, which included an experience that aligned with the status-level described. I then asked participants describe an experience from their lives that aligned with each status-level. All of these interviews were digitally record and then transcribed by me.

In addition to one informal and three informal interviews, participants and I engaged in several short conversations throughout the 12-week observation period.

These short exchanges, which often occurred during classroom transitions, were recorded in my field notes and often brought up again during the three formal interviews.

Participant Observations

In addition to interviews and email correspondences, I also conducted 13 participant observations within each participant's classrooms. The purpose of these observations was to gather information about how participants' tacit assumptions, ideological stances, beliefs, and perceptions interacted with curricula, student interactions, and teaching and learning. Observations occurred twice a week, every other week, for a total of three months. In general, these sessions lasted two hours each; however, there was one session in which I spent an entire day in each participant's classroom so that I could get a sense of how the school day was structured. Throughout each observation session, I looked for any mention, acknowledgment, or discussion of race, racial or ethnic difference, or racism by the teacher or students. In particular, I wanted to know how each participant negotiated the topic of race with students and colleagues. I also made every effort to be conscious of the spaces when race, racial or ethnic difference, or racism were not mentioned. All observations were hand-written in a field journal. Once each observation period was completed, field notes were typed up and stored as a Word file.

Classroom Artifacts

In addition to interviews and participant observation, I also collected and examined various classroom and teaching artifacts such as literature found within the classroom, lesson websites, teacher-generated lessons plans, student assignments,

worksheets, and tests. I wanted to investigate the interaction between teachers' ideological stance and the materials used in class. I was also curious about what types of materials were being used as well as what types of materials were not being used.

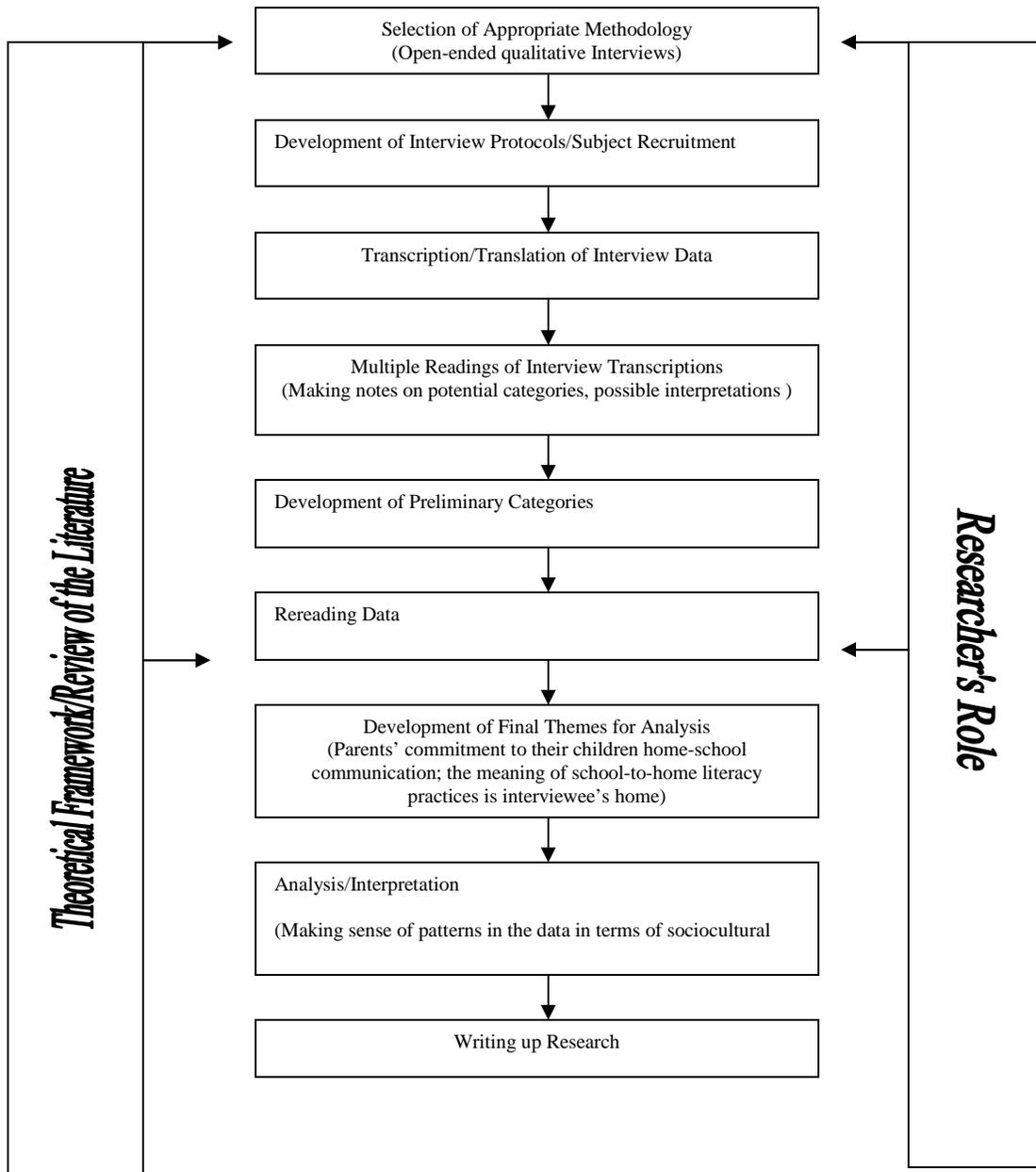
Data Analysis

In *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions*, John Creswell (1998) notes that there is not one-prescribed “off-the-shelf” way to collect, organize, and analyze data that is applied to every qualitative investigation. According to Creswell, qualitative researchers tend to “custom-build” and “revise” analytic methods based upon what happens within the field. As a result, qualitative data analysis can be quite an idiosyncratic process. However, even though there are many ways of conducting qualitative data analysis, Creswell suggests that, in general, most analysis “conforms to a general contour.” (p. 142). For Creswell, this “contour is best represented in a spiral image” where “the researcher engages in the process of moving in analytic circles rather than using a fixed linear approach (p. 42). The researcher “enters [this spiral] with data of text or images...and exits with an account or a narrative.” Between these two points, “the researcher touches on several facets of analysis and circles around and around” (p. 142). Thus, data analysis is a recursive and multi-layered endeavor that involves taking apart the data that has been collected and putting it back together in several different ways.

In his recently published investigation of the perceptions of urban African American and immigrant ESL parents regarding school-home literacy initiatives, Curt Dudley-Marling (2009) built on the idea that qualitative data analysis can be an

Figure 3.1*
 Process of Data Collection, Organization, and Analysis of the Interview Data

Research Questions: How African American and immigrant ESL parents served by chronically underperforming schools experienced various literacy practices initiated by their children's schools, particularly parents perceptions of the degree to which school-to-home-literacy initiatives were sensitive to the cultural values, expectations, and material demands of their homes



* Figure from C. Dudley-Marling (2009)

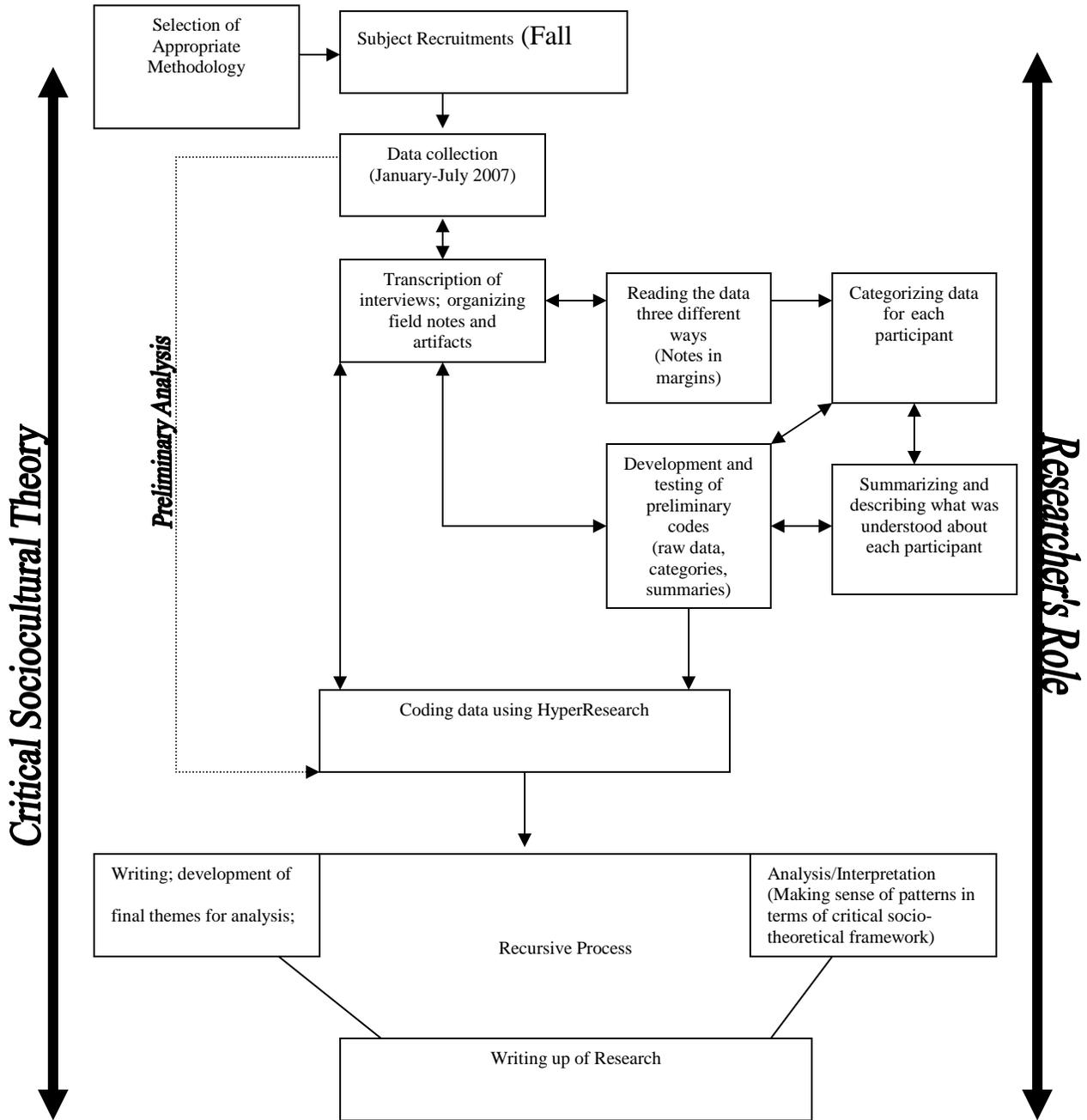
idiosyncratic process. For example, he noted that the process of collecting, organizing and analyzing the interview data for his study, while similar to other qualitative research designs, involved much more than a sequential set of procedures related to a particular form of qualitative analysis. The researcher's autobiography and the body of existing conceptual and empirical work also had a profound impact on the way in which a particular study is shaped. According to Dudley-Marling, it is very likely that a different researcher who was utilizing a different theoretical framework would have offered a different interpretation of the data collected for his study. The data for Dudley-Marling's study came from parent interviews, which were audiotaped and transcribed, and when needed, translated. Through repeated readings of the corpus of data, Dudley-Marling was able to generate central themes that served as a focus for data analysis. According to Dudley-Marling, data were analyzed through a method of analysis called "modified analytic induction" which enabled him to develop "loose descriptive theory" of how study participants understood school-to-home literacy programs.

In order to illustrate the progression of the collection, organization, and analysis of the data for his investigation at the same time acknowledging the role literature and the researcher's biography, Dudley-Marling created a figure that outlined the various steps he engaged in as his study progressed. This figure, which is presented in Figure 3.1, offered a sequential map of the entire research process, beginning with the development of the research question and ending with the final write up of the research.

The collection, organization and analysis of data for the investigation presented in this dissertation was informed by a critical sociocultural perspective and occurred

Figure 3.2
 Process of Data Collection, Organization, and Analysis of Data
 Modification of Dudley-Marling's (2009) analytic framework

Research Questions: (1) How does the ideological stance of two White elementary school teachers inform their construction of race? (2) How do teachers' ideological stances and constructions of race influence teaching practice?



through a method of analytic induction influenced by the work of Erickson (1986) and Bogdan and Bilken (1998). Like Dudley-Marling's (2009) study, my own autobiography as well as the theoretical framework supporting this investigation impacted data analysis for this study. Borrowing directly from Dudley-Marling's (2008) work, the process by which I organized and analyzed the data is presented in Figure 3.2. While Dudley-Marling's analytic framework is helpful in offering a linear outline of the collection, organization, and analysis of the data generated for this study, it does not fully demonstrate the recursive process I engaged in as I analyzed and interpreted the data. In order to represent more accurately the circular nature of analysis and better align it with Creswell's "data analysis spiral" I have added to Dudley-Marling's initial outline so that the recursive and cyclical nature of the analysis, interpretation, and writing process is adequately represented. While this second figure does not completely line up with Creswell's analytic circles, it honors the "general contour" of his model.

The identification of categories, codes, and themes was a recursive process that began immediately at the start of data collection. For example, questions generated for each formal interview were based upon previously collected data. This meant that before conducting each formal interview, I carefully listened, re-listened, read through and summarized earlier interviews and observation field notes in order to identify incipient codes and/or themes. These emergent codes and/or themes were then used to develop interview questions for subsequent interviews.

All informal, formal and principal interviews were digitally recorded and subsequently transcribed by me. As each interview was transcribed, I focused on what

was being said as well as what *not* being said. Field notes were handwritten during classroom observations and then word-processed at a later date.

Interview transcripts and field notes were read three different ways. First, each participant's data were read chronologically. During this initial reading I carefully listened to digital recordings of each interview at the same time I read through interview transcripts, making notes in the margins of the text and creating list of categories and potential themes. Second, I read the corpus of data across the two participants by data type (field notes, interviews, and classroom artifacts), making additional notes in the margins of the text. Third, using the notes generated from the two previous readings, I read through the entire corpus of data looking for specific themes.

After reading the data three different ways, I created a list of categories for each participant. In general, categories for both participants overlapped and included topic areas such as "Identity," "Beliefs and Attitudes," "Perceptions about Others," and "Race Talk." In many cases these general categories included several sub-categories. For example, sub-categories under "Identity" were "Family," "Growing Up," and "White Teacher." Once these categories were established, I again read through the data several times, using it to generate statements that corresponded with specific categories. For instance, under the sub-category "Identity: White Teacher," I wrote the following statements about one participant:

- Katherine wonders if it's race or social economics that she's thinking about in regard to her students and their families
- When Katherine has felt racial prejudice from people of color it's been more like, "Who do you think you are? Or, "You're not part of this group." Or, "I'm not going to listen to what you have to say because you're White."

After this task had been completed, I then created a general description of each participant's personal history, ideological stance, and classroom practice. Moving back and forth from the list of categories, participant descriptions, and the entire corpus of data, a separate list of preliminary codes and sub-codes was developed for each participant. This initial set of codes was then tested on a small portion of interview data and then subsequently revised again. Once the list of codes for each participant was finalized, a catalogue was created that included the name and general description of each code (See Appendix D & E).

Interview transcripts were coded according to the final list of codes using *Hyper Research* (ResearchWare, 1999), which is a software package that enables the researcher to code large amounts of text-based data. Using *Hyper Research*, I also selectively coded the field notes, looking specifically for moments or events that appeared to address the questions driving this dissertation. These events may have included a lesson designed to help students explore the meaning of stereotypes, teacher-student conversation about race, or the presentation of a read out-loud book that represented a minority perspective.

Final themes for each participant emerged from a cyclical process of writing, revisiting the coded data, creating and re-working visual displays and then re-revising writing. These themes included the notion that a teacher's ideological stance and construction of race were directly shaped by the discursive lens he or she used to interpret the socio-cultural and historical context of race within their personal and professional life.

Singing the Rest: Locating Meaning between the Words

In her racial biography of teacher activist Margaret Haley, Kate Rousmaniere (2001) notes that while “organized teachers have voiced concerns about the economics, organization, and conditions of their work,” they “have remained largely silent” about the racial inequities often found within public institutions like schools. Rousmaniere argues that, for White teachers in particular, “silence about race is deeply and historically embedded in the cultural and political fabric of the occupation of teaching” (p. 7). In her treatment of Haley’s life, Rousmaniere makes every effort to “reconstruct the silences of Haley’s life” so as to understand how this prominent activist became so silent “about the problem of race in American schools” (p. 7). In constructing the racial biographies of my two participants, I attempted to “reconstruct the silences” (p. 7) hidden within each woman’s narrative by delving into the sometimes raw, silent spaces where the often-unspeakable tensions about race lurk between the conscious and unconscious mind.

To facilitate an investigation of these silent spaces, I have drawn on the work of Lisa Mazzei (2007). Through her research with White teachers “engaged in conversations about race,” (p. 27), Mazzei developed a methodological approach that features a “poetic understanding of silence” (p. 37) in which the “unspoken” is viewed as an “inhabited” space fully charged with “meaning and breath” (p. 36). In describing this approach, Mazzei notes “a discussion of silence in discourse-based methodological literature...often refers only to the silencing of stories or explores the power of normative discourses that produce silence” (p. 29). Mazzei is not interested in such methodological positions; instead, she is concerned with making use of a “deconstructive methodology”

that theorizes silences “as a type of transgressive data, that when taken seriously, is allowed to enter the playing field of discourse-based research” (p. 29-30). According to Mazzei, “this theorizing of silence locates silence as ‘data,’ not as absence, lack, or omission, but as positive, strategic, purposeful, and *meaning full*” (p. 29).

According to Mazzei, adequately listening to the silences found within participants’ texts means that the researcher must “attend to the words between words, or the language buried in language” (p. 34). Doing this enables the researcher to “conceive of the silences as intelligible elements of language” that represent much more than “an absence of something else” (p. 34). Mazzei elaborates further by stating:

...contained within [words between words] are meanings purposeful and unintentional, intelligible, and unintelligible, apparent and sedimented. These words between words are not merely an absence of something else; they are an integral aspect of the fullness of expression. This is particularly evident in our experience that participants are not always silent because they cannot find the right words or have nothing to say. Sometimes the words between words are spoken because participants have everything to say and words are not sufficient, words cannot say enough—or hide enough. (p. 35).

In discussing her theorizing of silence, Mazzei highlights the fact that the “tradition of silence as being, as presence, as spoken, is long in the context of philosophy, art, literature, poetry and music” (p. 30). In my own experience as a professionally trained singer, I am aware that the use of silence is just as important as the notes one plays or sings. Several years ago, I was rehearsing a piece of German lieder with an experienced

accompanist. At one point during the rehearsal, she stopped me mid-phrase and asked that, instead of thinking of the quarter-note rest found within the middle of musical phrase as empty space, I “sing the rest.” She wanted me to appreciate that the rest was not simply a stopping point where I could take a necessary breath; it was also an active and integral part of melodic line. By acknowledging the purpose and meaning of that strategically placed moment of silence, or by “singing the rest,” I was better able to interpret and express the meaning of the musical text.

In constructing a re-presentation of how each participant’s ideological stance informed their construction of race, I have attempted to “sing the rests” found within each woman’s narrative. What I mean by this is that, as I have mined interviews and field notes for how study participants’ ideological constructions informed their respective constructions of race, I also made a point to listen to what has been said—the musical notes if you will—as well as what was not been said—the rests. I have carefully listened to the “silent words” which are located between spoken words – the unspoken beliefs, hidden meanings, and unstated common sense values that sometimes connect and sometimes interrupt the continuity of the textual or lyrical quality of the line.

By attempting to “sing” “the words between words,” I not only “conceiv[ed] of the silences as intelligible elements of language” (Mazzei, p. 34), but I also attempted to uncover those ideological positions that may be considered “unspeakable,” as they have the potential of exposing things that participants may not want to fully acknowledge (p. 39). I was interested in discovering what “the silences *about* whiteness...that are not

spoken *with* words, but are spoken *between* words” (p. 39) told me about White teachers’ construction of race and its impact on teaching and learning.

In analyzing the data collected for this study, I made very effort to honor the integrity of the silences “heard” within participants’ texts—whether intentional or unintentional. In doing this I uncovered several silent motifs that shaped each teacher’s attitude about race and the meaning of Whiteness with the classroom.

CHAPTER 4: THE RACIAL GEOGRAPHY OF TEACHING

As noted in chapter 1, the K-12 teaching force in this country has become increasingly White, European American, monolingual, and middle-class. Meanwhile, the K-12 student population has become more racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse. This demographic difference represents an ever-widening gap between teachers and students in which White teachers, many of whom have grown up in racial isolation, often have difficulty understanding the experiences of students of color, or students who live in poverty, or speak a first language that is not English—students, who themselves, have often been raised in communities just as racially isolated as many White teachers. Given that current projections suggest that this demographic divide will only intensify over time, it appears that students of color will continue to be served by a majority White teaching force over the next several decades.

The demographic difference between White teachers and their students of color is problematic for several reasons. For instance, because many White teachers have little understanding of what it means to grow up in an urban environment, to live in poverty, or speak a language other than English, there is a tendency to ignore or evade racial and cultural differences and take on a “color-blind” approach to racial differences. In addition, many White teachers, although not all, also tend to view diverse students—meaning nonwhite students—as the deficient “other” who must overcome their cultural, racial, and linguistic backgrounds in order to efficiently assimilate into White American culture. When teachers operate from the idea that racial and linguistic differences represent a deficit to learning, and when they are not aware of the meaning of race within

their own lives or the lives of their students, this may adversely affect the potential learning outcomes of students. Given this situation and the fact that there continues to be a significant achievement gap between African American and Hispanic students and their White counterparts, it is important to explore what is happening within the classrooms of White teachers who serve students who are racially, socio-economically, and linguistically different from them.

Over the last 15 years, there have been countless studies that have addressed certain aspects of what has been called “the demographic divide” between White teachers and students of color (Gay, 2000; Goodwin, 2001; Hodgkinson, 2002). For example, in chapter 2, I reviewed several studies that explored the attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions preservice and inservice White teachers had towards race, racism, and their students of color. This research suggested that many White teachers not only had little knowledge or first hand experience about racial discrimination (King, 1991; Bollin & Finkle, 1995; Sleeter, 2001a, 2001b, 2008), but they were also resistant to seeing and understanding “how racism works in schools and society at large” as well as “how it is reproduced daily” (Sleeter, 2008, p. 560). This resistance may be manifested in color-blind ideologies, which include various beliefs and assumptions, such as the idea that race does not matter (Bollin & Finkle, 1995). It also meant that many White teachers “see racism is a problem of interpersonal interactions, which they believe that an open attitude towards others solves” (Sleeter, 2008, p. 560). Several of the studies also suggested that White teachers tended to define Whiteness as a neutral cultural norm that citizens need to aspire to in order to be fully accepted into U.S. society (Schofield, 1986; Bell, 2002; Marx,

2004). This belief combined with the fact that many White teachers grow up and live within racially isolated contexts means that many of them “bring virtually no conceptual framework for understanding visible inequalities other than the dominant deficit framework” (Sleeter, p. 560). They are subsequently unable to see that having “lower expectations for the achievement of students of color than for White students” is “a manifestation of racism” (Sleeter, p. 560).

These are, of course, very important findings that reveal a great deal about White teachers. However, in order to discover how the ideological stance of White teachers informs their construction of race and how this construction influences teaching practice, it is necessary to move beyond studies that just explore color-blind ideologies and unconscious racism found amongst preservice and inservice White teachers. Teaching practice is shaped by far more than perceptions, attitudes and beliefs. It is also reliant on a series of other factors, such as the historical context that one is born into, one’s family of origin, the region of the country one is raised in, as well as one’s own experience in school. Each of these factors interacts with another in intricate and sometimes knotty, hard to untangle ways. Therefore, the central purpose of this study was to disentangle and reveal some of the very complicated and knotty elements that shaped the way in which two White teachers understood race, racism, and the construction of Whiteness within their personal and professional lives. Building on the theoretical and empirical literature I reviewed in Chapter 2, I developed a conceptual framework, which I refer to as the “Racial Geography of Teaching.” This framework provided me with a means of identifying and understanding the intricate interrelationships that existed between a

variety of the various aspects associated with race and racism that shaped the teaching practice of two White teachers in conscious and unconscious ways.

Racial Geography of Teaching

As noted in Chapter 1, the purpose of this study is to investigate what practice looks like for two people who are alike in the sense that they are both White teachers working in urban schools, but different in that their lives have been fashioned by different environmental and temporal contexts. As noted above, I have developed a conceptual framework, which I refer to as the racial geography of teaching. The purpose of this framework is to provide a means of conceptually mapping race that moves beyond teachers' beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes towards something much more expansive and multifaceted.

Like Ruth Frankenberg (1993) in her ethnographic study on the ways that race affects the lives of White women, I am interested in exploring how “racism as a system shaped [my participants'] daily environments” at the same time I consider “the social, political, and historical forces that brought those environments into being” (p. 44). To facilitate this, I am drawing on several pre-existing approaches of conceptually mapping race within the lives of White people. First, I am borrowing and modifying the two-dimensional analytic framework presented in Frankenberg's (1993) ethnographic study, which focuses on material and discursive dimensions of race, racism, and the construction of Whiteness among 30 White women. Second, I am drawing upon a notion of racial biography (Rousmaniere, 2001) that represents an exploration of an individual's life through his or her personal experiences with race and/or racism. These experiences

include factors such as the ways in which race was or was not talked about, interracial interactions, and/or the way in which an individual racially identifies himself or herself. In terms of this study, racial biography provides an overarching, loosely chronological structure for the narratives presented in this dissertation, as well as a means of marking the social, political, and historical events that have shaped the personal lives and professional practice of two teachers in regards to race, racism, and the construction of Whiteness. In addition to drawing upon Frankenberg's analytic framework and the concept of racial biography, the racial geography of teaching is also informed by a body of theoretical work found within Chapter 2, which includes critical multicultural education, White racial identity theory, and dominant ideologies found with the United States.

As noted above, through the use of in-depth life history interviews, Frankenberg's (1993) study explores the various ways White women make sense of race, racism, and the construction of Whiteness. While Frankenberg's study does not focus on White teachers and their professional practice specifically, her ideas about the ways in which White women construct race align with the goals of the study presented here in that she seeks to understand White women's construction of race as far more than a collection of beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions. In order to do this, she situates the construction of race within the social, political, historical, and discursive context of each participant's individual experience, examining how these factors inform racial identity and a sense of cultural belonging. She also explores the place where race intersects with issues of social class and gender.

As stated above, Frankenberg's (1993) two-dimensional analytic framework is comprised of, what she refers to as, material and discursive dimensions. Material dimensions of race, racism and the construction of Whiteness are made up of concrete experiences such as childhood experiences, the past and present "structuring of daily life" (p. 238), and/or important local, national, and global historical events. In general, the materiality of past experiences like historic events and childhood experiences are rooted in the fact that "what has already taken place" cannot be undone (p. 238). However, the structure of present day experience is also included in this list because, as noted by Frankenberg, while it is possible to transform the structure of present-day events through social action, the present is generally shaped by what has gone on before (p. 238).

While the material dimension is grounded within a physical and tangible realm, the discursive dimension includes a range of discursive repertoires or lenses that tend to be more "fluid" (Frankenberg, p. 239) and changeable over time. These repertoires serve as a filter for the ways in which we view, understand, and interpret the material world of racial difference and racism. For example, even as the history of desegregation and forced bussing within North East City is material, the way it is remembered, communicated, and interpreted is discursive in that it is filtered through a particular discursive lens that continues to shape the relationships between White teachers and their families and colleagues of color. This suggests that the material and discursive realms have a dialectical relationship in which one shapes and influences the other.

One of the most common discursive repertoires found within the United States is "color-blindness" (Frankenberg, 1993; Bonilla-Silva, 2003) or as Frankenberg refers to it,

“color- and power-evasiveness” (p. 142). This particular repertoire represents a “mode of thinking about race organized around an effort to not ‘see,’ or at any rate not to acknowledge, race differences” (p. 142). Thus, within this discursive practice, racial characteristics are seen as an irrelevant factor in determining individual merit; therefore, race is ignored. On the opposite end of the discursive spectrum is “race cognizance” (Frankenberg, p. 157). Whereas a color-blind discourse promotes the idea of “essential sameness,” this repertoire not only embraces racial differences, but also views them “in historical, political, social, or cultural terms rather than essentialist ones” (p. 157).

In this study, I have not only explored the material and discursive aspects that informed two teachers’ understandings of race, racism, and Whiteness, I have also paid close attention to how these dimensional forces affected and ultimately shaped the practices of these two White urban teachers who served a racially diverse student population. In order to chart the material and discursive dimensions of the racial geography of teaching for these two teachers, I have drawn on two approaches. The first approach, the “social geography of race” (Frankenberg, 1993) again emerges directly from Frankenberg’s ethnographic study. It provides an analytic method for mapping the material dimensions of race, racism, and the construction of Whiteness. The second approach, which I refer to as “racial biography” (Rousmaniere, 2001), provides both a means of mapping discursive repertoires and a way to explore how both material and discursive dimensions are woven together. While both of these frameworks have addressed the construction of race, racism, and Whiteness found amongst White women,

neither has been applied to the teaching practice of White teachers serving students of color.

As noted above, the idea of the “social geography of race” emerges from Ruth Frankenberg’s (1993) ethnographic study. Through the use of in-depth, “life-history” interviews, Frankenberg not only sought to investigate “the relationship between white women and racism,” but also explored the “social construction of Whiteness” (p. 5) found among thirty White women. One of the primary purposes of Frankenberg’s study was “to begin exploring, mapping, and examining the terrain of whiteness” (p. 1).

According to Frankenberg, Whiteness as a racial construct is founded upon a set of three linked dimensions:

First, whiteness is a location of structural advantage, of race privilege. Second, it is a ‘standpoint,’ a place from which white people look at ourselves, at others, and at society. Third, ‘whiteness’ refers to a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed. (p. 10)

In order to chart the topography of these dimensional aspects of Whiteness, Frankenberg analyzed the childhood experiences of five of her participants through, what she referred to as, the “social geography of race,” (p. 43) which she defines as follows:

Geography refers here to the physical landscape—the home, the street, the neighborhood, the school, parts of town visited or driven through rarely or regularly, places visited on vacation. My interest was in how physical space was divided and who inhabited it, and, for my purposes, “who” referred to racially and ethnically identified beings.

The notion of *social* geography suggests that the physical landscape is peopled and that it is constituted and perceived by means of social rather than natural processes. I thus asked how the women I interviewed conceptualized and related to the people around them. To what extent, for example, did they have relationships of closeness or distance, equality or inequality, with people of color? What were they encouraged or taught by example to make of the variously “raced” people in their environments? *Racial* social geography, in short, refers to the racial and ethnic mapping of environments in physical and social terms and enables also the beginning of an understanding of the conceptual mappings of self and other operating in White women’s lives (p. 43-44, italics in the original).

While the narratives of these five women were not necessarily representative of all thirty participants, according to Frankenberg, these stories started a “process of ‘defamiliarizing’ that which is taken for granted in white experience and to elaborate a method for making visible and analyzing the racial structuring of white experience” (p. 44). Thus, the purpose of mapping the ‘social geography of race’ amongst these five White women was to problematize Whiteness – to move it out of the shadows of invisibility and “normativity” (p. 6) in order to identify it as a socially constructed racial category that shapes the social and physical lives of White women.

Frankenberg’s concept of the “social geography of race” has informed my development of the “racial geography of teaching” as it has provided an analytic means of conceptually mapping the racial landscape of each participant’s childhood and young adulthood, their teacher preparation experience, and their current teaching practice both

in terms of their personal life and professional practice. In terms of participants' childhood and young adulthood, this mapping included detailed physical descriptions of the racial world each grew up in, as well as explorations into the social, historical, and cultural dimensions that shaped each of their lives. I looked at who each participant attended school with, who they socialized with on a daily basis, and who resided within their respective neighborhoods. I was concerned with "who" it was that each participant defined as racially and ethnically different, their general attitude and physical proximity to these people, as well as the types of relationships each did or did not develop with people of color. I was also curious about how each participant's family, community of origin, and the political and cultural ethos in which she was raised influenced her understandings of race, racism, and Whiteness.

Like Frankenberg, I used the social geography of race as a way to gain a sense of the racial socialization each participant received as a child and young adult. However, with the purpose of discovering how each participant conceptualized race, racism, and Whiteness within their teaching practice, I also used this framework to map out the social, cultural, and historic dimensions of each teacher's teacher preparation experience and well as her current professional context. Just as with the participants' formative years, I was concerned with "who" it was that the participants defined as racially and ethnically different from themselves within the context of their schools, their physical and relational proximity to these people, and their general attitude towards them. Consequently, I was interested in the types of relationships each woman developed with colleagues, students, and families of color in addition to those who were White. I wanted

to know how these relationships were the same or different, as well as what impact they may or may not have had on teaching practice. I was also interested in how the racial socialization each participant received as a child interacted with the racial socialization she received within her respective school. In particular, I wanted to know if formative understandings about race, racism, and Whiteness were solidified, challenged, or disrupted by what was experienced within a professional context and what this interaction meant for teaching practice.

In order to chart the discursive repertoires my participants engaged in regarding race, racism, and Whiteness as well as to explore the interconnection between these discursive dimensions and the materiality of each participant's personal and professional life, the racial geography of teaching was also shaped by the idea of racial biography. As noted, racial biography represents an exploration of an individual's life through his or her experiences with race. An example of racial biography can be found in an essay written by Kate Rousmaniere (2001) that presents a racial biography of Margaret Haley, who lived from 1861-1939 and was founder of the Chicago Teachers' Federation. Here, Rousmaniere focused on how Haley's ideological assumptions informed her construction of race during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. According to Rousmaniere, Haley was responsible for a variety of "progressive, creative, and dynamic social and educational changes" (p. 7). However, she appeared to be conspicuously silent about the issue of racial equality. For Rousmaniere, this reticence concerning racial inequality was quite remarkable "given that [Haley's] years of most prominent public activism" overlapped "with years of increasing racial change in Chicago" (p. 7). In order to

understand how Haley “arrived at this place of powerful silence” (p. 7), Rousmaniere attempted to “reconstruct the silences of Haley’s life, drawing on threads and shadows of evidence, interpreting the tiniest reference, and rethinking the story that Margaret Haley told, and did not tell, in historical context” (p. 7).

Rousmaniere’s essay provides an example of the way in which material and discursive dimensions are braided together. For example, Haley’s racial biography, which is loosely chronological, deals with the concrete and stable material dimensions such as the historical fact that the activist was born during the Civil War. For Haley, the Civil War had a profound effect on her. Not only was she proud that she was raised in the home state of Abraham Lincoln, she also believed that “no child could grow up in Illinois in the 20 years after Appomattox without” believing in the causes of freedom (p. 8). Haley was not alone in this view. Jane Addams, who was also born in Illinois, also noted, “that all children who were born during the Civil War were shaped by the way that it introduced outside issues into their lives” (p. 8). Thus, for Haley, the materiality of the Civil War and the fact that she grew up in the home state of Abraham Lincoln shaped a discursive environment that centered on social change and equality. However, Rousmaniere suggests that, for Haley, this discursive repertoire did not appear to apply to African Americans.

