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**SHOPPING WHILE BLACK:
PERCEPTIONS OF DISCRIMINATION
IN RETAIL SETTINGS**

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Edith F. Davidson
May 2007

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This paper represents the culmination of years of effort that would not be possible were it not for the support of multiple individuals. My dissertation committee challenged me with high expectations that I sought to meet throughout this process. My dissertation committee chair, Dave Schumann, has been my drill sergeant, my mentor, and my friend for the past five years and is largely responsible for any scholarly endeavors that I produce in my career.

For the support that my family has provided, both emotional and financial, I am forever indebted. I'd also like to extend a special thank you to my daughter Elizabeth, who will no longer have to hear the excuse, "I can't, Mommy has to work on her dissertation," again. Though this process has required me to spend too many hours away from you, Elizabeth, you have truly been the 'wind beneath my wings' and indeed the inspiration for my flight.

Thanks to all of you for the support, guidance, and inspiration you have provided.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation research was to understand perceptions of discrimination as experienced by African American women in retail settings. Because the emphasis here was on understanding the phenomenon from the target's perspective, an existential phenomenological approach was used. Existential phenomenology "seeks to explicate the essence, structure or form of both human experience and human behavior as revealed through essentially descriptive techniques including disciplined reflection" (Valle, King and Halling 1989, pg. 6). In-depth interviews were conducted with African American women who believed they'd received negative treatment because of their race in a retail setting. The analysis provided a rich description of retail perceptions of discrimination. Specifically, the phenomenon emerged as involving four themes (identified in emic terms by italics). The participant was subjected to *Invisible/criminal treatment* by sales associates and/or retail managers. At some point during the encounters described, participants internally attributed this treatment to discrimination. Sometimes this attribution arose quickly, other times it arose subsequent to a process of testing. For the experiences described, there was a point where the participant knew (*I knew*) she was being discriminated against. The perception of discrimination produced primarily negative emotions, corresponding cognitions and behaviors collectively described by the theme *Have restraint - Show my butt*. The perception of discrimination is facilitated by the notion that, despite social norms against these practices, discrimination is an omnipresent threat because *Racism Exists*. Both parental socialization and personal experiences with discrimination in other settings influence retail perceptions of discrimination. This study contributes to marketing and retailing research (e.g. understanding negative critical incidents of diverse consumers) as well as social psychological research (e.g. understanding how prejudice is experienced by targets). Specific implications for marketing and retailing faculty, researchers and practitioners; public policy officials and consumers are described.

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CHAPTER ONE
DEFINING THE PROBLEM AND
THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY
INTRODUCTION

I have felt the eyes of sales clerks upon me as I shopped in expensive stores. Even when I'm not being actively watched, I find myself being very aware of my actions. My thoughts too often run along these lines: "Don't open your purse and reach in for a Tic-Tac or your keys until you leave the store. Make a grand gesture of *replacing* that item you have picked up to examine more closely. Don't stand looking at the same item for too long, don't want to be accused of anything." ...I realize that I am a product of our society. I have been trained to know that I was, as comedian Chris Rock has put it, "born a suspect," and to behave accordingly (<http://racerelements.about.com>).

In recent years, the topic of racial profiling by police has gained national media attention. It is defined as the process of identifying a person as a potential suspect or threat based solely on his or her race. Numerous front-page news stories and editorials have appeared in both the national and local press discussing racial profiling and its individual and social costs. Allegations have become so common among African Americans and Hispanics, the phrases 'driving while black' and 'driving while brown' have appeared in reference to this phenomenon (Coates 2005, Engel, Calnon and Bernard 2002). Empirical evidence indicates the perceived pervasiveness of this practice as well. A 1999 Gallup Poll found that over half of those individuals polled believed that the police were actively engaged in the practice of racial profiling (www.racialprofilinganalysis.neu.edu). A more recent study indicates that 40 % of blacks report having been stopped by police because of their race (Weitzer and Tuch

2002). The proportion is highest among young black males with 72.7% of 18-34 year old black men claiming to have been victimized by racial profiling at least once.

Police officers have not been the only group accused of engaging in racial profiling. Another common setting for perceived racial profiling appears to exist in the marketplace. Allegations of racial profiling at retail stores and malls are rising. The practice of profiling consumers in retail environments is referred to by some African Americans as ‘Shopping while Black’ and may be one of the most common forms of discrimination practiced today (Mathis 2002). Other phrases, including ‘consumer racism’ and ‘retail racial profiling’, have been coined to describe this same experience. Neither income nor celebrity status are sufficient barriers to retail racial profiling. In a 2001 article, WNBA star Sheryl Swoopes, Congresswoman Maxine Waters, and talk show host Oprah Winfrey were among several noted celebrities who recounted their own stories of ‘Shopping while Black’ experienced since they attained public success (Fifield 2001). The excerpt at the beginning of this chapter suggests perceptions of racial profiling in stores causes some African Americans to alter even simple behaviors that most Caucasian shoppers would engage in without hesitation.

Another context where allegations of marketplace racial profiling are common is restaurants (Dirks and Rice 2004). This particular type of perceived profiling, not surprisingly labeled ‘dining while black,’ has previously been examined in the hotel and restaurant literature. Some researchers have noted a kind of ‘self-fulfilling prophecy’ appears to be working in this particular context (Dirks and Rice 2004). Empirical examinations of tipping behavior indicate that Blacks on average tip less than Whites

(Lynn 2004). There is anecdotal evidence and limited research reflecting that White servers perceive a racial disparity in tipping exists, even in the absence of supporting evidence (Dirks and Rice 2004). These *a priori* perceptions have been thought to be one possible explanation for the perceived discrimination experienced by Blacks. As Dirk and Rice state, “Those servers who believe that black Americans do not tip well may then provide inferior service to black customers, which then in turn leads to lower tips – a self-fulfilling prophecy” (pg. 33). In their recent study examining ‘dining while black’, Dirk and Rice conclude, “Based on our research, we see restaurants as an institution plagued by racial discrimination not unlike many other American institutions, places where black Americans face continued and various forms of racism, regardless of law or official public policy” (pg. 30-31).

In some cases of retail racial profiling as in other forms of racial profiling, redress from state and federal officials has been sought. In 1998, Amanda Berube went to work for The Children’s Place, a national retailer of children’s clothes (Fifield 2001). She was instructed by her superiors to follow black customers as they browsed, withhold large shopping bags from such customers, and to refrain from inviting them to apply for store credit cards or telling them about sales. Ms. Berube launched a complaint with the Massachusetts Commission against Discrimination and the Massachusetts Attorney General, Thomas F. Reilly. Mr. Reilly’s staff sent black and white undercover “testers” to the stores, and became convinced. In December of 2000, the State of Massachusetts reached a settlement with the Children’s Place. As part to the settlement, the retail chain is required to take 22 corrective steps, including setting aside \$100,000 to hire a

consultant to review their policies with the goal of eliminating discriminatory practices, and donating \$50,000 to local children's groups (Fifield 2001).

While shopping at Macy's for Mother's Day gifts, Makan Magassa realized that the 'suspicious black man' the salesclerk warned another employee to keep an eye on was him. He later filed a complaint with the New York State Attorney General. The complaint led to an investigation which revealed that in five of the chain's 29 stores in the New York area, 75 percent of shoppers detained on suspicion of shoplifting were Black or Latino, a proportion much higher than that of blacks and Latinos shopping in those stores. Recently, Macy's agreed to pay a \$600,000 settlement, the terms of which require Macy's to undergo a number of internal reforms, including hiring outside auditors to anonymously test whether store employees treat shoppers differently based on race and ethnicity (Confessore 2005).

The focus of this research is the latter form of marketplace racial profiling noted above – 'shopping while Black'. This refers to examples of marketplace (or retail) racial profiling that occurs in a myriad of business-to-consumer product-exchange environments ranging from national discount stores to local boutiques. This chapter presents an argument for the importance of studying perceptions of discrimination as experienced by ethnic minorities in these settings.¹

¹ The meaning of both ethnicity and race continues to be debated among anthropologists, biologists, and social psychologists (eg. Bonham 2005, Smedley and Smedley 2005, Harrison 1995). For the purposes of this research, race refers to categorization of a person based on his or her physical appearance by another person; ethnicity refers to self-categorization.

SOCIAL INTERACTION IN THE MARKETPLACE

"Social phenomena, unlike mechanical objects, do not remain indifferent to bio-cultural and sociocultural influences which produce an environment that is in a state of constant flux. Communication between system members fuels the process of social construction. People interpret the speech and behavior of others and co-ordinate their actions accordingly. This interpretive and co-ordinative process produces the systemic social realities in which people live." (Rosnow 1981 as cited in Buttle 1998).

In retail settings, an exchange of meaning occurs between two parties – the customer and the salesperson. Both individuals bring to the exchange the sum total of their life experiences – their perceptual fields – that may result in disparate meanings for the participants.

It is particularly likely that such disparities will result from interracial interactions. Research suggests that African Americans and Whites come to exchanges with different expectations, perceptions and communication styles (Martin, Moore, Hecht and Larkey 2001). This is not surprising given the historical significance of race in the United States. It is important to understand these differences as perceived by both participants in a marketing exchange, since self-perceptions are as vital to the understanding of exchange processes and marketing relationships as the transaction itself.

In marketing contexts, perceptions often arise and are manifested in a dynamic environment. This is especially true for retail environments. "Selling is a social situation in which two people come together for a specific purpose and, in doing so, influence each other," (Fine and Schumann 2001, pg. 285). When a customer responds to a salesperson, he/she responds not to what the person actually does, but to what he/she perceives that person is doing. The same can be said about the salesperson's response to the customer (Fine and Schumann 1992). Preconceptions and stereotypes along with inherent

communication differences can serve as barriers to competent intercultural communication. To the extent that racial attitudes shape the everyday behaviors of Whites toward Blacks (and Blacks toward Whites), these barriers can produce mixed messages and can interfere with the trust that leads to long-term positive relationships.

Because of the history of race relations in this country, Blacks are attuned to negative behaviors of Whites that could reveal their prejudice. Detecting such behaviors makes these individuals less satisfied with the interaction (Dovidio, Kawakami and Gaertner 2002). Additionally, perceptions of these behaviors may fuel the climate of miscommunication and distrust that characterizes many contemporary interracial relations in the United States. Given the diverse nature of the marketplace, it is critical that marketers understand how these perceptions are experienced in exchange environments. One such perception that has captured the attention of social psychologists is the perception of discrimination. Such perceptions can result in the experiencing of both psychological and financial costs in today's marketplace environments.

PROBLEM DEFINITION

Perceived Discrimination in Retail Settings

The word discrimination is used typically to refer to biased behaviors based on group membership (Dion 2001). The court system, economists and public policy officials have all documented incidences of discrimination based on ethnicity in retail markets. Housing and car sales have been the subject of most research in this area (e.g. Yinger 1998; Riach and Rich 2002; Ayres 1995). There is evidence of discrimination in

other retail markets as well that suggests blacks wait significantly longer than whites at retail customer service counters (Ainscough and Motley 2000). The empirical evidence of discriminatory behaviors in retail services is limited however (for exceptions see Bell and Burlin 1993; Ainscough and Motley 2000), and there is a need for additional research on actual discrimination. There is also a need to study the *perception* of discrimination in addition to *actual* discrimination.

Perceived discrimination as employed in this research refers to a minority group member's perception of negative *attitudes and/or biased behavior* from a dominant social group member based on group membership. Although advantaged group members may attribute negative experiences to discrimination, this attribution is more likely to be made by disadvantaged group members (Kobrynowicz and Branscombe 1997). Research suggests that because perceptual cues make ethnic membership more easily recognizable, and because race and ethnicity continue to be sensitive issues in the U.S., ethnic minorities are more likely to be the targets of discrimination and more readily perceive discrimination than other disadvantaged groups (Dion 2001; Major, Gramzow, McCoy, Levin, Schmader and Sidanius 2002).

African American, Hispanic and Asian consumers comprise approximately 30 % of the U.S. population. As noted above, racial profiling has been identified as a phenomenon which affects African Americans and Hispanics in a number of different contexts, including police enforcement. There are 3 times more private security officers than public law enforcement officers. Thus, it seems natural to examine minorities' experiences with racial profiling in retail settings. Retail in this case refers to a myriad of business-to-consumer product-exchange environments ranging from national discount

stores to local boutiques. A substantial majority of minority consumers report that they at least occasionally experience poor service in stores or restaurants that they attribute to race or ethnicity (Crockett, Grier and Williams 2003). Social psychologists Sellers and Shelton note,

“Racial discrimination is a pervasive phenomenon in the lives of many racial minorities. It can take the form of both blatant (e.g., being called a derogatory name) and subtle (e.g., being stared at by security guards while shopping) behaviors that permeate the daily lives of individuals” (2003, pg. 1079).

The perception of discrimination is highest amongst African Americans. In a large-scale national survey, 61 % of African Americans reported experiencing racial discrimination on a daily basis (Sellers and Shelton 2003). Blacks and Hispanics were more likely than non-Hispanic whites to say profiling is widespread in shopping malls. Sixty-five percent of blacks and fifty-six percent of Hispanics think racial profiling is widespread in malls and stores, compared with forty-five percent of non-Hispanic whites. More directly applicable for marketing researchers, in a 1997 Gallup Poll, 45 % of blacks reported being discriminated against while shopping, and 21 % reported being discriminated against while dining out in the 30 days prior to the survey (Fix and Turner 2003). In an article addressing racial discrimination in everyday commercial transactions – such as eating at restaurants and shopping – Siegelman (2003) found the probability of discrimination *per unit of transaction* for such transactions appears to be roughly 1 to 5 percent. These numbers may appear seem small until one considers the cumulative frequencies for such transactions. Siegelman’s use of discrimination in this case is consistent with the definition of perceived discrimination used in this inquiry. Research suggests the cumulative personal experiences with racism are at the very least hurtful and

take a heavy psychological toll on minorities, who must remain constantly aware in navigating these uneasy and offensive predicaments (Lee 2000).

Researching Perceptions of Discrimination

There are three perspectives from which the phenomenon of perceived discrimination may be examined – the perspective of the person accused of engaging in the behavior (the actor), the perspective of the person who perceives the action as directed towards him/herself (the target), and the perspective of an observer who is not directly engaged in the encounter (3rd person). Each of these perspectives may be different even when describing the same event (Shelton and Richeson 2005). “People construct rather than simply record their experiences, in that they assign personal, social and cultural meaning to the events and outcomes of their stories thereby giving meaning, relevance and value to experiences that would otherwise just be a sequence of happenings” (Friend and Thompson 2003, pg. 24). Empirical evidence has found an actor’s perceptions of his/her own racial bias to be only weakly correlated to targets’ and observers’ perceptions of the actor’s racial bias (Dovidio et. al. 2002). To understand perceived discrimination fully, each of these perspectives must be further explored.

Social psychological researchers have examined perceptions of discrimination for categories based on race and gender. While the former research is the focus of this dissertation, the research on gender informs this topic as well. Tables 1 and 2 present findings from social psychological research examining each perspective (actor, target and

observer).² The studies are grouped according to the category examined, with studies examining race or ethnicity appearing in Table 1 and studies examining gender in Table 2. Key findings from this research are reviewed below as is research from other disciplines (sociology, economics, and marketing).

The Actor's Perspective

Social psychological has primarily focused on examining prejudice and discrimination from their source – members of the dominant social group (Branscombe, Schmitt and Harvey 1999). In this research, these individuals are referred to as actors, the perceived perpetrators of discrimination and are assumed to be Caucasian, the dominant social group in the U.S. Actor in this particular context also refers to supervisors and managers ultimately responsible for the behaviors of sales staff. A consistent finding has been that Whites' attitudes towards Blacks consist of an explicit component and an implicit component. Explicit attitudes operate in a conscious mode and are exemplified by traditional self-report measures. Implicit attitudes operate in an unconscious fashion and represent 'introspectively unidentified' (or inaccurately identified) traces of past experience that mediate favorable or unfavorable feeling, thought or action toward social objects (Dovidio, Kawakami, Johnson, Johnson and Howard 1997). Both explicit and implicit measures of racial attitudes are systematically related to behavior, but different types of behavior (Dovidio et al. 2002). Dovidio and his colleagues (2002) experimentally manipulated interracial interactions involving Caucasian participants and African American and Caucasian confederates. Confederates served two purposes in the experiment. Both Caucasian and African American

² All tables are located in Appendix A.

confederates acted as partners in the constructed scenarios. Additionally, some Caucasian confederates who watched videotapes of the interactions gave feedback regarding the perceived friendliness of the participants. Caucasian participants' explicit racial attitudes were reflected in their perceptions of their own friendliness toward White and Black partners and in their verbal behaviors toward Black versus White confederates. In other words, Caucasians who were cognitively aware of their bias against Blacks were more likely to perceive their behavior towards Blacks as less friendly than their behavior towards Whites.

In a study of discrimination against gays and lesbians, Walters and Moore (2002) employed an experimental field study design that included perspectives from the targets, observers, and the actors. The targets, who were trained confederates, entered retail stores in their roles as a straight, lesbian or gay couple. The results revealed that straight couples were helped in significantly less time than were lesbian or gay couples, and the latter were treated significantly more poorly by sales associates on a number of dimensions. At the conclusion of the study, store managers were informed of the results. The researchers note, "we suspected managers would assert that discrimination against any minority group (or any potential customer) was wrong, that they would train their employees consistent with this approach, and that any evidence of discriminatory treatment to customers would be confronted and rectified" (pg. 296). These researchers found instead that managers' comments "reflected little concern about how socially disenfranchised customers would be treated in stores" (pg. 297).

Although gays and lesbians were the primary focus of the Walters and Moore study, other research suggests the findings may apply to ethnic minorities as well. It has

been consistently shown that many individuals who report homophobia also report prejudice against other socially marginalized groups (Walters and Moore 2002). Some managers commented “on their concerns about the percentage of their ‘darker customers’ and how they might increase sales volume from 'lighter' customers with the goal of reducing the volume from persons of color” (Walters and Moore 2002, pg. 297). Additionally, when store managers were asked if they would discipline or terminate an employee who was found to discriminate against a customer for any reason, none of the white store managers responded affirmatively.

The perspective of actors has also been explored directly in a study examining ‘dining while black’ (Dirks and Rice 2004). Interviews were conducted with white restaurant workers regarding their perceptions of black patrons. Data revealed a private racial language existed that was deliberately hidden from people of color. Data also revealed what the authors referred to as racial schizophrenia - the use of racial code words to present oneself as non-racist. For example, in one restaurant, servers used the word ‘Canadians’ as a code word for ‘blacks’, as in the phrase “Don’t seat me with Canadians” (pg. 41). In every one of the interviews, the shared sentiment among restaurant workers was that blacks do not tip well and as such, servers should 'not waste their time' on these customers. The authors conclude, "The fact that many of the servers in the study appear to feel justified in their prejudicial and discriminatory treatment of black American diners substantiates the reports of black Americans that they have experienced racial discrimination in the form of dining while black." (pg. 44).

The Target's Perspective

Recently, more social psychologists have begun examining prejudice and discrimination from the perspective of the target – the person who perceives he or she is being discriminated against. Such a perspective is important because “perceiving that one is a victim of discrimination has important implications for self-esteem, investment in life domains, group identification, interpersonal relationships and intergroup hostility” (Major, Gramzow, McCoy, Levin, Schmader and Sidanius 2002). Because publicly reporting discrimination is the first step in preventing the negative events from occurring again, it is crucial to identify factors that increase reporting (Sechrist, Swim and Stangor 2004). In examining perceived discrimination from the target's perspective, there appears to be primarily two questions addressed: What personal characteristics or traits make a person more likely to perceive attitudes or behaviors as discriminatory? Under what situations are targets more likely to perceive discrimination?

One of the most widely examined personal traits has been the target's level of ethnic identification. Ethnic identification describes a minority individual's association with his or her minority group's culture or intra-group differences and similarities. There are two opposing views regarding the relationship between ethnic identification and perceptions of discrimination. One view posits that, the more devalued group members recognize prejudice against their group, the more highly identified they are with that group (Branscombe et al. 1999). Conversely, minority group identification has been seen to increase the likelihood of making attributions to prejudice (Crocker and Major 1989). A study using structural equation modeling to test bi-directionality and alternative hypotheses lends support for the first theory (Branscombe et al. 1999).

Although targets of discrimination are likely to be aware that they may face prejudice in a number of situations at many different times, it is not well understood in which situations individuals make or fail to make attributions to discrimination. While some orientations suggest that individuals may be motivated to maximize their perceptions of discrimination, other orientations suggest that there are reasons to minimize such perceptions because the costs may outweigh any potential benefits of doing so (Sechrist et al. 2004). The latter orientation suggests perceiving that one is a victim and is worse off than others is extremely aversive, making it an inference that people tend to avoid. The majority of research lends support in this direction with findings indicating that the more African Americans perceive themselves to be victims of either gender or racial prejudice, the more they exhibit debilitating symptoms (Branscombe et al. 1999). Negative affect and psychological and psychiatric symptoms have all been found to be positively correlated with perceptions of discrimination (Crockett et al. 2003; Noh and Kasper 2003). An appraisal of discrimination is threatening in that “victims impute stable, malevolent motives and intentions to the antagonist(s) and see themselves as a deliberate target of nasty attitudes and behavior by the antagonist(s)” (Dion 2001, pg. 4). More often than not, targets are unlikely to predict that they will be discriminated against. This unpredictability may serve as an additional source of stress, apart from the appraisal process itself.

In Dovidio’s (et al. 2002) experimental investigation of interracial interactions, Black confederates were more likely to rely on non-verbal signs from White participants in their perceptions of biased behavior. These non-verbal behaviors were significantly correlated to Whites’ implicit attitudes, but not to Whites’ explicit attitudes. Moreover,

Black confederates and White participants formed largely unrelated impressions of how biased participants behaved.

Observer (3rd person perspective)

The 3rd person perspective describes the point of view of a person who observes an exchange that could potentially be considered discriminatory without being directly involved in the encounter – a neutral observer. Such a perspective is important as research suggests targets of discrimination may be unwilling to report such behaviors themselves (Dovidio et al. 2002).

The two most examined predictors in perceptions of discrimination by observers are the race of the observer and the presence or absence of alternative explanations (Johnson, Simmons, Trawalter, Ferguson and Reed 2003). Evidence suggests that overall, Black observers are more likely to attribute behaviors to racism or prejudice than White observers. This is not surprising given that the majority of sociology research indicates a clear 'racial divide' exists in Black and White Americans perceptions of the prevalence of racism in America. However, social psychological research reflects that in the absence of alternative explanations for negative behaviors, Black and White observers make similar attributions regarding discrimination (Johnson et al. 2003). For example, in a study comparing Black and White observers' perceptions of discrimination in a work setting, racist dispositional attributions did not vary as a function of race when there were no alternative explanations provided for the supervisor's actions (Johnson et al. 2003). However, Black observers were more likely to make racist dispositional attributions for the supervisor's negative actions toward a Black target when an alternative explanation was provided. The researchers note, "Even when a clear constraint was present, Black

participants reported greater racist dispositional attributions than Whites,” (Johnson et al. 2003, pg. 619).

Other cognitive, motivational and affective factors have been found to influence people's judgments of prejudice and discrimination. It is been suggested an actor's intent to discriminate will influence perceptions of the actor's subsequent behavior as discriminatory (Swim et al. 2003). It is difficult for observers and targets of behaviors to know an actor's intent with complete certainty because it represents an internal state in the individual and may not be expressed. Even if it is expressed, some observers and targets may not necessarily believe an expressed lack of intent, especially when the behavior in question involves differential treatment of members of different social groups. In the Dovidio study discussed above, White observers watched videotaped recordings of the experimental interracial interactions. These observers relied primarily on nonverbal cues to form their perceptions of the friendliness of White participants and their ratings matched those of the Black participants in the exchanges.

The majority of the research on perceived discrimination has been conducted in social psychology, sociology and economics. This research indicates the perception of discrimination is indeed a social phenomenon worthy of examining from all three perspectives (actor, target, observer) presented. The lack of research in the marketing arena suggests a need for future inquiry on this topic.

CONSUMPTION EXPERIENCES

The examination of consumers' experiences in the marketplace is a fairly recent endeavor in the consumer behavior field. Recently, the term 'consumer culture theory'

has been offered to describe a plurality of theoretical perspectives that address the dynamic relationships between consumer actions, the marketplace and cultural meanings (Arnould and Thompson 2005). Initial research in this area appears to have begun in the 1980s (eg. Solomon 1983; Thompson, Locander and Pollio 1989). Since then, researchers have called for additional work in this vein:

“Studying and interpreting the subjective experiences of the market segments served by specific marketing programs is a useful step in establishing enduring, effective exchange relationships and an organizationwide market orientation” (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994, pg. 484).

“‘Consumer behavior’ is an anachronism reflecting an era in which psychology was dominated by behaviorism. The majority of contemporary research should be more aptly labeled ‘consumer cognition’. Much of consumer research ignores experience.” (Thompson, Locander and Pollio 1989).

The need for research specifically examining negative experiences in the marketplace has been noted as well, “How consumers cope with negative emotions is an important issue for marketers because coping may influence postpurchase behaviors, such as repurchase and negative word-of-mouth communication” (Yi and Baumgartner 2004, pg. 303). The infancy of consumer experience research partly explains the lack of research examining the role of ethnicity in consumption experiences. However, researchers in various disciplines have called for studies specifically examining this topic:

"It (is) important to explore the way ethnicity is understood by the ethnic minorities themselves in relation to their interaction with the majority population. In other words how it feels to be a part of an ethnic minority group in a Western society and how such feelings affect day to day consumption choices of consumers belonging to the ethnic minorities” (Jamal and Chapman 2000, pg. 366).

Future research on communication competence in the United States needs to explicitly recognize the intergroup aspect of inter-racial interaction and understand that many encounters take place in contexts of pervasive prejudice and discrimination” (Martin et al. 2001, pg. 23).

“...further research may consider how the specific expectations, motivations, and sensitivities of participants in interracial interactions influence how interactants weigh the various aspects of their partner's behavior (Dovidio, Kawakami and Gaertner 2002, pg. 67).

Anthropological and social psychological research indicates that race and ethnicity are essential components in understanding the consumption experiences of minority consumers. “Race essentializes and stereotypes people, their social statuses, their social behaviors, and their social ranking,” (Smedley and Smedley 2005, pg. 22). There is little doubt among researchers who study discrimination that the history of racial discrimination in the United States has had lasting consequences. Despite increased cultural diversity within its borders, relations among various racial groups remain strained and problematic and are often characterized by more anxiety and uncertainty than intracultural encounters (Martin et al. 2001). As such, it makes sense to examine how consumers and salespeople experience ethnicity and race in marketing since “transactions between marketers and consumers are, above all else, exchanges of meaning” (Levy 1959 as cited in Thompson 1997, pg. 438). The impact of such exchanges is described next.

MARKET POWER OF ETHNIC MINORITIES

Academics have indeed recognized that ethnicity appears to have a significant influence on market attitudes and behaviors. Some researchers assert that research on marketing to minorities has now transitioned to an era focused on understanding

differences in ethnic group's cultures that may drive consumption patterns (Holland and Gentry 1999). There has been significant research attention examining the consumptive behavior of the three major ethnic groups in the United States – Hispanics, Asians and African Americans which currently comprise approximately 30 % of the population (eg. Wilkes and Valencia 1985; Reilly and Wallendorf 1987; Kim and Kang 2001). It has been noted, “America's changing racial and ethnic makeup will profoundly transform the nation's regional landscape for at least the next four decades. Consumer markets, politics, and day-to-day transactions simply will not go on as they have up to now as this change sweeps the nation” (Frey 2004, pg. 27). Practitioners have also identified these groups as attractive segments, both separately and collectively.

The term Hispanic is used to refer to a U.S. citizen whose first language is Spanish, or whose ancestors were natives of Cuba, Mexico, Central or South America or Puerto Rico. Hispanics are currently the largest ethnic minority at 13.4 % of the population. The majority of Hispanics (2/3rd) are of Mexican origin. Hispanics are more geographically concentrated than Whites, with 79 % residing primarily in the West and South. Hispanics are also generally younger than Whites - 34.4 % of their population is under age 18 versus 22.8 % of Whites. Total income for this group for 2003 was approximately \$653 billion (www.ewowfacts.org). As Hispanics become more integrated into American culture, they occupy higher status jobs (Delener and Neelankavil 1990). This climb is reflected through increased purchasing power – an increase of 300 % between 1983 and 1993 (Kim and Kang 2001). Hispanics spend higher percentages of their incomes on apparel and services and used cars and trucks than other ethnic groups and whites (www.ewowfacts.com). Market research also indicates

Hispanics own more satellite radios than any other group, travel more than African Americans or Asians, and outpace online consumers in several areas of Internet usage, including entertainment (www.ewowfacts.com).

Although African Americans are the second largest minority segment in the U.S. at 12.9 % of the population, their income for 2003 of \$688 billion was larger than any other ethnic minority group. The Black population is also growing more rapidly than the total population, and Blacks tend to be geographically concentrated as well, with 55 % of Blacks living in the South and 18 % living in the Northeast and Midwest. Blacks spend more collectively than other minorities in almost every consumer product and service category (www.ewowfacts.com). In a survey conducted in February 2005 to assess consumer confidence, more Black respondents than Whites said they plan to purchase a big-ticket product in the next 90 days (www.targetmarketnews.com). In many categories such as video games, televisions, CD players, cable TV service and sound equipment, Black households are spending more on average than their White counterparts (www.targetmarketnews.com). This is also true of spending on items that enhance personal appearance. Black households spend 11 % more than average on personal services, such as manicures and hair styling, and 47 % more than average on personal care products (www.ewowfacts.com). Market research firms also indicate Blacks find advertising more entertaining and trustworthy than other groups and are more likely to watch TV commercials; 54 % of Blacks say that they watch TV ads, compared with only 32 % of Whites (www.targetmarketnews.com). .

Immigrants from Saudi Arabia, Japan, Korea, China and India all technically fall under the Asian umbrella category. In the U.S., the term Asian American is generally

limited to people from the following Asian countries: Cambodia, China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Phillipines, Taiwan, Thailand, Malaysia, and Hong Kong (Taylor and Stern 1997). In 2003, Asian Americans comprised 4.2 % of the U.S. population with an income of approximately \$344 billion. This means Asian American households make more money than any other ethnic group (www.ewowfacts.com). Asian Americans represent the most affluent demographic segment and their population is growing faster than other minority groups (Taylor and Stern 1997, Taylor, Lee and Stern 1995). The wealth of Asian Americans increased more than fivefold in the past two years, making them the fastest-growing group of affluent investors. Asian Americans are more likely than Whites and other ethnic minorities to have earned at least a bachelor's degree. Research firms also indicate the following: Asian American consumers are more likely to buy multiple cars than other ethnic groups, and are more likely to buy cars in either the \$40,000 luxury range or the \$20,000 family sedan category (www.ewowfacts.com).

Collectively, ethnic minorities now spend over \$900 billion a year on products and services. According to a 2004 study by the Association of National Advertisers, an overwhelming 89 % of respondents to a survey of its members said they are doing multicultural marketing. Eighty-six percent of respondents said they are marketing to Hispanics, up from seventy percent in a similar 2002 study. Sixty percent of the respondents say they market to African Americans (virtually unchanged from 59 % in 2002), and thirty-five percent market to Asian Americans, up from 27 % in 2002 (Swaidan, Rawwas and Al-Khatib 2004). In recent years, major corporations such as Kraft, General Foods and Pepsi-Co have created special divisions within their marketing departments to develop targeted strategies for reaching ethnically diverse markets (Torres

and Gelb 2002). Even the U.S. Postal Service, “the ultimate symbol of bureaucratic mass marketing,” recently hired ethnic marketing specialists to reach African Americans and Hispanics (Halter 2000, pg. 27).

This research demonstrates that “clear-cut and unique decision-making patterns exist among the three ethnic consumer groups” (Kim and Kang 2001, pg. 45). However, several questions remain. Does ethnicity affect all market related attitudes and behaviors? Is ethnicity situationally relevant as some researchers have suggested (Stayman and Deshpande 1989)? If so, in what contexts is ethnicity likely to be influential? How is ethnicity manifested in marketing exchanges? How do ethnicity and race influence consumers’ and salespersons’ respective experiences in the marketplace? It is this latter question that this research seeks to address.

PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH

The purpose of this research project is to understand perceptions of discrimination as experienced by African Americans in retail environments. As such, the perspective examined is that of the target of perceived discrimination. Although all three perspectives have been under-examined, it is particularly important to understand this perspective in marketing. Marketing is charged with ensuring the ‘voice of customer’ is heard, and a successful marketing strategy has to incorporate the customers’ needs, preferences and perceptions. African Americans were selected as the focus of this research study for the following reasons:

- African Americans are more likely to encounter discrimination. Although Hispanics outnumber African Americans, it is sometimes difficult for non-

Hispanics to identify a person as Hispanic simply based on appearance.

Furthermore, research indicating that Asian Americans are the 'Model Minority' suggests that in retail settings Asian Americans are less likely to encounter discrimination than other groups (Taylor and Stern 1997).

- African Americans spend a larger percentage of their incomes on goods and services than other minority groups. Additionally, Black households spend more than Hispanics or other minorities in almost every consumer product and service category. African Americans spend more of their annual incomes on apparel and services than Whites (6 % vs. 4.8 %) though Whites earn \$14,000 more a year (Gabbidon 2003).
- African Americans are more likely than other minorities in the U.S. to attribute negative interracial encounters to discrimination (Gabbidon 2003).
- Racial profiling and discrimination remain largely unexplored in the marketing realm. What is needed at this stage is a holistic understanding of the phenomenon. Focusing on a single ethnic minority initially may facilitate such an understanding.

Research Objective

The specific objective for this research is:

To understand how perceptions of discrimination arise, are formed and sustained by African Americans, what catalysts trigger these perceptions, what emotions are evoked, and what strategies are employed to cope with such perceptions.

The following research questions will be explored: How do perceptions of discrimination arise? What do African American women think, feel and do when

faced with perceived discrimination? How do past experiences affect consumers' market behaviors? Under what circumstances are consumers willing to make their allegations public? How are these experiences understood by the participants? How are these understandings shaped by the background of consumer socialization and cultural knowledge and beliefs?

Although these are the questions that the research is expected to address, they are not examples of specific research questions that will be asked of study participants. Nor is it assumed a priori that the phenomenon will unfold as presumed by the questions outlined here. As the study progresses, these research questions may be modified as needed.

Methodology

Because the emphasis here is on understanding this phenomenon from the target's perspective, an existential phenomenological approach is used. Existential-phenomenology "seeks to explicate the essence, structure or form of both human experience and human behavior as revealed through essentially descriptive techniques including disciplined reflection" (Valle, King and Halling 1989, pg. 6). The core assumptions of the existential phenomenological world are described by the metaphors of pattern, figure/ground, and seeing (Thompson, Locander and Pollio 1989). These assumptions and their relevance in the current research are discussed in the following chapter.

Additional assumptions are:

- The phenomenon of perceived discrimination can be understood.

- Participants in this study are able to effectively articulate their experiences with retail discrimination and are willing to reveal their perceptions, thoughts and actions as openly as possible.
- The phenomenological interview is a valid method for gathering an in-depth description of participants' experiences with retail discrimination.
- It is important for marketers to understand perceptions of discrimination.
- Understanding this phenomenon will enable marketers to reduce such attributions in retail settings.

POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS

The literature discussed shows that *perceived* discrimination is indeed a *real* problem in marketing environments for minorities. Despite significant advances towards achieving economic equality, minorities continue to perceive treatment at restaurants, stores, car lots, and other retail settings as discriminatory. Unfortunately, as long as discrimination and racial profiling are treated as problems and not symptoms, few actual remedies will be forthcoming. Criminologist researcher Rodney Coates remarks, "To treat racial profiling as the problem, much like treating only the cough that comes with smoking, is to treat only the symptoms. Racial profiling is part of a larger, more ingrained problem in Western culture" (2004, pg. 874). One step to understanding discrimination and racial profiling is to understand how perceptions of such behaviors arise.

The implications of perceived discrimination for marketing managers can be easily surmised. At the very least, a perception of discrimination may result in the loss of one customer. At the other extreme, the company may find themselves the losers in a million dollar award settlement.

On April 5th, Paula Hampton, an African-American female, went shopping with her family at Department Store C's Department Store in Overland Park, Kansas. As she waited at a fragrance counter for a free gift, a security officer wrongly accused Hampton and her 24-year-old niece of shoplifting and threatened to have her physically removed from the store in the presence of Hampton's seven-year-old daughter. Hampton perceived this treatment as discriminatory. In December 1997, an all-white jury agreed with her. They awarded Hampton more than \$1 million (Gray 1998).

The above case is not an isolated event. Just two months before the one million dollar verdict awarded to Hampton in the case above, a federal jury in Maryland awarded one million dollars to Alonzo Jackson as a result of discriminatory treatment he received at an Eddie Bauer warehouse outlet (Gray 1998).

Social psychological research indicates actors involved in perceptions of discrimination may engage in behaviors that imply prejudicial attitudes. Some studies indicate that stereotypes and behaviors thought to be automatically triggered by the presence of a minority individual may be reduced or eliminated through awareness, contextual manipulation or repetition (eg. Plant and Peruche 2005; Barden, Maddox, Petty and Brewer 2004; Asquith and Bristow 2000). Insights gained from this dissertation research may aid in the development of training programs designed to sensitize retail employees on this phenomenon. Such training programs might also be employed in classroom instruction to educate our students, tomorrow's retail managers (Asquith and Bristow 2000).

The prevalence and magnitude of perceived discrimination in retail settings and the lack of research in this area by consumer researchers mandates additional inquiry. As

long as 'shopping while Black' continues to have negative connotations for a majority of African Americans, there will be a need for research investigating the phenomenon of perceived discrimination. An existential-phenomenological approach provides a foundation for understanding this phenomenon as it is experienced by the participants.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The focus of the present study concerns African Americans' experience of and psychological and behavioral reactions to perceived discrimination in retail settings. This phenomenon is better understood by examining and integrating research from multiple disciplines: cultural studies, anthropology, social psychology, criminology, communications and marketing.

In any research focusing on African Americans, the terms 'race' and 'ethnicity' are almost certain to crop up. Even if not explicitly used by the writer, one term or the other is likely to arise in the mind of readers. Unfortunately, there is inconsistency in these terms as used by the populace and in the academic literature. This chapter begins with a discussion of these terms which serves two purposes. The first purpose is to define the terms as employed in this research. Given the variable meanings for race and ethnicity, definition is required to clarify what the researcher means by these terms and to facilitate a consensual meaning between the researcher and the reader. An existential-phenomenological inquiry requires the researcher to be knowledgeable of cultural and historical forces that are integral to the phenomenon of interest. Thus, the second purpose is to show how race and ethnicity, which are both cultural and historical concepts, are vital components of the 'shopping while Black' phenomenon. This section is followed with an exploration of the manifestation of race and ethnicity in a specific context—that of marketing.

While the terms race and ethnicity are useful in describing what ‘shopping while Black’ is, they fail to provide an understanding of what motivates individuals to use race to categorize others and the negative thoughts, attitudes and behaviors that arise from such categorizations. The social psychological literature provides this basis. Relevant literature on intergroup bias –and its associated constructs of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination – is reviewed for potential theoretical support for findings which may emerge during the course of the study. This exhaustive review highlights the extensive research examining racial bias from the perspective of the actor (the person perceived to be exhibiting bias) and the relative paucity of research examining bias from the target’s perspective.

The euphemism, ‘shopping while Black’, arose in reference to a similar phenomenon, ‘driving while black’, otherwise referred to as racial profiling. Chapter One indicates that there are similarities between these two phenomena. While there is a lack of research on ‘shopping while Black’, the criminology field has extensively examined ‘driving while black’. This literature on racial profiling is reviewed to provide some insight into the nature of ‘shopping while Black’.

Finally, in an attempt to understand what it is about retail settings that make them potential conduits for perceptions of discrimination, literature is reviewed regarding the nature of retail environments.

To summarize, this chapter is organized as follows: 1) Race and Ethnicity, 2) Race and Ethnicity in Marketing, 3) Intergroup Bias, 4) Racial Profiling and 5) The Nature of Retail Markets.

RACE AND ETHNICITY

The labels 'race' and 'ethnicity' are evolving in their lexicographical meanings. Historically, 'race' has been used to refer to classifications based on biological differences. Archeological evidence indicates that the first human communities evolved in Central Africa millennia ago (Spickard and Daniel 2004). Over time, groups migrated to other continents and adapted to various environments. This adaptation resulted in visible differences among geographically concentrated populations. These differences provided the bases originally used to classify races in the 18th century. 'White', 'yellow' and 'black' people were categorized to as 'caucasoid', 'mongoloid' and 'negroid' respectively (Ratcliffe 2004). It was also at this time that the concept of race became infused with hierarchical connotations. Skin color and facial features were associated with "deterministic, and naturalized, cultural and character traits" with people with lighter skins assumed to possess more positive traits (Ratcliffe 2004, pg. 16). 'Race' became a way of classifying people according to assumed innate biological differences that produced significant differences among groups. This fusion of physical features and behavior continues to be the meaning of race utilized by scholars across many fields (Smedley and Smedley 2005).

In the 20th century, work by geneticists indicated that human beings were more alike than the concept of 'race' indicated (Smedley and Smedley 2005). This work cast doubt on the biological reality of race. Current genetic data refutes the notion that races are genetically distinct human populations – humans around the globe are 99.9 % alike (Bonham, Warshauer-Baker and Collins 2005; Smedley and Smedley 2005). Some scholars have discarded the word 'race' as a category concept. Noted anthropologist

Leonard Lieberman states, “Race--once universally accepted as a reality--has been rejected as a valid concept by 80 percent of cultural anthropologists and 69 percent of physical anthropologists” (2004, pg. 137). Despite this evidence, the legacy of ‘race’ is a socially constructed meaning which continues to be acted upon in many societies and is “inextricably intertwined with inequality in the distribution of wealth, power, privilege and prestige” (Spickard and Daniel 2004, pg. 6).

If ‘race’ does not exist, how does one categorize people that are phenotypically distinguishable? The concept of race has been supplanted in some academic disciplines with the concept of ethnicity (Harrison 1995). ‘Ethnicity’ provides a way to describe groups focusing on culture and descent rather than on biology and the process of migration and adaptation (Bush 2001). The word ‘ethnicity’ appears to have first been used in 1941 to describe a trait “that separates the individual from some classes and identifies him with others” (Sollors 1981, pg. 259). Some scholars feel that ‘ethnicity’ is a less problematic concept than race since it is free of negative historical connotations (Spickard and Daniel 2004). Other scholars criticize this movement to replace ‘race’ with ‘ethnicity’. Anthropologist Faye Harrison argues,

“... the focus on ethnicity euphemized if not denied race by not specifying the conditions under which those social categories and groups historically subordinated as 'racially' distinct emerge and persist...The structural consequences of race such as forced exclusion, may differ significantly from those generally associated with ethnicity" (Harrison 1995, pg. 48).

Others believe that ethnicity may become simply a euphemism for race, another way of naturalizing differences (Ratcliffe 2004). Clearly the terms race and ethnicity have similar overtones and are used by many laypeople synonymously. The meaning of both terms continues to be debated among scholars in disciplines such as biology,

anthropology and sociology. “Race and ethnicity are complex sociopolitical constructs. They are variable and fluid, changing over time and differing throughout the world” (Bonham 2005, pg. 13).

RACE AND ETHNICITY IN MARKETING EXCHANGES

From a marketing perspective the distinction between race and ethnicity may, in most cases, be less problematic. For marketing research involving ‘ethnic’ minorities, the question of whether indeed race, ethnicity, or both are relevant may be answered by first considering perspective. Is the researcher exploring a phenomenon from the perspective of a minority group member, from the perspective of a majority group member, or from both perspectives? Consider the following scenario. A person walks into a store. That person is considered Asian by a White salesperson based on her appearance – slanted eyes, long black hair. The customer is of Japanese descent, but considers herself a fully-assimilated American and indeed demonstrates consumption behaviors that are typically American. In this scenario, the salesperson used obvious physical characteristics or ‘racial traits’ to categorize the prospect. For the purposes of this research, race refers to categorization of a person to a geographically-concentrated or phenotypically-distinct group based solely on his or her physical appearance by another person. The prospective customer identifies herself as American. In this research, ethnicity refers to self-categorization based on ancestry or country of origin. In other words, race is used when an etic perspective is utilized, ethnicity for an emic perspective.

The conceptualizations employed here coincide with those of other researchers who have noted, “Skin color, hair texture, nose width, and lip thickness have remained

major markers of racial identity in the United States,” (Smedley and Smedley 2005, pg. 20); and “...physical characteristics should never be included in a definition of ethnic identity” (Smedley and Smedley 2005, pg. 18). It is important that marketers understand how race and ethnicity are manifested in marketing exchanges given the significant managerial and public policy implications of both.

Race in Marketing

“...I just don’t like them (blacks). They’re a __ holes.”
“...I look at every black person (as a likely shoplifter).”
“...I usually watch people, what I call ‘salt and pepper’. You know, black and white mix. They just look dirty.”
“I’m watching the colored guy. Just because he’s black.”
(Asquith and Bristow 2002, pg. 14).

The use of the term race in this research refers to a categorization of a person to a geographically-concentrated or phenotypically-distinct group based solely on his or her physical appearance by another person. This is an epic conceptualization that suggests, “...race is in the eye of the beholder” (Fiske 1998, pg. 379). This definition corresponds to both the historical concept of race and the typical layperson use of the word race. As noted above, there has been a movement to reject the word ‘race’ because of its historical ties and recent genetic research. Advocates of this argument often note that race is an illusion, a social myth (Spickard and Daniel 2004). In marketing exchanges, the use of race is appropriate because as Lieberman states, “...race is a reality because our culture teaches us to selectively perceive and emphasize some differences such as skin color and assume all persons of that ‘race’ are much the same” (1987, pg. 3).

Race can be socially useful for three reasons: it is visually accessible, culturally meaningful and interactionally relevant (Fiske 1998). It has been extensively documented in social psychological research that individuals have an innate need to reduce cognitive processing efforts. Grouping people along easily identifiable dimensions such as skin color provides a sort of cognitive shortcut (Fiske 1998).³ Second, race is infused with social connotations and expectations. Smedley and Smedley state, “Race essentializes and stereotypes people, their social statuses, their social behaviors, and their social ranking,” (2005, pg. 22). Finally, racial categorization has implications for interpersonal thoughts, feelings and behaviors (Maddox 2004). Despite increased cultural diversity within the United States, relations among various racial groups remain strained and problematic (Martin et al. 2001). Empirical evidence suggests interracial interactions are often characterized by more anxiety and uncertainty than intracultural encounters (Plant and Devine 2003). Race often shapes immediate interaction goals regarding expected kinds of possible relationships (Fiske 1998). This research suggests that the simple adage, ‘race matters’ continues to be true in social settings. The question of particular relevance here is, does race matter when it comes to marketing? There is anecdotal as well as empirical evidence that suggests that race may exert an influence in several marketing contexts.

Product

There are products that are developed and marketed to groups based on racial distinctions. Some types of products, such as make-up lines (eg. Fashion Fair, Flori

³ Though perhaps cognitively efficient, this process may produce and sustain negative associations, attitudes and behaviors among groups. The following section of this chapter elaborates on this topic.

Roberts) and panty-hose (eg. Brown Sugar), might seem to call for this type of differentiation. For other products, segmenting along racial dimensions may be less obvious. In 1987, Hallmark introduced a line of cards, Mahogany, designed specifically for African Americans (hallmark.com). In 2003, the Sinceramente line was introduced by Hallmark to “mirror the values and perspectives of Hispanic consumers” (hallmark.com). In 1993, Spiegel, Inc. and Ebony magazine teamed up for a joint venture to produce a catalog, E Style, specializing in clothing for African American women. Inter Image Video specializes in African American entertainment and educational videos for adults and children. All of these examples illustrate the use of race in conjunction with a specific product.

Consumer behavior research has examined how ‘races’ differ in the types of products purchased. An early study found African Americans spend relatively more on generic grocery items than Whites (Wilkes and Valencia 1985). Other research suggests minority group members are significantly different than majority group members in the foods that they consume. Past research suggests that when African-Americans drink liquor, they are more likely to drink cognac than whites; and when they smoke, they are more likely to prefer menthol cigarettes to plain ones (Rossman 1994). In an empirical study using garbage refuse analysis, researchers found that Blacks and Hispanics exhibited consistently high levels of consumption of sweets, particularly regular soda and candy (Reilly and Wallendorf 1987). The researchers propose these differences may be interpreted as “...an attempt to sweeten the lives of minority group members who otherwise face an exclusionary majority group. Sweets may serve as a means of temporary self-gratification in a world that provides few rewards to minority group

members.” (pg. 293). Other studies offer support for this proposition. A 1990 Consumer Expenditure Survey found that Black households spent 50 % more on sugar each year than White households (Rossman 1994). Additionally, African Americans are a disproportionate share of consumers for Wrigley’s chewing gum and presweetened cereal (Williams 2001).

Price

Economic and law journals provide ample empirical evidence of price discrimination based on race (eg. Ayres 1991, Ayres and Siegelman 1995, Ayres 1995). Housing and car sales have been the subject of most research in this area. National studies as well as smaller audits conducted as far back as 1955 indicate that Blacks and Hispanics have faced price discrimination when purchasing or renting housing (Yinger 1998). A 1997 study reported an Hispanic female applying for a two-bedroom apartment was quoted a rent of \$670 per month with a \$200 security deposit while an equally qualified white female applicant was quoted a rate of \$616 per month with a \$100 security deposit for the same apartment (Yinger 1998). Studies in more recent years show no indication of this type of discrimination abating (Yinger 1998).

A series of studies by legal scholar Ian Ayres and his colleague, economist Peter Siegelman examined gender and race discrimination in automobile sales (Ayres 1991, Ayres and Siegelman 1995, Ayres 1995). The studies, conducted in the Chicago area in 1990, utilized paired-testing in blind audits. All of the studies found that dealer’s initial and final offers were highest for Black males, followed by Black females, White females, and White males. The 1995 study reported that compared to White males, final profits

averaged \$1,100 more for Black men, \$400 more for Black women, and \$92 more for White women.⁴

A decade has passed since Ayres and Siegelman conducted their studies and there is no recent empirical evidence suggesting that discriminatory practices continue in automobile sales. Nevertheless, these studies on housing and car sales remain significant for two reasons. First, housing and car expenditures are costly investments. In 2004, these categories jointly accounted for approximately 1/5th of personal consumption expenditures. Second, discrimination based on race in housing markets is illegal under the 1968 Fair Housing Act. If price discrimination occurs in markets where it is illegal to do so, and where relatively large capital outlays are required, does it also occur in smaller markets that aren't covered by government regulations? There is limited evidence that suggests the answer may be yes.

A study of fast-food pricing analyzed data for 356 restaurants (four major chains) in New Jersey and eastern Pennsylvania (Graddy 1997). The study asked whether, after accounting for differences in income and cost, prices for certain items were significantly higher in Black than in White neighborhoods – a practice referred to as redlining (Yinger 1998). The researcher found that “meal prices rise about 5 percent for a 50 percent rise in the Black population” (Graddy 1997, pg. 2). Another study by the same researcher examined pricing at a fish market in New York City (Graddy 1995). This study concluded that Asian buyers paid 7 % less for a certain type of fish than did White buyers. These studies appear to be the only published investigations of price

⁴ Goldberg (1996) examined price discrimination in car sales using regression analysis on a sample of households purchasing cars between 1983 and 1987. This study found “no evidence of price discrimination against blacks or women” (pg. 652). Yinger (1998) presents arguments against this conclusion.

discrimination based on race in markets other than housing or automobile sales.

Although additional evidence is needed in a variety of service markets, these findings suggest that race may exert an influence in pricing decisions.

Promotion

The examination of race in the market-related domains of product, pricing and placement has been conducted largely by non-marketers – Black cultural scholars, economists and legal scholars. However, the marketing discipline has extensively examined the use of race in promotion. The majority of this work has focused on advertising. The underlying premise behind this type of research is that viewers use racial traits, such as skin color and facial features, to categorize actors appearing in advertisements. Studies in this area fall into two categories. One stream of research evaluates the appearance of minority actors in advertising (eg. Taylor and Stern 1997; Taylor, Lee and Stern 1995; Bristor, Lee and Hunt 1995). The purpose of such research is to determine if adequate representation exists for Blacks, Hispanics and Asians in terms of the number and quality of their portrayals in various media. Current research suggests that while Blacks and Asians are represented in numbers fairly commensurate with their percentages in the population, Hispanics continue to be underrepresented. Additionally, the literature shows that advertising continues to promote stereotypical portrayals of all three groups.

The second research stream addresses audience response to advertisements featuring Black, Hispanic and Asian actors (eg. Whittler and Spira 2002; Fujioka 1999; Green 1999). In an article published in 1991, Whittler summarized extant research in this area published between 1964 and 1972. Subsequent to Whittler's article, numerous

researchers have continued in this vein (eg. Appiah 2004, Simpson, Snuggs, Christiansen & Simples 2000; Brumbaugh 2002).

This research stream may be further divided according to two purposes: to examine how in-group viewers respond to advertisements featuring actors perceived to be of the same race (eg. African Americans viewing ads featuring African American actors); and to examine how out-group viewers respond to advertisements featuring actors perceived to be of a different race (eg. Caucasians viewing ads featuring African American actors).

Studying out-group response to advertisements featuring actors of differing races is an important area of research because as Grier and Smith note, “There will always be some degree of misfit between targeting marketing efforts, the target market, and the actual program audience, thus it is useful to understand how other audiences may influence consumer response (1997, pg. 145). Some research suggests whites may respond similarly to advertisements that feature a White or Black actor.

Appiah (2001) found that White participants perceived themselves to be more similar to the Black actors depicted in the ads, identified more with these actors, and rated these ads higher than the ads featuring White actors. Other studies indicate Whites typically have more positive affect towards advertisements featuring Whites (Whittler and Scattone forthcoming; Qualls and Moore 1999). Whittler and Scattone (forthcoming) suggest these contradictory findings may be partially explained by increased racial interaction among college students who are the participants in most of these research studies. Little research attention has been given to moderators that might affect these relationships.

In a series of studies, Whittler and his colleagues investigated viewers' prejudice levels as a potential moderator for dependent variables such as attitude towards the advertisement and intent to buy (Whittler and DiMeo 1991; Whittler 1989, 2002). The researchers found prejudice level to be a significant moderator for most of the dependent variables measured. Their results are supported by social psychological literature on group-identification and biases (reviewed in a subsequent section of this chapter).

Other Marketing Contexts

While there has been significant research attention examining race in advertising, the impact of race in other areas of promotion such as publicity, sponsorship marketing and personal selling has been relatively neglected. Asquith and Bristow conducted two studies exploring college students' perceptions of the profile of shoplifters (2000, 2002). The initial study was conducted in a region where minorities comprised between 10 and 12 % of the population at the time. Prior to a training sensitivity exercise, 42.6 % of participants indicated that African-Americans and Hispanics were most likely to shoplift merchandise from a retail store. Demographic information obtained from the participants showed that 46.1 % of these students had retail work experience. Although the study did not examine related behaviors, it is not unreasonable to propose that these perceptions may have affected these employees' treatment of African American and Hispanic consumers at their retail establishments.

In the training exercise administered after the initial survey, students viewed a video which "graphically illustrated the many limitations of using skin color or ethnic background rather than observed behaviors as a predictor of shopping behavior" (Asquith and Bristow 2000, pg. 272). The comments introducing this section on race in marketing

- eg. “I’m watching the colored guy. Just because he’s black.” - were asserted by security guards in this video. These quotes affirm that the differential treatment administered by the security guards in the video was based on their related beliefs (i.e. stereotypes) and attitudes (i.e. prejudices) regarding race. There is some empirical evidence suggesting that salesclerks engage in differential treatment based on race as well. The objective of a recent study was to determine if customers’ physical characteristics impacted upon the level of service they received from a retail customer service representative (Ainscough and Motley 2000). The study found that Blacks waited twice as long for service as whites at retail customer service counters.

Williams (2001) lists anecdotal examples of what he refers to as ‘racial prejudice’ in the marketplace. The use of the word prejudice has been criticized by some as inferring intent and animosity (Ayres 2004). Ayres uses the phrase ‘race-contingent behavior’ to refer to the intentional or unintentional use of race to make decisions (Ayres 2004). This deliberate distinction in terms is made to suggest that whether animosity accompanies behavior or not, whether the person intends to or not, if a person shows differential treatment to an individual attributable primarily to race, he or she is engaging in discrimination. The research reviewed here indicates that whether it is called ‘racial prejudice’ or ‘race-contingent behavior’, race – categorization by another person based on geographically-concentrated or phenotypical-distinctions – is used for differential treatment in marketing-related contexts.

Ethnicity in Marketing Exchanges

”Disc jockey one: “I never thought I’d see the day when Black people took over the game of golf.”

Disk jockey two: “What you talking about? I know we have Tiger Woods, but I wouldn’t call that taking over.

Disk jockey one: Yeah, we’ve got Tiger and that other one, Vijay Singh.

Disk jockey two: Sorry player, Vijay Singh says he’s not Black. He’s from one of those islands, Fiji I think. Gotta let that one go...

Disk jockey one: Well, hell! If we just have folks who *claim* to be, we gotta let Tiger go too! I knew it was too good to be true.”

(adapted from The Tom Joyner Morning Show nationally syndicated radio program 2004)

Ethnicity refers to self-categorization based on ancestry or country of origin.

Although individuals that categorize themselves as belonging to a common ethnicity may share common phenotypical traits that distinguish them from other members of society, possession of these traits is not a necessary condition for inclusion. Nor does possession of certain racial traits automatically mean an individual identifies with a certain ethnic group as the skit above suggests. Ethnicity is not based on physical criteria, but is more of a psychological connection to a group that engenders a common sense of fate (Herring, Jankowski and Brown 1999). Some researchers have suggested that ethnicity is a situational variable (Deshpande and Stayman 1994, O’Guinn and Faber 1985). In other words, “the salience of ethnicity in a given social situation is likely to increase or decrease depending on the extent to which one's ethnicity is similar to or different from that of others in a given environment or situation”, (Sekhon and Szmigin 2005, pg. 5). Whether ethnicity is an enduring personality characteristic or temporarily induced, an individual who identifies highly with his or her ethnic group is likely to exhibit behaviors that differ from other ethnic groups. These differences may be displayed in the marketplace:

"Ethnicity is increasingly manifest through self-conscious consumption of goods and services and, at the same time, these commodities assist in negotiating and enforcing identity differences," (Halter 2000, pg. 7).

“Ethnicity affects consumer behavior from styles of dress, tastes in music, leisure time pursuits and even food and drink consumption.” (Sekhon and Szmigin 2005, pg. 4).

Several variables have been identified as exerting a moderating effect within ethnic cultures. Most widely examined have been assimilation, acculturation and ethnic identification. These three terms have been used differently in the literature.

Assimilation has been described as “a process on inter-penetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments and attitudes of other persons or groups and by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life” (Park and Burgess, 1921 pg. 735 as cited in D’Rozario and Douglas 1999). Researchers have used this concept to explain intergroup differences. In their development of a multidimensional measure of assimilation, D’Rozario and Douglas describe ethnic identification as a subprocess of assimilation that they refer to as identificational assimilation. Similarly, acculturation is also described as a subprocess of assimilation referred to as cultural assimilation. Elsewhere these constructs have been defined as follows:

Acculturation is “the process of learning and adopting cultural traits, different from the ones with which the person was originally reared” (Kaufman-Scarborough 2000, pg. 250).

Ethnic identity is “a complex psychological process that involves perceptions, cognition, affect and knowledge structures about how a person thinks and feels about him or herself and others in the society” (Jamal and Chapman 2000, pg. 366).

“Ethnic identity is the aspect of acculturation that focuses on how an ethnic group relates to its own group as a subgroup of the larger host society” (Webster 1994, pg. 321).

“Assimilation is generally known as the process of transforming aspects of a nondominant culture into a status of relative adjustment to the form of the dominant culture” (Kaufman-Scarborough 2000, pg. 250).

“Assimilation, one mode of acculturation, occurs when the immigrant group relinquishes its ethnic identity and moves into the larger society” (Webster 1994, pg. 321).

Although there is a lack of consensus in the literature regarding the conceptual relationship between assimilation and acculturation, both of these terms appear to describe a minority group member's association with the larger (majority) culture or intergroup differences and similarities. In contrast, ethnic identification describes a minority individual's association with his or her minority group's culture or intragroup differences and similarities. Some researchers assert that in essence these constructs lie on a continuum, with ethnic identification on one end, and assimilation or acculturation on the other as implied by Webster's definitions above. Other researchers maintain that the constructs are separate and thus, an individual can clearly identify with his or her ethnic culture while adopting traits of the dominant culture (Hernandez, Cohen and Garcia 2000; Jamal and Chapman 2000). Despite the various conceptualizations in the literature, ethnic identification, assimilation and acculturation have all been found to influence ethnic minorities' behavior and attitudes regarding products and promotions.

Product

In a stream of research investigating the influence of ethnic identification on the purchase behavior of Hispanics, Webster found a significant positive relationship between ethnic identification and husband dominance in decision making (1994, 1997). The higher in ethnic-identification the husband was, the more likely he was to dominate decisions during the more critical phases of the purchase process. The author concluded,

“(marketers) targeting more traditional households (i.e. higher in ethnic identification) should focus on men when the product decisions relate to relatively important and functional products and to important decision phases,” (Webster 1997, pg.4).

A study involving Hong Kong immigrants to Canada examined the number of co-ethnic relationships participants had in their peripheral relationships (Chung and Fisher 1999). Findings indicated the more co-ethnic strong ties one had, the more frequently he/she used ethnic brands.

Promotion

Research shows that African Americans high in ethnic identification gave more favorable product and advertising evaluations for advertisements with a Black model than African Americans who were identified as weak in ethnic identification (Whittler & Spira 2000). Similar results have been found in other studies as well (e.g., Appiah 2001, Green 1999).

The interaction between spokesperson ethnicity and ethnic salience has been shown to be statistically significant in predicting spokesperson trustworthiness and brand attitude for Hispanics (Deshpande’ and Stayman 1994). In some studies involving Hispanic participants, researchers have manipulated language in advertisements to examine its relationship with ad-attitude related variables. Ueltschy and Krampf clustered participants according to acculturation and found that individuals high in acculturation had more positive attitudes towards ads with English copy while individuals low in acculturation had more positive attitudes towards ads with Spanish copy (1997). Other researchers have looked at how language influences the perceived cultural sensitivity towards the advertiser (Koslow, Shamdasani & Touchstone 1994). Perceived

cultural sensitivity was lowest for ads with all English. However, the attitude towards the ad was lowest for the ads with all Spanish. The previously cited research suggests that perhaps acculturation may moderate this relationship as well. Differences in acculturation have also been found to affect Hispanics' shopping orientations, attitudes' towards grocery shopping, media preferences, and usage of cents-off coupons (Hernandez, Cohen and Garcia 2000).