With the intention of discovering why Haley did not extend this discursive repertoire to the plight of African Americans, Rousmaniere focused on other material aspects of Haley’s life such as the fact that she grew up in “an essentially White world” (p. 8) as well as her earliest experiences with people of color. Rousmaniere also explore

Haley's teaching career, her role as the leader of the Chicago Teachers' Federation, as well as what she appeared to know and not know about African Americans living in Chicago during the late 19th and early 20th Century. As a result of this exploration, Rousmaniere explored how these material dimensions may have shaped Haley's racial discourse. For instance, Rousmaniere points out that Haley's "identity as an Irish Catholic probably shaped the parameters of her thinking about racial difference more than anything else" (p. 8). This was because during the late 19th and early 20th century there was a great deal of discrimination against Irish Catholics who were "burdened by their own racialized identity" (p. 8). In order to improve their social status and establish themselves as a "solidified class with working rights and privileges" (p. 8), many Irish-led labor unions disassociated themselves from African Americans by excluding them from their professional ranks, thereby engaging in a racial discourse that essentialized African Americans as inferior. Thus, for Haley, fighting for the racial and economic equality of African Americans would have gone against the economic interest of the mostly White, Irish Catholic female members of her labor organization. Here, we see how the "material structuring" (p. 8) of race within the historic context of Haley's life pushed her towards a discursive repertoire of that defined African Americans as inferior and Irish Catholics as superior.

One of the purposes of the racial geography of teaching is to provide a way to get at how the ideological assumptions of two White teachers shaped the ways each constructed race and how these constructions informed teaching practice. In order to gain this understanding, I have included racial biography with this framework so that I am

able to both explore the interconnection between the material and discursive dimensions of these teachers' racial lives as well as identify discursive repertoires they engaged in regarding race, racism, and Whiteness. I am interested in how material dimensions such as each participant's life history, their educational background, their experiences with people of color, as well as the sociocultural history of their school district are linked to discursive dimensions such as the development of racial, social, and individual identities, ideological stance, and ways of thinking about race.

As a conceptual framework, the racial geography of teaching represents a merging of racial biography and the social geography of race. Racial biography provides a loosely chronological structure that allows for an exploration of how the interconnection of material and discursive dimensions have shaped each participant's ideological stance and influenced her construction of race. As a result, it is possible to see how each woman's deployment of race, racism, and Whiteness did or did not change over time and what this ultimately means in terms of teaching practice. At the same time, racial biography offers a temporal perspective of each participant's personal life and professional practice, the social geography of race situates various points of each woman's story within a specific physical, social, and historical milieu with the purpose of identifying and problematizing Whiteness, and understanding the meaning of race within teaching and learning.

Epistemological Tensions

It is important to note that there is an epistemological tension between the conceptual framework developed as part of this study and stage theories of racial or ethnic identity development such as Helms (1990, 1992, 1995), Cross (1991), and

Phinney (1993), which also informed the dissertation's theoretical framework. For example, Helms' model works from a post-positivist epistemology that defines White identity as something that is measurable, relatively fixed and stable. Similarly, Cross' model of Black racial identity development also works from a post-positivist perspective. However, the study presented here, works from a constructivist interpretive paradigm and is based upon the assumption that identity is constructed through an evolving interplay between discursive, material, and social processes that are highly subjective, unstable, and deeply contextual. Thus, as Frankenberg (1997) suggests, the construction of one's racial identity is defined "as [a] process, not a 'thing.'"

At first glance, the differences between these two epistemological stances appear to be almost irreconcilable. However, there are two important reasons why racial identity stage theories such as Helms' do inform this study. First, theories of racial identity development, such as Helms', are often used as a framework for understanding and/or measuring the racial identity development of White teachers. This study not only acknowledges the contribution of racial identity stage theories, but also critiques them. Secondly, stage models served as a point of reference as I work to construct the meaning of race within the lives of the study participants' personal lives and professional practice. Identity formation represents a dialectical relationship between individual and socially constructed notions of what it means to be a man, woman, African American, or White person. Racial identity stage theories provide a template from which to examine the ways in which conceptions of race are socially constructed within study participants' lives.

Kenneth Howe's (1998) analysis is useful here. He suggests that there is a debate found within interpretivism between *postmodernists*, who believe that the mission of social research should be to critique, challenge and deconstruct the "emancipatory project" (p. 13) of modernity, and *transformationalists*, who believe that, while imperfect, it is the job of social research to "see this project through" (p. 13). According to Howe, postmodernists and transformationalists define identity in different ways. Postmodernists are critical of the notion that there is fixed or fundamental representation of human nature that serves as a standard of measurement for all humans. Instead, postmodernists highlight the notion that identities emerge from many different locations such as race, ethnicity, socio-economic class, sexual orientation, and/or gender. Because of this, postmodernists define identity as something that is "neither unified nor fixed, but as various and continually 'displaced/replaced'" (p. 16) or de-centered. On the other hand, transformationalists suggest that identities, while not necessarily stable and fixed, are unavoidably informed by "social facts" (p. 16), which are built from "normative structure[s] associated with social categories and practices" (p. 17). Howe uses gender as a means of illustrating the idea that identities are socially constructed in that they are created by social norms, beliefs, and conventions:

Take gender. To be sure, there have been and continue to be institutional facts associated with gender...But more far reaching are shared beliefs, expectations, know-how, and practices that make up the social facts of gender. In Western societies, the feminine gender historically has been identified with nurturing and preserving relationship on one hand and with a lack of worldliness and capacity

for abstract reasoning on the other...Independent of what individual girls and women believe—and like it or not—there is a ‘gender regimen’ (Connell, 1987) associated with a particular kind of feminine identity that is, in turn, associated with a large complex of social facts that shape it. (p. 16)

Howe concludes that the construction of an individual’s identity is greatly influenced by socially constructed definitions of what it means to be a certain gender, sexual orientation, or race. He argues that postmodernists are, “wary of the normalizing and sinister influences that [such] social forces have on the formation of selves” (p. 17). While transformationalists do not believe that all such forces are bad. Instead, they are defined as “resting places for the self” (p. 17).

Borrowing from a transformationalist perspective, stage models of racial identity serve as a kind of normative “resting place for the self.” In other words, in terms of this study, they provided a base line or starting point from which to examine the construction of a White racial identity. However, while stage models of racial identity development informed this study, they did not serve as a theoretical framework.

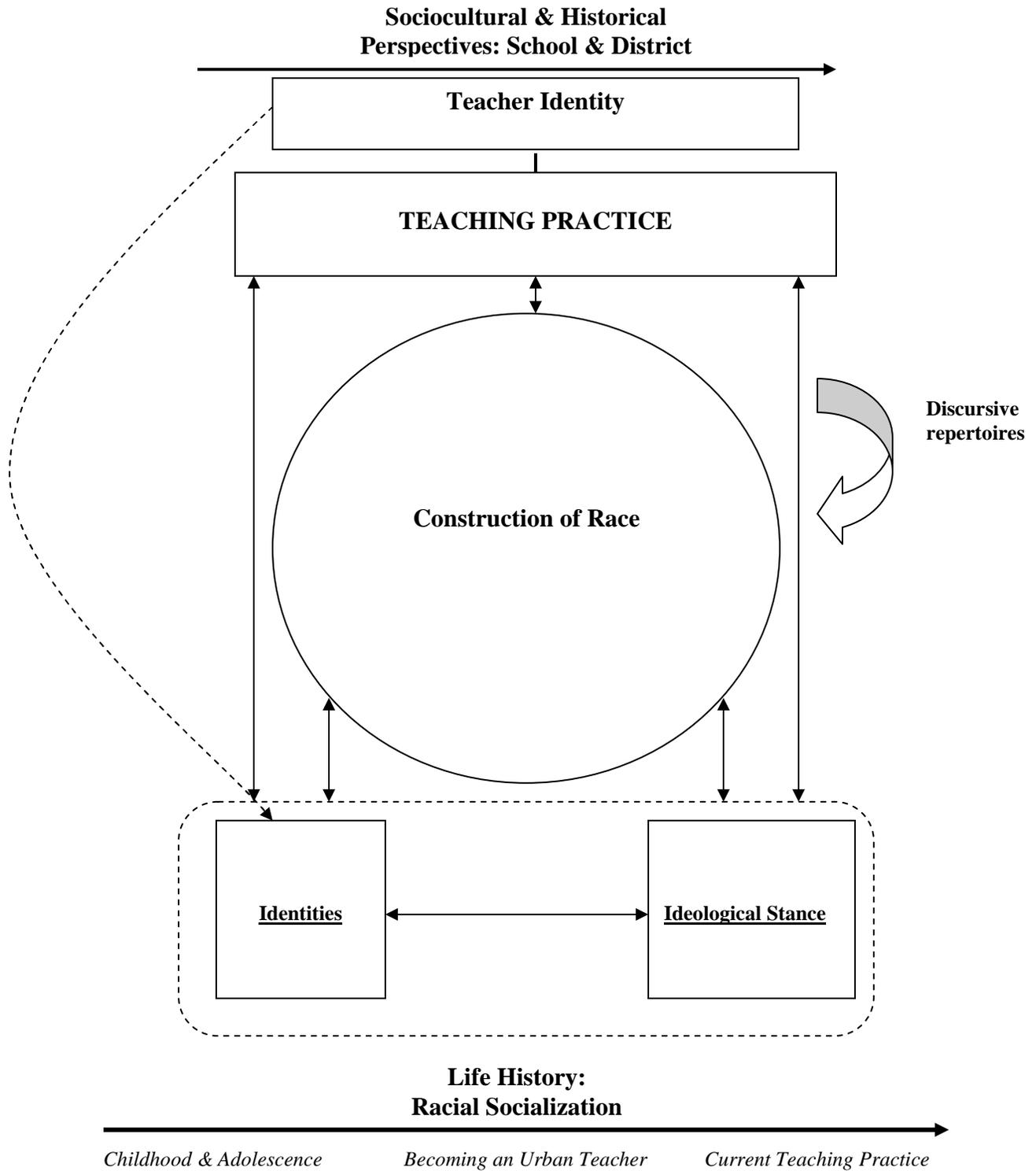
Conceptually Mapping Race

Thus far, I have argued that in order to conceptually map out how two White teachers’ ideological stance informed their construction of race and what this meant for practice, one must identify and explore the linkages between the material and discursive dimensions (Frankenberg, 1993) that shaped each participant’s experience of race, racism, and the social construction of Whiteness. Figure 4.1 provides a visual mapping of the material and discursive dimensions that constitute the racial geography of teaching.

According to Frankenberg (1993), these two dimensions are so fiercely knotted together, it is nearly impossible to disentangle one from the other. However, an effort must be made to separate these two dimensions in order to reveal and confront White supremacy (p. 238). Thus, the purpose of this visual representation is to illustrate the interrelationships between each material and discursive dimension in order to get a sense of the ways that race, racism and Whiteness shape the teaching practice of participants.

As Figure 4.1 indicates, included within the racial geography of teaching are two sets of material dimensions, although it is important to note that each are interpreted or filtered through various discursive repertoires. The first, which is represented as an arrow at the bottom of the figure, focuses on each participant's *life history*, starting from childhood and young adulthood and continuing through the period of data collection for this study. In order to fully map out the meaning of race, racism, and Whiteness throughout the span of each teacher's life so far, I have divided each woman's life history into three stages—childhood and young adulthood, becoming an urban teacher, and current teaching practice. Then, using Frankenberg's (1993) "social geography of race," I have mapped out each stage so as to gain a conceptual understanding of the racial socialization each participant experienced during a specific time and place. By charting the life histories of my participants in this way, I am able to identify what Frankenberg calls the "individual trajectories of change" (p. 239).

Figure 4.1
 The Racial Geography of Teaching: Material and Discursive Dimensions



The second material dimension, which overlaps with the first, is represented as an arrow at the top of Figure 4.1. It focuses on the *sociohistorical context* of each participant's school district and school community at-large. Here, I am again utilizing the "social geography of race" to map out the meaning of race within the physical and social environment of each participant's current professional context. I am curious as to how the history of the district at-large has shaped the discursive repertoires located within each participant's school and what this means in terms of teaching practice for each teacher. For example, does the discursive environment of the school community conflict or align with the discursive environment of my participants' classrooms? If these repertoires do conflict, how do my participants negotiate this tension in terms of practice?

The notion of the racial geography of teaching also includes four sets of discursive dimensions. Again, it is important to note that intertwined within each of these discursive aspects are elements of material dimensions as well. Borrowing directly from Frankenberg (1993), I refer to the first discursive dimension, which is represented as a vertical line located on the right side of the figure, as *discursive repertoires*. According to Frankenberg, "[d]iscursive repertoires may reinforce, contradict, conceal, explain, or 'explain away' the materiality or the history of a given situation" (p. 2). Therefore, the purpose of this dimensional aspect is to provide a means of understanding the degree to which each participant perceives, comprehends, and appreciates the historical, social, and structural aspects of race, racism, and the construction of Whiteness. For example, if a teacher interprets his or her world through a discursive repertoire of colonialism, it is very likely that he or she believes that the Western canon should be the curricular focus

of K-12 education. Consequently, the contributions of African Americans, Asian Americans, and other racial groups may be underrepresented or even ignored within his or her classroom. Meanwhile, another teacher may interpret his or her world through a discursive repertoire of critical multiculturalism in which he or she uses the curriculum to assist her students as they learn to critique, challenge, and transform social and racial injustice. The important point here is that, while discursive repertoires are interconnected with every other dimension represented on Figure 4.2, they also have a direct relationship with the construction of race.

My framework also includes a second and third discursive dimension—*identity* and *ideological stance*. These two dimensions, which are represented as two interconnected boxes located just above *life history*, have a dialectical relationship in which one shapes the other. This means that one cannot be fully understood without understanding its relationship with the other; however, at the same time, they also represent two separate entities. It is also important to note that, while I am defining identity and ideological stance as discursive dimensions, material aspects also shape them. The formation of identity, for instance, is a complex process that is informed by a variety of material dimensions, such as one's family of origin, historical events, and/or the political or social circumstances in which a person lives (Tatum, 1997). Identity formation is also deeply rooted within what can be described as inherited (Frankenberg, 1993) material characteristics such as gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, nationality, social class, and race. While several material dimensions shape the concept of identity, it is discursive in the sense that it is fluid and changeable over time.

As noted, the concept of identity has a dialectical and often recursive relationship with the term *ideological stance*, which also embodies material and discursive characteristics. In their study of the ways in which teachers' personal cultural ideologies shape their conceptions of curriculum, Shkedi and Nisan (2006) describe ideology "as a set of beliefs (either factual or evaluative)" as well as a "system of comparatively stable basic assumptions that inform human perceptions of and attitudes toward physical or social reality" (p. 690). As discussed in Chapter 2, these beliefs and assumptions, which are never value-free, are so embedded within the thinking of an individual or given society that their validity remains unquestioned. Thus, they are perceived as unchangeable aspects that have always been and always will be. Given this definition, ideology needs to be understood as an integral part of what Frankenberg calls the "material structuring of daily life" (Frankenberg, p. 238) and thus can be defined as a material dimension. However, the term ideological stance, which refers to a philosophical, paradigmatic, or intellectual position based upon a core set of beliefs about the world, is more discursive in that it has the potential to change over time. It also has a great deal in common with discursive repertoires in that both dimensions serve as a means of perceiving and interpreting the world at-large, although ideological stance is much broader in that it represents part of the material environment as well. In this study, I was interested in how the relationship between these two dimensions impacted two teachers' construction of race, as well as what it meant for practice.

The fourth discursive dimension, the *construction of race*, is represented in the center of Figure 4.1 by a large circle. While this dimension is influenced by the other

dimensions—the life history of each participant, the sociocultural history and context of the school district in which each one works, as well as each one’s sense of identity and ideological stance—it is primarily made up of the various discursive repertoires regarding race, racism, and Whiteness that each participant has engaged in throughout her personal and professional life. Like the White women in Frankenberg’s (1993) study, who “lived, negotiated, appropriated, and rejected, at some times more consciously and intentionally than at others, the entire array of discursive repertoires,” the two teachers in this study often “deployed one discursive repertoire against another and at other times appeared simultaneously caught within and critical of specific elements of one or another” (p. 239). Thus, the construction of race is comprised of the tensions between such conflicting repertoires. For example, a teacher might be caught between the discursive repertoires of color-blindness and race cognizance. Another might be stuck between a discursive repertoire of openness towards race and one of making “dangerous” assumptions about a particular racial or ethnic group. I wanted to know how these tensions played out in teachers’ classrooms. What do tensions like these mean for teaching and learning?

The last dimension of Figure 4.1 is *teaching practice*, which is located just below the sociocultural history and context and is connected to the construction of race. All of the other material and discursive dimensions that reveal the racial geography of teacher lead to this final dimension. Consequently, teaching practice is equally comprised of both the material and discursive. Its materiality is rooted within the fact that teaching practice takes place within a specific contextual space and time. It is also discursive in that it is shaped by the development of each teacher’s identity and ideological stance long

with a lifetime of discursive repertoires. However, it is important to note that teaching practice is not only influenced by all of the other material and discursive dimensions; it also, in turn, influences and shapes several other dimensional aspects. In particular, the interactions and experiences that take place within teaching practice directly influence the discursive dimensions represented. This means that teaching practice has a direct influence on the types of discursive tensions found within the construction of race. It also influences identity and ideological stance and has the potential to change and alter discursive repertoires.

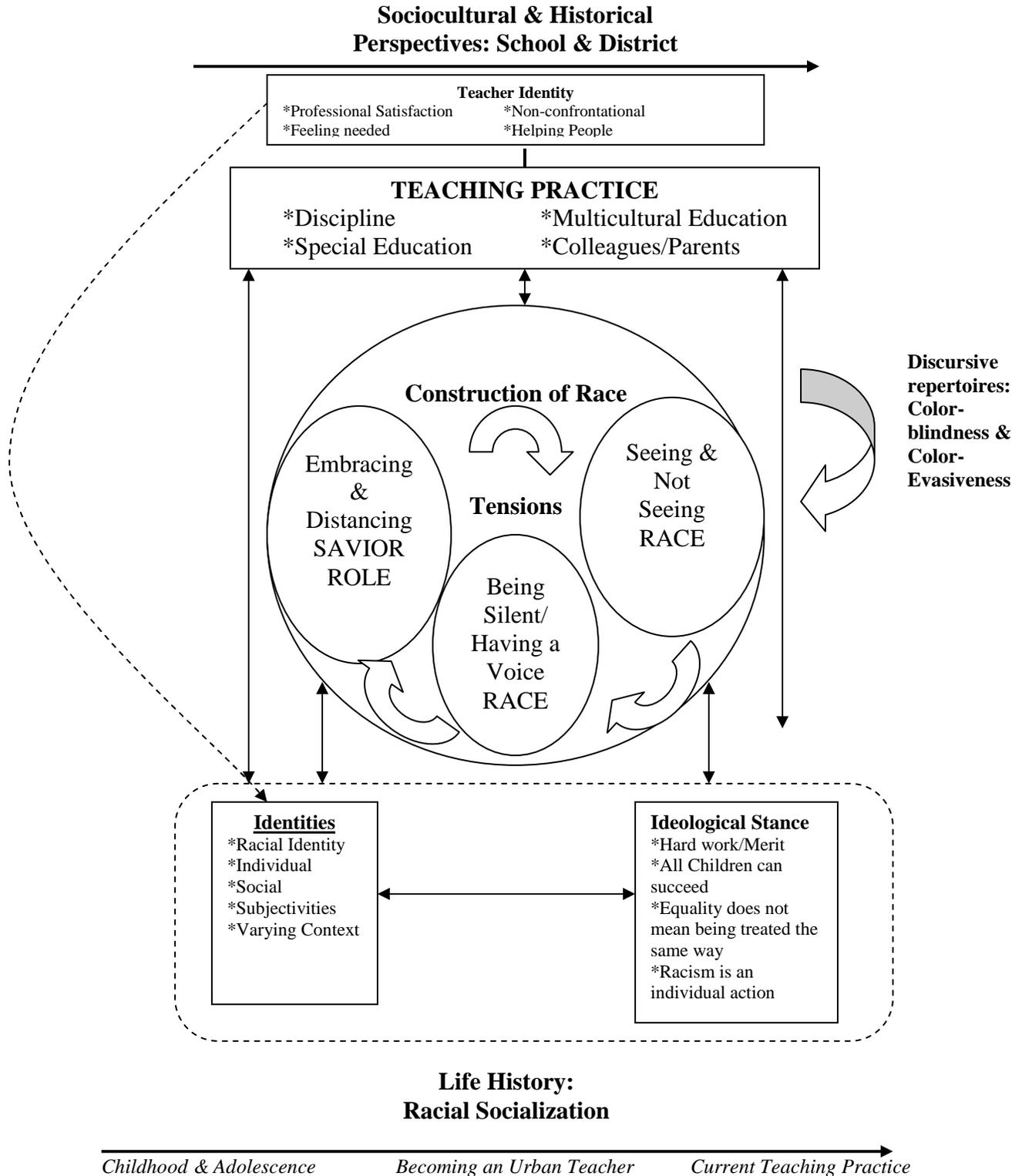
The Racial Geography of Teaching: Two Cases

Using the framework described above as a model, I provide two analytic maps (see Figures 4.2 and 4.3) that chart the material and discursive dimensions that comprise the racial geography of teaching for Megan DeAngelis and Katherine Mackenzie. While the same conceptual model represents each teacher's experience, there are key differences between the two, specifically with regard to the discursive dimensions included within this framework (e.g., discursive repertoires, construction of race, identity, ideological stance, and teaching practice).

Megan DeAngelis

Figure 4.2 maps out the material and discursive dimensions that shape the Racial Geography of Teaching for Megan DeAngelis. In particular, this figure presents details regarding the discursive dimensions that make up this framework. For instance, as mentioned in the previous section, discursive repertoires embody the degree to which each participant consciously and unconsciously perceived and interpreted the social,

Figure 4.2
The Racial Geography of Teaching: Megan DeAngelis

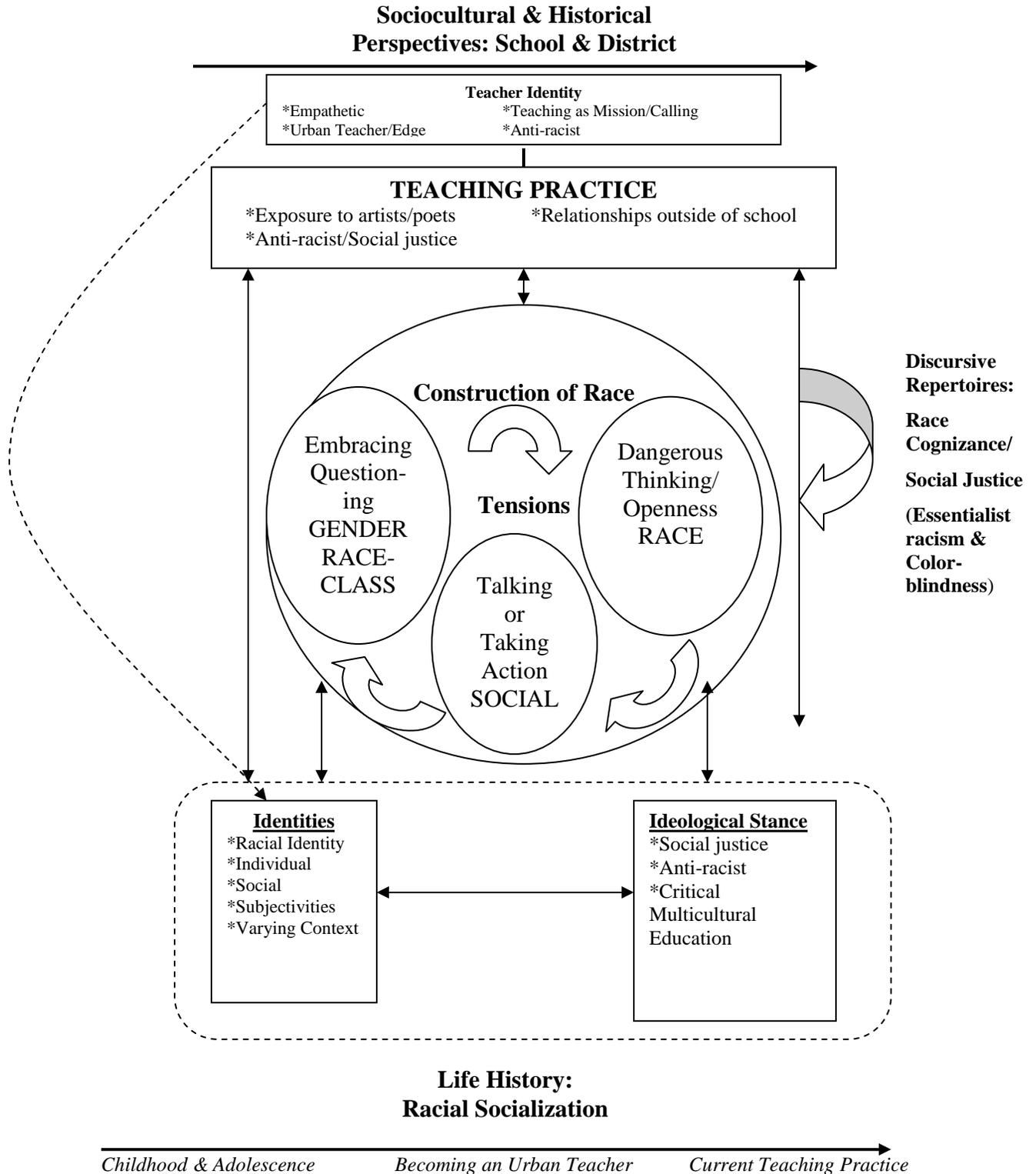


structural, and historical aspects of race. In the case of Megan, analysis revealed that she tended to utilize a repertoire of color-blindness or color-evasiveness as a means of perceiving and understanding the social, structural, and historical ramifications of race within her personal and professional life. Use of this particular repertoire often manifested itself through a discourse of silence.

As noted on Figure 4.2, *discursive repertoires* have a direct relationship with the discursive dimension, *construction of race*. What this means is that, in the case of Megan, her *construction of race* is informed by the dominant repertoire of color-blindness; however, it is also shaped by other, less-dominant repertoires, which she has also been exposed to during the course of her personal and professional lifetime. Because these other repertoires are often in conflict with one another (e.g., color-blindness vs. race cognizance), they can cause a great deal of tension regarding the meaning of race, racism, and the construction of Whiteness.

For Megan, her *construction of race* is comprised of three sometimes-overlapping sets of often-conflicting *discursive repertoires* that include embracing and distancing oneself from the White savior role, (2) seeing and not seeing race, and (3) being silent and having a voice about race. These conflicting tensions are also informed by, and in turn, shape Megan's individual, social, and racial identities and her ideological stance, which includes the belief that all children can succeed, equality does not mean that everyone gets the same things, and the notion that people can succeed if they work hard enough. These tensions also serve as a filter for making pedagogical decisions and interpreting such things as multicultural education.

Figure 4.3
The Racial Geography of Teaching: Katherine Mackenzie



Katherine Mackenzie

Figure 4.3 maps out the material and discursive dimensions that shape the racial geography of teaching for Katherine Mackenzie. As with Figure 4.2, which presented the discursive dimensions that made up the racial geography of teaching for Megan DeAngelis, this figure provides similar details for Katherine Mackenzie. While Megan tended to utilize a discursive repertoire of color-blindness or power-evasiveness, analysis exposed that Katherine generally viewed the social, structural and historical aspects of race, racism, and the construction of Whiteness through a discursive repertoire of race-cognizance.

As with Megan, Katherine's construction of race, which is directly influenced by the discursive repertoire of race cognizance, is comprised of three sometimes-overlapping sets of often-conflicting discursive repertoires. These include (1) embracing and questioning issues regarding race and gender; (2) openness towards and/or dangerous thinking about race; and, (3) simply talking about or taking action regarding social justice.

These conflicting tensions are also informed by and, in turn, shape Katherine's individual, social, and racial identities as well as her ideological stance, which includes a commitment to social justice, the intersection of race, class, and gender as well as the idea that teaching is an intellectual, socially transformative endeavor. All of these discursive dimensions not only influence and shape the pedagogical decisions Katherine makes within her classroom, but they also shape the way in which she chooses to support her students and their families both in and outside of the school.

Conclusion

In the next two chapters, I will present the racial geography of teaching of Megan DeAngelis and Katherine Mackenzie. As noted earlier in this chapter, each teacher's narrative has been divided into three distinct time periods. The first centers on the racial socialization each woman received as a child and young adult. The second explores the process each went through in choosing to become an urban schoolteacher, and the third focuses on the state of being a practicing teacher within an urban school context. Using the racial geography of teaching as a guide, I chart the material and discursive dimensions that shape the racial landscape found within each of these time periods using Frankenberg's social geography of race, as well as the theoretical literature discussed within Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

CHAPTER 5:

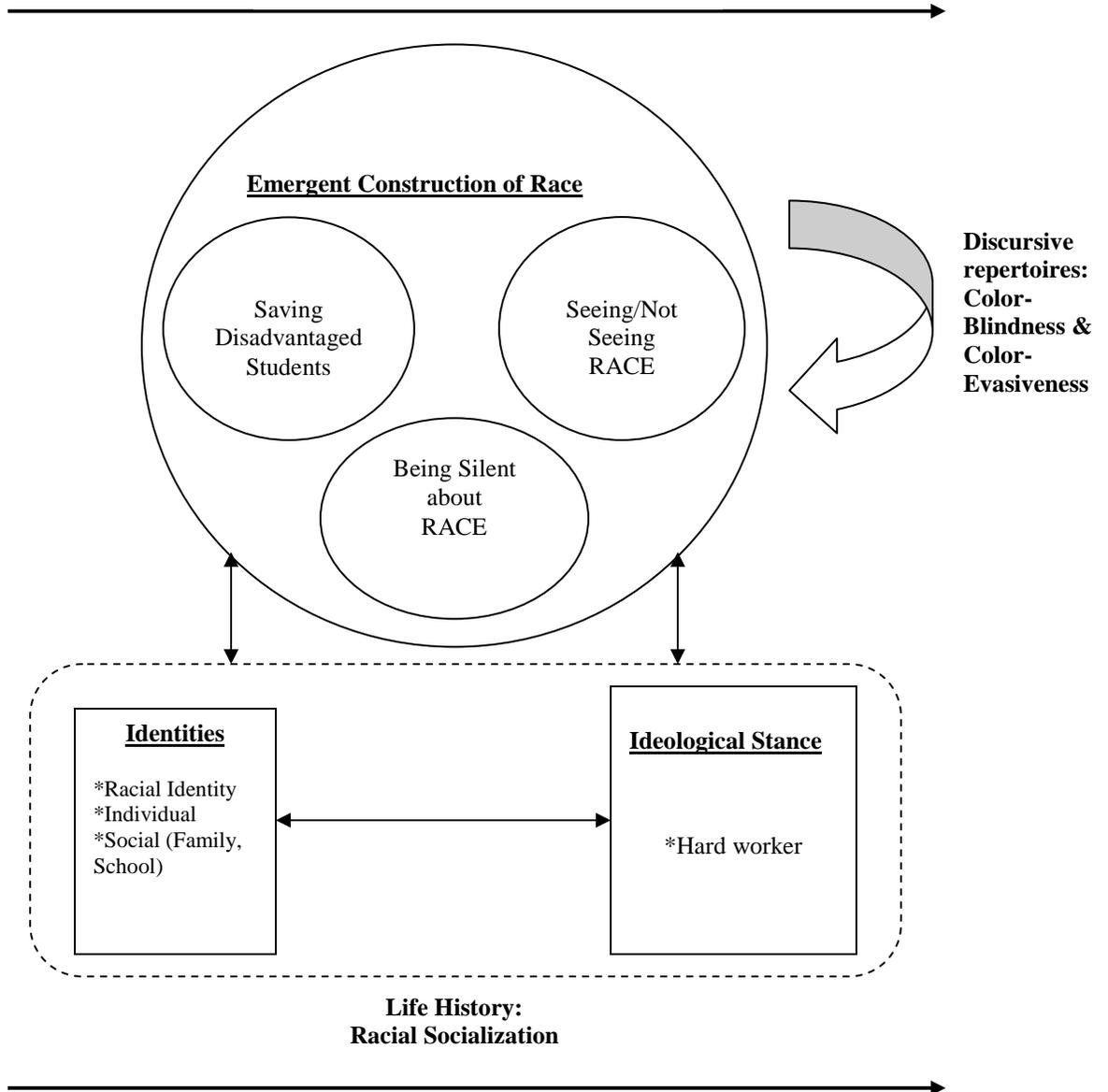
THE RACIAL GEOGRAPHY OF TEACHING: MEGAN DEANGELIS

This chapter presents the racial geography of teaching for Megan DeAngelis. In particular, it examines how Megan's ideological stance informed her construction of race and shaped her teaching practice. As noted in Chapter 4, my notion of the racial geography of teaching is informed by Frankenberg's (1993) concept of the "social geography of race" and Rousmaniere's (2001) idea of racial biography. Building on these two conceptual approaches as well as the literature concerning White teachers, multicultural education, and ideology presented in Chapter 2, I have developed a conceptual model that investigates the meaning of race within the teaching practice of two White teachers from both a temporal and thematic perspective. What this means is that I am not only looking at each participant's life chronologically, but I am also investigating the historical, physical, social, and environmental factors that informed each participant's construction of race.

In order to map out the racial geography of teaching for Megan and gain a conceptual understanding of the material and discursive dimensions that have influenced the racial structuring of her personal life and professional practice, I have divided Megan's story into three time periods: (1) the racial socialization process she engaged in as a child and young adult; (2) her choice to become an urban schoolteacher, and (3) her current teaching practice.

Figure 5.1
Childhood: Racial Socialization

Sociocultural & Historical Perspectives



With the purpose of providing a complete picture of Megan's racial geography of teaching, each of the three time frames described above is represented by a separate figure, which outlines the configuration material and discursive dimensions (See Figures 5.1, 5.2, 5.3) that shaped Megan's personal and professional life. It is important to note that each of these figures interacts with and builds upon the other. What this means is that, depending on the time-period represented, certain dimensions and/or dimensional relationships have been added and highlighted.

Figure 5.1 provides a detailed representation of the dimensions that shaped the racial socialization Megan received as a child and young adult. As mentioned above, the discursive dimensional aspects indicated on this figure are similar to the ones found on Figure 4.2 (e.g., discursive repertoires, identity, ideology, construction of race.); however, rather than being fully formed, they are presented as emergent. For instance, Megan's emergent construction of race is comprised of incipient versions of the discursive repertoires that would eventually shape Megan's construction of race as a preservice and practicing teacher.

What is of particular interest in this figure is that it offers a representation of the sociocultural and historical perspectives that shaped the material and conceptual aspects of Megan's life. The reason for this is that Megan's construction of race was not created within a cultural vacuum. It was shaped and influenced by a confluence of historical, political, and social events that occurred well before she, or even her parents and grandparents, were born. Because of this, it is necessary that the events of her life be

preceded by a brief historical synopsis that reviews the dominant discourses that have shaped racial relations in the United States over the past two centuries.

The Racial Socialization of Megan DeAngelis

This section explores the early racial socialization of Megan DeAngelis. I begin by providing a brief sketch of the sociocultural and historical dimensions that shaped the political and cultural milieu that Megan was born into and then map out the physical and social aspects that influenced the racial structure of her childhood and young adulthood.