The prior section of this chapter suggested that the adage 'race matters' is applicable in marketing contexts. The research just reviewed suggests that 'ethnicity matters' as well. One's association with an ethnic group can potentially influence market-related behaviors and attitudes. There is limited research indicating how this self-identification is manifested in ethnic minorities' experiences in the marketplace.

Reciprocal Influences: The Interaction of Race and Ethnicity in Marketing Exchanges

From adolescence on, the Black mother knows her son or daughter will be watched through the corners of eyes, over shoulders, through one-way mirrors, through surveillance cameras. So, she preaches the following warnings: "Keep your hands out of your pockets. Don't reach under your shirt – if there's an itch, just live with it. Always have the clerk bag your purchase with the receipt inside the bag." All the while a voice inside the mother's head yearns to say, "Go ahead, child; scratch that itch. Put your hands wherever you want. To hell with answering someone's prejudicial paranoia. You're free. Be it." The mother fears that giving breath to that inner voice may result in a finger pointed at her child, or a gun drawn between his eyes. And so she says, "Remember. Keep your hands out of your pockets." (Mathis 2002, pg. 121-123).

In this dissertation research, race is conceptualized as categorization by another, ethnicity as self-categorization. In social interactions between individuals perceived to be of different 'races' by at least one of the parties in the exchange, race and ethnicity may

exert reciprocal influences on each other. Economist John Yinger (1998) notes, “People who are treated differently because of their superficial physical characteristics, such as skin color or the shape of facial features, develop behavioral patterns that respond to or rationalize their differential treatment” (pg. 24). Another researcher states, “For many African Americans, the physical characteristics associated with ‘being Black’ are important to ethnic identity and are learned as part of the American experience” (Tharp 2001, pg. 166).

The above excerpt provides an example of how race and ethnicity may interact in marketing exchanges. The mother, who self-identifies herself as Black, perceives that other individuals – store clerks or security guards in this context – will categorize her and her children along racial dimensions and respond negatively towards them as a result. Harrison notes, “Race and ethnicity can be interrelated but distinct dimensions in the formation of individual and group identity, and ...depending on the context, one dimension may modify or take precedence over the other” (1995, pg. 48). Retail environments are social settings involving people who actively influence one another (Fine and Schumann 1992). The interplay among hierarchical social groups in marketing context has been referred to as reflexivity (Buttle 1998). To understand minority consumers’ experiences in the marketplace, the experiences should be considered holistically as a social system of ‘interacting phenomena’ (Buttle 1998).

The concepts of race and ethnicity provide a useful way conceptualizing differences between and within certain social groups in society. However, these concepts fail to explain the psychological benefits that are derived from associations with these groups and the negative thoughts, attitudes and behaviors that often occur between

groups. The social psychological literature reviewed in the following section provides some theoretical foundation.

INTERGROUP BIAS

Categorization refers to the lumping together of objects and events into meaningful groupings that enables a person to process information quickly and automatically (Brewer 1996). The process of categorization tends to attenuate perceived differences among items grouped together while accentuating perceived differences between groups (Brewer and Kramer 1985). The first researcher to apply the concept of categorization to the context of social relationships was noted psychologist Gordon Allport in his seminal book, *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954). When individuals categorize others however, they tend to do so in relation to themselves, using perceived similarities and perceived differences to determine group membership. This social categorization produces evaluative connotations. Allport (1954) proposed that when people categorize others, there is a natural tendency to love one group (the in-group) and, therefore hate the other (the out-group). The systematic tendency to evaluate one's own membership group (the in-group) more favorably than a non-membership group (the out-group) is referred to as intergroup bias (Hewstone, Rubin and Willis 2002).

Intergroup bias has been widely examined in the social psychological literature using real and fictitious groups and has been demonstrated to be a robust phenomenon (eg. Ensari and Miller 2002; Hong et al. 2004; Devine 1989). Several theories have been

proffered to explain its occurrence⁵. Social Identity Theory is the theoretical perspective most often used to explain intergroup bias (Brown 2000). Social Identity Theory posits that people are motivated to positively differentiate themselves from others on relevant dimensions in order to maintain or enhance group distinctiveness and social identity (Jetten, Spears and Manstead 1998). Under this theory, individuals form favorable in-groups and relevant out-groups in order to boost their self-esteem (Hewstone, Rubin and Miles 2002). This tendency to favor the in-group while denigrating the out-group is the 'bias' that is produced in intergroup relations.

Social categorization is a subjective process. People are members of many different social categories and any one of these categories can be used to judge people (Stangor 2000). The more salient a category is the more likely it is to be used. Furthermore, a reciprocal relationship is posited to occur in the social categorization process. Identification with social groups produces competition between groups which further enhances category salience (Brewer and Brown 1998). Visual cues such as race and gender are often the basis of social categorization because these features are immediately, physically apparent (Stangor 2000). Intergroup bias between easily identifiable social groups is posited to result in stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination (Fiske 1998).

⁵ Hewstone, Rubin and Willis (2002) provide a review of the most widely examined theories of intergroup bias.

Stereotypes

The word ‘stereotype’ was coined by Walter Lippman in 1922. He used to term to describe “pictures in our heads” that people use when reacting to people from different countries and different races (Stangor 2000). Allport described a stereotype as “an exaggerated belief associated with a category. Its function is to justify (rationalize) our conduct in relation to that category” (1954, p. 191). Other researchers have adapted or extended Allport’s definition as needed, including the following:

“Stereotypes are beliefs about the characteristics, attributes, and behaviors of members of certain groups. More than just beliefs about groups, they are also theories about how and why certain attributes go together.... These beliefs may be representations of real differences between groups - or at least the local reality to which the perceiver is exposed- or they may be formed about various groups independent of real group differences,” (Hilton and von Hippel 1996).

“Stereotypes are characteristics that are associated with members of social categories. Although they are typically portrayed as cognitive structures consisting of personality traits, stereotypes also represent physical characteristics, expectations, attitudes and feelings about social groups” (Kawakami et al. 2002).

Table 3 catalogs other classic definitions of stereotypes. As these definitions indicate, there is a lack of consensus on what stereotypes are (Schneider 2004). In this research, ‘stereotype’ refers to positive or negative characteristics that are consistently and uniformly associated with members of social categories. Several theories have been offered to explain the formation of stereotypes. The ‘cognitive miser’ perspective argues that individuals form stereotypes to simplify complex environments (McGarty, Yzerbyt and Spears 2002). Another rationale is that stereotypes are formed to maintain the status quo or to justify hierarchical social systems (McGarty et al. 2002). Social identity theory

postulates that individuals form stereotypes to aid in ‘self-esteem enhancement’ (Brown 2000).

Although there is a lack of consensus about why stereotypes are formed, consistent findings suggest that stereotypes of important social groups are learned through communication with relevant others and personal experiences (Stangor 2000). Research suggests that most individuals in the United States are knowledgeable of the stereotypical traits associated with ethnic minority groups in this country (Devine 1989). The following characteristics have been included in the cultural stereotype of Blacks: aggressive or tough, criminal, low intelligence, sexually perverse, athletic, inferior, fun-loving, and self-destructive (Devine 1989; Fiske 1998; Power, Murphy and Coover 1996).

Once learned, stereotypes are stored in memory in cognitive representations that contain linkages between a social category and the traits associated with it (Stangor 2000). Stereotypes allow perceivers to rapidly integrate incoming information with preexisting interconnected items. This initial triggering of stereotypes is referred to as stereotype activation. The use of stereotypic knowledge in forming an impression of a specific individual or individuals, referred to in the social psychology literature as stereotype application, is more commonly known as ‘stereotyping’ (Fiske 1998).

Initial research on stereotype activation suggested that stereotypes are automatically triggered upon perception of a categorized member (Allport 1954; Tajfel 1969; Devine 1989; Lepore and Brown 1997). For the purpose of this paper, this is labeled the traditional view. In an influential study, social psychologist Patricia Devine showed that even subliminally presented racial cues could activate stereotypes (Devine

1989). However, more recent research indicates that categorization does not necessarily lead to activation (eg. Lepore and Brown 1997, Blair 2002).

Researchers have begun examining potential moderators to the relationship between categorization and stereotype activation (eg. Lepore and Brown 2002; Lepore and Brown 1997; Blair 2002). Early research in this area was conducted by psychologists Lorella Lepore and Rupert Brown (1997). The premise of their investigation was that prior research failed to separate category activation from stereotype activation. As an example, they noted that in her study Devine primed both the category Blacks and the stereotypes associated with the category. Therefore, it could not be determined from that study if the stereotype activation did indeed occur automatically in response to a category member. In their research, Lepore and Brown examined separately the effects of category activation and stereotype activation. They found that respondents high and low in prejudice responded similarly in their automatic responses when primed with negative stereotypes. However, their automatic responses differed when only the category was primed. High prejudice subjects assigned more negative stereotypical traits than did low prejudice subjects. This research provides support for an alternative view that it is possible for stereotypic characteristics to be primed directly, that unintentional activation of stereotypes occurs selectively, and that stereotypes are not automatically activated upon categorization (Lepore and Brown 2002; Lepore and Brown 1997).

The notion of flexibility among categorization, stereotyping and prejudice has gained support from other researchers as well. In a comprehensive literature review on this topic, Blair found that the perceivers' motives and strategies and the situational

context served as moderators for automatic stereotypes and prejudice (2002). These findings are strengthened by the number and variety of studies reported in the review (approximately 50) and their different goals and purposes.

The following conclusion may be drawn from this research: a stereotype must be activated before it can be applied; however, an activated stereotype does not have to be applied. People may avoid applying stereotypes to individuals because they wish to avoid prejudice or for other reasons (Sinclair and Kunda 1999). The empirical evidence suggests the relationship between stereotype activation and stereotype application is in fact moderated by a number of factors, including the prejudice level of the perceiver (Blair 2002).

Prejudice

Prejudice is a predisposition directed towards a social group. This bias may have a positive or negative valence. However, prejudice towards groups based on racial differences is chiefly described as negative (Stangor 2000). In this research, prejudice is defined as a negative feeling or attitude towards a group or an individual based solely on group membership (Crandall, Eshleman and O'Brien 2002; Stangor 2000). Prejudice towards a specific group based on race is thus racism. While prejudice may serve a self-gratifying purpose, it is more often a "matter of blind conformity with prevailing folkways" (Stangor 2000, pg. 24).

The history of the United States is one marked by a significant amount of racial prejudice between Whites and Blacks. In the last 50 years or so, social norms have made the expression of such prejudices socially unacceptable (Crandall et al. 2002). There has

been a corresponding downward trend in traditional measures used to assess prejudice for the past few decades (Plant and Devine 1998). Many social psychologists used this trend as evidence that racial attitudes had become considerably more positive (Plant and Devine 1998). Current research suggests these conclusions may have been premature (eg. Cunningham, Nezlek and Banaji 2004, Devine et al. 2002, Devine 2001).

Attitudes may have two components: one that is automatically activated (an implicit attitude) and one that may only be activated with conscious deliberation (an explicit attitude) (Cunningham, Nezlek and Banaji 2004). Considerable empirical evidence now indicates there are two components to prejudice as well (eg. Cunningham et al. 2004; Devine et al. 2002; Devine 2001; Dovidio et al. 2002). Explicit prejudice is a consciously held attitude toward a social group. Implicit prejudice is the automatic cognitive association between a social group and a negative evaluation (Cunningham et al. 2004). Automatically activated attitudes may be quite distinct from more deliberative attitudes and may even have a different valence (Cunningham et al. 2004; Dovidio et al. 1997). Different measures are required to assess explicit and implicitly held attitudes. Initial measures of prejudice only captured one component of prejudice – explicit prejudice. In recent years numerous measures have been developed to assess implicit prejudice. Studies using these measures have produced interesting findings regarding the relationship between implicit and explicit prejudice and behaviors associated with each (eg. Olsen and Fazio 2003).

Dovidio and his colleagues (2002) conducted experimental studies examining explicit and implicit prejudice. They found that explicit and implicit measures of prejudice are systematically related to behavior, but different types of behavior. Explicit

prejudice (measured through traditional survey instruments) was predictive of Whites' verbal behaviors toward Blacks (Dovidio et al. 2002). Implicit prejudice (measured through automatic association tests and response latencies) was shown to predict Whites' nonverbal friendliness. The researchers surmised, "To the extent that implicit and explicit racial attitudes shape the everyday behaviors of Whites toward Blacks, these potentially divergent influences, which can produce mixed messages, can interfere with the communication and trust that is critical to developing long-term positive relations between Blacks and Whites" (pg. 63). The Implicit Association Test (IAT), a widely used measure of implicit bias, has been shown to correlate modestly with nonverbal behaviors such as smiling and seating distance (Schneider 2004). In a study examining the relationship between implicit and explicit prejudice, researchers found that widely-used measures for both constructs (the IAT and MRS respectively) did indeed measure different things or tap different dimensions of a single attitudinal construct (Karpinski and Hinton 2001). A study by Hugenberg and Bodenhausen (2003) examined how implicit prejudice predicted facial threat on the faces of African Americans and Caucasians using a computer simulation. Individuals who were high in implicit prejudice (but not explicit prejudice) were more likely to see hostility as lingering longer and appearing more quickly on the faces of African Americans.

Some scholars have criticized this recent focus on implicit prejudice. Arkes and Tetlock (2004) claim, "...researchers have been too quick to make the inferential leap from implicit associations to implicit attitudes, and then from implicit attitudes to value-laden characterization of those attitudes as prejudice" (pg. 7). The crux of their argument is, "the work on implicit prejudice sets the threshold for making attributions of prejudice

at an unprecedented low level” and psychologists using such measures risk “mistakenly accusing the unprejudiced” while “mistakenly exonerating the prejudiced” (2004, pg. 8). The arguments they present are valid given the negative societal implications currently associated with the label ‘prejudiced’. However, the studies above show that implicit prejudice measures predict certain discriminatory behaviors even when explicit prejudice measures fail to do so. This suggests there is a need to understand the automatic biases described as implicit prejudice, even if researchers label these biases as something other than ‘prejudice’ to more strongly differentiate the construct from cognitively held attitudes.

There has been an almost universal assumption in social psychology research that prejudice is the proximal cause of discrimination (Mackie and Smith 1998). The research reviewed above suggests that more accurate predictions can be made by compartmentalizing prejudice into implicit prejudice and explicit prejudice and differentiating between types of discrimination (Dovidio et al. 2002; Dovidio et al. 1997).

Discrimination

Discrimination refers to any positive or negative behavior directed toward a social group or its members on account of group membership (Mackie and Smith 1998). Racial discrimination has been (and continues to be) documented in numerous disciplines including economics, organizational behavior, and educational psychology. However, discrimination has been the least examined area in social psychology of the three intergroup phenomena presented (Fiske 1998).

Discrimination research can be categorized according to the following purposes: documenting discriminatory practices, understanding the psychological processes that fuel discriminatory behavior, and understanding how targets of discrimination perceive and cope with discrimination directed towards them (Fiske 1998).⁶ As expected, the majority of social psychological research on discrimination has pursued the second purpose – understanding its’ underlying psychological processes (Fiske 1998). However, social psychologists have noted the need for additional disciplinary research for the other purposes as well (eg. Fiske 1998; Dovidio et al. 2002; Johnson and Lecci 2003). Noted social psychologist Susan Fiske remarked, “Like the attitude-behavior debacle that almost destroyed the foundations of persuasion research, a debacle threatens stereotyping research if it does not soon address behavior” (1998, pg. 374). In reference to the third purpose, Dovidio calls for social psychological research examining “how the specific expectations, motivations and sensitivities of participants in interracial interactions influence how interactants weigh various aspects of their partner’s behavior” (2002, pg. 67). Despite relative neglect to this phenomenon, extant research has advanced our understanding of discrimination in all three categories.

Fiske suggests that there are two kinds of discrimination to document (1998). One kind of discrimination is described as ‘hot discrimination’. This type of discrimination is based on disgust, resentment, hostility and anger. It is this type of discrimination that most laypeople associate with the word discrimination. ‘Hot’ discrimination is often a manifestation of explicit prejudice (Dovidio et al. 2002).

⁶ These categories correspond to the research perspectives of objective (3rd person), actor and target previously described in Chapter One of this dissertation.

Elsewhere this type of discrimination has been labeled “straight-line discrimination” because of the “straight psychological line between prejudice and behavior” that it describes (Schneider 2004, pg. 292). ‘Hot’ discrimination is engaged in deliberately and is thought to occur much less frequently in the United States now than a half century ago (Schneider 2004). In fact, some people who restrict discrimination to ‘hot’ discrimination argue that it is well on its way to being eliminated (Schneider 2004). Others argue although prejudicial attitudes appear to be declining, hate crimes are not diminishing at the same pace and may be increasing (Crandall and Eshleman 2003). The internet may facilitate these types of hate crimes because it provides an outlet for expression of prejudicial attitudes while allowing perpetrators to retain anonymity and avoid personal criticism.

The second type of discrimination is labeled ‘cold discrimination’ (Fiske 1998). This type of discrimination is based entirely on stereotypes of an outgroup’s interests, knowledge and motivations. The forerunners of this type of discrimination are the automatic cognitive processes previously described - stereotype activation and implicit prejudice (Fiske 1998). This type of discrimination has also been referred to as subtle discrimination (Schneider 2004). It may involve rejection or cool nonverbal behaviors. An example of ‘cold’ discrimination would be used-car dealers exploiting groups they consider to be less intelligent (Fiske 1998). The concept of ‘cold’ discrimination may also explain why many low-prejudiced people report that they sometimes respond with more bias toward members of stigmatized groups than they believe they should (Devine et al. 2002).

Although ‘hot’ discrimination may appear to be more damaging for individuals to whom the behavior is targeted, it is currently less examined in social psychological research than ‘cold’ discrimination. There are several reasons for this current trend. Most discrimination is not blatant (Schneider 2004). Researchers have reported a decline in explicit prejudices which trigger ‘hot discrimination’ in recent years, partly attributed to social norms which make the expressions of these behaviors unacceptable. Secondly, researchers concur that ‘cold’ discrimination can lead to self-fulfilling spirals that result in seemingly justified rejection. Third, for many minority groups, ‘cold’ discrimination is “unremitting and a constant part of the social environment they inhabit” (Schneider 2004, pg. 293).

There is a growing body of research documenting ‘cold’ discriminatory behaviors. Dovidio and his colleagues demonstrated that individuals who were high in implicit prejudice exhibited non-verbal behaviors and eye contact that were attributed to racist attitudes by confederate participants in an interracial exchange as well as by observers of the interaction (2002). Other researchers have found that individuals who are high in implicit prejudice are more likely to choose a White applicant for a teaching fellowship than a Black applicant (Vanman, Saltz, Nathan and Warren 2004).

A second purpose of discrimination research is to understand what functions hot and cold discrimination serve for individuals expressing these behaviors as well as the motivations behind them. The research examining the psychological processes behind discrimination returns us to the topics of stereotypes and prejudices. Some researchers contend the primary reason social psychologists study stereotyping and prejudice is because of the underlying assumption that these constructs explain discriminatory

treatment of social groups in societies (Dovidio et al. 2002). There are contrasting views regarding the relationships of these three phenomena, however, which are discussed in the next section of this chapter.

The final purpose of discrimination research is to examine why and in what situations individuals attribute behaviors to discrimination, how these attributions affect the perceivers, and what coping strategies they employ in response. This stream of research has been the most under-examined area of discrimination research. Eberhardt and Fiske (1996) proffer several reasons for the paucity of research. First, targets are not seen as causal agents who can impact their social environment in any meaningful way. Secondly, targets oftentimes do not control resources, and are therefore assumed to lack the ability to express their attitudes in ways that alter the social environment. Finally, researchers are typically members of the majority and take the perspective of the powerful as change agents, rather than targets as change agents. Eberhardt and Fiske (1996) assert, “By not permitting targets to function as subjects of study, we become blind to their capacity strategically to manipulate their social environment. As a result, we fail to consider seriously the complexities of target behavior and to apply this knowledge to our understanding of stereotype and prejudice”, (pg. 395).

In the last twenty years or so, social psychologists have increased research attention towards the targets of discrimination. There have been several experimental investigations examining people’s ability to detect discrimination or to label behavior as discriminatory (eg. Kaiser and Miller 2001; Major et al. 2002; Ruggiero and Taylor 1997, 1995). Members of groups that traditionally are the targets of discrimination are more prone to see discrimination against their own groups (Schneider 2004). Some people use

this and related statistics to argue that, “minority group members are far too ready to perceive bias when it was neither intended nor present” (Schneider 2004, pg. 301). This heightened suspicion regarding prejudice has been labeled attributional ambiguity (Operario and Fiske 2001). This view alleges a type of conspiracy theory with the majority asserting that minorities believe prejudice is lurking around every corner.

Conversely, other researchers believe the greater discrimination claims of low-status groups reported on surveys compared with members of high-status groups is more likely to be explained, “...by the greater frequency or severity of discrimination experienced by the former rather than by hypersensitivity to prejudice on their part,” (Major et al. 2002, pg. 280). There is empirical support which suggests discriminatory behavior may go undetected by individuals on the receiving end of the incongruent treatment (Branscombe et al. 1999). The perception that one is a victim and is worse off than others is extremely aversive, making it an inference that people tend to avoid. This has been labeled the minimization of prejudice effect (Kaiser and Miller 2001). According to this view, on the streets that minorities frequent, prejudice probably really is lurking around every corner though minorities only recognize it sometimes. Other studies provide a middle ground between the oppositional views of attributional ambiguity and the minimization of prejudice effect.

Stangor and his colleagues (2000, 2002) conducted a series of studies examining how situational influences affected attributions to discrimination. The results indicate stigmatized individuals report more discrimination when responding privately or in the presence of another stigmatized individual than in the presence of non-group members

(2000). Individuals were also more likely to attribute negative feedback to discrimination when they were an observer rather than the target of the treatment (2004). Attributions to discrimination have been found to be significantly greater following rejection by an outgroup member than rejection by an ingroup member (Major et al. 2002).

Another contextual variable is the amount of integration the target experiences (Postmes and Branscombe 2002). Two propositions have been suggested. The types of contact opportunities offered by racial integration may lead minority group members to see dominant group members increasingly as individuals, thus reducing attributions to discrimination (Postmes and Branscombe 2002). Conversely, it is also possible that day-to-day interaction with out-group members heightens one's awareness of intergroup differences, and as a result, could increase perceptions of discrimination (Postmes and Branscombe 2002). The relationship between integration and perceptions of discrimination remains to be tested. However, there is evidence that African Americans in segregated environments are higher in social identification and self-categorization, which may lead to increased perceptions of discrimination (Postmes and Branscombe 2002).

Personal beliefs and traits such as individual mobility and ethnic identification have been studied as predictors of attributions to discrimination (eg. Branscombe et al. 1999, Major et al. 2002, Operario and Fiske 2001). Individual mobility is, “the belief that the status hierarchy is permeable and individuals have the capacity to improve their own individual status” (Major et al. 2002, pg. 269). A 2002 study found that the more minority individuals embraced the ideology of individual mobility, the less likely they

were to attribute rejection to discrimination (Major et al. 2002). Ethnic identification describes a minority individual's association with his or her minority group's culture or intra-group differences and similarities. Two opposing hypotheses have been offered regarding the relationship between ethnic identification and perceptions of discrimination. One view posits that perceptions of discrimination are causally related to ethnic identification. In other words, the more minority group members recognize prejudice against their group, the more highly identified they become with that group (Branscombe et al. 1999). The reverse causal relationship is also plausible. That is, the more a minority individual identifies with his or her ethnic group, the more likely he or she is to make attributions to prejudice (Crocker and Major 1989). Branscombe and her colleagues (1999) used structural equation modeling to test bi-directionality for these and other alternative hypotheses. Their findings lend support for the first theory (Branscombe et al. 1999).

Research has consistently shown that members of minorities perceive a higher level of discrimination directed at their group as a whole than at themselves as individual members (Verkuyten 1998). This divergence has been labeled the personal-group discrepancy effect (PGD) (Verkuyten 1998, Kobrynowicz and Branscombe 1997). The PGD effect indicates the importance of studying separately perceptions of discrimination against one's group from individual attributions to discrimination. Some researchers have criticized the apparent emphasis on global perceptions of discrimination while minorities' experience and interpretation of individual situations remains neglected (Verkuyten 1998). Perceiving discrimination as an individual member of a group is methodologically different than perceiving discrimination directed at the group as a

whole and the former may be more directly related to individual well-being (Verkuyten 1998).

The more women or African-Americans perceive themselves to be victims of either gender or racial prejudice, the more they exhibit debilitating psychiatric and physical health symptoms (Branscome et al. 2004). Negative affect and psychological symptoms have all been found to be positively correlated with perceptions of discrimination (Crockett et al. 2003; Noh and Casper 2003). An appraisal of discrimination is threatening in that “victims impute stable, malevolent motives and intentions to the antagonist(s) and see themselves as a deliberate target of nasty attitudes and behavior by the antagonist(s)” (Dion 2001, pg. 4). More often than not, targets are unlikely to predict that they will be discriminated against. This unpredictability may serve as an additional source of stress, apart from the appraisal process itself.

Though these recent studies have enhanced our understanding of discrimination from the target’s perspective, there are some limitations. The studies have typically used examples of behaviors that are blatantly discriminatory. As previously noted, it is more likely that minority individuals will encounter more subtle forms of discrimination and little is known about the circumstances under which individuals perceive these behaviors as discriminatory. Additionally, extant research about motivation and stereotyping suggests there are tactics and strategies that targets of discrimination can employ to understand and predict the actions of those who might discriminate against them and, in certain cases, effectively change the nature of their relationship to potential perpetrators (Eberhardt and Fiske 1996). Eberhardt and Fiske (1996) list several of these strategies and identify risks the strategies might pose for targets. For example, they suggest targets

can motivate others to categorize them as members of the in-group by identifying shared goals, a common fate, or other similarities. While some of the strategies suggested by these researchers have been tested directly, there remain many as-yet-untested implications (Eberhardt and Fiske 1996).

Stereotypes, Prejudice and Discrimination

Traditionally, stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination have been described as components of category-based reactions, with stereotyping taken as the most cognitive component, prejudice as the most affective component and discrimination as the most behavioral component (Fiske 1998). More recent research suggests that each phenomenon is more complex than originally believed. There is now consensus among some prominent social psychologists that stereotypes and prejudice both have affective, cognitive and conative components (Dovidio et al. 1996; Fiske 1998). However, many popular scales used to measure these constructs appear to correspond with the traditional conceptualizations. These measurement issues may partly explain the lack of consensus regarding the relationship between stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination.

Some cynics contend, “Although stereotyping may be interesting in its own right, stereotypes seem to have little to do with attitudes and even less to do with discrimination” (Dovidio et al. 1996, pg. 311). The more established position is that stereotypes are significantly related to prejudice and prejudice systematically predicts discrimination (Dovidio et al. 1996). The original reason for studying stereotypes was because researchers thought it would help explain prejudice and discrimination (Schneider 1996). Other researchers propose it is also possible that stereotyping can

relate to discrimination in ways independent of prejudice (Dovidio 1996; Fiske 1998).

Dovidio and his colleagues (1996) performed a meta-analysis examining the interrelationships among racial stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination. The results of their analysis suggest that stereotypes are significantly related to both prejudice and discrimination, and that prejudice is significantly related to discrimination. Figure 1 depicts potential interrelationships among these constructs. Prejudice is represented as a negative attitude consisting of three components (affective, cognitive and conative). Stereotypes are conceptualized as the cognitive component of prejudice (Dovidio et al. 1996). A direct positive relationship between stereotypes and discrimination is posited to occur because “stereotypes represent a set of social expectations that can guide interpersonal behaviors to produce a self-fulfilling prophecy” (pg. 302). In their meta-analysis, Dovidio and his colleagues found that the relationship between stereotypes and discrimination was significant ($r=.16$) albeit weak. The researchers concluded, “...despite the conceptual arguments that racial stereotypes and discrimination should be positively related, the findings of the three studies are inconsistent and, at best, moderate in strength” (pg. 303). However, the authors conjecture the results may not be surprising given that the features of a specific situation may make norms or other types of information salient, which may override or moderate the influence of stereotypes.

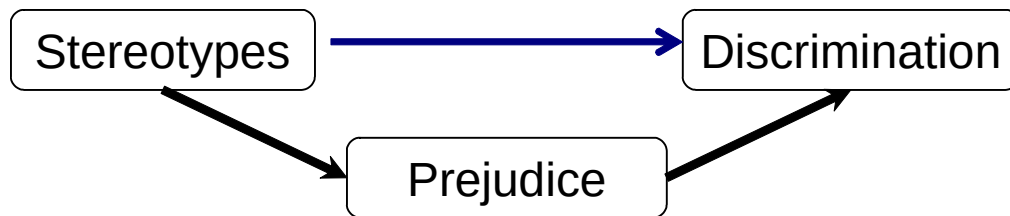


Figure 1. Potential relationship among stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination. (Dovidio, Brigham, Johnson and Gaertner 1996)

It has been further proposed that the relationships between stereotypes and discrimination, and stereotypes and prejudice may be bidirectional. It is plausible that people may stereotype others in order to justify their treatment of them. This position has been advocated from thought leaders such as Allport and Lippman. Additionally, it has been posited that on an aggregate level, this relationship serves to maintain the economic status quo. Similarly, it is possible that prejudice causes stereotypes. Schneider (2004) asserts, “It is not only possible but likely that we employ stereotypes to justify prejudices, as well as the reverse” (pg. 268).

There are other theoretical explanations that suggest other pathways as well. Fiske does not view stereotypes as part of prejudice, but as the cognitive component of category-based reactions (1998). She describes explicit prejudice as a consciously held attitude toward a social group, implicit prejudice as an automatic cognitive association between a social group and a negative evaluation (Cunningham et al. 2004). This type of conceptualization suggests relationships among stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination depicted in Figure 2.

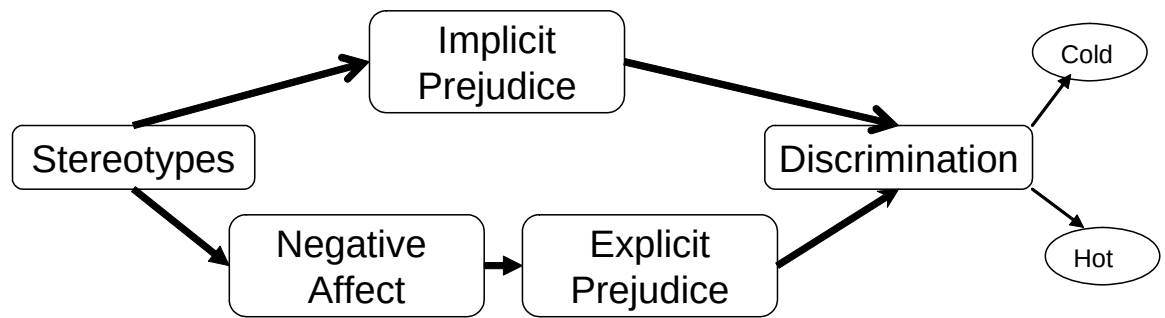


Figure 2. Alternative relationship among stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination.

Consistent with this depiction, Fiske maintains that prejudices predict discrimination far better than do stereotypes. Interestingly, she uses the meta-analysis performed by Dovidio and his colleagues (1996) which uses a different conceptualization for these constructs as support for this assertion. Their analysis indicated that prejudice correlated moderately with discrimination, with an effect size ($r = .32$), remarkably close to the typical magnitude of the attitude-behavior relationship ($r \approx .30$).

Despite the varying conceptualizations and the associated relationships among the constructs, there are some overarching similarities with important implications for this dissertation.

First, the different perspectives all indicate that stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination are largely context-driven. In the meta-analysis conducted by Dovidio and his colleagues (1996), the magnitude of the attitude-behavior relationship varied considerably across studies. The authors called for additional research examining stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination across different situations and contexts. One criticism levied against social science research in this area is that the stimuli used are often so devoid of social and cultural significance that they limit generalizability to the

social world (Schneider 1996). Examining real-life settings where discrimination potentially occurs can enhance our knowledge of how these phenomena are manifested in the real lives of out-group members as they interact.

Second, there is a consensus that stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination all have some apparently automatic aspects. Early work suggested that these automatic biases were present in a large majority of people and, because of their automatic nature, were immune from prevention or amelioration (Barden et al. 2004). This led some scholars to criticize that if true, this means that prejudice (and discrimination) is inevitable (eg. Arkes and Tetlock 2004, Lepore and Brown 1997). Recent research suggests that although stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination may be automatic, they are not unavoidable (eg. Monteith 1993, Blair and Banaji 1996, Dovidio et al. 2004). The automaticity of these phenomena has been likened to a “bad habit” – an overlearned response that can be unlearned (Dovidio et al. 1997, pg. 535). Dovidio (et al. 2004) reports an experimental study in which participants watched a series of discriminatory acts toward a Black man versus a White man while the two men engaged in common activities such as shopping. Participants’ prejudice-level was measured several weeks prior to the study and immediately after watching the video. Participants who were asked to imagine themselves as the Black man in the video showed a significant reduction in prejudice subsequent to the manipulation in comparison to participants in other conditions. The researchers propose that feelings associated with recognizing injustice after viewing acts of racial discrimination are key mediators of decreases in prejudice and that these feelings may be, in essence, trained or learned so they become automatic.

Third, researchers concur that discrimination can occur independently of racial animus. In Figure 1, the direct relationship between stereotypes and discrimination is consistent with the concept of ‘cold’ discrimination proposed by Fiske, while the pathway mediated by prejudice would lead to ‘hot’ discrimination. This means that in certain cases, individuals may not be aware that they are behaving in ways that could be considered discriminatory by a target or an observer (Dovidio et al. 2002). As such, it becomes even more important to ascertain what information targets use to form perceptions of discrimination. Would-be ‘perpetrators’ of discrimination can then be trained to avoid those behaviors to minimize perceptions of discrimination.

Clearly, stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination are complex phenomena and are related in complex ways. One researcher likens defining these concepts as akin to defining pornography – hard to define, but “people know it when they see it – or at least they think they do” (Schneider 2004, pg. 27). The focus of this dissertation is a particular context in which African Americans often think they see discrimination – retail settings. In order to understand the nature of this particular phenomenon, a similar phenomenon is discussed, racial profiling.

RACIAL PROFILING

Racial profiling originally referred to the use of race as an explicit criterion in ‘profiles’ of offenders that some police organizations issued to guide police officers’ decision making (Engel, Calnon and Bernard 2002). The first official racial profile originated with the attempt to prohibit the flow of drugs from Miami up I-95 to cities in the Northeast. The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles issued

guidelines in which race and ethnicity were explicitly listed as characteristics to identify potential suspects (Engel et al. 2002). The U.S. Department of Justice shed light on this practice during a 1998 investigation of the New Jersey State Police which revealed officers singled out racial or ethnic groups for relatively minor traffic crimes in order to question and or search them for drugs, guns, and other contraband (www.racialprofilinganalysis.neu.edu). Today, racial profiling refers to the practice of using one characteristic – race – to identify and/or detain potential suspects (Gold 2003). This practice may be explicit or implicit. Numerous front-page news stories and editorials have appeared in both the national and local press discussing racial profiling and its individual and social costs. Also indicative of this growing public interest are the tens of thousands of American web pages that result from a search using the words ‘racial profiling’ (Gold 2003). Survey research suggests Americans of all races believe the police actively engage in the practice of racial profiling (Weitzer and Tuch 2002).

The media spotlight on racial profiling by the police brought the subject to the attention of public policy makers as well. In June 1999, President Bill Clinton directed federal agencies to begin the process of collecting data on the race and ethnicity of persons stopped or searched by federal agents. Since then, more than 20 states have passed legislation prohibiting racial profiling and/or mandating data collection on stops and searches. There is currently no federal law specifically prohibiting the practice of racial profiling. The crux of most claims of racial profiling is that the use of race or ethnicity to detain an individual is a violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution (Smith and Alpert 2002). However, a bipartisan committee has proposed The End Racial Profiling Act to prohibit the practice

of racial profiling and allow the Justice Department or individuals the ability to file a suit for injunctive relief (www.racialprofilinganalysis.neu.edu).

Recently researchers in the field of criminology have turned their attention to racial profiling as well:

“One of the most salient issues facing the police today is the use of race as a criterion in police decision making during discretionary traffic and field stops, often described as racial profiling,” (Parker, MacDonald, Alpert, Smith and Piquero 2004).

“One of the most salient research and public policy issues that police administrators and researchers face is the use of race as a criterion in police decision making during discretionary traffic and field interrogation stops..” (Engel, Calnon and Bernard 2002, pg. 249).

“Racial profiling is one of the most significant issues confronting law enforcement today.” (Smith and Alpert 2002, pg. 674).

Even though the awareness of racial profiling as an important phenomenon has grown, research on the subject is limited (Smith and Alpert 2002). The majority of work in this area has consisted of collecting data from police and federal agencies and comparing the number of stops, searches, citations, and arrests among individuals in various ethnic groups. Most often, researchers have used U.S. Census Data on the percentages of ethnic groups in a given area as a benchmark to ascertain whether or not officers (or agencies) are engaging in racial profiling. A smaller number of researchers assert that a more appropriate benchmark is the relevant population not the total population. In the case of traffic violations for example, the relevant population would be licensed drivers. Of the studies that have been reported, half were conducted in-house by law enforcement agencies using their own data and personnel, the other half by outside researchers (Smith and Alpert 2002). The majority of these studies have indicated that

minorities are stopped, searched and sometimes ticketed at rates that exceed those for whites (Smith and Alpert 2002). This conclusion is noteworthy considering the apparent self-interest conflicts inherent in some of the studies and the many different types of agencies and localities examined. One researcher remarks, "The practice (of racial profiling) is alive and well throughout America. A long history of racial profiling has and continues to be well-documented.... Evidence supports the vilification of racial nonelites," (Coates 2004, pg. 874).

Although such findings are indeed striking, there have been recent criticisms of the approach that has been employed in the majority of studies on racial profiling. Researchers have been accused of simply counting things – the number of stops, number of tickets – and failing to provide theoretical explanations for these behaviors (Engel et al. 2002). This has prompted researchers to call for more theoretical research (Engel et al. 2002, Coates 2004). Some scholars have begun to answer this call.

Theories on Racial Profiling

"Unfortunately, as long as racial profiling is treated as a problem and not a symptom, few actual remedies will be forthcoming. To treat racial profiling as the problem, much like treating only the cough that comes with smoking, is to treat only the symptoms. Racial profiling is part of a larger, more ingrained problem in Western culture." (Coates 2004, pg. 874).

Engel and her colleagues conceptualize racial profiling as a phenomenon with three types of dependent variables - the behavior of individual criminal justice agents, the behavior of criminal justice agencies, and the aggregate-level characteristics of the entire criminal justice system or its component parts (2002).

They suggest that theories and constructs from other disciplines may be borrowed to explain each of the three dependent variables. For example, it is suggested that the theory of coercive actions might explain the social dynamics involved during interactions between officers and citizens which may influence officers' behavior. Additionally, expectancy theory suggests that workers' perceptions of the value of particular work behaviors are altered by various factors. The authors posit, "Applying this theory to police behavior - as these factors change, officers' willingness to perform work activities will also change" (pg. 268). Similarly, organization and management theories are offered as potential explanations of criminal justice agencies and aggregate-level behaviors and decision making.

Parker and her colleagues (2004) call for theoretical research focusing more on the context within which racial profiling occurs, specifically on police practices in local jurisdictions. These researchers draw on urban sociological literature - social disorganization theory, urban disadvantage and neighborhood collective efficacy - to describe how features of communities may shape the behavior of the police within the context of racial profiling (Parker et al. 2004).

Critical Race Theory (CRT) has also been proffered as an explanation for racial profiling practices. According to the tenets of CRT, race-based law enforcement perpetuates white supremacy. This form of systemic racism is posited as a causal link of racial profiling ultimately resulting in one-third of all African American males being under some form of criminal justice supervision. (Romero 2003).

While the research cited above applies theory from other disciplines to explain racial profiling practices, Gabbidon (2003) uses criminology theories to explain the particular type of racial profiling that is the focus of this study – retail racial profiling or ‘Shopping while Black’. Gabbidon describes two potentially applicable theories: labeling perspective and conflict theory.

The labeling perspective refers to the practice of labeling people of color as criminals. Although the practice is likely to have been around for years, it has been discussed by scholars only recently, in the past decade or so (Gabbidon 2003). The stereotype of African Americans includes ‘criminal’ as a characteristic associated with the group (Devine 1989). Labeling perspective suggests that tagging African Americans with the label ‘criminal’ may cause people to react to this group differently. As a result, African Americans may be scrutinized more closely and considered a suspect even in the absence of supporting evidence. This perspective further suggests that African Americans are aware of the label as well and may take the label on and act it out in a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy, though most do not (Gabbidon 2003).

Conflict theory centers on power differentials based on class and race (Gabbidon 2003). According to conflict theory, the majority White ruling class endorses policies such as racial profiling that principally affect the working class and minority groups in order to maintain a privileged position in society. Racial profiling thus becomes a way of maintaining the status-quo. In the context of ‘Shopping while Black,’ it infers that no matter how much money an African

American has, he/she can still be 'brought back down to place' by a salesclerk or security guard who is part of the majority ruling class.

The recent calls for theoretical research on racial profiling have produced conflicting descriptions of the role of racial prejudice in the practice of racial profiling. Largely absent in recent analysis of profiling is any notion of 'racial animus' or racial prejudice. The prior section suggests that stereotypes and prejudice may drive discrimination. This relationship has been inferred by social scientists in their analyses of analogous decision making among key actors in other institutional domains, such as the workplace and the housing market. However, no existing social science research has systematically assessed stereotypes and prejudice in the context of profiling (Wilson, Dunham and Alpert 2004).

Wilson, Dunham and Alpert (2004) appear to be the first researchers to suggest that stereotypes be examined in the context of racial profiling. The stereotype of African Americans infers they are aggressive and criminal (Devine 1989; Fiske 1998). Wilson and his colleagues contend that among law enforcement officers, this stereotype is deep-rooted and widely held and may influence their attitudes and behaviors. They use the concepts of statistical discrimination and attribution bias to describe how stereotypes and bias may operate in decision-making contexts. Statistical discrimination refers to the assignment of stereotypes of a group to any one of its members by key decision makers resulting in a negative outcome for that individual. Confirmatory attribution bias is the tendency of people to selectively accentuate negative

aspects of racial minorities, such as their physical appearance, characteristics, or behavior. Statistical discrimination and confirmatory attribution bias are conceptually very similar to the concepts of cold discrimination and hot discrimination described in the prior section of this dissertation. Wilson and his colleagues suggest these processes are manifested in the context of police stops and searches. Likewise, it is plausible they occur in retail settings as well (Harris, Henderson and Williams 2005).

NATURE OF RETAIL SETTINGS

A substantial majority of ethnic minority consumers report that they at least occasionally experience poor service in stores or restaurants that they attribute to race or ethnicity (Crockett et al. 2003). In a large-scale national survey, 61 % of African Americans reported experiencing racial discrimination on a daily basis (Sellers and Shelton 2003). A 1997 Gallup Poll found 45 % of Blacks surveyed reported being discriminated against while shopping (Fix and Turner 2003). What is it about the nature of retail settings that generates perceptions of discrimination among ethnic minorities with such regularity?

When customers and sales associates interact with each other in retail settings, each enters the exchange with his or her own expectations and perceptions (Fine and Schumann 1992). Additionally, as they interact, each person's expectations and perceptions influence the exchange producing a unique communicative outcome. These types of encounters have been described as dyadic interactions or interpersonal perception (van Dolen et al. 2002). Although there has been increased acknowledgement

of dyadic interactions in retail environments, there is a lack of information on the underlying mechanisms that govern these interactions (van Dolen et al. 2002).

The limited theoretical research on racial profiling suggests that in addition to the direct participants in an exchange (eg. Police officers and alleged traffic violators), entities further up the hierarchy, such as the local police precincts or federal agencies, contribute to the phenomenon as well (eg. Parker et al. 2004; Gabbidon 2004).

Correspondingly, to understand how perceptions of discrimination arise in retail settings, researchers must consider the roles of consumers, retail sales associates and the retail environment overall. Although it is recognized that any consumer may perceive that they are being discriminated against, in keeping with the purpose of this study, the focus will be on African American consumers.

Consumers

Customers may enter retail settings hoping to fulfill functional needs such as saving time or money. They may also hope to fulfill social needs such as deriving satisfaction from a social exchange or from developing/sustaining an ongoing relationship (Beatty et al. 1996). Van Dolen and his colleagues suggest that in retail settings, the consumer's satisfaction with an exchange is a function of two things, the consumer's perception of the salesperson's performance and the salesperson's perception of the salesperson's performance as depicted in Figure 3.

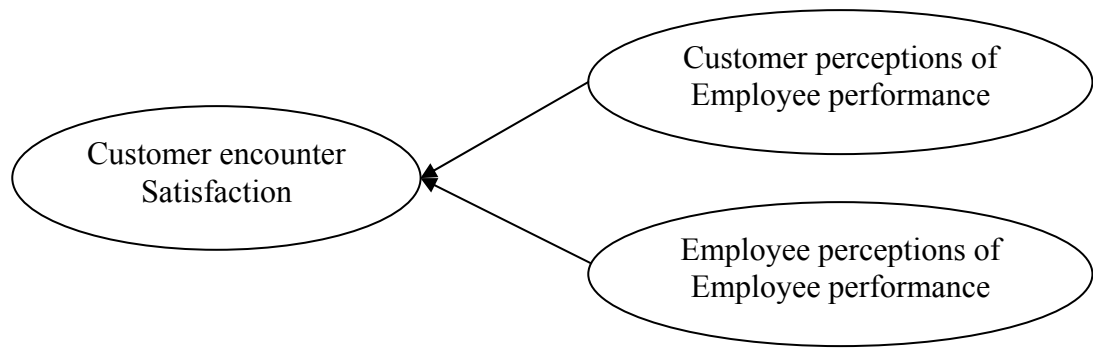


Figure 3. Customer Satisfaction and Perceptions (van Dolen (2002), pg. 265)

Perceptions are not formed in a vacuum but are influenced by an individual's prior experiences and associated beliefs. Thompson (1997) describes perceptions as, "fundamentally and inescapably shaped by socio-historic conditions" (pg. 446). There is no reason to believe that perceptions formed in retail settings should be any different. The customer's perceptions of an employee and that employee's performance are influenced by the consumer's relevant social and cultural experiences. The literature reviewed in this chapter suggests that for African American consumers, race and ethnicity are both likely to color the lenses through which these perceptions are formed.

Race as employed in this research refers to the categorization of an individual to a geographically-concentrated or phenotypically-distinct group based solely on his or her physical appearance by another person. While the social psychological research has predominantly examined stereotypes of minority groups, there is research that suggests African Americans hold stereotypes of Whites as well (eg. Hughes and Baldwin 2002, Heaven and Green 2001). A survey conducted in 1994 found that 76 % of African Americans felt that Whites are insensitive to people and 79 % believed that Whites see themselves as superior (Hughes and Baldwin 2002). African American consumers who

hold this stereotype are likely to be negatively predisposed to sales interactions involving Caucasian sales staff.

Research suggests that African American's attitudes towards Whites are a function of not only their evaluation of Whites, but also their expectations of anti-Black attitudes from Whites (Johnson and Lecci 2003). Such expectations might increase the probability that certain Blacks will perceive racism in the behavior of Whites if racial motivations are ambiguous (Johnson and Lecci 2003). Compounding this problem is the fact that African Americans and Whites may have different communication styles and expectations in interactions (Martin et al. 2001). Marketing researchers have begun to acknowledge this (eg. Rotfeld 2002; Bush et al. 2001). Rotfeld (2002) states, "...it should be intuitively obvious that people from different backgrounds expect different types of service in a store." For example, while some (White) consumers might prefer a sales clerk to leave them alone as they are shopping, other consumers (Black) might view the same behavior as a deliberate racial snub. There is empirical evidence that Black consumers tend to view salesclerks as less 'likable' than White consumers do (Jones et al. 1998). Earlier research indicates that Black consumers place more emphasis on variables relating to the perceived understanding and friendliness of the salesperson, while white respondents consider the perceived qualifications of the salesperson as the primary variable in forming initial impressions (LaTour, Henthorne and Williams 1989). Bush and her colleagues (2001) argue that the changing demographics of the marketplace requires salespersons who are skilled in adaptive behaviors that allow them to respond as needed for satisfactory encounters with culturally diverse consumers. From a marketing

standpoint, it becomes critical to know what kinds of service expectations minorities have.

Retail Sales Associates

Customers' needs and expectations are only one side of the retail equation. These customers are interacting with salespeople who also have goals and motives for engaging in exchanges. Like the customer, the salesperson's perceptions are also influenced by his or her previous experiences and beliefs. Salespeople often have constraints that prevent contact with every potential customer. A salesperson's perceptions may govern the choice of who to sell to (Fine and Schumann 1992).

Research indicates that sales associates often make judgments on the basis of physical cues (eg. Cronin 1994). Gabbidon (2003) suggests that the stereotype of Blacks as criminal results in the label 'criminal' being applied to African Americans indiscriminately. This predicts that salesclerks would tend to view African American consumers negatively and, given a choice, would approach a White sales prospect as opposed to a Black sales prospect.

People in general, and Whites particularly, have less experience with people from other racial groups than with people from their own race (Plant and Devine 2003; Martin et al. 2001). This may produce nervous behaviors in interracial interactions (Plant and Devine 2003). In turn, these behaviors have the potential to be interpreted as displays of underlying prejudice regardless of the person's intention or attitude. Correspondingly, Yinger (1998) notes, "People who are treated differently because of their superficial physical characteristics, such as skin color or the shape of facial features, develop

behavioral patterns that respond to or rationalize their differential treatment" (pg. 24). In retail settings, "the behaviors of buyer and seller are non-recursive, each influencing the other, and in turn being influenced by the other's reactions to that influence" (Cronin 1994, pg. 69). Thus interracial anxieties in retail settings may fuel a prophetic spiral with the attitudes of one group producing corresponding negative attitudes and behaviors in the other group. Additionally, Evans and his colleagues note, "It seems that certain traits associated with the first impression may lead to behaviors that seek to confirm, rather than objectively test, one's initial assessment of the sales prospect" (2000, pg. 521). This suggests salesclerks may have a tendency to accentuate the negative and attenuate the positive in sales encounters with African Americans.

Retail Settings

Customers can build relationships with the firm, or specific branches, stores and departments, or they can build relationships with individual sales associates (Beatty et al. 1996). Similarly, a negative experience with an individual sales associate can transfer to the department, the store, the branch or the firm. Empirical evidence suggests consumers often have more negative views of sales encounters than employees or managers are aware of (Chung-Herrera, Goldschmidt and Hoffman 2004). This finding should be particularly troublesome to retail managers as customer service and satisfaction may be the most effective point of differentiation in the increasingly saturated retail industry (Machleit, Meyer and Eroglu 2005). Despite these important implications, most empirical work on employee-customer interactions and relationships has been conducted in contexts other than retailing (Beatty et al. 1996).

Marketing strategist George Day (2000) describes marketing exchanges as existing along a continuum, with transactional exchanges at one end and collaborative exchanges at the other end. 'Transactional exchanges' in a business-to-consumer context refers to anonymous encounters, such as a visitor to a city taking a taxi to a hotel. At the other end of the spectrum are collaborative exchanges in which all parties of the exchange are mutually committed to long-term relationship. Between these extremes lie value-adding exchanges. Value-adding exchanges occur when the selling firm shifts its focus from getting customers to keeping customers. Although firms may have some latitude in determining what type of exchange to engage in, there are limits imposed by the character of the markets (Day 2000).

In this dissertation, retail refers to business-to-consumer product-exchange environments ranging from national discount stores to local upscale boutiques. Unlike some firms, a key component of most retail environments is the interaction that occurs between customers and front-line sales employees. Even at what would be considered the lowest end of the spectrum, a customer interacts with the cashier who 'closes' the sale. Retail managers who view relationship building as appropriate only for a few valuable customers buying risky and expensive purchases are engaging in myopic framing (Day 2000). The Internet and a multitude of delivery options have enabled any retailer to be, in essence, a national competitor, able to engage in repetitive sales with customers scattered across the globe. As such, the notion of 'transactional exchanges' as described above is largely absent in retail settings. Every sale, every interaction, is a 'moment of truth' for most retailers with the potential to add or lose a new loyal customer (Day 2000). It has been asserted that managing relationships with customers is central to

achieving a strategic advantage in the marketplace (Beatty et al. 1996, Day 2000). Thus, understanding the needs, perceptions and experiences of customers in these retail settings becomes imperative.

Looking closely at a customer's perception of a single market encounter may serve as a conduit to learning more about marketing relationships in general. Consumers frequently experience negative emotions in purchase-related situations. Even a relatively short encounter with a salesperson may be an emotionally charged experience (Stern, Thompson and Arnould 1998). How consumers cope with negative emotions is an important issue for marketers because coping may influence post-purchase behaviors, such as repurchase and negative word-of-mouth communication. The increasingly multicultural nature of the marketplace requires managers to take into account different possible customer experiences and expectations and hire salespeople capable of empathizing with all potential consumers (Rotfeld 2002). Additionally, tangential research suggests that by publicly denouncing discriminatory practices, retailers may make perceptions of discrimination less likely.

There is a consensus in the marketing management literature that a relationship or customer-orientation must begin with management before it can be effectively implemented by a sales force (Day 2000). Machleit and her colleagues (2005) suggest that a customer's experience in a retail environment is largely shaped by temporal and contextual factors in the setting that retail managers are able to control to some extent. A recent study examining consumers' perceptions of certain experiences in retail stores concluded that most hassles can be avoided through rigorous employee screening and training programs (Machleit et al. 2005). Likewise, this research suggests the retailer

itself may play a pivotal role in minimizing perceptions of discrimination amongst minority consumers.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of African Americans' experience of perceived discrimination in retail settings. The concept of perceived discrimination and the impact of these experiences have received little attention in the marketing literature. Although the social psychology field has studied discrimination (and its' assumed antecedents stereotyping and prejudice) extensively, only recently have researchers begun examining this phenomenon from the target's perspective. This research has primarily explored perceptions of discrimination in classroom and workplace settings. There are important distinctions between those settings and retail settings that may affect perceptions of discrimination.

The first difference is the amount of time that individuals spend in these settings. In classroom and workplace settings, individuals have the opportunity to see how other students and co-workers are treated in various situations and over extended periods of time. The ability of one to observe the treatment of others in a retail setting is quite limited in comparison as Ayres notes, "In many contexts, it is difficult for individuals to know whether they are the victims or the beneficiaries of discrimination because they do not know how other types of people are treated" (2001, pg. 2420). Secondly, classroom and workplace environments may be viewed as competitive situations for individuals who might perceive discriminatory practices directed towards them. It is less likely that retail settings would be described as competitive from the consumer's perspective. The

final difference has to do with the perceived availability of alternatives. Many students and employees might not feel they have the flexibility to leave a class or job if they feel they are being discriminated against. However, consumers who feel they are being discriminated against can easily choose to physically remove themselves from the situation. It is difficult (if not impossible) to generalize from class and workplace situations to the marketplace. If marketers want answers to the problem of perceived discrimination in retail settings, then market-specific research needs to be done.

Researchers have contended that understanding consumer experiences is a critical step in strategy formulation (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994). Practitioners realize that changing demographics within the United States require understanding the various ethnic and cultural markets to remain competitive. Thus by investigating African Americans' experiences of perceived discrimination in retail settings, this research makes a contribution to both theory and practice as discussed in detail in Chapter One.

This study employed an existential-phenomenological approach to investigate the phenomenon of interest. This chapter explains why this approach was chosen for this research and details the methodology employed. Specifically, this chapter is organized as follows: 1) Historical Origins of Existential-Phenomenology, 2) Existential-phenomenology as a Form of Inquiry, 3) Existential-phenomenology in Marketing Research, 4) Procedures Employed and 5) Evaluative Criteria.

HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF EXISTENTIAL-PHENOMENOLOGY

Though the words 'existential' and 'phenomenology' are often used in tandem to describe a particular qualitative tradition, each term refers to a distinct philosophical

movement with its own historical development, purpose and assumptions. Movements such as these are characterized by a broad approach that tends to be shared rather than a body of doctrine that all participants follow (Kose 1993). As such, there may be methodological discrepancies within existentialism and phenomenology by pundits claiming to adhere to these approaches. Although distinct, existentialism and phenomenology are highly complementary (Valle et al. 1989). Combining certain elements of each approach and labeling the resulting combination existential-phenomenology adds to the confusion. In an attempt to clarify the existential-phenomenological approach employed in this research, a historical overview of existentialism, phenomenology and existential-phenomenology is provided. The overview will serve an additional purpose of describing the philosophical perspectives behind the approach of existential-phenomenology.

Existentialism

The two most influential thinkers in the creation of existentialism are Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. Existentialism is generally thought to have originated with Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard during the early 1800s (Valle et al. 1989). The original purpose of existential philosophy was to examine, “the concrete existence of the individual person and attempt to elucidate the fundamental themes with which human beings invariably struggle” (Valle et al. 1989, pg. 6). The philosophy arose as a backlash against scientific study that treated human beings as instances of universal laws (Guignon 2004). Kierkegaard criticized the scientific view as inadequate to explain unique individuals in concrete situations. Instead, he viewed human beings as ‘existing

individuals' with no real connections to anything in this world (Guignon 2004). This separation produced a two-fold conundrum. On the one hand, it allowed individuals the freedom to make their own choices. However, these choices are made in the face of the unknown that ultimately leads to a sense of dread. Kierkegaard's intent was to intensify feelings of anxiety and despair in order to bring a person into a defining relationship with God (Guignon 2004).

German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche is regarded as the next influential figure in existentialism thought, although his aim was quite different than Kierkegaard's (Guignon 2004). He believed that by abandoning a belief in absolutes, such as God and divine will, people would become responsible for their own 'existence'. If 'God is dead', then each person must uniquely determine their reason for living.

The contrasting aims of Kierkegaard's and Nietzsche's teachings have caused researchers to observe that "...existentialism has been used to justify everything from theism to atheism" (Kose 1993, pg. 294). The existential focus on the core existence of the person remains the same despite the different aims of the early philosophers. There are some basic commonalities that describe what is called "existentialism" (Guignon 2004). The first is the concept of individual uniqueness (Kose 1993). Kierkegaard argued that actions and choices can only be understood from the subjective standpoint of the agent. The second is the concept of freedom. Human beings have the freedom to make their own choices in life; they are not restricted by others (Kierkegaard) or by God (Nietzsche). This freedom makes humans responsible or 'respond-able' for their choices and ultimate fate. Finally, there is the theme of authenticity. Existentialists posit that

most individuals tend to live their lives in a 'herd', allowing social norms to dictate behaviors. This type of life is described as 'inauthentic'. Existentialists are concerned with helping individuals live the most authentic and fulfilling life possible (Valle et al. 1989).

Phenomenology

The word 'phenomenology' is derived from the Greek words *phainomenon* (an appearance) and *logos* ('reason' or 'word'). German philosopher Edmund Husserl is generally recognized as the founder of phenomenology (Valle et al. 1989). In his work *Logische Untersuchungen (Logical Investigations)*, Husserl called for a return 'zu den Sachen selbst' or 'to the matters (things) themselves' (Embree 1998). Phenomenology was based on the principle that scientific knowledge begins with a fresh and unbiased description of its subject matter (Wertz 2005). The purpose of phenomenological research was, "the rigorous and unbiased study of things *as they appear* so that one might come to an essential understanding of human consciousness and experience" (Valle et al. 1989, pg. 6, italics in the original). Phenomenological research differs from other descriptive and qualitative research because its focus is on the subject's experienced meaning instead of on descriptions of their overt actions or behavior (Polkinghorne 1988). The phenomenology proposed by Husserl is sometimes referred to as 'descriptive' phenomenology (Embree 1998). Other types of phenomenology have emerged from this conceptual foundation - realistic phenomenology, constitutive phenomenology, transcendental phenomenology, existential-phenomenology and hermeneutical phenomenology. Although these approaches sometimes overlap

temporally and conceptually, the primary emphasis in each is different. However, the core ideas, methods, and often the terminology, used in each of these various phenomenological movements originated with Husserl's work.

There are four discernible themes present in phenomenology. First is the call to return 'to the matters themselves' (Wertz 2005). Husserl referred to this as the *epoche* of the natural sciences (Wertz 2005). This *epoche* requires researchers to set aside or *bracket* scientific assumptions and investigate the subject matter as it exists prior to and independent of scientific knowledge. This requirement does not imply that knowledge generated through the scientific method is false; often this knowledge is in fact needed to warrant additional inquiry through phenomenological methods (Creswell 1998). Received science is however suspended, "for the sake of fresh research access to the matters to be investigated" (Wertz 2005, pg. 168). This *epoche* enables investigators to study what Husserl describes as *lebenswelt*, the prescientific life-world – "...as it is lived, precisely as it is encountered in everyday affairs," (Wertz 2005, pg. 168). The process of focusing on the realm of phenomena or *lebenswelt* is referred to as *phenomenological reduction* (Howarth 1998).

The second theme is the *intuition of essence* or the *eidetic reduction* (Wertz 2005). The goal of phenomenological research is to provide a presuppositionless description (Howarth 1998). Eidetic reduction is the process of delineating the invariant characteristics of a phenomenon to determine the essence of the phenomenon (Wertz 2005). Essence in traditional philosophy refers to a general character, or a universal in the sense that a certain number of things belong to it while others do not (Ihde 1986). Phenomenological research describes the essence of a phenomenon - tells readers what

something essentially is (Wertz 2005). Husserl proposes a test for determining what is essential: ask the question “Can the phenomenon be imagined without it?” (Howarth 1998). The purpose and methods of uncovering essences varies in the phenomenological movements.

The third theme is *intentionality*. Intentionality refers to the idea that consciousness is always directed towards an object (Wertz 2005). That which stands out is described as the core of the phenomenon (Ihde 1986). In everyday life, individuals are exposed to multiple stimuli almost continuously. At any point in time, an individual’s attention (consciousness) is directed towards a particular stimulus while other stimuli fade into the background. “All experience is experience of something” (Ihde 1986, pg. 42). Two terms associated with intentionality are *noema* and *noesis*. Noema refers to that which is experienced, while noesis refers to how it is experienced (Ihde 1986). How one person experiences something may be different than how another person experiences it. Intentionality includes the meaning that something has for the individual. Ihde describes intentionality as the directional shape of experience, “the rule that specifies the horizon or boundary of phenomenology within which the totality of things may be dealt with” (1986, pg. 41).