Sociocultural and Historical Perspectives

As noted in Chapter 1, racial characteristics became significant in the early 17th century when Western European explorers first came into contact with the non-Western “other” living in the New World. In order to reconcile the existence of different races and cultures in a way that maintained Western Christian values and a sense of cultural superiority (Vidich & Lyman, 2000), a racial discourse emerged that defined the non-Western “other” as intellectually, morally, and biologically inferior to the White, Western-European.

This racial discourse, which Frankenberg refers to as “essentialist racism,” was not only the dominant way of understanding racial difference for much of the history of the United States, it was also used as justification for the legally and socially sanctioned inequitable treatment of African American, Native American, and other non-White groups living within the United States. However, World War II represented a pivotal moment in U.S. racial discourse as it served as a transition between essentialist racism to a discourse of “essential sameness” in which a “color-blind” approach to racial issues

was valued (Takaki, 1993). As discussed in Chapter 1, the term color-blind refers to the idea that racial characteristics are immaterial in determining individual merit. Therefore, people should be judged by the quality of their character and not by the color of their skin. During this time, many White Americans saw a parallel between the Nazi belief of Aryan supremacy and the institutional and cultural racism found within the United States. This forced many Americans to take a hard look at the racism embedded within the societal fabric of the United States (Takaki, 1993). As a result, they began to ask the question: How is it possible for a nation that promotes the principles of democracy to marginalize and oppress many of its own citizens?

It was also during this time that racially oppressed groups began to use the federal court system to challenge institutional racial discrimination. During the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, there were many well publicized court cases, such as *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, the Montgomery bus boycott of 1956, and other nonviolent demonstrations that inspired national leaders to change federal laws and enact social programs, laws, and federal legislation designed to solve the problem of individual, cultural, and institutional racism (Spring, 2001, p. 99).

While these laws and programs ended “state-enforced segregation” (Feagin, Vera, & Batur, 2001, p. 10) within the United States and provided people of color with the opportunity of “moving into many formerly forbidden areas of U.S. society” (p. 11), there was a backlash against this racial progress, which began in the late 1970s and continued through the 1980s, 1990s, and the early 2000s. Feagin, Vera, & Batur (2001) describe the timbre of this post-Civil Rights period as follows:

Presidential use of the White House as a ‘bully pulpit’ for conservative political agendas during the Reagan and Bush years of the 1980s and early 1990s was particularly devastating to racial relations. Federal civil rights enforcement programs were weakened significantly in this period. The political denial of white (sic) racism made its way into intellectual circles and the mass media, where the concept of the ‘declining significance of race’ became fashionable. (p. 11)

For Feagin, Vera, & Batur, the “denial of White racism takes the form of the deracialization of a number of issues—such as affirmative action in such areas as college admissions and state contracts—by recasting them in terms of ‘merit’ and the ‘need for color-blindness’” (p. 12). As I argued in Chapter 1, color-blindness and color-evasiveness, which are “organized around an effort to not ‘see,’ or at any rate not to acknowledge race differences” (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 142), currently represent the dominant racial discourses found within the United States. For many Americans, this discursive practice is the *only* polite way to engage with the topic of race. However, as Frankenberg states, “color evasion actually involves a selective engagement with difference, rather than no engagement at all” (p. 143) and has the potential to guide White people “back into complicity with structural and institutional dimensions of inequality” (p. 143).

Megan DeAngelis was born in 1981 during Ronald Reagan’s first year in office and seven years after the desegregation crisis in the North East City Schools. She was raised, educated, and became an urban schoolteacher within a post-Civil Rights era in

which the dominant discourse about race was rooted in color-blindness or color-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). Thus, she grew up in a discursive environment in which, in order to be socially polite and appear non-racist, racial differences were supposed to be evaded, ignored, and simply not discussed. In the pages that follow, I explore how the discursive repertoires of color-blindness and power-evasion influenced Megan's sense of identity, ideological stance, construction of race, and professional practice.

Childhood and Young Adulthood

In order to fully understand Megan's teaching in terms of the racial geography of teaching, I begin by mapping out the racial socialization Megan engaged in as a child and young adult. This process starts with a description of her family of origin as well as her role within that structure. It then moves on to an exploration of her childhood neighborhood, which includes an accounting of who did and did not reside there. In addition, the physical and social environment of her K-12 school experience is also investigated. Throughout this discussion, there is focus on the various types of relationships Megan reported having or not having with people of color as well as what she learned about race and racism from the physical and social environment around her. By exploring the materiality of Megan's life in this way, the origins of her racial identity and the emergent discursive repertoires that eventually shaped her construction of race as an adult and professional educator are uncovered.

Family, Neighborhood and School

Megan grew up in a very strict, close-knit, Italian American, Catholic family that included her mother, father, an older brother, and a twin brother, as well as a large

extended family that she saw frequently. She and her brothers were raised in the affluent, primarily White suburb of Batesville, located just a few miles west of North East City. Although Megan described her family as middle class, she noted that they “didn’t live the high life by any means” (Formal Interview I). Megan reported that, because of her status as the only girl, as well as the youngest child in the family (her twin brother was born first), she was somewhat “sheltered” (Formal Interview I) in that there were different rules for her than there were for her twin. For instance, her brother was allowed a later curfew than she was, and while he was allowed to ride his bike with his friends, Megan had to be driven everywhere she needed to go.

Along with being overprotected, Megan noted that she grew up in a “VERY, VERY strict home where education came first” (Email, March 10, 2007):

Not doing well in school, and not going to college was not an option in my house. If my brother or myself received anything below a B in school, we had to stop our outside sports activities to focus more on school. My parents were/are really hard workers, and expected the same from my brothers and me. (Email, March 10, 2007)¹

For Megan, this pressure to work hard and do well in school was intensified when, as a young child, she was identified as having a learning disability:

In second grade, I was diagnosed with a learning disability, which made school even more difficult for me. However, my parents always told me that I could do it; I just needed to work a little bit harder than everyone else. With my parents’

¹ Email, interview, and field note excerpts were edited lightly for grammar and readability.

support and countless teachers along the way, I was able to achieve my dream of going on to college and getting a masters degree, although it was not always easy.

(Email, March 10, 2007)

The message Megan received from her parents about her having a learning disability was that, while this might be difficult, this was something that could be overcome with hard work. However, she also made it clear that it was not hard work alone that helped her as she struggled for academic success. She was also well supported by her parents and “countless teachers along the way.”

According to Megan, her family lived in a neighborhood that was populated with families generally like her own in that most of them were White and Catholic. However, when asked about her neighborhood, Megan noted that this had not always been the case:

What was my neighborhood like? There were lots of kids around, mostly White.

It’s funny. Growing up, we had an African American family that used to live next door to us and I remember looking at pictures when I was a kid. But they moved away. I was still very young when they moved away. But, like, in elementary school looking at pictures from when I was younger—I remember looking at it and thinking, ‘Hmm, You don’t really see African Americans in my neighborhood.’ (Formal Interview I)

Megan’s childhood reaction to this picture of her former African American neighbors suggested that, while an African American family could live in her neighborhood, it was a very unusual event. Thus, the racial structuring of her childhood neighborhood was

shaped by the overwhelming presence of people similar to Megan and her family, as well as a general absence of people of color.

According to Megan, she attended elementary school with the same group of children from kindergarten through sixth grade. Most of Megan's elementary school peers were children from her neighborhood. However, this state of homogeneity was interrupted by the presence of a handful of urban African American students who attended school with Megan. The reason these urban students attended the Batesville Public Schools was that the school system voluntarily participated in a state-funded desegregation program called the Inner-City Educational Improvement Project (ICEIP). The purpose of the ICEIP program was to improve the education of urban, minority students, diminish the racial homogeneity of suburban schools, and ameliorate racial segregation in urban schools. In order to meet these goals, a number of African American students from urban communities were bussed from their urban neighborhoods to participating suburban communities throughout the state. According to Megan, there were always ICEIP students in her classes throughout her entire K-12 public school career. Megan felt that attending school with these students made her aware of racial differences from an early age. However, while she may have been physically close to her urban African American peers in school, the racial structuring of her environment kept her physically *and* socially distant from them outside of school.

ICEIP Students: Physically Close and Socially Separate

Although Megan reported being physically close to and often friendly with her ICEIP peers at school and school related events, she did not interact with them outside of

this institutional context. Even as a young elementary-aged child, Megan appeared to be conscious of the social distance between herself and her African American peers. When asked what her feelings were towards ICEIP students, Megan remembered that, as a young elementary-aged child, she was distressed that they could not stay after school and play:

I remember, like, feeling badly because [ICEIP students] could never stay after school and play in the yard...I had some friends who were in the ICEIP program and I used to get sad because they couldn't stay after school to play because they had to take the bus to get home and there was no other way for them to get home.

(Formal Interview I)

When I asked if ICEIP students ever went to her house or if she visited them in their homes in the city, she indicated that this never happened. ICEIP students simply could not stay after school because they had to take the bus home. As a result, Megan primarily socialized and interacted with children who lived within the community of Batesville.

According to Megan, the social distance between her and ICEIP students continued throughout her entire K-12 experience:

In high school and in elementary school, I mean, I was friendly with children who were African American, not White. I mean, we never had play dates, but they were in my classes. You know, we worked together. When I played sports in high school, there were African American children, you know, other kids on my teams. And I knew they were...I don't think I was color-blind in that context. Like I knew that they were different...I had definitely experience with African

Americans, but they just weren't part of my life. I was with them in school, but outside of school was...Not at home. Not in my dance class, gymnastics--nothing outside of school. (Formal Interview III)

It would seem then that Megan's cross-racial interactions with ICEIP students were extremely limited, as they occurred only at school or school related events. Thus, the racial structuring of Megan's childhood and young adulthood was shaped by a sharp social (and sometimes physical) separation between herself and her urban African American peers. Given this context, the inclusion of urban African American students within the Batesville Public School represented a partial, incomplete form of racial integration.

Assumptions and Attitudes about ICEIP Peers

Megan reported, "In all, [because of] my lack of exposure/education to/about diversity and race as a child, I formed many assumptions about race and urban schools" (Email, March 10, 2007). Many of these assumptions emerged from a deficit view of urban environments and the people who inhabited them. For example, in the same email, Megan referred to her assumption that ICEIP students attended Batesville schools in order to escape failing schools:

I guess my assumptions of urban school failure were a result of the preconceived notions that were subconsciously instilled in me by my family. I attributed this failure to ineffective teachers, students who didn't care about school, parents who didn't care about their children's schooling, and the violence, which I thought occurred in school. I guess this all came from, again, my parents, and my

experience in high school with the ICEIP program. At one time, I must have asked my parents why children from North East City had to come to Batesville to come to school, and I am sure that these were the answers my parents gave me.

(Email, March 10, 2007)

Hence, as a child, Megan internalized several negative messages about urban schools, which she assumed came from her family, although she reported having no memory of any conversations about urban schools or her ICEIP peers. Because of these negative messages, she came to believe that ICEIP students attended the Batesville Public Schools in order to escape inferior, sometimes dangerous, schools and neighborhoods that were inhabited by potentially violent people:

Well, growing up being—having the ICEIP program infiltrated in my school is—I always wondered why they couldn't go to school in their own town. And I think that the message I got was that the schools weren't good enough—that they weren't good schools or they weren't safe schools or they weren't getting a good education. So, I think that, I believe that, you know, the Batesville schools were, you know, superior to the North East schools. (Formal Interview III)

There are two ideas that stand out in this excerpt. First, Megan's use of the term "infiltrated" is an interesting word choice. According to the *Merriam Webster Online Dictionary*, the term infiltrate means, among other things, "to pass (troops) singly or in small groups through gaps in the enemy line," or "to enter or become established in gradually or unobtrusively usually for subversive purposes." The term has less to do with racial integration than it does with espionage or invasion. This suggests that Megan may

have felt some discomfort and/or sense of threat in having urban African American students attend her school.

The second item that stands out is that, even in the absence of any direct experience with urban environments, comparing her town to the urban neighborhoods where her ICEIP peers resided informed Megan's view of the community where she lived. For instance, when weighed against an urban context that was believed to promote student failure, Megan not only deemed Batesville as superior, but also saw it as helping urban students of color improve their educational chances. This notion that Batesville Public Schools were superior to the urban public schools may have also been reinforced by the fact that ICEIP students were bussed into Batesville, not the other way around.

It is also important to note that, in general, Megan did not believe that her childhood assumptions about her ICEIP peers were necessarily rooted in race:

And then going into high school, where there were more ICEIP students—Again, I just assumed that they were there—I'm not sure if it was a racial assumption or just that their schools weren't good enough and that our schools were better and that's why they were coming. (Formal Interview III)

What is striking here is that when Megan discussed her childhood assumptions about ICEIP students they were almost always framed in terms of an urban rather than a racial context. This suggested that the connection Megan was making to race was dysconscious (King, 1991) in that she was not consciously making assumptions about race and trying to hide them; she was simply not aware and did not recognize that her assumptions about ICEIP students were racially based. However, the racial status of ICEIP students became

salient to Megan when, in middle and high school, racial tensions arose between ICEIP students and White Batesville students:

And then in middle school we had some racial tension between the ICEIP students and the White students. I don't know how to describe it. I wasn't really involved with it, but there definitely were some fights. I don't remember it clearly, but there were fights that would break out in the cafeteria and it was always the ICEIP students and the others...I think from seeing that, I might have taken in that ICEIP students are violent or they're starting fights. However, I had no idea who started the fight or what the fight was even about. (Formal Interview III)

As Megan entered adolescence, she not only became more aware of race, but also appeared to have developed a more reproachful and critical stance towards her ICEIP peers in which she held them, and not her White peers, accountable for the racially charged altercations that occurred in the school cafeteria.

Racial Socialization and White Racial Identity Status

The fact that Megan became more racially cognizant of her African American peers during middle and high school aligns with much of the research on the racial identity development of adolescents (Carter, 1997; Tatum, 1997; Helms 2003). Along with other developmental theorists Helms (2003) and Tatum (1997) note that as young people move into adolescence, they begin to struggle with questions such as "Who am I?" and "Who can I be?" in more complicated ways than before. This struggle to develop a personal sense of self occurs within "a variety of identity domains, including self-

concept, occupations, and interpersonal relationships” (Helms, p. 143). Because we live in a nation that distributes societal goods based upon the color of one’s skin, “racial group memberships, race and related racial socialization become significant aspects of adolescents’ self-conception” (p. 143). Consequently, in addition to the other identity domains listed above, adolescents must also wrestle with the development of their own sense of racial identity.

For adolescents, the attainment of one’s racial identity occurs through a process of racial socialization, which, as noted by Helms (2003), “refers to the contextual laws, practices, customs, or traditions by which individuals are taught the differential value of societal racial groups and themselves as members of these groups” (p. 147). According to Helms, the development of a person’s racial identity is formed through “direct (e.g., parents) and indirect (e.g., media) sociocultural influences in the person’s environment” (p. 147). These direct and indirect influences transmit important messages about the behaviors and attitudes one must adhere to as a member of a specific racial group. According to Helms, while parents and family serve as the “initial socializing agents” of child’s racial identity development, “different sociocultural influences matter at different phases of the life span” (p. 147). For example, as a child enters adolescence, familial influences may be overshadowed by the influence of peers, teachers, or the media as “communicators of the racial messages that are internalized and steer the adolescent’s racial development” (p. 147-148).

It is important to note that the type of racial socialization one receives is to a great extent completely reliant upon one’s racial group membership. For example, as

discussed in Chapter 2, people of color often receive the cultural message that they are inferior to their White counterparts and thus do not deserve the same access to society's goods. On the other hand, the process of racial socialization "communicates to Whites, through a variety of mechanisms, that they are different from Latinos, Asians, Blacks, and American Indians" (Carter, 1997, p. 201). These mechanisms include messages that suggest that White people are superior to other racial groups and, as a result, deserve the unearned privileges accorded to them (McIntosh, 1988).

As indicated by Helms (2003), there appears to be little empirical research that explores the racial socialization practices of White families. However, she does suggest that one possible "socialization consequence of [being in] the advantaged-status racial group is that one can avoid explicit racial socialization" (p. 151-152). For example, Helms refers to research conducted by Hamm (1997), who found that, while White parents believed their children should learn about African American culture and the economic disparities between African American and White people, they did not see race as a necessary part of the familial socialization process, therefore it was relegated to outside influences such as school. For these families, racial socialization centered on the racialized "other" and not on the ways White people benefited from the current racial hierarchy. This avoidance of dealing with race, racism, and White privilege is an important aspect of Contact stage of Helms' theoretical model of racial identity (Carter, 1997; Helms, 2003).

The racial structuring of Megan's school experience had an impact on her racial socialization in several indirect but powerful ways. For instance, while public school

provided Megan with some cross-racial contact, her experience with racial diversity was limited in that she had almost no interactions with people of color beyond the parameters of a public school context. Outside of school, she resided within a racially homogeneous, White suburban context that kept her socially distant from her urban African American peers. As a result, Megan was only able to have what Carter (1997) refers to as “situational, interracial, social, or occupational interactions with People of Color” (p. 201). As a result, Megan received the message that people of color were not a part of her everyday life. Another indirect message Megan received from the Batesville Public Schools, which was mentioned earlier in the chapter, had to do with the fact that ICEIP students were bussed into Batesville—Batesville students were *not* bussed into urban neighborhoods. Because of this, Megan came to believe that the education and maybe even the people in her community were superior to the neighborhoods, schools, and families of her ICEIP peers.

While Megan does not remember hearing any explicit messages about race as a child, she internalized several subtle but powerful messages that portrayed the White community of Batesville as superior to the urban African American neighborhoods where her ICEIP came from. Because of these subtle messages, by the time Megan entered adolescence, she had also not only internalized the idea that race belonged to people of color, but also, people of color were responsible for any racial tensions that emerged during middle and high school.

Emergent Construction of Race

Emerging from the social geography of race of Megan's childhood and young adulthood are three discursive repertoires that influenced and shaped the discursive tensions that constituted her construction of race as an adult and practicing teacher. The first emergent repertoire, color-blindness or color-evasion, manifested itself through the fact that, while Megan may have initially noticed or "seen" a person's race, she was socialized to either ignore or "not to see" its significance. For example, as noted above, when discussing her assumptions about urban African American peers, Megan did not attribute the social distance between her and ICEIP students to race, but rather to the fact that these students were from an urban environment. Thus, the term "urban" became a code word or substitute for "Black" or "African American." The second repertoire, silence, is related to color-blindness in that conversations about race, racism, or the meaning of Whiteness are avoided. This repertoire was evident in Megan's family, as she did not recall any substantive conversations about race or the possible reasons why ICEIP students attended the Batesville Public Schools. The third discursive repertoire focused on the idea that the city of Batesville, by allowing urban African American students to attend the public school, was acting as savior for disadvantaged students.

Racial Socialization: Nurturing a Color-blind Stance

In mapping out the material and discursive dimensions represented on Figure 5.1, it becomes apparent that the racial socialization process Megan engaged in as a child and young adult was generally informed by a discursive repertoire of color-blindness. For Megan, the process of racial socialization was informed by several direct and indirect

material influences—the historical period in which she born and raised, her family, and her K-12 public school experience. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Megan was reared within a post-Civil Rights context that was shaped by a general denial of White racism and a concurrent cultural backlash against Civil Rights-era programs such as affirmative action. Growing up within such an historical setting placed Megan, her family, and her K-12 experience within a discursive environment steeped in color-blindness and color-evasiveness. As a result, the racial messages she received as a child and young adult—whether from family, school, or peers—were filtered through a conceptual framework that promoted the avoidance and evasion of race, racism, and the meaning of Whiteness. For example, while Megan’s parents conveyed several messages about the importance of parental and family support, academic achievement, and hard work, she noted that there was a general silence about race. As a result, it seems that Megan’s parents left the racial socialization up to the public schools.

Teacher Identity: Becoming an Urban Teacher

This section, which explores the second aspect of Megan’s racial geography of teaching, investigates the development of Megan’s preparation and subsequent identification as an urban teacher. It begins with an exploration of Megan’s experiences in a university-based teacher preparation program that includes a description and analysis of the various types of interactions, discussions and courses she had during this time that focused on the issues of race, racism, and/or Whiteness. This section also maps the ways that the internal and external pressures from Megan’s childhood and young adulthood, as well as her teacher preparation, shaped her emergent identity and developing ideological

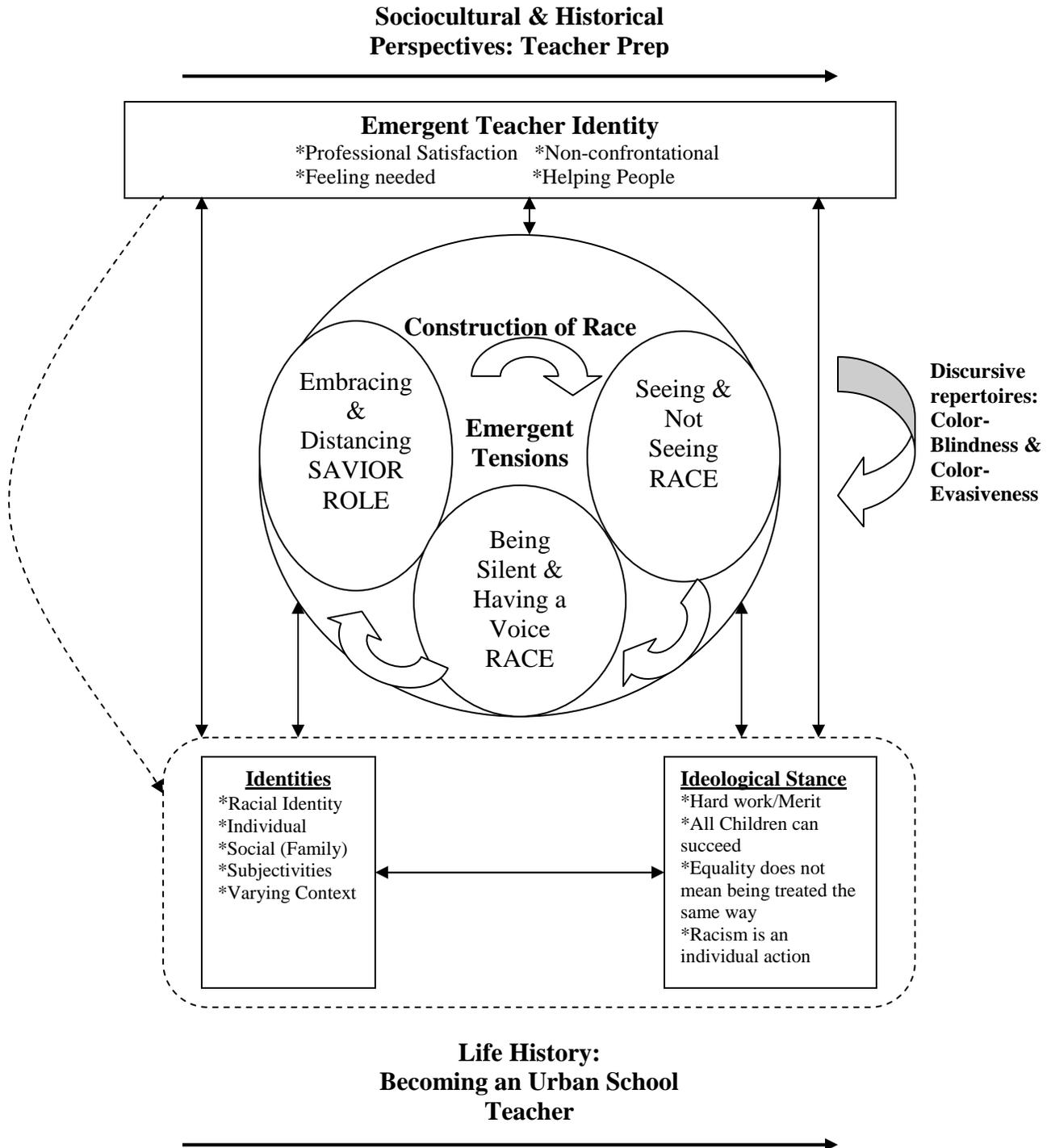
stance as an urban schoolteacher. This section concludes with a description and brief analysis of the emergent ideas or tensions that constituted her construction of race during this particular time frame.

Figure 5.2 represents the material and discursive dimensions that shaped the second time frame of Megan's racial geography of teaching – becoming an urban schoolteacher. The line at the top of this figure represents the materiality of Megan's teacher preparation experience. Unlike the previous figure, this one also offers a snapshot of the development of Megan's emergent identity as an urban schoolteacher, as well as its relationship to the other ways in which she identified herself, especially in terms of race. This figure also provides a more developed representation of Megan's construction of race that includes three emergent and overlapping discursive tensions: (1) embracing and distancing oneself from the White savior role; (2) seeing and not seeing race; and, (3) being silent and having a voice about race. As will be noted, these discursive tensions materialized directly from the contradictions and conflicts located among the multiple and shifting identities that shaped Megan's personal and professional lives.

Teacher Preparation

Megan always knew that she wanted to become a teacher. She reported that, as a child, she would frequently play school with her friends, almost always performing the role of the teacher. She reported that she had always felt a great deal of satisfaction from “being around kids” and “helping people” (Formal Interview I). In fact, Megan was so

Figure 5.2
 Teacher Identity: Becoming an Urban Teacher



sure about the professional path she had chosen that she could not understand why her college roommates worried so much about possible career choices:

My roommates were like, ‘I don’t know what I’m going to do with my life.’ Like how can you not know what you’re going to do with your life? I’ve always had this—I’ve always wanted to do this. (Formal Interview I)

In order to become a teacher, Megan attended a university-based teacher preparation program at Mt. Blaine University; an academically well-regarded Catholic institution located only a few miles from her family home. The teacher education program at Mt. Blaine was built upon several foundational principles, such as “promoting social justice” and “accommodating racial and ethnic diversity.” Over a five-year period, Megan earned an undergraduate degree in education, as well as a graduate degree in special education.

When I asked Megan via email how many courses she took during her teacher education program regarding race or whether she was ever encouraged and/or given the opportunity to examine and/or critique how being White shaped her life, she responded:

The only class that I took that touched on race was *Social Issues in Education*. However, I was part of a research group with Dr. Sterling which focused on reflective judgment, where I took a closer look at being white in an urban school, and what that meant for me and my students. Dr. Sterling did ask how my life has affected my views on race. My answers were similar to the ones I have provided you with. Maybe a little bit different now that I am older and have more teaching experience under my belt. (Email, March 18, 2007)

The course Megan was referring to—*Social Issues in Education*—was a core-course requirement for all education majors and was taken during her freshman year at Mt. Blaine. Its primary focus was to assist education majors as they investigated the meaning of contemporary social problems, such as racism, sexism, ethnic prejudice, poverty, and violence in terms of children, families, and schooling. As noted, the only other opportunity Megan had as an undergraduate to explore the meaning of race within her personal and professional life was as part of a research group on reflective judgment. Here, she was asked to investigate what it meant for her and her students that she was a White person working in an urban school, as well as how her life experiences had shaped her views on race.

It was surprising to hear that Megan had spent time during her undergraduate years exploring the meaning of her Whiteness. In our first formal interview, I had asked her what her Whiteness meant in terms of her teaching. The answer I received suggested she had not previously considered these issues:

Interviewer: ...Do you think your race—the fact that you're White—in any way impacts your teaching?

Megan: I don't know. I've never really thought about it...I mean my culture and how I was raised and how I was taught might impact my teaching. But I'm not sure that because I'm White—I mean—I don't know. It may in ways that I don't see—I mean I'm sure if an African American teacher came in and watched me teach they'd be like – Actually, I know they would. (Formal Interview I)

Megan went on to talk about how she believed that a small clique of her African American colleagues saw her as someone who wanted to “save” underprivileged children. There were other occasions throughout the course of data collection when

Megan was asked similar questions about the meaning of her Whiteness and she responded in a similar fashion.

While it was unclear from our interviews how, as a preservice teacher (or even as a practicing teacher), Megan addressed the meaning of her Whiteness within an urban school context; she did articulate ways that her life experience informed and shaped her views of race. For example, as discussed in the previous section, Megan talked about how, even though she attended school with African American students from the ICEIP program, her childhood experiences with racial diversity were quite limited. Megan also reported that, as a child and young adult, she had internalized many negative assumptions about urban schools. For the adolescent Megan, these assumptions were reinforced by the racial tension that arose between ICEIP students and White students from Batesville during middle and high school—racial tension she attributed to ICEIP students and not to the students from Batesville.

Given Megan's youthful assumptions about urban schooling and her ICEIP peers, it was not at all surprising that when she entered the teacher preparation program at Mt. Blaine, her initial desire was to teach in Batesville or a community like Batesville. According to several scholars (Zimpher & Ashburn, 1992; Melnick & Zeichner, 1995; Lawrence, 1997), this desire to teach within a demographic setting similar to one's own K-12 educational experience is common among White preservice teachers. However, in Megan's case, her aspirations were dramatically altered after several early pre-practicum experiences:

Megan: It's funny. When I went to Mt. Blaine I was, like, I'm going to teach in a—be in Batesville—and then I did a practicum in a Batesville school and I hated

it. I hated it. I hated going. I was, like, am I really supposed to be a teacher? Like I hate it so much. And then I did a prac in an urban school and I just fell in love with it. So I think that—that's really...

Interviewer: What was it that made you fall in love with it?

Megan: I felt needed. Like I felt like I had more of an impact on the kids than I did—I felt like, in the school in Batesville, I was just kind of sitting there. I'd try to initiate, you know. Maybe it was the teacher I was working with that really turned me off. I don't know. I just felt like it was a waste of time.

Interviewer: So you weren't—in Batesville you felt like you weren't given anything to do?

Megan: Right. I would ask. And I wasn't valued in any way and then when I went to the James-Eliot it was like, "Here you go, take these kids and do a reading group." Or—my expertise and my knowledge were used and valued there.

Interviewer: So, you felt validated as an emerging teacher and needed.

Megan: And the kids were different—I think.

Interviewer: How so?

Megan: I know people would say kids would be kids. But I'm very, like, affectionate—I'm very physical. I like to hug my kids and, you know, give them physical affirmations and I couldn't do that in Batesville. It was like we were very standoffish. The kids were just, you know, they haven't seen you in a week and they have a bazillion things to say to you. They give you a big hug...I just felt more accepted. I don't know. (Formal Interview I)

According to Megan, it was after these pre-practicum experiences that she came to believe that many of the assumptions that she had had as a child and young adult about urban schools were incorrect. Urban schools now represented a context in which she could attain a sense of professional satisfaction:

Once I got to Mt. Blaine and had experience in an urban school, I realized that this was not the case at all. This is when I decided that my efforts, knowledge, patience were needed not in suburban schools, but in urban schools, where a good

chunk of the population is in need of many supports beyond their homes. (Email, March 10, 2007)

What is interesting about Megan's shift from wanting to teach in Batesville to deciding to become an urban school teacher is that, even though Megan's pre-practicum experiences appeared to have caused her to dispel certain myths about urban schools (e.g., urban school are violent places that promote school failure), she continued to maintain a deficit view of urban children in which she saw them as needing extra help and "many supports beyond their homes." This idea that urban students were in need of help was not a new one for Megan. As noted, as a child Megan believed that the city of Batesville was helping urban African American students improve their life chances by allowing them to attend the Batesville Public Schools. Instead of seeing Batesville as the only potential savior of urban children, Megan began to see herself as someone who could help urban students improve their life chances. It is important to note that, even in her third year of teaching, these beliefs were still an important part of Megan's ideological stance as a practicing teacher, as indicated in the following email excerpt:

Many, not all, minority students living in the city have some kind of struggle. It might be financial, family issues, lack of support, etc. To be honest, I believe that in some instances I may treat these students differently because I know that they have a struggle, but KNOW that they CAN overcome it with the proper support. I know that many of my supports growing up were some of my teachers. I do sometimes give my minority children more attention because I know that some of them don't get that at home, and I know that in order for them to succeed, they

NEED to feel supported. I certainly don't believe that ALL African American students have little support at home, but from my experiences, I believe that many do. I think that my school experience, and values instilled in me have caused me to think this way about minority children. (Email, March 10, 2007)

The "school experience" and "instilled values" Megan was referring in this excerpt centered on her being diagnosed with a learning disability as a young, primary-aged child. It would seem that Megan clearly drew a parallel between the struggles she assumed her urban minority students contended with (e.g., financial problems, lack of support at home) and her own personal struggle as a special needs student. Because she was able to overcome her academic challenges with hard work and the support of her parents and teachers, Megan believed, that as a teacher, she could help urban-minority students by providing them with the support they did not get at home.

Megan also reported other reasons why she chose to become an urban rather than suburban schoolteacher:

I think that, and this could be wrong and it's totally an assumption or whatever you want to call it, but I feel like my challenges come from my kids and I feel in a suburban school I feel like the challenges come from the parents. And I rather my children be challenges to me than teaching because a parent asked me to do this— You know, dictating what is going to be done in the classroom. Because—I don't know, it's just not how I operate...I [also] think that teachers are felt—are looked upon more highly or viewed as professionals in urban school systems. In the suburban school systems, you have doctors and lawyers and people who clearly

have higher paying jobs than you and I feel inferior—like you’re—I would feel as though I was inferior in a backwards way. (Formal Interview I)

From this excerpt, it appears that Megan was uncomfortable with suburban parents for two reasons. First, she believed that suburban parents might attempt to “dictate” how she should (or should not) conduct her classroom thereby thwarting her sense of professional autonomy. Second, because many suburban parents were highly paid professionals that made a great deal more money than schoolteachers, Megan might feel as though she “was inferior in a backwards way.” For Megan, this discomfort with affluent, suburban parents suggested an unspoken tension in which she identified teaching as a low status profession.

Emergent Teacher Identity and Ideological Stance

For the preservice teacher, a crucial part of *becoming* an educator is the development of a personal and professional identity (Danielewicz, 2001; Britzman, 2003; Alsup, 2005; Rodgers & Scott, 2008) in which the emergent teacher moves beyond *playing* the role of teacher and actually *becomes* a teacher (Britzman, 2003). It is, however, important to note that the construction of a teacher’s identity is not a static event that occurs within a social vacuum. It is, rather, a complicated process that is socially constructed (Danielewicz, 2001) and shaped by the dialectical relationship found among various individual and social dimensions (Jenkins, 1996). In their review of “contemporary conceptions of identity,” Rodgers and Scott (2008) provide a conceptual overview of the individual and social dimensions that shape identity:

Contemporary conceptions of identity share four basic assumptions: (1) that identity is dependent upon and formed within multiple *contexts* which bring social, cultural, political, and historical forces to bear upon that formation; (2) that identity is formed in *relationship* with others and involves *emotions*; (3) that identity is *shifting, unstable, and multiple*; and (4) that identity involves the construction and reconstruction of meaning through *stories* over time...Contexts and relationships describe the *external* [or social] aspects of identity formation; and stories and emotions, the *internal* [or individual], meaning-making aspects. (p. 733)

Thus, all forms of identity, whether positioned within race, gender, religion, or professional aspirations, “emerge as a result of dynamic interplay between discursive processes that are internal (to the individual) and external (involving everyone else)” (Danielewicz, p. 11, 2001).

In mapping out the racial geography of Megan’s emergent identity as a White urban schoolteacher, it is important that the connection between the shifting identities that shaped her personal and professional lives and her construction of race as a prospective and a newly minted teacher is charted. For Megan, many of the internal (emotions and stories) and external (context and relationships) “pressures” that shaped her vision of what it meant for her to be a teacher were directly connected to her subjective experiences as a child and young adult. An example of this comes from Megan’s experience as a struggling special needs student who was able to attain academic success through hard work and support from her parents and teachers. This

story of overcoming academic adversity appeared to have had a powerful impact on the ways in which she defined herself as teacher. For example, not only did she choose to earn a degree in special education, but she also believed that an important part of her role as teacher centered on the belief that all children, no matter what their circumstances, could attain academic success through the same type of hard work and support she received from the adults around her.

For Megan, an important way to provide students with the same type of support she received as a child was through the use of “physical affirmations,” which included such things as a pat on the back, an arm around the shoulder, or a hug. According to Megan, her desire to be physically demonstrative towards her students emerged from the fact that, as an elementary-age student, she remembered responding positively to such physical contact from her parents and teachers.

Related to her desire to support her students was Megan’s wish to feel that she was having a positive impact on her students—in short, she wanted to feel “needed” within a professional context. While these affective aspects of Megan’s professional identity were reflected back to her within her urban pre-practicum experiences, they appeared to have been completely undervalued within a suburban context. As a result, she felt far more comfort and professional satisfaction working within an urban rather than a suburban school context.

While Megan felt far more at ease working in an urban rather than a suburban school environment, she did not, as a preservice and a newly practicing teacher, fully explore the meaning of race within such a professional context. Instead, Megan’s

positionality as a former special needs student and her subsequent role as a special educator were used as a template for interpreting race within her professional practice:

I do believe, as a special educator, that all children can learn and I think that translates to my racial beliefs—that it doesn't matter what color skin you have: everyone can learn and everybody deserves, you know, to be on an equal playing field. (Formal Interview II)

This particular stance—that it doesn't matter what color skin you have and everyone deserves to be on an equal playing field—suggests that, her exploration about race at Mt. Blaine (e.g., reflective judgment group, *Social Issues in Education* course) may have been somewhat incomplete in that she continued to view race through a discursive lens of color-blindness or color-evasion. As noted in previous chapters, this discursive practice turns on the assumption that racial characteristics are an irrelevant factor in determining individual merit. As a result, every effort is made not to “see” or acknowledge racial differences. However, for Megan, nested within her efforts not to see race were particular, albeit tacit, assumptions about racial difference. For instance, by equating special education with race Megan was not only “not seeing” the social and historical impact race had upon her life as a White woman, as well as the lives of her students, she was also associating racial difference with a disability (e.g., lack of support at home, living in poverty).

While Megan's identification as an urban school teacher did not include a conscious critique of race, racism, and Whiteness, she reported that her attitudes regarding race were quite different than those of many members of her extended family.

According to Megan, these family members frequently expressed overtly racist and sometimes classist attitudes regarding her students:

Megan: And like my grandparents—When I started teaching in urban schools my grandfather was like, ‘What are you...’ You know, of course, ridiculous comments that no one should ever make. But my grandparents are a product of their generation...I don’t even talk about my work in front of them because they have no idea.

Interviewer: So, they would make racial comments about you working in an urban school?

Megan: Correct.

Interviewer: And possibly classist comments as well?

Megan: Correct.

Interviewer: And then you would just say nothing because it’s...

Megan: Because it’s just not—and even some of my mother’s—not so much on my dad—actually, not at all on my dad’s side, but on my mom’s side. Even some of my aunts and uncles—I just don’t even go there because it just makes me frustrated and upset because they have no idea [what goes on in urban schools] and they make racial, stupid comments.

Interviewer: Like what?

Megan: Oh, God I don’t even know. I don’t even know. I can’t think of anything.

Interviewer: You just know it when you’re there.

Megan: Yeah. And if I happen to—if I were to tell a story about Marcus throwing a chair or something, I’m sure that—I know that there would be some comment. Not that he has a crazy life. Not that he has a disability or something like that. It would be because he’s Black. He’s a Black child that’s why he assaulted you or something to do with that. So, I don’t ever talk about my job in front of my mother’s side of the family. My father’s side of the family is—They are more open and they enjoy my stories. Not my mom’s side. I don’t know why but it’s just the way they were brought up, I guess. (Formal Interview III)

What is interesting here is that, even though the racial comments made by her maternal relatives left her feeling “frustrated and upset,” she chose to remain silent and non-confrontational when they occurred. The use of silence and a non-confrontational stance was also a part of her relationship with her parents, especially regarding her choice to become an urban schoolteacher. For instance, Megan believed that when she first started teaching in an urban school, her parents were a little apprehensive about her working in such an environment. However, Megan never directly discussed these issues with her parents and she was left to having to guess what their attitudes were about race and her professional choices:

I’m sure, that my parents, you know, have some—well, they do have some reservations about me being in the city and, you know, probably—I don’t know this because we’ve never really had a conversation, but may believe that, you know, African American children are, not less competent but—I don’t know.

(Formal Interview II)

Analysis of the data suggests that there are two explanations for this silence and lack of confrontation. First, Megan reported that her “family [was] the most important thing in [her] life” (Formal Interview I). Because of this, it may have been too emotionally painful for her to confront her maternal grandparents, uncles, and aunts about their racist attitudes because such a confrontation had the potential to disturb or damage valuable familial relationships. The second reason that Megan remained silent had to do with the fact that, in general, Megan reported avoiding any type of confrontation.

According to Megan, this aversion to confrontational interactions was an important aspect of who she was as a person:

Megan: I don't have conversations about race because I am avoiding confrontation...It's the same with my family [when they talk about race]. Again, it is frustrating to me, but I don't ever attempt to change anybody.

Interviewer: So, you might feel momentarily aggravated, but you move on because you want to avoid confrontation?

Megan: Yes...I think it is part of who I am as well...If my roommate was bothering me with something I would never ever say, 'Yes, that bothers me.' Ever! (Formal Interview III)

In addition to the tensions she experienced between her teacher and family identities, Megan's teacher identity also appeared to have been shaped by an internal struggle in which the external issues of race, social class, family allegiances, and professional status converged to create a complicated paradox that, when untangled, exposed a struggle to avoid any direct engagement with race, racism, and the social construction of Whiteness. The origins of this paradox emerged from the sense of inferiority that Megan reported when she compared her professional role as a schoolteacher to that of highly paid, suburban parents who were doctors and lawyers. This tension was also present in her relationships with some members of her extended family—people who were similar to the affluent parents in Batesville:

Megan: I mean, at first it was difficult [to be an urban educator]—especially in my family because I am so close with them—to be the one that [decides to teach] because all of my cousins and aunts and uncles are all in professions that—none of them are teachers—but they're in professions that are, you know, they are all...

Interviewer: Money making.

Megan: Exactly...And so. I don't know being the one—It was difficult to say, 'No, I'm not going to teach in a suburban school system. It's not what I enjoy.

This is where I'm comfortable. This is what I want to do in order to be my own person rather than conforming to what was expected of me.' (Formal Interview III)

It would appear that the fact that she chose to be a teacher at all was in and of itself problematic, and was further exacerbated by her decision to work in an urban rather than suburban context. It was one thing in the eyes of her family to be a teacher in a suburban school serving middle and upper-middle class families, and quite another to work with poor, minority children and families who were probably dangerous. Thus, it would seem that Megan's professional choice to become a teacher caused an unspoken rift between herself and her extended family who expected her to follow a more financially lucrative professional path. This rift was made even wider by the social context in which she chose to practice. In spite of this tension, she reported that it was what she needed to do "in order to become [her] own person." Consequently, for Megan, part of becoming an urban schoolteacher meant individuating from the expectations and values of her family of origin.

As discussed earlier, one reason that Megan cited for being more comfortable working in an urban context was the sense that her educational expertise was more respected, which not only made her feel more appreciated, but more professional, as well. I would also argue that this increased sense of professionalism was also based upon the fact that urban parents did not intimidate her in the same way that suburban parents did. For instance, urban parents often made less money, were not as well educated, and appeared to be less involved in their children's educational experience than their suburban counterparts. Because of this, Megan felt as though she was under far less

parental scrutiny in an urban classroom than she would have been in a community like Batesville.

Given these differences, it may also have been the case that, in some instances, rather than only feeling inferior to the suburban parents, Megan may have felt superior to the urban parents. This sense of superiority was not only rooted in her level of education and income as compared to many of her urban students' parents, it was also enmeshed with her desire to "help" underprivileged urban students, which emerged from a deficit view of urban environments:

I think when I first started teaching I was there to like save—not save the world—but I felt as though I was doing this really good thing for, you know, underprivileged children and trying to help them. (Formal Interview II)

In sharing her professional expertise and knowledge, Megan believed that she was able to provide her urban students with the type of support that their families could not or would not give them. She was, if not "saving" them, helping students attain what she considered to be a better life (e.g., her standards of desirable levels of education and income).

At the same time that Megan may have felt superior to urban parents, as a practicing teacher, she also reported feeling self-conscious in her interactions with parents of color:

Megan: I feel like I have to like kind of front load my introduction to [parents of color] in that I really over do it that I'm not this, 'save-the-world-person' and that I'm really here for [their] kids. I don't care what color they are—I'm here to help them. Well, I do care—you know what I mean. I didn't mean that—I do care about what color they are and who they are, but I'm not judging them.

Interviewer: Regardless of their color you want to...

Megan: Right. I'm going to treat them...the way they deserve to be treated. I always—well not always—during the past three years of my teaching—I've really tried to, you know, [make] phone calls and get parents in to meet them so that they know who I am and what my expectations are so that we can kind of be on the same page. Because I do fear that a parent may accuse me of being racist, or of not treating his or her child fairly because of the color of his or her skin.
(Formal Interview II)

For Megan, the self-consciousness described above exposed a discomfort that was caused by anxiety centered on Megan's "mission to help" (Formal Interview II) urban children as well as a deep-seated fear that she would be called a racist by one of these parents. It would also seem that, in relation to parents of color, Megan became acutely aware of her Whiteness and the inherent privileges that went along with it. However, rather than problematizing it in terms of her professional interactions with parents, she utilized a color-blind and color-evasive discursive repertoire in which she attempted to mask, avoid, or push away the topic of race and her Whiteness by being extra attentive and communicative with parents of color. This discursive practice enabled her to present herself to parents as a racially neutral party who was only interested in "helping" urban children, not "saving" them.

Becoming a Teacher: Construction of Race and Emergent Tensions

During this second time period of Megan's racial geography of teaching, her construction of race was similar to that of her childhood and young adulthood. However, as both a prospective teacher and a new teacher, her construction of race began to include emergent tensions that complicated the ways in which she understood race as a child and young adult. For example, this complexity was evident in the first set of discursive

tensions—seeing and not seeing race—in several ways. For example, instead of “seeing” her students as raced, Megan often saw them through a special education lens in which she drew on her own experiences as a student who received special education services and her role as a special educator. However, at the same time Megan was “not seeing” the race of her students, she also reported that she sometimes treated her minority students differently from her non-minority students because she believed that many of them were not getting “proper support” at home. This “seeing and not seeing” race also influenced her interactions with parents of color. As noted above, when Megan “saw” the racial difference between herself and her parents of color, she became self-conscious and attempted to evade any racial tension by making a special effort to communicate with her parents of color. She did this in order to avoid being seen as someone who defined themselves as a White savior and, also to protect herself from being called a racist.

The second set of discursive tensions, being silent or developing a voice about race, was situated within the tension Megan experienced between her family’s attitudes and her own evolving views of race as a prospective teacher. For instance, from her pre-practicum experiences within an urban context and some of her coursework at Mt. Blaine, Megan began to construct a discourse around race that subscribed to the notion that all children, no matter what color, “deserved to be on an equal playing field.” However, Megan reported that some of her family did not share this same belief and often made racist and classist remarks. Rather than confront these family members, Megan chose to remain silent.

The third set of discursive tensions, embracing and distancing herself from the role of White savior, was present right from the moment that Megan decided to become an urban schoolteacher. According to Megan, when she first began teaching in an urban school, she felt like she was doing a good thing by helping “underprivileged” children. However, during her first few years of her professional practice, she began to feel increasing discomfort with this position and was very concerned that parents and colleagues of color not see her as someone who believed she could “save” urban students. For Megan, an inner struggle emerged about how it might be possible for her to “help” her urban students achieve without taking on the role or persona of “savior.”

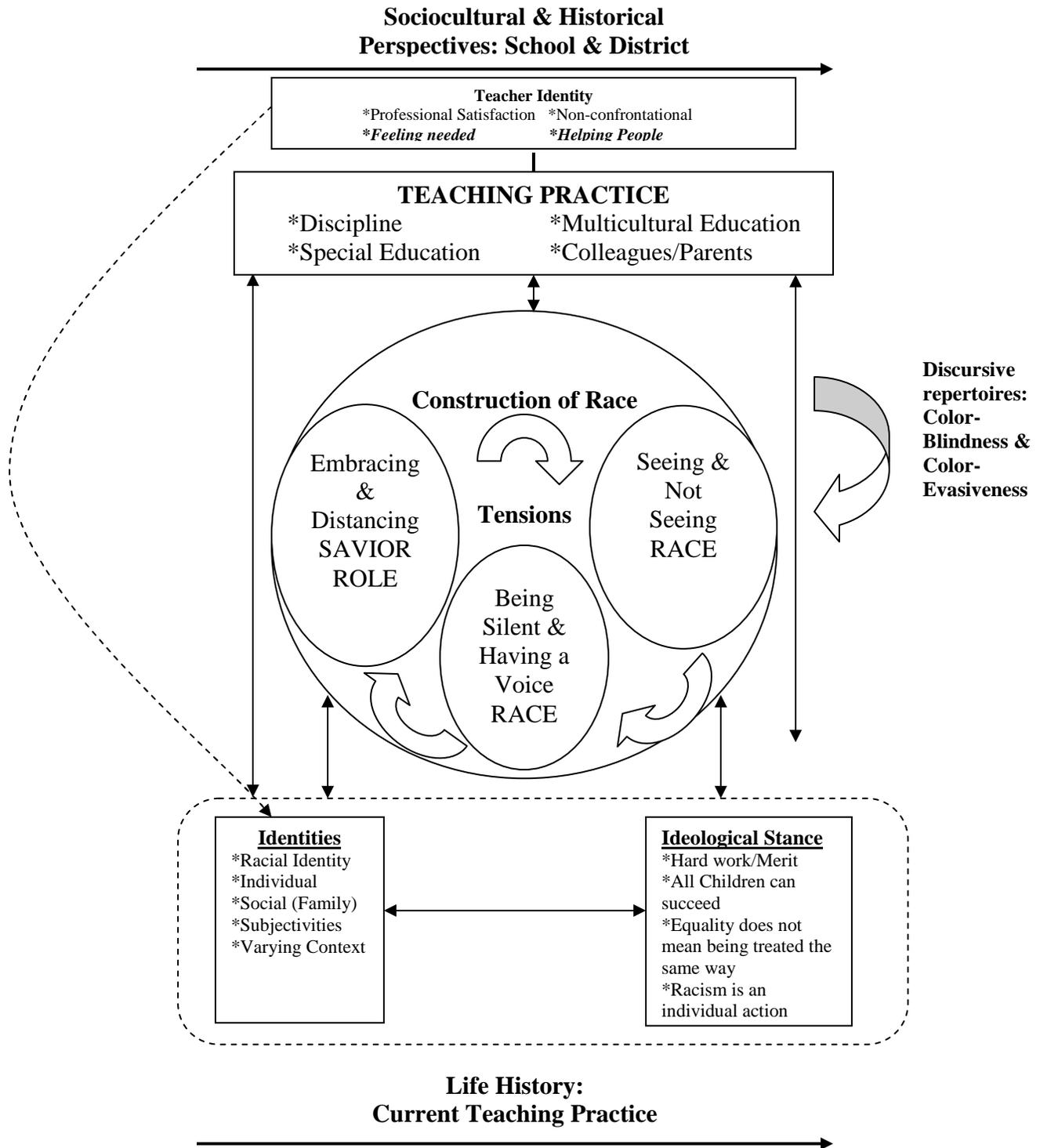
Becoming an Urban Teacher: Avoiding Being Called a Racist

By mapping the discursive and material dimension represented on Figure 5.2, it becomes evident that an important aspect of Megan’s racial geography of teaching as a preservice and a newly practicing teacher centered on the discursive repertoire of color-blindness and its relationship with the emergent tensions that comprised her construction of race. As noted, as a child and young adult, Megan was not only socialized not to see race, she also learned to avoid *any* type of confrontation, whether about race or anything else. This fear of confrontation prevented Megan from fully problematizing the meaning of race within both her personal life and professional practice, as well as what it meant for her to be a White teacher.

Teacher Identity: Being an Urban Teacher

This section explores the third and final aspect of Megan’s racial geography of teaching—being an urban teacher. It begins with a description of Megan’s current

Figure 5.3
 Teacher Identity: Current Teaching Practice



professional context, which includes a demographic description of Megan's classroom and school at-large as well as an exploration of her relationships with students, their families, and her colleagues in terms of race and racism. Within this description is a discussion and analysis of the ways in which Megan, as an urban teacher who, at times, struggled with the racial differences between some of her colleagues, her students and their parents. This section also maps out how Megan's ideological stance and construction of race informed her teaching practice.

Figure 5.3 represents the material and discursive dimensions which shaped the third and final time frame of Megan's racial geography of teaching – being an urban schoolteacher. The line at the top of this figure represents the sociocultural, historical, and contextual aspects of Megan's district, school, and classroom. In particular, this figure focuses on the relationship between Megan's teaching practice and the ways in which she identified herself as a teacher in terms of race, racism, and Whiteness. It also offers a representation of Megan's construction of race that stresses the conflicting relationships that existed among the three discursive tensions reviewed in the previous section (e.g., embracing and distancing oneself from the White savior role, seeing and not seeing race, being silent and having a voice about race). Added to this figure is a representation of Megan's teaching practice, which includes several aspects that shaped her teaching, such as dealing with issues of discipline, special education, and multicultural education.

School and Classroom Context

Megan began teaching at the James-Eliot Elementary School, which was located in a crowded commercial-residential neighborhood in North East City, three decades after the desegregation crisis of the 1970s. At the time of this study, the James-Eliot was serving nearly 600 K-6 students. The student demographics were majority minority in that 42% of the students were African American, 27% were Hispanic, 18 % were White, and 14% were Asian. Over 70% of students were eligible for free or reduced-priced meals.

Of the nearly 50 teachers in the school, 66% were White, 19% were Black, and 14% were Asian, Native American, or Portuguese. At the time of this study, 50% of students attended regular education classes, 25% were English Language Learners and 25% were in special education classes. The special education program included several grade-level “integrated” classrooms, as well as a K-5 program for children with autism. The school was also not meeting “Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)” as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act in either English Language Arts or Mathematics. This meant that the school fell under the “Needs Improvement” category in both Math and English Language Arts. Because of this rating, families at the James-Eliot were entitled to transfer to another school within the district or, in the case of low-income students, receive “Supplemental Education Services,” such as individual tutoring.

Because of the NECPS “controlled choice” program and the fact that the James-Eliot housed special programs for various sub-groups of students, a majority of the children attending the James-Eliot were bused in from other city neighborhoods.

According to the school principal, Dr. Callahan, many students resided in neighborhoods where there had been an increase in gun violence. As a result, parents did not allow their youngsters to play outside because they feared they might be caught in cross fire. This was a legitimate concern, as a former student had been shot and killed a few months earlier.

At the time of this study, Megan was teaching in an integrated 4th grade classroom. By definition, her classroom should have been comprised of eight children who had been diagnosed with a specific learning disability, outlined in an Individualized Education Program (IEP), and seven regular education students who would serve as peer models for the children with IEPs. However, instead, she was assigned 18 children, 16 of whom had IEPs. With the help of two paraprofessionals, Megan addressed a wide array of learning disabilities ranging from mild verbal processing issues to social-emotional disorders and autism. Fourteen of her students were African American and four were White (three of the White students were autistic). One of her students, in addition to being autistic, was an English Language Learner. Of all of the students in her class, only 3 students were female.

In addition to Megan and the two paraprofessionals, there were several other adults in and out of Megan's classroom throughout the course of the school day. Because a majority of her students had speech and occupational therapy written into their IEPs, the speech teacher and occupational therapist visited the classroom on a weekly basis. Megan also had a full-time, graduate-level student teacher and a part-time undergraduate student teacher, both of whom were from Mt. Blaine.

From the perspective of behavior, Megan was dealing with an unusually challenging and rather “immature” group of students. She noted that, as the day progressed, student behavior tended to deteriorate. By the time lunch was over, students were absolutely “miserable” (Formal Interview I) in that they became increasingly more argumentative, frustrated, and defiant. In particular, Megan reported that it was two African American boys, Lamar and Marcus, whose behavior was especially difficult to deal with:

Two students are the biggest challenge of my life...They're beyond me...One of them is just highly volatile and he—I mean he has a really poor home life and I understand where, you know, some of his anger is coming [from], but he's just defiant and I just can't—I mean I've tried. It's just a puzzle. You know, I just can't figure them—the two of them—I just can't figure them out. And they know how to push my buttons and they know exactly what to do. So, keeping them—I mean and I'll say most of my attention is, unfortunately with them, which is frustrating because it shouldn't be that way but it has to be because if I [don't pay attention to the them], it's chaos. (Informal Interview I)

Because of these behavioral issues and the fact that her classroom did not accurately align with an integrated classroom model (that is, in that she did not have an appropriate number of regular education students to serve as models), it was proving to be a very difficult, challenging, and frustrating academic year for Megan:

I feel really badly that my classroom is so chaotic all of the time...I feel like a disciplinarian most of the time. I know that I don't cover all of the content I need

to because of some of the issues I am dealing with in the class; however, that is a sad reality that I have to face this year. After this year, I can now see why many new teachers leave the profession after three years... Don't get me wrong, I love what I do, but it can be draining and exhausting. Luckily for me, I have had two "good" years of teaching, and know that this class is not how it is all of the time in urban schools. (Email, January 29, 2007)

From my observations, it would appear that much of the professional frustration Megan experienced during this academic year came from the fact that, because of the time she had to spend negotiating the disruptive behavior exhibited by many of the students in her class, it was sometimes very difficult for her to provide her students with full access to the curriculum. No matter how thoughtful, well-prepared, and interesting Megan's lessons were (and they often were quite interesting), they were often interrupted by the need to manage inappropriate student behavior. While Megan reported that she enjoyed modifying the curriculum for individual students, the fact that she had so many students who needed such modification also added to her stress.

Although Megan was struggling with the extreme behavioral issues exhibited by her many of her students, she reported feeling very supported by a majority of her teaching colleagues. However, according to Megan, there were a handful of veteran African American teachers with whom she reported feeling some racial discomfort:

Megan: My first year teaching, I had had a really bad day and I remember the teacher across the hall who wasn't really—there's like a sub-level of like—I don't know how to say this—this is going to sound awful—but of reverse racism among the teachers, in my opinion. I think that some of the African American teachers in our school think that—and I don't know this—I'm just inferring this from different situations and conversations—that some African American teachers in

our school believe that the White teachers think that we are coming here to save these, you know, impoverished children who have nothing, etc. etc., which really is not how I feel at all. I'm not saving anybody, you know, I'm here to teach and do the best that I can. And I remember one time—I don't yell. I rarely raise my voice. I try to keep an even tone because when I yell, the kids get—it's just not how I am—it's not my teaching style. And I had had a bad day and I was speaking with a kid in the hallway and we had, whatever, talked it out and I put my arm on his shoulder and, you know, 'Let's have a better day tomorrow,' whatever and there were two teachers across the hallway and one of them said to the other one, 'That's her problem. She wants to be their friend.' It's not that I want to be their friends but...

Interviewer: This was an African American teacher?

Megan: Yes, right. And, I mean, maybe it wasn't a racial thing but—

Interviewer: Did it feel that way?

Megan: Yes, it did. It most definitely did.

Interviewer: And why did it feel that way to you?

Megan: Maybe because those two individuals really aren't friendly at all to many of the younger-people that I associate with. Really aren't friendly, don't make an effort, They have like a big multicultural luncheon every year and the invitation's only brought to the African American teachers in the school...And then, last year, another one of our student's brother was killed and they took up a collection and only African American teachers were asked to donate. It's bizarre. I don't know. (Formal Interview I)

While Megan did not experience this type of racial tension with all of her African American colleagues, especially those African American teachers who were the same age as she was, she reported that a small group of African American teachers kept their distance and segregated themselves from her and the other young White teachers she worked with. When asked if she made any attempt to bridge this distance between herself and these teachers, she stated that she tried to connect to them by being as friendly as possible, and “instead of walking down the hall with my head down, I'd say hello”

(Formal Interview I). In some ways, her response to this small group of African American teachers was similar to the one she had with some members of her extended family who made racist comments in that, even though she reported feeling hurt by their behavior towards her, she chose to remain silent and not confront them. As with her family, it seems likely that part of the reason for this non-confrontational stance had to do with the fact that Megan was uncomfortable with any type of confrontation and made every effort to avoid it.

Current Teaching Practice: The Construction of Race

As a practicing teacher, Megan's construction of race was comprised of the same three discursive tensions reviewed in the earlier time periods— seeing and not seeing race, embracing and distancing oneself from the White savior role, and being silent or developing a voice about race. As will be discussed, each of these tensions was woven into some aspect of Megan's teaching practice and/or her relationship with students, colleagues, and parents. The first set of tensions between seeing and not seeing race was situated throughout Megan's teaching practice in several ways. For example, while Megan made a great effort to infuse multicultural literature throughout the curriculum, she defined multicultural education through a discursive lens of color-blindness. The second set of discursive tensions between being silent or developing a voice about race was evident in her approach to discussing racial issues with her students in that there were times when she avoided talking about race, as well as times when she actively engaged in conversations about race. The third set of discursive tensions between

embracing and distancing herself from the role of White savior was located within her relationships with parents and colleagues.

The Racial Geography of Teaching and Practice

The purpose of this chapter was to address the ways Megan DeAngelis' ideological stance informed her construction of race as well as how these two aspects influenced her teaching practice. In order to explore these issues, I utilized the racial geography of teaching as a means of conceptually mapping the meaning of race within Megan's personal and professional life. What I uncovered was the fact that Megan's racial geography of teaching was greatly influenced by the relationship that existed between a discursive repertoire of color-blindness and the tensions that comprised Megan's construction of race. This relationship had a great deal of influence on Megan's ideological stance, which in turn had a profound impact upon her teaching practice. In the pages that follow, I explore how these tensions shaped Megan's ideological stance and played out within Megan's practice.

As noted, Megan's class was, behaviorally speaking, extremely challenging. As a result, she had to spend a great deal of class time focused on discipline. In spite of these issues, Megan appeared to have a very warm relationship with students. I noted that she was often physically demonstrative with students, often patting them on the back, providing them with lotion for chapped skin, or putting an arm around a particular child who appeared to be in distress. Megan frequently tried to encourage appropriate behavior through positive reinforcement. For example, she often said things like, "John, you are doing a nice job in line. Who else can I give a compliment to?" or "I like the way

Michaela is working.” It was also not unusual to hear Megan tell the other adults who came in and out her classroom how much she “loved” particular children.

In order to deal with student conduct, Megan utilized several behavior modification strategies. One of these included a series of three colored wall charts – green, yellow, and red. At the beginning of each day, all of the children's names were attached to the green chart. Below the green chart was a yellow chart that was labeled with two rows—a “minus 5 minute” row and a “minus 10 minute row.” If a child misbehaved, his or her name was brought down from the green chart and placed onto the yellow chart—the first offense being five minutes taken away from recess; for the second offense, ten minutes is taken away. If a student’s name was brought down to the red chart, s/he would lose 15 minutes of recess. Since many of the children in Megan’s classroom had idiosyncratic behavior issues, discipline was based upon each individual child’s particular needs. For some children who had a great deal of difficulty controlling their behavior, Megan might give them the opportunity to earn their recess back. Other children, who had more self-control and seldom got into trouble, might not receive the same opportunity.

The idea that different students needed different things based upon their individual academic and emotional needs was also evident in other areas of Megan’s teaching practice. For instance, when I asked Megan, in our very first interview, what she thought her students’ biggest challenges might be she responded:

Megan: I think a lot of [my students] feel unsuccessful a lot of the time and throughout their whole school career. I mean, sad enough the children like—I mean the whole school knows that [integrated] classes are for the SPED kids. They’ve always been in these classes and they get made fun of and I think that

just getting through the day and feeling successful is a struggle for them. I mean, like assignments—I don't really put a time limit—if they don't finish, they finish it at another time. It's not marked down because it's late...they want to finish it. They want to feel that success—you know, 'I finished it. I got it done.' But even—despite the fact that I'm not holding it above them, I think that's difficult for them to just access the curriculum. Yes, I'm modifying it for them...for someone with attention issues to sit and focus on me for 20 minutes is a huge challenge. So, I think they all have different challenges they're working with.

Interviewer: Right. But your goal is to have them get as much access to the curriculum as possible.

Megan: Right. Yeah, and I mean they're not all going to; some will get everything done and do great and be successful and others will be successful at another level. They may not finish their [vocabulary words], but they got two words done and last week they only got one word done, which is, in my opinion successful or showing growth. (Informal Interview)

It would appear then that, for Megan, having equal access to the curriculum did not mean that each child received the same type of instruction or was required to attain the exact level of skill in a certain academic area. Instead, student success was defined by the individual needs, ability, and/or level of growth for each student. As noted on Figure 5.3, this aspect of Megan's practice aligned with part of her ideological stance that stressed the idea that equality does not mean that everyone gets the same thing, but rather that everyone gets what he or she needs.

At the same time that Megan worked tirelessly to address the emotional, behavioral, and academic needs of students, she reported that she also made a great deal of effort to infuse multicultural literature throughout the curriculum. Below is a brief description of Megan's stance towards multicultural education from our first formal interview:

Megan: I think some people think of [multicultural education] as social studies and teaching, you know, different contents and different cultures, but I think it's

important to weave it into all, across all subjects. Just having a library that has multicultural literature in it. I try to address the needs that I'm specifically working with in terms of cultures first and then work in other cultures. So, for example, say I have a child that's Portuguese—[I] would try and address, that would be my first—I would try to address the needs of my classroom first and then open it up.

Interviewer: So, who is in your classroom would shape how you approach [multicultural education].

Megan: I think so. (Formal Interview I)

From this description, it would seem that Megan viewed multicultural education as something that needed to be infused throughout the curriculum, and believed it should be informed by the experiences students brought to the classroom. However, missing from her description of multicultural education is any mention of racial differences, social justice, or a desire to actively challenge various forms of injustice such as racism, classism, and gender discrimination. In fact, Megan reported that when thinking about planning and modifying the curriculum for her students, she noted that race was not the first thing on her mind:

I don't really think about [the race of my students] unless I have to think about it. Like, you know, multicultural literature and trying to include that kind of stuff— Yes, I'm trying to think about curriculum, but I'm also thinking about, you know, who my students are and trying to, you know, cater to their needs culturally—but specifically racially I'm not—I don't really think about it that much. (Formal Interview II)

This omission of race within Megan's conception of multicultural education and the fact that she did not appear to see race as a defining aspect of her students' identity suggest

that, whether consciously or not, she was interpreting multicultural education through a discursive lens of color-blindness. In many ways, Megan's interpretation of multicultural education appeared to align with the second of Sleeter and Grant's (1987) five typologies or approaches to multicultural education, which were outlined in Chapter 2. As noted, the purposes of the second approach—*human relations*—are to help children from different backgrounds develop a positive self image, learn to get along with one another, and improve communication among diverse school populations. However, issues regarding poverty and the meaning of cultural and institutional racism are rarely, if ever, fully addressed. Given this description, it would be possible for a teacher to integrate various forms of multicultural material and never directly confront the issue of race.

Over the course of data collection, I observed that Megan did indeed make an effort to “weave” a variety of literature that centered on African American themes throughout the curriculum. These texts were generally used as a tool for learning new vocabulary or developing study skills. For example, during one of my observations Megan incorporated the text *Martin's Big Words: The Life of Martin Luther King* (2001) by Doreen Rappaport into a lesson on note taking. On another occasion, I observed Megan read aloud a beautifully illustrated book entitled *Flossie and the Fox* (1986), which was written by Patricia McKissack and illustrated by Rachel Isadora. This story, which the author originally heard from her grandfather as a young child, tells the Southern African American story of an African American girl named Flossie Finley who outmaneuvers a malevolent fox who had been stealing eggs from Flossie's neighbors. Below is an excerpt from my field notes that describes this read aloud:

Before reading the story, Megan read the author's note at the beginning of the book to the class, which explains that *Flossie and the Fox* was from an oral tradition. Megan explains that the author had heard the story from her grandfather as a child and decided to write it down as an adult.

After a few moments of reading the text, it became clear that Megan was having difficulty reading the Southern African American dialect. At one point, she stops reading and asked the class, "Why am I having difficulty reading this?" She then tells the children that the reason she is having difficulty reading the text is because the book is written in a Southern dialect. She talks about how Mr. Martin, who is her student teacher, and she speak differently because he is from the South and she is from the North. [Mr. Martin] is African American. (Field Note, February 6, 2007)

What makes this excerpt interesting is not based upon what Megan said, but rather what she did not say about the text. For example, Megan told her students that the difficulty she had reading the text had to do with the fact that it was written in a Southern dialect, and since she is from the Northern part of the country, it was hard for her to read it out loud. However, what she did not acknowledge was that this dialect could also be described as African American. Given the fact that the illustrations depict a young African American girl, it was even more intriguing that Megan omitted this fact from her discussion with the students. It was also interesting that Megan neglected to acknowledge the fact that Mr. Martin was African American.

Megan and I had a chance to discuss this particular incidence during our second formal interview:

Interviewer: It was really interesting. I noticed that when you started [reading *Flossie and the Fox*] you were struggling with the dialect...I thought, 'Is she going to acknowledge the dialect in any way.' As soon as I said that you asked, 'Well, why am I having trouble reading this?' You then told the kids that you were having trouble reading the language in the book because it was in a Southern dialect. You then said, 'Well, I'm from the North and this is why it's hard for me to read this dialect. Mr. Martin's from the South and, you know, we speak differently because he's from the South and I'm from the North.' Some people

would have said that this text was written in an African American dialect. Certainly, there are Whites who live in the South who speak this way, but I think given the context of the book, it was meant to be in an African American dialect and, of course, Mr. Martin is African American. So, it was interesting to me that you didn't mention those things.

Megan: Yes. I honestly didn't even—it did not cross my mind—that it was [African American]. I didn't—I picked it out—I was reading it as a Southern—I mean in my mind it was a Southern—it seemed a more Southern than African American dialect. So, it's interesting you say that because I didn't—it hadn't occurred to me that I would pinpoint it as, you know, African American. And, Mr. Martin just happened to be African American from the South. So, I don't know.

Interviewer: So, it wasn't something you were thinking about at the time.

Megan: No. No. (Formal Interview II)

It would appear then that, in this particular incident, Megan's color-blindness not only prevented her from fully embracing the racial aspects of the text, but also from seeing herself or her student teacher as raced. This incident also provided further evidence that, when thinking about multicultural education, Megan tended to thinking about the cultural, rather than racial, aspects of a particular material.