A key difference between phenomenology and existentialism is that phenomenology puts aside presuppositions, including the existential belief that objects exist in and of themselves as an absolute entity, apart from a consciousness that perceives them (von Eckartsberg 1998). What remains when these beliefs are suspended is the phenomenon as it is presented to consciousness.

Existential-phenomenology

The origins of existential-phenomenology as a distinct philosophy are difficult to trace. Most of the philosophers associated with the term identified themselves as existentialists or phenomenologists. There are however three figures consistently recognized for their contributions to existential-phenomenological thought - German philosopher Martin Heidegger, and French philosophers Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (von Eckartsberg 1998).

Heidegger's main contribution to existential-phenomenology is the concept of *Dasein* - literally "there-being" (Valle et al. 1989). Existentialism viewed individuals as separated from a world presumed to exist completely independent of them. Heidegger proposed instead that the world comes into existence for individuals in and through their participation in the world or their 'being-in-the-world'. Heidegger referred to his approach as hermeneutics of existence, the interpretive characterization of existence in the world (von Eckartsberg 1998).

Heidegger describes three primary modes of being-in-the-world (Brice 1978). The first mode is Thrown (*Geworfenheit*). Human beings are 'thrown' into a world not of their own choosing. There are certain 'givens' that human beings face. One cannot choose one's parents, the time and place of one's birth or the fact that one will die. In accordance with existentialist thought, Heidegger acknowledges individuals have possibilities and freedom. However, Heidegger believes this freedom is limited by the 'givens'. This idea of freedom within constraints is referred to as *situated freedom* (Brice 1978). The second mode is Fallen (*verfallen*) (Brice 1978). In a social environment, individuals interact with others through work, recreation, almost all human endeavors

(Anderson 1998). In these social situations, individuals attempt to avoid crises by following (or *falling to*) the masses. In other words, individuals surrender their individuality to the ‘dictatorship of the they’ (Brice 1978, pg. 301). This mode closely reflects the existential concept of inauthenticity. The third mode is Understanding (*verstehen*) (Brice 1978). Human beings are always works in progress. Brice states, “Our being-in-the-world is never positional or static but is always one step ahead; we are always there (Da)” (1978, pg. 301). As such, human beings are always *becoming*, never simply *being* as existentialism suggests. This mode opens individuals to the realm of possibility.

The term ‘existentialism’ was first used by critics of French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre (Guignon 2004). Sartre was heavily influenced by Husserl and Heidegger. The key contribution Sartre made to existential-phenomenology was the axiom ‘existence precedes essence’ (Valle et al. 1989). In other words, “...human reality is what it has chosen to be” (Embree 1998). This concept logically follows from the foundation laid by Heidegger. If individuals are free to make choices within constraints, then a person is the sum total of his or her life choices (von Eckartsberg 1998). Sartre introduced the term *fundamental project* to refer to the way each person chooses his or her life to be (McConville 1978). According to Sartre, one is always moving beyond oneself toward something else (von Eckertsberg 1998). To comprehend *being*, one must consider both subject (*pour soi*) and world (*en soi*) (Mcconville 1978). The study of individuals requires gaining an understanding of how one goes about fulfilling his or her possibilities (von Eckertsberg 1998). To accomplish this, Sartre proposes that researchers must,

“...enter the original situatedness of that person biographically in terms of the operative historical and cultural conditions; seek to understand the purpose or goal choice that governs the direction of the action taken by means of which the person surpasses the givens in the direction of his or her possibles” (von Eckertsberg 1998).

Maurice Merleau-Ponty is perhaps the name most often associated with existential-phenomenology. His key contribution lies with his expanded conceptualization of intentionality. Intentionality, as envisioned by Merleau-Ponty, included not only the immediate object or stimulus to which attention is directed but also the embodied existence and interactive communication that precedes it. According to Merleau-Ponty, the ‘mind’ and ‘body’ in human life are inseparable. This integrated form was referred to as ‘the phenomenal body’ (Baldwin 1998). ‘The phenomenal field’ describes the sum-total of person’s experiences, the embodied existence, which is ever-present (Merleau-Ponty 197?). Through the process of perception, meaning is bestowed upon the objects of experience (Baldwin 1998). Merleau-Ponty was concerned with human existence as embodied perception in the world and the inherent structures in what is perceived (Embree 1998). Though Merleau-Ponty considered Husserl’s aim of phenomenological reduction to be worthwhile, he believed that a totally presuppositionless vantage point is not obtainable.

Neither Heidegger, Sartre, nor Merleau-Ponty used the term ‘existential-phenomenology’. Nevertheless, the influence of all three can be seen in the paradigm so labeled (Valle et al. 1989).

EXISTENTIAL-PHENOMENOLOGY AS A FORM OF INQUIRY

Core Concepts of Existential-phenomenology

Existential-phenomenology combines the methods of phenomenology with the philosophy of existentialism (Von Eckaratsberg 1998; Valle et al. 1989). The purpose of existential-phenomenology is to understand the essence or essential structure of human experience as it emerges in some context using descriptive techniques such as disciplined reflection. There are three core concepts of existential-phenomenology: co-constitutionality, situated freedom, and reflection. The following paragraphs describe these concepts and their implications for the proposed research.

Co-Constitutionality

The central concept of existential-phenomenology is the inseparability and interdependence of man and the world. Existential-phenomenologists refer to this as *co-constitutionality* (Valle 1978). The goal of existential-phenomenology is to describe experience as it emerges in some context or, to rephrase this, as it is lived by the participant (Thompson et al. 1989). Valle notes, “In the truest sense, the person is viewed as having no existence apart from the world, and the world as having no existence apart from persons” (1978, pg. 7). This concept is conveyed visually through the use of a black and white drawing. The focal point in the drawing can be the white image (the vase) or the black image (the face profiles) (Valle et al. 1989). One image is made possible only through the existence of the other image. When one image is the focal point, the other image is its background. Thompson and his colleagues (1989) employ the Gestalt notion of figure/ground to describe this concept. They note, “A particular

setting can afford different experiences as certain aspects of the context stand out while others recede and become background for the experience” (pg. 136). Intentionality is what determines which aspect stands out as the focal point (the figure) and which recede into the background (ground).

Existential-phenomenologists study the totality of ‘human-being-in-the world’. Though the concept of ‘being-in-the-world’ was originally articulated by Heidegger, there is a difference between Heidegger’s use of the term and ‘human-being-in-the-world’ as conceptualized in existential-phenomenology. Heidegger proffers that the world comes into being for an individual through his/her perception of it. Existential-phenomenology further suggests a ‘dialogal’ relationship exists between people and the world such that the world exerts an influence on people as well. The world presents situations in which the person must act. These decisions ultimately influence who the person becomes. This product of this interaction is the *Lebenswelt* or life-world – the world as lived by the person (Valle and King 1989).

Co-constitutionality has two implications for existential-phenomenological research. The first is that experience emerges in a contextual setting and is not entirely subjective or objective. The second implication is that experience is understood in the context of person-in-the-world (Thompson et al. 1989). This dissertation research seeks to understand a particular experience, perceptions of discrimination, as experienced by African Americans in a particular context, retail settings. The experience of perceived discrimination emerges in a specific context. It is assumed these perceptions are neither entirely subjective nor entirely objective. The participant as a person-in-the-world brings into each interaction his or her prior experiences and self-concept. Therefore, each

situation a person experiences is seen through lenses colored by his or her personal history. In order to fully understand an individual's perceptions of discrimination, the researcher must have some knowledge of the participant's relevant personal and cultural history.

Situated Freedom

A second core concept of existential-phenomenology is *situated freedom*. This concept builds on the concept of situated freedom as described by Heidegger. The 'givens' are not the only constraints presented by the world. As noted above, existential-phenomenologists believe the world presents situations to individuals through a perpetual dialogue. These situations force individuals to make choices. However, individuals have the freedom to make whatever choices they would like. The only choice that one cannot make is to not choose (Valle et al. 1989). Merleau-Ponty reflects, "We take our fate in our hands, we become responsible for our history through reflection, but equally by a decision on which we stake our life, and in both cases what is involved is a violent act which is validated by being performed" (2002, pg. xxiii). Applying the concept of situated freedom to the phenomenon of perceived discrimination suggests that targets of discrimination (as well as agents) have the freedom to make choices at any time during what is perceived by the target to be a discriminatory encounter. The choices that the target chooses to make contribute to his or her experience.

Reflection

The third core concept of existential-phenomenology is *reflection*. Closely intertwined with reflection are Husserl's constructs of consciousness and intentionality. Valle (et al. 1989) describes consciousness as "...that forum in which phenomena show

themselves or are revealed” (pg. 11). Individuals are always ‘conscious of’ something, whether it be another person, an object, or an abstract idea or concept. Consciousness is therefore intentional in nature, or characterized by *intentionality*. Intentionality has also been described as “the process of consciousness with its specific object” (Valle et al. 1989, pg. 11).

Literally, reflection means to ‘bend back on itself’. Reflection refers to mentally returning to an experience at a later time. As noted above, when an individual is experiencing a phenomenon, his/her consciousness is directed towards a specific object or objects and his/her meaning of it (intentionality). However, other elements are present at the time and affect the perceiver’s ultimate experience, though they are not the focal point. As an individual reflects upon his/her experience at a later time, elements that were in the background may become the focal point. The relationship between intentionality and reflection is often depicted through the use of a visual with an ellipse surrounding horizontal lines between two points (Ihde 1986, pg. 47). The ellipse indicates the field of overall experience. Every possible experience falls within the ellipse. The two points in the ellipse refer to what is experienced and that to which the experience refers. The lines of relation indicate possible modes of experience. Intentionality refers to the direction and internal shape of experience; reflection is the means of bringing forth the specifics of that direction and shape (Ihde 1986). Unfortunately, the differences between reflection and intentionality are not as straightforward as it might seem. Ihde notes, “To reflect is to reflect about something, which is to say, in phenomenological language, that reflection is intentional” (1986, pg. 51).

Human behavior is both unreflected and reflected (Thompson et al. 1989). Individuals are seen as acting in a situation without the opportunity to disengage and reflect on their actions in everyday life. When such reflection is induced, meanings and symbols may emerge from the ground of unreflected experiences. Reflection brings to light that which may be cloaked in darkness. As Merleau-Ponty indicates in the preceding paragraph, *reflection impacts a person's existence as much as the choices that are made as a situation is encountered*. Existential-phenomenology requires reflective thinking characterized by a distancing from straightforward experience to understand a phenomenon in its entirety (Ihde 1986). The participants' reflections of perceived discrimination may provide a richer understanding of this phenomenon *for others and for the participant him/ herself* than can be discovered through other qualitative methods.

EXISTENTIAL-PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH IN MARKETING

The marketing research literature has shown an increasing acceptance of qualitative research (eg. Askegaard, Arnould and Kjeldgaard 2005; Thompson 2005; Flint, Woodruff and Gardial 2002). Qualitative research provides a means for understanding what is perhaps the most basic and intriguing of all human phenomena: how one human being can come to understand the world of another (Thompson 1991, pg. 67). This type of insight is particularly useful in marketing research as academics and marketing managers place increasing emphasis on the importance of understanding consumers. Consumer research has become in many ways the "driver in both methods and concepts" for the marketing discipline (Flint, Haley and Mentzer 2000).

In a recent review article, Arnould and Thompson (2005) catalogued a list of qualitative investigations appearing in *The Journal of Consumer Research* (JCR) in the last 20 years.⁷ The list includes 34 articles across various qualitative traditions such as ethnography (eg. Celsi, Rose and Leigh 1993; Schouten and McAlexander 1995) and phenomenology (eg. Mick and Buhl 1992; Thompson 1996). Arnould and Thompson point out that research addressing the experiential, symbolic and ideological aspects of consumption is referred to by many ‘nebulous epithets’ such as relativist, interpretivist, humanistic, postmodern (pg. 868). The authors charge that these terms are problematic for the following reasons: 1) they serve to obfuscate rather than clarify; 2) researchers often fail to signify the theoretical commonalities within the research tradition; and 3) too much emphasis is placed on methodological distinctions. Their arguments highlight some of the problems one encounters when one begins to look for examples of existential-phenomenological research in the marketing literature.

In many cases, researchers fail to identify the philosophical assumptions which guide their research. Some may argue that this means that progress has been made. Researchers may assume the philosophy guiding their research will be inferred by the knowledgeable research audience. For example, how many authors begin an article reporting an experimental study by saying they are using a positivist approach? It is often the journals that embrace qualitative methodologies (such as JCR) that publish articles which don’t explicitly state the philosophical approaches behind the research (eg. Thompson and Arsel 2004; Askegaard, Arnould and Kjeldgaard 2005). Another related

⁷ The articles listed are described as examples of Consumer Culture Theory Research which, as Arnould and Thompson point out, encompasses methodological pluralism and does not ‘canonize a qualitative-quantitative’ divide.

reason for the absence of philosophical discussion may be a lack of journal space available.

Compounding this problem is the fact that similar methodological techniques may be used in different philosophical approaches. For example, phenomenological interviews may be used in approaches with very different goals such as existential-phenomenology (eg. Mick and Buhl 1992) and grounded theory (eg. Fournier and Mick 1999). Conversely, within a philosophical approach, different methodological techniques may be used for the same purposes. In their study of consumers with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Kaufman-Scarborough and Cohen (2004) used conceptual ordering analysis, developed in the grounded theory tradition, in data analysis. Baker, Stephens and Hill (2002) used hermeneutic analysis as a data analysis technique in their investigation of visually-impaired consumers. In both of these articles, the authors explicitly stated they were using an existential-phenomenological approach.

How then does a researcher identify articles conducted in a particular tradition given these complications? As a starting point, the researcher must examine the core assumptions of the research tradition. The core concepts of existential-phenomenology are co-constitutionality, situated freedom, and consciousness. With this in mind, this researcher looked for qualitative articles published in various marketing journals (*Journal of Consumer Research*, *Psychology & Marketing*, *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*) to identify articles which adhered to the concepts of existential-phenomenology. This search was conducted for the following reasons: 1) to find similarities amongst the articles; 2) to become familiar with the research designs employed; 3) to see how articles using this approach are presented in marketing journals and 4) identify journals which

have been receptive to this particular approach. The search, which was not meant to be a comprehensive review, yielded 7 studies published between 2001 and 2005 which appear in Table 4.

The purpose of existential-phenomenological research is to “...explicate the essence, structure or form of both human experience and human behavior as revealed through essentially descriptive techniques including disciplined reflection” (Valle et al. 1989, pg. 6). Each of the studies appearing in Table 4 has a purpose of understanding some form of human experience as manifested in a marketing related context. In the Kaufman-Scarborough and Cohen (2004) article, for example, the purpose of the study is to understand how consumers with ADD experience shopping environments. This focus on experience as lived by the participant is the hallmark characteristic of existential-phenomenological research. In each study, the authors attempt to provide a thick description of the structure of the phenomenon either through the use of themes, the use of stories or through symbolic metaphors. Although the research design was similar across studies, the studies varied in research techniques used during similar stages of research. Additionally, it appears journals of various levels are receptive to existential-phenomenological research. The articles above were published in the one of the following journals: *The Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, *The Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, and *Psychology & Marketing*.

The focus on lived experiences from an individual perspective makes existential-phenomenological research particularly useful for examining phenomena of interest to consumer researchers and marketing practitioners. The research approach a researcher

employs determines the type of knowledge the researcher is able to obtain. A behavioristic approach for example views consumers as ‘a repertoire of instrumental behaviors which have been shaped by environmental contingencies’ (Churchill and Wertz 1985, pg. 550). Researchers following this approach would acquire knowledge about ways to motivate consumers to behave in accordance with marketers’ goals. A cognitive approach views consumer behavior as an output of cognitive processing. Researchers study potential pathways and inputs used in processing information and the accompanying behaviors. The existential-phenomenological approach views humans as inseparable beings in the world around them. As such, every consumer’s encounter with a product, advertisement, or marketing environment is assumed to be a unique experience. Existential-phenomenologists seek to understand the structure of particular phenomenon for ‘beings-in-the-world’. The existential-phenomenological approach provides a way for marketing researchers to learn about a multitude of products, advertisements, and marketing environments, *as individual consumers perceive them* (Fennell 1985). The following quote describes the applicability of existential-phenomenological research for consumer research,

“Consumer research investigates human beings relating to the world in such concrete forms as watching television, reading magazines, calculating finances, walking to the store, deciding what to buy, bargaining with salespersons, expecting satisfaction, and cooking and eating dinner. All of these acts amount to intentional relations with real things,” (Churchill and Wertz 1985, pg.552).

EXISTENTIAL-PHENOMENOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

As the articles cited above show, existential-phenomenology is not associated with one particular methodology. However, the core concepts of existential-

phenomenology have distinct implications that guide research conducted in this tradition. Pollio and Thompson (1997) describe the following activities as typical in phenomenological research: 1) Choose Topic, 2) Perform Bracketing Interview, 3) Interview Participants, 4) Transcribe Interviews, 5) Develop Thematic Structure in a Research Group, 6) Report Findings to Participants and 7) Prepare Final Report (pg. 60). These steps will be used as a general framework for this research. This framework is supplemented with congruent qualitative research procedures. In accordance with the purpose of qualitative research in general, and existential-phenomenology in particular, this dissertation study will use an emergent research design. This type of research design provides flexibility for the investigator to conduct research in a natural, changing environment (Hudson and Ozanne 1988). The choices that the researcher makes throughout the study are determined after critically and reflectively weighing the relative ability of alternatives to contribute to a better description of the participants' lived experience (Wertz 2005). Although some of the activities described by Pollio and Thompson logically precede other activities, the steps are not necessarily sequential. Qualitative research typically is conducted in an iterative process with interviewing and data analysis being performed concurrently.

Selecting a Topic

The first step in any research enterprise is to select a topic. What is the broad research question or problem of interest to the researcher? For this dissertation, that question is how marketing communications and exchanges transmit, reinforce and/or sustain stereotypes and prejudices?

The marketing literature has extensively examined the use of race in advertising. The underlying premise behind this type of research is that viewers use racial traits, such as skin color and facial features, to categorize actors appearing in advertisements. Marketing researchers have examined how advertisements featuring minority groups promote and sustain stereotypes (eg. Bristor et al 1995, Taylor and Stern 1997; Taylor, Lee and Stern 1995). Advertising however is only one method used by marketers to communicate with consumers. Additional research is needed to understand whether other marketing communications (such as personal selling) transmit, reinforce and sustain stereotypes and prejudices. This thought process ultimately resulted in the topic of retail discrimination selected for this dissertation.

Choosing a Phenomenon

The next step in the research process is to identify within the topic a phenomenon or phenomena to explore. Public press accounts of recently settled lawsuits alleging discrimination against major retailers illuminated a phenomenon. The phenomenon of discrimination in retail settings can be explored from several perspectives: the agent, the target or an objective (3rd person) perspective. For the reasons outlined in Chapter One, this dissertation explores the phenomenon from the perspective of the target. From that perspective, the phenomenon becomes not discrimination as objectively ascertainable, but the target's perception of discrimination. The phrase 'Shopping while Black' is used to refer to this phenomenon.

Additional considerations when choosing a phenomenon to explore are 'can' and 'should' the phenomenon be researched (Creswell 1998). The 'should' refers to the

researcher first considering whether inquiry would advance research knowledge in the area. The question of should can only be answered through a thorough review of the literature. This review also serves to immerse the researcher in background research concerning the historical and cultural conditions relevant to the domain of interest (Thompson 1997). The literature reviewed in Chapter Two suggests this research contributes to gaps in several disciplines such as consumer behavior, social psychology and criminology. Also at issue with ‘should’ is whether anyone outside the researcher’s own institution and area would be interested in the research. Chapter One describes the relevancy of the proposed research for retailers, public policy officials and consumers. The question left remaining is can ‘Shopping while Black’ be examined? Before this question can be answered, it is necessary to consider the assumed characteristics of the phenomenon.

Assumed Characteristics of Perceived Discrimination

‘Shopping while Black’ as defined in this study is assumed to have the following key characteristics. 1) *It exists* – it is assumed that ‘shopping while Black’ is a real phenomenon; that perceptions of discrimination in retail settings do occur and that these experiences are meaningful for the individuals who experience them. 2) *It involves social interaction* – it is assumed that these perceptions necessarily involve interaction with at least one other person; these interactions are dynamic, with each individual responding to perceived attitudes and behaviors of the other party. 3) *It is complex* – it is assumed that perceptions of discrimination do not arise in a vacuum; each individual brings with him or her personal experiences and beliefs that influence the interaction. The researcher must understand these experiences in order to fully understand the

phenomenon of ‘shopping while Black’. 4) *It is neither entirely subjective nor objective* – though ‘shopping while Black’ is a perceptual phenomenon, there are objective behaviors that the target uses in forming these perceptions. The experience is reflected in concepts that can be noticed and articulated. Churchill and Wertz (1985) summarize,

“Perceiving involves a perceiver relating to a perceived: What one sees is a function of how one is looking. The ‘what’ (objective characteristic) and the ‘how’ (subjective presence) are dynamically and dialectically related” (pg. 551).

Given these key characteristics, the question of can this phenomenon be examined can now be addressed. The core concepts of existential-phenomenology discussed prior suggest an existential-phenomenological approach allows examination of this phenomenon based on the assumptions above.

Bracketing Interview

Existential-phenomenology requires that the researcher distance himself from everyday immersion in the ordinary practical activities of life and adopt a reflective standpoint (Howarth 1998). This process is referred to as phenomenological reduction or ‘bracketing’. The point of phenomenological reduction is to bring our attention to the realm of phenomena. There is not an attempt to disconnect oneself from his or her prior knowledge, only to ‘bracket’ prior personal and scientific knowledge about the phenomena into parenthesis (Kvale 1983). In order to accomplish this, the researcher must first be aware of the presuppositions he or she has regarding the phenomenon. A bracketing interview is conducted to provide this insight. The interview may be a type of self-analysis as the researcher reflects on his or her beliefs about the phenomenon using a

reflective journal. Alternatively, the interview may be conducted by another researcher who is familiar with the core concepts of existential-phenomenology. This technique may be more effective in bringing forth veiled beliefs. Phenomenological reduction does not involve an absence of presuppositions, but a consciousness of one's own presuppositions (Kvale 1983).

Sampling Decisions

One of the most important tasks in existential-phenomenological research is the identification and selection of individuals who will provide insight into the phenomenon of interest. Wertz (2005) describes four potential types of participants: the researcher himself or herself, laypersons, expert witnesses, or a system or group of related persons. The participants for this study fall into the final group. The initial sampling decision for this research was to interview African American women and men who had experienced what they perceived to be discrimination in a retail setting. Sampling was revised after early interviews with males resulted in descriptions of more general types of discrimination (ex. Renting an apartment, housing discrimination) than retail discrimination despite solicitation requests for retail experiences. Thus the sample for this study consists solely of African American women. These participants were recruited through organizations, such as the alumni branches of African-American sororities. The participants for this investigation can be considered 'self-selected' since the participants were those who responded to the call for interviewees. In keeping with the purpose of this research, potential informants had to identify themselves as African-American or

Black. More information on the subjects who participated in this study is provided in Chapter Four.

The most important considerations in selecting participants for the study were 1) that the participant had experience with the phenomenon and 2) the participant was articulate and willing to discuss the phenomenon of interest. To ascertain if the former condition holds, potential participants were asked if they could recall any situations in stores, shopping centers, or malls where they felt they were treated differently because of their race. If they answered affirmatively, they were then asked if they would be willing to discuss their experiences as part of a research study. Participants were assured that their responses would be confidential.

A second consideration is the number of participants. This choice is dependent upon the nature of the research problem and the potential yield of findings (Wertz 2005). In certain cases, in-depth knowledge of one individual's experience may be sufficient. Stern and her colleagues (et al. 1998) were interested in examining how a single market encounter influenced relationship marketing efforts from a consumer's perspective. For this study, one participant was interviewed. The researchers obtained detailed information about a particular encounter (an unsatisfactory one) at a local store that resulted in switching behavior. The use of one participant and one encounter was deemed appropriate given the focus of the study on a single market encounter as a core event in relationship marketing. The researchers do note the use of one participant as a limitation of the study that can be overcome with additional interviews with multiple respondents. For this research, it was not possible to determine the required number of participants beforehand. The researcher conducted interviews until she believed that she

had achieved saturation, that is, interviews failed to yield new findings and redundancy occurs (Wertz 2005). This resulted in a sample of sixteen participants.

Another sampling consideration is the situations that are studied (Wertz 2005). This dissertation research explored perceptions of discrimination in a retail setting. ‘Retail setting’ is broadly defined to include any consumer-product exchange environment. In order to fully capture this phenomenon, it was necessary to obtain descriptions of ‘shopping while Black’ in a variety of retail situations. If this variety did not occur naturally as the interviews were conducted, the researcher planned to make an attempt to solicit individuals who had experienced the phenomenon in particular types of retail settings. However a variety of retail settings did emerge in the interviews as described in Chapter Four.

Phenomenological Interviews

In qualitative research, there are two perspectives regarding the role of the researcher in the interview process. According to one view, the researcher’s role is to extract information from the interviewee much like material is extracted from a container. The metaphor ‘researcher as an instrument’ is used to describe this concept of data collection. For these types of interviews, questionnaires are considered essential to ensure that the investigator covers all the terrain in the same order for each respondent (McCracken 1988). Multiple interviewers may be used as long as they are similarly trained in interviewing techniques. The interviewees’ answers are interpreted without a consideration of the interviewer’s role as a participant in the social interaction.

The second perspective criticizes the ‘researcher as instrument’ view based on the following arguments. The logic behind interviewing is that it promises an entrance to the ‘real’ experiences, attitudes, opinions, and emotions of the interviewee through personal interaction with the interviewer (van den Berg, Wetherell and Houtkoop-Steenstra 2003). To infer that the researcher’s presence opens the interviewee up on the one hand and assert that the interviewee’s answers are unaffected by the researcher on the other hand is double-speak. These critics view the process of interviewing as a social process and thus, the interviewer and the interviewee are both participants in the knowledge construction process. According to this perspective, the researcher’s role is to provide an environment in which the participant feels free to describe personal experiences in detail (Thompson et al. 1989). Instead of questionnaires, open-ended prompts are used to initiate a dialogue that is considered to emerge uniquely in each interview. The researcher tries to follow the participant wherever he or she takes the interview. Transcripts are analyzed as a joint product of the interviewer and the interviewee (van den Berg et al. 2003). This perspective is referred to as the social constructionist view of interviewing.

The latter stance aligns with the precepts of existential-phenomenology. Existential-phenomenology uses the phenomenological interview as the primary data collection method. The goal of phenomenological interviews is to attain a first-person description of some specified domain of experience (Thompson 1989). The phenomenological interview is conceived as a discourse or conversation. Subjects are encouraged to share with the researcher the details of their experience in an interpersonal engagement. As Kvale notes, “...the interviewer and the interviewee unavoidably co-

determine the results” (1983, pg. 187). Although the focus remains on the phenomenon of interest, the researcher's behavior is individualized for each participant interaction (Polkinghorne 1978).

Kvale (1983) describes twelve characteristics of phenomenological interviews. This list is provided in Table 5. While most of these characteristics are self-explanatory, a few warrant additional discussion. The main task in interviewing is to understand the *meaning* of what is said. The interviewer must interpret not only what is said but how it is said, recording vocalization, facial expressions and gestures. To confirm that the true meaning is understood, the interviewer may need to ‘play back’ her interpretation of what was said to obtain an immediate confirmation or disconfirmation of the interpretation. During the interview, the participant may experience *change* as he or she reflects upon the event of interest. This type of change makes it unlikely to obtain reproducible intra-subjectively consistent data. The participant himself is changed during the course of the interview as the interview becomes part of the participant’s lived experience. *Positive experience* refers to the research-interview as a positive experience for the interviewee. As previously noted, the participants’ reflections of the phenomenon should provide a richer understanding of this phenomenon not only for the researcher, but for the participant as well.

In accord with the social constructionist view, it is assumed that some knowledge is constructed during the interview, as the interviewer and participant engage in an emerging dialogue. To facilitate this dialogue, phenomenologists recommend the use of guiding concepts. Guiding concepts are broad topics the researcher identifies to guide the

interview as opposed to following a preplanned interview script. It is not unusual for a phenomenological investigation to have a singular guiding concept used simply to initiate the conversation. The concepts used in this investigation consisted of the participant: 1) telling the researcher about her current life in general, 2) describing positive shopping experiences, 3) describing the first time she recalled being treated discriminatorily because of her race and 4) describing other experiences perceived to be discriminatory. These concepts were developed based on the research questions previously described. In addition, the purpose of some of the concepts is to learn about the personal histories and general lifestyles of the participants. Thompson notes the importance of such information, "...the heterogeneity among consumers' personal histories can frame their perceptions of consumer needs in very different meaning systems" (1997, pg. 439). To ensure sufficient time to capture this information, Thompson conducted his interviews in two stages. The first interview was devoted to exploring general lifestyle issues and perceptions. The second interview examined the specific phenomenon of interest. An additional benefit of this two-stage approach is that it facilitates mutual trust and collaboration between the participant and the interviewer by extending their time together. This may also be a disadvantage if it causes the participant to alter his or her responses in order to 'please' the researcher.

This dissertation research consists of single interviews that were approximated to last 1 to 1 ½ hours. While the two-stage approach offers certain advantages, an increased potential for participant acquiescence for a socially sensitive topic such as discrimination makes this approach less desirable. It was hoped that approaching the participant through

an organization with which she was affiliated would facilitate trust with the participant initially. The interviews opened and ended with broad questions of historical and cultural significance.⁸ Efforts were made during the interview to ensure the participant that it was indeed her own perceptions that the researcher was interested in and that there were no right or wrong answers.

The quality of data obtained through interviews is of critical importance. The best data is concrete data. In other words, the descriptions should, “reflect the details of lived situations rather than hypotheses or opinions about, explanations of, interpretations of, inferences, or generalizations regarding the phenomenon” (Wertz 2005, pg. 171). Efforts were made throughout the interview process to keep the participant focused on her lived situation.

These phenomenological interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim to provide the data for analysis. Some existential-phenomenologists recommend that transcription be done by the researcher because it provides an additional opportunity to become familiar with the data (Pollio and Thompson 1997). However, this is not a necessary requirement. This same familiarity may be acquired through repetitive reading of the transcripts. The amount of data obtained and the sophistication and accuracy of current transcription services justified the use of a professional transcriber for this research endeavor.

⁸ Potential questions are posed in the Implementation section that follows.

Data Analysis

Existential-phenomenology does not require a particular method of data analysis to be used. The purpose of data analysis is to obtain a clear understanding of the structure of the phenomenon. In existential-phenomenology this is referred to as the phenomenon's essence or essential meaning. A phenomenon is seen as having the same essential meaning when it is perceived over time in many different situations (Valle et al. 1989). Any data analysis technique that facilitates identification of the phenomenon's essence may be used in existential-phenomenological research. The data analysis must be conducted however in adherence to the core concepts of existential-phenomenology. The researcher as a being-in-the-world is participating in a lived experience as he or she engages in data analysis. This has important implications for how data analysis is conducted as Wertz describes below:

“The researcher strives to leave his or her own world behind and to enter fully, through the written description, into the situations of the participants. The researcher empathically joins with participants in their lived situation(s). This sharing of experience is the basis for later reflection on meanings and experiential processes,” (2005, pg. 172).

The researcher must take extreme care to appreciate the situations described by the participants by processing the data in a slow, meditative way that attends to and magnifies the details (Wertz 2005). In this research, the researcher conducted data analysis as mandated by the precepts of existential-phenomenology using the following data analysis techniques.

Interpretive Group

The researcher and other individuals familiar with existential-phenomenological research may conduct data analysis. They are referred to as an interpretive group.

Thompson (et al. 1989) describes the characteristics of the interpretive group and its' purpose. Group members must be committed to spending the time and effort to interpret a series of interviews. The group facilitates bracketing by conscientiously questioning the assumptions each member employs and helping others in the group bracket preconceptions. The interpretive group first seeks an individual understanding of each interview reading the transcript as a whole and relating separate passages of the transcript to its overall content. Group members put forth their interpretations to the group for discussion. Each interpretation should result in at least two follow up questions: Is the proposed interpretation at the level of the respondent's lived experience? Does the proposed interpretation take into account previous passages of the transcript?

Using an interpretive group provides the following advantages: the perspective of the group is broader than an individual perspective, a 'fresh' vision is more likely to be maintained, group members provide immediate feedback and the burden of interpretation is reduced because of the enhanced ability of the group to remember various aspects of transcripts (Thompson et al. 1989).

Two interviews conducted early in the research process were analyzed by an interpretive group consisting of marketing faculty and doctoral students. Interpretations were expanded and refined as a result of this analysis. Additionally, all interviews were read and findings substantiated by a member of the dissertation committee.

Hermeneutical Analysis

Hermeneutics is the interpretation of texts (Kvale 1983). The purpose of hermeneutics is "...to determine what a text has to say and to provide instruction about what to do," (Arnold and Fisher 1994, pg. 56). This study employed hermeneutics as an

analytical technique to understand the consumer narratives. Thompson states “From a hermeneutic perspective, the analysis of consumption stories involves a constant interrogation of plot in order to develop an understanding of the personal significance of the salient experiences, circumstances and events described in a consumer story” (1997, pg. 443). This view is supported by Arnold and Fisher who note “... the texts to be studied will represent the contextualized personal expressions of an individual consumer” (pg. 61).

The central idea behind hermeneutical analysis is the hermeneutic circle. The hermeneutical circle “represents the idea that the meaning of a whole text is determined from the individual elements of a text, while, at the same time, an individual element is understood by referring to the whole of which it is a part” (Arnold and Fisher, pg. 63). The process is an iterative one that ends when the researcher attains a ‘valid unitary meaning, free of inner contradictions’ (Kvale 1983, pg. 185). This process is used to analyze each transcript as a whole (intratextual analysis) and subsequently to relate separate interviews to each other to identify common patterns, or global themes (intertextual analysis) (Thompson 1997; Thompson et al. 1989). This analysis technique was used to understand the data obtained in this research. The result of this process was the identification of global themes.

Identifying global themes across interviews allows researchers to see “where one situation is experientially similar to another or, in phenomenological terms, where respondent intentionalities are the same” (Thompson et al 1989, pg. 142). The goal of these themes is not to attain ‘convergent validity’ but to attain an ‘improved interpretive vision’ (pg. 141).

There are various types of global themes that can be identified. Binary themes enable 'marketing researchers to organize systematically the multiplicity of textual details that emerge in consumer stories into a more manageable set of underlying thematic dimensions' (Thompson 1997). Thompson's research on the consumption experiences of married women provides the following example of a binary theme: Theme of Being Restricted/Being Free from Restrictions (Thompson et al. 1990). The premise behind using these themes is that binary contrasts provide major organizing principles for human cognition and are common features of Westernized plot lines (Thompson 1997). In accordance with hermeneutical interpretation, each transcript should provide support for the themes identified.

The essence of the phenomenon can also be understood by identifying symbolic metaphors. Symbolic metaphors are images or events that convey a nexus of assumptions, concerns, values, and meanings (Thompson, Pollio and Locander 1994). In their work on consumer timestyles, Cotte, Ratneswar and Mick (2004) used symbolic metaphors such as 'Time is a Pressure Cooker' and 'Time is a Map' to describe their findings. Symbolic metaphors allow researchers to identify systematic differences among the participants' experiences. In contrast, themes highlight similarities among participants' experiences while points of differentiation are not revealed. Symbolic metaphors can be used as a complement to thematic research to highlight differences among consumers' viewpoints.

In addition to the hermeneutical circle analysis as described above, the analysis also involved other hermeneutic processes discussed by Thompson and his colleagues (1994) in their detailed discussion of the hermeneutic approach:

“Our interpretive process also involved a continuous movement between two modes of interpretation. In the one mode, primary focus was placed on the personal meanings expressed by each participant. In the second mode, primary focus was placed on the relating of these personal meanings to a background of sociocultural narratives” (pg. 435).

The consumer stories that are obtained through phenomenological interviews are situated in a broader cultural, historical and societal system of meaning (Thompson 1997). These stories must be understood in respect to those influences. This stage in the interpretive process requires the researcher to have been fully immersed in the background of historical literature relevant to the research domain. Once again, an iterative process is employed as the researcher moves between consumer narratives of identity and a broader system of socio-historic meaning to draw conclusions. This embedding of meaning in its sociocultural context is expected to result in an enhanced understanding of perceptions of discrimination beyond themes.

End Product

The final research report should include a review of the previous research and theory pertaining to the topic. This is done to set the scholarly context in which the study will be carried out and to justify why an additional study, using phenomenological methods, is needed on the topic. The primary goal of the research report is to provide an articulate, clear and accurate description of a particular experience so that the reader of the report comes away feeling, "I understand better what it is like for someone to experience that," (Polkinghorne 1978).

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

Hunt (1989) suggests that any research study has to be able to answer the following questions: 1. What is the nature of the purported contribution to knowledge of the manuscript? 2. What is the extent of the purported contribution to knowledge? 3. Is the purported contribution to knowledge genuine? The first two questions are similar to the 'should' question posed in the procedural section of this paper. In essence, these questions amount to knowing why the research should be conducted and not over-promising and/or under-delivering. These criteria are used as minimal standards for evaluating this dissertation research.

A research approach must have some means of evaluating the rigor of the work conducted in that tradition. Several marketing scholars have suggested evaluative criteria appropriate for qualitative research (eg. McCracken 1988, Spiggle 1994). Critics argue that these criteria seek to distinguish truth from non-truth and scientific from non-scientific knowledge (Thompson 1990). As such, these criteria are considered anti-paradigmatic to existential-phenomenological research.

The criteria described by Mick and Buhl (1992) are in alignment with existential-phenomenological research. Rigorous research conducted in this tradition should answer the following questions: 1) Does the research provide insight into how a phenomenon is given meaning in a person's life? 2) Are the researchers' interpretations consistent with the aims of the inquiry? 3) Are interpretations supported by reference to participants' stories? 4) Did the researchers understand the persons at the conclusion of the study better than the persons understood themselves? 5) Did the inquiry contribute to the

researcher's knowledge of him/herself? These criteria are the primary criteria used to evaluate this research and are addressed in Chapter Five.

As a being-in-the-world, readers of a research report are engaging in a lived situation as they are reading the report. It is critical that readers be ready to question their own presuppositions regarding the material. Valle, King and Halling (1989) suggest the reader ask questions such as "What have I already assumed which may account for my failure to make sense of this section?" Or "Are there any specific assumptions which this writer takes for granted which someone from my tradition would not take for granted?" Thus, existential-phenomenological research requires the reader to become more than a passive recipient of information.

IMPLEMENTATION OF PROCEDURES

Recruiting Participants

The researcher approached members of African American churches and organizations (eg. alumni branches of sororities, Jack and Jill Club of America, student and faculty organizations) in Knoxville, TN and Jackson, MS. The researcher briefly described the research topic and asked for permission to address the group (in person or via e-mail) to recruit participants. Potential respondents were assured that their responses would remain anonymous. As an incentive, participants were paid \$30. Participants in this study are described in more detail in Chapter Four.

Interviews

All interviews were conducted by the researcher at a public location (examples include public libraries and coffee shops). Prior to beginning the interview, the participant was thanked for her participation in the study. The researcher let the participant know that the interview would be audio-taped and that the tapes were strictly to ensure that the researcher captured the participant's responses accurately. The researcher informed the participant that a pseudonym would be used and assured her that her identity would remain anonymous. The researcher then asked the participant to sign a consent form acknowledging that she had been informed of the above points and willingly agreed to participate in the interview. Finally, right before beginning the interview, participants were told again that it was her experience the researcher was looking for and thus, there was no right or wrong answer.

Each interview began as follows: "The focus of my research is the experience of feeling treated differently in stores because you're African American. In order for me to know more about your unique experience with this topic, I'd like to know a little bit more about you. So, let's start by having you tell me about yourself." This broad opening allowed the participant to open up a little by talking about herself. Specific questions were asked such as, "Where did you grow up? Tell me about growing up there? This allowed the researcher to get some cultural and historical information about the respondent in order to understand the phenomenon more holistically.

To transition to the phenomenon of interest, the participant was asked to recall and describe the first time she felt like she was being treated differently because of her ethnicity in a retail setting. After this experience was fully explored, the researcher asked

the participant to talk about another experience of being treated differently that stood out in her mind. This line of questioning continued, with the participant recounting as many experiences as recollected. The primary focus, however, was on obtaining depth rather than breadth. Thus the researcher attempted to fully explore each perceived discriminatory encounter rather than simply cataloging a list of such experiences. To facilitate this dialogue, prompts were used such as: What stood out in your mind at that time? What was that experience like? Looking back, is there anything else that stands out now that might not have at the time? What did that feel like to you? The interviews concluded by thanking the participant for her time and paying the \$30 incentive.

Data Analysis

The audio tapes of each interview were transcribed as the interviews were completed. Data analysis occurred concurrently with the interview process. If there were more than 3 transcripts in the transcription/analysis pipeline, interviews were suspended pending data analysis of at least 1 transcript.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of African Americans' experience of perceived discrimination in retail settings. This chapter provides that understanding, achieved through the interviews and subsequent analysis of 16 African American women. Transcripts of these interviews are provided in Appendix B. A brief description of each participant is provided in Table 5. Participants ranged in age from early 20s to early 60s. Although most participants were interviewed in the same Southern city, many were born and raised in other locations across the United States. Most participants (14 out of 16) had earned at least a bachelor's degree at the time of the interview and worked in professional settings. The number of perceived discriminatory experiences recalled per participant ranged from 1 to 6, with an average of 2.75 experiences described. There were a total of 44 episodes described by participants. The diverse backgrounds of the participants produced a wide spectrum of experiences. Some participants described incidents that occurred more than 20 years ago while others spoke of experiences occurring just days before the interview. The majority of incidents (38) occurred within the last five years. Additionally, the primary settings for the majority of these experiences were department stores and upscale niche boutiques. Other settings included discount mass retailers, specialty clothing stores, specialty merchandisers and a flea market.

Despite these differences, the analysis process revealed common elements found in each interview or protocol. Those structural invariant elements that stand out as focal points are referred to in phenomenological terms as the figural themes. The figural themes in perceptions of discrimination are labeled as: 1) *Invisible/Criminal treatment*, 2) *I knew*, 3) *Have restraint - Show my butt* and 4) *Racism exists*. These four themes are elaborated upon in the subsequent section and are illustrated by text from participant interviews. In most cases, more text is provided than the sentence or two that directly relates to the theme under discussion in order to understand the context in which it emerged. This resulted in some overlap, as some passages contained multiple themes. In other words, some excerpts are used more than once. For clarity, directly relevant statements or key words are italicized. In excerpts referring to perceived discriminatory experiences, the names of the retailers are not revealed. Code names (eg. Discount Retailer A, Boutique B) are used consistently throughout this paper to refer to specific retailers.

While the figural elements stand out as focal elements of the phenomenon, there are other invariant elements present that served as contextual elements of perceptions of discrimination. These elements, which are referred to as the ground of the phenomenon, are *socialization* and *life experiences* and are elaborated upon in the appropriately labeled section.

Although each figural theme is an element of perceived discrimination, the phenomenon may be fully understood only by examining these themes holistically. Accordingly, the chapter concludes with a discussion of the relationship between the themes.

FIGURAL THEMES

A basic assumption in phenomenology is that a person's life is a socially constructed totality in which experiences interrelate coherently and meaningfully (Goulding 1999). This was evidenced during the course of this research endeavor. Participants were asked to talk about a situation when they felt they were treated negatively in a retail environment because of their race. During interviews, related types of discrimination such as housing discrimination and employment discrimination would sometimes emerge. Some participants spoke of discriminatory situations experienced by their parents or other family members and friends. These experiences were all related to the participants' socially constructed ideas of 'retail discrimination'. These incidents may inform us of participants' attitudes towards the pervasiveness of the phenomenon as well as their knowledge of coping strategies. The focus of this analysis however is on retail discrimination personally experienced by the participants. To identify the figural elements of this experience, significant statements and key words used in discussing personal experiences of retail discrimination only were extracted from the protocols. Through an iterative process within and between transcripts, the dominant (figural) themes common in each protocol were identified. In keeping with phenomenological aims, these themes are rendered in emic terms (Goulding 1999). They are: 1) *Invisible/Criminal treatment*, 2) *I knew*, 3) *Have restraint - Show my butt*, and 4) *Racism exists*.

Theme One: *Invisible/Criminal treatment*

The theme of *Invisible/Criminal treatment* refers to the nature of the discrimination encountered in retail settings. Many participants described situations where they felt they were being blatantly ignored by salespersons, sometimes using the word ‘invisible’ to describe this experience. Other participants described experiences in which they were treated suspiciously in stores as though they were a ‘criminal’. As discussed in the analysis below, these themes of being invisible or being treated like a criminal were manifest in various ways. The terms ‘Invisible treatment’ and ‘criminal treatment’ refer to the nature of the experience itself and are described separately below.

Invisible treatment

Invisible treatment refers to a perception of deliberate neglect or disregard towards the participant by a sales associate. Most often this theme appeared as not being acknowledged by retail staff in any kind of way at all while shopping, as described in the excerpts below:

INTERVIEW THREE:

I would go in there repeatedly, repeatedly and they would ignore me *as if I was invisible*. And I couldn’t understand. I thought they thought I was poor or something but I would see people coming in after me and they were just as helpful. I mean, I even applied there when I was 16. *I don’t think I even got an acknowledgement or response* that I even put in an application.

INTERVIEW FOUR:

“So I go up to the counter with the watch in my hand and um, two of them standing there talking and I’m trying to, you know, be polite not interrupt, they wouldn’t stop, just *as if I was invisible*. Finally the one that was on the floor walked away and then the lady at the register finally turned and said well, can I help you with something. And, before I could say, yes I’d like to find the price of this watch, the lady who was putting out stock came out and asked the lady a question well do you know where such and such is, and she said well I’m not sure. I mean didn’t say excuse me or

anything. Not only did she continue the conversation, she walked off. Left me standing there, went out on the floor with this other lady, didn't come back and I'm still standing there looking with this watch in my hand like, what in the world. *I was in that store for about 45 minutes and I never had anyone say anything to me about can I help you or anything.* When I finally did get to someone at the register she just anyway *totally blew me off.*"

"I mean I was right there *in plain sight*. It didn't matter to them that I was doing that; I was still totally *invisible* to them."

INTERVIEW ELEVEN:

So, I go in Department Store I and I walk in. I walked directly to the counter that sold the um necklaces and looked around, picked one out. Um, it took me a while to pick it out, I guess probably uh, 20 minutes 'cause you know I'm pretty indecisive. And, uh and mind you, during this time, *no one has come to say, hello, welcome to Department Store I, we have a sale over here... you know, how you doing? Do you need some help? You know, nobody had said that.* So I guess it took me about 20, 25 minutes to pick out the necklace. I picked the necklace out and then I go to another counter and look at the toe rings and I look at them for, um, probably another 20 minutes, so this is 40 minutes, let's say 45 minutes that I've been in the store and *no one has said anything.*

INTERVIEW FIFTEEN:

And it just really got to the point where I went to another register to ask somebody to help me and she said, "well I can't help you, that's not my area I have to stay over here". I said okay, she said but there is somebody over there. I said, well she's not helping me, I said she's told me three times that she'll be with me in a minute, I said she's constantly back and forth with the customer that's in the dressing room and I said, I really don't have that kind of time to wait on an individual like that. I said you know if she would just help me find something, cause the racks were just jam packed and they were not in order, you know, they were not how they normally have sizes going around the little circular thing but they were just different sizes and I said and *I was just trying to get some assistance and I can't get any.* And I said, I really wanna buy my dress here. She said okay. So I went back over there and once again the lady was still, you know acting like I was *invisible*.

These participants describe an interaction - or rather a lack of an interaction - with a sales associate who appears to be at the very least inattentive. The perception of negligent salesclerks is not restricted to African American consumers. In their study of

delightful and terrible shopping experiences, Arnold and his colleagues found that the majority of terrible shopping experiences (35.4 %) were due to lack of interpersonal engagement on the part of sales staff and describe this as ‘incidents in which the salesperson is rude or unfriendly to the customer, or simply ignores the customer’ (2005, pg. 1140). There are differences however between those ‘terrible’ experiences and the experiences recounted above. As these participants voiced, the sentiment is that *because of the color of their skin*, they are *deliberately* ignored. There is a perceived rationale and a perceived intent that is not necessarily present in terrible shopping experiences. These participants recalled experiences where not only are they not being approached by salesclerks, there also appears to be a sense that they are literally not even ‘seen’ by these clerks. The perception is that what is seen is their color, not the person, and that this results in a purposeful attempt by the salesperson to avoid them. In other protocols, the theme of invisible is manifest differently, as the examples below show:

INTERVIEW ONE:

Normally when I go in there, I’m coming from work and or you know, *I tend to probably have a suit on or more of business attire*. Well this particular Saturday morning I needed to run and get a gift so I was not dressed appropriately. I had on some sweat pants, hat on my head and I went to Department Store A to purchase a gift and because, at the department where I get all the free gift wrap and all that.....And so there is this lady who’s known me for years, who has waited on me, she always had an attitude, she’s never been the best customer service person, but she’s waited on me numerous times in the past, knew that I was platinum but [she] *did not recognize me because of my attire and my appearance that day*. So when I gave her the card I saw her expression change.

So I said to her, I guess to get good service *I need to make sure I’m in my business attire and look better when I come in here*.

INTERVIEW FOUR:

“... I was just comfortable so *I was just bumming around*, went in Boutique C, just sort of walked in there and you know *there wasn’t the*

usual, you know greeting that I normally get, no-one said anything to me and that store is not that big. You know you can see, if you stand at the register, you can see people almost half way down you know, to the other door of the Mall. So, and, the store was, this was during the week, so a weekday, so you can imagine there was no traffic in there.

These participants recounted a perceived discriminatory experience while shopping at a store that they regularly frequented. In Interview One, the participant mentions that she was ‘platinum’. This is the highest level attained through the store’s loyalty program that provides certain benefits for frequent customers. On past shopping trips both participants had received adequate service, but on this particular occasion, each was dressed differently than she would ordinarily dress while shopping - more casual or ‘bumming around’ as Participant Four states. Each participant regarded the lack of service on this occasion as a failure on the part of the salesclerk to recognize them outside their normal attire. In these instances, *invisible* refers a perceived lack of effort on the salesclerk’s part to really get to know the customer because of her race.

Participant Four elaborates on this in the excerpt below.

INTERVIEW FOUR:

When I’d gone in there before it’s been like directly from work and I think what may have been, when I’ve gone in from work I would have had on some Boutique C clothes, because I’d shopped there so often. So when you walk in there, if you already have on their clothes, they are going to recognize. There had been a couple of times when I’ve gone in there and not had on their clothes and had someone say, do you know how our sizes run? And I said yes I shop here quite a bit, you know, and I’m sure they ask other people that, but I had been in there when they had not asked people other than me that. They’ve not asked, I’ve not seen them ask white customers that. And you know, some of that I just sort of dismiss, but I think if I’d been in there with some Boutique C clothes on they would have, you know, oh she’s already an established customer so she’s okay. But there I was and um, there was um, there was a white woman who came in she didn’t have on Boutique C stuff. She really wasn’t dressed a whole lot better than I was and they bent over backwards trying

to help her and I'd shopped at Boutique C enough to recognize their clothes, so.

...But *obviously she had not even taken the time to get to know who I was* and, trust me I've spent much more than \$500.00 in that store over a couple of years. Because their clothing is not inexpensive, unfortunately I have spent more than \$500.00. I'm sure my husband is glad that I'm mad with them.

This incident also took place at a store that has a loyalty rewards program.

Special benefits are provided to customers who are enrolled and spend more than \$500 at the retailer during the year. The participant was a member of this program and had in fact considered the store to be a favorite to shop at until the incident described above.

The customer felt the salesperson did not recognize her because she never really got to know her, despite the amount of time and money she'd spent at the store on prior visits.

She attributes this failure to her race. There is research that suggests that individuals of one race often fail to recognize or make false identifications of individuals of other races.

This predisposition towards same-group recognitions has been labeled own-race bias (also referred to as the cross-race effect or other-race effect) and numerous studies have found it to be a robust phenomenon (eg. Meissner and Brigham 2001; Bothwell, Brigham and Malpass 1989; and Anthony, Copper and Mullen 1992). In the narratives above, this bias was perceived by the participants (as coming from the sales associates) regardless of whether there was an actual bias on the part of the sales associates.

Criminal Treatment

While some participants described feeling invisible while shopping, other participants discussed situations where they felt they were hyper-visible. There was a sense that they were being treated at retailers as though they were a suspect or a *criminal*.

This was typically described as the participant perceiving that she was being stared at or followed around.

INTERVIEW FIVE:

I was in the Department Store C's and my son was with me and I think it was holidays and we were walking back and forth looking at all the special gift things, one afternoon; I don't know if it was either a Friday or Sunday. But he must have still been in high school. He was still young enough to want to go to the Mall with me from time to time. And *I noticed this guard and I saw him looking at us*, but I thought you know, they all do. And as I moved along I saw him approaching, *he was following us* and I was so upset about this, that *he was following me and my son*, I just could not believe. And I kept looking back and he kept following us and I really wanted to make a scene in that store, but I didn't want to do it with my son there.... I don't understand why this man thought he needed to follow me around. I'd shopped in Department Store C's a long time....

INTERVIEW SIX:

I was really walking around looking for a baby shower gift and um the sales person kept asking me, could she help me? And I said no, I'm just looking, but thank you. And then other people were walking around and she'd ask them and then go on. And then *she'd come back to me again*. And *I said are you watching me* or something? You know I said because you've asked me once and I told you I thank you and I appreciate it but I'm looking. I just said "you are really being disrespectful after I've told you that I'm looking and that if I need your assistance I'll ask". I said "you have all these other people, you haven't asked them or you've asked them only once, what's the reason?" She says well ma'am I'm just trying to be helpful. *I said no, you're trying to be more than helpful*, so what's the reason?

INTERVIEW ELEVEN:

I went to the girl's section and a security guard came up and asked me if I was by myself. I said no, my mom's over there, I'm just waiting for her, and *he followed me around. Yep. He followed me around*. And I made it a point to go to where my mom was and you know, I kind of whispered, like this man this, you know, this security is following me around. She said, really? Yeah. And um, so she said well walk around some more and see... So I walked around some more and he, you know, followed me, for a good ten minutes and then I went back to where my mother was. She, uh, asked the security guard, why are you following my daughter? He said, uh, I'm not, you know, I'm just doing my job, we just go around and you know make sure everything is okay in all of the different

departments, I'm not following her, she said. And I told him, yes you were, you've been following right behind me. He just denied it and said no he wasn't.

These participants described situations where a salesperson or security guard followed or watched them as they shopped. They assumed that they were being suspected of attempting to engage in criminal activity such as shoplifting solely because of their race. While the majority of 'criminal' experiences described fall under the umbrella of perceived hyper-surveillance, this theme was manifest in other ways also.

INTERVIEW ONE:

I had an account with Department Store B and I was going to pay it off, pay the account off. Well what my husband and I done is we were paying some accounts off, so we had our bank pre-write checks to everyone that we were supposed to pay accounts off. So the check was written to, directly to Department Store B itself. So I go in there and I just thought it was a matter of me taking the check in there and taking care of it. I give them the check the lady said oh we can't take it, we can't take this, so I said why, oh it's a third party check. I said I know what a third party check is, this is not a third party check. A third party check would be written to me and to Department Store B, it's not a third party check. "well you're a, you're a, you're address is not there". I said, my address has to be on there? "oh yes." So I said, I'm confused why you can't take this check. "oh no, we can't take it". So I said, would you please take the check, it really floored me 'cause my husband, dropped me off and said I'll be back in 5 minutes, I was probably about 45 minutes. So, I asked to speak to the Manager, 'cause I wanted to know why they won't take the check. Well I was at the counter waiting for the manager. *I see this man coming across the floor at full speed; I didn't know who that was. He didn't speak; he walked up to me "we cannot take this check."* And I said excuse me, who are you? I'm so and so, the manager and da, da, da, and we're not gonna take this check. And I said okay well, I'm gonna make sure I'm clear in regards to why you're not accepting this check. "It's a third party check." It's not a third party check, it's written directly to you all. "Well we can't take this check and you know we don't do this sort of thing", you know *making it seem as though I was trying to do something illegal....* Well, what really bothered me about it was the way he came he came running, *you know he thought I was a shoplifter or something....* The thing is it wasn't a personal thing, you

know, but all I wanted to do was pay my bill. But *I was treated like I was a criminal for trying to pay a bill.*

INTERVIEW NINE:

She was facing that area and she was also facing customers who were coming through. I kept my voice very low, as not to bring attention that we were having a conversation. And *I would notice her look up from time to time. And every time she looked up her voice would elevate just a little more and a little more to bring attention to the fact that we were talking.* And I basically was telling her, when I made the comment to her, I said you know what? I said I don't think I'm coming here anymore and then she started talking about, well god forgives and if you're a forgiving person. And I'm looking at her and I told her, that is not necessary and it has nothing to do with this conversation. And I walked off. This woman followed me to the car to talk to me, and I told her I said look... She was still trying to justify, her behavior and I finally looked at her and I told her. I said, you know what? I said *you treated me as though I was a perpetrator and thief.* I said when I never raised my voice to you and *you were drawing attention to our conversation like I stole something.*

INTERVIEW SEVEN:

I went to the United Way Golf Tournament last year and as part of your goody bag they gave away coupons for Specialty Store A. Now the coupons were specific, it was a sleeve, and a sleeve is 3 balls, 3 golf balls, a sleeve of balls and they had, Noodle was the name of the balls, a sleeve of Noodle balls with the presentation of this coupon. Well I got two coupons, one for me and one for my friend.... So I go to Specialty Store A Campbell Station Road and I walk in and the son, Alex is his name, Alex is standing behind the counter, there's nobody in the store, just me and Alex. I walk in and I say, hey you know I got this coupon. He acts kinda funny but he says hey the balls' over there and I go over there and I grab two balls and I give him two coupons. He says you can only have one sleeve of balls. I said, what? I said I have two coupons. He says no, it's one coupon for one sleeve of balls. And I said no, no. And he said look we stood there and argued for maybe two minutes about the sleeve of balls. He did not let me have that other sleeve of balls. No what I should have done was leave both, but I said no, I'll take the one sleeve of balls but I will never dawn the doors of Specialty Store A. He, with that, he said now see every coupon has a sleeve of balls and it's one per person. I said, 'how do you know I'm not going to give this to my friend?' I mean I was just being, 'how do you know?' I mean I'm picking up these... But that wasn't the point, the point was good business. I had two coupons; I was supposed to get two sleeves. You know, *it's not like I ran those things off because they weren't hand..., the*

numbers were in um ink, so it wasn't like I was reproducing these coupons. It was clear that this was a coupon that they had given for United Way. He told me no, and so I said I'm going to be back tomorrow. I said I'll be back tomorrow for the other ball and he didn't say anything. Well of course I didn't go back, I'm not going to drive all the way there but, they have not changed. They are money grabbing, prejudiced dogs!

In Interview Nine, the participant describes an encounter with a manager with whom she was attempting to register a complaint about an 'invisible' experience she was having at the store. She explicitly uses the words 'perpetrator' and 'thief' to refer to how she felt the manager treated her during the exchange. Other participants reported feeling as though they are being treated like a suspect or criminal while engaging in fairly ordinary retail endeavors such as paying off a store credit card and redeeming coupons. Although they are not being watched or stared at, they still feel that they are being treated as though they are trying to get away with something illegal.

This practice, the use of race to identify someone as a potential criminal suspect, is referred to as racial profiling (Gold 2003). While the term originated in the context of police stops and searches, it has also been used to describe the behavior these participants experienced at retailers. The terms consumer racial profiling and consumer racism both refer to the use of racial profiling in retail environments (Harris 2003, Kennedy 2004). It is this type of 'criminal' treatment that is most often the basis for lawsuits filed against retailers by consumers alleging racial discrimination (Harris 2003, Kennedy 2004, Austin 1994).

Social psychological research suggests that one of the most common themes in the stereotype of Blacks is that of a criminal (Plant and Peruche 2005; Devine 1989). Devine found that both high and low prejudiced subjects identified this stereotype for

Blacks. Eberhardt and her colleagues (2004) examined police officers identification of criminals based on race. When asked directly ‘Who looks criminal?’ police officers choose more black faces than white faces. Furthermore, the more stereotypically Black a face appeared, the more likely officers were to report that the face looked criminal. These researchers note, “Certain concepts may be so tightly coupled with a specific social group that these groups have become, in a sense, hijacked by that group. Indeed the social group functions as the prototypical embodiment of these concepts” (pg. 889).

There is evidence that the stereotype of Blacks as ‘criminals’ may be applied in retail settings as well. Asquith and Bristow found that 42.6 % of student respondents indicated that African-Americans and Hispanics were most likely to shoplift merchandise from a retail store although they represented less than 12 % of the population in the area where the study was conducted at the time. Demographic information obtained from the participants showed that 46.1 % of these students had retail work experience. Although the study did not examine related behaviors, it is not unreasonable to propose that these perceptions may have affected these employees’ treatment of African American and Hispanic consumers at their retail establishments. Similarly it is possible that the actors (salesclerks/manager) discussed in the excerpts above were aware of the stereotype of Blacks as criminals and were acting on this stereotype. There is an alternative hypothesis as well.

Just as Caucasians, regardless of prejudice level, are aware of the stereotype of Blacks as criminal, African Americans are aware of the label as well (Gabbidon 2003). It is possible that African Americans may perceive that the label is being applied to them even when it is not. Social psychology studies suggest that individual variables such as

ethnic identification may influence attributions of discrimination (Branscombe et al. 1999). It is impossible to reject or accept either hypothesis in this analysis and there is a need for additional research in this area.

Similarities between Invisible treatment and Criminal treatment

Underlying both the invisible and criminal experiences described is a sentiment of not being seen as a human being that exists and matters in a retail setting solely because of race. Participants interpreted the actions (or inaction) of retail staff as an attempt to lessen them, to devalue them, or to put them in their place, as described in the following excerpts:

INTERVIEW ONE:

The lady looked at me like, *you know your place*.

INTERVIEW FOUR:

I'm self assured enough that rather than *making me feel small*, [it] just pisses me off. That's not very lady-like language, but *I know that it is an attempt to make you feel small* and *I just refuse to allow people to control me that way*.

INTERVIEW NINE:

I even now, when I look at some of the younger people and they still have that old nasty stereotypical mentality where they treat you, and it's obvious that *you're being treated in a second class manner*, that bugs me to no end.