At the same time that there were moments like the one described above in which Megan did not appear to “see” race, there were also instances when she reported “seeing” race, but made a conscious effort to evade or avoid the topic. For example, Megan stated that, due to the general immaturity of her current class and the “volatility” of some of her students, she generally avoided whole-class discussions about race:

Again, I think that there are ways that in like past classes [conversations about race were] doable, but with the group I have this year, I don't think that it's really possible... You know, I have this handful of kids that are just defiant... I wouldn't

want [a conversation] to turn into something that it's not supposed to be...I wouldn't want children to feel uncomfortable or offended in anyway. For that sake, I try not to specifically talk about it...And I don't think that they're mature enough—some of them are mature enough to handle it in that type of setting—in that whole group setting—maybe in small groups, if I were to pull a few of them for lunch or out on the playground or something. Like in a small, like, more controlled setting, but when I'm there, you know, with 17 of them it's really difficult when, you know, Lamar or Marcus or someone [might say something offensive]. (Formal Interview II)

As a result, whenever a controversial issue regarding race came up, Megan reported that she made every effort to deal with it on an individual, one-on-one basis:

Naomi one time used the word 'nigger' and I'm sure that—this is an assumption again—but I'm sure that other kids in my class have used the word before, and it has been inappropriate. I chose to speak with her individually and not in front of the group, again because I didn't think that—maybe I don't feel competent or comfortable enough to have this conversation with the whole group and having that conversation with her about...And yes, that would be beneficial for, you know, all my students to hear, but the forum just isn't—the community—the culture of my classroom—I don't believe allows for that type of conversation right now. (Formal Interview II)

Megan also reported that she believed her students did not necessarily understand what the term racism meant and, as a result, often “threw” it around with little in-depth knowledge of its implications:

I think I let Matt [who is White] go to the bathroom or do something and Jed had just been to the bathroom and he got upset because I wouldn't let him go to the bathroom. He's like, 'You're racist.' And I kind of dismissed this because I knew he didn't know really—Well, I didn't think he knew what that meant or what the word even means. So, later on that day, I pulled him aside and I was like, 'Do you think that I would be here if I was racist?' I was like, 'Look at our class. If I didn't like Black people, why would I—why would I choose the James-Eliot to teach in?' He's like, 'I don't know Ms. DeAngelis, I was just mad.' So, I think the term is thrown around sometimes and among the kids. And I've definitely heard it before from others, you know, in passing. (Formal Interview II)

While it is certainly possible that Jed, who was African American, may have called Megan a “racist” simply because he was angry, that does not mean that he did not have a deeper understanding of the meaning of race and racism. For example, in their ethnographic study of 58 pre-school children, Van Ausdale and Feagin (2001) discovered that children as young as three years old could recognize racial and ethnic characteristics and used them as a way to manipulate social relationships.

Although Megan reported that she generally tried to avoid conversations with her class about race, I did observe a few moments when the use of multicultural literature

did, in fact, inspire spontaneous class discussions about racism. The field note excerpt below offers an example of one of these conversations. Using the novel *Maniac MacGee* (1999) by Jerry Spinelli, Megan asked her students to compare and contrast two of the White families portrayed in the story—the Pickwells and the McNabbs. In the story, the title character, Maniac MacGee, brought Mars Bar, an African American boy who lives in the Black section of town, to the White section of town in order to spend time with two different White families. Maniac first took Mars Bar to the Pickwell house where he was received with little fanfare and given dinner without any mention of the color of his skin. Maniac then brought Mars Bar to visit the McNabbs where he was treated quite poorly because he was Black:

Megan began the lesson by passing out copies of the *Maniac MacGee* to each child so that the children could read along as she read the text out-loud. She also put a Venn diagram on the marker board. One circle was labeled 'Pickwell' and the other circle was labeled 'McNabb.' Megan then read chapter 41 & 42, asking students to think about how the Pickwell and McNabb families were alike and how they were different. When she finished reading the chapters, she asked students to help her begin to fill in the diagram. Lamar raised his hands and noted that the McNabbs [who were White] were racist and the Pickwells [who were also White] weren't racist because they accepted Mars Bar, an African American boy from another part of the city. Jed said that he thought it was 'rude' for the McNabbs to refer to Mars Bar as an 'it' rather than a 'him.' Students were then asked to work on the Venn diagram in pairs.

After 20 minutes, Megan asked the children to move back to the meeting area...Once the children were settled Megan reviewed the Venn Diagram with the children. Responses included the following:

Pickwells

- last name begins with a P
- treated Mars Bar with respect
- Pickwells treat people the way they want to be treated
- not racist

McNabb

-Racist to Black people

Pickwell & McNabb

-families knew Maniac

-both families have two sons

-both have Mars Bar in their house

-both are White

During the discussion, a student made the comment that Maniac probably brought Mars Bar over to the Pickwells so that he would get to know some White people who were nice. Megan mentioned that good readers make inferences and the comment above is a good example of one. She then tells the class, 'You can't say someone is a racist without evidence.' Megan then shared an experience of when she had evidence of someone being racist. She described an incident in which she observed a lady who wasn't being very nice to people of color. Apparently, the woman said that the onion smell everyone was noticing wasn't from the onion fields, but from the 'internationals.' (Field Notes, March 26, 2007)

While Megan reported that she did not think her students really understood what the term racism meant, the excerpt above suggests that they did, in fact, have an understanding of its meaning. For example, Jed, who was the child that called Megan a racist because she would not let him go to the bathroom, was the one who opined that "it was 'rude' for the McNabbs to refer to Mars Bar as an 'it' rather than a 'him.'" This comment implies an implicit understanding of the dehumanizing nature of racism.

Of course, Jed's racial insight regarding the characters in *Maniac McGee* does not mean that his earlier comment about Megan being a racist did not emerge from a moment of frustration and anger. What it does suggest, however, is that Megan was unable to see that her status as a White teacher influenced and shaped her relationship with Jed who was African American. Had Jed and Megan been the same race, it seems very unlikely that Jed would have even considered calling her a racist. Because Megan had little direct experience with racism, it is very likely that she did not think about the ways Jed, as a

Black child, may have been exposed to a variety of subtle and not so subtle racist messages that she would not have experienced growing up White. Thus, it appears that even though Megan and her students did sometimes engage in conversations about race, which on the surface appeared to be rooted within an anti-racist discourse, these conversations were still filtered through a discursive repertoire of color-blindness.

Identity, Ideologies and Color-blindness

One consequence of “not seeing” race as a salient aspect of her personal and professional life was that Megan appeared unable to recognize how being White may have provided her with unearned social and economic privileges at the expense of people of color:

I'm White that's who I am and there's nothing I can do to change it. I don't, I mean, everything that I have—like where I live, what I have—I don't feel I got that because I was White. I feel like I got that because I worked my ass off and my parents worked their ass off. And granted I started at a completely different playing field [when compared to] some of my students in that I had a great home and I had supportive parents. But where I am right now—I'm here because I worked hard. I don't think it's because I'm—maybe it is because I'm White, but I don't believe it's because I'm White. (Formal Interview III)

Megan attributed her personal, academic, and professional success to her parents' and her own individual merit—not to being White. This focus on merit suggests that, in addition to being influenced by color-blindness, in some important ways, Megan's ideological stance aligned with William Ryan's (1981) concept of “Fair Play” ideology.

As noted in Chapter 2, Ryan argues that this ideological stance represents the dominant ideology of the United States and is centered on the “primacy of the individual” (p. 47) and the belief that “internal, individual differences” impact the lives of individuals. Contextual factors such as socio-economic class, racial and linguistic difference should make no difference in a person’s life, as success can be achieved through character traits and personal merit.

What is interesting here is that Megan’s ideological stance did not always align with the “Fair Play” ideology. It was also composed of elements embedded within Ryan’s (1981) “Fair Shares” ideology. Unlike the “Fair Play” ideology which centers on a paradigm of “internal, individual differences,” the “Fair Shares” ideology emerges from a “collective sameness-external” model. Not only does this stance place value on external and collective experience, it also “concerns itself...with equality of rights and of access, particularly the implicit rights to a reasonable share of society’s resources” (p. 9). In terms of Megan’s practice, she clearly believed that there were external factors that had a significant impact on the lives her students (e.g., having a diagnosed learning difference, living in poverty, being raised by a single parent). Yet, excluded from Megan’s list of external and contextual factors was any mention of the personal, social, and institutional meanings of race within her own life or the lives of her students.

This complicated and often contradictory amalgamation of color-blind, Fair Play, and Fair Shares ideologies combined with a lack of historical perspective made it very difficult for Megan to see the cultural, intuitional, and historical meaning of race both within her school and the society at-large. For example, Megan appeared to be generally

unaware of the bussing crisis of the early 1970s and its long-term impact on racial relations across the North East City schools. This lack of historical knowledge was especially evident when I asked Megan if the racial discrimination exhibited by White people was the same or different from African Americans:

Interviewer: Do you think it's the same for a White person to exhibit racial discrimination as it is for an African American person to exhibit racial discrimination?

Megan: I think s[o]—I don't know; I don't know. I don't really know. Like I know that—that a lot of White people who are—Well, I don't know this. I assume that many people who are—White people who are racist—it stems from, way back when and beliefs that have been passed on to them. And for African American people, I don't know. I don't know why they might be racist against White people—maybe they're discriminating against White people—Maybe they're upset because of what happened. I don't know—I've never really talked to someone who felt—I've never spoken with an African American who discriminated against White people before. I've never had that conversation with anyone. So, I don't know if it's coming from the same place or not. (Formal Interview II)

Because the history of racial relations and racism were not a part of how she viewed the world, Megan seemed unable to identify “why” African Americans might be “racist against White people.” Consequently, Megan appeared to have a very difficult time framing racism as a social construct that advantaged White people and disadvantaged people of color. Instead, she only viewed racism as an individual act in which people were treated unfairly simply because of the color of their skin:

I [have] felt that some [of the veteran, African American] teachers have looked at the color of my skin and looked at who I am—a young, White teacher—and have passed judgments...My first year I heard people chatting about my style of teaching without even knowing who I was. And even still now, like some people

won't even look at me or engage in conversation even if I prompt it, 'Hi, how are you?' They might look at me or maybe say hello with their head down for no reason at all. At least I don't—Maybe there's a reason I don't know about it. But I've never really ever had any formal conversations with some of the people in my building. (Formal Interview II)

As noted earlier, these interactions with this small number of veteran, African American teachers, which Megan took to be racially charged, not only made her feel as though she was a victim of “reverse discrimination,” but she also found them to be emotionally unsettling:

It's just awful that someone doesn't want to talk to you and they don't even know you. And I don't know, it's kind of upsetting, you know (Starts to tear up), that people are judging you because of the color of your skin, or maybe it is because I'm young—maybe that's what it is. I don't know. Sorry. (Formal Interview II)

While these exchanges must have been enormously uncomfortable and highly distressing, what is interesting here is that, rather than frame her interactions with these African American colleagues in terms of the divisive racial history of the city schools, Megan took their actions quite personally. She did not consider the likelihood that many of these veteran teachers were either working in or attending the North East City Schools during the bussing crisis and, as a result, had a great deal of first-hand experience with racial tension. These experiences may well have shaped their attitudes towards young White teachers like Megan, many of whom may well have seen themselves as saviors.

Racial Geography of Teaching: Being Color-Blind

In mapping Megan DeAngelis' racial geography of teaching, it is apparent that Megan's professional identity was connected to an ideological stance, which was shaped by several assumptions. First, she believed that academic struggles could be overcome with hard work and individual merit. Second, she held that all children could succeed and, as a result, deserved to be provided with an equal opportunity to learn. For Megan, equality did not mean that all children received the same thing, but rather that each individual child should receive exactly what he or she needed in order to feel successful. Third, rather than see her students as pathological or deficient, Megan viewed their problems as puzzles that had to be solved by the teacher. In terms of Megan's practice, this ideological stance translated into a commitment to multicultural education, an effort to know who students were as people, and a valiant effort to make sure each of her students attained equitable access to the curriculum. However, Megan's ideological assumptions, her identity, and her teaching practice were filtered through a discursive lens of color-blindness and color-evasion that made it difficult for her to acknowledge the importance of race in shaping her students' identities or her own identity. In turn, Megan's construction of race, which constituted of a series of tensions that teetered between acknowledging and not acknowledging the meaning of race, represented, in a part, a struggle to avoid being seen as a racist.

What does it mean when a White teacher serving students of color does not "see" or attempts to evade the meaning of race? In many cases, viewing the world through a lens of color-blindness means that teachers are unable to name or challenge their own

racial biases (Marx, 2004). These hidden biases may include a deficit view of children and families of color, low academic expectations, or the assumption that simply by being a person of color one is disadvantaged (Atwater, 2008). When left unchecked these unspoken assumptions not only shape teaching practice in profound ways, but also the learning outcomes for students of color (McKown & Weinstein, 2002).

Even though Megan was a deeply committed urban educator, her fear of confrontation and the possibility that a parent or colleague of color might think that she was racist prevented her from fully unpacking the meaning of race, racism, or the construction of Whiteness within her personal life and professional practice. For Megan, color-blindness was used as a means of insulating and protecting herself from any type of racialized critique. However, no matter how much she tried to avoid, evade, or keep silent about the meaning of race within her professional life, it still shaped her relationships with students, parents, and some of her African American colleagues.

The issue of color-blindness and its influence on teaching practice will be taken up again in Chapter 7. This final chapter will also synthesize the other material and discursive aspects that comprise the racial geography of teaching in terms of its theoretical contributions as well implications for research, policy, and practice.

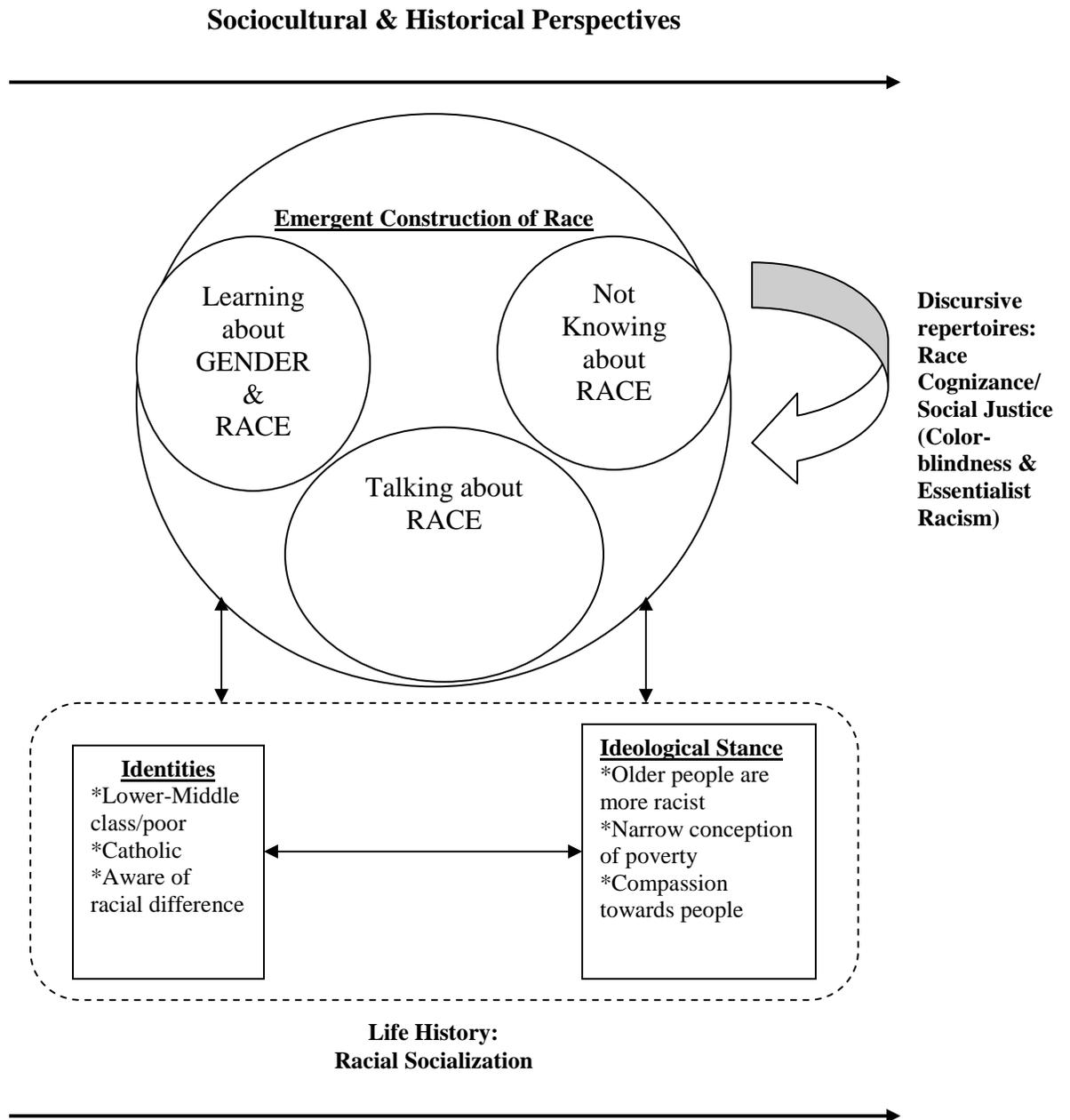
CHAPTER 6

THE RACIAL GEOGRAPHY OF TEACHING: KATHERINE MACKENZIE

This chapter presents the racial geography of teaching for Katherine Mackenzie. In particular, it examines how Katherine's ideological stance informed her construction of race and shaped her teaching practice. Just as I did with Megan DeAngelis in the previous chapter, I have used the "racial geography of teaching" as a means of gaining a conceptual understanding of the material and discursive dimensions that influenced the racial structuring of Katherine's personal life and professional practice. As with Megan's biography, Katherine's narrative is divided into three loosely chronological time periods: (1) the racial socialization process she engaged in as a child and young adult, (2) her choice to become an urban schoolteacher, and (3) her current teaching practice.

Figure 6.1 provides a detailed representation of the emergent material and discursive aspects that shaped the racial socialization Katherine engaged in as a child and young adult. The dimensions indicated on this figure, which are the discursive repertoires of identity, ideology, and the construction of race, are identical to the ones presented for Megan's racial socialization in that they are represented as emergent rather than fully formed. For instance, Katherine's emergent construction of race is comprised of incipient versions of the discursive repertoires that would eventually inform and shape Katherine's construction of race as a preservice and practicing teacher. This figure also provides a representation of the sociocultural and historical perspectives that shaped the material and conceptual aspects of Katherine's life. Since Katherine is

Figure 6.1
 Katherine Mackenzie: Childhood & Racial Socialization



only eight years older than Megan, many of the sociocultural and historical perspectives that influence Megan's life also apply to with Katherine's racial geography of teaching. For example, not only were both of the participants of this study White women who worked in the North East City Public School system, but they also both grew up in the same state, were raised Catholic, and attended Catholic institutions of higher learning. Both women also expressed a deep commitment to urban education. There were, however, also significant differences between Katherine and Megan in terms of age, number of years teaching, the communities in which each one was raised, as well as the structure of each woman's family of origin.

The Racial Socialization of Katherine Mackenzie

This section explores the early racial socialization of Katherine Mackenzie, beginning with the sociocultural and historical dimensions that shaped the political and cultural milieu into which she was born. This chapter also maps out the physical and social aspects that influenced the racial structuring of her childhood and young adulthood. In order to uncover the different racial messages Katherine received as a child and young adult as well as how she interpreted them, I have paid particular attention to the various discursive repertoires regarding race that she was exposed to as a child and young adult.

Sociocultural and Historical Perspectives

Katherine Mackenzie was born towards the end of the Civil Rights Movement and during the second-wave feminist movement in October of 1973. This was one year before the court ordered desegregation of North East City Schools and eight years before

the birth of Megan DeAngelis. Several important political and cultural events occurred during that year. Richard Nixon was sworn into office for a second term as President of the United States. A week after the inauguration, the U.S. government, along with the governments of North and South Vietnam, signed the Paris Peace Accord, marking the end of U.S. involvement in Vietnam. This was also the year that the Watergate scandal, which would eventually force Nixon to resign, exploded onto the national scene through a plethora of newspaper articles and televised congressional hearings. That same year the *Roe v. Wade* decision was handed down by the U.S. Supreme Court, lifting state bans on abortion throughout the nation and sparking decades of debate on the issue.

While Katherine was born during the Civil Rights Movement, her childhood and young adulthood took place during a period in U.S. history in which there were conflicting discursive repertoires or paradigms regarding race (Omi & Winant, 1994), which, as noted in Chapter 1, is described by Frankenberg (1993) as essentialist racism, color-blindness, and race cognizance (Frankenberg, 1993). Frankenberg characterizes the development of these three discourses as follows:

One way to describe these three moments, paradigms, or discourses is in terms of shifts from ‘difference’ to ‘similarity,’ and then ‘back’ to differences radically defined. The first shift, then, is from a first moment that I will call ‘essentialist racism,’ with its emphasis on race difference understood in hierarchical terms of essential, biological inequality, to a discourse of essential ‘sameness’ popularly referred to as ‘color-blindness’...This second movement asserts that we are all the same under the skin; that culturally, we are converging; that, materially, we have

the same chances in U.S. society; and that—the sting in the tail—any failure to achieve is therefore the fault of people of color themselves. The third moment insists once again on difference, but in a form very different from that of the first moment. Where the terms of essentialist racism were set by the white dominant culture, in the third moment they are articulated by people of color. Where difference within the terms of essentialist racism alleges the inferiority of people of color, in the third moment difference signals autonomy of culture, values, aesthetic standards, and so on...I will refer to this discursive repertoire as one of ‘race cognizance.’ (pp. 14-15)

While the emergence of each of these discourses can be located within a particular time in U.S history, the general shift from essentialist racism to color-blindness to race cognizance did not mean that one discourse replaced or superceded the other. In fact, as I show in this chapter, Katherine grew up within a racial environment that included all of these discourses, although the distinction between each of them was not always clear as one often overlapped with another.

Although Katherine was exposed to a variety of discursive ways of interpreting race, the way she was racially socialized appeared to have been most closely aligned with race cognizance. Throughout the rest of this chapter, I explore how this discourse and its interaction with essentialist racism and color-blindness influenced Katherine’s sense of identity, ideological stance, construction of race, and professional practice.

Childhood and Young Adulthood

In order to fully understand Katherine's practice in terms of the racial geography of teaching, I begin by mapping out her racial socialization as a child and young adult, starting with a description of her family of origin, as well as her role within that structure. I then move on to an exploration of the community where she grew up, as well as her own elementary and secondary experience. Just like Megan's biography, there is focus on the relationships Katherine reported having or not having with White people and people of color, as well as what she learned about race and racism from the physical and social environment around her. By exploring the materiality of Katherine's life in this way, the origins of her racial identity and the emergent discursive repertoires that eventually shaped her construction of race as an adult and professional educator are uncovered.

Family, Neighborhood and School

Katherine grew up in a single-family home in the community of Albion, located just north of North East City and roughly 12-15 miles of Batesville, which is where Megan was raised. She described her childhood environment as "a middle class/working class neighborhood where pretty much everyone was Irish or Italian and pretty much everyone I knew was Catholic" (Formal Interview I). Katherine reported that her parents, both of whom were college-educated and of White European descent, were divorced when she was four years old. While Katherine's mother had primary custody of her and her older brother, Katherine's father was a constant presence in her life in that

she and her brother spent every weekend with him. This was the case even after her father was remarried and had another child.

Katherine remembered that, during her childhood, even though she lived in a house and had all of her immediate needs met, money was a “known issue all the time” (Formal Interview I). Because of this, she recalled thinking that her family was poor, although, according to Katherine, her definition of who was poor and who was not was rather limited in that she herself had little knowledge of the socioeconomic status of families other than those in her neighborhood:

You were either poor like us—We didn’t have a car and we couldn’t go on vacation and that sort of thing—Or, you were poor like you’re starving. Or you’re poor like a homeless person. But I didn’t think so much about other families - I don’t think. I don’t really remember. (Formal Interview I)

As an adult, Katherine thought that this lack of awareness might have had to do with the fact that almost everyone in her neighborhood was similar to her own family:

Maybe it’s like when you grow up in a working class/middle class world everyone seems so the same that you don’t think about it that much. (Formal Interview I)¹

Katherine reported that her mother and father had different attitudes and perceptions about race. In the case of her mother and her maternal grandparents, Katherine reported that when she was young she defined their conception of racial differences as racist:

¹ Email, interview, and field note excerpts were edited lightly for grammar and readability.

Katherine: Okay, when I was younger, I would think, ‘My mom is probably racist.’ But then, as I got older and experienced some real racist people, I realized my family was much more liberal than I thought they were.

Interviewer: Why did you think she was probably racist? What was the evidence?

Katherine: Well, because where she grew up—in [the city]—My grandparents lived there up until they died two years ago, and it was like a ghetto type of neighborhood. When I say ghetto, I mean houses falling down and high crime and so forth and so on. And it was predominately people of color, mostly Black. And so my mom would say, ‘You know, they need to get out of that Black neighborhood.’

Interviewer: Did it make you uncomfortable when she would say it or did you feel...judgmental? I mean, what, what was going on for you?

Katherine: I guess I always just took it as, you know, that’s what older people say... You know, because you know, even with my grandparents, I remember when they’d say—you know, they’d use the word colored. Or, they’d say this nice ‘colored’ woman was going to move into the apartment. So, I mean, I think it still is racist, but I didn’t think it was malicious. I never thought my mom was malicious, but I didn’t think she was very open to thinking about other races maybe.

Interviewer: Open? What do you mean by open?

Katherine: Like, she didn’t think beyond like the color of—I don’t know how to say it. Like if she identifies people, she’ll say, ‘Oh this very nice Black teacher at my school.’ So, it’s always about identifying with color, where in my mind, you really shouldn’t say that, but then I’m like, ‘Am I just being a self-righteous politically correct person or do I think it anyways?’ (Formal Interview I)

From the excerpt above, it seems that the language Katherine’s mother and grandparents used when discussing racial differences was linked to a discursive repertoire of “essentialist racism” (Frankenberg, 1993). This discourse, which defines people of color as biologically, morally, and intellectually inferior to White people, dominated the discursive landscape of the United States for well over four centuries. Frankenberg notes that essentialist racism, while no longer the dominant discourse about racial difference in

the United States, has influenced other “discourse on race difference” (p. 139) in a variety of ways:

First, precisely because it proposed race as a significant axis of difference, essentialist racism remains the benchmark against which other discourses on race are articulated. In other words, the articulation and deployment of essentialist racism approximately five hundred years ago marks the moment when, so to speak, *race was made into a difference* and simultaneously into a rationale for racial inequality. It is in ongoing response to that moment that movements and individuals—for or against the empowerment of people of color—continue to articulate analysis of difference and sameness with respect to race...Second, in significant ways, the notion of ontological racial difference underlies other, ostensibly cultural, conceptualizations of race difference. Third, essentialist racism—particularly intentional, explicit racial discrimination—remains, for most white people, including many of the women I interviewed, paradigmatic of racism. This, as I have argued, renders structural and institutional dimensions of racism less easily conceptualized and apparently less noteworthy. (p. 139, italics in original)

From Katherine’s perspective, the reason her mother and grandparents were racist was not necessarily that they were engaged in “intentional, explicit racial discrimination,” but rather that they were not “very open” when thinking about race, as they were always “identifying with color.” Thus, even though Katherine did not believe her mother and grandparents were “malicious” towards people of color, the language they used to

describe racial differences implied that people of color were somehow inferior to White people. For example, Katherine's mother referred to the "ghetto type" neighborhood Katherine's grandparents lived in as that "Black neighborhood," thereby conflating urban poverty and violence with racial difference. Yet, the excerpt above also suggests that Katherine's mother and grandparents had also positive feelings towards African Americans (e.g., "Oh, this very nice Black teacher at my school" or, "This nice colored woman is going to move into the apartment upstairs").

Rather than feel upset about her mother and grandparents' essentialization of people of color, Katherine assumed their racial attitudes had to do with age, which suggests that, as a child and young adult, Katherine may have seen racial attitudes as historically progressive with each new generation becoming more racially enlightened than the previous one. It is also interesting to note that even though Katherine felt uncomfortable with the way her mother talked about race, as an adult, she also acknowledged that, while she did not necessarily use the same language her mother and grandparents used to describe racial differences, there were moments when she reported having thoughts about people of color that she considered "racist." As discussed later in the chapter, Katherine spent a great deal of time grappling with these feelings with colleagues.

Before discussing Katherine's father's attitudes about race, it is important to note that, although Katherine felt that her mother had a somewhat narrow way of thinking about racial differences, growing up in a single-parent home headed by a woman had a lasting on effect on her personal life and professional practice:

When you grow up in a single-parent home where the woman has to do everything—the female takes on all of the male roles—you realized that you couldn't—you have to rely on yourself because you can't know that there's going to be someone else there. So, just that whole idea that you never know—I mean, you could divorce, your husband could die, you could—So, you have to have a sense of independence. [I got that] from my mom who was an independent—well, not really but she at least tried to be. (Formal Interview III)

Thus, Katherine's childhood experience of watching her mother struggle to become more independent shaped a stance towards gender in which it was crucial for women to strive for independence and self-reliance. As I point out later in this chapter, Katherine frequently drew parallels between issues of gender and race.

At the same time, Katherine described her mother as not being “open” to thinking about race, she described her father as a compassionate person who deeply cared about people and understood the structural, cultural, and institution impact race had on people's lives:

My dad's pretty liberal and he is definitely more of—I would consider him like an activist, you know, a humanitarian. He just cares about people—he talks about issues. Growing up, he always talked about inequities and he always had compassion for people. So that was just common. So, I guess we talked about race and maybe ethnicities. (Formal Interview I)

According to Katherine, her father typically critiqued things like a local news broadcast in which the news anchor glossed over the shooting of an African American child from a poor neighborhood:

I'll just use the example of an [African American] boy being shot and then like the news—the anchor says, 'And moving on to other important news, there's going to be a heat wave tomorrow.' So, my dad would be like, 'This is outrageous!' And he would point out that if this had been a White child who had been shot [more attention would have been paid to it]. (Formal Interview III)

Unlike Katherine's mother (and grandparents), it was ingrained within her father's conception of racial differences that racial inequality was shaped and perpetuated by inequitable social structures rather than by individuals. Because of an ongoing dialogue with her father about these issues, which appeared to be rooted within a discursive repertoire of race cognizance, and the fact that he lived in a racially diverse urban environment, Katherine felt that, even as a child and young adult, she was aware of how race had an impact on people's lives. However, as Katherine pointed out, the information she gained about the structural, institutional and cultural forms of inequality from her father was generally "academic" in that it came from talk rather than from direct experience:

Katherine: Okay...I always thought that race affected people. I think because [my father] talked about it often, like very explicitly. Like he'd say something and he'd be like, 'But what about the poor mother living here? Nobody seems to care about what she's thinking.' You know, he would always have [some] commentary. So, I always thought about it, but it was not around me. It was like that poor Black mother didn't enter my world.

Interviewer: So...it's that academic intellectual understanding...But not the...experience. So, you were isolated in that you weren't around it.

Katherine: Right. (Formal Interview III)

Not only did Katherine experience racial isolation in her neighborhood, she also reported that she had very little cross-racial interactions during her K-12 school years or, for that matter, during her four years at college. For instance, Katherine attended the Albion Public Schools through third grade and then, went to private Catholic schools for the rest of elementary school, junior high, high school, and college. According to Katherine, most of her school peers were White, although, she recalled that there were a few African American students in her high school class. Katherine noted that all of these African American students resided in the “Black” section of Albion:

Katherine: And then in high school—like Albion has East Albion, which is the Black section of town. So, I mean that was like, you were aware of that—

Interviewer: But you didn't go there, or?

Katherine: Not necessarily. I mean, it's a nice part of town.

Interviewer: Yeah. It is a nice part of town.

Katherine: It's just, you know, it just seemed to me like, 'Well, the Black people who live in Albion live in this section of town.'

Interviewer: Because?

Katherine: They want to be together.

Interviewer: Okay.

Katherine: You know and then, like ironically, anyone in my high school who was Black lived in East Albion—Not ironically.

Interviewer: Literally.

Katherine: Right. (Formal Interview I)

Unlike Megan, who attended school with African American students bussed into Batesville from North East City, the African American students with whom Katherine attended school resided in Albion. However, as Katherine herself noted, all of these African American students lived within what was considered the Black section of town. As a child and young adult, Katherine assumed that this residential segregation existed because African American families wanted to be together. It is interesting to note that, even though Katherine reported that her father was constantly discussing issues of race, inequity and social justice, the young Katherine did not make a connection between the political and social ramifications of race and residential patterning. This suggests that, even though as a child and adolescent Katherine engaged in countless conversations with her father that were rooted within a repertoire of race cognizance, she saw much of the world through a color-blind lens. This was not necessarily rooted in an effort “not to see” the meaning of race, racism, and Whiteness, but rather, it appeared to have emerged from general “ignorance” about and lack of experience with racial diversity.

There were, however, moments when Katherine’s color-blindness or ignorance about race was challenged by life events. For example, Katherine mentioned having at least one high school friend who was African American. According to Katherine, this relationship was generally similar to her relationships with her White girlfriends. However, Katherine described one occasion when the racial difference between her friend and herself became relevant:

One thing I remember is being in high school and we were good friends with Nieema who was one out of the three African American girls in our class. And we were fooling around and she could get crazy. I mean she and I would be mouthy with one another. Like we were just [fighting]—it was fighting, but it was fake fighting almost. And we were getting on the bus and I threw this juice at her. But it wasn't like she hadn't done something similar, you know. It got in her hair and she was so mad and said, 'You don't understand! I have to iron my hair!' And then my [White] girlfriends were mad at me and said, 'How could you do that to Nieema?' But I felt like they were turning on me because Nieema could have said, 'You don't get my hair.' So, I guess that was the first time when—she didn't call me racist, but race was a factor and I had never thought about it before. Like I was thinking, 'I never thought—I never knew you ironed your hair, and I never knew that if it got wet it ruined it being ironed.' But in Nieema's mind she was thinking, 'This White girl doesn't know about my hair.' So, it was an issue—race was an issue. And so I felt like, 'I hate you Nieema because you're using this.' But at the same time, it was part of my ignorance [about race]. But it didn't mean—I just wasn't aware. So, it was like I was ignorant, but I wasn't purposely ignorant. (Formal Interview III)

For the adolescent Katherine, this incident brought up complicated and confusing emotions. For example, she reported feeling very “hurt” that her White girlfriends had taken Nieema's side instead of hers. Given the rambunctious nature of Katherine and Nieema's relationship, it could just as easily have been Nieema getting juice in

Katherine's hair. Because of this, Katherine did not feel as though she had done anything wrong. It was simply a case of her not understanding that there was a difference between her hair and her African American friend's hair. Nieema should have explained this to her. In the end, Katherine ended up feeling as though her White girlfriends were "siding with Nieema because she [was] Black and they [did not] want to look racist" (Formal Interview III). As a result, Katherine felt very angry and defensive and refused to "back down." Eventually, the whole incident blew over and everyone became friends again, but according to Katherine, this was really the first time that she began to grapple with the significance of race within her own personal relationships—that while she and Nieema were alike, they were also different and this difference was based upon the fact that Katherine was White and Nieema was Black.

Racial Socialization and White Racial Identity

As discussed in the previous chapter, an adolescent realizes his or her racial identity through a process of racial socialization, which is formed through direct and indirect sociocultural influences, located within his or her particular familial and social context (Helms, 2003). These sociocultural contexts transmit important messages about the behaviors and attitudes one must adhere to as a member of a specific racial group. During the early years of development, parents and family have a great deal of influence on a child's racial identity development, however, as noted by Helms (2003), these influences may be overshadowed during adolescence by outside influences such as peers, teachers, and the media.

Like Megan, Katherine's process of racial socialization was informed by several direct and indirect material influences—the historical period in which she was born and raised, her parents' marital status, and her K-12 school experience. As noted, Katherine was born near the end of the Civil Rights Movement and during the second-wave of feminism. However, her childhood and young adulthood took place during a transitional period in U.S. history in which there was a movement away from the Civil Rights rhetoric of racial empowerment and social equity towards a rhetoric of color-blindness, the denial of White privilege, and a dismantling of Civil Rights-era policies such as affirmative action. Because of this, Katherine grew up in a complicated discursive environment shaped by several competing repertoires regarding racial difference. As a result of this complexity, the racial messages she received from her family, friends, and/or peers, were oftentimes contradictory, overlapping, and multi-layered. For example, the racial message Katherine received from her mother and grandparents was complicated in that the language they used to refer to people of color appeared to align with an essentialist view of racial differences. Yet, at the same time that they appeared to be overtly racist, they also sometimes expressed positive attitudes towards individuals of color whom they might encounter in their neighborhood or workplace.

On the other hand, from her father, Katherine received the racial message that racial inequality was shaped and perpetuated by inequitable social structures rather than by individuals. While this message was linked to a discursive repertoire of race cognizance, conversations with her father only offered Katherine an intellectual or conceptual understanding of racial differences. Thus, the messages from her father, while

socially progressive, were sent and received within a context of White privilege and racial, socioeconomic, and religious homogeneity. Because of this, Katherine tended to interpret race through a lens of color-blindness that was rooted in ignorance rather than an effort not to see race.

In many ways, Katherine's racial socialization was similar to Megan's in that both women grew up within racially homogeneous settings and both utilized a discursive repertoire of color-blindness as means of interpreting the meaning of racial differences, which was entrenched within a context of White privilege. However, whereas Megan grew up in a discursive environment in which racial differences were generally dealt with through silence and an effort not to see racial differences, Katherine grew up in a discursive environment filled with talk about race and an acknowledgement of racial differences. As noted, some of this "talk" appeared to be linked to an essentialist, albeit subtle, racist discourse (e.g., mother and grandparents) and some appeared to be linked to a race cognizance discourse (e.g., father). In particular, Katherine reported that her father's continuing dialogue about racial and other forms of social inequity had a significant impact on the way she viewed race within her personal life and professional practice.

The range and complexity of the racial messages Katherine was exposed to and interpreted as a child and young adult, suggest that the development of racial identity is more nuanced than is portrayed Helms' theory of racial identity. While Helms' theory makes room for the idea that an individual's racial identity is shaped by several different "identity statuses" at one time, as discussed in Chapter 2, White Racial Identity theory

focuses primarily on individual attitudes. As a result, it does not adequately take into account the relationship between an individual person and the historical, cultural, and institutional discourses that construct his or her racial environment. Helms' model also appears to ignore the impact of other intersecting forms of identity (e.g., gender, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, socioeconomic status) on racial identity. As Katherine's (and Megan's) racial geography suggests, how one defines oneself racially is not an isolated process; it emerges from a dialectical interaction between the multiple and shifting ways that an individual identifies himself or herself over time and the social world at-large.

Emergent Construction of Race

Emerging from the social geography of race of Katherine's childhood and young adulthood are three overlapping and incipient discursive tensions or repertoires that influenced and shaped her construction of race as an adult and practicing teacher. The first is Katherine's emergent understanding of race and gender—in short how she learned about the personal and social meanings of these particular forms of identification. From her father, Katherine developed an intellectual understanding of racial differences and the notion that racial inequality was shaped and perpetuated by inequitable social structures rather than by individuals. In terms of gender, Katherine's observations of her mother as she struggled for financial and social independence shaped a stance towards gender that stressed the importance of women learning to be self-reliant. Katherine often made reference to the parallels and connections between issues of race and gender. The second discursive repertoire centers on Katherine's lack of understanding or not knowing about

the meaning of racial differences. Through her father, Katherine reported having an intellectual awareness about and general openness towards the ways in which race impacted people's lives; however, she had very little, everyday experience with racial difference. As result, she described herself as "ignorant" about certain aspects of racial differences. The third discursive repertoire, which overlaps with the first and second repertoires, involves talking about race. Katherine heard different kinds of race talk from her mother and maternal grandparents than she did from her father.

Racial Socialization: Nurturing an Anti-Racist Stance

In mapping out the material and discursive dimensions represented on Figure 6.1, it becomes apparent that Katherine's racial socialization was informed by several different, often conflicting, discursive repertoires. As noted, these repertoires included a form of race cognizance, which was shaped by conversations with her father about issues of racial and social inequality; a type of color-blindness that came from living within a racially homogeneous context; and, a subtle form of essentialist racism associated with the racial language she heard from her mother and maternal grandparents. While all of these repertoires interacted with Katherine's sense of identity, her ideological stance and emergent construction of race, the discursive repertoire of race cognizance appeared to have played a dominant role in her racial socialization. Even as a child and adolescent, Katherine appeared to have an understanding that institutional and cultural structures played a decisive role in shaping various forms of social and racial inequity. Such a discursive lens supported a developing ideological stance that included a sense of compassion towards other people, as well as an emergent construction of race that was

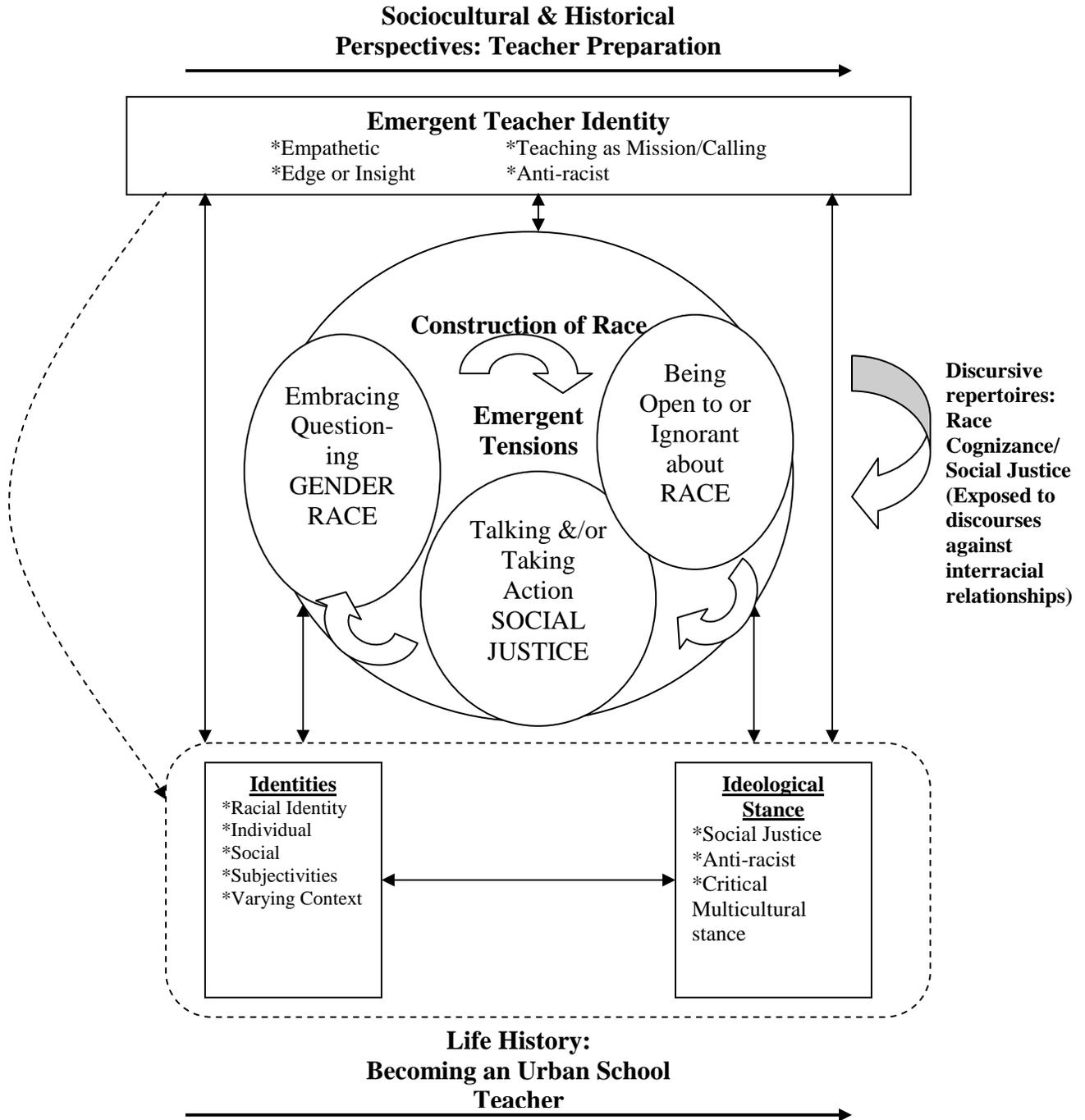
shaped by a general openness towards learning and talking about the meaning of race. Given this, it would seem that the racial socialization Katherine engaged in nurtured the development of an anti-racist stance. However, this stance was sometimes interrupted by discourses such as essentialist racism and color-blindness.

Teacher Identity: Becoming an Urban Teacher

This section, which explores the second aspect of Katherine's racial geography of teaching, investigates the development of Katherine's identity and preparation teacher as an urban teacher. It starts with an exploration of Katherine's college experience, her decision to become an urban schoolteacher, her teacher preparation program, as well as an analysis of the types of interactions, discussions or courses she had during this time regarding race and racism. This chapter also maps out the interrelationship between her emergent identity as a teacher and her ideological stance, which was shaped by a commitment to social justice and anti-racism. I also investigate how the internal and external pressure from Katherine's youth impacted her stance towards students, as well as the ways in which she eventually identified herself as an urban educator. This section concludes with description and brief analysis of the emergent ideas or tensions that comprised her construction of race during this particular time frame.

Figure 6.2 represents the material and discursive dimensions that shaped this second time period of Katherine's racial geography of teaching. The line at the top of this figure represents the materiality of Katherine's teacher preparation experience. Unlike the previous figure, this one also offers a snapshot of the development of Katherine's emergent identity as an urban schoolteacher and its relationship to other ways in which

Figure 6.2
Teacher Identity: Becoming an Urban Teacher



she identified herself, especially in terms of race. This figure also provides a more developed representation of Katherine's construction of race that includes three emergent and overlapping discursive tensions: embracing and questioning issues regarding race and gender, openness towards and/or ignorance about race, and simply talking about or taking action regarding social justice.

Teacher Preparation

Katherine attended St. Bridget University, a Catholic institution of higher learning, which was located in a neighboring state. Katherine noted that St. Bridget's was overwhelmingly populated by White students of Irish Catholic descent who, like herself had attended private Catholic high schools before entering college. Despite the racial homogeneity of St. Bridget's, Katherine did have some cross-racial interactions during college. For instance, during our second formal interview, she revealed that she had dated a Black man while at college. According to Katherine, the message she received from some of her female African American classmates regarding this relationship was, "Stay away from our guys" (Formal Interview II). For Katherine, this experience as a White woman dating a Black man signified far more than just racial tension; it also represented the complex and knotty interrelationship between race and gender.

As a White woman dating a Black man, Katherine was interrupting a social discourse that was rooted in White supremacy and essentialist racism (Frankenberg, 1993). For most of its 400-year history, the United States prohibited interracial marriage through antimiscegenation laws, which were enacted in nearly 40 states and driven by the

assumption that White people were superior to people of color. The apparent purpose of these laws was to maintain racial segregation and White racial dominance and power. Indeed, it was not until 1967 that the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that such laws violated the 14th Amendment of the Constitution, thereby making them unconstitutional.

However, in dating a Black man, Katherine also appeared to be confronting another, albeit less dominant, discourse against interracial romances that was rooted in the experiences and attitudes of some African American women. Within this discourse, the reasons against interracial marriages were not founded on notions of racial inferiority, superiority, or White power. Instead, they emerged from the perception held by many professional African American women that the pool of well-educated African American males was small and, as a result, there were not enough eligible males to go around. For some African American women, this situation was exacerbated when African American males entered into interracial dating or marriage relationships with White women. There is, in fact, empirical evidence that supports this perception. In their analysis of the impact that interracial marriages by Black men have on the marital potential of Black women, Crowder & Tolnay (2004) noted a correlation between a decline in the marriage rates found among well-educated Black women and the increased rate of interracial marriage found among equally well-educated Black men. By dating a Black man, Katherine was unwittingly entering into a gender-based competition over a small subset of desirable men. However, the fact that she was a woman who possessed unearned privilege based upon her Whiteness also shaped the tension she felt coming from her African American classmates. It is important to note that this story was the first of many where Katherine

tried to make sense of the complex ways that gender and race intersected, not only in her own life, but in terms of the lives of her students and their families. For example, as will be discussed in more detail below, Katherine was deeply concerned about the gendered and racial aspects of what she perceived as the trend found among many African American families where fathers were physically and financially absent from their children's lives, leaving children to be raised in a single-parent household.

Other than this brief reference to the attitudes of some of her female African American classmates regarding her dating a Black man, Katherine reported that she had a "great college experience" and felt very comfortable at St. Bridget's. What is interesting is that, unlike Megan, Katherine did not enter college with her heart set on becoming a schoolteacher, although, in our first formal interview, she talked about how it was her ultimate goal to work in a profession in which she was helping people. Katherine's decision to become an educator did not occur until after she had graduated from St. Bridget's:

When I came out of college, I was a political science major, and I thought I would take a year off and go back and go to law school. I wanted to do family law and live locally, so I moved back home with my mom after Labor Day...And really I didn't have any money or a car or any idea of what I was going to do. I figured I would temp for a year and then go back to school. My mom said, 'You have to get a job.' So I started subbing. And then, I think during October of that year a teacher left at [a North East City Public School], and I took over her classroom, and knew that that's what I wanted to do. So, that summer I did one of those

urban certification programs and got certified that summer and then got a position here at the [Pierce] School. 1(Informal Interview)

Whereas, Megan attended a university-based, four-year teacher preparation program in which most of her fellow students were close to the same age, White, and from suburban backgrounds, Katherine received her teaching credentials through an alternative certification program designed to “recruit minorities to go into education” (Formal Interview I).

Most of the people who participated in this program were older individuals of color who had been serving as paraprofessionals within the North East City Public Schools. In fact, Katherine was one of only two people who identified as White. According to Katherine, the interactions she had with her cohort members benefited her greatly:

I did do an urban teaching program that I really enjoyed and actually learned more [about racial differences] from my cohort. It was just phenomenal because it was mostly people of color and mostly older people who'd been working in the NECPS but just weren't certified. And it was—I was just so young and ignorant about a lot things that it was wonderful for me to see people fighting—I was like, ‘Wait a minute. They’re both Black and they’re fighting, they hate each other.’ You know, or, like, my best friend in the program was my age and she'd just come from Guatemala, and we became best friends because of our interests and our age, not so much because of our race or anything like that. (Informal Interview)

Through this experience, it would seem that certain assumptions Katherine had about people of color—the idea that all Black people were the same and got along with one another—were proven to be false. She also learned to make a distinction between ethnicity and race. For example, she came to realize that one could identify as Latino at the same time he or she also identified as Black. Rather than be upset about her racial misconceptions or lack of knowledge, she appeared to be genuinely curious and open to what she was learning. She also discovered that there were ways in which cross-racial relationships could be based upon mutual similarities and interests rather than just racial characteristics.

It is also important to mention that, for Katherine, the reason she decided to become an urban rather than suburban schoolteacher had to do with a desire to advocate and help urban children and their families navigate the messy bureaucratic world of a public city school system:

I purposely went into urban education, and I went into teaching more for the social justice aspect vs. the teaching part. I wouldn't teach anywhere other than in an urban context. And so, I mean, who knows if that is right or wrong? But, you know, some people teach to teach—some people just like teaching. I enjoy teaching but I have enjoyed more advocating for kids or meeting with parents and helping parents become more knowledgeable about schools and so forth—you know, letting them know the way it works here [in the NECPS]. (Informal Interview)

She also expressed the belief that it took a “certain type of person to teach in urban schools” (Formal Interview I):

Katherine: You know, I think the teachers that I work with who I think are really good urban teachers have a strong, strong commitment to kids—so strong that they can put up with all the bullshit of a big urban school district.

Interviewer: By bullshit you mean, bureaucratic?

Katherine: Yes...So strong that they can come back to school every day despite the challenges of some of the children bring into the classroom. And I also think some of the really good urban teachers I've seen do have like a little bit of an edge to them. Like have had something in their life that's given them some insight like understanding where kids or families are coming from. So, I shouldn't say edge—I mean, some of them have an edge but, you know, I always think [my colleague] Margaret is such a phenomenal teacher and I think growing up as a bilingual child—I think every teacher brings something into the classroom with them, but I think those teachers that bring something that allows them to be open helps them. I think you just have to be so flexible and open to teach any where, but really to teach in an urban school where things don't run the way they're supposed to run or kids aren't what they're supposed to be all the time. (Formal Interview I)

Katherine's idea that good urban teachers have life experiences that provide them with some edge, insight and/or understanding of where urban children and families might be “coming from” align with a handful of empirical studies reviewed in Chapter 2. These studies suggested that White teachers' attitudes, beliefs, values, and perceptions of racial awareness are strongly influenced by previous cultural and life experiences (Hollins, 1996; Sleeter, 1996b; Cockrell et. al., 1999). In particular, Johnson (2002) discovered that White teachers' perceptions regarding race were influenced by several factors. For instance, White teachers who appeared to have some sense of racial awareness tended to have lived experiences that “disidentified” them from mainstream White culture or they possessed specific spiritual or philosophical beliefs in which morality was conflated with

issues of social justice. Johnson also noted that cross cultural experiences where Whites lived and worked with people of color within an equitable context allowed them to see the direct effects of racism. In the case of Katherine, her perceptions about race and its meaning in terms of her personal life and professional practice were shaped by a set of philosophical beliefs that were inspired by a sense of mission rooted in Catholicism, social justice and anti-racism. There were also several experiences in her life that allowed her to “disidentify” with the dominant White culture and see the world from her students’ perspective.

The next section of this chapter discusses the discursive and material factors that informed Katherine’s philosophical and ideological position on race, racism, and the meaning of Whiteness, exploring its relationship to her emergent identity as a brand new urban teacher. In particular, I consider those dimensions that provided her with the necessary edge, insight, or understanding that enabled her to work within an urban context.

Emergent Teacher Identity and Ideological Stance

In the racial geography of Megan DeAngelis described in the previous chapter, it was important to chart adequately the connection between the shifting identities that shaped Megan’s personal life and professional practice (e.g., daughter, special education student, hard worker, urban schoolteacher) and her construction of race as a prospective and newly minted teacher. As previously discussed, many of the internal (emotions and stories) and external (context and relationships) pressures that shaped Megan’s vision of what it meant for her to be a teacher were directly connected to her subjective

experiences as a child and young adult. For example, as a child, Megan identified herself as a struggling special needs student who was able to attain academic success through hard work and support from her parents and teachers. As discussed in Chapter 5, this identification had a powerful impact on the ways in which Megan interpreted the needs of her students, most of whom had been diagnosed with some type of learning difference. This experience as a special education student also shaped an ideological stance that embraced the notion that one could attain success through hard work and proper adult support.

Like Megan, there were specific internal and external pressures from Katherine's childhood and young adulthood that had a powerful impact on how she thought about her students as well as how she identified herself as an urban schoolteacher. In turn, the ways she identified herself were shaped and reshaped by her ideological stance. For instance, during our first informal interview, when asked about the types of challenges her students faced, Katherine talked about the concern she felt for those students who remained silent because they were afraid other children might physically and emotionally pick on them. According to Katherine, these fears and worries were filtered through the experiences she witnessed her older brother and half-brother have as they negotiated the treacherous social terrain of elementary and middle school:

Even the second grade peer pressure in little groups and cliques is challenging for some of the kids...I mean it was a long time ago when I was in second grade...It's personal to me because my brother is 14 months older and he's gay and obviously must have known since he was little, or so he told me. It was so clear, when we

were children, when that realization must have happened for him because then he became almost—he was reclusive...And so, I'm very aware of it because I always think of how awful elementary school must have been for him—or middle school. And then I have a half-brother who is ten years younger and was teased terribly in school and eventually had a breakdown and had to be removed by an ambulance from school and then home schooled for about six months... I worry a lot about kids in schools and challenges that they may face as far as being afraid of certain kids. (Informal Interview)

For Katherine, the social, emotional, and identity issues and the ways in which her brothers “disidentified” with mainstream culture during their elementary, middle, and high school years made her “hyper” aware of the possibility that a child who was sitting quietly in her class could actually be “dying inside because he want[ed] to fit in and not get pick[ed] on, so he just kept quiet all day” (Informal Interview).

Katherine also reported that there were other events from her childhood that influenced her interactions with students as well as how she saw herself as a teacher. For example, Katherine noted that her mother, while not a “bad person,” (Formal Interview I), was often verbally abusive with her when she was growing up. In response to this strain between herself and her mother, Katherine was determined to make an effort to see the world from her students’ point of view:

There are things from my childhood that made me want to listen to kids [and] I always make sure that I see children’s perspective...I can remember myself from a child’s perspective and many, many, many times I know what they’re thinking.

I know how they're thinking...Like Sean came in today and his pants were wet on the bottom and I had to go to a meeting and I was rushing, and he said, 'I need to change my pants.' And I said, 'It's just going to dry.' And he's said, 'I need to call my mother.' And then I said, 'I know you're mother's working. What do you think she's going to do for you?' And then the next thing you know he starts crying, 'People are going to think that like I peed myself.' Now like most humans will feel sympathy, but I feel like I have this over sympathetic heart sometimes because right at that moment I saw myself when I was Sean's age and I forgot my shoes to change into and I had these moon boots, which I didn't want to wear them all day. (Formal Interview II)

As Figure 6.2 shows, one of the key features of Katherine's professional identity was that she was genuinely empathetic towards her students. This ability to empathize overlapped with another feature of Katherine's identity—an emotional edge or personal insight that made it possible for her to deal with bureaucratic issues of urban schools and be open to urban children and their families. Katherine believed that the stressful relationship with her mother, as well as the difficulties she saw her brothers experience in elementary and middle school provided her with this emotional edge and insight.

Another important element of Katherine professional identity, which was intertwined with her ideological stance, was a deep and profound commitment to teaching for social justice. Katherine attributed the origins of this commitment to the missionary-like messages she received while attending Catholic schools. It could also be

argued that the ongoing dialogue she engaged in with her father about racial and socioeconomic inequity also impacted this desire to help people.

According to Katherine, when she first started teaching, her definition of social justice centered on “helping” children and their families:

There are definitely times when you feel like it’s fulfilling something in you... You know, I’m not saying there isn’t ever a time, or maybe when I first started, where I felt like, ‘Well, I’m being a really good person because I’m working in an urban school.’ I’m benefiting from this too because it makes me feel good to help people. (Formal Interview I)

However, over time, she began to question this view and, as a result, redefined social justice as something more multifaceted than just “helping” people:

It all starts to become gray because, you know, you grow up going to Catholic schools and there’s always that missionary sense of the Catholic Church. And so, you always feel like, ‘Am I treating this like charity? Or, am I trying to help those who maybe are sort of like the underdog in situations?’ So, really when I think of social justice it’s really—I guess it’s about helping give people a voice who don’t always have a voice. You know, and I feel like if you—if you have the knowledge. You know, if I’m so lucky to have been educated enough to like know how to navigate what it’s about... Like, having—I guess it would be like having capital—human capital, social capital. If you have that—Like if you have that, it was always so obvious to me that those who have certain—you, whether

you have social capital or human capital—knowing people—that you can get ahead, that you have certain advantages. (Formal Interview I)

For Katherine, the idea of teaching for social justice meant moving beyond an act of charity towards something far more complicated. Rather than seeing her role as simply helping urban students, she began to see her role as including supporting parents and students as they developed the knowledge, skills, and social and human capital needed to navigate the intricate, and sometimes knotty, world of an urban public school system and the world at-large. Social justice also meant providing students with cultural and intellectual experiences that they might not normally have access to:

I like to teach kids things that maybe they're not hearing at home or you know, certain poets or artists or like 'This is important for you to know' just because [it will make you] more worldly and so forth.' So that's what I think of when I think of social justice. (Formal Interview I)

Katherine interpreted teaching for social justice in other ways as well. For instance, she frequently established relationships with her students and their families outside of school. As discussed in the next section of this chapter, these relationships might last for just one academic year or they had the potential to continue for an indefinite length of time. It also appeared that, for Katherine, teaching for social justice was linked to a sense of service as well as an emotional zest for teaching and learning:

Just recently at the Leadership Conference when Dr. Miller spoke—it wasn't anything monumental that he said—I don't even think it was a big part of his lecture, but in his closing remarks he articulated the Jesuit mission of Mt. Blaine

and said how he never really knew what it was. Now, of course, I've worked at Mt. Blaine [as adjunct faculty] all these years...But when he said the Jesuit mission, I was "That's what I am." I'm like, I feel like I'm Jesuit. I guess the part I took away from it is beyond the teaching part that I like—beyond serving others—it's more like I think I do have a passion for learning and teaching. So, even though I didn't go in just for the teaching, I do—I love teaching and I love learning. So I was like, maybe it's more like that, having a passion for something. So, it's a whole bunch of passion—a passion for helping people and passion for learning, a passion for teaching. (Formal Interview I)

Thus, it would seem that, in the case of Katherine, the practice of teaching for social justice was more than approach or technique rooted. It required hands-on engagement and action. For Katherine, teaching for social justice signified a personal and professional stance in which teaching could be defined as a mission, calling, or service that transcended the walls of the classroom or school and required a certain openness and commitment towards urban children and their families.

In many ways, Katherine's conception of social justice aligned with the theoretical tenets of critical multicultural education described in Chapter 2. As noted, these tenets include: a focus on the transformative and emancipatory potential of education (Nieto, 1996); willingness to name and challenge various forms of social injustice such as racism, classism, and gender discrimination (Rodriguez, 2000); the capacity to see schools as sites that have the potential to either promote or discourage the transformation of teachers and students (Obidah, 2000); the ability to link the local world

of the school to larger social issues and the society at-large (McCarthy, 1995); and the capability to analyze the ways that existing power shape concepts such as culture and identity. Given this association with critical multicultural education, it would appear that an important aspect of Katherine's definition of social justice also included an anti-racist stance.

Because Katherine defined teaching for social justice in such a complex and nuanced manner, she reported that she was often frustrated by the "liberal talk" she heard from her family and the preservice teachers she mentored from Mt. Blaine. As a result she described herself as "kind of anti-liberal these days":

Interviewer: So, why are you anti-liberal?

Katherine: Well, because my dad's side of the family—they're pretty well educated, so they're kind of intellectual snobs—That's what I call them. And they love to sit around and talk about politics. They all live in fairly affluent towns and, you know, their kids all went to great schools...So, they'll just talk about things, like, they love to bash Bush and they love to bash Republicans. Yet, my aunt will volunteer at a suburban Historical Society, where she could really, you know, volunteer at an urban public school. Liberals in that, I don't know if they've ever really been to, the African American section of North East City. Liberals who don't really know what goes on in schools...their talk just feels like charity talk to me, which kind of bothers me. But it's not just them—it's also preservice teachers that I've seen at Mt. Blaine that have that liberal attitude of 'I'm going to go and save poor Black children in the North East Public Schools.' But when they get here they don't really—they can't—not just that they can't hack it, but they just can't—I've had a few people who don't understand where parents are coming from. (Formal Interview I)

For Katherine, it would seem that the "liberal talk" she heard from her family was frustrating for two reasons. First, even though her relatives expressed a socially liberal worldview, what they had to say about social issues, while liberally biased, was simply not based upon lived experience. Second, the liberal talk that Katherine's family engaged

in did not result in any action to ameliorate social inequity. Without such action, their talk appeared to be a form of intellectual or academic charity that did nothing to improve the plight of urban students or their families. They might be talking the talk, but they were not walking the walk.

It is important to note that Katherine also critiqued herself in this way, and expressed the belief that, as teacher, she was not always walking the walking:

I went to visit my brother in Detroit...and I thought, 'This is where I really need to be teaching.' And then like feeling like, 'Yeah, I'm an urban school teacher but not really.' Yes, I deal with all the issues of a big urban district and the kids are from all over, but it's not like – it's not like [I'm teaching at a really tough school], which is 95% African American with overcrowded classrooms and failing miserably. So, sometimes it feels like, 'Okay, I want the challenge, but as long as I'm not going to fail.' So, that's why I said I don't know who really walks the walk. (Formal Interview III)

The frustration Katherine was experiencing with the liberal talk of White preservice teachers from Mt. Blaine was rooted in something slightly different than what she was felt towards her "liberal" family members. According to some of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, many young White preservice teachers from middle and upper class backgrounds have a tendency to see themselves as "White Knights" (McIntyre, 1997, p. 123) coming to "save" inner city children from poor parenting, bad teachers, and violence (Marx, 2004, 2006). For example, in her participatory action research study on the ways in which White preservice teachers constructed Whiteness, McIntyre (1997) notes that

the prospective teachers who participated in her study appeared to have “experience[d] an unvarying conformity with the dominant white Eurocentric discourse that underlies white society’s ways of thinking, living, and relating with people of color” (p. 135). Embedded within this discourse is the notion that “being white is normal, typical, and functions as a standard for what is right, what is good, and what is true” (p. 135). Thus, at the same time many White preservice teachers valorize White cultural practices and values, they also judge the cultural practices and values of people of color as deficient. For Katherine, it was this stance that made it difficult for many White prospective teachers to understand and adequately negotiate the social and cultural complexities of urban schools, students, and families in an open and non-judgmental manner. According to Katherine, this was because they did not have the necessary set of dispositions (e.g., openness, empathy, experience) that might enable them to “reflect on things” (Formal Interview III), such as racial and social inequity.

Katherine did not think that the embodiment of these dispositions meant automatic racial enlightenment regarding issues of race. For instance, when Katherine first started teaching she reported being unaware of the complexities of race and racial identity within a family:

I think I was ignorant and I probably—I remember when I was in my first year [year of teaching]—I probably told you, I said to this little boy, ‘That is not your aunt!’ He was Dominican or Puerto Rican and something. He was light-skinned and his aunt was very dark-skinned. And I said, ‘Where is your aunt? I don’t see

her.’ And he said, ‘She’s here!’ And I thought, ‘Oh my God, how ignorant of me!’ (Formal Interview III)

However, because she believed herself to be open to and curious about racial differences, Katherine felt that she was able to move beyond her own ignorance and racial naiveté. Because of this openness and her commitment to social justice, which was also linked to a critical multicultural framework, it would appear that, both as a prospective teacher and a new teacher, Katherine was developing an anti-racist stance, not just in terms of her professional identity, but also in terms of the ideology that shaped her practice. Given this, it would appear that how she saw herself as a teacher and how she thought about teaching were almost identical (e.g., what she thought shaped who she was). Thus, it would appear that there was a dialectical relationship between Katherine’s anti-racist teaching identity and her anti-racist teaching ideology in that one clearly shaped and informed the other. This interrelationship is represented in Figure 6.2 as two interconnected boxes at the bottom of the figure, which a directly linked to Katherine’s emergent teacher identity.

Becoming a Teacher: Construction of Race and Emergent Tensions

As a prospective and as a newly minted teacher, Katherine’s construction of race was similar to that of her childhood and young adulthood. However, once she became a teacher, her understanding of race and its meaning within teaching became more nuanced and complex. During this second time period of Katherine’s racial geography of teaching, her construction of race was shaped by three sets of discursive tensions.

The first set of discursive tensions, embracing and questioning the relationship between race and gender, manifested itself in several ways. During the second time period, this tension was also informed by Katherine's experience of dating a Black man during college. As noted, as a White woman dating a Black man, Katherine was challenging two social discourses that were opposed to interracial sexual relationships. The first discourse, which was rooted in White supremacy and the assumption that Whites were superior to people of color, was enacted through prohibition of interracial marriages through antimiscegenation laws. The second discourse, which was linked to the experiences of American women, was quite different than the first in that it was not rooted in the assumption that White people were superior to people of color. Instead, it emerged from the perception held by many professional African American women that the pool of well-educated African American males is quite small and, as a result, there are not enough eligible males to go around. This willingness to explore and question the relationship between gender and race suggest that, as a prospective teacher and a new teacher, Katherine was developing the ability to understand the relationships between various forms of discrimination such as racism, classism, and sexism.