[Y]ou needed to know what your staff is doing. Now what you do with them is not my issue, but you at least need to talk to them about customer service and even if somebody different comes in here who they may not like because of appearance sake, *they still need to treat everyone with respect and dignity*.

INTERVIEW TEN:

You should be second, you know and less than a person. You know, as if that's standard practice. And uh, *it's a feeling of, I don't know, not having rights*. *You feel the injustice because of the color of your skin*.

Research on marketing satisfaction/dissatisfaction suggests some theoretical explanation for these experiences. Schneider and Bowen (1999) remind marketers that customers are people first and consumers second. Correspondingly, they have basic needs that must be filled even in retail environments. These are the need for security, the need for justice and the need for self-esteem. Security refers to ‘the need to feel unthreatened by physical or economic harm’. Justice refers to ‘the need to be fairly treated’. Self-esteem refers to ‘the need to maintain and enhance one’s self-image’ (pg. 38). They note, “The impulse on the part of people to fulfill these basic needs is sacrosanct: violate these needs and the outcome will be outrage; gratify them and the outcome will be delight” (pg. 37). For the participants in this study, the invisible and criminal experiences described appear to be violations of the participants’ needs for justice and self-esteem in retail settings.

The need for justice consists of three types of justice – distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice (Schneider and Bowen 1999, Schoefer and Ennew 2005). The latter is arguably applicable to this discussion. Interactional justice is described as “how employees relate personally to the firm’s clients rather than what the specific noninterpersonal procedures might be. [It] might be thought of as ‘bedside manner’ compared to the specific procedures or medications prescribed” (pg. 40). The phrases used by the participants - ‘making me feel small’, ‘not having rights’, ‘treated in a second class manner’ and most directly ‘feel the injustice because of the color of your skin’ - suggest that these experiences violated the participants need to be treated fairly and respectfully by the retail employees.

The need for self-esteem is a higher level need than security or justice. It can take various forms such as not wanting to appear stupid or wanting to be viewed as a valuable individual and not just as a member of a certain class of consumers (Schneider and Bowen 1999). The following comments reveal this need:

INTERVIEW TWO:

I would think that *someone who was capable of paying for your product* would be given a much better customer service.

INTERVIEW FIVE:

It was hard for me to deal with because *here I felt I was this up standing citizen. It's just nothing like this had ever happened to me; I've always had plenty of money and credit cards, always paid my bills. And it doesn't occur to me to think that I could be a suspicious person.* But then it occurred to me that well yeah, many people are and often Black people are. And I thought, I guess that's what they are operating on, but I don't like the way it feels. And I thought I guess this is how a lot of people feel at times and I just hadn't thought about it before.

INTERVIEW SIX:

I just said *you are really being disrespectful* after I've told you that I'm looking and that if I need your assistance I'll ask.

The link between the need for self-esteem and perceptions of discrimination has been inferred in prior research. Some scholars have assumed that repeated exposure to prejudice and discrimination directed against oneself or one's group will inevitably result in negative psychological consequences for the target, such as low self-esteem (Kaiser, Major and McCoy 2004). This suggests that perceived prejudice and discrimination may lead to low self-esteem. This perspective is consistent with early literature comparing self-esteem among racial groups where, “the expectation of low Black self-esteem was almost an axiom among social scientists” (Gray-Little and Hafdahl 2000, pg. 26). The accumulation of contrary findings led psychologists to consider alternative explanations.

Recent meta-analytical studies indicate that African Americans have higher self-esteem on average compared to other groups (Gray-Little and Hafdahl 2000; Twenge and Crocker 2002). In their study comparing the self-esteem of Black and White children, adolescents and young adults, Gray-Little and Hafdahl revealed significantly higher scores for Blacks than for Whites (2000). Extending this research, Twenge and Crocker (2002) compared self-esteem among Whites, Blacks, Hispanics, Asians and American Indians of all ages and found that Blacks scored highest on self-esteem measures. Various theories have been offered as potential explanations for the self-esteem advantage found in Blacks. First, social identity theory suggests that membership in a highly distinct social group allows individuals in the group to derive a higher level of collective and personal self-esteem from identification with their group. African Americans are members of a distinctive minority group and this theory would suggest an expectation of higher self-esteem amongst individuals in this group (Gray-Little and Hafdahl 2000). Secondly, having a racial identity that is germane allows African Americans to selectively embrace or reject domains in which minority and majority group members excel or fail. This enables African Americans to compare themselves with others in their group or to compare themselves to selective majority group members which may lead to a higher self-esteem as a result. Finally, membership in a stigmatized group allows individuals to deflect personal failures as indicative of prejudice (Twenge and Crocker 2002). It is possible that for African Americans, racial membership serves as a buffer, protecting their self-esteem. Thus, instead of prejudice and discrimination leading to lower self-esteem, perceptions of prejudice and discrimination may actually be indicative of higher self-esteem.

Theme Two: *I knew*

The theme of *I knew* refers to the participant becoming aware that she is being treated discriminatorily because of her race. This awareness appears to be the result of an internal dialogue or process through which the customer attributes the perceived negative treatment she is receiving to discrimination.

It is impossible to ascertain in this research endeavor whether participants were discriminated against in objective terms. Some researchers have asserted that minority group members perceive bias when it was neither intended nor present (Schneider 2004). This heightened suspicion regarding prejudice has been labeled attributional ambiguity (Operario and Fiske 2001). This view alleges a type of conspiracy theory with the majority asserting that minorities believe prejudice is lurking around every corner. Conversely, there is empirical support which suggests discriminatory behavior may go undetected by individuals on the receiving end of the incongruent treatment (Branscombe et. al.1999). The perception that one is a victim and is worse off than others is extremely aversive, making it an inference that people tend to avoid. This has been labeled the minimization of prejudice effect (Kaiser and Miller 2001). According to this view, on the streets that minorities frequent, prejudice probably really is lurking around every corner though minorities only recognize it sometimes. Other studies suggest examining contextual variables (i.e. presence of others) and personal variables (i.e. ethnic identification) provides a middle ground between the oppositional views of attributional ambiguity and the minimization of prejudice effect.

In this research project, participants were asked to explicitly describe experiences where they felt they were discriminated against in retail settings. The number of

experiences described for each participant ranged from one to six. In comparison to the total number of retail shopping visits likely experienced by each participant, the number of experiences perceived as discriminatory appears to be relatively low although each experience was salient to the participant. Thus there is no collective evidence of hypersensitivity towards prejudice as alleged by the attributional ambiguity perspective though some individuals may exhibit this trait. The experiences of these participants cannot be fully explained by the minimization of prejudice effect either.

Most social psychology studies that have examined attributions of discrimination have used static scenarios in an experimental design (e.g. Johnson et al. 2003; Kaiser and Miller 2001a; Khan and Lambert 2001; Major et al. 2002; Operario and Fiske 2001; Ruggiero, Steele, Hwang and Marx 2000). In these studies, participants read an excerpt describing an actor that has engaged in certain behaviors and make a determination as to whether the behavior described is discriminatory or not. More often than not, the scenarios involve work or academic settings. Researchers typically examine how contextual variables (e.g. Kaiser and Miller 2001; Khan and Lambert 2001; Ruggiero et al. 2000; Stangor et al. 2002) and/or personality variables (Major et al. 2002; Operario and Fiske 2001) influence attributions of discrimination. This type of methodology results in attributions of prejudice being assessed at a discrete point in time. While this research provides an important first step in examining prejudice from the target's perspective, it has significant limitations.

There may be some situations where an individual might initially deny discrimination but as the encounter continues, becomes more likely to make this attribution. In the experimental studies described above, this might result in support for

the minimization of prejudice effect or the attributional ambiguity hypothesis depending on what snapshot a scenario captured. In real life, perceptions of discrimination occur in a dynamic environment. The final attribution of discrimination may be more likely to occur as the end result of process rather than as a stagnant event. This research provides some initial support for this hypothesis. Analysis revealed a process continuum emerging in perceptions of discrimination.

At some point during the encounters described, the participant had an initial thought she was being treated differently because of her race. In some cases this thought was quickly accepted as valid by the participant. There were also occasions the participant '*tested*' this assumption before accepting it or rejecting it. For all of the participants in this study, acceptance was the end result of this process. There was a point during the experiences described where the participant '*knew*' she was being discriminated against. This is not surprising given the explicit focus on perceived discrimination in this study. What is surprising is how participants arrived at this final conclusion. Some participants were more likely to reach this end of the continuum more quickly than others. Other participants initially denied this experience internally and acceptance occurred subsequent to a process of '*testing*' (an emic term that arose during this research). Individual participants may have a tendency to minimize prejudice initially, but through a process become more likely to make an attribution of prejudice - at least internally - as they collect more evidence for themselves through the process of testing. This process is depicted in Figure 4.

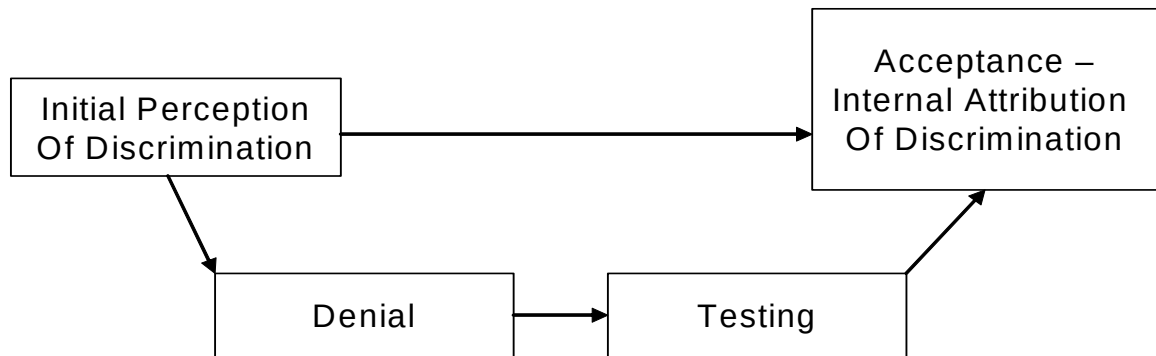


Figure 4. Attributions of Discrimination

At the point where the participant *knew* she had been discriminated against, an internal attribution of discrimination has occurred. There is a certainty associated with the experience at the time an internal attribution of discrimination occurs. That certainty of a discriminatory experience is sustained even after a period of time has elapsed. The activities of denial, testing and acceptance are discussed more fully below.

Denial

The term ‘denial’ as used here refers to the participant’s tendency to reject or delay confirmation of an initial impression that an actor is engaging in discriminatory behavior. The term is used broadly to encompass a suspension of belief, disbelief, and ‘denial’ as typically conceptualized in psychological research.

INTERVIEW THREE:

And I was like, I’ve been here 10 or 15 minutes and at first I thought [states her name] *you are just being sensitive and you are just looking for something to say. Okay, you tell yourself that you don’t wanna be that person that has a chip on their shoulder. Because the reality of life is racism exists but it’s on how you deal with it. Okay. So I was like, no, no.*

I was very sad and hurt. Because Boutique B was one of my favorite places. I just loved it and *I just couldn't believe, you know*. Then I got angry, I was sad and then I got angry.

INTERVIEW FIVE:

[H]e was following us and I was so upset about this, that he was following me and my son, *I just could not believe [it]*.

Both participants above verbally reflected that they could not 'believe' that they were indeed experiencing discrimination during the encounters recalled. There are a few ways this expressed disbelief can be interpreted. The first is that the participant recognizes the behavior as potentially discriminatory, but has trouble accepting it because of other possible explanations accessed from memory or constructed onsite. This is more indicative of suspended belief rather than disbelief. Alternatively, the participant may recognize the behavior as potentially discriminatory but rejects this attribution given other possible explanations accessed from memory or constructed onsite. This is more indicative of disbelief as typically conceptualized. Finally, the participant may also recognize the behavior as potentially discriminatory but can't bring herself to believe it even in the face of other explanations from memory or constructed onsite. If in fact the behavior is discriminatory, this type of rejection is referred to in Freudian terms as denial. The narratives do not provide sufficient evidence to know which of these three potential interpretations is most applicable. There is research directly examining attributions of discrimination that provides some clarification for denial as experienced by these participants.

Participants may want to avoid viewing themselves as vulnerable targets of discrimination. The expressed disbelief may be a type of coping strategy. Research on emotions suggests that when faced with a threat such as discrimination, people may

engage in emotion-focused strategies such as denial (Bagozzi, Gopinath and Nyer 1999). It also appears that for some participants, denial may occur as a result of shock. These participants are truly shocked because the idea of being perceived as a suspicious person is so very incongruent with the participant's self-concept.

INTERVIEW FIVE:

I don't understand why this man thought he needed to follow me around. I'd shopped in Department Store C's a long time. *I had more credit cards than he could ever think about* and I called them up and they apologized.

It just was a horrible feeling for me because I just couldn't imagine why he followed, and I know they watch people in stores, but I was just very insulted that he was following the two of us around, *that had never happened to me before*.

It was hard for me to deal with because *here I felt I was this up-standing citizen*. It's just *nothing like this had ever happened to me; I've always had plenty of money and credit cards, always paid my bills*. And it *doesn't occur to me to think that I could be a suspicious person*. But then it occurred to me that well yeah, many people are and often Black people are. And I thought, I guess that's what they are operating on, but I don't like the way it feels. And I thought I guess this is how a lot of people feel at times and I just hadn't thought about it before.

This participant holds a doctorate degree and has been a college professor for more than 25 years. Her academic credentials and professional position have provided her with a certain level of respect from others. The notion that *she* could be viewed as a suspect stuns her. Most of the women interviewed in this study are professionals. This denial/disbelief may be incredulity of the perceived behavior. The participants may feel their status insulates them from this type of treatment. Extant research supports this contention. African Americans tend to perceive a higher level of discrimination directed at their group as a whole than at themselves as individual members (Verkuyten 1998).

This divergence has been labeled the personal-group discrepancy effect (PGD) (Verkuyten 1998, Kobrynowicz and Branscombe 1997).

Denial may also be indicative of a desire to avoid being labeled as some sort of racial conspiracy extremist (Sechrist et al 2004). This assessment doesn't necessarily have to come from an outsider.

INTERVIEW FIFTEEN:

Because sometimes *I'm always wondering, am I overreacting...*

Because having worked in retail myself, the customer before another customer can really tick you off to the point where unfortunately you might take it out on the next customer. You know and I guess it's why, when I used to work in McDonald's when I was in High School and when I go to McDonald's I know that sometimes the managers can be ratty about the smallest, craziest thing and that can display in your attitude, and that's why when I go, you know, you see some customers who are cut up or get mad because they asked for this, that and the other, but *I try to always be patient and be calm and that's why I guess I really looked at this situation at Discount Retailer B as, well was she being rude because I was Black or was she being rude just because maybe she was having a bad day. And so you don't wanna just always throw out the 'race card', so I try to you know.*

In the excerpt above, the participant is referring to her own thoughts following a potentially discriminatory experience. The only person who would be catching the 'race card' in this narrative would be the participant herself. Similarly, Participant Three remarks above, "*you don't wanna be that person that has a chip on their shoulder.*" At this point during the interview the participant is referring to her initial thoughts during the discriminatory encounter. The implication is that she wants to avoid viewing herself as 'that person'. Research suggests people who publicly make attributions of discrimination may risk being labeled as hypersensitive, emotional and generally unpleasant (Kaiser and Miller 2001). The subsequent section discussing the theme *Have Restraint/Show Your Butt* provides some support that this label may prevent people who believe they have

been discriminated against from making a public complaint. The present analysis extends this research by suggesting that the label of ‘racial conspiracy theorist’ is one that some people may unwittingly apply even to themselves when confronted with subtle negative behaviors that they deem discriminatory.

Testing

Denial refers to an unwillingness to quickly make an attribution of discrimination that was evidenced by some participants. Other participants revealed an uncertainty associated with attributions of discrimination. Most of the encounters described involved subtle behaviors rather than the use of more overt discriminatory behaviors or racial slurs. In many of these cases, participants revealed a propensity to be unsure of their initial perception. When experiencing denial or disbelief, participants engaged in a process of testing. Testing refers to the accumulation of evidence to support or refute the initial perception of discrimination. A careful search of the social psychological literature to date did not find any direct or indirect reference to this notion of testing, which suggests this may be a novel finding.

INTERVIEW ONE:

And the thing is, I felt that you know a lot of *things are not always racist type of things*, but *I observe a lot and see how people are treated*.

INTERVIEW THREE:

The only thing, you have to remember, I did a *test run*...

I would go in there periodically, not really to shop or anything, I just wanted to observe. I remember being ignored several times,

Just totally like I wasn’t even there. And people would be walking in behind me, and they were like oh can I help you. And I was like, I’ve been here 10 or 15 minutes and at first I thought [states her name] you are just being sensitive and you are just looking for something to say. Okay, you tell yourself that you don’t wanna be that person that has a chip on

their shoulder. Because the reality of life is racism exists but it's on how you deal with it. Okay. So I was like, no, no. *So, I would do sample test runs*, like my mom took me to the Mall or I want to apply for some jobs and *I would go into Boutique B, time and time again. And I got the same response*. They didn't follow me, okay. I wish they had, maybe I would have got their attention. But the fact is they would just glance, see I was there and act like I wasn't there. That was what I felt and that was, I said I'm gonna go ahead and apply. They had a big sign. Help wanted. So I applied to one of those signs, like I was telling you earlier. I went in they acted like I didn't apply, told me the job was filled. That was my experience, retail wise.

INTERVIEW NINE:

So I try to give balance to everything, to make sure that okay, *you need to assess it first*. And then *I'll watch* and sometimes I'm not looking at jewelry anymore *I'm watching to see, do you do this to everybody?* Now *if you do this to everybody that's just who you are*. But *when I see you making a deliberate difference I'm gonna say something*.

INTERVIEW ELEVEN:

So, I go in Department Store I and I walk in. I walked directly to the counter that sold the um necklaces and looked around, picked one out. Um, it took me a while to pick it out, I guess probably uh, 20 minutes cause you know I'm pretty indecisive. And, uh and mind you, during this time, no one has come to say, hello, welcome to Department Store I, we have a sale over here... you know, how you doing? Do you need some help? You know, nobody had said that. So I guess it took me about 20, 25 minutes to pick out the necklace. I picked the necklace out and then I go to another counter and look at the toe rings and I look at them for, um, probably another 20 minutes, *so this is 40 minutes, let's say 45 minutes that I've been in the store and no one has said anything*. So I kind of recognized that after I picked out the necklace that, okay, nobody has said anything to me and um, *during this time, several other customers, um, have walked into the store. Several other customers of the other persuasion. And, uh, immediately, you know, they were, um someone said something to them. Either, hello, hi, how you doing, you know, welcome to the store. Do you need any help?* Um, and *when I realized that that happened, I just kind of sat back and just observed and you know I just wanted to wait it out to see how long it was gonna take for somebody to come up to me*.

These participants appeared to seek alternative explanations for the perceived behavior. The participants engage in certain behaviors while testing. They observe the

treatment of customers while focusing specifically on the race of other customers. They pay attention to the amount of time that's passing. Participants appear to ask themselves, 'Is this really discrimination?' In other words, is the salesperson treating everyone the same regardless of race? It is unclear if the motive behind testing is to reject the initial thought of discrimination or if it is to support it. The minimization of prejudice and attributional ambiguity perspectives respectively support each hypothesis and no literature directly examining the concept of testing was found. Regardless of the intent, some participants noted times when 'testing' did not lead them to embrace an initial perception of discrimination.

INTERVIEW FIFTEEN:

...I try to always be patient and be calm and that's why I guess I really looked at this situation at Discount Retailer B as, *well was she being rude because I was Black or was she being rude just because maybe she was having a bad day?* And so you don't wanna just always throw out the 'race card', so I try to you know. *In that case too, it wasn't worth it, I wasn't gonna get any satisfaction out of that, especially with the doubts I had in my head.*

INTERVIEW SIXTEEN:

You know what's going on but at the same time you kinda question it *because they are doing it to everybody*, so it's like *is it because of race* or is it just because of the people who are in the store, you know, *you really can't tell.*

Acceptance

For the perceived discriminatory experiences that are the focus of this research the answer to the question 'Is this discrimination?' is necessarily yes. The prior section reveals that for some participants, this 'yes' came subsequent to a process of testing. For other participants, the affirmation came more quickly. For all the participants, at some

point during the experiences recounted there was a time the participant ‘knew’ that the negative encounter was discrimination.

INTERVIEW ONE:

I felt at that point *she made a deliberate choice to wait on the Caucasian*. And *I said, you know that’s when I felt, this is discriminatory* she chooses to wait on her; she is choosing to wait on her.

INTERVIEW THREE:

But it confirmed, she was totally ignoring me like, whatever are you done yet. And *I knew, I knew*. I said okay.

I don’t know if I saw a Hispanic lady come in or maybe a Mediterranean lady or something and they treated her the same way. I saw something happen to somebody and *I realized this is how they were treating minorities*. And *I knew*. *It was not a question of me looking for racism or me being sensitive or anything. It was just outright racism and once I realized that, you know, I was saddened*.

INTERVIEW SEVEN:

Of course when I was collecting and being involved in securing door prizes and coupons and whatever, my first thought was Black. It’s always at the back of my mind. *If I were White I would get different treatment and nobody can take that away from me, that’s my perception*.

INTERVIEW TEN:

It’s so, how can I say, I just felt like, the way he said it, oh you have a coat, came out to him it’s probably um just fine, but to me that was like, well why wouldn’t I have a coat, you know, so. I’m 50-years-old, you know when do I get one at 75. Anyway, but *it was more about color*. *It was more about the color of my skin, I know it was*.

INTERVIEW ELEVEN:

That’s when it occurred to me because I, when I started observing the people coming in. You know, first of all, I was the only African-American in the store. And then when I started seeing the people come in, you know, they were all uh white-Americans, you know, just coming in and they were being helped, so I’m like, Okay, now I see that, you know, *this is because I was Black*, you know, I assumed that....

The location of Department Store C was on the plaza which is a luxury shopping area in Kansas City, so, uh, you know... *I just kind of knew*.

These excerpts reveal a certainty associated with these attributions of discrimination for the participants. At this stage, there is no longer any denial, disbelief or doubt. The attitude is ‘This is discrimination and I know it!’ Some of the participants seem to understand that this attribution is indeed their perception and not objectively ascertainable. This does not negate their conviction of the discriminatory experience for them. Though there are differences conceptually between a perception of discrimination and an internal attribution of discrimination, the remaining paper uses the former term to refer to both the perception and the attribution for simplicity and in keeping with the terminology employed with this study from the onset. For the participants in this study, the experience of retail discrimination is undeniable. The following theme reveals this belief may have significant and lasting effects for the participant and potentially for the retailer.

Theme Three: *Have restraint - Show my butt*

Customer satisfaction/dissatisfaction research has shown that customers are often more affected by bad service encounters than service providers are aware of (Chung-Herrera et al. 2004). Research in social psychology suggests that the perception that one is a victim of discrimination is likely to be even more emotionally taxing than a typical negative service encounter given the motivation ascribed to this behavior. In addition to emotional responses which are uncontrollable, the consumer also faces the decision as to what actions to take in response to the perceived behavior. Some participants expressed this choice of actions to employ as a decision that they actively grappled with. The research conducted to date suggests that this topic is important to understand both for the

emotions themselves and for the associated service failure and recovery behaviors. This theme, *Have restraint - Show my butt*, encapsulates emotions, cognitions and behaviors participants experienced subsequent to a perception of discrimination.

The relationship between emotions, cognitions and behavior has been a highly debated area in psychological research. Two of the most popular perspectives are briefly reviewed in the following section. This is followed by a more in-depth discussion of emotions, cognitions and behaviors involved in perceptions of discrimination which incorporates relevant consumer behavior research.

Emotions, Cognitions and Behaviors

There is little doubt among researchers that emotions, cognitions and behaviors are closely intertwined with each other. What is questioned however is the nature of the relationship between them. The central point of contention appears to be whether cognitions precede emotions as posited by appraisal theorists or whether emotions precede cognitions as asserted by emotion theorists (Izard 1992).

According to appraisal theory, cognitions are important antecedents of emotions. Appraisal theorists describe emotions as being ‘evoked by an evaluation of the significance of one’s circumstances for personal well-being’ (Smith, Haynes, Lazarus and Pope 1993, pg. 916). This evaluation consists of knowledge of relevant circumstances as well as appraisal of the circumstances for their implications for personal well-being (Smith et al. 1993).

Emotion theorists maintain that emotions serve biological and social functions which motivate certain cognitions and behaviors (Izard 1992). For example, sadness has been shown to elicit empathy and altruistic behavior (Barnett, King and Howard 1979).

Under this view emotions are basic in the sense that they are the basis for coping strategies and adaptation. “Emotion can be activated by a thalamoamygdala pathway that can operate independently of neo-cortex and therefore independently of any type of cognition requiring cortical processing or integration” (Izard 1992, pg. 563). Further evidence of the independence of emotions without cognition is that emotions have been induced through the manipulation of facial expressions, by unanticipated pain, and by changing the temperature of cerebral blood (Izard 1992).

Applying these theories to the phenomenon under investigation here produces vastly different conclusions. Under appraisal theory, the participant’s awareness of discrepant treatment coupled with the appraisal that this treatment is due to the participant’s race would evoke emotions that subsequently influence behaviors. Conversely, emotion theory infers that the participant does not have to engage in an appraisal process before experiencing emotions. Through either past experiences or biological pathways, emotions can arise independently of cognitions. The implication for this research is that the participants might have experienced ‘hot’ emotions quickly in these situations and these emotions subsequently affected cognitions and behaviors. The retrospective accounts of the participants’ experiences make it impossible to disentangle the linear sequence through which emotions and cognitions emerged. What did emerge however were specific emotions, behaviors and cognitions that were common in perceptions of discrimination. Although this analysis attempts to separate emotions, behaviors and cognitions to integrate existing literature on these topics, this distinction did not emerge naturally during the analysis of the interview protocols. Thus some overlap occurs in the discussion below.

Emotions Evoked During Perceptions of Discrimination

The examination of emotions in consumer realms is in its infancy in comparison to information processing and behavioral decision research (Bagozzi et al. 1999). Researchers still have much to learn about the role of emotions in marketing related behaviors. There is in fact little consistency in how the word ‘emotions’ is conceptualized among marketers (Laros and Steenkamp 2005) and its distinction from similar constructs such as moods and attitudes is often unclear (Bagozzi et al. 1999). One of the most cited attempts to clarify emotions in marketing is Richins’ seminal article “Measuring Emotions in the Consumption Experience” (1997). She defines emotion as a valenced affective reaction to perceptions of situations. The present analysis appears to reflect the definition of emotions offered by Bagozzi and his colleagues (1999). They define emotion as “a mental state of readiness that arises from cognitive appraisals of events or thoughts; has a phenomenological tone; is accompanied by physiological processes physically; and may result in specific actions to affirm or cope with the emotion, depending on its nature and meaning for the person having it” (pg. 184). This definition better corresponds to the inseparable manifestation of emotions, actions and cognitions that emerged in the participants’ narratives.

Given the lack of research on emotions in consumer contexts in general, the corresponding shortage of knowledge on the effect of negative emotions in retail environments is not surprising. Stern and her colleagues (1998) concluded that even a relatively short encounter with a salesperson may be an emotionally charged experience. This analysis finds that to be true as well. Relatively short encounters with sales staff produced clearly negative emotions for many of the participants:

INTERVIEW TWO

I got hot. I called the manager and wanted to know what the hell was going on. "Oh, Miss, it was just a misunderstanding". I said oh no, I don't think so, but that's okay, I will never shop at your store again, and I have never, ever stepped foot into a Department Store D store.

Emotions tend to be intense in the strength of felt subjective experience (Bagozzi et al. 1999). In the above excerpt, the participant is referring to an experience that occurred over a decade ago. Her colorful language reveals the intensity of the anger she felt at the time. Her emotions were so deeply felt that she altered her purchase behavior immediately afterwards and continues to avoid shopping at the retailer even today. This behavior appears to be motivated by the anger felt at that time. Additionally, her animated delivery while recalling this incident indicates she continues to relive this anger when she speaks of this experience. This passion was revealed in other protocols as well:

INTERVIEW THREE:

I was very sad and hurt. Because Boutique B was one of my favorite places. I just loved it and I just couldn't believe, you know. Then *I got angry, I was sad and then I got angry.*

INTERVIEW FOUR:

I was just really... *ticked* at being treated that way.

INTERVIEW SEVEN:

But in this particular case it was something that *I almost went ballistic*, but I didn't.

INTERVIEW NINE:

Now *I'm seething* and I'm like, cause I was a little on the militant side anyway, *I was like no she didn't just ask me that.*

INTERVIEW ELEVEN:

But when I talked to the salesperson and expressed myself, *I got, you know, loud* and let her know that *I was angry* and... *I kind of tossed the items on the counter.*

INTERVIEW SIXTEEN:

The Asian guy would follow us, I mean he made no attempt to try to hide that he was following us and *it was really pissing me off*. And I told my husband, I was like, I know you see that. He was like yeah but, you know, this is a store, I'm not trying to. I guess he wasn't in the mood for it. But *I was really getting heated* and I wanted to say something to him, but my husband wouldn't let me.

These excerpts reveal the anger that emerged across several protocols, both explicitly and implicitly. In the analysis of the theme *Invisible/Criminal*, it was suggested that the perceived discriminatory behavior described appears to violate the participants' need for interactional justice and need for self-esteem in retail environments (Schneider and Bowen 1999). Prior research suggests that such violations have an impact on emotions. Schoefer and Ennew (2005) found that low levels of perceived interactional justice elicited higher levels of negative emotions such as anger or rage. Their commentary does not differentiate between anger and rage. Laros and Steenkamp (2005) describe four basic negative emotions that are relative to consumer behavior – anger, fear, sadness and shame. Anger is a primary emotion comprised of the following subordinate emotions: angry, frustrated, irritated, unfulfilled, discontented, envious, and jealous (Laros and Steenkamp 2005). Anger was the emotion that emerged most often participants' experiences of retail discrimination. There was some evidence of the other emotions as well.

In the passages above, Participant Three spoke of sadness she felt prior to feeling anger. Although she is the only participant to use this word explicitly while describing her feelings, other participants revealed a sense of helplessness that Laros and Steenkamp (2005) categorize as subordinate to sadness:

INTERVIEW FIVE:

I don't understand why this man thought he needed to follow me around. I'd shopped in Department Store C's a long time. I had more credit cards than he could ever think about and I called them up and they apologized. Actually when I went back there, not too much later, I never saw him again. But, it really upset me because I had never been followed like that. Um, I just hadn't experienced it and it just really bothered me terribly.

INTERVIEW SIX:

I basically felt that she was watching to make sure that I didn't steal anything and you know, I wondered, well, what is it about me? I'm dressed, you know, nicely I think, so what's...? What about me is causing her to feel that I'm not in here to buy anything?

Other emotions indicative of sadness are: depressed, miserable, nostalgia and guilty. These did not appear in any of the transcripts. Shame subsumes the following emotions: embarrassed, ashamed and humiliated (Laros and Steenkamp 2005). Shame emerged in the following participants' narratives:

INTERVIEW FOUR:

We had not been here in Knoxville very long, and we were just piddling around watching things and we came across this table of watches and my youngest daughter likes watches just as much as I do, so she had a couple that she wanted me to look at and she was still walking around and she had them in her hand, still very, very close to the table and I was on one side of the table and she was on the other. And the man behind there, who was an older white gentleman, started screaming at her. Put those down, you're trying to steal those. And I said wait a minute she's not trying to steal those. You have but 30 watches here, we could afford to buy your entire stand if we wanted to. And I said Lindsay put them down, we don't want to buy anything from him, and I mean we're out in this big hall and he's screaming and the attention of everyone and it was total embarrassment for both my girls and they wanted to leave at that point.

INTERVIEW SEVEN:

(Interviewer: *Have you told anyone about that experience?*)

No, I was embarrassed. With that experience I was more embarrassed than angry and the reason is because I had told the graduate students that I was getting a club. And I ended up, well we had a club, we'll just put it like that. But I was embarrassed more than anything else and I can't, I

don't know, I think the club came after, the club incident came after the Specialty Store A incident so after a couple of years I realized I just don't have it.

In the first excerpt, the participant spoke of her daughter's embarrassment as the shouting salesman drew the attention of other patrons at the flea market. Participant Seven's embarrassment is associated with her graduate students' perception of her subsequent to the encounter. For both of these participants, embarrassment was associated with potential appraisal by a person *other than* the salesclerk with whom the participant was interacting. Interestingly, both of these participants displayed anger directed towards salesclerks either during this encounter or another retail perception of discrimination. This suggests consumers may experience multiple negative emotions during a single encounter.

Fear may be revealed through the following emotions: scared, afraid, panicky, nervous, worried and tense. Fear arose during only one interview when the participant described a 'criminal' experience she'd had at an early age:

INTERVIEW ELEVEN:

... I had on a long leather coat and um walked in the store with my mom. She was looking at some, some clothes and I wanted to go to the girl's section. So, she told me okay, go ahead, go to the girl's section. I went to the girl's section and a security guard came up and asked me if I was by myself. I said no, my mom's over there, I'm just waiting for her, and he followed me around. Yep. He followed me around. And I made it a point to go to where my mom was and you know, I kind of whispered, like this man this, you know, this security is following me around. She said, really? Yeah. And um, so she said well walk around some more and see... So I walked around some more and he, you know, followed me, for a good ten minutes and then I went back to where my mother was. She, uh, asked the security guard, why are you following my daughter? He said, uh, I'm not, you know, I'm just doing my job, we just go around and you know make sure everything is okay in all of the different departments, I'm

not following her, she said. And I told him, yes you were, you've been following right behind me. He just denied it and said no he wasn't.

(Interviewer: *You said that you were younger, do you recall how old you were?*)

I was probably, say, ten, eleven? This was at Department Store C's in Kansas City.

(Interviewer: *Do you recall what you were feeling during that encounter?*)

... feeling a little confused, a little hurt, because I'm like I haven't done anything, why is this man following me? Um, *there was a question of like, is he going to try to do something to me?* Or, does he think that I've taken something, you know, it was just kind of a mix-up, but *I was, you know, kind of like upset.*

In addition to being fearful because of a potential threat she may have felt from the security guard during this encounter, it is possible that fear arose as a result of socialization from her parents regarding discrimination. Parental socialization emerged as a ground for perceptions of discrimination and is discussed in detail in a latter section.

There was another emotion that was revealed in these interviews that was not present in the Laros and Steenkamp's hierarchy. This emotion was disappointment.

INTERVIEW ONE:

He reacted like, he was coming to take care of the situation, take care of the situation and as I suggested in the letter that he could probably benefit from some diversity training. But *I was more disappointed in him because he wasn't an assistant manager, he was the manager.* And then they said he was a former school teacher and it's his personality and I told them no. He has no excuse; you all need to train him better. There is no excuse.

INTERVIEW FOUR

Like I said, just sort of general things, having people break in front of you, as if it's their right to go before you and not having the sales people intervene to say, okay you're not next. Or this person is next, *are really both disappointments to me.*

INTERVIEW EIGHT:

I was disappointed, because she didn't even realize. I don't think she realized that it was a racist comment or a comment that was derived from her perception of race, so I was disappointed. Then I was kinda angry cause I thought, you know she really could have recommended me to a very nice store where I could have bought a cute top or a cute skirt or some sunglasses, but instead while I'm on my vacation she thinks I'm thinking about speakers, so I was offended, I was offended.

Disappointment is excluded from both the Laros and Steenkamp hierarchy of consumer behavior emotions used in the analysis thus far, as well as the more inclusive list of consumer emotions developed by Richins (1997). It appears to be similar to sadness as conceptualized by Laros and Steenkamp (2005) and Richins (1997). There is a difference in sadness and disappointment as they were manifested in these participants' narratives. Sadness appeared as a feeling of helplessness directed inwardly. Disappointment appears to be directed outwardly - towards the manager, other customers or a sales associate respectively - in all of the excerpts above. The participant is disappointed that this person is engaging in the perceived discriminatory behavior. The result may be that this leads to a feeling of sadness but this link is neither explicitly made nor can it be assumed. In the last excerpt above, the participant indicates she experienced anger as well. This presents further evidence of multiple emotions arising during a singular negative experience.

In summary, this analysis presents the following tentative conclusions regarding emotions evoked during perceptions of discrimination: 1) Anger is the emotion that is most commonly associated with perceptions of discrimination; 2) This anger is typically directed towards the person accused of engaging in the discriminatory behavior; 3) The other negative consumer emotions of sadness, shame and fear also emerged but were

experienced by significantly fewer participants; 4) Disappointment towards other retail managers, employees and consumers was experienced as well; 5) Consumers may experience multiple negative emotions during a single encounter. Conclusion four appears to be a relatively novel finding and additional research is needed examining this particular emotion in consumption experiences given its absence from current frameworks.

Actions Employed in Response to Perceptions of Discrimination

Perceptions of discrimination induced negative emotions such as anger, sadness, shame, fear, and disappointment for the participants in this study. These emotions produce a tension or stress that consumers try to relieve by evoking certain coping strategies (Branscombe et al. 1999, Feagin 1991). Coping has been defined as “the set of cognitive and behavioral processes initiated by consumers in response to emotionally arousing, stress inducing interactions with the environment aimed at bring forth more desirable emotional states and reduced levels of stress” (Duhachek, Iacobucci and Keller 2005, pg. 42). Coping strategies produce resultant behaviors. In an attempt to understand the coping strategies engaged during retail perceptions of discrimination, this analysis begins by examining the actual behaviors that were exhibited.

In the marketing literature, responses to negative treatment in retail settings have been categorized in terms of approach and avoidance behaviors (Duhachek et al. 2005). The responsive behaviors that emerged in these participants’ perceptions of discrimination however can be best described as falling under the broad categories of active and passive responses. Active responses are those where the participant ‘actively’ engages in some course of action to relieve the tension induced. These responses involve

some type of interaction with at least one other person. As such these behaviors would typically fall under the umbrella of ‘approach’ behaviors in psychology (e.g., Cannon 1930) and in the consumer satisfaction research (e.g., Van Kenhove and Desrumaux 2001). However, in these narratives, participants did not necessarily interact with the actor perceived to be engaging in the discriminatory behavior or a manager. The interaction might have been with others who were not present at the time of the encounter and might fall under the category of ‘avoidance’. This would conceal the nature of that response as revealed in these narratives. The active (approach) responses that emerged in these narratives are confrontation, formal complaints and broadcasting.

INTERVIEW ELEVEN:

So at this point I made up my mind that I wasn’t going to buy it because of this and *there was a salesperson that walked um, from the office in the back of the store and she hadn’t been out there that whole time. She walked out from the back and um, she immediately you know just came out and said hey, how you doing, do you need any help?* (Slight laugh). And so I told her, you know, I told her, well I’m very upset. Um, I had two things that I wanted to purchase but um, you know I’ve been here, I’ve been in this store for a little over an hour. Nobody has come to ask if I needed any help, if I needed some assistance, to tell me what sales were going on, to say hello, hi, anything, and while, since I have been there, there have been several other customers who have walked in the store and you know they have been helped and all of that, so, you know, you just, you missed out on a purchase and I am not going to purchase this and I will tell other people what happened. And I put the things down and I walked out.

Confrontation refers to the participant choosing to directly engage on-site the actor perceived to be engaging in the discriminatory behavior, another sales associate, or a manager regarding her negative treatment. This confrontation (with a sales associate and/or manager) occurs shortly after an internal attribution of discrimination has been made. In the preceding quote, the participant describes her experience to another sales

associate who was not engaging in the perceived behavior. She speaks of the ‘invisible’ treatment she received. Even more interesting is what the participant does not say during the confrontation. She does not explicitly use the term ‘discrimination’ nor does she make any reference to her race. It is unclear if the absence of these terms is deliberate or if the participant assumed the salesperson was aware of her perception. Even though she confronts the behavior, she does not directly confront the prejudicial motivation she believes underlies this behavior. There are other examples where this attribution is absent from confrontations as well:

INTERVIEW FOUR:

I took their little card out, broke it up into many, many pieces. I mean I was right there in plain sight. It didn’t matter to them that I was doing that; I was still totally invisible to them. And finally the lady who had been going back and forth, you know pretending to be getting something out of the back room when I was looking at the sales stuff, came up and I asked her, “do you have a trash can?” and she said well yeah. I said well could you put this in the trash for me, and I handed her the card. She said oh sure, never questioned me or anything and it was obvious that it was their little card. And she just threw it in the trash and just went on about, you know just completely turned away from me. I started to walk out of the store, and I’m like, well surely someone’s going to say something, no-one said a word, they just let me go on out of the store...

In this passage, Participant Four is referring to a loyalty-rewards card for this particular retailer. By tearing the card up and handing it to one of the sales associates perceived of engaging in the behavior, this participant was engaging in confrontation. As in the prior passage, the motivation of prejudice ascribed to this behavior does not emerge during this confrontation. This was not true for all confrontations.

INTERVIEW THREE:

I just confronted her, I said I come in here time and time again. I said there’s a lot of minorities that can afford your clothes, and I said, not one,

and I would point to them, not one asked me. I said [and] I came in and applied for a job and I'm told the job is full. I said you know that sets such a bad precedence, of like you guys don't want any minorities. "oh I do," she never answered my question. I didn't get anywhere, okay. Because if I had gotten anywhere, I know I would have remembered it.

INTERVIEW SIX:

I was really walking around looking for a baby shower gift and um the sales person kept asking me, could she help me? And I said no, I'm just looking, but thank you. And then other people were walking around and she'd ask them and then go on. And then she'd come back to me again. And I said are you watching me or something? You know I said because you've asked me once and I told you I thank you and I appreciate it but I'm looking. I just said "you are really being disrespectful after I've told you that I'm looking and that if I need your assistance I'll ask". I said "you have all these other people, you haven't asked them or you've asked them only once, what's the reason?" She says well ma'am I'm just trying to be helpful. I said no, you're trying to be more than helpful, so what's the reason? So, she walked off in a huff and *I said, before you leave where's your manager?* So she says he's back there. And I went back there and I spoke with him. I said would you come out because I would like to point out the sales person to you. I said you all need to do something about your training or something I said because *she was making a distinction in how she was approaching me.* He said, well ma'am I don't really think so. I said I know so, you know the customer's always right, remember that.

In these scenarios, the allegation of race discrimination is more direct. This type of contention appears to be an exception for in-store confrontations. Specific claims of racial discrimination were more likely to appear in the form of a formal complaint. In this case 'formal complaint' refers to an attempt to register a complaint regarding the perceived discriminatory treatment with a higher-level of management than a sales associate either through phone calls or a written notification.

INTERVIEW ONE:

And the lady that called me told me that she had talked to her and, well I told her, I said you know if she really felt she was wrong she would have sent an apology to me when I went back in there, but *I told her I said it was racially motivated, oh, also I found the assistant manager was racial*

too and, I'd like to put that in writing I told them that I did not like the treatment, that if a person walks in there and they were not in business attire looking a certain way, um that says to me you're not 'gonna get good treatment. So the manager pleaded with me not to take my services to other places and I said well as long as she understands she's not to wait on me or come near me because I don't want to give, cause most of them are on commission, and I said I didn't want her getting any benefits from my services. You know, so I feel, I know they moved her to customer service that was out there.

This participant is referring to a return phone-call made to her by the store manager. The participant had originally called to complain about a prior discriminatory encounter that would fall under the heading of *invisible* using the *Invisible/Criminal treatment* categorization. During the conversation above, she attributes both the salesperson's behavior and an assistant manager's behavior as racially motivated. This type of overt claim appeared in other formal complaints:

INTERVIEW TWO:

I went home and wrote a letter, I may still have the letter, I don't know what I did with it, I think I still have it. I wrote a letter to the owner of the company, and I told him about my experience. And I said now, you explain to me why they would treat us that way. And the guy wrote me back, the President he says, it's not racism, I have people working in my shop that are this, that and whatever, and I told him. Because in the letter I told him, you know we paid for our suits, so it wasn't like I asked anyone to pay for anything. I said I didn't go and get a loan, I didn't pay with a credit card and I would think that someone who was capable of paying for your product would be given a much better customer service. And I said, the only thing I could think of is because we look differently from the rest of your staff. And he did, he wrote me back a response and sent us a silk tie which my husband threw in the garbage.

In the following passages, the participants describe formal complaints they engaged in subsequent to perceived retail discrimination. It is unclear from these excerpts if the participants made explicit claims of racial discrimination:

INTERVIEW FOUR:

I wrote um the store, customer service, I wrote them a long email explaining in detail what had happened.

(Interviewer: *Did you direct that to the local store here or did you send it to the chain?*)

I sent it to the chain... I didn't receive a response. I did not receive a response and they continued to send me their flyers and I asked them to please take me off their mailing list, that I no longer wanted to be contacted by them because of the poor service and how I'd been treated and for their lack of response to how I'd been treated. Like I said, that by far is probably the worst.

INTERVIEW FIVE:

So I went home and I called Department Store C's and I really made a big fuss about it and said that, you know, I was very upset, I didn't want to shop there again. I don't understand why this man thought he needed to follow me around. I'd shopped in Department Store C's a long time. I had more credit cards than he could ever think about and I called them up and they apologized. Actually when I went back there, not too much later, I never saw him again. But, it really upset me because I had never been followed like that. Um, I just hadn't experienced it and it just really bothered me terribly.

While these participants don't explicitly use phrases like 'racially motivated' or 'racism', they do state that they explained what happened to them in their correspondence. It is likely that these types of written complaints did more directly refer to discrimination than the in-store confrontations above. Some time had elapsed between the participant's discriminatory experience and her attempt to launch a formal complaint. Nevertheless, these experiences were notable enough to motivate the participant's behavior subsequent to leaving the retailer. Similarly additional effort is required for the participant to engage in the third active behavior of broadcasting. These types of behaviors are described below:

INTERVIEW ONE:

I've told several people about that experience. I've shared it with people I knew, yeah I've shared it with a lot of people.

INTERVIEW THREE:

I told every Black person I could not to shop there.

INTERVIEW NINE:

I'm not coming back and I'm going to tell as many people as I possibly can not to come here.

INTERVIEW ELEVEN:

[W]hen I would talk to people about it, it wasn't like it was traumatic and I was reliving it, I was just telling them, I went to Department Store I and this is what happened. Girl, do not go, you know, cause...

Broadcasting refers to a deliberate effort to engage in negative word of mouth.

People often engage in this coping strategy subsequent experiencing negative behaviors in retail settings in an effort to notify others of the treatment they received. This appears to be true in the excerpts above. Through broadcasting the participants give family and friends a warning that discriminatory behavior is occurring at this retailer. Broadcasting appears to serve another purpose during retail perceptions of discrimination:

INTERVIEW EIGHT:

We talk about it a lot, I think we told everybody. We were like, can you believe this woman? And I still tell people about it.

(Interviewer: And when you share your experience with other people, what's typically their reaction?)

They just kinda laugh and they say, oh that's funny. Or she's just ignorant, or that's kind of messed up, you know. Granted I can be convincing so I can make someone think that it was wrong even if she didn't really mean any harm, but I do still share that story.

Broadcasting serves two purposes in this passage, notification and validation. By sharing her story with others, the participant receives support for her interpretation of the sequence of events. The theme *I knew* reveals that for some participants, doubt and

denial were associated with initial thoughts of discrimination. By broadcasting this experience with others, participants receive assurance that their resultant attribution of discrimination was justified.

In addition to the active responses of confrontation, formal complaints, and broadcasting, participants also displayed passive behaviors. Passive behaviors are responsive activities that do not necessitate interaction with another person. These behaviors fall under the headings of departure and boycotting.

When the perception of discrimination occurs, participants experience stress and tension. Some participants relieve this tension by simply removing themselves from the environment. This choice may be followed by additional behaviors such as a formal complaint or boycotting but not necessarily. A willful departure following a perception of discrimination is in itself a responsive behavior.

INTERVIEW NINE:

Or, it's like, you're not getting my money today, you just lost a sale.
That's what I'm thinking and *I'll just leave and go someplace else....*

INTERVIEW EIGHT:

I shop in Boutique D on a regular basis and I normally get attention or people ask me if they can help me, whereas if I go, I can think of one situation where I went into Boutique D, I had on like workout pants and a jacket and no-one ever said anything to me and I thought this is really strange, you know, this is really strange. Why has no-one asked me if I want a fitting room? Why has no-one asked if I need any help, and in that moment I kept saying to myself in the store, it must be because I look like I don't have any money, or I like I'm not about to shop. And I really try not to go shopping unless I'm dressed in my regular clothes.

(Interviewer: *That day, did you ever bring that up to any of the sales people that were there?*)

No, I didn't. I don't think I bought anything, *I just think I kinda left.*

Departure refers to exercising a deliberate choice to leave because of the perceived discrimination. This responsive behavior requires the least amount of effort from the participant. In the participants' narratives, this response was often accompanied by an additional decision to boycott the retailer where the perception of discrimination occurred.

INTERVIEW NINE:

I said um it's one thing to just kinda overlook somebody, I said but when you know, and there was someone with me, I said when you know people are just ignoring you. I said and *the sad part about this whole experience is that I was a sure sale*. I said now, *I'm not buying anything out of this store; you can't even give it away to me free because I don't want it...* I had to tell her a couple times *I'm not spending any money in here now. As a matter of fact, I'm not coming back and I'm going to tell as many people as I possibly can not to come here.*

INTERVIEW FIFTEEN:

I just, I mean *I'm not gonna patronize your business if you don't appreciate my money. My money is the same color, same President on it as everybody else's and for you to mistreat me. If you don't want me in your store. I mean legally I guess you can't put a sign up there that says, you know, no Blacks allowed or whatever. Or whatever you wanna say, but if you're running retail, you have to treat everybody. I mean there is very little room for discrimination in retail nowadays and I'm just not going to give you my money, point blank. And you know some people say, well you still go to Discount Retailer B. Yeah but that Discount Retailer B may not do as much business as the other Discount Retailer B. Their sales are hurting. Yeah, all the money's goes into one general pot for Discount Retailer B but each store is looked at and I know that, so that's just a number they have to meet. And you know when I go to Discount Retailer B I spend money, so uh, uh.*

Boycotting has been defined as “an attempt by one or more parties to achieve certain objectives by urging individual consumers to refrain from making selected purchases in the marketplace” (Friedman 1985, pg. 97). The term ‘boycotting’ is used more generally here to refer to a deliberate strategy of avoidance that does not necessarily

include soliciting other individuals to join in. This was typically expressed as refusal to patronize the retailer where the perception of discrimination occurred. The primary motivation for boycotting appears to be to cause economic harm to the retailer with the ultimate goal of changing the perceived behavior. Although participants avoid the establishment, they do not necessarily avoid the memory of the experience.

INTERVIEW FOUR:

Oh, it's been a couple of years, about two year's maybe. But *I had been a customer of Boutique C for probably about five years.* And they have this little card system that after you spend, I think like \$500.00 in the store then you start to get like 5% discount with each purchase and every month they send you their little catalogue with what's coming out and you get coupons. It's really, really a great practice you know. Um like you get coupons you get 50% off of one item one month and maybe \$25.00 off an item another month. Every month there is something in there, so you'd look, *we used to really look for the 50% off coupon.*

In the excerpt above the participant speaks of her relationship with Boutique C prior to her discriminatory experience as positive. She was a preferred customer who shopped there frequently and looked forward to the perks provided with the loyalty program. After one perceived discriminatory experience she made the decision to no longer shop there. This boycott extended to other Boutique C locations in other cities:

INTERVIEW FOUR:

[My cousin] shops at Boutique C and she continues to shop at Boutique C, but again she's not shopped at the one here. Okay. She's shopping in Charlotte. And um, there have been a couple of times I've gone in, different Boutique C stores in the last couple of years. Like that is an outlet, like the store my cousin goes to in Charlotte, *I went in there with her, but I didn't buy anything.* Um, and there is a store in Columbia, South Carolina where *I didn't buy anything in there either.*

(Interviewer: *Is that a conscientious decision not to buy anything at those other Boutique C or is it just more so you just didn't?*)

For the longest it's been really conscientious. But it took me a while to even go back in the store, because it wasn't just that the Knoxville store,

you know, treated me badly, it was just the overall, where I wrote that complaint and I never got a response, so that reflects...nationwide.

Other passages further suggest the deliberate nature of boycotting and an associated sense of self-deprivation:

INTERVIEW FOUR:

We didn't come in here to steal anything, but my girls were so uncomfortable and *I've never been back to that event* (annual flea market), *even though you know, I've always wanted to. Because of that, I have never been back to that event.*

INTERVIEW ELEVEN:

... I felt kind of over it after I uh, you know, when I would talk to people about it, it wasn't like it was traumatic and I was reliving it, I was just telling them, I went to Department Store I and this is what happened. Girl, do not go, you know, cause And, but then it did.... *I would kind of relive it when I would go back to that mall and walk past there, you know like, damn, you know... Cause they had some cute things in that store! (Laughs)* And I, you know, even before, that wasn't my first time shopping at that store. You know, I had been there, you know, several (emphasized), several times had been there. So that wasn't, you know, my first time.

These findings extend the relatively scant literature examining consumer motivations to boycott (eg. Sen, Gurhan-Canli and Morwitz 2001; Klein, Smith and John 2004; Friedman 1985). Prior research suggests that consumers are more likely to boycott a product or company when preference for that product or company is low and substitutes are available. In the narratives above, some participants clearly indicated a positive attitude towards these retailers prior to their discriminatory experiences. Despite this affinity, they were willing to forego shopping at these retailers after one discriminatory experience. Boycotting resulted in a type of personal sacrifice by the participant.

While boycotting generally referred to personal boycotts, there was also evidence of more organized formal attempts to boycott as well:

INTERVIEW SEVEN:

I did good boycotting the store for a long time and not even saying anything about Specialty Store A, to any of my golfing friends. But after the second time, you know, let it be known. Then I found out that they had treated some of my golfing buddies the same way. Or, in different ways, in a not, in an inappropriate way. Um, and when I became aware of how they treated our president at the time, um, I just simply said we need to boycott Specialty Store A and just take them off of our sponsorship role, but um. I think they are still associated with the chapter in some way. So, um they must be stroking some folks right. They're not gonna stroke me though.

In this narrative the participant attempted to call for a formal boycott by her sports-related organization based on her treatment and the treatment of the president of the organization. Boycotting can also refer to purposeful avoidance of a particular salesperson perceived to be engaging in discriminatory practices:

INTERVIEW ONE:

On the flip side of that sometimes, *there's a Black sales person in Department Store A that I don't allow her to wait on me because I think she tries to think things that if you are Black you can't afford it so she's gonna try to seek out the white person and,*

(Interviewer: *What gives you that impression?*)

Um, she's been there about two years, might be three. I went to her register one day and I went up to her she was waiting on this other customer I walk up and I had these items and I also had some coupons that they were using. Well she challenged me as to how many coupons I could use and they were the ones for the items, it says that clearly on the things and she made me feel like I was doing something wrong, *so I finally said to her. I tell you what, let me take my stuff and go to somebody where I'm not gonna be questioned...* about whether I'm doing something illegal because her questions were trying make you feel like you were doing something illegal. And so what I did was, what I notice is I go into the department, she can see me but she never turns her eye to wait on me. I asked her one day, I was in there and the manager comes out and says "oh hi Miss ***** oh we all know Miss *** she's one of our best customers, then the behavior changed. ... But this lady you know, *I just made a conscious effort and I would never let her have anything of mine.* Because if, you know if it was bad if not I just say, I'll wait on the Caucasian clerk, you have to look at the Black ones as well.

This participant continues to shop at Department Store A, but makes an effort to avoid having a particular salesclerk wait on her. This participant also spoke of a discriminatory experience she'd had at a Discount Retailer A location over 10 years ago. After this experience she willfully avoided shopping at Discount Retailer A for years and still does no personal shopping there. The sense of self-deprivation associated with boycotting for other participants does not appear to be felt by this participant in either case. Instead there is a sense of other-deprivation directed singularly towards the Black salesclerk accused of engaging in discriminatory behavior. The participant experienced anger during both the Department Store A and Discount Retailer A experiences. However this anger resulted in different forms of boycotting, one against the store and one against the actor. This suggests that the choice of responsive actions is not fully explained by emotional triggers. There appear to be cognitions influencing subsequent behaviors as well.

Have restraint - Show my butt

Blacks and Whites are equally knowledgeable of the stereotypes associated with racial groups (Lepore and Brown 1997; Kern-Foxworth 1994). One of the stereotypical images associated with African-American women is that of the angry Black female. This stereotype is often portrayed engaging in behaviors such as head-rolling and finger-snapping while shouting utterances such as "Oh, no he didn't!" Participants in this study indicated that they were aware of this stereotype. By confronting the perceived discriminatory behavior they risk being associated with this stereotypical image. Ethnic minorities are aware that their individual behavior may be used to reinforce a negative

stereotype about their group (Cohen and Garcia 2005). The anger felt during these experiences appears to initially propel participants towards aggressive responses. Given the risk of being categorized stereotypically, they consider an alternative option. This decision might belie the anger that they feel but it might also dispel the stereotypical image of the 'angry Black woman'. In essence, the participants struggle with the following dilemma: Should I *have restraint* or should I *show my butt*? *Show my butt* refers to combative behaviors exhibited with intensity. *Have restraint* refers to a more subdued approach. This decision itself appears to produce a type of tension for the participants.

INTERVIEW SIXTEEN:

I feel like African-American women always have to adjust themselves, so that's a constant battle that always goes on in my mind, so it's like do I come out and say something and appear as the stereotypical Black woman or do I keep my cool and try to dispel those stereotypes. So it's like what do I do? Because, at the same time I feel like I'm not being true to myself if I don't do what my heart feels I should do.

There is relatively little research on how individuals use same-group stereotypes in their evaluations of the self outside of academic threat situations. Recent work by social psychologists suggests that the social identities of gender and ethnicity influence stereotype self-evaluations in social contexts (Sinclair, Hardin and Lowery 2006). This analysis provides additional support for this finding. The participants' race and gender interacted in the consumers' expectations of how they would be regarded when reacting to perceived discrimination. In the excerpt above, the participant expresses her social identity as an African-American woman in the context of retail perceived discriminatory experiences. She explicitly ties this identity to conflict she experiences when considering responsive actions. This conflict emerged indirectly in other narratives as well:

INTERVIEW NINE:

I had put an outfit on layaway for my graduation, that I was gonna wear. So, I went to get my outfit out of layaway and my mom went with me. I was all excited and everything. I go up to the layaway counter and there was this older white lady there and she was like, you know, she went and got my layaway, my dress, and oh it was so cute, and I just knew that I was going to be cute, and I'm just so excited. This woman turns around and looks at me and she says, oh here's your layaway slip, can you write? Now when she said it, *now when we get out to the car my mom tells me how she was responding 'cause she knows me, okay. She said she just stopped breathing and started praying, she said oh god no. Please don't let this girl start clowning with this woman up in her, Lord why did this woman ask her that.* And she was just. Now I'm seething and I'm like, cause I was a little on the militant side anyway, I was like no she didn't just ask me that. I thought okay. *And I remember, it's like what you gon' do? My first inclination was to take my ink pen and hold it in my hand and carve an X through the paper and tell her no, I can't write, I just graduated from college, but I didn't do that, I was so nice.* I said yes, I can write and I signed my name and she's like oh thank you. Because it's like, okay, how am I gon' help her? *And I try to look at things as teachable moments.* Now I haven't always been that smart, but *it's like there has been something in me that when I'd be wanting to clown for real, I can't. I'll rehearse what I'm getting ready to do and something different will come out my mouth. And sometimes that just makes me so angry, but I guess that's really the way I've been taught.* That's that equity coming in that my mom has drilled into us all this time. But I was very nice and walked outside, and *momma was like, hey I was so proud of you 'cause I was so scared you were going across that counter.* And I looked at her, and *I said don't think that the thought didn't cross my mind.*

The participant notes an initial urge to act out in an aggressive manner which she refers to as 'wanting to clown'. This is a colloquial term in the African-American community that denotes an urge to demonstratively display anger. Though the participant did not expressly refer to her race or gender, her use of idiomatic terms implies her racial identity was salient for her during this reminiscence. She further indicates that her mother also expected her to act out as well. The participant chose another course of action after choosing to reframe her response as a 'teachable moment'. Given the nature of the encounter, it appears this lesson regards erroneous stereotypes.

This participant chose to 'have restraint'. This choice was displayed by other participants as well:

INTERVIEW FOUR:

I went in the new Department Store F at Turkey Creek, the day that they opened. I went in there to get a birthday gift for my husband and had two Tommy Bahama shirts in my hand and um, a sweater vest that was a Tommy Bahama, so we're talking about a couple of hundred dollars, okay. So obviously, you know, I'm spending some money. They weren't on sale and I was in line and stood there a while and I was the next up and this lady um, who was white and very well dressed. It was my opinion that they were pulling from one line, okay. So there was a person in front of me, I was the very next person and there were a couple of people behind me and this lady comes up and she just walks right up to the second cashier even though, you know we were in line there and I'm next up and I'm expecting that cashier to say well, you know I'm gonna take the lady whose next in line. He didn't, he didn't. He went ahead and took her things. Um, I wasn't very pleased about that and what made it even worse is that when she got up there, she had misplaced her charge card and left it at another register, so he put her stuff aside and you know waited for her to come back, she still hadn't come back. Then finally there were some people in front of me, I don't know what was going on with their transaction, but they were doing all sorts of weird stuff. But I'm still patiently standing there with the Tommy Bahama stuff, finally he said well, it doesn't look like she's coming back right now, so I can go ahead and take you. *And I said, let me say a little prayer here, and not act like I have had no Christian up-bringing. I need to be the model here.* So, just as I started to walk over to him, what do you think happened? She shows up and she says, oh you can go ahead and wait on her, it's just like she's doing me a favor. You know sort of that tokenism thing and um, *I said no. Go ahead since he had started with you, I don't you know, go ahead and I was just gracious about it.*

...[R]eally what I wanted them to see was, you know she did not act like a nasty person in here. She did not act like; you know I think they probably would have expected me to go off. I really do and he really looked sort of puzzled as to why is she not getting mad. And he was really a little nervous with me, because he really didn't know what to expect and I was still very polite.

INTERVIEW FIVE:

I really wanted to make a scene in that store, but I didn't want to do it with my son there. I was really going to tell him off, but I didn't want to do it with my son there. So I went home and I called Department Store C and I

really made a big fuss about it and said that, you know, I was very upset, I didn't want to shop there again...

I really wanted to make a scene and I don't often, but I thought, well I don't want to do this with my son here. Later I wished I had, but I thought well, I didn't want it to turn into something that could then backfire and it would be then bad for him too, and I just didn't want him to have to deal with that. Although I did talk to him about it when I went home. I talked to him and my husband about it.