The second set of ideas or tensions—being open to or ignorant of racial differences—was evident during this time period in several different ways. In becoming an urban schoolteacher, Katherine reported that, while she was still ignorant about many issues related to race, she maintained a general openness to and curiosity about racial differences that allowed her to develop a deeper understanding of the meaning of race within people's lives. These aspects, when combined with her stance on social justice,

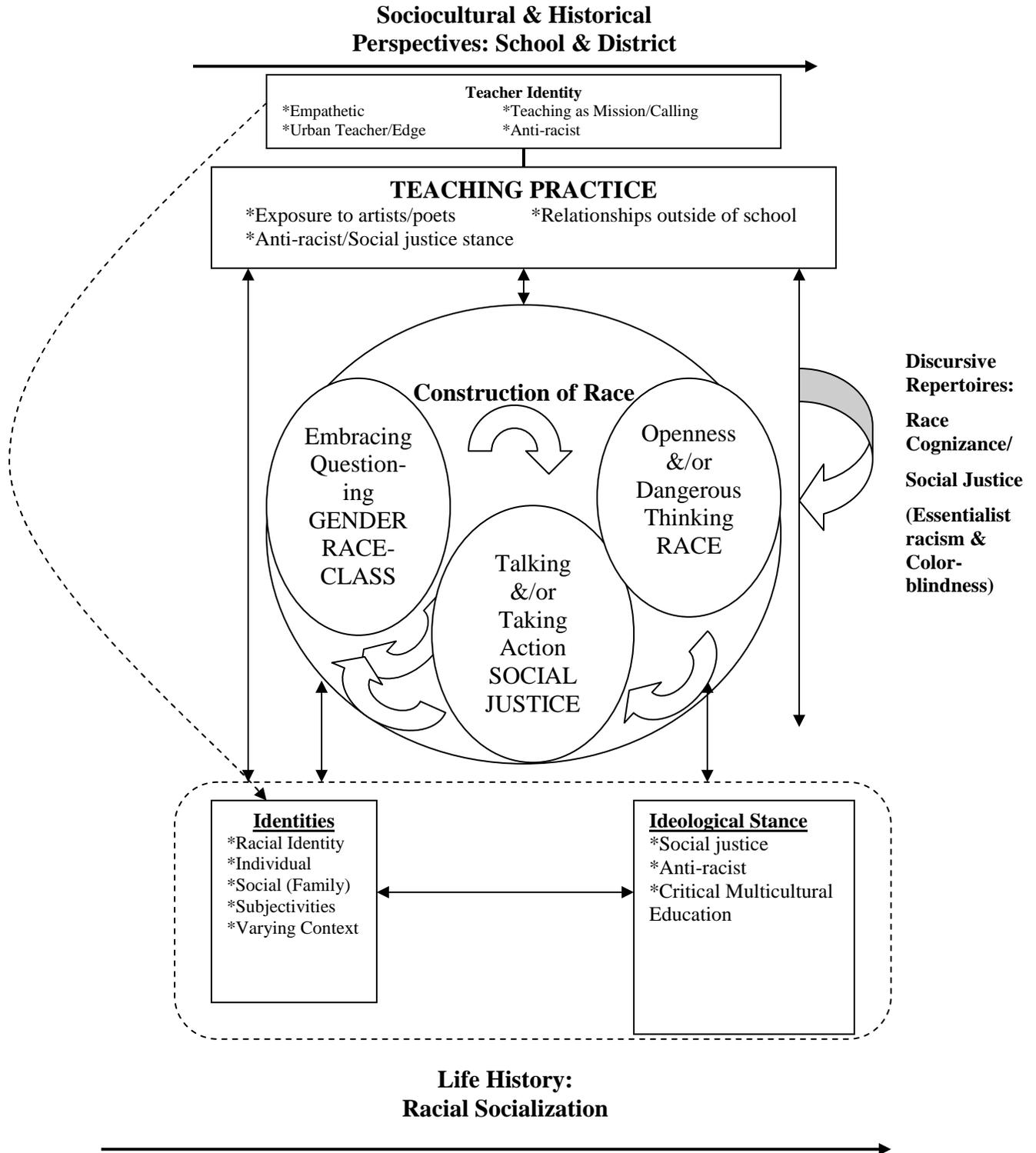
enabled her to begin to construct an anti-racist identity that was interconnected to an anti-racist ideology.

The third discursive repertoire, talking about and/or taking action about social and racial injustice, could be located within her relationships with liberally minded relatives from her father's side of the family. Katherine reported feeling frustrated by these family members because the liberal talk that they engaged in did not result in any action to ameliorate social inequities. They could talk the talk, but chose not to walk the walk. Katherine also included herself within this critique, suggesting it was easy for her to take action because she worked in a small school located in a comfortable and safe neighborhood rather than in an overcrowded school that was 95% African American and was classified as failing. This tension suggests that, ideologically speaking, Katherine was moving beyond a liberal ideological stance towards one that was critically oriented.

Becoming an Urban Teacher: Developing an Anti-Racist Identity and Ideological Stance

By mapping the discursive and material dimensions represented on Figure 6.2, it becomes evident that an important aspect of Katherine's racial geography of teaching was rooted within the dialectical relationship found between her emergent identity as an urban teacher and her developing ideological stance. This relationship, which centered on an anti-racist and critical posture, was informed by a discursive repertoire of race cognizance that suggested racial inequality was shaped and perpetuated by social structures rather than individual actions.

Figure 6.3
Teacher Identity: Current Teaching Practice



Teacher Identity: Being an Urban Teacher

This section explores the third and final aspect of Katherine's racial geography of teaching—being an urban teacher. It begins with a description of Katherine's current school and classroom context, which includes an accounting of Katherine's many professional responsibilities; a demographic description of the school at-large; and an exploration of her relationships with students, their families, and her colleagues in terms of race and racism. Embedded within this description is a discussion and analysis of the ways in which Katherine, as an urban teacher committed to anti-racism, grappled with the complicated issues of race and racism within her school, with her colleagues, and with herself. This section also maps out how Katherine's ideological stance and construction of race informed her teaching practice.

Figure 6.3 represents the material and discursive dimensions which shaped the third and final time frame of Katherine's racial geography of teaching—being an urban schoolteacher. The line at the top of this figure represents the sociocultural, historical, and contextual aspects of Katherine's school and classroom. This dimension includes a description of the school and classroom context. In particular, this figure focuses on the relationship between Katherine's teaching practice and the ways in which she identified herself as a teacher in terms of race, racism, and Whiteness. It also offers a representation of Katherine's construction of race that builds on the discursive tensions reviewed in the previous section (e.g., embracing and questioning the relationship between race, gender and socioeconomic class; openness and dangerous thinking regarding race; talking about and/or taking action about social and racial injustice).

Added to this figure is a representation of Katherine's teaching practice, which includes several aspects that shaped her teaching, such as relationships in and outside school, multiple teaching roles, high academic standards, and fears and frustrations.

School and Classroom Context

At the time of this study, Katherine was in her twelfth year of teaching at the Pierce Elementary School, located a just mile from the James-Eliot School, tucked within a cozy residential neighborhood. In addition to teaching second grade, Katherine also was responsible for a variety of other roles. These included serving as a school-wide literacy coach for the Pierce School, planning and conducting district-wide professional development across North East City, mentoring undergraduate and graduate-level preservice teachers, serving as an adjunct instructor at Mt. Blaine, co-editing a book with a Mt. Blaine professor, and attending national educational research conferences. Katherine reported that the work she was doing at Mt. Blaine with professors and doctoral students made it possible for her to continue to remain working in the classroom:

I really don't think I would still be teaching in the classroom if I didn't have Mt. Blaine because I think it's really hard to survive in a school as far as—I don't know how to say this—there isn't always a high level of—I guess I would say intellectual thinking. (Formal Interview I)

Not only did working with the professors and students at Mt. Blaine provide Katherine with the opportunity to engage in vigorous intellectual discussions regarding teaching and learning in a way she could not with many of her colleagues at the Pierce, it

also provided her with a greater sense of professionalism in that she was able to attend and present at national conferences.

In comparison to the James-Eliot, the Pierce was quite small, populated by just over 200 K-5 students. However, like the James-Eliot, it served a diverse student population—roughly 40% of students were African American, 34% were Hispanic, 14% were White, 10% were Asian, and roughly 2% were Native American.

At the same time, the student population was majority minority, and the teaching staff was not racially diverse—74 % were White, 13% were Black, 9% were Hispanic, and 4% were Asian.

Like James-Eliot, Pierce was not meeting “Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)” as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act in either English Language Arts or Mathematics. This meant that the school fell under the “Needs Improvement” category in both Math and English Language Arts. Because of this rating, families at Pierce were entitled to transfer to another school within the district or, in the case of low-income students, receive “Supplemental Education Services,” such as individual tutoring. As with the James-Eliot, a majority of the students at the Pierce were bused in from other city neighborhoods.

Katherine’s second grade classroom was comprised of 11 girls and 8 boys. Only one student, whose parents were Irish immigrants, identified as White, the rest identified as Puerto Rican, Dominican, Cambodian, Vietnamese, and/or African American. Katherine noted that a majority of the children in her class could be classified as what she considered “gray area” bilingual students. Katherine defined “gray area” (Informal

Interview) students as children whose parents were not academically proficient in either English or their language of origin; thus, it was difficult for them to help their children with schoolwork. Katherine also mentioned that there was a wide range of academic abilities represented in her classroom. In general, this was not an unusual situation; in every class, Katherine had taught prior to this year, there had always been a “range of learners” (Informal Interview). However, what made this class especially challenging was the unusually large range of emotional, social, and family issues that her students brought with them into the classroom. For example, Katherine had one student whose older brother’s mental illness was causing a great deal of instability at home. Because of this, the child was emotionally needy and demanded a great deal of Katherine’s time and energy. Another child was constantly having what Katherine referred to as “outbreaks,” or tantrums, during class in which he would shout, yell, or cry if he felt he was not getting his way. At the same time she was dealing with behavioral issues, she also had several well-behaved, hard-working students who were struggling academically. Because she was spending so much time negotiating difficult behaviors, she did not believe she was giving these students the attention that they needed. Given the disparate emotional and academic needs of her students, this was proving to be a very difficult and challenging year for Katherine.

In addition to student issues, Katherine was experiencing a great deal of frustration with some of the parents of her students:

There’s one child in this room that you’ll meet who is someone I have a hard time liking...I know deep down she must care, but most of the time, she’s like, ‘I don’t

care.’ Like I could take everything away and she doesn’t care. I tell her I’m going to call her mother and she says, ‘Okay.’ Her mother and I have been really close, but today her mother hung up on me, and I’m past a breaking point of—I’m at a point where I just don’t want to care...I have to be honest that this year I’m having a very hard time with urban education and feeling like I can do it. Not in terms of whether I can teach or handle the classroom...Am I going to continue to hold like the same high standards and not think things I don’t want to think about children and their parents? So, that’s what I’m having a hard time with.

(Informal Interview)

Because some of the parents did not seem to care about what happened to their children, Katherine was starting to feel as though she did not want to care either. For instance, Katherine reported feeling this way with Charlie’s mother who was, no matter what type of support Katherine provided, not meeting her son’s emotional needs:

I get [this way with] Charlie’s mother—I don’t care because the mother's not caring. I hate going to that place. (Informal Interview I)

Katherine also found herself engaging in extremely negative thoughts about some of the urban families that she served. For example, after noting an apparent trend of poor urban mothers having several children with different men, who were often absent from their children’s lives, Katherine reported that she found herself thinking that there should be some standard or level of personal competence that people should be able to meet before they were allowed to have children. Katherine reported that such thoughts often caught her off guard and she would think, “Whoa, that is scary to know that my mind would go

there” (Formal Interview III). Katherine referred to such thoughts as “dangerous thinking.” For Katherine, this type of thinking referred to any derogatory or critical thought she found herself having about students, parents, and colleagues of color. However, it is important to note that, in terms of the urban families she was serving, Katherine was not entirely sure whether her dangerous thoughts were rooted in racial or socioeconomic differences between her and urban families:

Sometimes I think, ‘Does it have to do with race, does it have to do with socioeconomics that I’m thinking this way about parents?’ But sometimes it doesn’t—it just has to do with [the fact] that you’re not doing what a parent is supposed to do. (Informal Interview)

It would appear then that, at the time of this study, Katherine was experiencing a professional crisis in which her beliefs about children and families, her anti-racist identity, and her commitment to teaching for social justice were being challenged in ways that made her feel extremely uncomfortable. In fact, according to Katherine, she reported that she wanted to participate in this study in order to have a place to sort through the complicated issues she was having with urban education.

In addition to having, what she considered dangerous thoughts about her students and their families, Katherine also reported that, over the course of her professional practice, she also observed what she defined as cultural or racial “trends” among certain ethnic or racial groups. For example, Katherine reported that many of the Brazilian parents she came into contact with appeared to think of “education as stairway or ladder to achievement” (Formal Interview II) and often placed a great deal of trust in their

children's teachers. In discussing such trends, Katherine was careful to acknowledge that there was a narrow boundary between understanding them as cultural patterns or as racial and ethnic stereotypes.

For Katherine, the racial or ethnic trend that caused her the greatest concern was rooted in what she referred to as the "African American culture of male absenteeism" (Formal Interview I). Over the course of her career, Katherine had observed that many African American fathers appeared to be completely absent from the lives of their children. This trend troubled Katherine for several reasons:

Katherine: One, it bothers me because I don't think [a woman] should have to bear the responsibility [of a child] by herself. I think she's worth more than feeling like she has to. And two, it's because I see so many kids in schools that suffer because they don't have enough parental involvement...So, I always think the child's going to suffer somewhere...I guess something else—I used to waitress. In the kitchen, a lot of the girls talked to me about their kids who went to the NECPS. It seemed very prevalent in the African American community here in North East City—that was just my experience—that males were not held responsible and it was expected [that they would not be responsible]. So, not only were they not present, but then when I'd say to some of the girls, 'Well, do you get child support?' It was like, 'Well, no, like why would we?'

Interviewer: So, they weren't expecting it?

Katherine: No. And that bothers me. I think maybe it bothers me more from a feminine perspective in that it's accepted and women are allowed to feel like they have to have all responsibility. And then the consequence is what I see in the classroom is what really bothers me. (Formal Interview I)

This excerpt provides another example of the ways in which Katherine attempted to make sense of the intersection between race and gender. For Katherine, the absence of Black fathers and the fact that there appeared to be no expectation that they would be financially accountable or physically present in their children's lives felt extremely disrespectful towards the women who were bearing their children. While she was upset

by the way these African American women were treated, Katherine was particularly worried about the way this apparent racial trend impacted the young African American males she served in her classroom:

And another thing that worries me is that many years...the lowest performing student in my class is an African American male. And it just makes me think that there's something happening in society or in the schools that isn't serving Black young males well. Or something happening in their community that's making them feel as though they're not good enough. (Formal Interview I)

According to Katherine, she was thinking about the “Black males in [her] classroom all the time” (Formal Interview II), and she spent a great deal of time talking about this issue with Dr. Miller and other like-minded teachers.

In terms of the teaching staff at Pierce, Katherine reported that most of the teachers got along well, although there were some cliques. Katherine, for example, noted that she spent a great deal of time with a “core” group of teachers who not only shared a similar set of beliefs and values about “teaching and children” (Informal Interview), but also spent a great deal of time together outside of school:

There's a group of us who hang out. So, for example, Moira and I talk every night, and we go out on the weekends. And then Margaret and I have been friends since high school and then this other woman, Marie—we go out, you know, for dinner. It's beyond, ‘Let's go out for drinks on a Friday afternoon,’—which we do---but we also go out during the summer and on weekends, also

during vacations. So, it's nice that we're close, but it is also not always nice because you're talking about school a lot. (Informal Interview)

Katherine and Moira combined their classes on a daily basis and co-taught lessons in reading, spelling, and art. Katherine not only attended high school with Margaret, but, at the time of this study, she was helping her to plan her upcoming wedding. Katherine was very close to Marie, who was one of three African American teachers teaching at the school. According to Katherine, Marie's path into education was different from those of the other teachers at Pierce in that she was a little bit older, had children who had attended the North East City Schools, and had served as a paraprofessional before becoming a credentialed teacher. Throughout all our interviews, Katherine noted that she and Marie spent a great deal of time talking about racial issues.

Katherine also noted that, on occasion, other staff members were included within this "core" group:

And then there are the peripheral people who, once in a while, join us. It doesn't mean they're not our friends, they just have different lives—maybe they have elderly parents or kids that they need to tend to, but it's not like we wouldn't hang out with each other...So, everyone is pretty close and there are some of the peripherals that we [the core group] know are pretty racist and we'll talk about them being pretty racist. And we'll share like things that they've said. (Informal Interview)

Some of the racist remarks Katherine reported hearing from her White colleagues at the Pierce included statements such as "The kids can't do it; you can't expect this from these

kids,” or “Oh, the kids are little monkeys” (Formal Interview II). Perhaps the most egregious comment she reported was that some colleagues, on occasion, would refer to students as “Little Joe” (Formal Interview II). The name “Little Joe” referred to a gorilla that had escaped from a North East City zoo a few years earlier. A local radio host had made a racially charged on-air statement suggesting that Little Joe was “probably an ICEIP gorilla waiting for a bus to take him to [the suburbs].” Not surprisingly, this statement inspired outrage from North East City parents and community leaders who believed the radio host was comparing people of color to apes. Given the public nature of such a racially disparaging comment, it would appear that the White teachers who referred to their African American students as “Little Joe” were consciously and overtly engaging in a form of essentialist racism in which they openly categorized children of color as less than human.

Katherine also noted that some of the racism exhibited by her White colleagues manifested itself as a general “apathy” towards students wherein some teachers appeared not to care if their students were learning or not. According to Katherine, this attitude made her “crazy” because these same teachers would not be so apathetic (or disdainful) about a child attending a well-regarded private school or their own children. Katherine had “no doubt” that this attitude negatively influenced student learning. However, as mentioned above, it is important to note that there were times when Katherine found herself struggling with a similar sense of apathy, especially when she was forced to deal with parents who did not seem to care about their children.

Given Katherine's role as the school's literacy coach, which required her to work with every teacher in the building, it was difficult for her to negotiate and/or confront the racist comments she heard from some of her White colleagues, as she had to maintain positive working relationships with everyone in the building:

Katherine: And, I don't know if I told you this, in my role as literacy coach, I was showing a teacher some of the read-aloud books that came with this new program and the teacher said, 'You know, I'm not going to read this book.' It was about Harriet Tubman.

Interviewer: And this was a White teacher saying this.

Katherine: Yes.

Interviewer: She assumed you would know why she wouldn't read this book. She didn't have to tell you.

Katherine: Right. So, it's like in so many situations, it's hard because when I'm coach, I have to be facilitator of meetings. I have to try to bring the school together—I have to have people with me. But, now you hear comments like the one [Shelby] made. So, what I said to her in a bail out way was, 'Oh [Shelby], you don't mean that.' Or, when [Marnie] says the most outrageous things—I'll just say you really didn't mean that. (Formal Interview II)

In this instance, Katherine dealt with the racist comments made by some of her White colleagues through a form of evasion, in which she not only kept her true feelings silent, but she also let these racist colleagues off the hook. Rather than emerging from a color-blind discourse rooted in an effort not to see color, this evasiveness and silence was intentional in that it was consciously employed so as to preserve professional ties. While the context is different, this non-confrontational stance was similar to the one that Megan DeAngelis used when dealing with racist comments made by some members of her extended family.

According to Katherine, “dangerous thinking” and/or noticing different ethnic or racial trends was not just reserved for her students or their families. There were also times when she had “dangerous” thoughts about some of her colleagues of color. In particular, this “dangerous thinking” was associated with the NECPS racial hiring quotas, which had been in place since the desegregation crisis of the 1970s. While the purpose of the quota system was to recruit more teachers and administrators of color, many White teachers felt that it was unfair, especially, when, in the early 1990s, a judge ruled that, in order to maintain racial balance among the teaching staff, White teachers with greater seniority could be laid-off before African American teachers with less seniority. According to Katherine, the fact that senior White staff could be fired before newer teachers of color inspired “a strong sense of hatred towards a lot of Black teachers” (Formal Interview I).

While Katherine reported that she agreed with the overarching purpose of the quota system, her own direct experience with its implementation caused her a great deal of conflict:

There was one [African American] teacher here who was my age when I first starting teaching—I was going to be teaching kindergarten and then...two weeks before school started I was told that I couldn't have that position—another girl was given the position because she needed to fill the quota...I always looked at her and thought, ‘You got my job’...And then, in the end, there was like a lot of controversy, and she had to leave here because she ended up not being the best teacher...I just felt like that wasn't right...At the same time, I believe in the

quotas because I think that kids should be served. They should see faces that look like theirs. (Formal Interview I)

This experience as well as some of her professional interactions with some colleagues of color left her, feeling not only distrustful at times, but also somewhat cynical about the quota system. This cynicism inspired what Katherine described as “very racist” thinking on her part regarding some colleagues of color:

Katherine: I think there are times when I get into dangerous thinking regarding the North East City Schools. I’ll be thinking, ‘That person is going to get that job because they’re Black and they’re definitely going to get it.’ There is another African American teacher at our school—not Marie—who wants to go into administration, and I thought, ‘Oh, she’ll probably be a principal someday.’ And I thought, ‘She’ll just get it because she’s Black.’ And it will be just like some of the other principals who I think shouldn’t be principals, but are because of the color of their skin. And then they’re going to treat me worse because they’re angry about White privilege. And so I do go into that place sometimes. And I don’t like it. But then sometimes it’s also based on experiences that I’ve seen too. So, and that’s my other struggle with some of this identity and racism. Like sometimes, it’s true and it has nothing to do with race necessarily. Sometimes the person isn’t a good teacher, or sometimes the person did get the job over someone else because they are a minority. So that’s why sometimes I struggle with some of my thoughts about the North East City Schools...but I’ve—I have—I don’t want to say evidence—But then I know is so much more complicated than that.

Interviewer: But that’s what your immediate thought is...

Katherine: Right.

Interviewer: ...and you struggle with it...

Katherine: Right.

Interviewer: But there it is.

Katherine: Right, and that’s very racist. (Formal Interview III)

Even though Katherine was a committed urban educator whose identity and ideological stance were shaped by anti-racist ideas and a social justice construct, on occasion, she

would find herself engaged in racist thinking. These racist thoughts did not render Katherine's commitment to urban students and parents, her role as an ally, and her relationships to people of color as null and void. What such thoughts did indicate was that the process of maintaining an anti-racist position as an urban educator was complicated in that it was not only shaped by discursive dimensions rooted in social justice and race cognizance, but also by contradictory discursive dimensions, such as essentialist racism, color-blindness, and White privilege. Thus, for Katherine, being a White anti-racist did not mean being able to conquer racism. Instead, it meant coming to grips with the institutional and ideological factors that shape racism, as well as grappling with how these factors benefit some people at the expense of others. Bonilla-Silva (2003) puts it this way:

Being an anti-racist begins with understanding the institutional nature of racial matter and accepting that all actors in a racialized society are affected *materially* (receive benefits or disadvantages) and *ideologically* by the racial structure. This stand implies taking responsibility for your unwilling participation in these practices and beginning a new life committed to the goal of achieving real racial equality. The ride will be rough, but after your eyes have been opened, there is no point in standing still. (p. 15)

Even though Katherine did not refer to herself as anti-racist and was deeply concerned about the "dangerous" thoughts she had about some colleagues and families of color, there was ample evidence that she was willing to acknowledge and take responsibility for the unearned benefits she received as a White person. One way that she did this was by

openly acknowledging the racist thoughts she had and then challenging them through personal reflection and conversations with colleagues, friends, and academic associates at Mt. Blaine. Katherine's anti-racist stance also manifested itself through her attempts to uncover and understand the social and structural conditions that shaped what she perceived of as racially based trends, such the absenteeism of African American fathers and its potential impact on the academic performance of the African American boys.

Being an Urban Teacher: The Construction of Race

Because it encompasses over 12 years of professional experience and personal reflection regarding the meaning of race, racism, and Whiteness within her professional practice, Figure 6.3 represents something far more complicated than the previous two figures presented within this chapter. In particular, it attempts to signify the progressive and changeable character of Katherine's perceptions, attitudes, understandings, and beliefs about race both in terms of her teaching, as well as her professional practice. Nowhere is the progressive nature of Katherine's racial geography of teaching more evident than within this final iteration of her construction of race. For example, as indicated on Figure 6.3, in addition to embracing and questioning the relationship between race and gender, the first set of ideas or tensions that comprised her construction of race as a practicing teacher also included the relationship and/or intersection between socioeconomic class and race. This tension was evident in Katherine's attempt to parse out whether the negative thoughts she had about some of her urban parents came from racial or socioeconomic differences between herself and the families she was serving.

The second set of ideas or tensions that comprised Katherine's construction of race as a practicing teacher—openness and/or dangerous thinking about race—represented one of the most complex and progressive aspects of Katherine's construction of race. In the first time period, this dimension was described as “not knowing about race,” which referred to the fact that, as a child and young adult, Katherine reported that, at the same time she had an intellectual understanding of the impact race had on people's lives, she had no direct experience with it in her own. In the second time period of Katherine's racial geography of teaching, this dimension was described as “being open to or ignorant of racial difference.” Here, Katherine reported that, while still ignorant about many issues related to race, she maintained a general openness to and curiosity about racial differences that allowed her to develop a deeper understanding of the meaning of race within people's lives. In this final time period of Katherine's racial geography of teaching, Katherine still maintained an openness and curiosity about the meaning of race; however, this stance was in direct opposition to the “dangerous” or racist thoughts she found herself having about some of her students, families, and colleagues of color.

Like the second set tensions, the third set that comprised Katherine's construction of race as a practicing teacher—talking about and/or taking action about social and racial injustice—was also progressive. For example, in the first time period of Katherine's racial geography of teaching, this dimension was described simply as “talking about race.” It was not until the second time period that Katherine indicated that a tension existed between talking about racial and social injustice and actually taking action.

Racial Geography of Teaching and Practice

The purpose of this chapter was to address the ways in which Katherine Mackenzie's ideological stance informed her construction of race as well as how these two particular dimensions influenced her teaching practice. In order to explore these issues, I utilized the racial geography of teaching as means of conceptually mapping the meaning of race within Katherine's personal and professional life. What I uncovered was the fact that Katherine's ideological stance had an interdependent and dynamic relationship with the other material and discursive dimensions that comprised her racial geography of teaching such as her biography, the historical and discursive contexts within which she born, and her racial and teacher identities. In turn, Katherine's construction of race also maintained an interdependent relationship with these same material and discursive dimensions.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of Katherine's racial geography of teaching was the dialectical relationship between Katherine's ideological stance, which included a profound belief in teaching for social justice and anti-racism, and her teacher identity. In particular, there seemed to be a direct connection between Katherine's characterization of teaching as a mission or calling, her identity as an anti-racist educator, and her ideological conception of teaching for social justice that manifested itself within her practice in several different ways.

A key aspect of Katherine's definition of teaching for social justice was the importance of exposing her students to cultural experiences that they might not normally have access to, such as important poets and well-known visual artists. An example of

this occurred during one observation period when I witnessed Katherine and her teaching partner Moira present a unit on pointillism, which was built around Georges-Pierre Seurat's famous painting entitled "Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte." While some of Katherine's colleagues may have believed that such a topic was too advanced for urban students or took too much time away from core academics, for Katherine, the purpose of having her students study this famous work was to provide them with the same type of opportunities she believed middle-class children might regularly receive through various extracurricular activities. Thus, by introducing her students to the world of art and poetry, Katherine was attempting to provide them with the type of cultural capital routinely found among well educated, middle-class families.

Another important aspect of Katherine's teaching practice that emerged from the dialectical relationship between her identity as an urban teacher and her ideological stance, rested upon the fact that she actively developed and maintained relationships with several of her students outside of the classroom community:

I'd say for the last eight years, there has always been one child in the class that seems particularly needy. It could be financially needy or it could just be about them needing attention. Somehow we have, like, we build this little relationship and, like, there are always some things I make sure I establish—I always make sure I'm in constant contact with the parent. And that I let the child know I'm not replacing your parent—To me it feels like I'm doing Big Brothers, Big Sisters. But I just happen to choose someone from the class and I don't even know how it develops...I think that I probably won't do it next year outside of school because

there have been relationships established that I have to continue. You know, so like Nathia, I can't just say, "Because, you're not in my class anymore, I can't see you." Most of these relationships last just one year, and it was understood that it was that year. (Formal Interview II)

This aspect of Katherine's practice was not only linked to the relationship between her conception of teaching as a mission or calling and her ideological commitment to social justice, but it was also connected to the third set of tensions that comprised her construction of race—the tension between simply talking about social and racial justice or taking action for it. By committing herself to supporting some of her most needy students both inside and outside of the classroom, she was moving beyond liberal talk about improving the plight of urban children and moving towards something that had the potential to be transformative for both her students and their families.

The interplay between Katherine's identity, ideology, and her construction of race and the way in which all of these dimensions informed her teaching practice was quite different from Megan's. For instance, unlike Megan who made explicit attempts to infuse multicultural literature into her teaching, Katherine's commitment to social justice and her anti-racist stance were enacted through her relationships with her students and their families. This does not mean that Katherine's students did not have access to multicultural literature or that she and her students never discussed race. For instance, Katherine reported that her students often spoke about their own racial, linguistic, or ethnic identities, and frequently categorized one another by race or ethnicity:

Katherine: [The students] define each other by their race. So, they'll say, 'The Black girl in the third grade,' or they'll say, 'That Spanish kid' or that 'White

kid.’ So, they definitely define each other by race. There’s a strong sense this year of—I guess it would be of a Latino heritage. And I think that Carlos and Lisa kind of spearhead that. You know, they’re very proud of their heritage, which is kind of interesting because they’re both Puerto Rican...I don’t think they speak Spanish...I mean, I think their mother will speak it and they’ll understand it...[Being Latino] has become very popular I’d say, which is a good thing...but I don’t know how much is really rooted in understanding the history of their country of origin. So that comes up a lot. I think it’s sort of cool [to be Latino] in here.

Interviewer: So, when it comes up, what do you do or say?

Katherine: We just celebrate it. Like usually if I read a book that has Spanish words in it, I’ll say like, ‘Can someone help me?’ And like, Morgan tried to help me, and I know she actually read the words incorrectly. So, I don’t even think she...I don’t know if she can speak any Spanish, which is fine, but I’ll just say, ‘Oh, thank you so much for helping me. It’s so wonderful those of us who know two languages.’ (Formal Interview I)

From this interview excerpt, it appears that Katherine was not only aware of the ways that race and identity were being negotiated among her students, she also supported this exploration by defining such differences as an asset (e.g., It’s so wonderful those of us who know two languages).

While I did not witness any exchanges like the one described above, what I did observe suggested that, rather than simply informing her practice, her anti-racist and social justice ideals represented a stance, or position, from which her practice emerged. Thus, it would appear that, for Katherine, her teaching practice was a representation of her ideological stance in action. For example, from my observations, Katherine’s classroom appeared to be a very busy and well-organized place where children were expected to adhere to high academic and behavioral standards. Katherine maintained a strict code of conduct for class conversations, transitions, and lessons in that students were expected to do their work to the best of their ability, listen to individuals as they

were speaking, and allow room for respectful disagreement. Throughout my observations, I frequently heard Katherine remind her students that, because they were second graders, she expected to see second grade level work. When students did not do what was expected of them, there were consequences that might include a phone call home, missing recess, or the opportunity to participate in an art lesson on pointillism. When students did do what was expected of them, they were allowed to have lunch with Katherine or be given extra time on the computer.

According to Katherine, she applied these standards, in varying degrees, to all of her students, even those who were having difficulties at home:

Lisa likes to tell me every day, ‘Oh, [my brother] was acting up.’ I switched it over to, ‘It’s not an excuse anymore, Lisa. I know that [your brother] is a problem at home, but it doesn’t give you the right to say [mean] things or not do your school-work.’ I finally just switched it because I feel like she hangs on this, and it’s so sad that it can start so early that she’s a victim. (Formal Interview I)

According to Katherine, while not always easy, part of the reason that she maintained such high standards for her students was because she was certain that education had the power to positively change the lives of urban children. Given this, it would seem, that for Katherine, her teaching practice represented one way of supporting such a transformation.

Racial Geography of Teaching: Struggling to be Anti-Racist

From mapping the racial geography of teaching for Katherine Mackenzie, it is evident that Katherine’s teaching practice emerged from an ideological stance rooted in

anti-racism and a social justice construct. In terms of Katherine's practice, this stance manifested itself through high academic and behavioral standards, as well as the sincere belief that education could transform the lives of her students. Yet, even though an understanding of racial differences and its inherent meaning within her classroom shaped Katherine's personal and professional life, she often found herself confronted by racist thoughts. Whereas the tensions embedded within Megan DeAngelis' construction of race had to do with her effort not to confront or challenge the meaning of race within her personal or professional lives, the tensions that comprised Katherine's construction of race had to do with the struggle to name and then combat her own racist assumptions about her students, their families, and some of her colleagues of color.

Given the fact that we continue to live in a racialized society shaped by competing and contradictory racial discourses, it is not surprising that Katherine, as well as other White teachers committed to anti-racism and a critically oriented model of social justice, would keep struggling with the meaning of race, racism, and the construction of Whiteness within their personal lives and professional practice. Because of the presence of White privilege, which renders the meaning of race almost invisible, it is difficult for many White people to fully understand how the legacy of racism has shaped our social institutions and cultural practices. Thus, in order to be anti-racist, a White educator must learn to recognize and unpack the meaning of White privilege at the same time he or she engages in a life-long process of self-examination, critique, and personal transformation that exposes the ways in which institutional and cultural practices have benefited him or her at the expense of people of color. For White educators, taking on such a stance is

risky business, as it means fully acknowledging the possible ways that each of us perpetuates existing racial inequalities. While painful, it is not possible to combat social inequities until we have confronted our own racial assumptions.

The meaning of being an anti-racist educator committed to a critically oriented form of social justice will be explored in more detail in the final chapter of this dissertation. In particular, there will be an investigation of the various discursive tensions that inform such an ideological stance.

CHAPTER 7:
THE RACIAL GEOGRAPHY OF TEACHING: IMPLICATIONS FOR
RESEARCH, PRACTICE, AND POLICY

This study analyzed how the ideological stance of two White urban elementary school teachers informed their construction of race and what this meant in terms of each woman's personal life and professional practice. A key purpose of this investigation was to build on and move beyond the existing body of empirical literature on White teachers, which generally focuses on the beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions about race, towards something more nuanced and complex. As noted in Chapter 4, teaching practice is not only shaped by perceptions, attitudes and beliefs, but also by other aspects such as the historical context into which one is born, one's family of origin, and the multiple ways in which one identifies oneself. Each of these elements interacts with one another in complicated ways that are often difficult to untangle. In particular, this study attempted to expose the interrelationships between these various elements and explore how they shaped the ways that two White teachers understood race and racism, and how they constructed Whiteness within their personal and professional lives. In order to do this, I developed a conceptual framework, which I refer to as the "Racial Geography of Teaching." This conceptual framework emerged from the conceptual and empirical work outlined in Chapter 2, Frankenberg's (1993) two-dimensional framework, Rousmaniere's (2001) conception of racial biography, and repeated readings of the collected data.

The first part of the chapter focuses on the contribution that the racial geography of teaching makes to the expanding body of research on White teachers. Included within

this discussion is a critique of racial identity stage or process-oriented models such as those of Helms (1990, 1992, 1995), Cross (1991), and Banks (1984). The first part highlights and analyzes what it is that can be seen by using this conceptual framework, drawing on insights based on analysis of both study participants. This second part of the chapter addresses the implication of this study for research, practice, and policy.

Making Sense of the Racial Geography of Teaching

Using the racial geography of teaching as a conceptual framework, this study exposed the complicated interrelationships found among a teacher's identity and her ideological stance, historical and social context, discursive practices, personal biography, construction of race, and teaching practice.

Racial Geography of Teaching: Methodological and Theoretical Underpinnings

The racial geography of teaching offers a way of looking at how the professional practices of two White teachers were shaped and informed by race, racism, and the construction of Whiteness. As noted above, this framework emerged from a complex interaction between existing theoretical work and repeated readings of the collected data; it was also rooted in a critical ethnographic paradigm. Critical ethnography is shaped by several foundational principles such as the idea that the purpose of social research is to address and ameliorate issues of social injustice, that the entire research process—from data collection to analysis—must work to name, challenge and transform inequitable power structures, and that such transformation should occur through a dialogical and reflexive process between the researcher and the researched. A primary purpose of

critical ethnography is to unpack and expose the unconscious and conscious ways that ideology influences research and the construction of knowledge.

As noted in Chapter 4, this conceptual framework drew on the two-dimensional analytic framework presented in Frankenberg's (1993) ethnographic study of the material and discursive dimensions of race and racism among 30 White women. Frankenberg's analytic frame aligns with the methodological stance of the study presented in this dissertation in that she grapples with more than the beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of White women. She also maps out the social, political, historical, and discursive contexts that influenced the racial structuring of participants' lives.

The construction of the racial geography of teaching was also informed by a critical multicultural education, which is shaped by the philosophical, methodological, and theoretical aspects of other critical traditions such as critical pedagogy, critical race theory, and anti-racist education (Sleeter & Bernal, 2004). As a theory, critical multicultural education attempts to move beyond contemporary forms of multicultural education, which focus on the teaching of tolerance, the celebration of differences, and the reduction of racial prejudice, towards something that encourages the identification, critique, and transformation of social, cultural, and political injustice situated within schools.