INTERVIEW SEVEN:

I just left. I just turned around and left. I mean because I'm still representing [X University] and I never want to see myself taken away in chains. It ain't worth it. So um *you have to have restraint.*

These participants revealed an initial desire to engage in confrontational behaviors but did not follow-up on this inclination. Additional influential factors surfaced in these excerpts. Participant Five remarks that she didn't want to make a scene in front of her son who at the time of this encounter was a teenager. In the third passage, the participant was soliciting donations for a fundraising event sponsored by her employer. Both participants reflectively considered those facts before choosing to 'have restraint' at the time of the encounter. There were also times participants chose to 'show my butt' in response to perceived discrimination.

INTERVIEW THREE:

I talked to the manager, I believe it was the manager and I just one on one. Because to me, formal complaints when you take the time to write them on paper, they could just go right in the trash can.... *I just confronted her,* I said I come in here time and time again. I said there's a lot of minorities that can afford your clothes, and I said, not one, and I would point to them, not one asked me. I said I came in and applied for a job and I'm told the job is full. I said you know that sets such a bad precedence, of like you guys don't want any minorities. "oh I do," she never answered my question. I didn't get anywhere, okay. Because if I had gotten anywhere, I know I would have remembered it. *I remember leaving there frustrated and angry and I knew it was unprofessional for me to I guess show my butt, but it was necessary for me to tell them how I felt and what my experience was.* Because, even though on a formal complaint, they don't

have to read it. They can trash it, but *when they are talking to me you gotta listen. To me that was more powerful. They might have turned their ears off, but you see me. I am here, I am not on a piece of paper that you can trash, burn or rip to the side, I'm a human being that's taking up your time.*

‘Show my butt’ is an idiomatic term similar to ‘wanting to clown’. It suggests a volatile response that conveys anger. Additionally, it reveals a sense of embarrassment associated with the chosen response. By revealing the anger she felt in the manner that she did, the participant consequently felt shame equivalent to literally ‘showing her butt’ in public. In addition to shame, this response engendered a sense of empowerment for this participant. *Invisible* encounters of discrimination may be indicative of violations of consumers’ need for self-esteem in retail settings. The *Invisible/Criminal treatment* analysis revealed that participants experienced this type of treatment as not being seen as a human being worthy of respect. By engaging in confrontational behaviors, participants may be actively fighting to restore their self-esteem. The customer can no longer be ignored if she chooses to ‘show her butt’. This further denotes the tension present in the conflict of *Have restraint - Show my butt*: ‘Showing my butt’ might be inappropriate, but you are not likely going to continue to be invisible.

Coping research has extensively examined the link between emotions and coping strategies employed during negative encounters (Duhachek 2005). This research consistently has shown that emotions presage coping. Duhachek (2005) extends this work by saying that coping behaviors are initiated subsequent to cognitions and emotions though he does not investigate the relationship between emotions and cognitions themselves. This analysis provides additional evidence of the interplay of emotions and cognitions and their influence on coping behavioral responses. The emotional responses

generated and the cognitive evaluation, 'Have restraint - Show my butt', conjunctively influence responsive behaviors engaged in when retail discrimination is experienced.

Theme Four: *Racism Exists*

Targets of discrimination are likely to be aware that they may face prejudice in a number of situations and at many different times (Branscombe et al. 1999). This awareness may be the result of socialization or personal experiences.⁹ There was an acceptance among participants in this study that racial prejudices still exist today which makes discrimination a potential risk for African Americans. This awareness, that *Racism Exists*, surfaced as a figural theme of retail perceived discrimination.

INTERVIEW THREE:

Just totally like I wasn't even there. And people would be walking in behind me, and they were like oh can I help you. And I was like, I've been here 10 or 15 minutes and at first I thought [states her name] you are just being sensitive and you are just looking for something to say. Okay, you tell yourself that you don't wanna be that person that has a chip on their shoulder. *Because the reality of life is racism exists but it's on how you deal with it.*

INTERVIEW TWO:

I don't see how you can be Black and not eventually learn some of these things. I don't care even if you have a lot of money and you come from a home that has a lot of money. Look at Michael Jackson, he had all kinds of money and they wanted to discredit him. True, he may have brought some of this stuff on himself, I'm not saying he didn't but, the whole intent was that, *there is a segment in our society, in the United States that cannot deal with those of us that have over achieved in their eyes, I may be wrong, but that's how I feel.*

INTERVIEW NINE:

But I'm like, you know, you need to talk to her, you need to just talk to her. *And this is a lady who is probably around my age, so I know what the mind set is. It's like okay; you're still way back there bless your darling*

⁹ Both socialization and personal experiences emerged as influential to participants' perceptions of discriminations. These are discussed separately as ground themes in the following section of this paper.

heart....That means that they are still carrying some of those old prejudices and stereotypes.

This theme that *Racism Exists* is not applied just to the retail encounter perceived to be discriminatory. Instead it refers to an overarching theme or perceptual lens through which a multitude of encounters are viewed. This potential for discrimination influenced participants differently. Some participants developed an expectancy attitude. They expected to be treated negatively or suspiciously because *Racism Exists*. This expectation affected their behaviors in retail settings in general. The following quotations illustrate this:

INTERVIEW ELEVEN:

I'm always looking, or counting how long it takes for a salesperson to um acknowledge me. (Delay) And also very aware of security, uh, you know, if they're following or(Delay). Even on the intercom system. I'm to the point where if I hear, if I'm going in a store and I hear, they say security aisle three, I'm looking to see if I'm on aisle three...Well, just I'm a little sensitive I guess, I'm just more aware, you know, pay close attention to the security..you know the intercoms or if security is watching me, or you know.... Almost to the point of ...um, I guess more aware? Sensitive?

INTERVIEW THIRTEEN:

And some people, no matter what, will see you as a Black person, a Black woman, a Black man no matter what you wear, so I think you should be comfortable in doing whatever you feel.

Because *Racism Exists*, other participants developed strategies to avoid or minimize discriminatory encounters in retail environments. The strategies expressed most often in interviews were related to conveying status, either through the use of a title or by dressing in a certain manner:

INTERVIEW FOUR:

And I went and reported it to them, and I said now, you know we don't appreciate the way we were treated. I notice when we look around, you know, there are not too many Black people in here and I have to believe

that it was because of that. And at that time *I don't usually use my husband's job, but I said my husband is an Assistant [sport] Coach at the [X University]; we can buy anything in this place that we want. And I never use that, but at that time I wanted to make a point.* You know, and even if we didn't. Even if we couldn't we do have a right to be in here to shop. We didn't come in here to steal anything, but my girls were so uncomfortable and I've never been back to that event, even though you know, I've always wanted to. Because of that, I have never been back to that event.

INTERVIEW SEVEN:

[T]here are many times where, and I guess *I've done this in retail because I don't want people to make assumptions about who I am or what I'm there for. I use my title; I say I'm Dr. XXXXXX.* And while sometimes you might think that, *I kind of hate to do that, but sometimes I have to, to get the kind of attention and respect that I want. I will say it's Dr. XXXXXX just to make sure they know that I, of what level they are speaking to. And I have done that in retail.*

By associating themselves with a title or a position, participants verbally communicate their expectation to be treated with a modicum of respect by the sales associate. In Participant Four's interview, her husband's title/position was communicated subsequent to a perceived discriminatory encounter as the participant confronted management about her experience. In the second passage, Participant Seven uses her title proactively to prevent negative treatment based on race. Other participants used nonverbal communication to convey their status in an attempt to proactively combat discrimination:

INTERVIEW EIGHT:

I can say that *I am definitely treated differently when I go shopping based on the way I dress. Like if I go shopping after I get off work I feel like people are more attentive, can I help you? Glad to see you again, yada, yada, yada. Can I help you in the dressing room?* Whereas if I leave the gym and go in my workout clothes, it's like. I mean I know that if I go in the store, if I'm in there for like 5 minutes and no-one talks to me, I'm usually like, what's going on? I have money just like anybody else in here. *But if I have on my gym clothes I feel like oh, it's because I'm dressed down, I'm not getting any attention. And so, I purposely try to*

never go shopping unless I'm fully dressed. And I don't know if that's crazy, at least shopping for clothes and shoes because I do feel like people treat you differently.

INTERVIEW NINE:

Sometimes I will dress a certain way, even in my casual, just like I tell you Saturday, prime example I dress a certain way for a couple of reasons. Number one I had to dress to accommodate my manicure and pedicure and number two, I had to dress with the mindset, I'm gonna be out for a while, how do I wanna be approached and so I deliberately wore what I wore and I had a great time. Now had I just been a little..., I know that my experience would have been different.

Collectively, the discussion and excerpts above support research findings that “‘perceptual baggage’ from a lifetime of experiences and exposure to various stimuli can have a profound impact on the perceptions of behavioral information that is not completely unambiguous” (Johnson et al. 2003). In retail perceptions of discrimination, the belief that ‘racism exists’ influences participants behaviors and attributions in a self-protective manner.

GROUND THEMES

The invariant elements that provide a context for the phenomenological experiences under investigation are referred to as the ground of the phenomenon. For perceptions of discrimination these elements are *socialization* and *life experiences*.

Socialization

Socialization refers to the social process by which norms, attitudes, motivations, and behaviors are transmitted from specific sources, commonly known as ‘socialization agents’, to the learner through interaction of the person and the agents in specific social settings. Recently, researchers have begun to examine how various racial and ethnic

groups convey information to their children regarding their racial background or ethnicity as well as the societal implications of those group memberships. This specific area of socialization has been referred to as ethnic or racial socialization. Ethnic socialization originated in reference to the experiences of primarily immigrant Latinos and Asians parents in the U.S, while the phrase ‘racial socialization’ has typically been used exclusively to refer to African Americans given their unique history of racial stratification in the U.S. (Hughes et al. 2006). There is significant overlap in these topics in current research and the terms ethnic socialization and racial socialization are often used interchangeably in the discussion of African Americans’ transmission of race related information in the U.S (Hughes et al. 2006). Psychologist Diane Hughes and her colleagues recently conducted an in-depth review of this literature (2006). They proposed the term ethnic-racial socialization to refer to research examining a wide-range of socialization experiences of various ethnic groups in the U.S. The researchers further suggest that ethnic-racial socialization can be subdivided into four more specific areas: cultural socialization, preparation for bias, promotion of mistrust and egalitarianism. Preparation for bias emerged in participants’ narratives of retail discrimination as an influential backdrop to participants’ perceptions of discrimination.

The ‘preparation for bias’ category of ethnic-racial socialization describes “parents’ efforts to promote their children’s awareness of discrimination and prepare them to cope with it” (Hughes et al. 2006, pg. 756). Despite current norms that make racism and discrimination less socially acceptable than in decades past, many African American parents believe both are real threats their children may one day have to confront (Sinclair et al. 2006; Demo and Hughes 1990). Given this risk, some parents

take steps to minimize the likelihood of this occurring or to equip their children to handle a discriminatory confrontation. Preparation for bias is a type of defensive coping strategy passed on to children in the event that they need it, but contrary to its' label, does not appear to endorse negative attitudes towards another racial group as a whole. The term 'preparation for bias' refers to promoting the idea that the minority group is a target of bias, rather than promoting bias against other groups. Some researchers have demonstrated however, that the negative racial attitudes expressed by Blacks stem primarily from thoughts of racism and discrimination perpetrated by Whites (Shelton and Richeson 2006). While negative racial attitudes were revealed by some participants, there was no evidence of negative racial attitudes fueling preparation for bias in the majority of narratives.

Preparation for bias emerged in these interviews in two different forms. First, participants often reflected on how their own parents prepared them for potential racism and discrimination both verbally and through their actions. This type of socialization is referred to here as parental preparation for bias. Secondly, participants' told of their own efforts to convey to their children probable consequences of being Black in America. Those consequences concerned the potential for discriminatory treatment by Whites both in and out of retail settings, as well as actions their children should take to reduce or eliminate this probability. This is labeled preparation of bias to children in this report. These two areas are elaborated upon below.

Parental preparation for bias

During the introductory statement for these interviews, participants were asked to begin by telling the interviewer something about themselves. Some subjects began this

conversation by describing where they had grown up, their career, or about their families of origin or their families now. Other interviewees began by describing information their parents shared with them regarding racism and discrimination as a child. This is not surprising given that participants were aware the focus of the interview was discrimination in retail settings. In other cases, parental preparation for bias emerged during the course of the interview.

INTERVIEW ONE:

I come from a large family but a close knit family. Um, my parents, especially my mother, she really encouraged family unity, and you know, worked hard, you know, to ensure that. *My mother was a um, was um civil rights worker... She was the only female in our county which was Kale County to participate in the civil rights movement. Always been a woman who fought for what she believed in and instilled in her children. She taught us to stand up for ourselves, so um and then as I look back on what she went through, you know, her being beaten, you know, jailed and all of that, you know that makes me, you know strong through my belief in terms of you can't allow people to mistreat you.* That's just one of my, you know, as I believe that when you experience negative behavior in regard to discrimination you should speak up and say something. You should take it to the appropriate people.

The excerpt above reveals parental socialization of racism in general. Other participants shared specific stories of retail discrimination experienced by a parent.

INTERVIEW ELEVEN:

Well, I don't know if it was the experience but just knowing...um, how life is. *You know my parents were very frank with me in you know, about prejudices, and you know, sometimes you go into a store, and you're Black, they will follow you just, you know, they think you've taken something* and uh, especially if it's an upscale store.

INTERVIEW FIFTEEN:

Well we always went, my dad very rarely went shopping with us, so with my mom I can look back on certain situations now and I just, you know when you're growing up and your mom is talking crazy to the salesperson you just don't, she's just being crazy. But when you experience those things yourself, then you realize. There was a store called Department Store J and it was in the Jackson Medical Mall, well it was the Jackson Mall at that time and that area, well *the area that the Mall is in was predominately Black, or should I say it was Black.* And was, that

was the Mall at the time before they built Metro and it was the only Mall for the area that was before all this came about, before the Metro Center and I remember that's where my mom always used to run in on Saturday's to buy her stockings for church the next day and *the sales lady was just really rude and momma asked to speak to the manager and I just remember momma just going off. And I was embarrassed, but now realized that it might have been more to do with her skin tone, even though this was a Mall in a Black area, once again, it was the only Mall for Jackson, so you know.*

INTERVIEW ELEVEN:

....And she looks at the receipt and notices on the receipt there was um handwritten seven b-l-a-c-k (spelled out), with a circle around it..., seven Black. (Slight laugh) So. My mom, you know, sitting down, she's like, what is this? So you know, we were, the adults who were there were looking like, what?!, you know, and I'm looking like, seven Black, why did they put, oh, its seven of us, so... *My mom goes up to the counter and just goes off. What is this? Why do you? Why is this written on here? Why do you have seven Black on here? Do you, you know, what is this all about? Um, the people were like, well---, um... The, evidently, the cashier, the person who wrote it, kind of went to the back when she saw my mom come up there, she ran off to the back. And so, you know, my mom's like, well why is she running off, and... She's like, well I don't know. The manager came out because my mother was very loud and said, you know, I'm sorry I don't know why she wrote that down, sometimes we just write um things like that down to identify what people so we know who to bring the food out to and so my mother goes up to another table, white people, and uh, asks to see their receipt and nothing is on their receipt, so she's like, no, you're lying, -dah, dah, dah, (etc.),- we don't want the food. They gave, the manager did give my mom the money back but uh, it was just a big ordeal and we left (laughs).*

In the excerpts above, the participants recounted experiences of discrimination their parents had when they were children. Although these incidents were not the direct focus of this research investigation, the linkage of these experiences to the participants' own discrimination narratives reveals the influential impact of these socialization experiences on latter perceptions of discrimination. In the following excerpt, Participant Eleven recounts her own experience with discrimination at an upscale niche retailer.

I didn't make any noises or throw anything down or anything. But when *I talked to the salesperson and expressed myself, I got, you know, loud* and let her know

that I was angry and... *I kind of tossed the items on the counter.* (Recalling an incident that occurred as an adult).

In many respects, the participant's response to differential treatment was a mirror image of the response her mother gave nearly 20 years before. This indicates that promotion of bias strategies need not be verbally communicated to children but that this type of ethnic-racial socialization occurs through actions as well.

Preparation for bias to children

Parents are likely to transmit to children the sorts of ethnic-racial socialization messages they received during their own upbringing (Hughes and Johnson 2001).

Correspondingly, participants in this study displayed a 'mother-bear' penchant to shield their children from being targets of discrimination. This was manifested in two ways.

Participants' expressed warnings of discrimination in general and/or in contexts outside of the retail realm, and they also described warnings/strategies transmitted to their children specifically for retail settings.

[Interviewer: In the first experience that you were talking about at Discount Retailer A you said you told everybody about it, I asked if you had spoken about it prior to today and you said you had told a lot of people about it. Do you share these other experiences with other friends?]

INTERVIEW ONE:

Yes, I tell my children too. When I was in, I believe my daughter was with me in Department Store A when I had that experience. I took the time to explain to her in terms of what happened I told her you're going to experience this in life, you're gonna experience this race is gonna play a factor. And what I try to do, I tell other people cause I want them to know. And people come and are sharing stuff in terms of things that happened and I say, what did you do? Did you say anything? Well no, I say well if you don't say nothing, it's not gonna change the direction.

INTERVIEW TWO:

[w]hen you are a person of color, you can't live a life long enough not to experience and learn some things. Because we live in a racist country. Maybe as a child, like our children, a lot of things they didn't realize were happening

because we didn't make an issue for them to know it. Okay, we didn't want them to carry that baggage with them into adulthood. Okay. And I think as a Black race we don't want them to have these preconceived hatreds and attitudes about people because

[Interviewer: Because they are going to have to live...?]

They are gonna have to live with it anyway. So let them enjoy as long as they can, as young children without having to be exposed to that. But, as they became older there were things we had to point out to them because we wanted them to be able to protect themselves as adults.

INTERVIEW NINE:

I don't allow him to wear baggy nothing. I saw him one morning he didn't have a belt on when I dropped him off at school, I about lost my mind. I told him if you ever, and if I ever I'm gonna embarrass you in front of everybody. I don't do that, I don't play that. Um, I tell him you're not thuggish, you're not going to run around here acting like everybody else. Um even growing up he didn't wear a lot of the name brands and you know just like younger with a lot of Osh Gosh and Mickey Mouse, he would have those things but they were always subtle because I didn't want him to be label conscious and he's not label conscious. And he doesn't do all of the bags and sags because he knows if I catch him, he's in trouble. So, I don't and you know, and we talk about things, we talk about things. Plus he's growing up here. He's had conversations with the college students. He has heard things, he had seen things, they have talked about things, so he's got a pretty good head on his shoulders, so that's what I've done to prepare him and you know like I tell him, I said, you know you're still a Black man, that doesn't change.

The excerpts above illustrate promotion of bias to children of a general nature.

One of the figural themes that emerged during this analysis was the notion that *Racism Exists*. Because *Racism Exists*, these participants attempt to protect their children from racist/discriminatory events in general. This is a purposeful act that may arise out of necessity (as a participant's parent experiences discrimination while with their child) or proactively (before their children have to confront discrimination). There is a tension involved with this type of ethnic-racial socialization. Parents want their children to enjoy being young and experiencing the illusions of youth – including the illusion of a non-

racist society. However, participants also fear that this illusion will be shattered by someone else and want their children to be prepared when that happens. As Participant Two expressed, “there were things we had to point out to them because we wanted them to be able to protect themselves as adults”.

Research suggests that this type of preparation for bias to children may be warranted. A recent study of African American 10 to 12 year olds found that the majority of these children reported having experienced at least one instance of racial discrimination (Simons, Murray, McLoyd, Cutrona and Conger 2002). The causal link between ethnic-racial socialization and children’s perceptions of discrimination has not been established. Does ethnic-racial socialization actually facilitate perceptions of discrimination among children, or does socialization occur in response to children’s perceptions of discrimination and/or information seeking regarding their race (Hughes and Johnson 2001)? There is some initial support for the latter hypothesis. In a short-term longitudinal study of African American parent-child dyads, researchers found that children’s perceptions of discrimination and their exploration of their ethnic identity influenced parental messages about race (Hughes and Johnson 2001). Additionally, parental socialization has been linked to some positive outcomes. African American children whose parents provided socialization about race have been found to have more favorable in-group evaluations, higher grades, higher self-esteem and a greater sense of self-efficacy (Hughes and Johnson 2001; Hughes and Chen 1997).

Participants’ also noted specific warnings they expressed to their children regarding retail discriminatory experiences.

INTERVIEW FOUR:

There was a um, hat store, my youngest daughter who is 15 used to be into ball caps and there was this cap that she wanted to buy and the sales clerk, she wanted to by it, she had her money and everything, treated her badly. She said that he just sort of snatched the cap out of her hand and asked “well are you planning on buying this” or something like that. And um, she said well I have to go ask my mom or something because it cost like \$30.00 and she didn’t want to pay \$30.00 for a hat, but she really wanted it. She said well, there’s a hat in there but I’m afraid to go back because the guy, I think probably thought I was going to steal it or something. And um, so I said well we’re going back in that store. She’s like oh mom, please, please, please. So, we went back in there and I said now is this the store where you were that you want and the guy could see me looking and his eyes were getting big. And I’m like is this the hat that you wanted to buy? And she’s like yeah and the guy came over, you know rushed over, oh can I help you, can I help you? I said my daughter was in here earlier and I believe she said she wanted to buy this hat. And he said oh yeah, yeah and *I said Lindsay what you do, you don’t just accept that kind of treatment. I said normally what we would do is, you know go away and maybe not patronize their business. I said but he needs to understand that, you know, that just because you are Black, you’re not in here trying to steal anything, that you have money and you don’t you know....I said that loud enough for him to hear it. I wasn’t real loud but I was talking to her in a tone, that you know, he was right there and I’m sure he heard me and she’s looking like, okay mom. Or sometimes I’ll be places with them and I’ll say I think they could benefit from some customer service training and they’ll like roll their eyes, mom please just let it go. I’m like no, I don’t want you guys to grow up just taking this sort of stuff, you don’t have to take that kind of treatment from people and you shouldn’t.*

INTERVIEW SIX:

I think part of the legacy of being Black and having gone through certain things, is that I’m very cautious with them [her sons]. You know, I had just drummed it into their brains; you don’t leave a counter without a receipt. You know, no matter what, I don’t care what the object is, how small it is, you ask for a bag. You know there are just certain things that you try to think of, you know they are Black males so automatically people are going to think they are stealing or they are dishonest, so that is just something that I have just burned into them. You know or don’t go shopping or doing things with a crowd.

Mothers in this study conveyed their expectancies of bias to their children (their belief that *Racism Exists*) and attempted to protect them from associated negative behaviors in the manners described.

Personal Experiences

Though the focus of this study is retail discrimination, many participants shared experiences of racism and discrimination encountered in other settings as well. These negative experiences may influence current interracial exchanges (Shelton and Richeson 2006).

INTERVIEW TWO

[w]e had stopped at a diner in New York, because we were kids, you know, we were hungry. So we had gone into the diner and at that time it's like Mel's diner, you know, you have a diner you have like more like a bar, you don't necessarily have people sitting at tables, you know, you sat at the bar. And so, we had all come up to the bar to eat and so, my cousin and I were the only Blacks in the group, and the waiter had gone around and he was taking the kids' orders. So, when he got to me, he bypassed me and went to the next kid next to me. And so, the guy's name was Bill and Bill said, oh, you forgot Pat, you need to take her order. And you could tell the guy felt uncomfortable, he didn't know what to do and he said why I need your order, the kid said, you forgot her order, she was next. The guy finally said, well we don't serve colored people. *That was my first experience ever of being denied service because of my color and I remember sitting there with my mouth open because I didn't know what to say.* We was some little kids, I was probably about 8th or 9th grade they were 11th and 12th graders. I can remember, because by that time we got everybody's attention. I can remember the kids before or adults could intercede. The kids stood up and said "if you can't serve them, you don't serve us", so we walked out. *So that was my first experience in dealing with that type of racism.*

...I was so, *I can remember because you don't forget a thing like that, I can remember feeling humiliated and I didn't know why. Um, 'cause like I said, I have never had that type of experience before when someone was so overt, with telling me they could not do something because of the color of my skin.* And then I got mad, but by the time I got mad of course we were back on the bus and I was really thinking about it. And I can

remember going home, telling my mom and my grandparents about it. And my grandfather would say to me, he would say, don't ever allow anyone to tell you you're not just as good as they are. So that was his way of dealing with it.

INTERVIEW NINE:

Well see, *I grew up in Jackson, Mississippi during the Civil Rights era so that in of itself is an experience.* And it's interesting because lately I've been talking a lot with students about my experiences and letting them know that Civil Rights was not that long ago and that I remember it as a kid. *I still remember going to the segregated waiting rooms when my mom would take us to the doctor. I still remember being in segregated areas when she would take us to buy shoes. I remember where it was colored only; see so I remember a lot of that stuff.*

Both of the participants above were in their early 50s and grew up during segregation. Though the experiences they described were not atypical of those times, as Participant Two notes, 'you don't forget a thing like that'. These types of blatant racially-charged exchanges were not limited to baby-boomers. A participant in her early thirties spoke of being called a 'nigger' by a classmate as a sixth-grade student. While it is impossible to ascertain exactly how these past experiences influence the participants' current perceptions of discrimination, it is also impossible to deny that they must have some impact. The emergence of these negative experiences in interviews focused on retail discrimination reveals a linkage for participants. For these participants, retail discrimination does not appear to be compartmentalized as a unique phenomenon, but demonstrative of racist and discriminatory events that they have encountered over a lifetime. It is possible that those other racist and discriminatory experiences affect participants' perceptions of negative events encountered in retail settings. There is an adage that the past predicts the future. Participants' past experiences with discrimination may lead them to expect discriminatory treatment in the future. These expectancies may

then impact interracial interactions and contribute to tension and anxiety experienced during these interactions by both parties.

The dearth of research examining African Americans as active participants in social psychological research on prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination has been noted throughout this paper. Of particular note here is the lack of research addressing how African Americans personal experiences with discrimination influence subsequent attributions of discrimination. Extant research suggests there are varying consequences for viewing discrimination as pervasive versus viewing discrimination as an isolated event (Foster, Jackson, Hartmann and Woulfe 2004). The former has been linked to decreased psychological well-being (life satisfaction, personal self-esteem, depression (Foster et al. 2004). The antecedents that lead to a view of discrimination as pervasive or isolated have been less examined. In general, research indicates a correlation between ethnic identification and higher attributions of discrimination (Major et al. 2002). A logical correlation would appear to exist between the number of discriminatory events experienced in the past and attributions of discrimination. However, as other researchers have noted, “The greater discrimination members of low-status groups report on surveys compared with members of high-status groups is more likely to be explained by the greater frequency or severity of discrimination experienced by the former rather than by hypersensitivity to prejudice on their part” (Major et al. 2002). Similarly, past experiences with discrimination do not necessarily indicate false attributions of discrimination in other encounters. These attributions may reveal an astute judgment on the part of the participant fine-tuned through prior experiences.

SOCIALIZATION AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCES INFLUENCE ON PERCEPTIONS OF DISCRIMINATION

Research has shown that the more negative Blacks' racial attitudes towards Whites, the more they perceived a White partner as behaving in a prejudiced manner during an interaction (Shelton and Richeson 2006). It is possible that these participants' racial attitudes and the belief that racism exists, formed in part by socialization and in part by their own experiences, contribute to the quality of their contact experiences with White people - including interactions in retail stores. Most social psychological research examining Blacks has assumed that they were passive targets of prejudice directed towards them primarily from Whites. There have been calls from researchers to examine Blacks as active participants in interracial interactions to more fully understand the real-world dynamics of prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination (Shelton 2000). This research endeavor underscores that need. Socialization and personal experiences with discrimination arose during participants' accounts of retail discrimination. Extant research fails to explain how either of these may alter or influence current perceptions of discrimination. Both socialization and personal experiences serve as peripheral forces that illuminate the central themes of retail discrimination.

RELATIONSHIP OF THEMES

The four figural themes that emerged as essential elements of perceptions of discrimination are: 1) *Invisible/Criminal*, 2) *I knew*, 3) *Have restraint - Show my butt* and 4) *Racism exists*. In order to more fully understand how perceptions of discrimination are experienced by participants, the relationship between these themes is examined.

The *Invisible/Criminal treatment* theme refers to the nature of the perceived discriminatory treatment. It describes the type of negative behaviors engaged in by others and directed towards the participant. 'Invisible' refers to situations where the participant feels blatantly ignored, while 'criminal' refers to suspicious or criminal treatment by others. In general, these are negative behaviors that most consumers would identify as falling below their expectations of expected customer service. In this study, these behaviors are ultimately deemed discriminatory, but these perceptions do not arise in a vacuum. There are negative behaviors that occur by salespersons initially. Both invisible and criminal treatment are experienced by the participants as violations of their need to be viewed as a 'human being' that matters (need for self-esteem) or their need to be treated fairly and respectfully by the retail employees in retail settings (need for justice).

I knew refers to an attribution of discrimination. This is an internal attribution that refers to an acceptance of the behavior as discriminatory. For some participants this attribution arose quickly. For others, it occurred subsequent to a period of testing during which they sought to confirm or deny their initial impression of discrimination. Although confirmation was necessarily the outcome of testing for the experiences under examination here, some participants noted times when testing led to a negative answer as well. At the point where the participant *knew* that discrimination occurred, any prior uncertainty associated with this attribution had been removed.

After an internal attribution of discrimination has been made, the participant experiences negative emotions. She also engages in cognitions and behaviors subsequent to the attribution. The theme *Have restraint - Show my butt* encapsulates these emotions,

cognitions, and behaviors. The primary emotion that is experienced during perceptions of discrimination is anger. Sadness, shame, fear and disappointment also emerged during discriminatory experiences. Participants engage in a cognitive appraisal process in which they contemplate employing a combative response (Show my butt) or a more subdued response (Have Restraint). These responses were evidenced as two types of behavior: participants engage in active behaviors which required them to interact with someone else (such as a formal complaint or broadcasting) or employ passive behaviors which did not require interaction (such as departure).

These themes did not necessarily arise in a linear sequence during the course of the interviews. There is however a temporal relationship that the above themes infer. The *Invisible/Criminal treatment* behaviors must take place before the attribution of discrimination can occur. The attribution of discrimination must be made before the emotions, cognitions, and behaviors described under *Have restraint - Show my butt* arise.

The fourth theme is that *Racism exists*. This theme refers to a belief that racism is still a threat that African Americans may encounter in a variety of settings, including retailers. This belief appears to influence all of the previous themes - the nature of the discrimination itself, the internal attribution of discrimination, as well as the emotions, cognitions and behaviors that arise subsequent to the attribution. Because *Racism exists*, there are strategies the participants engage in (wearing their status, using titles) that they hope will prevent discriminatory treatment from occurring. Whether this is an accurate assessment or not cannot be determined from these interviews, though participants noted times that failure to utilize these strategies resulted in *Invisible/Criminal treatment* behaviors from retailers. This belief is also likely to influence how quickly participants

make an attribution of discrimination once negative behaviors have been experienced. Additionally, the belief that *Racism exists* may influence participants' emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses to perceptions of discrimination. These latter conclusions are tentative and have not been examined in extant research. The belief that *Racism exists* may be formed in part by parental socialization and in part by prior personal experiences with racism and/or discrimination. Both socialization and personal experiences indirectly influence how the participant experiences retail discrimination overall.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION

The primary goal of this research study is to provide an articulate, clear and accurate description of how perceptions of discrimination are experienced by African American women in retail settings. The analysis in Chapter Four facilitates this understanding, while this Chapter further contributes towards this goal by examining the larger contributions of the study. Understanding perceptions of discrimination in retail settings contributes to extant theory and has implications for stakeholders as well. This chapter details those contributions and implications. The chapter begins with a review of the study. This is followed with a discussion of the criteria used to evaluate the contributions of the study, and the limitations of the study. The primary contributions of the study and its separate contributions to marketing and retailing research and social psychological research are presented. The implications of the study for marketing and retailing teaching faculty, researchers, and practitioners; public policy officials and consumers are addressed. The chapter concludes with a summary of these topics.

REVIEW OF THE STUDY

There is ample evidence that many African Americans believe racial profiling is widespread in the marketplace (e.g., Mathis 2002, Fifield 2001, Sellers and Shelton 2003, Fix and Turner 2003, Siegelman 2003). The issue of actual discrimination in retail settings has been examined largely outside of the marketing literature, in economic

journals and law reviews (e.g. Yinger 1998, Ayres 2003). While it is important to ascertain objectively whether discrimination occurs in retail, it is equally important to understand how people perceive discriminatory treatment. This is particularly germane for the field of marketing where self-perceptions are as vital to the understanding of exchange processes and marketing relationships as the transaction itself.

Chapter One argued the importance of studying perceived discrimination for African Americans in retail settings. Perceived discrimination is defined in this research as a minority group member's perception of negative *attitudes and/or biased behavior* from another person based primarily on group membership. This discussion emphasized the lack of literature on this topic, the potential negative psychological consequences for individuals perceiving such treatment, and potential economic consequences for retailers.

In Chapter Two, the constructs of race and ethnicity were defined and the marketing literature examining both was presented. Perceived discrimination was distinguished from similar group-bias constructs such as prejudice, stereotyping, and actual (objective) discrimination. Similarities and differences between racial profiling in police contexts and retail settings were discussed. While there is increasing evidence of racial profiling occurring, a review of the legal and criminal justice literature found it to be largely absent of theory explaining the practice or its effect on individuals who believe they have been the targets of profiling. The chapter concluded with a review of literature on interpersonal dynamics in retail settings in an effort to understand how these settings serve as conduits for perceptions of discrimination.

Existential-phenomenology was chosen as the most appropriate method for achieving the research objectives. The purpose of existential-phenomenology is to

understand the essence or essential structure of human experience as it emerges in some context using descriptive techniques such as disciplined reflection. There are three core concepts of existential-phenomenology: co-constitutionality, situated freedom, and reflection. These concepts and their relevance to the current study are recapped below.

Co-constitutionality refers to the inseparability and interdependence between human beings and their environments. A ‘dialogal’ relationship exists between people and the world such that the world exerts an influence on people as well (Valle and King 1989). The world presents situations in which a person must act. These decisions ultimately influence who the person becomes. This dissertation research sought to understand a particular experience, perceptions of discrimination, as experienced by African Americans in a particular context, retail settings. It is assumed these perceptions are neither entirely subjective nor entirely objective. The participant as a person-in-the-world brings into each interaction his or her prior experiences and self-concept.

While individuals can’t choose the situations which the world places them in, they have the freedom to act once so situated. This ability to make decisions given constraints is referred to in existential-phenomenological terms as situated freedom. Participants in this study are assumed to have the ability to act freely once confronted with what they perceive to be discriminatory experiences. The choices that a participant makes in these discriminatory encounters ultimately contribute to her experience.

The third core concept of existential-phenomenology is reflection. Individuals are seen as acting in a situation without the opportunity to disengage and reflect on their actions in everyday life. When such reflection occurs, meanings and symbols may emerge from the ground of unreflected experiences.

Sixteen African American women, most of whom worked in professional settings, were interviewed during this research project. Participants in this study were asked to mentally return to the discriminatory experiences and to describe the encounter, accompanying behaviors and feelings, as they unfolded at the time. They were also asked to describe any additional reflections or thoughts regarding the experience that emerged at the time of the interview. These descriptions, reflections and thoughts served as the basis for the subsequent analysis.

Chapter Four presented four figural themes that emerged in the analysis of perceptions of discrimination. These themes are: 1) Invisible/Criminal treatment, 2) I knew, 3) Have restraint - Show my butt and 4) Racism exists. *Invisible/criminal treatment* describes the nature of the behavior by actors perceived to be engaging in discriminatory actions. *I knew* refers to an internal attribution of discrimination that may occur through a process of 'testing'. *Have Restraint/ Show my butt* describes emotions, cognitions and behaviors that emerged subsequent to internal attributions of discrimination. *Racism exists* refers to a belief held by participants that facilitates perceptions of discrimination and has an impact on the entire experience of discrimination. The ground themes of socialization and personal experience emerged as influential backdrop forces for these perceptions. The temporal relationship between themes was discussed as well as additional insights that emerged.

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

Mick and Buhl (1992) propose the following evaluative criteria for phenomenological research endeavors: 1) Does the research provide insight into how a

phenomenon is given meaning in a person's life? 2) Are the researchers' interpretations consistent with the aims of the inquiry? 3) Are interpretations supported by reference to participants' stories? 4) Did the researchers understand the persons at the conclusion of the study better than the persons understood themselves? 5) Did the inquiry contribute to the researcher's knowledge of him/herself? These are the primary criteria used to evaluate this research.

1. *Does the research provide insight into how a phenomenon is given meaning in a person's life?*

The primary goal of this research was to understand how perceptions of discrimination are experienced by African American women in retail settings.

The analysis in Chapter 4 provides a rich description of this phenomenon. The following section of this chapter elaborates on this issue as the primary contribution of this research study.

2. *Are the researchers' interpretations consistent with the aims of the inquiry?*

Phenomenological inquiry is designed to explore a phenomenon from the experience of someone who has lived it. The findings and interpretations presented in Chapter 4 are consistent with this goal.

3. *Are interpretations supported by reference to participants' stories?*

All of the themes identified were supported with excerpts from multiple narratives. Additionally, the themes are all rendered in emic terms in an effort to accurately represent the participants' experiences.

4. *Did the researchers understand the persons at the conclusion of the study better than the persons understood themselves?*

Efforts were made to validate the findings by employing member checks. A summary of the findings were e-mailed to a randomly selected group of 5 participants. These participants were asked to review the summary and determine whether or not they felt it accurately reflected their experiences. Two responses were received back and both of those participants concurred with the findings. One participant reflected that though she had not realized it before, she could see how her responses to discriminatory experiences were very much like her mother's responses decades before as the findings revealed. This provides some support that this criterion was met.

5. *Did the inquiry contribute to the researcher's knowledge of herself?*

It is assumed that the researcher in existential-phenomenological endeavors is an active participant in the research project. Thus, the researcher must understand how her personal inclinations and predispositions might influence or bias how and what she investigates, as well as the conclusions that are reached. To address these concerns, prior to beginning the interviews the author participated in a bracketing interview. Bracketing involves discovering beliefs, hypotheses, attitudes and hunches the researcher holds regarding the phenomenon (Colaizzi 1978). The researcher is an African American female. The bracketing interview revealed that though she believed perceived discrimination in retail settings occurs presently, she could not recall any experiences she'd personally had. The analysis suggests that perceptions of discrimination are facilitated by socialization and personal experiences with discrimination. The researcher found that this potentially explained her inability to recall personal experiences with

discrimination in retail settings. The researcher grew up in a largely integrated environment and attended private Catholic elementary and high schools. This background may have insulated her from discrimination in general. Furthermore, the ‘preparation for bias’ category of ethnic-racial socialization describes “parents’ efforts to promote their children’s awareness of discrimination and prepare them to cope with it” (Hughes et al. 2006, pg. 756). The researcher could not recall receiving this type of socialization from her guardians. As such, the research process significantly enhanced the researcher’s understanding of her own personal experiences (or lack thereof) with retail discrimination.

STUDY LIMITATIONS

Like all research endeavors, this dissertation has certain limitations. These limitations include the sample of participants interviewed and the methodology employed. This section describes these limitations and how they might affect the findings reached and the generalizability of the findings.

Participants

The participants in this study were African American women. It is unclear whether these findings will extend to other minority groups or to African American men. Additionally, research has shown that group consciousness is associated with perceptions of prejudice. African Americans who are immersed in African American culture report significantly more recent and lifetime racist events and appraise these events as more stressful than do African Americans who are more acculturated to mainstream European American culture (Landrine and Klonoff 1996). Many of the participants in this study

were identified through groups that have a racial affiliation (ex. Sororities, African American faculty and student organizations). These participants may be likely to have a higher group consciousness or be more racially sensitive than other African Americans. Additionally, most of the women interviewed in this study are professionals. They may be more likely to frequent more upscale stores and boutiques or stores or malls that have a primarily Caucasian customer base. It is unclear if their experiences are similar to African American women who have less education and income. Thus the findings of this study may be limited only to African American professional women and additional research is needed to explore beyond this demographic segment.

Methodology

An existential-phenomenological approach was employed in this research project. The purpose of existential-phenomenological research is to “...explicate the essence, structure or form of both human experience and human behavior as revealed through essentially descriptive techniques including disciplined reflection” (Valle et al. 1989, pg. 6).

For an existential-phenomenological approach to be used, the phenomenon under investigation must have certain characteristics. These characteristics, originally presented in Chapter 3 of this dissertation, are: 1) *It exists* – it is assumed that ‘shopping while Black’ is a real phenomenon; 2) *It involves social interaction* – it is assumed that these perceptions necessarily involve interaction with at least one other person; 3) *It is complex* – it is assumed that perceptions of discrimination do not arise in a vacuum; 4) *It is neither entirely subjective nor objective* – though ‘shopping while Black’ is a perceptual phenomenon, there are objective behaviors that the target uses in forming

these perceptions. These assumed characteristics necessarily direct the questions that were asked in the interviews and may influence the conclusions that were reached. This is a limitation inherent in this research approach. Additional studies using other methodologies are recommended to substantiate these findings.

PRIMARY CONTRIBUTIONS

An existential phenomenological report should enable a reader of the report to feel, "I understand better what it is like for someone to experience that," (Polkinghorne 1988). If this report provides that understanding for perceptions of discrimination in retail settings, the study has made a significant contribution. This includes ascertaining not only what the perception of discrimination entails, as presented in Chapter Four, but also understanding the significance and impact of the experiences for participants.

The analysis indicates that the perception of discrimination in retail settings was meaningful for participants in multiple ways. Behaviors indicative of discrimination were revealed as violations of the participants' need for justice and self-esteem in retail settings. The internal attribution of discrimination involved tension in some cases as the participant struggled with being viewed as some sort of racist extremist, even if this contention came solely from the participant herself. Further tension was induced as the participant struggled with how to confront the perceived discriminatory treatment given the emotions and cognitions that arose subsequent to the attribution. In some cases responsive behaviors were indicative of an attempt to actively fight to regain a sense of respect or self-esteem which was violated as a result of the perceived behaviors. In other cases, the responses themselves further harmed participants in that they produced a sense

of self-deprivation when participants avoided patronizing stores or events where the discriminatory experience occurred despite an affinity for the retailer's merchandise. Collectively this analysis provides conclusive evidence of the impact of perceived discriminatory retail experiences for participants.

In addition to understanding the experience of discrimination in retail settings in general, more specific objectives for this research project were as follows: To understand how perceptions of discrimination arise, are formed and sustained by African Americans; what catalysts trigger these perceptions; what emotions are evoked and what strategies are employed to cope with such perceptions. Tackling these specific objectives is a further contribution of this study and each objective is discussed in more detail below as well as additional - and in some cases contradictory- insights that emerged.

There were no clear cut predictors of perceived racial discrimination in retail settings. This does not infer however that there are not ways that marketers and retailers can minimize such perceptions and these implications are detailed in a latter section of this paper. The analysis revealed there were objective negative behaviors that actors (salespersons, managers) engaged in that, in the incidents that were the primary focus of this research report, were perceived as discriminatory. These behaviors fell under the categories of *invisible treatment* and *criminal treatment*. *Invisible treatment* refers to the perception of being deliberately ignored solely because race. *Criminal treatment* describes a perception of suspiciousness directed by retail employees towards the participant due to her race. Perceptions of discrimination arose as a function of those negative behaviors (and the attitudes assumed to drive those behaviors) in conjunction with participants' belief that racism exists. This belief was formed through parental

socialization (in particular parental promotion of bias) as well as personal experiences with racism or discrimination in and out of retail settings.

The analysis revealed a difference between an initial perception of discrimination and an internal attribution of discrimination. The perception of discrimination emerged as an initial notion by the participant that she is being subjected to *invisible/criminal treatment* at a retailer. In some cases this thought was quickly accepted as valid by the participant. There were also occasions the participant ‘*tested*’ this assumption before accepting it or rejecting it. For the experiences that were the focus of this research project, the end result was necessarily an acceptance of this perception as accurate. At the point where the participant *knew* she had been discriminated against, an internal attribution of discrimination has occurred. There is a certainty associated with the experience at the time an internal attribution of discrimination occurs. That certainty of a discriminatory experience is sustained even after a period of time has elapsed. In addition to helping shape the belief that *racism exists*, parental socialization and personal experiences with discrimination both appear to exert an influence on the initial perception of discrimination as well as the internal attribution of discrimination.

The primary emotion experienced during perceptions of discrimination was anger. Perceptions of discrimination also induced negative emotions such as sadness, shame, fear, and disappointment for the participants in this study. These emotions produced a tension or stress that consumers tried to relieve through their responsive actions (Branscombe et al. 1999, Feagin 1991). These actions were categorized as active responses and passive responses. Active responses were described as those responses that required interacting with someone else and included confrontation, formal

complaints and broadcasting. Passive responses were those responses – departure and boycotting – that did not mandate interaction with another person. In some cases the responses further sustain the perception of discrimination because they require purposeful action (broadcasting) or inaction (boycotting) on the part of the participant that continues over time.

The anger felt during discriminatory experiences appears to initially propel participants towards aggressive responses. The choice of subsequent behaviors appears to be also related to cognitions involving the appropriateness of this behavior. By confronting the perceived discriminatory behavior participants risk being associated with a stereotypical image of Black women. Ethnic minorities are aware that their individual behavior may be used to reinforce a negative stereotype about their group (Cohen and Garcia 2005). Given the risk of being categorized stereotypically, they consider an alternative option. This decision might belie the anger that they feel but it does not promote the stereotypical image of the ‘angry Black woman’. These cognitions are referred to as a decision to *have restraint* or *show my butt*. *Show my butt* refers to combative behaviors exhibited with intensity. *Have restraint* refers to a more subdued approach. This decision itself appears to produce a type of tension for the participants.

An assumption going into the study was that there were certain unique stimuli (e.g., behaviors or words of salespeople) that produced perceptions of discrimination. In other words, it was assumed that a linear process existed whereby if a, b and/or c occurred in a retail setting, it was likely that a person would perceive they had been discriminated against. It was hoped that those catalysts would be revealed through the interview and analysis process. Instead, the interviews and analysis as discussed above

reflect more the dynamic nature of retail settings and the influence of individuals' related beliefs and past experiences on current marketing situations.

Though these contributions are significant in their own right, the study also contributes more specifically to extant theory in the marketing and retailing literature, and social psychological literature. These contributions are discussed separately for these disciplines.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO MARKETING AND RETAILING RESEARCH

The marketing concept implies a responsibility for marketers to ensure that the voice of the customer is heard. In order to be successful, marketing strategy has to be consistent with consumer needs, perceptions and preferences. This research project amplifies among marketers the voice of African American female consumers who fervently believe they have been discriminated against in retail settings. In doing so, the study contributes to marketing and retailing research in three primary ways: 1) It increases understanding of consumer experiences in general; 2) It enhances understanding of consumers' experience of negative critical incidents and distinguishes perceptions of discrimination in retail settings from negative critical incidents in general; and 3) It examines the role of personal selling and marketing in the transmission of prejudice.

Consumer Experiences

There have been calls heralded by researchers to examine how consumers experience the marketplace (e.g., Thompson et al. 1989, Arnould and Thompson 2005). This research project answers that call. Experience has been largely ignored in consumer

research though arguably it is the experience of a marketing exchange that remains with consumers long after specific cognitions or emotions involved become vague. A consumer might not recall all the specific details involved in a marketing exchange, but those details that stand out are likely to be indicative of his/her overall experience. This observation reflects a criticism sometimes associated with phenomenological research. A question arises regarding a participant's ability to accurately recall past events. This research endeavor does not disregard that concern. There is no way of knowing, nor is it assumed, that the participants' recollection of events would correspond to an objective (3rd party) account of the same encounter. What is assumed is that the participant's recollection accurately describes the experience of the event as *perceived by the participant* and her accompanying thoughts and feelings. It is further assumed that this experience is more important to the participant and has a greater impact on the participant than an 'objective' recollection of a sequence of events.

Similarly, it is often impossible to extricate consumer perceptions of a marketing exchange from the 'reality' of what actually occurs. This research endeavor demonstrates the importance of understanding how consumers experience marketing exchanges. In some cases, a participant indicated that her perception of discrimination may have been objectively unverifiable. However this did not negate the experience for the participant. Despite this potential discrepancy, ultimately what mattered was the participant's perception of the encounter. Additionally, the consumer's experience of the marketplace appears to provide a more holistic portrait of market exchanges *for the consumer* than an examination of the consumers' cognitions, emotions or behaviors in isolation.

Negative critical incidents and perceptions of discrimination

Cheung-Herrera, Goldschmidt and Hoffman (2004) note the dearth of studies examining attributions in the service failure and recovery process involving diverse participants. This study contributes towards filling that gap. In addition, the study contributes to extant research on critical incidents by confirming and extending current frameworks of consumer marketplace emotions, distinguishing perceptions of discrimination from negative critical incidents in general, and examining coping strategies employed in these incidents.

Researchers have noted a need for retailers to more closely examine customer emotions that emerge during customers' interactions with retail salespeople (Lee and Dubinsky 2003). One of the most widely cited frameworks of consumer emotions is Richins' list of consumer emotions (1997). Laros and Steenkamp (2005) developed a hierarchy of consumer emotions that extends this work. This analysis provides additional support for these frameworks, as several of the emotions described emerged in consumers' perceived discriminatory encounters. While anger was the emotion most often evoked, other negative emotions such as sadness, shame and fear also emerged. Yi and Baumgartner (2004) include disappointment as well as anger, regret and worry as in their discussion of emotions involved in negative consumption experiences. Disappointment towards other retail managers, employees and consumers was experienced during perceived discriminatory encounters as well. Disappointment however is missing from the Richins and Laros and Steenkamp classifications of emotions. This suggests that, though popular, these classifications may not fully tap the emotions evoked in consumer contexts. Specifically, this research provides supportive

evidence that disappointment is experienced in these contexts and further indicates a need for additional research on consumer emotions, particularly in negative situations.

In addition to evoking the same set of emotions, there is another similarity between perceptions of discrimination in retail settings and other negative critical incidents. Schneider and Bowen (1999) suggest that negative critical incidents are marketplace experiences that violate consumers' need for security, need for justice and/or their need for self-esteem. Similarly, perceived discriminatory behaviors emerged as violations of participants' needs for self-esteem and justice in retail settings, providing some confirmation of the initial research in this area.

While perceptions of discrimination in retail settings may evoke the same emotions that arise during negative critical incidents, there are important differences between these two phenomena. First, in this study, the need for security was not associated with perceptions of discrimination. The need for security refers to a need to feel unthreatened by physical or economic harm (Schneider and Bowen 1999). The argument could be made that discriminatory encounters do cause economic harm because they interfere with a target's ability to freely enjoy the fruits of their labor in the marketplace. Though plausible, the interviews here provide no support for this assertion. There also appeared to be no threat of physical harm. Even in cases where participants felt they were treated as though they were a criminal, overall they were not concerned for their physical safety during those encounters. This may be a result of sample limitations. Although seemingly counterintuitive, the gender of the participants may play a part here. African American men are more likely than African American women to be viewed as a physical threat. Therefore, they might experience discriminatory behavior as violating

their need for security, given the potential for a physical confrontation. However, in one of the few published studies of marketplace discrimination conducted with African American men, there is no explicit mention of a fear of physical harm (Crockett et al. 2003). More research is needed to ascertain if perceived discriminatory behavior does indeed violate the need for security and the conditions under which this might occur. Secondly, the perception of discrimination emerged as a deliberate attempt by a retail sales associate or manager to treat the participant negatively solely because of her race. There is an intent and a rationale that is not necessarily present in negative critical incidents. This perceived causation appears to be more emotionally taxing than a negative encounter with someone who is simply perceived as rude, unfriendly or unprofessional (Andreason and Manning 1990). Finally, participants believed that because racism exists, there is a possibility of them encountering discriminatory treatment in stores. They actively engage in behaviors to reduce this likelihood. Conversely, negative critical incidents in general do not produce this omnipresent emotional toll nor the preventative measures associated with perceptions of discrimination.

Researchers have suggested that specific emotions are likely to result in certain coping strategies being employed in negative consumer encounters (Yi and Baumgartner 2004). For example, consumers experiencing disappointment were found to engage in confrontive behaviors. This direct link between emotions and coping strategies was not found for perceptions of discrimination. Overwhelmingly anger was the emotion that emerged. Nevertheless, different coping strategies were utilized. The choice of coping strategy appeared to be influenced not only by emotion, but by the decision whether to

‘show my butt’ or ‘have restraint’. Other researchers have found that emotion-coping strategies can be better understood by considering appraisals that underlie the various emotions (Schoefer and Ennew 2005; Yi and Baumgartner 2004). This analysis suggests that relevant cognitions must be considered in conjunction with emotions in the analysis of coping strategies for perceived discriminatory encounters in retail environments. This is not surprising given the research indicating that cognitions and emotions both influence behavior (Izard 1992). This research contributes to marketers’ understanding of cognitions that are engaged in during perceived discriminatory encounters.

The coping strategies evidenced in discriminatory encounters were categorized as active and passive responses. This distinction is different than the approach-avoidance categorization that is often used to describe responses to negative critical incidents. Active-passive responses diverge in whether they require interaction of the participant with another person (salesperson, manager, or family and friends) in an effort to reduce the tension evoked during the encounter. This categorization appears to more accurately describe the nature of the responses evidenced by participants. The active responses that emerged were: confrontation, broadcasting and formal complaints. The passive responses were: departure and boycotting. All of these strategies could be used to respond to negative critical incidents in general and in fact have been identified in prior research (e.g. Yi and Baumgartner 2004, Schoefer and Ennew 2005). However, there appears to be elements of some of the responses that are unique to perceptions of discrimination.

Though an encounter may be perceived as discriminatory, this specific allegation may not be made during active responses. For most negative critical incidents, this is

likely a non-issue. Customers employing an active response in those situations would have no reason to question whether or not to disclose their related beliefs or thoughts about the exchange. The analysis indicates that even internal attributions of discrimination may be put off initially because participants want to avoid viewing themselves as a racial extremist. The possibility of others inferring this as well is likely to influence whether they directly address the prejudicial attitudes they perceive to drive the negative behaviors they experience. Broadcasting is similar to negative word of mouth used in negative critical incidents in that it serves to deter others from going to the retailer where the negative experience occurred. In perceptions of discrimination, broadcasting serves an additional purpose of validation. Many retail discriminatory encounters involve ambiguous behaviors. By describing these situations to similar others, participants may receive confirmation that their attribution of discrimination was correct. Such confirmation is unlikely to be sought in negative critical incidents in general. A final difference between the coping strategies employed in perceived discriminatory encounters and negative critical incidents in general is found in the response of boycotting. Boycotting as defined in this research refers primarily to an individual decision not to return to a retailer. In some cases this decision continued decades after the initial negative encounter. There was also evidence of an attempt to recruit others to embark in a formal boycott of a retailer perceived to be engaging in discriminatory practices. Though such boycotts may be encouraged subsequent to negative critical incidents in general, historically most formal boycotts have arisen as a result of socially problematic issues such as racism (Klein et al. 2004).

Marketing and the transmission of prejudice

Marketers have widely recognized the potential influence of advertising in promoting stereotypes and prejudices (e.g. Pollay 1986; Pollay, Lee, Carter-Whitney 1992; Kern-Foxworth 1994; Bristor et al. 1995; Power, Murphy and Coover 1996). This attention to advertising is not surprising given that advertising is the form of marketing communication most often associated with marketing by consumers. However, advertising is but one component of the marketing mix. This research project provides evidence of another form of marketing communication - personal selling – as a conduit for stereotypes and prejudice as well. It also suggests that the more strategic practices of segmentation and targeting may play a role in the transmission of stereotypes and prejudice in retail environments as well.

The notion of salespeople categorizing individuals on the basis of easily observable characteristics such as sex and race is undisputed (Ainscough and Motley 2000; LaTour et. al. 1989). Given the constraints they face, a salesperson's choice of whom to sell to is likely to be influenced by his or her perceptions (Fine and Schumann 1992). Advertising is one of the most controllable forms of marketing communication yet has been found to contain stereotypes that may promote or reinforce prejudices. Personal selling on the other hand is the least controllable form of marketing communication (Shimp 2005). This suggests there is a potential for stereotypes and prejudices to come into play in personal selling situations. Despite this, there is little research examining the role of personal selling in promoting stereotypes and prejudices (exceptions include Asquith and Bristow 2000; Crockett, Grier and Williams 2003). The

participants' narratives demonstrate a perception of prejudice in a personal selling context. The above section described similarities between negative critical incidents and perceptions of discrimination. One of the key differences is that in perceptions of discrimination, the negative behaviors that the sales associates are accused of engaging in are perceived to be indicative of negative racial attitudes or prejudice. This may not be true for all negative interracial encounters. However, the participants' perception of prejudice as an impetus for the actions of salespeople indicates the potential for prejudicial attitudes to be transmitted in personal selling situations.

In his presidential address to the Society for Consumer Psychology, consumer psychologist David Schumann calls for researchers to broaden the examination of marketing's role in the transmission of prejudice and stereotypes. Specifically, he suggests that in addition to advertising, the marketing practices of segmentation and targeting may contribute to the formation or reinforcement of prejudicial attitudes. The current research project further stresses the need for additional examination of segmentation and prejudice. Specifically, the questions arise, to what extent do retailers engage in market segmentation on the basis of race and what are the social ramifications of this type of segmentation strategy?

Targeting groups on the basis of race or ethnicity has been referred to as 'one of the most successful segmenting strategies' (Halter 2000, pg. 5). Wal-Mart recently revealed a marketing strategy plan to position their stores for specific demographic groups. Over the next two years, merchandising and marketing will reflect the national retailer's efforts to target one of six demographic groups – African-Americans, Hispanics, affluent markets, empty nesters, suburbanites and rural residents (McTaggart

2006). This move by Wal-Mart follows that of other retailers who have also attempted to gain a larger share of minority markets through targeted merchandise and ad campaigns. Niche retailer Ashley Stewart has focused on targeting primarily African American women since its inception in 1991 (Sokol 2003) and operates more than 200 stores, with its flagship store based in Harlem, New York. In addition to carrying merchandise designed to appeal to full-figured African-American women, Ashley Stewart's ad campaigns feature primarily women in this demographic group, and this year they partnered with R & B legend Gladys Knight for promotional spots. Their targeting efforts clearly extend beyond advertising into every area of their marketing mix. While efforts such as these to reach minority markets have been lauded in some cases, there may be a darker side to racial segmentation that is not often addressed.

Segmentation is about markets - determining who is included in a market. Consequently it promotes the exclusion of others (Schumann 1999; Turow 1997). The retailer Abercrombie and Fitch has faced criticism (and lawsuits) alleging the retailer's focus on reaching the 'classic American' college market has resulted in discrimination against African American, Asian and Hispanic potential employees and consumers (Edwards 2003). This suggests that targeting practices may produce a perception of a racist motivation (Smith and Cooper-Martin 1997). In this research endeavor, certain retailers appeared over and over again in participants' discussions of their discriminatory experiences. There are several reasons why this frequency might have occurred. It might be simply coincidental given the relatively small sample involved. It could potentially be that because several of the participants were interviewed in the same Southern city, they

may have come across the same salespeople at those retailers. It may also reveal a more systematic effort by those retailers to target and cater to a non-minority clientele.

In his presidential address, Schumann asked, “Is it possible that market segmentation leads to a type of market segregation?” Abercrombie and Fitch has been accused of promoting the image of the ‘classic American’ not only through ads featuring primarily young, attractive Caucasians, but also through its sales’ force who mirror the models in the ads. Whether intentional or not, Abercrombie and Fitch may potentially create the impression that minorities are not wanted. Similarly this impression may have been created by the retailers in this study who were accused of engaging in discriminatory practices. Numerous accusations against a handful of retailers affirm the need for further inquiry into market segmentation and market segregation.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Social psychology has primarily focused on examining prejudice and discrimination from their source – members of the dominant social group (Branscombe et al. 1999). Increasingly social psychologists have called for research examining discrimination from the perspective of minority groups who are the targets of prejudice and discrimination (e.g., Branscombe et al. 1999; Shelton 2000; Shelton and Richeson 2006). This research endeavor answers that call. In doing so it provides the following contributions: 1) It enhances overall understanding of prejudice and discrimination; 2) It identifies socialization and personal experiences as influential to perceptions of discrimination; 3) It introduces the notion of testing which is absent from current

discussions of prejudice and discrimination; and 4) It contributes towards understanding current racial problems in the United States.

Prejudice and discrimination

Those researchers who have heralded calls for research on prejudice and discrimination from the target's perspective have indicated this work is needed to understand: 1) the psychological implications of being a target of discrimination (Cassidy et al. 2004); 2) the attitudes that minorities bring with them to interracial encounters (Shelton 2000); 3) what behaviors are interpreted as indicative of prejudice. This dissertation research contributes to the literature in each of these areas.

It has been posited that members of minority groups are likely to be aware of a potential for discriminatory treatment during ordinary endeavors and that awareness may produce a constant tension or stress (Cassidy et al. 2004)). This research provides additional support for this assertion. The theme *Racism exists* emerged as recognition among participants that discrimination in and out of retail settings is a potentiality because racist attitudes continue to exist. Because *Racism exists*, participants engaged in certain behaviors to minimize or prevent discriminatory treatment. These behaviors indicate that the notion of encountering discrimination is aversive, ever-present and alters behaviors. It further suggests that perceiving oneself as a target is stressful. An additional source of stress occurs as participants struggle with how to combat racism when confronted with it. In retail situations this was associated with the decision of whether to *have restraint* or *show my butt*. Participant Sixteen directly addressed this conflict:

INTERVIEW SIXTEEN:

I feel like African-American women always have to adjust themselves, so that's a constant battle that always goes on in my mind, so it's like do I come out and say something and appear as the stereotypical Black woman or do I keep my cool and try to dispel those stereotypes. So it's like what do I do? Because, as the same time I feel like I'm not being true to myself if I don't do what my heart feels I should do.

It is unclear if this tension is associated with perceptions of discrimination in general or if it is isolated to discriminatory experiences in retail settings. Work and school settings are more likely to provide multiple opportunities for contact with perpetrators of discrimination and others. Does this make it less likely that a single experience of discrimination in those settings will result in a decision of whether to *have restraint* or *show my butt* for that particular encounter? Although there is more research examining the target's experience of discrimination in school and work settings than in retail settings, a canvassing of this literature provided no direct or indirect mention of this type of conflict. It would seem therefore that further investigation is needed exploring under what discriminatory contexts this particular cognition emerges.

The attitudes of both parties in interactions contribute to the quality of the interaction. This is true for interracial interactions as well. Little is known however about the racial attitudes of minorities (Brigham 1993). There was little indication of overtly hostile attitudes towards whites evidenced in the narratives. It has been suggested that African Americans' racial attitudes towards whites reflect perceptions of racism and discrimination perpetuated by whites (Shelton and Richeson 2006, Monteith and Spicer 2000). This study supports that contention. As discussed in previous paragraphs, there was an acceptance among participants that *Racism exists*. This implies a sense of distrust or suspicion towards Whites in general and reflects the belief that Whites behave in ways

that are harmful to ethnic minorities (Shelton and Richeson 2006). Ironically, it is the perceived suspicious treatment of African Americans by certain Whites that appears to produce this suspiciousness towards Whites in general.

Though there was little evidence of overtly hostile attitudes towards Whites, some participants revealed antagonistic attitudes toward other minority groups:

INTERVIEW SEVEN:

So we went down there and I knew, you know how you get this feeling, I knew *when I walked in to the store that I wasn't going to get what I asked for and the reason was, I saw who ran the store and I hate to say this, but Arabic in nature.* ... Initially when I walked in the son was behind the, I can't recall his name, but I can see his face, the son was behind the counter and I say, hey, I'm here to pick up my gift certificates and door prizes, whatever. And he said no. The son actually said no, we don't do that. Well then I said, well I talked to the assistant manager a few days ago and she said that there would be no problem. Well then he calls his father and his father comes up and his father is just arrogant, both of these guys are very arrogant and when I said well. He said the assistant manager had no authority to give you access basically. And I'm thinking, okay....I could go ballistic and just get, you know, just really act up. But there were other people in the store and I thought, and I thought, but *I got so angry and so mad when both of them stood there and I mean, they are Arabic, they are either from Turkey, or Iran or Iraq.. I don't know where they are from, but they stood there and said no....* Well of course I didn't go back, I'm not going to drive all the way there but, they have not changed. *They are money grabbing, prejudiced dogs.*

INTERVIEW SIXTEEN:

The hair stores that are usually owned by Asians, it [discrimination] usually happens.

These participants explicitly mention the race of the sales associate. This suggests that race was salient to them during the encounter. Both of these participants also noted the race of sales associates during another discriminatory experience at an unrelated location. In both of these cases, the actors perceived to be engaging in

discrimination were identified as being in the same racial category as a prior discriminatory encounter:

INTERVIEW SEVEN:

I went to Baskin Robbins down here, oh this is going to sound bad, but it's the truth. Went to Baskin Robbins off of Chapman Highway, and *that Baskin Robbins was also owned by a person of Arabic or Turkish, whatever you want to call it, background.* And he had the audacity when I showed him the little old letter. I said hey you know, we're having a little golf tournament. I have been turned down before, but there's a way to do it.... *it sounds like I'm being um.. but no, I'm telling you my experiences, and my experiences have been, the ones that I recall with in that situation. I'm talking about Arabic.*

INTERVIEW SIXTEEN:

We went into an international food store. Um, we weren't looking for anything in particular but since my husband, he was born in Germany and he has memories of certain foods so I guess he went in there looking for something. Well we went in there, *it's owned by an Asian*, we went in there and we were going up and down the aisles looking for what he wanted. *The Asian guy would follow us, I mean he made no attempt to try to hide that he was following us and it was really pissing me off...* Even though we have the stereotype or whatever, I just felt like there was no need for him to follow us so closely behind us. It's like, we didn't really present a threat, we weren't acting, like we weren't hunching over and stuffing stuff in our bag. I didn't understand why he would act like that. It just made me made. *It almost made me put all Asians into one group and I had to remind myself that you can't base one Asian on the whole population, so I had to, it was like a constant battle in my mind. It's like part of me is saying this bad stuff, this negative stuff about other Asians and the other part is saying, don't think that way, this is just one time. But then I think about when I was back home and I was in the hair stores, and I'm like, they did it too, So it's just, I don't know what to think anymore.*

The research on ethnic minorities' racial attitudes towards other minority groups is almost non-existent. This study indicates that for African Americans, these attitudes may be more negative than their attitudes towards Whites. Specifically, racial animus was detected towards individuals perceived to be of Asian descent and Arab Americans. While current social norms make expression of racist attitudes towards Blacks

unacceptable, this is not true for all minority groups. Specifically, since 9-11 racial profiling towards individuals of Arab descent has increased (Kim 2004). It is unclear what motivates this particular type of prejudice between stigmatized groups.

A main point of contention in social psychological research has been deciding which attitudinal expressions and behaviors are truly indicative of racial prejudice. Social norms of recent decades have made the expression of most overt racial prejudices unacceptable. This has produced a new form of prejudice that some researchers refer to as modern racism or subtle racism (McConahay et al. 1981). Others have argued these new forms of racism aren't racism at all and conservative ideologies are often mislabeled as racism (Arkes and Tetlock 2004). Arkes and Tetlock (2004) propose the question, "Would Jesse Jackson 'fail' the implicit association test?" This question refers to a remark Jesse Jackson made that he feels a sense of relief when he walks down a street, hears footsteps, and turns around and sees someone White. The crux of their argument is, "the work on implicit prejudice sets the threshold for making attributions of prejudice at an unprecedented low level" and psychologists using such measures risk "mistakenly accusing the unprejudiced" while "mistakenly exonerating the prejudiced" (2004). This debate has occurred amongst social psychological researchers who use implicit or explicit measures to infer prejudicial attitudes. Outside the walls of academia, attributions of prejudice usually arise from minority group members. It therefore becomes important to know how these individuals identify racist motivations and behaviors. This research contributes to this discussion.

The sales associates in most of the narratives described engaged in behaviors that at a minimum fall short of expected customer service. In this research those behaviors

were categorized as *invisible* or *criminal treatment*. These negative behaviors served to prompt attributions of discrimination. Whether the behavior was actually discriminatory cannot be determined in this research. The behaviors were perceived by participants as attempts to devalue or lessen them. Contributing to the attribution of discrimination is the belief that *Racism Exists*. There was also evidence that parental socialization and personal experiences with discrimination also influence perceptions of discrimination.

Socialization and personal experiences with discrimination

Ethnic-racial socialization refers to parental efforts to convey information to their children regarding their racial background or ethnicity as well as the societal implications of those group memberships. There are four types of ethnic-racial socialization – cultural socialization, preparation for bias, promotion of mistrust and egalitarianism (Hughes et al. 2006). Preparation for bias emerged in participants' narratives of retail discrimination as influential to participants' perceptions of discrimination. In some interviews, participants directly referred to parental experiences with discrimination (in and out of retail settings). In other cases participants discussed advice their parents gave them regarding discrimination. Participants shared this same kind of advice with their own children. The link between ethnic-racial socialization and perceptions of discrimination has been examined in social psychological research (Hughes and Johnson 2001). This research provides additional evidence of that link.

There is a shortage of research addressing how African Americans' personal experiences with discrimination influence subsequent attributions of discrimination. Though this study focused explicitly on retail discriminatory experiences, participants

often recalled discriminatory experiences in other settings as well. Retail discrimination did not appear to be compartmentalized as a unique phenomenon, but demonstrative of racist and discriminatory events encountered over a lifetime. Past experiences with discrimination may lead participants to expect discriminatory treatment in the future and attributions of discrimination may be the result of a self-fulfilling prophecy. On the other hand, the attributions may reveal an accurate judgment that has been partially established through prior discriminatory experiences. This study reveals a link between prior personal experiences of discrimination and current perceptions of discrimination. However, the precise nature of the effect of prior personal experiences on perceptions of discrimination cannot be determined and this research emphasizes the need for additional research in this area.

Testing

The social psychological research on prejudice from the target's perspective has focused on two contradictory perspectives regarding attributions of prejudice - the attributional ambiguity perspective (e.g. Operario and Fiske 2001) and the minimization of prejudice effect (e.g. Kaiser and Miller 2001). According to the attributional ambiguity perspective, minority members often ascribe prejudicial motivation to clearly ambiguous situations (Schneider 2004). Conversely, the minimization of prejudice effect suggests because the perception that one is a victim is aversive, discriminatory behavior may often go undetected by individuals subjected to this treatment (Branscombe et al. 1999; Kaiser and Miller 2001). Other studies have provided a middle ground between the oppositional views of attributional ambiguity and the minimization of

prejudice effect. Individual differences such as ethnic identity (e.g. Major et al. 2002, Operario and Fiske 2001) and situational contexts such as the presence of others (e.g. Stangor et al. 2002) have been posited to influence attributions of prejudice. This dissertation research provides an additional means of synthesizing these contrasting viewpoints.

The examination of discrimination from the target's perspective produced the notion of 'testing' in attributions of discrimination. The initial perception of discrimination did not immediately result in an internal attribution of discrimination in all cases. Some participants attempted to collect additional evidence to support or refute their initial perception. This process was referred to as testing and is absent from the social psychological research on prejudice and discrimination.

The concept of testing has been inferred in prior marketing research. In their work examining marketplace discriminatory experiences of African American men, Crockett and his colleagues remarked that participants, "were cautious about making discriminatory attributions, and in some instances did not feel they had enough evidence to attribute discriminatory intent to the poor service they had received" (2003, pg. 1). This is consistent with the notion of testing that emerged in this analysis.

Most social psychological studies that have examined attributions of discrimination have used static scenarios in an experimental design (e.g., Johnson et al. 2003; Kaiser and Miller 2001a; Khan and Lambert 2001; Major et al. 2002; Operario and Fiske 2001). The retrospective accounts of perceived discrimination in these interviews reveal that, during a given encounter, an individual may move from denial to certainty in their attribution of discrimination. In these cases, the final attribution of discrimination is

better understood as the end result of a process rather than as a stagnant event. Thus the notion of testing that emerged in this study significantly enhances the existing literature on prejudice and discrimination.

Racial Problems in the U.S.

There was a sentiment among participants that non-minorities don't understand the experience of discrimination in retail settings because they've never had to deal with being the targets of racial prejudice or discrimination. Participant Six notes,

“I think as a Black female having grown up in segregated Mississippi I do have a different perspective and I think that as a Black female we really have to work hard not to be bitter. You know, not to be angry, not to be um ready to pounce, you know in an instant, but to be able to um, sit back and wait a minute and pray for discernment on how to handle the situation. And, you know my dad used to say, the person that's stepping on your feet and you don't say anything, they always have the excuse that they didn't know it. But if they are stepping on your feet, you say excuse me you're on my feet and that makes me uncomfortable, please don't do it anymore. And then if they do it again, then you know where they're coming from. So I've just always kinda taken that approach that if people do something to me, I don't like to let them know, but let them know then as opposed to letting it fester and react in anger. But like with shopping or whatever the case is, you know, I let people know. Or I will ask, why are you watching me? Why are you following me? You know, and I guess too, like I said I probably have tried to tell my kids things to do when they are shopping. There are things too, like my mother would say, “don't just pick things up you know you're not gonna buy”. And those are things that unfortunately our white counterparts never had to deal with.

African Americans and Caucasians have differing perspectives on the amount of racial progress that has been made in the United States (Eibach and Keegan 2006). While most African Americans believe that racial discrimination and prejudice continue to be widespread practices, most Caucasians believe them to be largely in the past or practiced by a small group of extremists (Eibach and Keegan 2006; Eibach and Ehrlinger 2006).

One of the impediments to breaking racial barriers is ignorance of the feelings, thoughts and perceptions of another group. By providing a detailed account the feelings and thoughts of individuals who perceive they have been targets of prejudice and discrimination, this research endeavor may contribute to breaking down racial barriers that continue to exist in the United States today.

IMPLICATIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS

Shimp and Lehmann (as cited in Simonson, Carmon, Dhar, Drolet and Nowlis 2001) proposed that consumer research needs to put far greater emphasis on consumer behavior that occurs within the milieu of actual marketplace phenomena. The ultimate goal of consumer behavior should be "the development of theory about actual consumer behavior that may serve the needs of all markets interested in consumer research: academics, students, businesspeople, public policy officials, and society at large" (Simonson et al. 2001, pg. 267). This section describes the implications of this research endeavor for several of these constituents.

Marketing and Retailing Faculty

This research suggests three topics for marketing and retailing faculty to explore with their students: 1) stereotyping and profiling in retail environments, 2) the impact of the marketplace becoming more diverse; and 3) the ethical implications and consequences of race-based segmentation strategies.

Stereotyping and Profiling

The transcripts provide evidence that African American women believe stereotyping and profiling are current phenomena they experience in retail settings. Specifically, stereotypes and negative attitudes associated with Blacks are believed to underlie the negative treatment experienced by participants in some retail situations. In this study, the negative treatment consisted of either being ignored (invisible) or being subjected to unwarranted surveillance (criminal). This behavior spurred participants to utilize coping strategies such as ‘wearing their status’ to reduce the likelihood of experiencing such treatment. This topic is missing from current marketing and retailing texts. A classroom discussion may be the most appropriate avenue for informing students of this issue. It also provides an opportunity to explore if and how other minorities experience racial discrimination in retail settings. Additionally, marketing and retailing students often obtain entry-level positions, such as a sales associate, in retail stores. Exploring how these students’ own stereotypes may influence their sales behavior may prove to be a useful classroom exercise. In their research on stereotypes and shoplifting in retail stores, Asquith and Bristow (2000, 2002) designed a classroom exercise to reduce misconceptions associated with racial groups and shoplifting behavior. Their research provides some initial and encouraging evidence of the ability of educators to change erroneous student beliefs associated with racial groups in retail environments. The current research indicates that such exercises are needed, particularly given the changing demographics of recent decades that are predicted to continue.

Increased Diversity in the Marketplace

In 2006, Hispanics, Asians and African Americans comprised approximately 30 % of the United States population (<http://factfinder.census.gov>). This reflects an

increase of 52 % in these groups collectively since 1990. Demographic researchers predict that by the year 2050, only half the population will be non-Hispanic white (Frey 2004). Specifically, the Hispanic and Asian populations are predicted to triple and the Black population predicted to almost double, while the white population remains steady (Frey 2004). In addition to increasing numerically, there is also evidence of increased financial power for these minority groups in the marketplace. It has been posited that these changes will impact politics, day-to-day transactions, and consumer markets for at least the next four decades (Frey 2004). Researchers have only recently begun to examine how these changes will influence the way marketers and retailers do business (Bush et al. 2001).

Many marketing and retailing textbooks include at least a section on race and ethnicity (eg. Blackwell, Miniard and Engel 2006; Shimp 2006; Ogden and Ogden 2005). In most cases these chapters inform students of the numerical representations of minority groups and issues involved with targeted marketing to these groups. There are other issues that are often unexplored. Perceived racial discrimination is only one of these issues that may arise as a result of racial diversity in the marketplace. According to social psychologists, the specific expectations, motivations, and sensitivities of participants in interracial interactions influence how interactants weigh the various aspects of their partner's behavior (Dovidio et al. 2002). How is this manifested in interracial market exchanges between consumers and sales associates? Additionally, research indicates that racial groups often have different communication styles (Hughes 2002, Martin et al. 2001). These differences may be problematic in interracial market encounters. Bush and her colleagues (2001) suggest such differences fuel the need for

adaptive selling techniques. As the population continues to become more diverse, students should be aware of these and other issues involved in communicating with diverse groups in retail settings.

Race-based Segmentation Strategies

Segmentation is discussed in marketing textbooks covering a broad range of topics, including consumer behavior, integrated marketing communication, marketing strategy and retail marketing. However, as highlighted in the prior section of this chapter, there is a negative side of segmentation that is often unaddressed. There are at least two potentially harmful effects of race-based segmentation practices. The first is that when marketers segment according to racial groups they make generalizations about the people within that group. This type of segmentation has been criticized as ignoring the intracultural variety within the nation's conglomerate Black population (Halter 2000). This argument can be applied to other minority groups as well as the gay and lesbian market. The second issue is who is excluded when racial segmentation is utilized. Does Ashley Stewart inadvertently promote an environment of exclusion towards Whites by targeting African Americans? Do Abercrombie and Fitch marketing policies reflect a deliberate attempt to reject African American consumers? How do individuals in non-targeted groups feel when they shop in stores they perceive to be engaging in race-based segmentation? How do store associates treat individuals in those non-targeted groups? While these questions may not be definitively answered, discussing these issues in class informs students of the potential ethical implications of race-based segmentation strategies.

Marketing and Retailing Researchers

The findings from this analysis suggest a program of future study for marketing and retailing researchers. The themes discovered provide one means of exploring future research questions. These research questions and the recommended methodology for each are discussed below.

Invisible/Criminal Treatment

Invisible/Criminal Treatment refers to the types of behavior used as a basis for the initial perception of discrimination. Specifically, *Invisible treatment* refers to the perception of being deliberately ignored solely because race and *Criminal treatment* describes a perception of suspiciousness directed by retail employees towards the participant due to her race. Perceptions of discrimination arose in the African American women interviewed as a function of those negative behaviors (and the attitudes assumed to drive those behaviors) in conjunction with participants' belief that racism exists. The following research questions arise: Is this behavior indicative of how African American males and other minority groups perceive discrimination? Do the racial attitudes of sales associates correspond to the perceived discriminatory behavior? How (if at all) do the stereotypes of minority group members influence sales associates' behaviors in retail settings?

This study focused on the discriminatory experiences of African American females. In order to ascertain if the findings extend to African American males and other minority groups, additional studies are needed. Existential phenomenological studies provide a means of ascertaining the content of the discriminatory experiences for these

groups. Employing this methodology would also allow for direct comparisons and contrasts to the current study.

There are three perspectives from which the phenomenon of perceived discrimination may be examined – the perspective of the person accused of engaging in the behavior (the actor), the perspective of the person who perceives the action as directed towards him/herself (the target), and the perspective of an observer who is not directly engaged in the encounter (3rd person). Each of these perspectives may be different even when describing the same event (Shelton and Richeson 2005). The findings in this study are based on the perspective of the target. It is impossible to ascertain if the perceived discriminatory behaviors described were actually indicative of racist attitudes on the part of the sales associates. Additional study is needed to understand if the perceived discriminatory behaviors indeed correspond to racist attitudes. An ethnographic study conducted in a retail store might provide the best means of exploring this topic. Specifically, the prejudice level of sales associates could be obtained as part of a mass survey on customer-related attitudes. The interactions of sales associates and customers of differing races would be observed by a 3rd party. The customers would then be interviewed about their interactions. This approach would provide some initial evidence of the accuracy or inaccuracy of perceived discriminatory behaviors.

Participants associated criminal treatment in retail stores with the stereotype of Blacks as criminal (Plant and Peruche 2005; Devine 1989). They believed that sales associates were aware of this stereotype, used the stereotype to make assumptions about the participant, and treated them accordingly. There is significant social psychological

research that indicates that stereotypes of minority groups are well-known and are sometimes activated when individuals are exposed to members of the stereotyped group (eg. Allport 1954; Tajfel 1969; Devine 1989; Lepore and Brown 1997). Future research should examine if stereotypes of minority groups are activated in retail settings and if so, how these stereotypes influence subsequent treatment of those groups. Experimental studies using sales simulations in retail environments provide one means of exploring these questions.

I knew

The theme of *I knew* refers to the participant becoming aware that she is being treated discriminatorily because of her race. This awareness appears to be the result of an internal dialogue or process through which the customer attributes the perceived negative treatment she is receiving to discrimination. In some cases this attribution arose subsequent to a period of testing during which the participant sought additional evidence. The concept of testing has not been explored in existing social psychological research. Under what conditions is a participant more or less likely to engage in this process? What individual differences influence this process? Future research should explore these questions through a series of experimental studies.

Have restraint - Show my butt

Have Restraint/ Show my butt describes emotions, cognitions and behaviors that emerged subsequent to internal attributions of discrimination. Additional research is needed to understand more fully each of these – emotions, cognitions, and behaviors – in perceived discriminatory encounters.

The primary emotion experienced during perceptions of discrimination was anger. Perceptions of discrimination also induced negative emotions such as sadness, shame, fear, and disappointment for the participants in this study. Disappointment is missing from popular classifications of consumer emotions (Richins 1997, Laros and Steenkamp 2005). This indicates a need for additional research on consumer emotions, particularly in negative situations. Qualitative methodologies, such as existential-phenomenology or grounded theory, would allow for these consumption-related emotions to emerge without restriction.

Cognitions involved in discriminatory encounters refer to a decision to *have restraint* or *show my butt*. *Show my butt* refers to combative behaviors exhibited with intensity. *Have restraint* refers to a more subdued approach. This decision appears to be associated with stereotypes involving race and gender. There is little research examining how individuals use same-group stereotypes in their evaluations of the self outside of academic threat situations (Sinclair et al. 2006). There is a need to explore the content of individual's self-stereotypes in various marketing contexts (including retail environments), how self-stereotypes are activated in marketing contexts, and how self-stereotypes influence behaviors once activated. A multi-method approach combining qualitative interviews or the use of written narratives and experimental studies is recommended to understand these issues.

Those actions employed in perceived discriminatory retail encounters were categorized as active responses and passive responses. Active responses were described as those responses that required interacting with someone else and included confrontation, formal complaints and broadcasting. Passive responses were those

responses – departure and boycotting – that did not mandate interaction with another person. It is unclear under what conditions individuals are likely to employ each of these responses. It is also unclear what individual personality traits influence response choice as well. Experimental studies manipulating conditions (ex. Presence of children) and examining individual traits (eg. Ethnic identification) are recommended as a means of examining these research questions.

Racism exists

Racism exists refers to a belief held by participants that facilitates perceptions of discrimination and has an impact on the entire experience of retail discrimination. This potential for discrimination influenced participants differently. Some participants developed an expectancy attitude, they expected to be treated negatively or suspiciously because *Racism Exists*. Other participants developed strategies to avoid or minimize discriminatory encounters in retail environments. A potential research question arises, are there ways that marketers can influence this belief?

There is a positive relationship between predictability and perceived discrimination. Predictability refers to the consumer's ability to accurately anticipate an event. If a consumer has reason to suspect that a retail encounter may be discriminatory, they are more likely to perceive any negative experience as confirmation of this discrimination. Knowledge of an actor's intent to discriminate plays a key role in subsequent judgments of prejudice and discrimination (Swim et al. 2003). Retailers may be able to influence predictability by publicly announcing their firm's commitment to ensuring equitable treatment for all of their customers. Such announcements may decrease the likelihood a target will predict discriminatory treatment at this particular

retailer and subsequently decrease perceptions of discrimination there. This research question can be examined through experimental studies.

Marketing and Retailing Practitioners

Few people would disagree that if discrimination in retail settings occurs, it is an example of a practice that is both socially irresponsible and harmful. This report accentuates the harmful effects of the mere perception of discrimination as well. It also suggests steps that marketers and retailers should implement in response. These steps are: 1) Know their customer base's demographics and their perceptions, motivations and interests; 2) Determine if and the extent to which perceptions of discrimination occur at their retail establishments; 3) Minimize perceptions of discrimination through training programs and a diverse sales force.

Knowing your customer

As the marketplace becomes increasingly more diverse, it becomes important for marketers to know and understand each customer group they serve. This includes knowing how groups differ in their perceptions, motivations and interests. This knowledge will equip managers to develop and maintaining successful buyer-seller relationships (Bush et al. 2001). Such knowledge may provide useful information to make appropriate and effective strategies to retail managers (Lee and Dubinsky 2003). The perception of discrimination is one example of a race-based perception that, as the analysis indicated, influenced African American women's attitudes and shopping behavior.

Ascertaining the extent of perceived discrimination

The participants in this study believed they were treated differently at retail stores solely because of their race. Subsequently, they engaged in various responsive behaviors. These behaviors were categorized as active responses (confrontation, formal complaints and broadcasting) and passive responses (departure and boycotting). When customers responded by using formal complaints, they were more likely to directly attribute the negative behavior they experienced to racism or discrimination. In other cases, though the customers internally attributed the experience to discrimination, a direct attribution was not made. Additionally, a formal complaint was the only response likely to be directed towards upper retail management. In cases where the perceived discrimination was confronted directly at the time of the experience, the confrontation often occurred solely with the sales associate perceived to be engaging in the negative behavior or another sales associate. Upper-level retail management may be unaware that their customers have had experiences perceived to be discriminatory. In participants' narratives, many of the perceived discriminatory experiences occurred at the same retailers. This suggests a need for retail management to assess whether their minority customers perceive themselves to be discriminated against at their stores and the frequency these experiences occur.

Customer feedback programs provide one way of assessing perceived discriminatory experiences. Customers can be encouraged to fill out a card or call a number to inform management about their shopping experience. This might reveal discriminatory experiences as well as other negative and positive experiences. There may be an additional benefit as well. Sales associates' customer orientation is dependent

upon top management's customer orientation (Beatty et al. 1996). Customer feedback programs may be viewed by sales staff as indicative of a customer orientation and may result in better service for customers overall.

Another way of examining the treatment of minority customers is through the use of mystery shoppers. Specifically, retailers can use paired testers differing only in race to ascertain how these individuals are treated in retail stores. Though this kind of testing has been used primarily for housing and apartment discrimination, it has also been used in retail markets as well. Legal scholar Ian Ayres and economist Peter Siegelman utilized paired-testing to examine gender and race discrimination in automobile sales (Ayres 1991, Ayres and Siegelman 1995, Ayres 1995). The studies, conducted in the Chicago area in 1990, found that dealers' initial and final offers were highest for Black males, followed by Black females, White females, and White males. In response to allegations of discrimination at The Children's Place, a national retailer of children's clothes, the Massachusetts Attorney General sent Black and White undercover "testers" to the stores and became convinced the allegations were valid. This resulted in a settlement with the Children's Place which required the retail chain to take 22 corrective steps, including setting aside \$100,000 to hire a consultant to review their policies with the goal of eliminating discriminatory practices.

Minimizing perceptions of discrimination

The perceived discriminatory experiences imply a need for training programs that emphasize the importance of empathy and adaptive selling behaviors. Marketing researcher Bush and her colleagues (2001) define empathy as "...the capacity to clearly project an interest in others and to obtain and reflect a reasonably clear and accurate

sense of another's thoughts, feelings and experiences.” (pg. 394). The analysis revealed that underlying the discriminatory experiences was a sentiment that participants were not being seen as human beings that existed and mattered solely because of race. Participants interpreted the actions (or inaction) of retail staff as an attempt to lessen them, to devalue them, or to put them in their place. If sales associates are trained to be empathic and actively attempt to show an interest in their customers of all racial backgrounds, allegations of discrimination may be minimized.

Adaptive selling has been defined as "altering sales behaviors during customer interactions based on perceived information about the nature of the selling situation" (Weitz, Sujaan and Sujaan 1986, pg. 175). Researchers have suggested a need for sales people to engage in adaptive selling when interacting with culturally diverse groups (Bush et al. 2001, Bush and Ingram 2001). For African American customers, the current research suggests these adaptive selling techniques should include sales associates actively seeking to convey that they do not harbor stereotypic views (Sinclair et al. 2005). The negative behaviors perceived to be discriminatory were being blatantly ignored by salespersons (invisible) and being subjected to hyper-surveillance (criminal). The participants noted that their initial perception of discrimination was sometimes subjected to a period of testing. During this time, participants sought additional information that their initial perception was correct before an internal attribution of discrimination was made. This period may provide an opportunity for sales associates who are aware of the phenomenon of perceived discrimination among African Americans and are vigilant to dispel this notion.

Public Policy Officials

Vulnerable consumers have been defined as those consumers who may be “susceptible to economic, physical, or psychological harm in, or as a result of, economic transactions because of characteristics that limit their ability to maximize their utility and well-being” (Smith and Cooper-Martin 1997, pg. 4). African Americans have been identified as a potentially vulnerable market (Smith and Cooper-Martin 1997, Pollay, Lee and Carter-Whitney 1992, Pollay 1993). This discussion has occurred primarily around marketers targeting minorities for harmful products such as cigarettes or alcohol. The premise of this argument is that slavery and legal segregation restricted African Americans from participating fully in the market place until recent decades. This produced an economic disparity manifested in lower incomes and less education for African Americans than their White counterparts. The labeling of a market as vulnerable based on race has understandably received some criticism (eg. Ringold 1995). The notion that race limits someone’s ability to make reasonable decisions has been criticized as a violation of the American notion of individualism (Bobo and Kluegel 1993). The current research project suggests, though the label of ‘vulnerable market’ is controversial, it may accurately describe African American women shopping in retail stores.

The perception of discrimination can be argued to limit the participants’ ability to maximize their utility and well-being in retail settings. The notion that they might be victims of discrimination appears to produce an emotional toll and participants sought to reduce this possibility by wearing their status or using a title. It also caused some participants to engage in self-deprivation by refusing to patronize stores they’d

previously enjoyed frequenting. There is additional research that suggests the perception of participation may be detrimental to the participants in ways even they are unaware of.

Racial profiling has been identified as “not only as a legal or policy concern, but also as a potential public health issue” (Bennett et al, 2004, pg. 972). The same argument can be made for perceptions of discrimination. The more women or African Americans perceive themselves to be victims of either gender or racial prejudice, the more they exhibit debilitating psychiatric and physical health symptoms (Branscome et al. 1999). In their study examining racial discrimination and the mental health of Blacks, psychologist Elizabeth Klonoff and her associates found that individuals who believed they had experienced discrimination were more likely to suffer from negative psychological symptoms such as stress and anxiety (1999). In their study, racial discrimination emerged as a powerful predictor of Blacks' psychiatric symptoms irrespective of the analysis conducted (Klonoff et al. 1999). Though participants did not explicitly refer to these systems during the interviews, the strategies used to prevent discrimination indicate that such perceptions are stressful. This suggests that public policy officials may need to consider examining if African Americans are a vulnerable market and if so, whether there is a need for legislation protecting this group in the marketplace.

Consumers

Social psychologists note, “... in order to understand the current racial problems in the United States, it is imperative to examine the attitudes, motivations and concerns that all individuals have” (Shelton and Richeson 2006, pg. 162). The analysis revealed that the perception of discrimination was facilitated through socialization and personal

experiences with discrimination. These appear to serve as background forces that influence the perception of discrimination. Additionally, the participants appear to be unaware that these forces may color their perception. Thus there may be a need to inform minority consumers of this influence.

This is somewhat of a politically incorrect topic and may be likened to blaming the victim. Nevertheless, the perception of discrimination arises through social interactions and it is important to ascertain how each individual ultimately contributes to this experience. This doesn't negate the accurateness of perceptions but does help explain why some individuals may be more likely or less likely to perceive discrimination in the same situations.

CONCLUSION

This study focused on one negative experience, the perception of discrimination, of African American women in retail environments. Though limited to one particular group, this discussion is very timely. Just recently, media powerhouse Oprah Winfrey gained national attention after she allegedly perceived herself to have been the victim of discrimination at the London luxury retailer Hermes. There have been million dollar verdicts awarded to individuals who have found themselves to be the victims of retail discrimination. Despite this national attention, marketplace discrimination in general has been largely ignored in the marketing literature. This study sought to begin to address this gap by understanding how perceptions of discrimination are experienced by African American women in retail stores.

The analysis revealed that the perception of discrimination is indeed a complex phenomenon. Specifically it is evidenced by the following themes: *Invisible/criminal treatment* describes the nature of the behavior by actors perceived to be engaging in discriminatory actions; *I knew* refers to an internal attribution of discrimination that may occur through a process of ‘testing’; *Have Restraint - Show my butt* describes emotions, cognitions and behaviors that emerged subsequent to internal attributions of discrimination; *Racism exists* refers to a belief held by participants that facilitates perceptions of discrimination and has an impact on the entire experience of discrimination. The ground themes of socialization and personal experience emerged as influential backdrop forces for these perceptions.

This study is the first step in a research program focused on helping marketers to understand the experience of minorities (African Americans, Hispanics, and Asian Americans) in the marketplace and the social consequences that arise as a result of marketplace diversity. It is hoped this knowledge will ultimately enable marketers to employ socially responsible marketing practices when communicating with these groups using the full array of marketing communications.

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Appendices

A. Tables

Table 1. Research on Judgments of Prejudice and Discrimination – Race¹⁰				
Study	Perspective	Measures	Primary Results	Category
Hong et al. 2004 - Study One	Actor	Bias measured by having participants identify positive, neutral and negative behaviors as characteristic of the given social groups. A social identity measure and an implicit theory measure also used.	Entity theorists, tended to attribute a larger percentage of negative behaviors to the outgroup. Incremental theorists attributed a smaller percentage of negative behaviors to the out-group when they held an inclusive social identity than when they held an exclusive social identity.	ethnicity
Major, Gramzow, McCoy, Levin, Schmader and Sidanius (2002) - Study Two	Target	Individual mobility; ethnic group identification - Importance to Identity subscale of the Collective Self-Esteem Scale; perceptions of discrimination measured with 4 items indicating reasons participants felt they were assigned to a lower-level role. Manipulated the ethnicity of the manager assigning the participant to a role.	Latino students who were rejected by a White manager were significantly less likely to attribute the rejection to discrimination the more they endorsed the ideology of individual mobility. Conversely, the more White participants endorsed the ideology of individual mobility, the more likely they were to attribute the rejection to discrimination.	ethnicity

¹⁰ Criteria for Inclusion: 1) Experimental condition requiring evaluation or judgments of out-groups - excluded studies in which prejudice was measured through scales such as the MRS, ATB, etc because these scales measure prejudice tendencies rather than prejudicial behavior in a particular context (Hong et al. 2004). 2) Social psychology journals published between 1995 and 2005. 3) Real social groups examined.

Table 1. Continued.				
Study	Perspective	Measures	Primary Results	Category
Devine, Monteith, Zuwerink, and Elliot (1991) - Study One	Actor	Prejudice level (Modern Racism Scale 1981); discrepancy measure - should/would judgments; affect measurements;	For low-prejudiced subjects, large discrepancies between how one should behave and how one would behave in certain inter-racial encounters result in negative affective consequences (i.e. guilt and self-criticism) directed towards the self.	Race
Eberhardt, Goff, Purdie and Davies (2004) - Study Five	Actor	Bias of police officer participants' measured by asking directly, "Who looks criminal?"	Police officers identified more Black faces as appearing to look criminal than White faces. The more stereotypical a Black face appeared, the more likely officers were to report the face looked criminal.	Race
Jordan, Spencer and Zanna (2005)	Actor	Implicit self-esteem measured using an IAT measure; explicit self-esteem measured; bias measured through indicating an appropriate disciplinary action for student offenders subsequent to receiving negative performance feedback on an intelligence test.	Among individuals with high explicit self-esteem under threat, those with relatively low implicit self-esteem recommended a more severe punishment for a Native, but not a White, student offender.	Race

Table 1. Continued.				
Study	Perspective	Measures	Primary Results	Category
Norton, Vandello and Darley (2004) - Study Five	Actor	Manipulated GPA , the number of AP classes for college applicants, the race of the applicant and accountability. Discrimination measured through the ranking of qualifications and admissions decisions respectively.	Participants who made decisions in private overwhelmingly selected Black candidates and inflated the value of qualifications that favored these candidates. Participants in the accountability condition were even more consistent in their inflation and demonstrated reluctance to use race in justifying these decisions.	Race
Norton, Vandello and Darley (2004) - Study Three	Actor	Manipulated GPA , the number of AP classes for college applicants and the race of the applicant. Discrimination measured through the admissions decision and the ranking of qualifications respectively.	White participants overwhelmingly selected Black candidates and justified this decision by inflating the importance of whichever qualification favored the Black candidate.	Race
Plant and Peruche (2005)	Actor	Bias measured through the number of incorrect decisions - decisions to shoot when targets were unarmed.	Officers were more likely to mistakenly shoot at an unarmed suspect when the suspect was Black than when the suspect was White. (Researchers note that after extensive exposure to the computer simulation officers were able to eliminate this bias).	Race

Table 1. Continued.				
Study	Perspective	Measures	Primary Results	Category
Johnson et al. 2003 - Study One	Observer	Measured perceptions of discrimination through 1 question asking "How racist was the White supervisor?" Bias expectation measured through responses on 3 questions in an initial assessment. Manipulated the degree of control the supervisor had over his actions.	Both Black and White participants made supervisor attributions that were fairly racist (the unconstrained condition). In the constrained condition, Black participants reported greater racist attributions than White participants. Both the general impact of participant bias and the racial divergence in the constrained condition were mediated by beliefs in White anti-Black bias.	Race
Johnson et al. 2003 - Study Two	Observer	Measured perceptions of discrimination through 1 question asking "How racist was the White supervisor?" Bias expectation measured through responses on 3 questions in an initial assessment. Manipulated the supervisor's response to a verbal order to reprimand the employee.	Black participants made more racist attributions than did White participants. However, in the maximal cue condition, racist attribution did not vary as a function of perceiver race. Differences in the minimal cue condition were mediated by White anti-Black beliefs, reducing the impact of race to nonsignificance.	Race

Table 1. Continued.				
Study	Perspective	Measures	Primary Results	Category
Johnson et al. 2003 - Study Three	Observer	Measured perceptions of bias through questions examining whether the supervisor could have done more to protest the verbal reprimand order. Bias expectation measured through responses on 3 questions subsequent to the experiment. Manipulated the supervisor's response to a verbal order to reprimand the employee and the race of the supervisor.	For the Black supervisor-White subordinate condition, perceptions did not vary as a function of participant race. For the White supervisor-Black subordinate condition, Black participants reported that the supervisor should have done more to a greater extent than White participants. In the minimal cue condition, Black participants were less certain than White participants that the supervisor's behavior represented his true feelings.	Race
Khan and Lambert (2001)	Observer	Prejudice Level (Modern Racism Scale - McConahay 1986); Need for Cognition (Cacioppo and Petty 1982); Bias measured through ratings of the quality of the actor's decisions, overall impressions of the actor, and the perceived frequency of such behaviors. Participants also indicated the extent to which he/she thought the actor was prejudiced against Blacks.	Among anti-Black participants, higher levels of need for cognition were associated with a greater tendency to perceive the actor as rational and less prejudice toward Blacks. Need for cognition played no role in the judgments rendered by pro-Black participants.	Race

Table 1. Continued.				
Study	Perspective	Measures	Primary Results	Category
Branscombe, Schmitt and Harvey (1999)	Target	Attributions to prejudice across a variety of life situations (future negative outcomes); past experiences with racial discrimination; minority group identification; personal well-being collective well-being.	Black participants attributed event outcomes to racial prejudice in the majority of situations. Men and women did not differ significantly in attributions of prejudice.	Race
Operario and Fiske (2001) - Study Two	Target	Ethnic identity; perceptions of prejudice measured through trait ratings of the partner, evaluations of the partner, and attributions for the partner's behavior; manipulated prejudice ambiguity	High ethnic-identifiers expressed more suspicion about the prejudiced confederate. Low identifiers expressed suspicion about the confederate only when prejudice was more obvious. High identifiers were most reactive to the subtle prejudice manipulation.	Race
Ruggiero and Taylor (1997) - Study Two	Target	Perceptions of discrimination measured by indicating the extent to which factors such as discrimination played in the grade received; measured perceptions of future career success; measured trait esteem measured, state self-esteem; perceived control measured with eight items. Manipulated probability of discrimination.	Asians exhibited a greater tendency to minimize discrimination, with significantly lower mean attributions to discrimination in comparison with Black participants. Attributing negative feedback to discrimination was positively correlated with performance state self-esteem, but negatively correlated with social state self-esteem.	Race

Table 1. Continued.				
Study	Perspective	Measures	Primary Results	Category
Stangor, Swim, Van Allen and Sechrist (2002)	Target	Measured attributions to discrimination by having participants indicate the extent to which his/her failing grade was caused by 'bias', 'ability and effort', 'discrimination' and the quality of his/her answers. Manipulated public/private disclosure of answers.	In private, women and African Americans regarded discrimination as a more likely cause of a failing grade than ability or effort in comparison with men and European Americans respectively. When an individual from another social category was present, both women and African Americans significantly reduced their reporting of discrimination.	race & gender

Table 2. Research on Judgments of Prejudice and Discrimination - Gender¹¹				
Study	Perspective	Measures	Primary Results	Category
Norton, Vandello and Darley (2004) - Study One	Actor	Manipulated education and experience of male and female candidates. Discrimination measured through the ranking of candidates and justification for these decisions.	Male participants selected the male candidate the majority of the time even when he was less educated. Participants justified such decisions by altering the relative importance of qualifications. Few participants cited gender as playing a role in their decision in any of the conditions.	Gender
Norton, Vandello and Darley (2004) - Study Two	Actor	Manipulated education of male and female candidates. Discrimination measured through hiring decision between two candidates and likelihood of reviewing more resumes.	Male participants selected the more educated candidate, regardless of whether that candidate was male or female. Participants in the female-educated condition expressed a stronger desire to seek more resumes than participants in the male-educated condition (although not statistically significant $p = .06$)	Gender

¹¹ Criteria for Inclusion: 1) Experimental condition requiring evaluation or judgments of out-groups - excluded studies in which prejudice was measured through scales such as the MRS, ATB, etc because these scales measure prejudice tendencies rather than prejudicial behavior in a particular context (Hong et al. 2004). 2) Social psychology journals published between 1995 and 2005. 3) Real social groups examined.

Table 2. Continued.				
Study	Perspective	Measures	Primary Results	Category
Swim, Sechrist, Scott, Campbell and Stangor (2003) - Study One	Observer	Judgments of prejudice and prejudicial behavior; manipulated intent to harm	Greater intent resulted in greater perceptions of prejudice. Participants were less likely to judge the actor than the actor's behavior as prejudiced when there was no intent and when there was medium intent. Men were less likely to judge the actor and actor's behavior as prejudiced than women.	gender
Swim, Sechrist, Scott, Campbell and Stangor (2003) - Study Three	Observer	Judgments of the actor and actor's behavior, perceived intent, perceived harm; manipulated intent and consequences (harm).	Women were less likely to judge the actor as prejudiced than actor's behavior as discriminatory when they were told that the actor did not intend to be prejudiced and when they were given no information about intent but did not judge the actor and actor's behavior differentially when there was high intent.	gender

Table 2. Continued.				
Study	Perspective	Measures	Primary Results	Category
Swim, Sechrist, Scott, Campbell and Stangor (2003) - Study Two	Observer	Judgments of prejudice and prejudicial behavior; manipulated information about the consequences of the actor's behavior for the target(s) of the actor's behavior.	Greater harm resulted in greater judgments of prejudice. Participants were more cautious in labeling the actor as prejudiced than in labeling the actor's behavior as prejudiced. Men were less likely to form a judgment of prejudice than women. The actor's behavior mediated the relationship between information about harm and judgments about the actor.	gender
Kaiser and Miller (2001)	Target	Participants' conformity with gender stereotypes and overall impressions measured in part by essay responses; attributions to prejudice measured using Ruggiero and Taylor's self-report measures (1997). Manipulated the likelihood that the evaluator was biased.	Attributions to discrimination were virtually identical in the certain (100 %) and possible (50 %) prejudice condition, both significantly different from the 0 % chance of prejudice condition. Failure to attribute poor performance to discrimination was not significantly related to attributions to answer quality.	gender

Table 2. Continued.				
Study	Perspective	Measures	Primary Results	Category
Major, Gramzow, McCoy, Levin, Schmader and Sidanius (2002) - Study Three	Target	Individual mobility; gender identification; perceptions of discrimination measured by asking participants the extent to which they believed their role assignment was due to gender discrimination; qualifications and competency of the manager.	Women who were rejected by a man were significantly less likely to attribute the rejection to discrimination the more they endorsed the ideology of individual mobility. Men who were rejected by a woman were more likely to attribute the rejection to discrimination the more they endorsed the ideology of individual mobility.	gender
Ruggiero, Steele, Hwang and Marx (2000) - Study One	Target	Perceptions of discrimination measured by indicating the extent to which factors such as discrimination played in the grade received; measured perceptions of future career success. Manipulated probability for discrimination (50/50 or none) and the grade received by other ingroup and outgroup testers (A or D).	In the ambiguous condition, women were more likely to blame their failing test grade on discrimination when they compared themselves to another woman who failed in comparison to the other in-group conditions. Women were more likely to blame their failure on discrimination when compared to a man who passed than compared to the other out-group conditions	gender

Table 2. Continued.				
Study	Perspective	Measures	Primary Results	Category
Ruggiero and Taylor (1997) - Study One	Target	Perceptions of discrimination measured by indicating the extent to which factors such as discrimination played in the grade received; measured perceptions of future career success; trait esteem and state self-esteem measured. Manipulated probability of discrimination (100 %, 75 %, 50 %, 25 % or 0 %).	The 100 % probability for discrimination condition was the only condition for which the mean attribution to discrimination was significantly greater than the mean attribution to the quality of answers. The more women attributed their failure to discrimination, the more likely they were to experience lower self-esteem in the social domain (social state self-esteem).	gender
Ruggiero and Taylor (1995)	Target	Perceptions of discrimination measured by indicating the extent to which factors such as discrimination played in the grade received; measured perceptions of future career success. Manipulated probability of discrimination (100 %, 75 %, 50 %, 25 % or 0 %) and perception of control.	Mean attributions to discrimination were significantly lower in the ambiguous conditions as compared with the 100 % condition. Mean attributions to quality of answers in each of the ambiguous conditions were significantly higher than those in the 100 % condition.	gender

Table 2. Continued.				
Study	Perspective	Measures	Primary Results	Category
Sechrist, Swim and Stangor (2004) - Study One	Target and Observer	Measured desire for control and self esteem. Attributions to ability and discrimination.	Participants were more willing to attribute negative feedback to discrimination in public conditions as an observer rather than as the target of the feedback. Participants high in desire for control were more likely to attribute failure to discrimination and less likely to attribute failure to ability in comparison to participants low in desire for control.	gender
Sechrist, Swim and Stangor (2004) - Study Two	Target and Observer	Mood questionnaire; attributions to ability and discrimination; manipulated control deprivation	Participants in the high-control condition were more likely to attribute failure to discrimination than ability, regardless of whether they were rating the self or a similar other. Individuals in the self-no-control deprivation condition were more likely to indicate they were less creative and that their failure was due to an internal source.	gender

Table 2. Continued.				
Study	Perspective	Measures	Primary Results	Category
Swim, Sechrist, Scott, Campbell and Stangor (2003) - Study Four	Target and Observer	Experience of negative consequences in the study, judgments of prejudice, judgments of intent to discriminate	Participants tended to be more likely to judge the behavior as discriminatory than the actor as prejudiced in both the no-harm and harm-present conditions. Female targets and female observers both perceived more harm than male observers. For female targets, greater harm resulted in higher judgments of discrimination and prejudice. In the no- harm condition the female targets' judgments revealed the lowest ratings of prejudice and discrimination and male observers' revealed the highest.	gender

Table 3. Definitions of Stereotypes (Schneider 2004 pg. 16-17)

Source	Definition
Katz & Braly, 1935, p. 18	“a fixed impression which conforms very little to the facts it pretends to represent and results from our defining first and observing second”
Edwards, 1940, pp. 357-358	“A stereotype is a stimulus which arouses standardized preconceptions which are influential in determining one’s response to the stimulus”
Vinacke, 1957, p. 230	“a collection of trait-names upon which a large percentage of people agree as appropriate for describing some class of individuals”
Secord & Backman, 1964, p. 66	“Stereotyping has three characteristics: the categorization of persons, a consensus on attributed traits, and a discrepancy between attributed traits and actual traits”
Harding et al., 1969, p. 4	“a belief that is simple, inadequately grounded, or at least partially inaccurate, and held with considerable assurance by many people”
Brigham, 1971, p. 29	“An ethnic stereotype is a generalization made about an ethnic group concerning a trait attribution, which is considered to be unjustified by an observer”
Mackie, 1973, pg. 435	“A stereotype refers to those folk beliefs about the attributes characterizing a social category on which there is substantial agreement”
Ashmore & DelBoca, 1979, p. 222	“A structured set of beliefs about the personal attributes of a group of people”
McCauley, Stitt, & Segal, 1980, p. 197	“those generalizations about a class of people that distinguish that class from others”
Stephan, 1985, p. 600	“sets of traits attributed to social groups”
Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986, p. 81	“a collection of associations that link a target group to a set of descriptive characteristic”
Anderson, Klatzky, & Murray, 1990, p. 192	“highly organized social categories that have properties of cognitive schemata”
Jones, 1997, p. 170	“a positive or negative set of beliefs held by an individual about the characteristics of a group of people. It varies in its accuracy, the extent to which it captures the degree to which the stereotyped group members possess these traits, and the extent to which the set of beliefs is shared by others”

Table 4. Existential-Phenomenological Research in Marketing

Authors (Year)	Philosophical Approach Explicitly Stated	Sampling	Interviews	Analysis and End Product
Stern, Thompson and Arnould (1998)	No	One participant	Phenomenological Interviews	Narrative analysis. Binary themes and a consumption story.
Baker, Stephens and Hill (2001)	Existential- phenomenology	Snowball sampling. Twenty one participants	Semi-structured in- depth interviews.	Hermeneutic analysis. Reflective journal used. Themes identified.
Baker, Stephens and Hill (2002)	No	Twenty-one participants.	Semi-structured in- depth interviews.	Multi-state analysis. Reflective journal used. Themes and categories identified.
Cotte, Ratneshwar and Mick (2004)	Phenomenology	Twenty-two participants.	Interviews conducted in two stages.	Emic analysis within transcripts and etic analysis across transcripts. Symbolic metaphors identified.
Kaufman- Scarborough and Cohen (2004)	Existential- phenomenology	2 samples – twelve professionals who treat ADD and 62 adults with ADD	Loosely structured interview with closed- ended and open-ended questions.	Tabulation of frequencies for closed-ended questions. Coding of open- ended questions with tabulation of frequencies. Categories were predetermined. Conceptual ordering analysis employed resulting in the identification of themes.

Table 4. Continued.

Authors (Year)	Philosophical Approach Explicitly Stated	Sampling	Interviews	Analysis and End Product
Thompson and Arsel (2004)	No	Purposeful sampling – 35 participants	Phenomenological interviews.	Hermeneutic analysis. Structural elements described.
Askegaard, Arnould and Kjeldgaard (2005)	No	Self-selected. 20 participants.	Semi-structured guide employed in interviews.	Multi-cultural interpretive team. NUD*IST software used in analysis. Triangulation across researchers. Themes, a classification scheme and a process model presented.
Henry (2005)	No	23 participants. Snowball sampling.	Semi-structured interview guide beginning with grand tour questions.	Hermeneutic analysis. Themes identified.

Table 5. Twelve Aspects of Qualitative Interviews (Kvale 1983)

Number	Aspect
1	It is centered on the interviewee's life world.
2	It seeks to understand the meaning of phenomena in his life-world.
3	It is qualitative.
4	It is descriptive.
5	It is specific.
6	It is presuppositionless.
7	It is focused on certain themes.
8	It is open for ambiguities.
9	It is open for changes.
10	It depends upon the sensitivity of the interviewer.
11	It takes place in an interpersonal interaction.
12	It may be a positive experience.

Table 6. Description of Participants					
Participant	Age Range	Birth State	Marital Status	Profession	Number of Experiences Described
One	45-50	MS	Married	Administrator	5
Two	55-60	CT	Married	Human Resources Administrator	3
Three	30-35	TN	Married	Bank Manager	3
Four	50-55	SC	Married	Human Resources Administrator	6
Five	55-60	NJ	Married	Professor	1
Six	50-55	MS	Married	Professor	1
Seven	40-45	n/a	Single	Professor	3
Eight	20-25	TN	Married	clerical/ administrative	2
Nine	50-55	TN	Single	Administrator	4
Ten	50-55	GA	Married	Bank Manager	2
Eleven	25-30	MO	Married	Housewife	2
Twelve	20-25	MS	Single	College Student	2
Thirteen	30-35	n/a	Married	Administrator	2
Fourteen	50-55	AL	Married	Sales associate	2
Fifteen	30-35	MS	Single	Engineer	3
Sixteen	20-25	VA	Married	Graduate Student	3

B. Transcripts

INTERVIEW ONE

Participant: AA Female

Late 40s

Married with two children.

Native of Mississippi, lived in Knoxville for 20 years.

Executive with a non-profit agency for 12 years.

I: Today is Tuesday February 7 and I'm with Mrs. *****. The study that I am conducting has to do with perceptions of discrimination in retail settings. I'm interested in your experience in retail settings, but before we get into your unique experiences, tell me a little bit about yourself so that I understand more your experiences of any sort. Tell me anything about you that you think I need to know.

R: Okay, um I'm a native of Mississippi originally,

I: So am I.

R: I've been in Knoxville for about 20 years, I moved here to attend Grad school at the University of Tennessee, I caught the social urge. I'm married; I have two daughters, 14 and 10. I have, my current employee is the Salvation Army, and I've been with them almost 12 years. Um, I, I won't say I'm a big shopper, I shop for specific things and I shop in specific stores. I'm not one that just goes and walks the Malls and window shop. I specifically know what I'm looking for, I have an idea before. I tend to find stores that I remain loyal to, if they treat me right.

I: We'll talk more about that a little bit later. Tell me about um, where in Mississippi are you from?

R: Um, 17 miles north of Jackson, Vaiden off I-54

I: I know where Vaiden is, I'm from Jackson. It's actually at that exit the gas station that's there now, that has a Baskin Robbins with it.

R: Exactly, that's the only one that has that.

I: Tell me about growing up in Mississippi.

R: Uh, I was the youngest of 11 children, um

I: Wow.

- R: I went to public schools in Mississippi, went to under Grad at Alcorn State, um.
- I: My mother went to Alcorn.
- R: Oh really. Oh, what year?
- I: Oh gosh, I don't know she died when I was three months old, so.
- R: Oh, I'm sorry. I come from a large family but a close knit family. Um, my parents, especially my mother, she really encouraged family unity, and you know, worked hard, you know, to ensure that. My mother was a um, was um civil rights worker,
- I: Wow,
- R: She was the only female in our county which was Kale County to participate in the civil rights movement. Always been a woman who fought for what she believed in and instilled in her children. She taught us to stand up for ourselves, so um and then as I look back on what she went through, you know, her being beaten, you know, jailed and all of that, you know that makes me, you know strong through my belief in terms of you can't allow people to mistreat you. That's just one of my, you know, as I believe that when you experience negative behavior in regard to discrimination you should speak up and say something. You should take it to the appropriate people.
- I: Can you recall an incident when you were growing up seeing situations like that where she handled it in a certain way or,
- R: Uh, yes I guess the most memorable one was we were in um school and because there were so many of us, the last three of us was sent there, so we were all a grade apart and even though the city was, the town was probably 95% black
- I: How much?
- R: 95. um the percentage in school was probably 98% black, the administration was white and um they had some beliefs that you know, they had various expectations of what we should do, and the rules they came up with was not um, was not realistic and most people were afraid to challenge the rules or to break the rules. I remember one time; they made this rule that you know that kids could not wear hats inside the building. Which might not be like an unreasonable rule but its hard when it feels like 20 degrees outside, then that might be unreasonable. We're not talking in terms of the classroom; we're talking about in the hallways. So my mother's position was you all can't wear them in the classroom, regardless of how cold it is, but in the hallway I want you to keep them on because I'm not gonna be taking you to the doctor. So she told us, do not take your hats off. So we

went, you know, to school and here comes this guy, this teacher who really wanted to get people suspended and all that, he talked about it. He approached one of my sisters, the oldest of the three of us and he said you need to pull your hat off. She said, I can't do that cause my mom told me I could not do it. He said, well you're gonna have to go to the office. So he goes around the corner, he finds me, cause I guess he figured I won't take it off. And he told me the same thing and I said the same thing to him. So he told us to go to the Principal. We get in the office and the Principal is saying, well now Sylvia even though it's cold, you are going to have to take the hats off, these are the rules. We're saying our mom said we can't take the hats off. He said well, I'm gonna have to suspend you and I'll take you home. And in those days, they would actually escort you home. So he put us in the car and we all knew that was in for a treat, so we got home and all, my mother was there, so he sent us into the kitchen. We just sort of lagged because we knew we were going back to school in a few minutes, we wouldn't be staying. And they had their conversation and I don't know what all was said, but we knew we wouldn't be staying and he took us right back to school.

I: Wow.

R: She took us right back to school. She had to go before the school board because she disagreed with the policy and she was saying, you know. My mother was a very vocal woman and I remember her getting up at the school board meeting and she said some of these rules that you all have are ridiculous, you know, the rules that you need to have, and there's not many of them, but when I see stuff in regards to uh in the rule book, girls must wear bras, girls must, and she's saying no-one needs to tell me to tell my child to wear a bra and she said those things are just ridiculous, and she said the only people I've ever seen without a bra is these little white girls. We knew we were staying, there was no way we were going to be out of school. There was no way that our mother was going to allow us to stay out of school, but I would say, she was not afraid to challenge authority and she would always, if we were wrong, she would be the first one, you know she's gonna be the first one leading the charge that you need to get adequate punishment, but if she truly believed in something, she would fight it to the end.

I: I definitely understand that because of being from Mississippi myself and having my grandmother from Mississippi. Do you recall any instances where you were out shopping or anything at a younger age where something might have happened that you all felt was discriminatory?

R: Honestly, I can't I think back when I was growing up, stores were pretty defined at that time as far as, you know, black, white in regards to, you know, what was acceptable. And specifically if we were shopping we would not shop alone, we were with our mom. Our mom was a very known person in the community and so, I think that deterred a lot of it.

- I: Okay.
- R: I should say that you know people talk about Mississippi you know, and it's very bad you know, they think of civil rights and most people term this city as being a little behind in the times, but I would say I probably have not experience direct discrimination in the Mall.
- I: Okay...
- R: I would say that, yeah. I did not experience that growing up.
- I: Oh wow, okay. Well let's start there. Talking about retail settings, tell me about an experience that stands out in your mind.
- R: Um I think one that happened, it's been years ago, probably 10 plus years it was in a Discount Retailer A and um, I went in and I was trying, I think I was going in for work, something to do with my job but I needed to, I needed some film, I think it was those Polaroid films, I didn't really know what I looking for. So I ran down the street and I went in and I couldn't figure out which type film went with the camera. So I went to customer service and requested, cause there was nobody in there at the time to help me. So the lady paged someone, well when I went to step up to the counter to wait, somebody came up, as I was waiting another lady came up, a white female who was standing at one side of me, she came up after me. Well eventually this lady comes over, she comes up to the counter and she says um, she started waiting on the white person who came up after I did. And the lady looked at me like, you know your place. That's what, you know, she knew she was like, you know. So when she finished with the lady she walked over to me. And I said, you do know that I was first. "oh, I didn't know I didn't know." I said you didn't ask either. I said, you walked up and there were two people standing at the counter you didn't ask which one arrived first. I was the one who had them page for you, this lady came up right before you got here. She wasn't even on line, but you went straight to her and I said, well I want to speak to a Manager and she told me she was the manager and I said, well you know, that's sad because if you don't see the wrong in this. You know, that just sticks out, you know, she just sees, usually when you see two people at a counter and you don't know which one, you say which one was here first. She came and she went immediately to that one, you know and that just stuck in my mind. She ran right to her as if I didn't exist. You know and then she said she was the manager and I just thought it was sad because that told me that, you know if the manager is using such behavior.
- I: I'm interested how that flowed back at the time, I know that was 10 plus years ago, but let's go back 10 years when you were there in the situation. Can you

recall at what point do you remember thinking this is just blatant discrimination? Like when, at what point if you remember, did that thought cross your mind?

R: Well I think when she came out and the fact that we were standing so close but she went, you know it wasn't a case where one was down at the other end and she didn't see both of us there. I felt at that point she made a deliberate choice to wait on the Caucasian. And I said, you know that's when I felt, this is discriminatory she chooses to wait on her; she is choosing to wait on her.

I: Can you remember what you were feeling at that time, after this?

R: Anger. Anger, you know. At first shock like, I can't believe she, you know, that she just bypassed me. Then it finally went to anger, you know.

I: Was there anybody with you at that time or where you by yourself?

R: No, I was by myself.

I: Have you told anybody else about that experience prior to this?

R: Oh yes, I've told several people about that experience. I've shared it with people I knew, yeah I've shared it with a lot of people.

I: Looking back, you said that you asked to speak to a manager and she said that she was the manager. Did you try to carry your complaint any further than that?

R: No, not that case, I didn't. I had planned to and then got busy and I just choose not to use the store any more.

I: How long did that decision last, you decided not to visit the store, so does that mean you have never been to Discount Retailer A since then?

R: Um, I have, I um met a person that worked at, um that was also a manager, in management at Discount Retailer A at another location and I was sharing with them that experience and they had told me that the person I described was no longer there. So I have gone in there probably in the last, I probably go in there once a year around Christmas, work related because of the account that they have there. But not personally, I don't use it.

I: Is that because of that experience 10 years ago still affects your purchase behavior today.

R: Um, hum, I think so.

- I: Um, looking back now, is there anything else that stands out in that experience that maybe not, that didn't seem important at the time but looking back it resonates with you, either how you felt or even being passed over at the time?
- R: Um, I can't think of anything, I can't think of anything.
- I: Okay, tell me about another experience you might have had.
- R: I had quite a few of them,
- I: Oh wonderful, well not wonderful for you, but wonderful for me and my research.
- R: I have a um, do you want stores names or,
- I: Yes,
- R: Okay.
- I: I want as much detail as you can provide.
- R: Okay. Anybody who knows me, knows that I'm a very faithful shopper to the Department Store A store. My husband says you go in there they know your first name. Um places that you know when everybody's calling hey Mrs ** that puts a scare into him, he wonders how much money I spend in Department Store A. I would say that probably 75% of my shopping, clothing shopping that we do in my home come for Department Store A stores and about, I wanna say it's been in the last year or so, I went in there one Saturday. Normally when I go in there, I'm coming from work and or you know, I tend to probably have a suit on or more of business attire. Well this particular Saturday morning I needed to run and get a gift so I was not dressed appropriately. I had on some sweat pants, hat on my head and I went to Department Store A to purchase a gift and because, at the department where I get all the free gift wrap and all that. So I walked to the customer service, most people there know me, but when they selected my gift wrap the lady asked me, she started to tell me how much it would cost, and I said no I'm platinum and she didn't know me and I've never seen her before. And she said, okay. So she picked up the wrap, you know, she didn't question me about whether I was platinum or not, she just went and picked up, well I went um to um, do something else and came back. The gift they had wrapped, they had just put on little plastic bow and like that I wanted a ribbon, so I said, oh no, no, I don't want that plastic bow or the ribbon. Well this lady now, I've known her since she started working there, she had come over and was helping the girl wrap the gift, so it was to her I said, oh I don't want the ribbon. Well, she said well you know, that's what comes with the gift wrap on platinum. And at that point she starts taking the wrap off and then she said, can I um, I need to see your card. Now the gift was already wrapped. So I pulled my card out and I said, do you need to see

my ID too? But when she looked at the card, she started saying, oh my god, cause I had all my hair out, a hat on my head and all that. So she um so she got so and the interesting part about everything was the ladies that were over at customer service, they had been looking at this situation, why would they use that information there. Because the way the questions that she was asking me you know whether or not, in terms of I had to show proof, I had to proof that I was platinum. Then the young lady who didn't know me, when I said to her earlier, you know I'm a platinum, she didn't question, she didn't challenge she just wrapped the gift.