The principles shaping critical multicultural education align with the methodological stance of critical ethnography in that both are interested in social transformation and the eradication of various forms of social injustice. However, critical multicultural education is concerned with what goes on in schools and, as a result, turns a

critical eye towards the structures and social practices that shape them. My linking of critical multicultural education with Frankenberg's framework for understanding race and racism brings teaching directly into the field of the sociology of race.

The racial geography of teaching was also informed by stage theories of racial or ethnic identity development such as Helms (1990, 1992, 1995), Cross (1991), and Banks (1984). As discussed in some detail in Chapter 4, there is an epistemological tension between the conceptual framework I developed and racial identity stage theories in that models like Helms' and Cross' emerge from a post-positivist epistemology whereas this study operates from a constructivist interpretive paradigm. "Process-oriented models" (McAllister & Irvine, 2000) are included in this study because they are frequently used as a framework for understanding the racial identity development of White teachers. These models are also often used as a way to measure and develop cross-cultural competency among White teachers working within diverse settings. For example, in their review of three process-oriented models of racial or ethnic identity development, which included Helms' (1990, 1992, 1995) Racial Identity Development, Banks' (1984) Typology of Ethnicity, and M.J. Bennett's (1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, McAllister and Irvine (2000) suggested these frameworks offered the most feasible way of developing cross-cultural learning for teachers. In particular, McAllister and Irvine assert that these models offer the best ways of helping teacher educators develop an understanding of teacher behaviors associated with race, especially the resistance often associated with the topic, planning multicultural courses, and establishing an environment that encourages learning (p. 5). McAllister and Irvine offer several recommendations for

the use of process-oriented models within preservice and inservice teacher education such as developing multicultural courses designed to relieve student resistance.

It can certainly be argued that stage- or process-oriented models of racial identity development have offered insights into how teachers think about and behave towards people who are racially different from themselves. In particular, Helms' (1990, 1992, 1995) theory of White racial identity has been used to measure the potential impact that a particular multicultural education course or diversity training workshop has on White teachers' beliefs, thinking, and resistance or non-resistance regarding race (Sleeter, 1992; Lawrence & Tatum, 1997). However, while stage-models of racial identity have the potential to inform teacher education, they offer a relatively narrow picture of the meaning of race in teachers' lives and work.

For example, as noted in Chapter 2, Helms' White racial identity theory generally centers on individual attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs. Thus, it does not acknowledge how individual identity is shaped and reshaped by the varied social, cultural, and historical contexts that an individual inhabits throughout his or her lifetime. Stage-models define racial development as a linear, step-wise process that is a relatively stable and fixed entity. However, as argued in Chapter 5, identity formation is hardly a linear process; rather it is informed by a dialectical interaction between an individual and the various social contexts that he or she inhabits, such family, school, home, and work. This suggests that individual agency is an important aspect of the construction of identity and must not be discounted. Thus, the construction of identity is an unstable endeavor that is highly contextual and mutable. As discussed in Chapter 4, there is an epistemological

tension between these two conceptions of identity in that one is rooted within a post-positivist perspective whereas the other is located within an interpretive constructivist paradigm.

Another issue with stage models of racial identity is that they generally only focus on one aspect of identity—race or ethnicity. Their theories do not take into account the complex interactions that occur between race and other forms of identification such as social-class, gender, or sexual orientation. At best then, stage-model racial identity theories offer a partial and incomplete picture of how race shapes an individual's sense of self.

Unlike stage-model theories of racial identity development, the “racial geography of teaching” provides a way to chart the racial topography of a teacher's life and professional practice in a way that moves well beyond attitudes, beliefs, and practices. Within this conceptual framework, various material and discursive aspects such as the sociohistorical context that an individual teacher was born into, the racial socialization he or she received as a child and young adult, the discourses he or she has heard, continues to hear, and uses to describe race are plotted out so that we are able to understand their interrelationship with other aspects related to identity such as ideology, the construction of race, and practice.

As noted, the racial geography of teaching has been informed by Frankenberg's (1993) conception of the social geography of race, Rousmaniere's (2001) notion of racial biography and the theoretical and empirical literature presented in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. By drawing on all of these ideas, this conceptual framework links the

sociology of race directly to the lives and practices of teachers. In particular, the racial geography of teaching provides a very different way of looking at what it means to be a White teacher working in a classroom populated by students of color. This conceptual framework problematizes what it means to prepare preservice teachers to work with students of color as well as to professionally support inservice teachers who are already working within a multiracial context over the course of their professional life span. According to current demographic projections, over the next several decades, the nation's teaching force will continue to become primarily White and the student population will continue to become more racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse. It is not only essential that White teachers learn to critique their own attitudes towards racial differences as well as those of the society at-large, but also begin to understand how their racial identity has been shaped and reshaped by the social, cultural, and historical contexts that they inhabit.

Looking Across Cases: What Can We Learn?

In Chapter 5 and 6 of this dissertation, the racial geography of teaching was charted for two teachers. Both chapters offered a complex description of the material and discursive aspects that shaped each teacher's ideological stance and construction of race as well as how these elements were linked to practice. However, these accounts represent more than just two engaging stories about the personal and professional lives of two White teachers. They suggest insights about the material and discursive elements that shape the practices of other White teachers.

Looking across the cases suggests that the temporal, contextual, and material aspects of teachers' lives have a profound impact on how their beliefs about teaching and learning are shaped, how they define themselves as educators, and how they ultimately construct the meaning of race within their personal and professional lives. For instance, all U.S. teachers live within a racialized historical and social context where White people are granted unearned social, cultural, and institutional privileges that people of color are not granted. These unearned privileges are rooted in a nearly 400-year history of White domination and the presumed biological, moral, and intellectual superiority of Western Europeans over people of color. Intricately intertwined within this long racial history are various discursive practices such as essentialist racism, White colonial discourses, and color-blindness that create a complicated discursive landscape. This has supported the continuation of White superiority and the unequal access people of color have to economic, educational, and cultural goods offered by the society at-large.

While every teacher's life is shaped by the racial history of the United States and the fact that we continue to live in a racist society, the two cases presented in this dissertation suggest that the discursive lenses teachers use to interpret these contexts may be different. These discursive lenses are shaped, at least initially, by the racial socialization each teacher engages in during their childhood and young adulthood. Some White teachers grow up unaware of the sociocultural history of race and the fact that they are recipients of various forms of social privileges. As a result, the racial socialization process they are part of during childhood and young adulthood may render the social

meaning of their Whiteness invisible. Brown et al. (2003) describe this invisibility of White privilege as follows:

According to a well-known philosophical maxim, the last thing a fish notices is the water. Things that are unproblematic seem natural and tend to go unnoticed. Fish take the water they swim in for granted, just as European Americans take their race as given, as normal. White Americans may face difficulties in life—problems having to do with money, religion, or family—but race is not one of them. White Americans can be sanguine about racial matters because their race has not been (until recently) visible to the society in which they live. They cannot see how this society produces advantages for them because these benefits seem so natural that they are taken for granted, experienced as wholly legitimate. They literally do not see how race permeates America’s institutions—the very rules of the game—and its distribution of opportunities and wealth. (Brown, et al., 2003).

Because they cannot see how race and White privilege impacts their lives, some White teachers grow up believing that their personal and academic successes are based upon individual merit and hard work rather than influenced by the fact that they are White. Of course, this does not mean that White teachers have not worked hard, but rather that they may have not acknowledged how certain cultural and institutional practices provide them opportunities that may not be available for people of color.

In addition to being reared not to recognize privilege, some White teachers have also been socialized not to “see” race. This is because the act of “seeing” racial differences is regarded as not only socially impolite, but also is regarded as representing a

form of racial prejudice itself. In order to avoid being labeled racist—an extremely frightening prospect for a majority of White people (Tatum, 1997)—some White teachers have been taught that the best course of action regarding racial differences and/or racial conflict is to remain color-blind and silent. For White teachers who have been raised to be color-blind and silent about race, it may be difficult to acknowledge the significance of their own racial identity or the racial identity of their students of color because discussion about race represents a social breach as well as the danger of exposing oneself to the charge of racism. Rather than running the risk of revealing racial biases, for some teachers, it is best to remain silent.

As noted above, while all U.S teachers are exposed to some of the same racialized history and social context, the racial socialization each teacher has been involved in as a child and young adult has a great deal to do with how he or she interprets these material dimensions. For example, a White teacher who is raised within a context where, instead of silence, there is constant talk and critique about the ways that race shapes people's lives, may interpret race from a very different discursive lens.

In looking across the two cases presented in this dissertation, it is clear that both participants, even though they were different in many significant ways, maintained a complicated and often problematic relationship to the topic of race within both their professional and personal lives. Each worried about how they thought about, talked about, and dealt with race as teachers. In one case, this worry carried over to a general fear of being perceived as racist by families and colleagues of color. In the other, this worry was fueled by “dangerous thinking” about certain families and colleagues of color

that challenged an identity and ideological stance rooted in social justice and anti-racism. What this finding suggests is that, for White teachers in the U.S., who represent the dominant racial group, the subject of race can cause stress, anxiety and tension.

How does a White teacher who, like the two participants described in this study, has a sincere desire to serve historically marginalized students negotiate this worry about race? One way to alleviate this stress is by avoiding the topic all together through a discursive repertoire of color-blindness. Yet, because we continue to live in a society where racial group membership still holds powerful social meanings, it is not possible to completely avoid race, especially if one is working within a multiracial context such as an urban school. Color-blindness simply cannot make the reality of racism disappear. For instance, in her analysis of 65 interviews with White educators, Bell (2002) noted that even though they claimed to be racially innocent, many of the people in her study actually appeared to have some “implicit knowledge” of the different unspoken rules that shape the lives of people of color and Whites. No matter how firmly a White teacher may attempt to steal himself or herself from the worry of race and racism, he or she continues to have a tacit understanding of the racial structuring of society and its meaning for people of color. This implicit knowledge creeps into a teacher’s personal life and professional practice.

My study suggests that, for some color-blind White teachers, especially those working within a multiracial context, this implicit or tacit knowledge about the institutional and cultural realities of race and racism causes additional tension. After all, it takes a great deal of energy not to see something that is in plain sight. This tension can

be manifested is a variety of ways. For example, the tension between a teacher's implicit racial knowledge and a color-blind stance has the potential to cause an uncomfortable struggle between seeing and not seeing race—one's own or one's students. As noted, for some color-blind teachers, the act of seeing or acknowledging race puts them at risk of perceiving themselves as racist, thus every attempt must be made to avoid the topic.

Another way tensions or worries about race can be manifested centers on how one should or should not talk about race. While seeing race places a color-blind teacher at risk of perceiving himself or herself as a racist, talking about race has the potential of having other people perceive him or her as racist. Given this fear, some color-blind teachers may have difficulty directly talking about race and, as a result, many use code words such as "culture" or "ethnicity" instead. In his analysis of survey and interview data, Bonilla-Silva (2003), found that many of the White participants were inarticulate when talking about various aspects of race. Bonilla-Silva referred to this difficulty in discussing racial issues as "rhetorical incoherence":

Rhetorical incoherence (e.g., grammatical mistakes, lengthy pauses, or repetition) is part of all natural speech. Nevertheless, the level of incoherence increases noticeably when people discuss sensitive subjects. Because the new racial climate in America forbids the open expression of racially based feelings, views, and positions, when whites discuss issues that make them feel uncomfortable, they become almost incomprehensible. (p. 68)

According to Bonilla-Silva, rhetorical incoherence includes a variety of “incongruous speech patterns” (p. 69) which are exhibited by verbal starts and stops, repeated phrases, and broken sentences.

This study suggests that, for the color-blind White teacher, the avoidance, silence, and general self-consciousness about race shapes practice in two important ways. First, because color-blindness prevents a White teacher from seeing and exploring the meaning of race within his or her personal life and professional practice, he or she is unable to unpack, name, and challenge his or her own racial assumptions. While these assumptions may appear to be hidden, they continue to tacitly shape a teacher’s expectations. As noted in Chapter 5, such hidden biases might include a deficit view of certain racial groups, which then translates as low academic expectations for children of color as well as the belief that being a minority is a disadvantage that must be overcome (Atwater, 2008). Second, many teachers believe that an important part of professional practice is understanding and knowing who his or her students are as individuals. By ignoring or avoiding race, it is nearly impossible for a White teacher to gain a complete picture of his or students of color.

This study suggests that it is not only color-blind White teachers who are worried about race. White teachers who view race through a discursive repertoire of race cognizance or anti-racism also may struggle with stress and tension around the topic. However, unlike color-blind White teachers, this tension is not rooted in silence, evasion, or avoidance, but rather in an active process of confrontation, open discussion, openness, and sometimes-painful self-reflection about their understandings and beliefs about people

of color. As noted in Chapter 6, to be race cognizant or anti-racist, one must learn to recognize the structural realities of racism at the same time one takes responsibility for how he or she has benefited from these structures. It also means learning to name and challenge one's own racial prejudice and hidden assumptions about people of color. However, the act of naming one's own racism can be a painful process in that it causes a tension between a desire to being open and curious about racial difference, on the one hand, and having "dangerous" thoughts and negative assumptions about people of color, on the other. Exploring these dangerous thoughts has the potential to expose a light upon an individual's darkest and most uncomfortable inner-world. These thoughts may challenge or change an individual's perception of himself or herself. While color-blind teachers struggle with tensions related to how one should or should not talk about race, race-cognizant teachers actively seek out opportunities to discuss their observations, thoughts and struggles about race with others. However, it may be that for some race-cognizant or anti-racist teachers, while important, talking about these issues is not enough—one must also take some kind of social action as well. Such social action might include spending additional time outside of school with particularly needy students and their families.

This study suggests that for the race-cognizant White teacher, the need to problematize one's own racial assumptions and the desire to take social action shapes practices in two significant ways. First, the idea of practice becomes much more expansive in that it includes more than what happens within the walls of the classroom. It can also include interactions with students in their home communities as well as

collaborating with parents as they learn to navigate the bureaucratic maze of public school. Thus, teaching becomes more than a job or career, it can also be seen as a mission or calling. Second, because race cognizant or anti-racist White teachers work to understand the way in which social structures perpetuate and support racism, practice may also mean providing students with the academic and social tools they will need to negotiate and challenge these structures. For the race cognizant teacher, this means maintaining high academic and behavior standards.

Implications

This study has several implications for research, practice, and policy. In the pages that follow, I argue for research on White preservice and inservice teachers that moves away from a focus on attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs and toward a more holistic, complex, and flexible view of race and racism in teachers' lives and work. In terms of practice, I suggest changes to preservice and inservice teacher education programs that highlight how the racial history of the U.S as well as current cultural practices and institutional policies concerning race shape teachers' personal lives and professional practices. I also recommend that state and national teacher licensure policies ought to include more explicit standards that focus issues of race, racism, for preservice teachers.

Implications for Research

As has been argued throughout this study, identity development is a complex process that is shaped by an intricate, hard-to-untangle web of interrelationships located between multiple sometimes-overlapping individual characteristics such as race, class, gender, and religion, and the historical, cultural, and social contexts in which an

individual inhabits. Thus, the formation of identity is the result of a dialectical interaction between the internal and external that is dynamic, volatile, shifting and unstable.

However, a majority of the empirical research that investigates how White teachers make sense of race focuses on the attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs of White teachers. Most of these studies are small explorations carried out by individual teacher educators who are investigating how a particular multicultural course or program influences the attitudes, perceptions, or beliefs of White teachers (Hollins & Guzman, 2005). Much of this research suggests that White teachers, particularly preservice teachers, have little knowledge or first hand experience with racial discrimination (King, 1991; Bollin & Finkle, 1995; Sleeter, 2001a, 2001b, 2008); are resistant to seeing how racism is manifested within public institutions such as schools; are color-blind and believe that race is an insignificant factor in one's life (Bollin & Finkle, 1995). Many of these studies utilize Helms' (1990, 1992, 1995) stage-model of White racial identity development in order to gauge whether a particular course or program has moved White teachers along a developmental continuum (Bollin & Finkel, 1995; Lawrence & Bunche, 1996). Generally missing from this body of research are longitudinal studies that investigate how multicultural coursework influences professional practice over time (Cochran-Smith et al., 2004) as well as studies that investigate how the dialectical relationship between the individual and the social world interacts with cultural and institutional discourses to shape White teachers' identity as well as how they learn to understand race, racism, and the construction of Whiteness.

In order to fill this gap and provide a more nuanced understanding of the ways that White teachers construct identity and understand race, the racial geography of teaching could be used as a conceptual framework for future research on White teachers. For instance, such a framework could be used as means of tracking the racial and ideological development of White preservice teachers starting from the beginning of their teacher preparation program through the first five years of their professional practice. Such longitudinal studies would provide multicultural teacher educators with a means of assessing the long-term impact of multicultural courses as well as offer insights into to how White teachers' ideological stances are influenced and shaped by various contextual factors and change over time.

The racial geography of teaching need not just focus on White teachers. It is also possible that the conceptual framework developed for this framework could be modified to investigate the material and discursive factors that shape the personal lives and professional practices of teachers of any race. Given this, future research could be conducted that investigates the racial geographies of African American, Hispanic, Asian, or Native American teachers. Cross-case comparisons could be done that contrasted these racial geographies with those of White teachers. Teacher educators could use the information gleaned from such comparisons to design and implement teacher preparation programs that were not built solely on the theoretical perspectives of pedagogical practices just White scholars and teachers, but also included perspectives of theoretical and pedagogical of scholars and teachers of color as well (Cochran-Smith, 2004).

Implications for Practice

Many university-based teacher education programs are attempting to address the widening demographic gap between majority White teachers and a P-12 student population that is increasingly diverse by offering preservice teachers courses that focus specifically on issues of diversity such as race, class, gender, and sometimes, special education. While these courses are often a required part of a preservice teacher's program of study, it is not unusual that they are only offered as electives. There are several issues with this approach to diversity, particularly for White teachers. For example, rather than present them as multiple and intersecting forms of identity that require separate investigation and analysis, these courses tend to conflate issues of race, class, and gender together as if they were an entity. Another issue is that, as discussed in the previous section, there are very few longitudinal studies that examine how effective such courses are once a preservice is working in the field. As a result, it is unclear whether these courses actually help White teachers critically examine or reify assumptions about people of color.

This study suggests several ways in which teacher education practices could be altered in order to address issues of diversity, particularly of race, for both preservice and inservice teachers. While this study uses the racial geography of teaching as a way of looking at how the professional practices of two White teachers were shaped and informed by race, this framework could also be used to reshape the way teacher preparation programs prepare preservice teachers to negotiate and understand the meaning of multicultural education, diversity, and race. For example, using the material

and discursive dimensions outlined in the framework, a sequence of courses could be developed that would help preservice teachers develop the analytical skills needed to unpack the meaning of race and other forms of oppressions such as gender, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status. This course sequence could include a history course that addresses the racialized history of the U.S. and well as an analysis of the dominant discursive repertoires—essentialist racism, color-blindness, and race cognizance—that have shaped the racial landscape of the U.S. over the past 4 centuries. Teacher candidates could be required to explore the relationship between the history of racism and the sociological history of schooling within the U.S. Another course might center on contemporary forms of racism and the ways race intersects with gender, socio-economic class, and various forms of social injustice. In particular, a course like this could pay attention to the cultural and social influences that shape identity and inform ideology and provide preservice teachers with the opportunity to unpack their assumptions about people of color. This would be reinforced in various content and methods courses that center on teaching practice and pedagogical content knowledge.

Because racism continues to be a pernicious problem within the U.S., unlearning racism and investigating one's White privilege is a life-long process that involves continuous self-reflection. For teachers, this means that learning about race occurs along a continuum that begins during a teacher's preservice preparation and continues throughout the course his or her professional life span. Given this, school districts would need to develop professional development that builds upon what teachers learned about race during their teacher preparation programs. This professional development could

help practicing teachers unpack the meaning of frequently used codes words for race such as diversity, culture, equity education, ethnicity, and multicultural education. This long-term commitment to learning about the meaning of race also suggests that the preparation of school and district administrators should also include a vigorous investigation of one's assumptions about race.

Induction and mentoring programs could be designed to actively assist inductees as they struggle to understand what race means in terms of pedagogical practice, academic content, colleagues, students and their families. To do so, mentors would need to be knowledgeable about multicultural education and culturally relevant pedagogy..

Implications for Policy

This study also offers recommendations for state and national policies regarding the preparation, performance, and evaluation of preservice teachers as well as the institutions that prepare them, particularly in terms of preparing teachers to work with students who are racially diverse, and the guiding principles that shape accreditation organizations such as the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). For example, in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, prospective teachers who are working toward their initial license through an approved teacher preparation program are required to meet five professional standards: plans curriculum and instruction, delivers effective instruction, manages classroom climate and operation, and equity. Several indicators or sub-standards accompany each standard. For example, one of the eight indicators for the first standard—plans curriculum and instruction—includes the statement “Plans lessons with clear objectives and relevant measurable outcomes.”

Preservice teachers are required to provide evidence that they have met each of these respective indicators. This evidence is recorded on a document generated by the Massachusetts Department of Education called the “Preservice Performance Assessment” form, which is filled out by the preservice teacher, signed by his or her cooperating teacher and field instructor, and filed at the institution where they are being prepared. Only one of the standards—equity—appears to address issues of diversity. Four indicators accompany this standard:

- (1) Encourages all students to believe that effort is a key to achievement.
 - (2) Works to promote achievement by all students without exception.
 - (3) Assesses the significance of student differences in home experiences, background knowledge, learning skills, learning pace, and proficiency in the English language for learning the curriculum at hand and uses professional judgment to determine if instructional adjustments are necessary.
 - (4) Helps all students to understand American civic culture, its underlying ideals, founding political principles and political institutions, and to see themselves as members of a local, state, national, and international civic community
- (Professional Standards for Teachers, 603 CMR 7.08)

These indicators appear to have more to do with the promotion of U.S. history and civics, the notion that the U.S. educational system is a meritocracy, and differentiated instruction than they do with equity. While these statements suggest that preservice teachers should develop skills for addressing the needs of “all children,” none of them refers directly to the importance of teachers learning to understand racial, ethnic, or cultural differences

between themselves and their students nor do they make any mention of teaching for social justice. Thus, for preservice teachers in Massachusetts, at least those who are being certified through a university-based teacher preparation program, the standard reflects a color-blind perspective.

It is also important to note that, while not necessarily the case in other states, for many preservice teachers in Massachusetts who take a state approved alternative, non-university route to their initial license, meeting the professional standards listed above is not always a requirement. As a result, they do not have to address *any* standard related to equity. This policy de-values the importance of preservice teachers learning about the impact of race on student learning.

As noted, NCATE is an organization that accredits institutions that prepare teachers and other educational professionals. NCATE's standards reflect the idea that preservice teachers need to be educated about issues of diversity as Standard 4 indicates:

This unit [or teacher preparation program] designs, implements, and evaluates curriculum and provides experiences for candidates to acquire and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions necessary to help all students learn. Assessments indicate that candidates can demonstrate and apply proficiencies related to diversity. Experiences provided for candidates include working with diverse populations, including higher education and P-12 school faculty, candidates, and students in P-12 schools. (NCATE, 2008, p. 34)

In the supporting explanation provided for this standard, NCATE addresses the widening demographic divide between White teachers and students and the fact that there is a

paucity of teachers of color. Because of the lack of diversity found among the teaching force, NCATE asserts “all teacher candidates must develop proficiencies for working effectively with students and families from diverse populations and with exceptionalities to ensure that all students learn” (p. 36). Because of this “the unit [or teacher preparation institutions] has the responsibility to provide opportunities for candidates to understand diversity and equity in the teaching and learning process” (p. 36). NCATE recommends that teacher preparation institutions, through coursework as well as field and practicum experiences help candidates learn about “exceptionalities and inclusion, English language learners and language acquisition, ethnic/racial cultural and linguistic differences, and gender differences, and the impact of these factors on learning” (p. 37). In particular, teacher candidates should be “helped to understand the potential impact of discrimination based on race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and language on students and their learning” (p. 37).

NCATE’s standards reflect a profound commitment to helping candidates develop more than a passing awareness of the multiple ways that social, historical, and contextual factors and issues of identity, such as race, gender or learning differences, influence student learning. In fact, NCATE’s justification for including issues of diversity in teacher preparation program standards are more closely aligned with a social justice perspective than either the Massachusetts state standards for teacher preparation program approval or the National Board’s professional standards for the certification of experienced teachers which are described below. Even given this, however, it is worth noting that NCATE’s focus on diversity combines a wide range of individual differences

under one heading. This raises questions about what it means, for example, to place race or linguistic differences under the same heading as learning disabilities. Does this assume that race is equivalent to a learning disability?

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) offers the opportunity to be considered for advanced certification to experienced teachers who already hold teaching licenses in their home states. The board has generated several “advanced” standards, which are referred to as “five core propositions.” They include the following:

- (1) Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
- (2) Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
- (3) Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring students learning.
- (4) Teachers think systematically about their practice and learning from experience
- (5) Teachers are members of learning communities. (NBPTS, 2002)

The final proposition listed above addresses issues of diversity. Below is an excerpt from the description of this standard:

Professional teachers cultivate knowledge of their school’s community as a powerful resource for learning... Teachers also cultivate knowledge about the character of the community and its effect on the school and students. They develop an appreciation of ethnic and linguistic differences, of cultural influences on students’ aspirations and expectation, and of the effects of poverty and

affluence. Cultural and other discontinuities between home and school frequently can confound teachers' effort to promote learning. Conversely, the cultural diversity represented in many communities can serve as a powerful resource in teaching about other cultures, in encouraging tolerance and understanding of human differences, and in promoting civic ideals. Accomplished teachers seek to capitalize on these opportunities and to respond productively to students' diverse background. (NBPTS Teaching Standards, p. 20)

From this statement, it appears that the NBPTS not only values ethnic, linguistic, and cultural differences which students bring into the classroom, but also sees these differences as opportunities and resources for learning. This is quite different Massachusetts' equity standard, which makes no reference to racial, ethnic, or cultural differences. However, while this NBPTS standard encourages tolerance for cultural differences, there is no reference to teachers learning about the meaning of race or racism, social justice, or possible ways that teachers and can become agents in the amelioration of social injustice.

Drawing on the analyses of this study, I would make four recommendations for more detailed and nuanced standards that would encourage preservice teachers and experienced teachers to think about the meaning of race within their personal lives and professional practice. First, because of the racialized history of the U.S. and the fact that we continue to live in a society that places a great of importance on racial characteristics, it is important that any standard concerned with diversity or equity avoid color-blind language such as "culture" and "all children." The term "race" and what this term means

should be *explicitly* stated. Second, state and national organizations that focus on the preparation of preservice teachers should create standards that involve teacher candidates learning to unpack their unspoken assumptions about race as well as their own role in maintaining the social structures that perpetuate social and racial injustice. This standard might include a reference to the historical underpinning of race and the various discursive practices that have shaped this nation's racial landscape. Third, because issues of race are often grouped with other areas of social oppression, standards that deal with diversity must clearly define each of these categories in order to prevent them from being conflated together as one large area of social inequity. Fourth, standards that focus on race and/or diversity should include clear definitions of terms like multicultural education or social justice. Both of these terms have been used to represent a variety of approaches, some of which actively combat racial and social injustice and some that do not.

Conclusion

As noted in Chapter 1, we are living in time when many U.S. citizens are filled with the hope that we are moving away from centuries of racial tension toward a new phase of interracial harmony and respect. For some, this new phase indicates an end to the social and cultural significance of race. For others, this new phase offers an opportunity to explore new ways of thinking and talking about race that help us reconcile the contradiction between a United States that is based on democracy and the country's long history of racial intolerance and oppression.

This study suggests that, in order to resolve this paradoxical relationship between democracy and racial oppression and set the nation on a path towards interracial unity, it

is imperative that we develop ways of talking about race that support the development of racial literacy among all citizens. This means that social institutions like schools, which are responsible for the enculturation of the nation's children, find ways to develop an expanded vocabulary for talking about race that includes an exploration of the social, cultural, and historical meaning of race and racism with each of our lives. One way to begin this process is by supporting the next generation of U.S. teachers—a majority of whom will be White—to unpack and critique the racial geographies of their lives and connect them to the decisions they make about their professional practice.

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APPENDIX A

Informal Interview

- (1) Can you tell me about your classroom?
 - a. How many students are you serving? How many boys and girls?
 - b. How is the day structured?
 - c. What is the demographic make up of your classroom?
 - d. Does anyone else work in your classroom? If so, who are they and what responsibilities do they have towards your students?
 - e. What are the greatest challenges that you face in your classroom each day?
 - f. What do you think are the greatest challenges your students face each day?

- (2) Can you tell me about your school?
 - a. How many students are in the entire building?
 - b. Where do these students come from and how do they get to school each day?
 - c. How many programs are housed within your school?
 - d. What is the administrative structure of your building?
 - e. How are issues of diversity addressed in your school?
 - f. What is the relationship like between teachers and administrators?

- (3) In general, what can you tell me about your school district?

- (4) As a teacher, what educational issues are most important to you?

- (5) Why are you interested in participating in this study?

APPENDIX B

Formal Interview I

The purpose of this first interview is to put your experience as a White teacher working with students of color in context. During the first part of the interview, I will be asking you questions that focus on your personal and professional background. During the second part of the interview I will be asking you questions about some of the things I've observed in your class during the first week of observations.

Part I

- (a) Describe your family of origin. Include a description of your family structure, ethnic or racial identity, social class, and the neighborhood(s) in which you were raised.
- (b) Discuss your first recollection about ethnicity, race, or class. How did this experience make you feel?
- (c) Who were your playmates and friend while growing up? How did you select your friends?
- (d) How do you think your race affected your likes, dislikes, and linguistic expression?
- (e) Where did you attend college?
- (f) Why did you become a teacher?
- (g) Before teaching at the school you currently work, where did you teacher before?
- (h) Can you talk about some of the other professional activities you participate outside of your class?
- (i) Do you think that your ethnicity/race impacts the way you work with your students? If so, how? Do you think that the ethnicity/race of your students has any impact on the way you work with your students? If so, how?
- (j) How do you define racism? Can you share an example of a racist act you've witnessed at your school?
- (k) How do you define multicultural education?

Part II

Addresses questions that came up during observations.

APPENDIX C

Code Dictionary: Megan DeAngelis

- (1) **Race Talk** (Any discussions that focus on race)
- a. Resistance to talking about race:
Reluctance or tendency to avoid talking about the ways that her race and race in general shape the classroom or her professional practice. This is represented in phrases like ‘I don’t know’ when asked a direct question about race.
 - b. Who am I to say:
Questioning the appropriateness of her aspirations for students such as the hope that all her students will go to college.
 - c. Fear of being called a savior/racist:
Worries about being misperceived by parents and colleagues of color as someone who sees herself as someone who can ‘save’ underprivileged children.
 - d. Views of race:
 - i. I don’t see color (absence):
Does not see or believe that her race and the race of her children influence her teaching.
 - ii. Not seeing privilege:
Believes that success is related to hard work rather than White privilege. (Connected to belief in merit)
 - iii. Individual racism:
Sees racism as an individual rather than social or institutional problem.
 - iv. What she considers racists views:
The ways in which participant defines racist views.
 - v. Interpretation of others’ views of race:
How she understands the ways that friends, families, and colleagues view race.
- (2) **Teacher’s work** (Day to day issues that come up during the course of the school day and academic year)
- a. Frustration:
Difficult issues that come up during the course of the school day and academic year.
 - b. Satisfaction:
Professional and personal satisfaction that is related to work.

(3) **Background & school context** (Life story including childhood, young adulthood, and school/district environment)

(4) **Practice**

- a. Multicultural literature
Use of multicultural literature in the classroom.
- b. Discipline
Philosophy of discipline and strategies used (e.g., behavior charts, incentives, etc.).
- c. Classroom race talk
Any discussions that occur in the classroom about race.
- d. Physical affirmation
Using physical touch to support student learning.
- e. Different children need different things
Children are responded to differently based upon their individual needs (related to Mission, Vision, Purpose, and Commitment).

(5) **Teacher Identity**

- a. White teacher:
Experiences, thoughts, and attitudes about being a White teacher who is serving students of color (e.g., Self consciousness about being White).
- b. Urban teacher:
Identifies as an urban schoolteacher.
- c. Family:
Family of origin including immediate and extended family.
- d. Mission, vision, purpose & commitment:
Mission to help and the belief that all children can learn
- e. Hard worker/Merit:
Instances where she believes that she has gotten where she is through her own hard work or the hard work of her parents.
- f. Formal Special Education Student:
Instances where she identifies as a former SPED student.
- g. Fear of confrontation:
Defines herself as a person who will avoid confrontation at any cost whether it is with a roommate, colleague, parent, or family.

APPENDIX D

Code Dictionary: Katherine Mackenzie

(1) Race Talk (Any discussions about race)

- a. Views of race:
 - i. Social, structural, historical view on race;
 - ii. Any comments that make reference to the social, structural, and historical impact of racism on teaching and learning within her life and school context.
 - iii. Dangerous thinking;
Ways of thinking about parents, students and colleagues of color that make her feel uncomfortable.
 - iv. Relationship between testing & race;
Discussions about high-stakes testing and the achievement gap.
 - v. Learning from colleagues;
What she has learned about working with students of color from colleagues.
 - vi. Tensions with colleagues;
Dealing with and negotiating racist comments made by colleagues or student teachers. Also, managing her assumptions about colleagues of color.
 - vii. Intersection with class & gender:
Discussions about the ways that race is connected to issues of class and/or gender.
- c. Racial or cultural trends:
Racially and culturally based trends she has noticed over time such as Brazilian parents' commitment to schooling or absentee African American fathers (Related to Dangerous Thinking).
- d. Who am I to say:
Questioning the appropriateness of her aspirations for students such as the hope that all her students will go to college.
- e. Professional Development:
Reference to professional development provided by the system and/or school that focuses on diversity and/or race.

(2) Practice

- f. Empathy:
Being able to put herself in the place of her students and parents.
- g. Relationships with families:
Interactions with families in and outside of school such as taking students out for their birthday.
- h. Classroom race talk:

Any discussions about that occur in the classroom.

(3) **Teacher's work** (Day to day issues that come up during the course of the school day and academic year)

i. Frustration:

Difficult issues that come during the school day and academic year.

j. Satisfaction:

Professional and personal satisfaction that is related to teacher's work.

(4) **Nature of teaching** (Experience of being a teacher over time; professional and ideological changes over time)

(5) **Background & school context** (Life story including childhood, young adulthood, and school district environment)

(6) **Teacher Identity**

k. White teacher:

Experiences, thoughts, and attitudes about being a White teacher who is serving students of color (e.g., Self consciousness about being White).

l. Family:

Family of origin included immediate and extended family.

m. Openness to racial difference:

A stance regarding racial differences between herself and others.

n. Mission, vision, purpose & commitment:

Commitment to social justice and collaborating with families and helping them develop social capital. A passion for teaching and learning that is associated with Jesuit social justice mission.

o. Urban teacher:

Identifies as an urban schoolteacher.

p. Feminist:

Interprets some issues in terms regarding race through a lens of gender.