I: Okay so this is another sales person.

R: This is another lady,

I: Okay.

R: And so there is this lady who's known me for years, who has waited on me, she always had an attitude, she's never been the best customer service person, but she's waited on me numerous times in the past, knew that I was platinum but did not recognize me because of my attire and my appearance that day. So when I gave her the card I saw her expression change.

I: She did recognize you then.

R: So I said to her, I guess to get good service I need to make sure I'm in my business attire and look better when I come in her. And she knew that wasn't gonna be the end of it. So, I called up the manager the next day, at the time I didn't know that the manager was critically ill, so the assistant manager called me back. And so I explained to her the situation and so, she told me that she was going to investigate it and get back to me. Well I went in there a couple days later to get another gift wrapped, same woman at the counter. Of course she didn't quiz me about my status but she wasn't thrilled either.

I: She was the one that handled the transaction.

R: Actually no, but she wasn't that thrilled either. And the lady that called me told me that she had talked to her and, well I told her, I said you know if she really felt she was wrong she would have sent an apology to me when I went back in there, but I told her I said it was racially motivated, oh, also I found the *****was racial too and, I'd like to put that in writing I told them that I did not like the treatment, that if a person walks in there and they were not in business attire looking a certain way, um that says to me you're not gonna get good treatment. So the manager pleaded with me not to take my services to other places and I said well as long as she understands she's not to wait on me or come near me because I don't want to give, cause most of them are on commission, and

I said I didn't want her getting any benefits from my services. You know, so I feel, I know they moved her to customer service that was out there. But I've had some experience in Department Store A um I had another incident that happened and this was before I knew that I actually got free gift wrap. I had platinum for a couple of years before I knew what the benefits were, so I started taking advantage of them. But Department Store A has this thing that if you buy a baby gift you get it wrapped. So I had bought these gifts at several, well I think the clothing sale was on the 18th so the woman tells me that it would have to be a charge, so I said well why would it have to be a charge, I understand if you had a baby gift, well it's only up to a certain amount. I said, did you all change the rules or anything, she said well that's always. And I said no, that's not always been the case, so she spoke with somebody and somebody told her that I was right. Well I guess because she was wrong that she didn't want to acknowledge it, she was like, she just thought I had 5 different gifts that I needed to have wrapped. You know, I told her which wrap that I wanted it in. She didn't ask me, would I want name tagging, I stood there and watched her. She wrapped all those gifts, she didn't label them or anything for me to know, usually what they do is, you know they'll say what is in the gift, pink outfit is in here, so you'd know which outfit was which. So when she finished, I said to her, so which one is which? And she said, I don't know, and I said, well how am I supposed to know too, you just wrapped these gifts, and she said I don't know. I said I think we need to have a manager come by here to ask. Well the manager comes by and I explained to him what had happened and he said unwrap all of them and re-label them. She was literally in tears, she was literally in tears. I was not feeling sorry for her because she was wrong at the time. And the thing is, I felt that you know a lot of things are not always racist type of things, but I observe a lot and see how people are treated. The fact that I challenged her on the information, I knew that had upset her. The fact that a black woman was challenging her on what she was supposed to do, so I'm gonna throw it together. And she assumed that I was going to accept it and when she realized that was not going to be the case, that I was not going to accept, um I was not going to accept this.

I: Were you happy with the way the manager resolved it at that time?

R: Yes I was.

I: Um Let me back up a minute to the previous incident that you talked about, you said that there were other sales people that were looking around noticing would you say specifically that they noticed that it was a racially charged act?

R: I only felt that with other customers. You can tell the expression on their face they were looking at me like, why is she giving you this distance, but even the lady who initially waited on me who actually took the order, I had not met her before but you could see her reaction saying, why is she planning to show all of this near you, like I explained to the manager, I said if there was an issue of

whether or not I was a platinum, that should have been established up front. If she had asked me up front before they even wrapped the gift, but what if I wasn't a platinum, she had given me the gift, only when I said I wanted the bow changed that it became an issue, it wasn't that I was platinum or not and that's when I knew that, you know and then she wanted to ask to see the ID and see the platinum card to make sure that I was indeed a platinum.

I: Now the more recent experience that you were telling me about, what were your feelings during that experience? You said during the first exchange you were angry, I don't feel that same anger in the second story that you told me about, what do you think you were feeling at that time?

R: I think I was feeling, you know it was in some situations I was thinking it was sad, that you know that you really feel that sometimes people shopping or based on what they look and all that and to me it was like confirmation because, I'm thinking I've been a customer here since the day they opened. Here is a woman who has waited on me numerous times, you know as I told that manager I could tell you when she started working here. She started out in housewares, I know enough about her history, surely she knows me. But because this was the first time she seen me with a hat on my head a tee shirt on not looking, and out of business attire I was treated differently.

I: Do you think about that response to your shopping behavior at all, do you think about that when you go out to shop now? About how you're dressed, especially when you go into stores that are an upper niche like Department Store A? Is that something you consciously think about before you go out?

R: Um hum. And I guess. Let me back up, I'm gonna wear what I'm gonna wear, but if I'm not, If I'm not in a certain attire and I go into a store that's more on the upper end, I am observant and curious as to whether or not, whether they are going to treat you any differently. Also when I have, you know when I go into stores they try to determine whether or not you can afford what you are looking at.

I: Tell me about that, what stores have you gone in and felt that, that was happening?

R: Um, I was in Department Store A just a couple of weeks ago and um, I was in there late one night to get a gift and I bought a gift there too.

I: I would say you buy lots of gifts.

R: I do, I buy my employees gifts so, I buy a lot of employee gifts and um, I went in there it must have been a Monday, see he left on a Tuesday it must have been Thursday I went in there and I was over and I was looking at um, stuff over in the

Men's department and so, the lady did ask me if I wanted to open a charge account, I said no, she would figure out that I already have one and so when I went to pay of course I gave her the card and she saw that I had a platinum and she wanted to know what did I do, oh what kind of work do you do? You know there was no reason for her to ask, you know but she was young and sometimes I just ignore stuff based on you know, but she was trying to determine how was I able, how had gotten to this level and what did I do.

- I: So you said, um because we are talking about one of the upper end kind of stores, what makes you think that this, the differential treatment that you experienced when you, as you put it weren't dressed, when you said that you were not dressed appropriately when you experienced that treatment before. What makes you think that the treatment that you experienced was more because of your ethnicity than because of the way that you were dressed, and that anyone regardless of race that had been dressed in that kind of way would it have been the same.
- R: Well I think, I don't think that's necessarily true, I think a Caucasian that looked that way and just because of the fact that they are Caucasian they won't be challenged, they won't be challenged. And um, in my field of work I remember this lady who was in one of our programs and she had finally eventually gotten caught, you know in terms of, she was a thief and she talked about the fact that she'd go into stores and no-one ever looked at her because she was white, no-one ever looked at her because she was white and she was busy filling her purse and I know that happens and um. On the flip side of that sometimes, there's a black sales person in Department Store A that I don't allow her to wait on me because I think she tries to think things that if you are black you can't afford it so she's gonna try to seek out the white person and,
- I: What gives you that impression?
- R: Um, she's been there about two years, might be three. I went to her register one day and I went up to her she was waiting on this other customer I walk up and I had these items and I also had some coupons that they were using. Well she challenged me as to how many coupons I could use and they were the ones for the items, it says that clearly on the things and she made me feel like I was doing something wrong, so I finally said to her. I tell you what, let me take my stuff and go to somebody where I'm not gonna be questioned,
- I: Where you're not gonna be?
- R: Not gonna be questioned about whether I'm doing something illegal because her questions were trying make you feel like you were doing something illegal. And so what I did was, what I notice is I go into the department, she can see me but she never turns her eye to wait on me. I asked her one day I was in there and the manager comes out and says "oh hi Miss ***** oh we all know Miss *** she's

one of our best customers, then the behavior changed. And my thing was well you stay wherever you been all along and my sister-in-law who was briefly moved here from New Orleans her sister-in-law lives in Philly, and we were talking about this and she said I do that, I practice that too we figure they can't afford it so we don't waste our time. So sometimes you can have blacks are also practicing the same behavior because they think that the white can afford. And it maybe sometimes small things in terms of they want you to wait forever, you know if you're waiting on me and somebody else comes up, they all of a sudden decide I need to wait on her; well my business is just as important as hers. If they say, excuse me let me let the person know I'm gonna be with them, I can accept that. But when move towards somebody else that bothered me. But this lady you know, I just made a conscious effort and I would never let her have anything of mine. Because if, you know if it was bad if not I just say, I'll wait on the Caucasian clerk, you have to look at the black ones as well.

I: Have you observed her treatment of other customers? This particular African-American person?

R: Oh yes she is very friendly towards them. She is very friendly to them and very pleasant, but I don't get that, and I guess now she knows it's a lost cause, really I have no answers for her, we don't need to, Um I would actually go to her department, select something and take it to another register to pay for it. I don't like to pay to get bad treatment.

I: I hear you on that. Are there any other experiences that stand out in your mind?

R: Well I had one with Department Store B.

I: How long ago was that?

R: About a year and a half, two years ago. Um, I went into Department Store B one night, I had an account with Department Store B and I was going to pay it off, pay the account off. Well what my husband and I done is we were paying some accounts off, so we had our bank pre-write checks to everyone that we were supposed to pay accounts off. So the check was written to, directly to Department Store B itself. So I go in there and I just thought it was a matter of me taking the check in there and taking care of it. I give them the check the lady said oh we can't take it, we can't take this, so I said why, oh it's a third party check. I said I know what a third party check is, this is not a third party check. A third party check would be written to me and to Department Store B, it's not a third party check. "well you're a, you're a, you're address is not there". I said, my address has to be on there? "oh yes." So you're telling me that if I send a friend of mine in there, and I can think of a situation I did with my sister throughout the holidays and I was in Mississippi, in Jackson and she lives in Natchez she needed to pay her Department Store C account and she had forgotten and she said, can you run

by Department Store C's, so I then wrote a check off of my own account, her name was nowhere on there. So I said, I'm confused why you can't take this check. "oh no, we can't take it". So I said, would you please take the check, it really floored me 'cause my husband, dropped me off and said I'll be back in 5 minutes, I was probably about 45 minutes. So, I asked to speak to the Manager, 'cause I wanted to know why they won't take the check. Well I was at the counter waiting for the manager. I see this man coming across the floor at full speed; I didn't know who that was. He didn't speak; he walked up to me "we cannot take this check." And I said excuse me, who are you? I'm so and so, the manager and da, da, da, and we're not gonna take this check. And I said okay well, I'm gonna make sure I'm clear in regards to why you're not accepting this check. "It's a third party check." It's not a third party check, it's written directly to you all. "Well we can't take this check and you know we don't do this sort of thing", you know making it seem as though I was trying to do something illegal. So I got his name and everything. Well I went right around the corner to Department Store A which was owed at the same time by the same company. Walked in there, just the same, walked up, took about a minute and I called Department Store B, cause you could, and told them. They said we get these kind of checks all the time. They said, we don't understand. They said if he really had a problem he could have called somebody and checked. So anyway, I called him back and I said I wanna make sure that I got the information correct in terms of why you wouldn't accept this check, so I told him what was on the check and what it said. And I said they're gonna call you cause they wanna find out why you won't accept this check. Well, what really bothered me about it was the way he came he came running, you know he thought I was a shoplifter or something. Well um I talked to Department Store B and they said they didn't understand why the check wasn't accepted, so I was real angry that night. So, I got on the internet and tried to find the person's boss, I got into a website and when I figured it out how everybody did their emails, so I took a chance, so I went to his boss's email and I sent him an email. So um, the next day the guy called me, very quickly and he said that he had um spoken to the person and that they addressed the issue. It's like I said, you know, if he wasn't sure, he could have called somebody, but the fact that he didn't even introduce himself to me. I mean I had sent letters to everybody, anyone I could find an email address on that night I sent a copy of the letter to. Well then the guy sent me an email, the manager, to tell me I could come back in and they would accept the check. And I said well, what's the difference today from yesterday; it's still the same check, what's the difference? Other than the fact that you'd been told to take it now. And I said, no thank you, but I assume this means that I could mail it and if it got there after a few days I would not incur any late fees or any finance charges cause I didn't want any of those to apply. Well then he sent something that said, he got a little smarter, he forwarded it to, cc to his boss too. His boss wrote back and said he didn't like his comment to me, and he assured me that he was going to address that. Well I had a student who interned for me and she worked part-time at Department Store B. Well she came to me and said Miss *** she said you are the talk of the store. They said some

lady came in there last night and he called everybody, the man's like "who is this woman?" "Who is she?" and I was telling her, you know, I just believe you have to stand up and I said she had never seen a check made out that way so she decided that there was something wrong about it. I said she didn't even try to call, I said I don't know what she told him when she went in back, but the way he came out there he was just coming to get this person out of his store. I was closing my account and I'll never have a Department Store B account, I'll never have a Department Store B account.

I: Did it stop you from shopping there?

R: I'll go back in there, this ain't gonna stop me if there is something I want, but I don't know if he's still there or not. The thing is it wasn't a personal thing, you know, but all I wanted to do was pay my bill. But I was treated like I was a criminal for trying to pay a bill.

I: At what point did you think that it was racism as opposed to just ignorance of the clerk that you were dealing with initially or was it poor customer service on the part of the manager?

R: Initially um, oh yeah I forgot, when I was trying to get everybody's name I called back cause I needed the clerk's name cause I wanted to get everything right. So I got her on the phone and I identified myself, I said I need to know your name. She hung up on me, so I called back so I said, direct to customer service and I said I've just been hung up on, I was told the phone was dead, no it didn't go dead, she hung up, but I need to, you know, I need the name, I need to know who I spoke to. At first I thought it was just ignorance, she had never seen the check made out to Department Store B and she didn't know.

I: Right.

R: And I will say, most of hers was ignorance. I think she thought that somebody was trying to do something illegal and I think that and because that I do believe wholeheartedly that if it was a white person that the whole reaction would have been totally different for the first thing. I think they would have taken the time to try to figure out how to address the check. But when he came out,

I: What makes you believe that?

R: I know this from just my life experiences. When you've really seen so much and even though you don't want it to be, you don't want to always think that, but you have to look at the reality of things, Um. I think if I had been a Caucasian woman with a check someone would have taken the time to find out. This manager didn't even, he didn't even introduce himself. He came across that floor, I just thought he was a man running with great speed across the floor, I didn't know who he

was. I didn't know he was coming to get me. You know he walked up he was telling me how they weren't taking this check and you know.

I: So it was more the manager's reaction than the clerk's reaction?

R: Yeah, I would say it was his reaction, I expected more from the manager. And that's what I said in my letter. She may not have known and I could ignore her, I could ignore her. But it was his reaction; it was very obvious that he thought I was doing something illegal.

I: Between the point when she, um said she wasn't going to take the check, before the manager came out. Did she actually leave and go talk to someone or did she call on the phone and talk to someone?

R: No, she left,

I: She left, okay.

R: She left.

I: What do you think she said after that?

R: I think it was probably how she presented it. If I'm not mistaken I think there was another person at the place. I was speaking to the sales person and then she went to her supervisor, I think. There was another lady, I saw those two talking. She relayed something to this lady and then the lady went to get the manager. Because, you know I requested the manager or a supervisor. Sometimes they like to make you wait and take so long, but I moved out of the way, I could see somebody coming. You know I guess she saw that, you know and my husband was probably fuming out in the car there, she wait five minutes and come out and check, probably think I'm shoplifting, I'm in there trying to pay a bill. But I think in what they presented to him

I: Do you think they alluded to your race when they went to him?

R: They probably said this big black woman's out there. He reacted like, he was coming to take care of the situation, take care of the situation and as I suggested in the letter that he could probably benefit from some diversity training. But I was more disappointed in him because he wasn't an assistant manager, he was the manager. And then they said he was a former school teacher and it's his personality and I told them no. He has no excuse; you all need to train him better. There is no excuse.

I: After you had sent the email you got from his supervisor that he didn't approach you correctly, were you satisfied with the resolution of it?

- R: Um for the most part, you know, I always, you never know, cause I had my own advice or authority to know what a disciplinary action is, I would hope that they did do the right thing. When I take the time to complain, I'm not complaining to stir up a problem, I want to raise their awareness to stop that person from doing it. So I hope when they get complaints that they actually do address it. I think in this case, because you know I'm assuming everyone knows about this because she came in one day laughing about the incident it was said that something had happened. But his boss said he didn't like the tone of his email that he sent to me.
- I: In the first experience that you were talking about at Discount Retailer A you said you told everybody about it, I asked if you had spoken about it prior to today and you said you had told a lot of people about it. Do you share these other experiences with other friends?
- R: Yes, I tell my children too. When I was in, I believe my daughter was with me in Department Store A when I had that experience. I took the time to explain to her in terms of what happened I told her you're going to experience this in life, you're gonna experience this race is gonna play a factor. And what I try to do, I tell other people cause I want them to know. And people come and are sharing stuff in terms of things that happened and I say, what did you do? Did you say anything? Well no, I say well if you don't say nothing, it's not gonna change the direction.
- I: You have two girls.
- R: I have two girls.
- I: Have they personally experienced anything to your knowledge that felt discriminatory to them ?
- R: In retail?
- I: In any setting?
- R: My youngest one in the last year she was playing a competitive sport and she was the only black on the team. She was really sharing some feelings, um and I really felt for her because she is truly there on her own and you know she would verbalize you know, lots of girls don't get treated that this and I asked her why do you think that? And she said cause they are white. My daughter just told me over the holidays, it was my two daughters and a cousin they were out in the Mall and she was saying they were um, I forget which store they were in and the ladies kept following them, kept following them. And of course I said, you know, unfortunately it's gonna happen. I said when they are following you stop and ask them is there a problem? My oldest one has not had any experiences; she may have had them and not known what they were.

I: It's interesting that you say that, because that's part of what I'm interested in - it's 'had it and not known what it was', if you experience it and you don't know what it was, do you think that you are safer, does that put you in safer position in terms of your emotions than if you recognize it when you see it? It's like, does it exist if you don't know that it exists?

R: I think that if you're not conscience of what it is and these may be the little problems, they might not be as out of control as some of the other things. If you don't know what it is and then you have one that hits you straight in the face, they are harder to deal with, that's just my opinion. Is that, my daughter, my oldest one is 14. She's not very confident so she's um that concerns me as a mother I'm trying to reverse that because when she goes away to college she needs to understand that if you can't now, you're not going to be doing it later on. They sell them that fairy tale, but most of them that do, you know this comes from my conditions by the way, most of them that do, when you really sit down and talk to them you can see that they are, as I said the fairytale syndrome, they are out of touch with reality in a lot of things, they are living in a white world, you know, environment that truly doesn't exist, they made it one way. You know I think you have to really adapt culturally, anybody I think we have to do that. As I said to them, I'm not trying to say that you should not have friends or other relationships but you also need to know about their culture too because that's who you are and if you isolate yourself from your black peers and they perceive you as thinking that you are better than them, when you get older and your white friends try to leave you out. Her three friends at her middle school were little like that and I would encourage her and I would say you can notice white people as well. And she would say why are they all that, they are in trouble, blah, blah, blah, you know she would be with whites at school and I said you know, they are going to start doing things without you cause some places things are not going to be, they are not going to invite you places if they have to explain to their friends who you are. And I said when they come to school and they are sharing about something they did at the weekend you're gonna flip because you weren't invited. We were going to the middle school basketball game with my sister-in-law who moved here from the Louisiana area she was displaced because of Katrina, her little girl plays basketball so we were going to the game.

[End of side 1] [missed a few minutes where the participant talks about her daughter going to a game and finding her white friends there at the game without her].

I:a lot of our behaviors and our social lives from our parents we learn from our parents how to be, you mentioned initially that because your mother was so active and forthcoming with racism is probably why you're so forthcoming. I know I've probably taken up more than enough of your time, I appreciate you taking the time with me I have lots of good data from this interview that I can really use, I thank you .

INTERVIEW TWO

Participant: AA Female
Administrator with local college
Late 50s
Two grown children

I: Today is Friday March 3rd. I'm with Interview participant # 3 and before we get started, you know the subject that I am interested in is retail discrimination in stores. I'm interested in examining people's unique experiences with racism in stores or discrimination in stores. Before I can know, before I start getting into the specifics of your situations, and those experiences, I need to know more about you as a person and your background because it's your unique experience and I wanna know kind of life history unfolds in those experiences. So I just want you to tell me anything about yourself that you want to share with me.

R: Okay, I was born in 1949 in a small town in Connecticut called Stafford Springs, Connecticut. I grew up in a small town called Skitter Cove [sp?] Connecticut and at that time, in the entire community there were only two black families. Our family which consisted of my grandparents and their 10 children and another family called the Jones' and he was the local blacksmith, because at that time there were still farmers that used horses to farm and so he would shoe their horses. And he would use my grandfather's barn to do that because he didn't have one anymore. So growing up in what I considered to be an all white community that was racially divided, I should say ethnically divided because of the people that lived there. Poles lived together, Italians lived together the French lived together, the Germans lived together and you had what, two little black families established in the community. So to say that I had to worry about going to segregated schools, no I didn't because they weren't going to build a school with just two or three children, so yes we went to integrated school system. And then as I graduated from school and I met my husband who was from the South, he chose to live in the South because he didn't like the attitudes of the North.

I: I wanna back up a few seconds; tell me about growing up in that integrated environment what was that like for you?

R: It probably was not as traumatic for me as it was perhaps for my husband. We more tended to look or treat racism more subtly than the South though they could be very overt with it. Yes, we had racism and I can remember um, hearing my grandparents talk about one of my aunts who was Valedictorian at the local high school at the age of 16 and they wouldn't give it to her because she was black. I experienced, my cousin and I experienced having to fight for the grades we were supposed to have because we were black. We weren't chosen to go on

cheerleading squads and things like that like the other kids who got the opportunity. Finally, I got to the middle school. I guess I was the first black cheerleader that Enfield ever had. Ever.

I: Oh...?

R: I can remember going to the University of Connecticut and taking courses in things and the teachers never told me, but I learned later they were trying to tell them that I couldn't go into these classrooms or whatever. I can remember as a cheerleader going to some of the games and they not wanting our squad to cheer because they have a black cheerleader. So,

I: How did you handle all this, tell me about how that felt to you and how you handled it? How you dealt with it.

R: I have to admit that at that time, the teachers were very supportive, so they tried to hide a lot of that from me. I can remember one time we were supposed to cheer and they were saying that we couldn't cheer and I was saying why and the school was saying if you don't let her, none of them do it. We, my cousin and I belonged to a um, I don't know if you've ever heard of a drum and bugle corps, it was like a band and they were very, very popular in the North East and they were outside of the school curriculum. They were individual, private bands, so to speak, and they were all horns and they had, what they called a color guard which consisted of people that carried flags and rifles and things, it was a really, really good experience. You got an opportunity to compete against other drum and bugle corps throughout this North East and I can remember one time, we had gone to, oh what was it, not it was not Brooklyn it was up state New York, was it Perkasié anyway I forgot the name of the town, but we had gone, marched and competed. And on our way back, we had stopped at a diner in New York, because we were kids, you know, we were hungry. So we had gone into the diner and at that time it's like Mel's diner, you know, you have a diner you have like more like a bar, you don't necessarily have people sitting at tables, you know, you sat at the bar. And so, we had all come up to the bar to eat and so, my cousin and I were the only blacks in the group, and the waiter had gone around and he was taking the kids' orders. So, when he got to me, he bypassed me and went to the next kid next to me. And so, the guy's name was Bill and Bill said, oh, you forgot Pat, you need to take her order. And you could tell the guy felt uncomfortable, he didn't know what to do and he said why I need your order, the kid said, you forgot her order, she was next. The guy finally said, well we don't serve colored people. That was my first experience ever of being denied service because of my color and I remember sitting there with my mouth open because I didn't know what to say. We was some little kids, I was probably about 8th or 9th grade they were 11th and 12th graders. I can remember, because by that time we got everybody's attention. I can remember the kids before or adults could intercede. The kids stood up and said "if you can't serve them, you don't serve us", so we

walked out. So that was my first experience in dealing with that type of racism. When I said we had racism in our community, we did, but it was different in the sense that it was a very small farming community, everybody knew everybody. Okay, now, that being said, when my mother wanted to rent an apartment. She had become an adult and wanted to be out on her own, she had difficulty because she would call them on the phone, because they could not perceive her as being black over the phone and then she'd show up and all of a sudden the apartment was rented or they would just outright tell her they don't rent to black people. Okay.

I: She shared all these experiences with you?

R: Oh yeah cause sometimes I'd be with her so I would hear these things and she would talk about them.

I: How did she handle those things?

R: You handled it. It was like, what were you going to do? You had nobody to complain to and even if you did, they weren't going to do anything about it. I can remember as a child, as my grandfather gave up farming. He went to work for a company called Bigelow Carpet company, it was a small company in our town that produced rugs. He was the maintenance or custodian person in this place. He worked for them, gosh; I know 10, maybe 15 years, maybe even longer. And, while he was working for them, a black man came to our town and robbed one of the stores. They went and picked my grandfather up because that was the only black person they knew. Even though his supervisors had said, he's been here all this time. Of course, obviously they let him go, because it was obvious it wasn't him the person was a whole lot younger, and my grandfather at that time was, he had to be, I was a kid, so he would have been in his 60's so there was an obvious difference. My grandfather being a product of the South stood his ground and he sued the town and he did win.

I: Hm.

R: That was a first. You have to go back to talk about that, my grandparents were products of the South. My grandfather was black, my grandmother was white. She was half white and half Indian and they left Georgia because at that time, Georgia had a rule that a black person could not be married to a person that was either half white or lighter, so they had to leave. That was how they ended up in Connecticut. Because my grandmother was as fair as my grandfather was dark. And so, we grew up in that kind of an environment of a biracial family so to speak, although my grandmother never considered herself white, and if you called her a mullatto she'd beat you. She was black as far as she was concerned.

I: Even though there was no,

R: No black.

I: Okay.

R: She was black as far as she was concerned.

I: Interesting.

R: And so, you know, because she had black brothers and sisters too. Our histories as black people go back a long way and I didn't discover this until my grandfather was dying and told me this, because I didn't know, I never knew. Well my grandmother, one was from Plains, Georgia and the other one was from Americas Georgia. And I think it was my grandmother from Plains, Georgia. Her mother was a full blooded American Indian. Okay. She was married to a black man, that's how the black children came into play, but my grandfather said, you need to understand, during that time, white people could come and do what they wanted to do. He says your great grand mother was a very beautiful woman and a white doctor in town took a liking to her. And he just came and did what he wanted to do, that's how your grandmother and some of your uncles and aunts look the way they do. So that gives you the why she had black brothers and sisters.

I: Okay.

R: Alright, cause the woman was still married to a black man, but what could they do?

I: Right.

R: I wish I had recorded some of the stories my grandfather eventually told me, because I remember them talking about them when I was a kid, but you know when you are children, you think it's just old folks' stories. But it was historical fact because his mother lived, I was 13 and my great grandmother was still alive and she was born into slavery and she could tell us stories. But at that time we thought that's exactly what they were. We didn't know they were for real because the families never sat down, unfortunately, and said this is your history, you need to understand these things. It was a matter or way of life that they accepted and they adapted to survive so they never gave it a second thought. As an adult then I can look back and say, oh my god, she was telling us the truth about what was going on. I remember one story my grandfather told us, told me rather. I was raised by my grandparents, so that's why I talk about them a lot. But, he said that when he was a boy, in Georgia that he and his cousin used to go out in the woods and get money and look for bones. They would get animal bones, because that's what they made fertilizer out of. So they would go out in the woods you know, where animals had died or whatever and they would get

these bones and they would take them into town. And they got paid by the pound. Now, the local general store was owned of course, by white people. And the guy had a son who my grandfather grew up with and he said, every time he would put his bones on the scale, Jimmy, was the young man's name, would knock them off. He said Jimmy I'm tired, if you knock my bones off again I'm gonna take this 2 by 4 and hit you with it. Well the culture was, you know black men just didn't do stuff like that. Of course my grandfather was a boy then, not a man,

I: This is back in Georgia?

R: Uh huh. So my grandfather put his bones up there and sure enough he knocked them off, because you know, privileged class, he did it again. Now my grandfather was true to form if he told you what he was going to do, he was going to do it. And he took the 2 by 4 and knocked the hell out of him. So, his cousin thought he had killed the boy, so he grabbed my grandfather and they ran home. So, he said when they got home his mother said to him, they called him bubba. She said bubba what did you do, or what's wrong? And he told her and she said well, she said I'm gonna fix you some sandwiches; you go up there to your uncle who was a recluse and lived way up in the woods. And you go up there and you stay up there for a while, cause she knew they would come after him, so he did. She said, don't go through the town, go through the woods. So he did, so he said when he got there his uncle said, what you doing here boy? And he said well Mama sent me, and he said, what did she send you up here for? He told her and he said his uncle said, hum, go hook up the buckboard, so he said okay.

I: Buckboard?

R: Buckboard, it's a wagon they pulled it with horses, they don't have them anymore. We're talking early 1900's. So he hooked up the Buckboard and his uncle came out with two shot guns and pistols on his hips. And he said, we're going into town. And he said they drove into town and drove right up to the general store, of course that's where everybody congregated, drove up to the store. His uncle Tommy said, "you wait right here, I want you to be silent. And he said he walked up to the general store and looked at all of them. He said he came back onto the porch. He looked up the street and down the other side of the street. He said, "this here is my nephew, he said anybody touch him" he said "I'll burn the whole damn town down". He got back into his buckboard and said now you can go home. He said he was never, he didn't kill the boy, but he never was bothered.

I: Oh really?

R: Because they thought his uncle was crazy and he meant every word, he didn't care.

- I: This was a story your grandfather told you on his deathbed? How old were you when he died?
- R: I was about 38.
- I: So you were grown up.
- R: I was grown. He was dying from cancer and I didn't know it, and he had my uncle drive him 968 miles one way to come down and say goodbye. And then, he stayed about 4-5 hours with me, and he turned around and went back home, then he died a couple days later.
- I: Um, I want to return to something you referred to a while ago. You were telling me about, as that process was unfolding, what it felt like for you as a 13 or 14 year old at the time, what you were thinking?
- R: I was so, I can remember because you don't forget a thing like that, I can remember feeling humiliated and I didn't know why. Um, 'cause like I said, I have never had that type of experience before when someone was so overt, with telling me they could not do something because of the color of my skin. And then I got mad, but by the time I got mad of course we were back on the bus and I was really thinking about it. And I can remember going home, telling my mom and my grandparents about it. And my grandfather would say to me, he would say, don't ever allow anyone to tell you you're not just as good as they are. So that was his way of dealing with it.
- I: Did you cry?
- R: Uh huh. In my family we don't cry in public. That was an emotion; you don't let folks see your weakness. And so, I was raised that way that you, your emotions are a personal friend and you are to keep them to yourself, so no, I don't cry. I was mad though.
- I: You said your cousin was with you at the time, did you and her ever talk about it?
- R: I don't remember. Karen is a year older than I am and we're real close 'cause I was an only child. She wasn't an only child and her brother at that time was like seven years older than she was, and so it was almost like being an only child too and so we were real close because I lived with my grandparents and my aunt lived right up the street from us. I don't remember us talking about it, I really don't. I don't remember.
- I: Okay, well let me get us up to present day. That tells me a lot about your background. Share with me any experiences you have had with discrimination in retail environments since you've been grown.

R: Okay.

I: And when I say retail I mean very broadly it could be any experience.

R: I was going to tell you about the experience my aunt had when she was building her home. Of course I just was there.

I: Okay.

R: I just was there, but like I said I grew up in a small New England community and my aunt and uncle had bought property to build their home. So they owned the property. Then they had worked and saved their money so they could build their house. They didn't have all the money, so they went to the bank so the bank would give them money to build their house. When the bank saw the kind of house they wanted to build, they literally told them that the house was too good for niggers and wouldn't give them the money.

I: What time period are we talking about here?

R: Well I'm 49, so we are talking late 50s.

I: Okay.

R: Okay. The reason I know that is because I remember being in the kitchen with my grandfather when my aunt came in upset over what had happened. And my grandfather said "don't worry about it". So he went and said, see at that time, my grandparents lived a long time. At that time my great grand father was still alive and so he called and told him the problems he was having. That summer my great grandfather, my grandfather's brother and my grandfather built, dug the hole, made the concrete and put the frame up for the house,

I: Really?

R: Then my aunt had enough money. When my aunt got elderly and she couldn't keep the house up anymore, she gave it to my cousin her son with the condition that they build a parents apartment attached to the house. My cousin tells the story. He said when the contractor came, he said to him "who built this house?" He said my grandfather and my great grandfather. He said we can't pull the studs out, they had used wooden studs, that's how well built the house was. They had to literally cut them out, they couldn't pull them out.

I: There's history there.

- R: Its history, but it also shows the racism. People of privilege class don't know what we have to deal with just to get something as simple as a house to live in.
- I: Do you think it's changed a lot since then or do you think that?
- R: No. I've got a girlfriend that lives down here, North Shore. They have been in their house now about 15 years. It's an exclusive neighborhood. Now, when they bought that property and then got ready to build their home. Their house is probably worth about \$800,000. When they built their home, when they applied for the loan, now they had perfect credit. They had put down a very sizeable amount of money to have the house built, she didn't see this until they got to closing where the man had written on the loan "white couple". So she questioned them about it and they said "you would not have got the loan if they hadn't put that on there". Now we're only talking 15 years ago.
- I: That recently?
- R: Okay, so we're not talking a long period of time. When we bought this house, it was really funny, we had a black realtor and so we were looking around at various houses and whatever, now the advantage to me is my daughter is in the mortgage industry. So we didn't have that issue. We had good credit, we had money, whatever, so we didn't have that issue, so my daughter did it. But some of the things we were able to get, the only reason we got them was because my daughter was in the industry, because they don't always tell us.
- I: Like what?
- R: The special rates you can get. Okay, um you know I have a 4.5% interest rate on this house. Most of my friends don't and they have good credit too. And it's because they are not told that you can get these things.
- I: Do you think that is a result of lenders wanting to just maximize their profits so they don't divulge that information regardless of race or do you think that it's a result of race?
- R: I think it's a combination of both because the lending institution necessarily don't know what race you are. It's your loan officer that knows this, okay. Um and I think a lot of it is home grown racism to the point that, it's well you just give them a different rate because of their color. The reason my husband doesn't sell insurance is because he found out they had different rates for black people than they did for white people and I think that kind of stuff still exists. Even in the North. Yes it's not as prevalent as it used to be because you know there's a lot of black people that has got lots of money and they can pretty much live anywhere they want to live. Um, we as a race of course, have had to learn to prepare ourselves to be able to go into the lending institutions by having good credit, you

know, by saving some money and doing these things which historically we have not been trained to do. Because we have not had the same opportunities. It was a matter of survival. You worked, you barely made enough money to put food on the table, in most cases, for your family, so to worry about all these other things, you didn't have that luxury. And so, by the time we were able, in my opinion, by the time we were able, cause I wasn't taught some of those things. The only reason I knew it was my grandfather was so frugal, he just didn't like spending money period. So it wasn't a matter of teaching me the economics of life, he was frugal, he didn't like spending money. But the thing is, we weren't taught that from day one. Don't go out there and get a lot of debt, learn how to save a little here and there and those kinds of things to build good credit so you can go out there and do these things. Your age group and probably a little younger are learning that or have already learned that. My age group in most cases haven't. So by the time they get to that point and they wanna do these things, it's a struggle for them to get them, because the credit industry are like, well Mr. & Mrs. Harpeo you've been late 5 or 6 times on this or that. And that affects your credit rating.

I: Right. Your husband shared with me an experience of being in Department Store B and an incident that happened in there. I want you to tell me about that experience from your perspective.

R: I don't think I was with him that day when he had that one, but I had one in Department Store B several times where, you see when I first started going to Department Store B there were no black people waiting on the counters or whatever, you didn't have any black clerks.

I: About what time frame are we talking about here?

R: Okay, I came in 1968.

I: Okay.

R: So, between 1968 and 1969 they didn't have any black people working in Department Store B, not in West Town, that's for sure. East Town wasn't built then. So um, we'd go in and it was the oddest thing, I turn around and there was somebody following us. I'd say, can I help you? Oh no, no, nothing. Then we'd go to some other part of the store, they were following. Then we realized anytime a black person came into Department Store B they followed them because I guess they thought they were going to steal something. That, of all the stores, that's the worst one I ever experienced was Department Store B. You'd go into Nancy Lynn's, which was an all women's, at that time, it was an all women's shop and it was supposed to be high end,

I: Nancy Lynn?

R: Nancy Lynn. Um, it was supposed to be a high end women's shop, and I know they got a lot of business from black people, I know because I go to my church and a lot of people, they just socially, oh this is Nancy Lynn, oh yeah. I know they got a lot of business from black people and I know the one, downtown I think, they had one black clerk, but if you would go in the only person that would wait on you was the black woman. I would think later, well here you're making a lot of money off of black people and this is how you treat us. So I wouldn't shop at Nancy Lynn. I had experience with my son at Department Store D; I never shopped at Department Store D since.

I: And what was that experience?

R: My son, when he turned 16 had gotten quite a bit of money for his 16th birthday from family and friends so we were trying to teach him how to have a checking account. So, we opened up a checking account and put his money in, you know trying to show him how to do all these things. So he says, mom I wanna go to Department Store D and shop. So I said okay so he did. And this was the Department Store D right over here off of Cedar Bluff, that area over there.

I: Okay.

R: That's where this happened. And, he had gone in there and found some things that he wanted and he was in line and the girl in front of him was a girl he went to school with, a white girl. And so, they were checking her out and she pulled out her checkbook and she paid. When it was Husband's turn he pulled out his checkbook and oh we need some ID and I need to get manager's approval, well my son is like his daddy, he said "what for"? You didn't ask her that, so why are you asking me? And he said that the clerk got nervous, didn't know what to say, I have to get the manager. He said get the manager I want to know why you're treating me- he said he got loud too - why are you treating me differently than the young woman in front of me?

I: Were you with your son?

R: No I wasn't, cause when he came home I called Department Store D. And so, he said the clerk said it was a mistake. Husband said no, it's not a mistake it was obvious. And he said, therefore I have money to pay for everything that is here, and secondly if I call my parents they could pay for anything that I wanted in this store, so you can keep it. And he said the guy was trying to apologize and whatever, and Husband said, no I don't have to spend my money here, my father has told me my green money is just as good anywhere else, and he walked out.

I: Wow.

R: And my son is 32, he was 16 so that tells you how long ago that was.

I: So when he came home, tell me about what happened.

R: I got hot. I called the manager and wanted to know what the hell was going on. "Oh miss it was just a misunderstanding". I said oh no, I don't think so, but that's okay, I will never shop at your store again, and I have never, ever stepped foot into a Department Store D store.

I: Oh?

R: And never will. Another experience we had, there is a, I don't think I told you about this one cause I wrote them a letter, I was hot! Boutique A, they are a men's clothing store that made suits here in Knoxville. Now, my husband's a big man, so it's difficult for us to just buy suits off the rack for him, he had told me he had gone down there in Knoxville, cause their main store is downtown Knoxville, he got in there and he said he waited and waited and nobody waited on him. This was only about four or five years ago. He went in; he was hot so he walks out. Well I know Husband. So I said okay, did they know you were standing there? Yeah they knew I was. So I said, I'm going with you. So we went down there and the way you walk in you have one desk here, I guess for the clerk and then because they make suits they have tables and stuff where they have materials and stuff all laying out there, and they have salesmen, one or two salesmen. When we walked in, they were busy, they had somebody with them, I mean they weren't going to just stop right there. So we went on in, about five, but I could see the office staff back there, they looked up at us and I thought I detected you know a kind of look, but I thought okay Pat, you know, let's put things into perspective. After about five or ten minutes, you know the guy does come and he apologizes cause you know, blah, blah, so Husband picks out the suits he wants and, now his suits costs well over \$2,000. I paid for them right then and there. So, we go out, he is supposed to go back and have his suits fitted after the had made them to make sure they were okay, so I went with him that day. Well we went in there and it was one salesman who was busy, I don't know where the other one was. The women were back there, they weren't even working they were working, they were talking. So we stood there, and we waited and we waited. The women looked at us and not one of them came up to us and said can I help you, whatever. Husband was getting hot, I said now hold on now. I walked up and I said excuse me do you have someone here that can wait on us? Oh so and so's back there. I said, I'd like to see someone now please. So she went off and the salesman was the same one that served us, Oh I didn't know you were here, and he brought out the suit, not an issue. I went home and wrote a letter, I may still have the letter, I don't know what I did with it, I think I still have it. I wrote a letter to the owner of the company, and I told him about my experience. And I said now, you explain to me why they would treat us that way. And the guy wrote me back, the President he says, it's not racism, I have people working in my shop that are this,

that and whatever, and I told him. Because in the letter I told him, you know we paid for our suits, so it wasn't like I asked anyone to pay for anything. I said I didn't go and get a loan, I didn't pay with a credit card and I would think that someone who was capable of paying for your product would be given a much better customer service. And I said, the only thing I could think of is because we look differently from the rest of your staff. And he did, he wrote me back a response and sent us a silk tie which my husband threw in the garbage.

I: I was going to ask what you felt about his response to it, was there any response that he could have given you that would have made you feel...

R: Better about it?

I: Yeah.

R: I think I respected him for at least responding. Because he could have chosen not to respond whatsoever; he did, so I give him credit for that and it came from the President, at least he signed it, I'm assuming he wrote it. So that, to me, at least made him aware of a situation maybe he didn't know existed in his store because the next time we went,

I: So you did go back there.

R: Oh yes because we had to pick up his suits, he had gone there to get them fitted.

I: Okay.

R: So when we went back, they were like lice, so it had an impact.

I: Okay.

R: Cause I had written a letter to the President, so that told me then that he went to his staff and said something, and believe me those women were no longer standing around just talking either.

I: Would you shop there again?

R: Oh yeah, they make beautiful clothes.

I: So you all continue to shop there.

R: Oh yes. We has shopped there years before and not had a problem, and then this time, as I'm just, I'm over it. I'm not going to just sit by and let things go without at least expressing my discontent.

- I: Okay, one of the things, when you said you shopped there previously and it was fine, and at this experience it was a negative experience do you think it was more a result of the people that were working there or a corporate policy?
- R: I'd say in this case, it was the people.
- I: Okay.
- R: Because my experience from living in this part of the country is that there is a certain mind set.
- I: Tell me about that.
- R: It goes both ways. The black people that were born and raised here, you're not from here are you? That's right you said you were from Mississippi. The black people that are from here and the white people have a certain mind set and unless you've got up into some of these area around Lake City, Wartburg, Rockwood and some of these areas, how can I best describe it? Although they may be educated in the formal sense, they're attitudes and approach to life is backwards. Okay, I have met people that live over here in Clinton and Lake City that have never been to Knoxville, Tennessee. In Clinton, Tennessee right around the corner, and Lake City is only what 30-40 miles from them, have never been to Knoxville, that's the big city.
- I: People of both races?
- R: You don't find too many of us out there in Lake City.
- I: Okay.
- R: No. East Tennessee is a very unique part of Tennessee; you know Tennessee is divided into three sections. You have East, Middle and West. Middle is probably more your metropolitan area, around the Nashville area.
- I: Okay.
- R: And then West Tennessee is Memphis, it has a high concentration of blacks. Okay, the further East you go, in this area demographically we are a very small percentage of the overall population. That being said, the most concentrated part is around the Knoxville, Oakridge kind of area, so when you start going out to these smaller cities, no you don't. And basically a lot of them are descendents of what we would call hill people, okay. Poor, uneducated. Um, I can remember from when I first came here, years ago you would hear on the news all the time how the revenuers were being shot. The revenuers were the people that used to

go and break down the stills. You didn't go to certain parts of this area if you were black and expect to come out alive. I even had a white person tell me

I: You are talking about the early 1970's 1969-70.

R: Yeah and even true today. There are certain parts around here, you may go there during the day, but I wouldn't go at night. Um, where my mechanic lives, over here in Andersonville, and Husband has known him for years, Donny, he works on our cars all the time and Donny lives way up in those areas. And I remember one time, he was taking his car and Donny worked out of his home and was taking our car and Husband got lost and so he had to stop and ask. And he said he could tell when the guy looked at him, looked at him kind of strange, but when he told him who he wanted, Oh no problem and then they were real kind to him. It's an attitude that if they think they know you, you're okay. If they don't you better get the hell outta there. Cause you may not make it out of some of them hills. But you see that's more of a culture, you could have been white, black, blue green. They don't know you.

I: Okay,

R: Okay, that's what could happen to you.

I: Um, the experience that you were telling me about at Profitt's a few minutes ago. You were being followed around the store. Tell me about, do you recall who was with you at that time?

R: This happened, most of the time it would be with Husband, because I hate shopping, so he would drag me to get something, so 9 times out of 10 it was him with me.

I: Do you recall what conversation was going on or is there anything about that incident that sticks out in your mind?

R: It happens so often, it wasn't even a matter of, you know, sticking out in our minds, we would just, when we realized that they were following us, we would just stop and say we don't want to be followed.

I: Did it cease at that time?

R: Oh yeah, because they would deny they were doing it, and then, you know the face turn red and you know that's exactly what was happening and they would leave us alone.

I: Did you ever follow that up, any of those incidences?

- R: No, not at that time no. And I guess, when you deal with that kind of thing, and I'm not justifying it but I think you just accept it and it's like um, it's not like they wouldn't wait on us or they wouldn't serve us, kind of thing, Husband's had more of that experience than I have. But then he's a product of the South, so he's experienced those kinds of things more so. I have never seen Jim Crow signs, he has.
- I: What's the difference in your mind? Did you continue to shop at Department Store B after that, do you continue to shop at Department Store B.
- R: I very seldom went into Department Store B.
- I: Okay.
- R: Yes, on occasion if they were having a really big sale and I wanted something, yes, but very seldom. At that time the biggest stores were Department Store B, J C Penny, and Sears and, what was the other store? Um wasn't Macys, what was the other store, because they were really good. They were a good department store to buy things from and it was family owned, how could I forget it, but we shopped mostly there and I don't remember experiencing that kind of attitude primarily in those stores. It was mostly Department Store B.
- I: What stands out in your mind as the difference between, after your incident with your son at Department Store D you said you never shop there again and won't shop there again.
- R: Oh I won't.
- I: What's the difference between that experience and the experiences that you had at Department Store B where you didn't out and out say, I'm never shopping here again.
- R: First of all, I think a lot had to do with being older
- I: When it happened with your son,
- R: And it affected my child.
- I: Okay.
- R: And you will, I understand you have a child?
- I: I do.
- R: If somebody does something to your child it's an entirely different attitude.

- I: Okay.
- R: Okay, you can do it to me as an adult I can deal with it. But you hurt my child, No.
- I: Interesting. Did the experiences that you had yourself; do you recall your children ever being with you all in a store when something happened that stuck out in your mind as a negative incident?
- R: Let me think about that, because the kids were always with us in most cases.
- I: One of the reasons I ask is that kids tend to mirror their experiences or responses with their parents, I wonder if your son or daughter was with you,
- R: We must have because for Husbandie to be that outspoken, well I shouldn't say that because we had always told our children, you know, you can be whoever you want to be, don't ever allow somebody to tell you what you can't be. And, the experiences we had with them going to an all white school. You know, my daughter having a teacher tell her, because she was having difficulty with math, well that's okay, your people can't do math.
- I: Oh my gosh and your daughter like I said, your daughter is only a couple of years older than me.
- R: When she came home and told me that, I was mad, my husband said no, that's not how we're gonna deal with it, cause he was hot he wanted to go up to the school. I said no, we're not gonna do that right now. The main thing is, we've gotta help her with her math. So, my husband who, his major in college was mathematics and biology. He said, not it won't work. She was in tears, now math was not my forte, she was taking algebra so, I was like, no this is not going to work. So, I had a friend, a white guy and his wife were professors in physics from Austin Pete State University that's the college my husband went to, and I called Fred Burke, and I said Fred, I'm having trouble with Dee, This is what happened to Dee Dee. He says, Pat bring her over here I'll tutor her. He tutored her for a whole year in mathematics. So he said to her, he told me, he said Pat it's not that she can't get it, she wasn't taught the basics. She was a freshman in High School, in her junior year, cause I made sure and I will tell this as a parent, I'm assuming going to an all white school,
- I: Yeah.
- R: Make sure you go to the PTA's and stuff. You make sure you know what's going on there. So I made sure I was on the PTA and we had picked some the teachers, I made Dee Dee go with me and so, we were fixing quiches and stuff for the

teachers, it was special recognition appreciation teacher's day and that particular teacher was there, that had told Dee Dee that, and Dee Dee and her, she's feisty like her daddy, and she turned to this person and she said oh Miss so, and so do you remember when you said my people couldn't do math. I just aced my calculus exam. God is good because that woman's face turned blood red and I never opened my mouth. I didn't have to, cause I had to prove her point. My daughter got her degree in mathematics and my husband is there now he said that shows the ignorance of that woman the father of mathematics is a black man, she needs an education in black history.

I: It's amazing though.

R: Yep, that's what she was told and that made her sensitive, because our kids, we had told our kids to try as young people to learn to resolve your own problems, but my philosophy was if you have a problem with an adult while you are in school you come to me, you let me deal with that adult. Don't be arguing with a teacher, you come home and you let me know the experience you had and I will deal with the teacher as an adult.

I: Right.

R: So, they had always try to handle their problems, but it was until they were grown that I learned that the subtle racism that they had to deal with in these predominately white schools, I didn't know they were dealing with. Raising their hands and never being called on. You know to a young child, impressionable child that can be detrimental, it affects their self esteem. I never knew that until they were adults, and they were sitting talking about, well yeah you remember when we used to always raise our hands in Miss so and so's class, she would never call on you.

I: One of the things, I think I probably mentioned this to your husband, and one of the issues that seems to come up in these interviews seems to be the issue of how much you divulge to your children. You want to protect them but you also don't. Because in these cases the child is the only African American in largely Caucasian environments. You want to protect them but you also don't want to, you want them to fit in and you want them to feel accepted, so you don't want to draw attention to their differences in that capacity, you know, you want them to respect their differences, but you also want them to feel accepted in their environment. In terms of negative events, racism how do you deal with that fine line? How much?

R: I think for us, as parents we try to instill in our children, good self esteem. My husband used to preach to the kids, if you can't love yourself you cannot love anyone else. They used to get so sick of hearing it that they'd go behind his back, but the philosophy is you've got to be comfortable with who you are, and you've

got to like you. If you can like you, it doesn't matter if somebody else doesn't like you. Um, so we try to instill that in our kids, but in doing so, I also had to bring the reality in that there's a segment of our society that's not gonna like you because you look different from than they are, but you don't ever allow them to take away your self esteem. You know, when that teacher told Dee Dee she couldn't do math she was devastated, she came home, she was crying. She was only 9th grade, what 12 or 13 years old. So, to tell a pre-teen or teenager something like that where she was not brought up in a house where we exhibited racism and for her to get smacked in the face with something like that, it was devastating to her. So we had to be concerned about her self esteem because as a parent, had we not, she would not have succeeded in mathematics cause she would have given up.

- I: That example with your daughter is a very, and you mentioned this word before, subtle racism. That's a very blatant example of racism. Do you think that she, they didn't tell you about subtle racism until later, do you think that she faced subtle racism before that.
- R: Oh sure she did, but she didn't realize what it was. She know she was being treated differently, except one time she came home and she told us that, it was her drafting class wasn't it Husband, her grades. But this wasn't so much racism as sexism, so our kids experienced that too. Dee Dee, there was only two girls in the drafting class. The teacher resented having females in his class. So, what happened was you know how kids are, you get your test back everybody shows theirs. Dee Dee would get a B, boys were getting A but they had the same number wrong. First time it happened and Dee Dee asked the teacher about it, oh that's just a mistake. Well it happened two or three more times, so she came home and told her dad. Husband said, I'll handle that, so he went and talked to the teacher. And the teacher said, oh, you know he tried to, and Husband said no, no, and he showed him the papers. And Husband said I'm not trying to tell you to give my child anything she doesn't deserve, but he said I'm telling you, you will not discriminate against her because she's a girl. He went face to face with them. Half the time he wouldn't let me go, because I, he said they need to see black males more often. So he would go. The time Dee Dee beat the snot out of a white boy for calling her a nigger right there in class. She did and I didn't know he had been harassing her. And the teachers knew it and did nothing about it. They would hear these kids harassing because they were but a handful of kids, black kids that went to She never told us, we didn't know and so when she got to the point that she felt she was tired of it she decided to handle it herself. So she took her notebook and beat him until she felt good.
- I: How old was she at that time, do you recall?
- R: She was 6th grade then.

I: Okay.

R: She was little, she was little like you, tiny little thing. And the kids came home and they were saying, she beat him with her bag, and I said where the teacher was? Standing there. So I was going to go up there, Husband said no, he went to the Principal. What did the Principal tell you Husband?

Husband: He told me I was wrong cause I told him that my children were trained, as soon as a white kid said 'N' they had to knock the hell outta them.

I: That's kinda dangerous when you have a little girl who is feisty.

Husband: The thing about the white segment of society is they have to do things in a game mentality. They are more game oriented than we are, they don't want to do things individually. And so, if you knock the hell out of an individual the game will separate and you will not have any problems with the game at all.

R: It's like the proverbial knot, you cut off the head and the bottom falls. And you know, when you have children in this environment, you need to be very sensitive to the fact, they've got to be tough. I can remember my grandmother telling me I had to be twice as good as the average, average now, white child. And I used to think I wouldn't have to teach my children that. Guess what? I was wrong. I had to teach them if that child gets a B, you're going to have to get an A just to get the same privileges that child who got the B.

I: One of the things you said just now was what we were talking about was the subtle racism that she experienced compared to that blatant racist remark, she probably experienced but didn't recognize it. Do you think If you don't recognize it, does it still exist? If somebody is calling me green, but green to me doesn't register as something negative, so I just think of that as a negative event but doesn't have anything to do with my ethnicity.

R: I think if you've never learned the difference. It's like being poor. When I was growing up we were poor, but I didn't know we were poor. Cause everybody else around me was poor. It wasn't until I met somebody that had all these things that I realized, oh, I'm poor.

I: How do you think that plays out in experiences that have to do with discrimination, for example some of the incidents that happened at Department Store B where you were walking around and somebody was following you around. If it never registered to you that this is because of my ethnicity, this is just a super over zealous, they just really want to offer the best service, they wanna make sure that they are there at my beg and call while I'm walking around the store. How do you think, what do you think makes it more, the fact that you came out of it with the experience that you feel you had versus someone who

might have had a different kind of upbringing thinking, oh that's just an over zealous sales person?

R: I'm not sure I can answer that question, and the reason I say that is because when you are a person of color, you can't live a life long enough not to experience and learn some things. Because we live in a racist country. Maybe as a child, like our children, a lot of things they didn't realize were happening because we didn't make an issue for them to know it. Okay, we didn't want them to carry that baggage with them into adulthood. Okay. And I think as a black race we don't want them to have these preconceived hatreds and attitudes about people because

I: Because they are going to have to live,

R: They are gonna have to live with it anyway. So let them enjoy as long as they can, as young children without having to be exposed to that. But, as they became older there were things we had to point out to them because we wanted them to be able to protect themselves as adults.

I: Okay.

R: So, for me, I don't see how you can be black and not eventually learn some of these things. I don't care even if you have a lot of money and you come from a home that has a lot of money. Look at Michael Jackson, he had all kinds of money and they wanted to discredit him. True, he may have brought some of this stuff on himself, I'm not saying he didn't but, the whole intent was that, there is a segment in our society, in the United States that cannot deal with those of us that have over achieved in their eyes, I may be wrong, but that's how I feel.

I: Okay, um are there any other experiences in retail settings that you can recall?

R: Well, I've had experiences at work, but I guess you wouldn't consider that retail.

I: You mentioned that the first incident that you recall happened at the diner, was there anything that happened while eating out at restaurants with your family or

R: I think that time we went to, you remember when we went to Fairfield Glen, Husband when the kids were little and we ate at that restaurant and it took them a long time to come wait on us, and I think part of it was they really wasn't used to black people and they didn't want to wait on us?

Husband: Yeah that was possible.

R: Yeah I think that's what it was.

I: where was this?

R: That was at Crossville, there's a sign on the interstate, "if you're black don't let the sun set on your back."

Husband: That was some 20 some years ago.

R: But it still happened. Right there was a sign, if you're black don't let the sun set on your back. People used to talk about it, even the white people.

Husband: It was not on the interstate, it was on the exit before the interstate was completed, but there was a sign.

I: Oh wow,

R: White people will tell you anything, and they would tell us this stuff.

Husband: Yeah, there was a sign, we didn't even notice it was there, until someone told us. If you weren't looking for it you would not see.

I: Oh wow.

R: He should have taken a picture of that because that's history right there.

I: That's rich. 1968. I was born in 1970 so that's within my lifetime.

R: We used to go camping up here in the Smokey Mountains, and we were very few black people camped. At least up here, I don't know about anywhere else. But we did, we camped and we would come up here to the Smokey Mountains, which we loved and I guess we were unique for a black family then because, like I said, we would drive, we lived at that time in Middletown so the interstate wasn't completed, so we had to go through all these little small towns, just to get up here to the Smokey Mountains and we would be up here and Husband, we wouldn't see a black person anywhere even in the campsites, but we were never mistreated, never. First time we were ever mistreated camping was down here in Crossville and we went to Standing Stone State Park, and we were with another couple and our kids were young and a group of white boys went around in their truck yelling nigger, nigger, oh yeah.

I: This was a group of other campers that were there?

R: Well we learned they were local boys. Now, there were other campers in the park and we never said anything to the Forest Ranger and next thing we know, here comes the Forest Ranger saying I heard that you guys had a bad experience, we were like, how did you know? The other campers had went and told, cause we had never opened our mouth. But Husband had always carried a gun, and so did

Rufus, and it was like, come if you want to. I would say that in our society now, our people have had to work too hard to allow things to go back the way they used to be. And my grandfather, when he was raising us, he used to tell me, he told my uncles and my aunts too, he said you never run from them. He said when you're right be willing to stand up for what is right, even if it means you have to die. So the attitude is, even if you kill me, so what I die. It's better for me to be right, than for you to mistreat me in some way. I wasn't afraid of death, I'm still not, so that was already in my head so I said hey, do something I am not going to step back, he said those days are over. You know they tell him they're gonna burn a cross in our yard. He told them come, come on.

I: When did this happen?

R: Not in this neighborhood, at our first house. Oh yeah, when I worked in Oakridge the Klu Klux Klan was real, real obvious. They used to go down here to a park in Oakridge called, I think it's called Yearly Park and um, they used to have their little rallies and for a while the Klan was burning crosses all the time in people's yards. They used to tease Husband, they said well the Klan's gonna come a burn a cross in your yard, and Husband says fine com'mon, He said I guarantee you, when you burn that cross you will be buried there. And the people who were, when they think you're that way, they tend to leave you alone. Cause they know you'll fight back.

I: Kinda like the incident when your grandfather went down with his uncle.

R: Right, what are they going to do? Kill you, you gotta die sometime.

I: Interesting.

R: Yeah, sure did, they were burning crosses, now talking about experiences, I had never seen the Klan in life, I'd seen them on TV. I can remember thinking, when I drove by, cause I worked here and the park, you went around the street and drive around the park was over here, so I was going home and that was the first time I had ever seen the Klan,

I: When are we talking about, what year?

R: Uh, 19, early 1970's.

I: Okay.

R: And I stopped, cause I was mesmerized.

I: That was not smart.

- R: That probably was not a smart thing to do, but the fear, because I had not grown up, like my husband grew up knowing and seeing how the Klan could really intimidate and do those kinds of things to you. I had read about it, but I had never experienced, the fear factor had never come across. It was more curiosity, but I wasn't stupid enough to walk up there either, but then I can remember thinking, I can remember this as if it happened yesterday, I can remember thinking, how sad to be so full of that kind of hate and just drove on.
- I: That's interesting that you mention that cause the first time I saw the Klan was really, let's see my grandmother died in 2001, it was 2000 and we were having a family reunion in Pelahatchie, Mississippi, I'm from Jackson, Mississippi and of course knew about the Klu Klux Klan and whatever, so we were going to our family reunion and most of my cousins, aunts and uncles live in New York now, so they had come down to Jackson and we were driving from Jackson to Pelahatchie, and as we pull into the City of Pelahatchie there was this big church over to the left and these guys with white hoods and white costumes on. My cousin was like, man that's the Klu Klux Klan, and I was like whatever, cause they'd been junking on Mississippi since they arrived, so I was like whatever. And I look closer and they had their signs and stuff and I was like, oh my god, it really is the Klu Klux Klan having a big rally on a Saturday afternoon in Pelahatchie, Mississippi, blew my mind, cause that was all they needed to see. You all can't come anywhere in the South and da, da, da. But it blew my mind that in the year 2000 plus, that they were still that vivid and blatant in their beliefs.
- R: But did you feel afraid?
- I: I didn't feel afraid at all.
- R: See, and that's the point. I think 100 years ago you would have.
- I: I think so. I think probably even 30 years ago, or 50 years ago
- R: You would have, because you didn't have nothing on your side as far as the government or the state that would have at least tried to help you or protect you. Nowadays you have a little bit more protection, so you are willing to stand up to them and face them. Except I read something in the paper the other day, they've become very sophisticated now,
- I: Right, with the internet you can hide behind that now.
- R: But even with the class of individuals that are becoming involved with the Klan, they are more educated people now. See before the majority of the Klan were uneducated, most of them couldn't read or write, poor. We as a society better

look out that a lot of these people now are not that uneducated and they are not that poor. Hitler came to power not strictly off the backs of the poor.

I: That does surprise me.

R: And somebody I work with was talking about this the other day, they were talking about terrorism and whatever, and I said you know, as a black person, most black people we live with terrorism all the time, so what's the big deal. What do you mean Pat? Well what do you think when the Klan would come in and hang people and rape people, what do you call that? That's home grown terrorism. I said, as a black person we had to learn to deal with terrorists all our lives. So this is just another part of it.

I: What's your prognosis for the near future in terms of race relations?

R: Here in East Tennessee or in the Country?

I: Both.

R: I'm an optimist, maybe I shouldn't be, but nationally, I'm optimistic that the younger generation like your children, they are not going to, hopefully have the same,

I: And your daughter,

R: have the same hang ups as we have. I mean look around you, even in East Tennessee you always saw black men and white women, I mean that's been going on forever, but in East Tennessee you see a lot of black women with white men, we've got several friends whose daughters are married to white men. Their children hopefully won't have the same hang ups, it'll be different kinds of hang ups, but hopefully it won't be the racial aspect of it so much. So, I'm hoping in the next five or six generations it will be better racially because our culture is becoming so diverse. Even in East Tennessee you've got an influx of Mexicans now. Okay, the Mexicans are what Husband and I call the poor black, that's where poor black people were. And I told my optometrist one day, I asked if he had anybody that spoke Spanish in here. He says, well no I don't think, and I said you're losing money. I said Spanish people have to have glasses too. They are going to feel far more comfortable coming to a place that can speak their language. He went out there and hired somebody who spoke Spanish. So, what I'm saying is, you give them a couple of generations where their children have had an opportunity to get educated and whatever, they are going to meet these other children from different races and they are gonna be just like ours. So the overall make up in the East Tennessee area is going to change. It'll take time, but it will change.

Husband: The stats indicate that it takes 3 generations to accomplish that

I: Changing demographics?

Husband: Yeah, and when you are bringing a new, so called minority. Because they are saying this same thing about the Asians that come in, things are different for them because they are given low cost, low interest loans to start business and anyone over 21 years of age is given, it's not called a social security check, but it's from social security funds, up until 2 or 3 years. All you have to do is come over and be over 21 and receive these funds, either 30 or 40 years, something like that. That's why you see so many of them in the same household. They get a lot of free money. Whereas the Mexicans don't do that. Now the blacks have never had that opportunity either. That's why they are so eager coming from overseas.

R: But then their culture, I deal with immigration, the company I work with. We're talking about various different cultures too and you've got to take that into consideration. What he's talking about is true from a socio economic side of it, they can come over here and get different kinds of substance to help them get loans to buy these hotels and, that we don't have the same opportunities. So I think that, you know when we go into stores now and restaurants, you see a lot of white people whose, what appears to be their grandchildren, are biracial, lots. You know cause you walk in and you go, something wrong here. And I have seen where maybe before the grand children came into play, some of the people maybe wouldn't give a black person a second thought, but once they got a child, that's their grandchild. Just like my grandchild is my grandchild. We have black racists too. And my husband is one of them, my girlfriends say god punished him cause my son-in-law is white.

I: Ahh.

R: And do you think, he adores his granddaughter. I'm talking about you hon, about being a black racist.

Husband: Well to some extent. I came up in a different era. I didn't try to teach my children the same hang ups because I get a little vulgar sometimes. Here are two things that you might read for your daughter, about the bully on the bus, and then about these different groups that work within the United States.

I: Interesting, thank you.

R: What was I saying,

I: You were saying about the biracial children.

R: Oh yes, I think that will change because in most cases people cannot not love their grandchildren. And as they love their grandchildren, they gotta accept who they are. But and still in our society even if you got a little bit of black blood, even though you may look white, they still consider you black. And see in this case my son-in-law has a white father and a black mother, he looks white. But he goes as a black person. Yeah, he has the blue eyes and the fair skin, straight hair the whole bit, and you know when he first came in, my husband was like,

I: Did he have a stroke?

R: Stroke, that was an understatement. He went down the hallway, he wouldn't come in. They met when they were in college. No Dee Dee never even thought about it,

Husband: She didn't tell me anything, right at that front door.

I: It's just like that movie with Bernie Mac, Guess Whose Coming to Dinner.

R: Yeah, I'm serious, I'll never forget it. It was Thanksgiving Weekend. She was a junior at college and she had said, she had called that she was coming home. She had a yellow Volkswagen that her dad had bought her when she was in college, and she loved her little Volkswagen, but you know how Volkswagens are, you could hear them a mile away they are loud little cars. And so, when she pulled into the sub-division I could hear her and Husband said, oh here comes Dee Dee. Now you gotta understand, he loves his son dearly, but Dee Dee is the apple of his eye. So she comes in and I go down, we lived in a split foyer, you know what that is, so I was coming down the steps, I opened the door and there's this white guy standing there, and I'm like, who are you? And by that time my daughter come running in Hi mommy I want you to meet Vincent. I said Hi, by that time my husband came down. He took one look and walked right back down the hall, would not even come out. So, I invited him in we were sitting there and I said oh, my name is Pat and he said my name is Vincent Rackinelli, I said oh, by that time my son comes up the steps and says we don't have any jungle fever here. And Dee Dee was like, oh Husband. And Vincent, I have to hand it to him, my son's about 6 feet 3, Vincent's all the way at 5'9, maybe 5'10. And so, he looked at Husband and he said "looks can be deceiving". And when he said that I looked at him really hard then, and then I could tell you know cause his nose was a little wider, but the overall features, I mean you don't see too many of us with blue eyes, and then I could tell, you know that he was mixed. Well that was a really a close family experience, for him not for me cause see I'm the third oldest of 30 some grandchildren and there is only 3 of us married to blacks.

I: Wow. Well you did mention that your grandmother was,

R: So I grew up in a very culturally diverse family which, you know was no big deal for me, it was for him. But then you've gotta understand the demographics of where I grew up and where he grew up and the experiences he had as a young person versus the experiences I had as a young person.

I: Very interesting.

R: North and south. When I first came here to the south, oh gosh, every time I opened up my mouth, oh you're a damn Yankee. I used to hear that all the time. And I'd get so agitated and one time I said, yes but we won the war. And that, would literally, the people here in the South still take that very, very seriously when you say that. It was like, oh I'm gonna start another war right here, I didn't care.

I: I think that's probably an Eastern Tennessee thing, I didn't see that in Mississippi growing up.

Husband: It's not happening in Middle Tennessee nor Western Tennessee. There are a lot of things different in this part of Tennessee.

R: Even when I'm in Oakridge, you know Oakridge, Tennessee is?

I: I do.

R: Well, that is, I guess you wanna say, supposed to be the intellectual part of the East Tennessee area. Because you've got Oakridge National Labs, you've got the Y12 facility, you've got what we still call K25 but you have all these scientists, so Oakridge has been known for having a variety of different people from all over the world in their community. Um, that being said however, they still discriminate. Um when I first came here and I worked for, DOE didn't used to be DOE, Department of Energy, I can't remember what it was called back then, but anyway I worked for Union Carbide which actually managed Oakridge National Lab, Y12 and K25. And I worked for them at what they called their central location which was the area that did all the hiring and whatever. I noticed if we would hire people, if they were minorities, they were not from Knoxville and Oakridge. Any blacks they brought in were from out of the area. When I went to my company I noticed that we did the same thing.

I: Why was that, did you know?

R: I asked, I said why is it that you don't seem to hire black people that are from this area? They have never given me an answer, I have never had an answer, but if you could go back and look at the statistical data especially, let's say from 1968 up to, I'd say as late as what 2000 Husband?

Husband: At least 68 to the 90's.

R: If you looked at their hiring record and looked at the people they were hiring that were of color. Take the Asians out of it, the Asians because at that time there were just Asians and blacks, we didn't have any other ethnic groups, yeah and white women. But if you were to look, if they hired 200 black people and looked at where those black people came from I'd be willing to bet you had less than 1% that were from the Knoxville Oakridge area.

I: Why do you think that, I guess you don't know, but why do you think?

R: I think, I've thought about this and our friends, most of our friends come from, we call ourselves transients, we weren't born and raised here.

I: But you've been here for 30 years.

R: 38 years. But seriously most of our friends are from North Carolina, Mississippi, Virginia, wherever we've all talked about it because they've noticed it in their places of employment as well, and the only thing we possibly can think of is just some kind of stigma between Oakridge and what they perceive the intelligence of the black community here. 50 years ago the black schools were teaching young girls how to be maids. Yeah, when I first heard that, I about fell out. I couldn't believe it, and that was the mentality because they knew you couldn't get these jobs. You were going to go to college and get a teaching degree or you could be a maid that was overall. And my husband now he's from further south of this area and he said all he was taught, he's from Clarksville and he said when he went to school teachers and whatever were teaching them that they could be whatever they wanted to be. But when I sat there and listen to some of these teachers talk about, oh yes we taught them because that was pretty much all you could do around here.

Husband: But they didn't teach calculus and Latin either, but in the black schools where I'm from they taught calculus and Latin but down here, they had never heard of it.

I: Do you think, I think you mentioned to me the city you grew up in was near an army base? So it was more integrated that that time?

Husband: Nashville had even more than what we had. If you went to school. Some parents, blacks in my community sent their kids to schools in Nashville because they had more to offer, especially if they knew that their kids were going to college. And so, you know, we grew up understanding that you had to have these courses. Well, you come down here, and when we came here in 72, I came here in 72 first and then they came and they said they had just recently had stopped teaching blacks about being domestics. It just about blew my mind.

R: When I first heard that, my mouth dropped because, now I was younger. I'm younger than he is a good five years younger than he is and even in my school, I was offered French, German, Latin and Italian. We had calculus, algebra, we were taking algebra and geometry in 7th and 8th grades, so I just couldn't imagine that concept.

Husband: Well this is sort of diverting from the subject, but in our school system we had all black teachers and if a kid was slow and really wasn't able to do school work, the teachers would put him in a vocational, what they called the vocational part of our school. Where brick masonry was taught, auto mechanics was taught, carpentry was taught, plumbing, and something else. Well they would divert that kid to something that he could learn how to do something, you know, because they knew that he was incapable of, well not incapable but not capable of learning at the same pace as everyone else, but nevertheless this individual was going to have to earn a living like everyone else. So they taught this kid how to do something. They don't do that anymore.

R: Well now, we have a curriculum like that, I don't think that's racism, I think that's just the overall situation.

Husband: But the difference is how teachers would help students as opposed to now. You know we have a boy that we knew, we asked the school administration to hold back a year, because he needed that year. They promoted him and gave him some kind of designation that I'd never heard of before. That's what they do, and then at the end of the 12 years you don't receive a diploma, you get a certificate. So you don't graduate from High School, but you don't stay in High School either, you get your certificate and you're outta there.

R: And what's so bad is you get a certificate from these schools, you can't even go into the military with a certificate I'm surprised they can still do that.

I: I'm amazed they are allowed to do that.

Husband: Neither can I, because here you are, you've promoted through all these grades. He becomes a senior and you say well, he doesn't meet the standard, so you hand him a certificate. Well he could have possibly met the standards if you held him back in the 9th grade. We just don't get it, but we're trying to get onto some state children advocacy committees because this school system and the way they do things, is just crazy, but it starts at these state committees. And you have to get onto these committees to understand what's going on. With all these systems, education, judicial. It's a mess.

I: I had no idea about the school system here, I've learned

R: Well what we have tried to do is especially any young people we are meeting, like you, and a young woman at work that's trying to have a baby. And we had been talking, she's from Mississippi too and she has her bachelors and we were talking and I said Shandra, what you need to do be aware of, just because you live here, don't take these things for granted. Just like I'm telling you about your daughter. When she comes home, ask her, because like we said, she is not going to recognize the subtleness, ask her, well how was your school day? What happens when you raise your hand in class, do you get called on when you raise your hand in class? A friend of mine just told me, just last week child over here in Cars, near Clinton, child came home to her mother said she wanted to be white. And the mother asked her, why? Because I wanna be pretty, and she said well what are you talking about? Well her teacher would tell these little blonde blue eyed girls everyday how beautiful they were and never would tell her. So, the perception to that child was she wasn't beautiful. The mother went up there and told the teacher, you will tell, I forgot what her daughter's name was, my daughter she is beautiful. You will tell her everyday she is beautiful. And when she finished telling her, she told her why. And then she went and talked to the school. What I'm saying, is this is a young child. How old is your little girl?

I: Six.

R: Okay. I think this one is about 7 or 8. See what I mean with the subtle. The child had picked up on, even though the teacher did not say anything exactly to that child, but she had picked up on what, my teacher's told so and so she's beautiful so therefore I'm not. Okay, this happened just a few months ago, and that's the point I'm trying to make. As you are a young parent, show up at school sometimes,

I: Oh, I go to her school all the time.

R: That's what you have to do. Do you have a husband?

I: I'm single.

R: Well, go and show up. Let them know you are visible. The guy that came in here, he has three boys, they live next door and Michael is extremely educated as well, He shows up at these schools all the time. He comes up and he does some kind of grading papers and whatever, letting the school know he is visible. That he is there. Cause I talked to Michael about that, I said Michael, you've got boys and his oldest one is just gonna turn 12 or 11, I think Jordan turns 11 this Saturday. So we're talking about a pre-teen. You've seen the little ones, well his oldest one is real attractive. And I said when he turns 13, 14 these little girls are gonna be all over him. And I said as a parent of a male child, you need to be fully aware of what's going on. So Michael is very much aware, and he had talked to the teachers about how they interact with male black kids. He's letting them know

that they go right out here. I think somebody told me A O Watson might have 5 black children, if they got that many.

Husband: It might be less than that, I went over the Ridge on Monday and what's the name of that Fairguard and two administrators are black. They had one certified black teacher, the administration person in charge of the program are black. But all the teachers except one are white.

I: Where is this?

Husband: It's over, let me see if I could tell you where it was.

R: It's in East Knoxville.

Husband: Yeah.

I: East Knoxville, I'm not gonna know, I'm not from here.

R: It's a predominately black area.

I: Oh wow.

Husband: and they only had but one black certified teacher and then the other teacher that is black, he's a volunteer, he teaches Spanish. And that's the only, and luckily enough he's a black male and like he said he's the only black face these kids see most of the day. That's why we said we are going to start going back over there so they can see us. So it's a problem, and this is in the heart of a black neighborhood the heart of a black neighborhood.

R: But we were talking about the differences. There are some definite differences here in East Tennessee in the way that black people that were born and raised here think. You know we were ostracized by the black community when we first moved here.

I: Why?

R: Because we chose not to live on the East side and the reason we didn't live on the east side was because my husband worked at Bullrun which is in Oakridge and I worked at Oakridge Associate Universities, why would I want to drive that distance. But, overall we were ostracized because we chose not to be in the heart of the black community.

Husband: There was another reason also, per square foot,

R: Yeah, economically.

Husband: If you divided up per square foot the homes cost more in East Knoxville than they did out here. So what they were doing, they were doing what we used to call “nigger insurances”. They were charging black people more for the same type of housing, and they didn’t realize it. Like I told Pat, you can’t blame them; if they are going to charge more and you can’t figure it out yourself I’d do the same thing. You should be capable of figuring out how much you are paying for square footage. Rather than just saying, I’m living in East Knoxville, I’m living in West Knoxville. So when I would give them my figures and show they why, they say, where do you get those figures from? I say, look in the book man, it’s real simple to figure out. Well I don’t think that’s right. Well I said I’m not spending my dollars like that. So that was the other reason, they didn’t realize that.

I: Do you think it’s changed since then? Do you think that mind set still exists?

R: I call it the slave mentality.

Husband: Yeah that mind set still exists because we have that problem in our Church, you know, I’ve resigned from a number of committees because of the backward thinking, and we were talking about it last night, the reason our church, there are other black churches that are really, really growing and our church, United Methodist, they were used to having all the doctors and lawyers belong to that church and so they had money, but they didn’t have any progressive thinking. And so, now we’re stagnant. And everyone else, all the Baptist Churches are growing. Black, white, everybody. And it’s because we don’t have any plans, we just our church set back the descendents who are going to church so we don’t build buildings and own our property, we were building some more buildings on our property, but we don’t have a plan. We don’t have a computer print out of where we want the place to build and what we want the lot to look like.

R: And I think here again we are talking about, the majority of the people that belong to our church are home grown. When you talk about these other churches that are growing, they have a larger percentage of their church congregation that’s from outside this area. Okay, so that’s what I’m saying. I call it a slave mentality. Where the master’s always right, so you go along with it. But you come in as a person that’s a slave and you try to tell them something different and it’s oh they can’t listen to you cause you don’t know anything, you’re an outsider.

Husband: The NAACP told me I live in West Knoxville

R: Therefore you can’t belong to the NAACP

Husband: I am black, yeah, they told me you live in West Knoxville you don't have the same problems.

I: How long ago was that?

Husband: Oh gosh about 30 years. They said you live in West Knoxville, you don't have the same problem.

R: We had more problems because we lived out here. White people didn't open up their arms and say welcome.

I: Your husband told me about some of your experiences shopping for homes when you first got here.

R: Yeah and I told you about my friend when the loan officer said he had to put white on the application otherwise you wouldn't have gotten the loan for that money. They were closing at this point and they were building their dream house, what were they going to do?

I: I'm going to officially close the interview at this point.

INTERVIEW THREE

Participant: AA Female
Banking branch manager
Early 30s
One daughter age 1

I: Okay, today is March 4th 2006 and I'm with interview number 4. It is a participant with whom, both of her parents I have spoken with previously, individually before today. The topic that I'm interested in for my dissertation is experiences with discrimination in retail settings. So, in any kind of retail settings whether it's a store like Wal-Mart or a very exclusive niche retailer. Those are the experiences that I'm interested in learning about. But, because I'm really trying to know what individual's experiences are in those situations, it's very important for me to know about the individuals that I'm talking with. So that, I know more about you, and your individual situation, that we are going to be talking about later. I want you to tell me anything about you that you think is important for me to know as we start this study.

R: Um, one of the things, I guess that would say is important about me, um is my ability to adapt. And, being raised in Knoxville and, at the level that, I went to private school as well as public school. I went to a college prep school. And, you almost have a life of duality when you are in situations like that. Black at home and you have to intermingle when you go to school.

I: Which was your early experience; you said you had both private and public. Tell me about those experiences, which was first? What do you remember from it?

R: My private school was my first school and is my earliest memories of school. I remember we used to play football, um, swimming; the classrooms were really, really small. It's a very vague memory because I was still very young, you know I'm 37 years old now and that was 31 years ago, so they were fond memories. I had more fun with the kids. I didn't experience racism until, where I can consciously remember it is when I was in public school.

I: Okay, tell me about that. What age did you go to public school?

R: I believe I was in 6th grade.

I: Tell me about that.

R: Um, a kid called me a nigger. That was my first experience and I hauled off and beat the snot out of Billy.

I: Out of Billy.

R: His name was Billy and he was the typical little red neck Billy, like you would say “everyone hates Chris” that little boy and Billy were identical.

I: When you first heard that word, what was it, what was your history of, your understanding of that word, that lead you to know him calling you that was a bad thing to do? If he had called you a green Martian, it would not have been the same as that word. What was the history behind that, that made that such an important thing for you to react the way you did?

R: I actually heard the word. I don’t remember this experience, I remember from my mother telling me about it. But, I told you I went to private school here. I actually went to Kindergarten in Clarksville, Tennessee.

I: Okay.

R: Montgomery. I didn’t know what it was when I first was called, I came home and asked my mother, and that’s when I found out what nigger meant.

I: So, someone called you that,

R: And I was clueless, I didn’t know how to respond. I’m like, whatever you know into my own little world and I came home one day and was like, “by the way mommy, what does this mean?” And my mother, I could tell by her body language, when she was describing, I vaguely remember it. Because, she realized that I didn’t know, because I had never heard my parents curse or use that,

I: How old were you at this time?

R: Oh, I was probably just four or five years old, but you have to remember, I grew up in a house where I never heard that word in my house. I didn’t hear cursing in my house, so when something like that is introduced to me I was very naïve, it was exactly what it is, a word and I enquired about it. At that time when Billy, the reason the experience with Billy sticks out, I understood what that word meant by that time.

I: So, when that happened to you at age four or five, do you recall when you came home and told your parents, what did they explain to you what was meant by that word? Do you recall that conversation at all?

R: I recall us talking about it and mom telling me over and over. This is typical of my parents, they opened up Webster's dictionary and that's the definition I got. Okay, and also between mom and dad and of course by the time I got to 6th grade, other black kids that I had been exposed to you understood other connotations that came with that word. It wasn't just, um a derogatory word used to talk about somebody who is lazy and blah, blah, blah. I understood by the time I got to 6th grade that's what white people called us, at times and they are using it to make us less than human.

I: So when you say the other connotations that go along with the word that's what you mean?

R: Yes, less than human. That you are not even worth as much as they would value a car. And that is where I was passionate for a little while before I got more mature, you're not going to call me that.

I: Where did you get the idea, your response you said when you heard that word in 6th grade, your exact words were to "beat the snot" out of him.

R: I don't even think I said anything to him. I just looked at him and went boom.

I: Okay, you beat him up, how did you get the idea that was an appropriate response to that situation?

R: You know what, it never occurred to me, and let me tell you why. You know what my teacher did; I just knew I was going to get kicked out of school. She said honey you did a good job. She sent him to the Principal and sent me back to class.

I: Was your teacher African-American or white?

R: No, she was a white lady. Older white lady. I can't remember her name, was it Miss Horton, the only thing I can remember is she married her husband after the first date. And I was thinking, people would do that? You know they had been married for like 40 years at that time. Of course being a kid we knew about marriage, but I knew 40 years was a long time, you know, of course I thought that was forever.

I: So when you came home, that day when that incident happened and you came home. I guess you weren't sent home as a result based on what I just heard. At the end of the day, when you tell your parents about that incident, what was their response to it?

R: Probably not appropriate, my daddy says “did you hit him good?” My daddy’s philosophy. You know what, you said that about racism, I remember when a cross was burnt in our yard. Oh, I totally forgot about that.

I: Tell me about that.

R: We were living in Clarksville, on Downer Drive and all I remember, it goes back to what my daddy always told me cause I remember my dad told us to get somewhere safe. I guess my daddy went and got a gun. I don’t know I never saw my daddy’s gun until I was like; I was a teenager when I realized my dad owned a gun. And I remember a cross being, and to be honest with you, I didn’t know what a cross meant. I was like, why are they doing that? That’s just stupid maybe they need to burn some leaves. You know when you are young, you don’t really.

I: How old do you think you were?

R: It’s gotta be before Kindergarten, I guess. I don’t know if it happened before I knew what nigger meant, I can’t remember. I only can remember the cross because I remember; I think I’m the one who told daddy. I was like mamma, daddy there’s somebody outside burning a cross in our yard. Not realizing the significance of a cross being burnt in your yard. You know these are memories, you know, you forget as you get older, but I totally forgot about that, that was a long time ago, that was a long time ago.

I: I understand that you forget, but that really does impact the research that I’m doing. Part of what I know is important in later experiences is how past experiences shape the experiences that we have in later years. So, the fact that you remember that now is really great. So, going back to that experience, tell me just as much of that as you can remember.

R: I think I was more scared of the fire than anything. I was a blank sheet back then. I didn’t know what nigger meant. I didn’t know what the cross meant. As I got older and started understanding they only did that to black people. They only called black people this. The power that I gave that word, the power of how I looked at white people was shaped from some of those experiences.

I: So the fear, because you didn’t understand the rationale, if I’m understanding you correctly, you didn’t necessarily understand the rationale behind it, for that particular incident that long ago, you were probably more afraid of the fire itself than what the implications were.

R: Right.

I: When did you come to realize what that fire symbolized and why they were burning it in front of your house?

R: It must have been around the time I was in 1st grade, because I could tell you the feelings, when he called me that word; I knew exactly what it meant. I knew he meant it to hurt me. I knew he was trying to tell me I was nothing, and I said no.

I: How did you know that?

R: Probably from conversations with other kids.

I: Were there any other African American kids at your school?

R: Um hum. There was a few, only a handful.

I: Okay.

R: Um, I went to a predominately white school, even in private school, predominately white. And of course being the few black kids, back then we all congregated. We shared our experiences because you don't get invited to birthday parties. First these things you don't really understand, but as you get older and you are involved and you are sharing your experiences with each other, you realize, oh Shana didn't get invited either. Then you start putting two and two together. In the beginning you are very innocent, you are very just like a regular kid. I was scared of the fire, not understanding what it meant. I ignored the word because I didn't understand what it meant. And, when I understood people intentions and meanings, my reaction changed. It evolved from what I learned. I started learning from my other, I had cousins. Of course I'm gonna tell them. Did you know such and such, girl they're not supposed to do that, this is what they do to try to put us down and blah, blah, blah. And as I converse with my family,

I: These are cousins that were here in the same school system that you were in or,?

R: No, I grew up, my daddy's sister which is really my aunt, I shouldn't call her my cousin but I only had a few cousins. Diane is only 5 years older. Daddy is 19 years older than his youngest sibling. Okay, she was the one that I confided in, I had four cousins that we semi-grew up together and those were my aunt, my dad's full sister, Carol's sons and they were from the Projects so, they were hard core.

I: Here?

R: No that was in Clarksville because we went back and forth.

I: They had projects in Clarksville?

R: Girl yeah. Girl you wouldn't believe it?

I: I think of Projects in like LA or New York.

R: You would not believe it, and they are probably very clean compared to those you see in those places. See they were real hard. Michael was like you don't like white people. White kids will tell you this and white kids will tell you that, because you are black and blah, blah. And as I grew, I started realizing you know; when I would be the only one not invited to a party it wasn't necessarily always because they didn't like me.

I: Do you recall a specific instance when that occurred?

R: Um, I was here in Knoxville and I wasn't getting invited, I was probably in 7th grade, and I wasn't getting invited you know all the girls in the class were, and I wouldn't be invited. You learn to ignore a lot. I'm gonna tell you about my personality. I would filter those things out, because if I focused on that even at a young age, that was gonna tear me down. Because I already had a temper, I get that from my grandmother. So I realized.

I: Your grandmother on what side, your mom?

R: Yes. My mother's mother. She's a little thing, she was only 5 feet, 4-4 ½ shoe, but she had a bad temper.

I: I guess that was based on what your mom was talking about. I just got a feeling that was the part that came from my mom's side.

R: Because my grandmother was a good person, she was fair, but once you crossed her she was through with you. End of story. You know, she didn't play games. I had played that game; I thought that was just a way to manipulate me to make me feel bad. There was other things I could do with my time and I had to learn that part of who I am at an early age.

I: Tell me what that means, "learn that part at an early age". "Learn who you were at an early age", what does that mean?

R: Growing up and the majority of my adult life was here in Knoxville. I mean growing up all the way until my early 20's. You know, there was a lot of birthday parties, there was a lot of clubs I was excluded from. I remember one year when we were at Farragat, now granted, there was only 17 of us, out of 1100

kids, okay, that does not even constitute 10% okay, and we understand that. But, over the years we never had a black cheerleader or a pom pom girl. It got to the point as a group and our parents we had enough. So, every girl in the whole school signed up and participated in every trial. Me who hated that kind of stuff. We didn't care, every one of us. Because, even though we made up less than 10% we would maybe make up 20% of the girls who were actually applying. If that makes sense.

I: I do, I understand what you're saying.

R: And so, we were like, you know what they need to put a black, and do you know, they did. They picked the biggest girl to be on the pom pom squad.

I: Really?

R: The biggest. So, they are like okay we'll do what you want, but this is how we're gonna do it. Rita was a star. Let me tell you, Rita Williams, she lost weight. And that's hard for a kid. Of all the people, Rita didn't think they would pick her. She was just doing it because we all made up our minds we were all gonna do it. That included the fat ones, the short ones, the skinny ones, everybody. But she lost weight, as much weight as she can for a kid and she practiced and practiced and she was not an embarrassment. But that's a shame, but from that point on, there was a Marcy Pete was the second one, I think she was on the cheerleading squad or pom pom, one or the other. And of course she fit the little pom pom look and everything. So I guess we made our point.

I: Okay,

R: But, you know, Rita did sacrifice. Because I know, can you imagine? It's like someone coming to me and saying, well we want you to be on the scientific engineer committee. Okay. I don't know the first thing, and I'm supposed to represent all my people. Yeah, I would probably go into Barnes and Nobles and try to figure out what the heck I'm doing.

I: You know that's so amazing to me because we are in the same age range and I grew up in Mississippi which is even further south than Tennessee and I can honestly say that I never had any experiences that even remotely mirrored those.

R: What was the make up? I went to private schools.

I: I went to private schools all of my life also. My dad taught in the public school system in Jackson Mississippi all his life because he had knowledge or an awareness of the public school system that he didn't want to send his children to public schools so he sent us to private schools. We went to private schools that were probably 50% African American 50% white people.

R: Girl, if I saw that many black people at school I would probably faint if I was a kid.

I: I think that really had a lot to do with my experience because the white people that were there, had to be open to the fact that their children were going to be socializing with African-American children.

R: Wow.

I: And even after that, that's elementary school, the high school that I went to was probably 25% African American, 75% other, but because a lot of those kids had gone to the same elementary schools that we had gone to I never experienced anything that I would have remotely contributed to racism or a negative experience.

R: That makes a huge difference, I'm gonna tell you because when I first went to a place where they had almost 50%, I remember whispering to somebody who was with me at the time, I don't know if I've ever seen this many black people.

I: Where was that?

R: We went somewhere, I think it was in Atlanta. I was shocked there were that many black people in one area, because, you have to understand Enfield, Connecticut my family is the only black.

I: But you didn't grow up in Enfield Connecticut. I know your mamma did.

R: But I spent summers there. I spent summers between here and there. My perception was, we were all scattered. Okay, you know kids don't talk about this with their parents. I'm sure my mother, if I had enquired would have said "oh no baby, this is not how it is". But I didn't. You know I'd go see Don and Danny and all of my other cousins up there and we were the only blacks. The berry clan. We were the only blacks in Enfield, Connecticut. I'm sure not now, but back then. Because everyone I went to the basketball was my cousins. It wasn't like there was anybody else I knew. Okay. I was like okay, whatever. And come here. I remember I was about 13, I don't know, I was pretty young and I was amazed that we would congregate in one area. Because what I saw on TV was so far away. Africa I remember some of the times which I would watch TV. I would say why would they show us with our shirts down. They didn't show any white people, you know, in those type of settings like that. I picked up on a lot of stuff early, and you know I had a lot of anger.

I: Did you discuss those things with your parents?

R: Off and on, you know just as a regular teen. I would make comments and my mother would say, “use prayer baby”. And when you are 13, 14 you’re like prayer! Yes I know god exists but he was not tangible to me because of my lack of maturity at that time. Like Monica who is an MD here I wish I could introduce you because

I: Your mother said there were four or five of you all that grew up together that are really close now.

R: Um hum. Monica is an MD up in Chicago, my girlfriend Stephanie who is also an MD up in Charlotte, my girlfriend Marcy who is married to one of the coaches for the Dallas Cowboys, and then my girlfriend Collette, her husband passed away about two or three years ago, who is in Atlanta, so yeah I did.

I: Okay, well that informs me a little bit of your history so let’s move on to the arena that I’m working in which is retail settings and the feeling of being treated differently because of your ethnicity in a retail setting. Can you recall the first time that you felt that you were being treated differently because of your ethnicity? Tell me a little bit about that.

R: Um hum. West Town Mall, Boutique B. I don’t know if they are in business, but they were like the chic shop when I was growing up. I would go in there repeatedly, repeatedly and they would ignore me as if I was invisible. And I couldn’t understand. I thought they thought I was poor or something but I would see people coming in after me and they were just as helpful. I mean, I even applied there when I was 16. I don’t think I even got an acknowledgement or response that I even put in an application. And, as I got older I realized that they just didn’t cater to African Americans, they didn’t cater to any minority, I don’t care if you were Hispanic or anybody, they didn’t want anything to do with you.

I: Tell me about that, what made you come to that opinion?

R: I think when I applied for the job at 16 I went back and they were like um, we don’t see your application. I had gotten the name and everything and she said, all the positions are filled. And I said well, you know, I come in here time and time again. I said you guys don’t cater to any African Americans that walk in here; you know I was sort of blunt. And of course she was like. You know I didn’t have to work at 16 that was my choice. My daddy wouldn’t raise my allowance so I thought I would go get some money then, how about that. So, I was very, probably very forthright when I spoke to them. But it confirmed, she was totally ignoring me like, whatever are you done yet. And I knew, I knew. I said okay.

I: Was that the manager you spoke with or just another sales clerk there?

R: I'm not sure. I probably knowing me would have asked for a manager. Because that's one of the first things I've learned very early, if you have an issue, go straight to the manager.

I: How did you learn that?

R: My mom,

I: Do you recall an experience when you were with her and that happened?

R: I don't know

I: Nothing that stands out in your mind as.

R: I don't think so, 'cause my mother, you know she is very poised and tries to do everything per etiquette, but after a while she will go to the manager. Now, my daddy isn't as poised. He will just sit there and like, I need to talk to the manager.

I: Do you recall any experiences in your youth, either with your mom or dad in a situation that you thought or they thought was a racist situation and how they handled that situation?

R: Yes, I'll tell you one that I experienced; it was when mom and dad were trying to sell their house.

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I: How old were you at the time?

R: Um, well granny was still alive, so I had to be about 16; my grandmother was still alive so I was about 16 years old. And, we lived in Farragat which at that time was predominately white. And my grandmother was there. Of course mom and dad were working. I think I had just come home from school or right before I came home from school. And the realtor had some people interested in buying the house and started talking to them. They said, I saw their maid. She said oh no, this is a Negro family's home. And my grandmother overheard them. Of course I don't know what transpired, I remember coming home and my daddy was pissed. Because they didn't put a contract on the house, when they were telling the realtor they wanted to and the realtor talking them out of it because my parents were black. I don't quite remember, mom and dad could probably tell you more about that experience, I just remember the highlights because daddy was pissed, granny was right there and Mama was heated.

I: Do you remember anything about how they resolved it, what ultimately happened in terms of their response to it?

R: I don't know what happened. We didn't sell our house, mom and dad didn't sell their house then. Mom and dad moved into this house 5 or 6 years ago, so obviously something happened where daddy just took it off the market and they re-did things. I remember when he first bought this house, he rented the house for years. upon himself.

I: [Sound of something crashing downstairs.] I hope that was not my daughter, Okay, back to the first answer that you had. The first incident in a retail setting at Boutique B where you said that you thought that people were ignoring you. You said that you mentioned that to somebody, do you recall

R: I think it was the manager. I think it really was, because I remember asking for him.

I: I wanna back up for a second. Tell me about from the time you first walked in there, to the time that you thought that you were being followed and how that felt. Because I am really interested in your experiences and with the hopes that if I can understand how that unfolded, I can understand what that sales person did that might have triggered something to you to give you that feeling that you were being treated, perhaps negatively and discriminatorily. As much as you can remember about that experience.

R: The only thing, you have to remember, I did a test run,

I: How did you do a test run, tell me about that.

R: I would go in there periodically, not really to shop or anything, I just wanted to observe. I remember being ignored several times,

I: By the potential salesperson.

R: Just totally like I wasn't even there. And people would be walking in behind me, and they were like oh can I help you. And I was like, I've been here 10 or 15 minutes and at first I thought [states her name] you are just being sensitive and you are just looking for something to say. Okay, you tell yourself that you don't wanna be that person that has a chip on their shoulder. Because the reality of life is racism exists but it's on how you deal with it. Okay. So I was like, no, no. So, I would do sample test runs, like my mom took me to the Mall or I want to apply for some jobs and I would go into Boutique B, time and time again. And I got the same response. They didn't follow me, okay. I wish they had, maybe I would have got their attention. But the fact is they would just glance, see I was there and act like I wasn't there. That was what I felt and that was, I said I'm gonna go ahead and apply. They had a big sign. Help wanted. So I applied to one of those signs, like I was telling you earlier. I went in they acted

like I didn't apply, told me the job was filled. That was my experience, retail wise. I've had many employment, but retail wise, that was my first experience.

I: How did you, after that experience, tell me about how you felt when you realized that it was probably because of your ethnicity how that felt and how you handled it afterwards.

R: I was very sad and hurt. Because Boutique B was one of my favorite places. I just loved it and I just couldn't believe, you know. Then I got angry, I was sad and then I got angry.

I: And when you got angry, how did you manifest that? What did being angry mean to you?

R: It meant I told every black person I could not to shop there.

I: Did you shop there again?

R: Not ever.

I: Not ever?

R: Not ever. I was like, I'll be darned if I give them any of my money, or anybody else. I don't think they are in business today. They may be.

I: Did you follow it up with a formal complaint or any higher level of management?

R: No, I talked to the manager, I believe it was the manager and I just one on one. Because to me, formal complaints when you take the time to write them on paper, they could just go right in the trash can.

I: But you did speak with the Manager?

R: Uh huh.

I: Tell me about that.

R: I just confronted her, I said I come in here time and time again. I said there's a lot of minorities that can afford your clothes, and I said, not one, and I would point to them, not one asked me. I said I came in and applied for a job and I'm told the job is full. I said you know that sets such a bad precedence, of like you guys don't want any minorities. "oh I do," she never answered my question. I didn't get anywhere, okay. Because if I had gotten anywhere, I know I would have remembered it. I remember leaving there frustrated and angry and I knew it

was unprofessional for me to I guess show my butt, but it was necessary for me to tell them how I felt and what my experience was. Because, even though on a formal complaint, they don't have to read it. They can trash it, but when they are talking to me you gotta listen. To me that was more powerful. They might have turned their ears off, but you see me. I am here, I am not on a piece of paper that you can trash, burn or rip to the side, I'm a human being that's taking up your time.

I: Did you carry it beyond that day? After that happened, did you carry it, the complaint any further than her level of management.

R: No. I be honest with you, I know I didn't. I probably was not aware of doing all that. I know I wasn't. I knew from my personality from now and to what I've evolved to, I'm very much a one-on-one person. I'm not a political player. You know, if I have a problem with you, I'd most likely come to you. I'm not going to go to Suzy and Bob and them, I'll just come to you.

I: Alright. Do you recall if you told your parents at that time and what their response was?

R: I think I told my mom, but I'm gonna tell you about my mom. My mom was like Ann, you get out there, there are plenty of places with opportunities. You know, she didn't want me to focus on that. She wanted me to focus on succeeding and finding somewhere else that would want me.

I: Okay.

R: So it wasn't like, Oh baby let me help, you know; let you cry on my shoulder. That is not my mom's style.

I: Okay, tell me about another experience that you might have had in a retail setting where you felt that you were treated differently because you were black.

R: Um, that was the only one I really, really. Here, I'm trying to think here.

I: It doesn't matter to me whether it was here, Nashville, the Virgin Islands, anywhere.

R: Okay, is renting a place considered retail?

I: Tell me about that.

R: We had gone to a Mortgage broker, and I had spoke to them, not a Mortgage broker a real estate broker.

I: We meaning your husband and you?

R: Yes, I had actually talked to him over the phone. I didn't realize this til many years later, obviously I don't sound black. And so, I was inquiring about an ad and his company was handling it was in Tullahoma, Tennessee I remember Vinnie had just graduated, I was close to graduating. Vinnie had just got a job offer and we didn't have a place to stay, so my task was to find us a place to stay. Oh yes we made an appointment and everything. Girl, don't you know that when we walked up from that car, now he had the door wide open, there was nothing in this place. He told me, oh it's been rented. I was like, I just, 'cause I had called and confirmed before we left. I'm very anal like that. I'll call you and make an appointment then I'll call you the day of, right before we leave, are we still on? And blah blah, I've always been like that, I guess nervous mania. I had just called him, okay. Oh yeah, yeah, I've got the place clean. He said we're gonna do some painting, so I don't want you to da da, da, I was like cool. I got there he was like it's rented. Oh, it just got rented a few minutes ago. I said, I just got off the phone with you. I didn't say a word. I got back in the car, I told my husband, this is probably not the place for us.

I: Okay. Tell me about your mind set from the time when he said this place has just been rented. Just talk to me about what you were thinking at the time, what you were feeling at that time. The conversation you had with your husband. Etc.

R: I left because I was so angry I felt I could hit him. That man, that broker. Because I knew exactly what it was. He looked at us.

I: Immediately?

R: Yes immediately 'cause he looked at my husband and he looked at me and you know that look, he looked me up and down.

I: Tell me about that look.

R: You know that look where he would be saying, I can't believe this. Ain't this a piece of !@!. Okay that kind of look. It's not the kind of look where you say ooh, Ahh, I'm wowed. It's a kind of look. It's a dirty look. Cause at first I was startled, cause I said what? And then I said let me, I was trying to go over the facts of our conversation and he was like, Oh it's already rented. I'm not a fool. You don't sit there and talk to somebody 30 minutes ago then all of a sudden it's rented. And you're gonna tell them all the painting and all this kind of stuff.

I: Did you mention anything to your agent?

R: No, at that time, I told [her husband], I said, there's a point where I learned as I got older, yeah there's times for us to scream, probably scream but there's also times when you need to walk away.

I: What are the differences between those times in your mind?

R: At the time, as I mentioned to you it's Tullahoma, Tennessee

I: Where?

R: Tullahoma, Tennessee. That incident happened in Tullahoma, Tennessee. Tullahoma is 20 years behind Knoxville, okay. I looked at the situation in its entirety I knew it wasn't going to be where I needed to go. I could stay there and fight. But I was a young college student, newly married, trying to find a place to live. I chose to find a place where we were going to live. I found some other realtors who were more than happy. And got a better place, yeah in the city. Got a better place we had a house.

I: What was the difference? If we are talking about the same city and the same time period.

R: He wasn't from Tullahoma, the other realtor was. I don't know. I could tell you it was Mr. Wisling or Wiseling, Vinnie might remember his name, but he wasn't from there. This guy was born and raised there and I didn't know that at the time. I only could tell you that I was able to ascertain very quickly after a couple of visits, I'm like this place is like 20 years behind Knoxville.

I: Looking back now, with the wisdom that you've gained 10-15 years later. Is there anything that you would have done differently based on what you know now? Than what you did at the time?

R: Yes. I would have turned that guy into the Tennessee Realtor's Board. Okay, because at the time I didn't always know where to complain, like, I knew to get a manager. That's not always the place you can look.

I: Was he not the manager of the company?

R: No, he was just a broker. There were owners and what these owners do is they get these little brokers to represent their properties. Get them rented basically, do a credit check. So really the person I would have had to go to was probably the Tennessee Realtor's Board to complain about discrimination in housing, because you're not supposed to do that. At that time, I didn't have that knowledge. I just knew that he didn't have a manager I could deal with, so I just said bye, bye. I need to find somewhere else and that's what I did. As I've gotten older and wiser, I'm also more knowledgeable. I know more about our legal

rights that I didn't always know. And, I could quickly talk to the person. I like to talk to people because sometimes people don't always understand how they are coming off. You can't always take it that this person's intention is dark. Because it isn't, sometimes it's just ignorance and thoughtlessness. So, um that's what I would change. I say I could call the corporate office of Boutique B, but that would not do me any good now.

I: The experience that you had looking back now with the knowledge that you've gained, the experience you had at Boutique B is there anything you would have done differently had that same thing happened to you now?

R: I would have had her name, see I had all their names when I talked to the manager. I would have got that manager's name. I would have called the Corporate Office. Because corporate offices, sometimes are not as worried about following the culture, they are worried about following the law. More so than somebody from a little small home town wanting to place their values within a company's organization. So, I didn't realize that. I didn't know or was not really aware, I didn't think that far ahead. I was 16 years old and I did what a 16 year old would do. I was 22 or 23 when we moved to Tullahoma. I did what a 22 or 23 year old, trying to get her husband through college and trying to finish college herself. So, my concerns were not so much as I really need to report these people, as I was really surviving on survival instincts. We were struggling and my husband didn't like to come to my parents and I wasn't going to go to them. That was probably a lack of communication on my part because maybe if I had told my parents, they would have told me about some of these things. Like you could of did this, I want you to go and talk to Tennessee Realtors Association. Put that person's name on a complaint. Go to the Housing Authority, let them know you have been discriminated against because of the color of your skin. I didn't tell them that. So I was not aware.

I: Did you shop at the Boutique B after this incident?

R: No girl, I never stepped foot in there,

I: Not ever again?

R: Not ever. Not ever again.

I: So your experience there at that time was enough to prevent you from shopping at that store again.

R: Ever. I would not probably ever go into Boutique B ever. Because it happened multiple times. I mean I went in there multiple times.

I: Multiple times?

R: Yeah, I was in there when I said at first I was thinking, maybe they are doing it because I'm so young. You know, I had a lot of reasons, you know cause I was 16 and usually some of the clientele were probably older around 25, 26. But that's not a reason to ignore, I could have been shopping for my mom, you know. I could have been shopping for an older sister and they were just ignoring me.

I: So what made you attribute that to racism and not negligent sales people versus you being young or a multitude of other reasons that you could have attributed it to?

R: Knowing me, I can't quite remember but I remember one time I was standing there for a long time. How is somebody going to be in a store for 30 minutes or 45 minutes and you not notice them? Okay, not even think I was shoplifting, maybe they didn't think I looked like a shoplifter, I don't know. But I don't know if I waited until another minority came in or something. Something triggered because I have a tendency to purge things out of my memory, especially unpleasant things. I just remember one of the times I sat there for a long time and I saw something that made me realize this was racism.

I: Can you remember what that was?

R: I don't know if I saw a Hispanic lady come in or maybe a Mediterranean lady or something and they treated her the same way. I saw something happen to somebody and I realized this is how they were treating minorities. And I knew. It was not a question of me looking for racism or me being sensitive or anything. It was just outright racism and once I realized that, you know, I was saddened. Because I don't think I confronted them on that issue, I actually think I came back and asked for the manager and made my little discussion then.

I: Can you recall another event when you might have been in a store or dinning out, grocery shopping etc., where you thought you were treated differently because of your ethnicity?

R: I know we've had one once, when we were out eating, I just don't remember what the chain was and they basically were just making us wait extra long.

I: We meaning who?

R: My husband. Now he has a better memory that I do. Vinnie can remember things seem like, all the way back to when he was 2 years old. Okay, cause he has a lot he could tell. He lost his job when they found out he was black.

One time I showed up, they had never seen me. It was right before he was graduating; he was working at a mason, mason yard or whatever.

I: Your parents were sharing that with me.

R: Oh they did? I showed up there because he forgot his lunch. And they realized he was black,

I: Because you showed up.

R: Um, hum. And they fired him.

I: I'm looking forward to talking to him about that.

R: Because they didn't know he was black. And that would happen to him in Tullahoma all the time. And they would look at us. Oh you should see the looks, we got in Tullahoma. The more looks I have ever seen in anywhere we have ever lived. Smyrna, Arcola, Florida was pretty rough. I guess they thought we were all blue/black in Arcola and they used to come up and ask me. "Is your husband white?" I mean people just asked me like it was appropriate that I need to explain myself about my husband's ethnicity. And you just look at people like, you don't even know me and you feel like you have the right to inquire on my husband's race. Oh yeah Arcola.

I: Have you ever been out shopping with him? When you go out shopping, do you think there's a difference in the way you are treated when you are shopping by yourself and your daughter versus the two of you all being with your husband?

R: I hate to tell you this, but when we have been here and it's not the type of racism that I think you want to hear, but I've seen other blacks treat me better when they have seen me with him.

I: No, I'm completely there, I'm interested in the phenomenon. So it doesn't matter how many biases.

R: Oh, Okay. Like they wouldn't give me eye contact or. Your know how, when you are in a retail setting people acknowledge your presence, usually when you enter the store. Okay, that's usually normal. And I've seen it where, I can't remember the chains, but I come in there. He went off to games stuff. And I go off into another store and they are just, um hum. And when he comes walking up behind me, and it's been black and white, not just blacks, they'll acknowledge me. "Oh this is your wife, is there anything I can help you with?" My butt's been here 5 minutes before him what took you so long?

I: What's your feeling when that happens?

R: It's happened so often I, that. At the beginning it really annoyed me. Everything annoyed me, you know people asking about my husband's race, about our last name, you know. Feel like they need to know a part about me and they don't even know me. It used to piss me off. It used to make me so, I mean, how dare you? You're not here to be my friend so, poof bye, bye. Leave me alone. As I got older I realized and I got wiser, I realized people don't realize how ignorant they are sometimes or how thoughtless they are being. Or how careless. You know just breaching your privacy. Because, people come from different walks of life and what you find insulting, the next person doesn't. And so, as I've got older I have become much more forgiving and much more understanding.

I: Has your response differed since you've been older? Is there a way that you would have acted when you were younger and less aware than you might act now?

R: I was very direct when I was very young. Probably like a bull in a china shop. Now I would, if somebody crosses that line, or I feel like they are getting close to it, I'll make a joke, but get my point across. Like, you know that's just not necessary sweetie. Oh what do you all do for a living? I says, oh I sweep houses girl, and he does the lawn.

I: Now, who did you get that from?

R: What?

I: That kind of commentary.

R: Oh, my daddy used to do it all the time girl, he

I: It sounds like something they told me when I interviewed them, your mom would tell me that her husband, your dad used to say that when they would go to events.

R: Because I didn't realize people did that, but people come up to us and ask what we do. You know, they feel that for some reason Vinnie and I are at some level that they are sort of shocked or something. I guess economic or education, I don't know. I don't know what it is. I stopped bothering myself trying to figure out somebody's psyche, you know. I remember one time my daddy said I'm the Janitor; he used to embarrass my momma. Oh she used to get so embarrassed. I'm a janitor. You know, at first I thought it was funny and cute, but as I got older I realized what my dad was saying. If you really want to know me, you're gonna find out who I am, not from what I got or what do I want. And people use that as

a gauge of your importance or your value. I do that because I want to know real people. People who's values are similar to mine.

I: Okay. Um, let me return again to the realm of retail.

: Okay.

I: Can you think of any other incidences that stand out in your mind in the retail setting when you felt you were treated negatively because of your ethnicity?

R: Oh, we were trying to buy a car.

I: Tell me about that.

R: It was here in Knoxville I think, was it here in Knoxville or was it Nashville. We had already got a pre-approved loan okay so, we had the money, we were ready to go. I think I wanted to get a Nissan or, it was either a Nissan or a small Toyota, can't remember, this was a long, long time ago.

I: How long ago?

R: Probably about 8 years ago. And I think it was here. I think it was here in Knoxville and you know back then all of the cars were near the airport, that's where all, you know if you wanna buy a car, that's where you go in. Girl we went there and we couldn't find nobody to help us. We couldn't get nobody to listen to us. And of course you know we were struggling, not struggling but you know we couldn't afford no, brand new car, and we looked at the price, well that's the price, we don't negotiate. Okay, Saturn were the ones that started that, okay. Not Nissan or Toyota. They were very abrupt, they were very rude. I looked at my husband, and he was like, well you know. I said I ain't spending one penny, I remember my Boutique B. I'm not spending my money. I said we will go find something else. He's like, but this is the car we said. I said I don't care. And we went somewhere else and bought our car. I'm not gonna use our hard earned dollars to benefit someone who is carrying that type of attitude. Because, to me the managers are seeing that, other co-workers are seeing that. I'm not the first one to see it.

I: To see what, tell me?

R: To see that type of display or contempt to a customer that you have only talked to for 5 minutes. 5 minutes, I cannot get on your nerves. Maybe an hour and 5 minutes, but not 5 minutes. I'm not gonna get on your nerves in 5 minutes.

I: Did you have the opportunity to have any interactions with other customers? While you all were there, do you recall?

R: I think we waited and either I watched him before or watched him after. Because I wanted to see the response. Why was he so abrupt, I was thinking we got money in hand.

I: Was this one sales person?

R: It was just one sales person. I'm not going to say it was the same institution but, I made my choice. Now I wouldn't say that I wouldn't buy a Toyota or a Nissan now, but at that time, I talked to Vinnie and he agreed with me we weren't going to spend our money there, for that one time.

I: Did you follow up with any other measures after your negative experience there?

R: On that one, no. I was in a rush to find a car. We were only home for the weekend and I was like, you know, I gotta go. I can't, I gotta go.

I: What do you think is the difference between your response at Boutique B, versus your response in this case? The Boutique B you never went there again, you never shopped there again. But here it wasn't that you'd never shopped at Nissan or Toyota wherever this dealer is again. What do you see as the difference between those instances in your mind?

R: It was the amount of times I went to Boutique B. I went in there so many times, I knew all the sales people, versus, it was just an ignorant sales person on that day.

I: So you never had any other negative sales experiences at a Toyota dealership.

R: No. Girl they come running. You know, it's like ching, ching, ching, do you want to try out a car? We got it ready, let's see your credit, let's test drive. And we're like, just looking. And um, I don't know if that's because times have changed. I don't know what it is. But Boutique B I remember cause I went in there so many times. You know, we're not talking about two or three times. We're talking about four or five and I didn't pick up on it until I starting thinking about applying for a job. And I don't know what caught my attention, I think one time, I sort of let time fly by and you know how you're looking through dresses and I'm like, oh my god. Nobody came over and said hello. Say boo or can I help you? What are you looking for?

I: It was because you were looking for a job. In one of those instances, was there an occasion that you were shopping for?

R: I think it was Prom dress.

I: Okay.

R: I think that's why I went in there, and of course my daddy had a budget, and I think they were having a sale and I loved Boutique B, so I was thinking Whoo I'm gonna get my prom dress from Boutique B, you know all excited and nobody came to help me. No-one, and I was like, okay. And I thought maybe it was a bad day. I will give people the benefit of the doubt.

I: Tell me what that means to you, giving people the benefit of the doubt. What does that translate into for you?

R: I think as human beings, what it translates to me is sometimes we are too eager to believe the negative and see the bad. You know, people have bad days. People make mistakes, and in my mind, as I try to justify and balance things inside my own head, I want to have not faith in people but faith and integrity and your wisdom and making sound, just decisions and not making a quick decision and blanketing it over everything. Because I have one bad experience with this one person, I'm going to blanket everybody who fits that description. To me, that is unjust and where I wanna go and how I wanna grow, I'm not going to get there with that kind of thinking.

I: What does faith and integrity mean to you?

R: My faith is defined by my want and willingness to do god's will. First is to be god-like as I grow and grown in my faith. That's what, it's the willingness to do his will. Integrity is moral statue to me. People who don't just talk the talk, but they walk the walk. You know how people are like, you know I'm your girlfriend. And the first time you fall ill with cancer, they don't give you a phone call. They don't check to see if you need some money to help pay your bills. They are not helping to come clean your house. Girl, do you need me to help baby-sit your daughter while you go get chemo? Do you want her to spend the night this weekend because I know you're tired? Do you have a way to get back and forth from the hospital? That's what I mean, integrity, people who can actually, not just give you a beautiful presentation but when you unwrap the box there are beautiful things in it. And that, I guess that's the way I see integrity. That's how I see it and feel it, when I am engaging in something, in a situation, another human being, anything.

I: When you go shopping now, what is your general, is there anything, tell me about your attitude towards shopping as far as race relations goes? And um, whether or not there is anything that you do to perhaps prevent the allusion that you might be engaging in negative behavior?

R: I'm gonna be honest with you, it's been so many years. I don't know if sales people have gotten smarter, it's like they can hone in on people who can afford to shop there versus the ones that can't and race doesn't play much of an issue. Let me think of the last time, makeup, now makeup. When you go shopping for makeup and they don't have like the colors for our skin tone, they have a tendency to try to ignore you and I don't think it's because of racism, it's because they can't help you. Instead of just coming up and saying, we don't have any products that fits your skin tone.

I: Have you experienced that?

R: Uh huh,

I: Tell me about that?

R: I just went to the mall one day and girl, I was just looking because I have shininess, okay. I've got the T zone dry skin, the big shiny forehead. Now if I could wear foundation or something light to pat this down. And I don't know which counter I was at but the girl was, it was like she was afraid to tell me they didn't have anything. I didn't see that as racism. She was intimidated, you know, she was going up to a possible client that happens to be black.

I: It wasn't a product line or necessarily for African American skin,

R: Right, and she was almost like intimidated. I was like, okay. I was trying to figure out if there was something she wasn't telling me, I was asking questions and then finally, I think somebody else came up and another clerk said, mam we don't have anything for ethnic skin. I said ohh, I was being smart, You don't have anything for black people. She says no, it's not that, it's this particular store they don't have it. Because I didn't realize that certain lines they have certain lines for ethnic people, but they go by certain areas. If you live in a predominately white area. That blew my mind. They won't have that line because it's like if it's 95% white but yet, you go across town somewhere way off in the boondocks where there is a higher percentage of us, then they will have that line available.

I: Do you recall what product line that was ?

R: Um I will tell you who does it a store, Walgreen's

I: Tell me about that.

R: Now that wasn't where I had it but I remember I went somewhere in Walgreen's. I went for pantyhose and I went, I know I bought my pair of pantyhose, and I couldn't find them. This is the Walgreen's near my house. I couldn't find it. I looked, I went do you all not carry them anymore? She says,

mam we carry it, but we don't carry it at this store. She said you can get it at our store over -----. It's way across town. Now you know Nashville's a big place, I'm not gonna travel 30 minutes to another Walgreen's to get my pantyhose. I'll just find another brand somewhere else, closer. But Walgreen's did it. They won't carry Iman in all their stores. See Iman is not sold, it's either sold online or you can go to certain stores. And Walgreen's is one of the stores that carries Iman.

I: Could you clarify what Iman's is?

R: Oh, it's a line of cosmetics, you know Iman that supermodel, pretty skinny, beautiful. She is married to David Bowie now. She has her own cosmetic line, because I remember my girlfriend Laurie about drove me crazy trying to go to every different Walgreen's to try to figure out which one carried it. And we ended up having to go online and realized that only certain ones would even carry her product line. And, it wasn't even some black areas. It was like one store in middle Tennessee. But yet, if you go to several different Walgreen's they will carry Covergirl who has a line, Queen Latifah has her own line. So, that was some interesting information, I don't know if you call that racism, but I thought to myself. I don't know it's sort of felt uneasy, I thought well, why don't they carry just a little bit. You know, even if it's 95% white you know that 5% lives there.

I: Did you follow up, did you complain to her level management in that case?

R: I did go to another manager. Actually what I did, I wasn't complaining, I was inquiring cause I thought, I don't believe this. And I went to the other store and talked to them about it and he says, mam that is how Walgreen's does it, that is how they are able not to keep products on their shelves. When he explained it, it made sense. When you look at it from a business standpoint, they can't have their products on shelves before certain lifetime. And if they carry a particular line. And he explained it. It was an honest business decision. It wasn't because you are black.

I: So you were satisfied with the answer that you got.

R: Yeah. At that time, because he broke it down, I was It was like, okay.

I: What, to you motivates the difference between you wanting to seek out more information, going to a higher level for a response to something you see as a negative incident perhaps triggered by racism in stores, versus not responding at all? What do you see as being the necessary ingredients for you having to initiate effort on your part?

R: Well I have gone up formally, but I didn't do it for retail, I did it for a job. I went to the EEOC.

I: Tell me about that situation why you chose to do that?

R: It was a situation in which there had been evidence of on-going racism in a department, and then I got to experience it's the different from hearsay, but when white people are telling you about it too. Okay it's like @!@!@!@. Okay, they are aware of it and of course their opinion is like you, they can't make any decisions, and when I got to experience it, I said, after I got over the shock, I was like, screw this, I'm gonna do it. I went to EEOC. I complained to HR. I was all out. But, I was in a situation where I had actually got a job somewhere else because you know what happens. I didn't know the EEOC will not do anything unless you are right at that job, which to me, is a travesty. There are so many things, they say, there's so many tools and stuff out there for racism. I'm gonna tell you something, my conclusion, after I've gone through procedures of going up to the chain of command, going up to the EEOC and when a company is sued on a grand scale, what is that called, um? Class Action Suit, It's really bad. Because the EEOC did absolutely nothing in my situation, nothing. It was a good thing that I had the foresight to look for other employment because all it did was make my situation worse. And none of the tools that are supposedly there were working.

I: So, what happened in your case, your formal complaint, did it lead to anything or what was the ultimate resolution?

R: I'll be honest with you, it was a spiritual resolution. I prayed, I prayed for guidance. I prayed on what to do because I did what I was expected to do. You know, I wasn't sitting back there quietly, going oh woe is me, and well hopefully it won't be so bad. I went to HR, I went to EEOC. I called Corporate. You know, I took initiative and nothing happened, so I prayed. Um, I don't know if this had anything to do with my prayer, but she lost her job. But that was about, honey, I left the company. That was about a year and a half after I left the company.

I: Was that resolution satisfactory to you?

R: I wouldn't want anybody to loose their job. I felt that HR had failed her, because the HR Department was the one that was to me, intervening, upon my own discovery. Well not intervening, they encouraged her behavior, by not dealing with the complaints that were coming from minorities, by not saying, you know what, we need to put you into some training because I think she might have been receptive, you never know. When you turn a blind eye to somebody who is doing something wrong, all you do is encourage that behavior. So I don't know if it was all fairness that she did lose her job. It would have been different if she was unwilling to change, but you don't know that when nobody's prompted them to do so.

I: Okay. Do you think that is true in other cases that you've spoke of in the incident that happened at Boutique B, yet do you think that she was unaware of it and was acting out of ignorance and if somebody had brought it to her attention, that particular,

R: Besides me?

I: or was it more than one sales person that was,

R: Well I took down the names of the different sales people.

I: So, there were multiple sales people.

R: Yeah. I said none of them are helping, it was a culture. Not an individual. And in that situation I was like, this is a group thing. And her response was not one of concern, but of annoyance.

I: Your parents told me about an incident that happened at a Department Store D.

R: Oh wait a minute which one? To her or to me?

I: Which one do you think it is?

R: Oh, that was a time I went off, girl I was not positive. I can't remember. I remember I was at Department Store D and they did something. I don't know if they followed me. I told you I like to purge stuff. I think I went off on a cashier or a manager.

I: Tell me about that? Tell me anything you remember about that.

R: I can't remember. All I remember is I went off on somebody, I think I went off on a manager.

I: Tell me whatever you remember about that incident.

R: I think I was with a white girl. I was with a white girl that I used to work with. We went to shop and we were picking out some clothes, I remember she was pregnant and I was trying to buy something, I can't remember. All I can remember, it's like a blur in my mind. All I can remember is that. Cause my brother went off too at the same Department Store D store from an experience he had and we both went off on the management.

I: Tell me about yours and tell me about your brothers. Just whatever, whatever you can remember and I know it's been a while, I mean my memory is bad also, but whatever you can remember about that incident.

R: I don't know, to me it was just ignorant country Knoxvilleians. And I was just like, I was just in one of those moods, I ain't having it, and I just went off. I can't remember. Frankie and I both went off,

I: You don't recall what initiated it in your case?

R: It was something when I got to the cashier's desk. When I got to pay something. I went off when I went to pay for something, but I don't know if somebody followed me, I can't recall or, I just can't recall. I would have to talk to my mom. Cause she could tell me some of the things and I will probably refresh my memory. I can't quite remember, but my brother and I both did.

I: What do you remember about your brother's experience?

R: All I can remember, Frankie came in and said he got loud and they were embarrassed, and they were like, okay sir, okay sir. I remember cause that's a tactic my daddy says, when you get loud, they say, okay, okay cause they want you to shut up and they start acting right. It's awful that you even have to do that, but that's how I remember it. My brother's was more comical than mine, mine was more angry and more frustration. My brother's was like.

I: How old do you think you were when you this happened. Were you in High School, college?

R: I don't know if it was before my first marriage or after my first marriage. I was pretty young; I wasn't married to Vinnie when this happened. I can't remember. I can't remember. I was pretty young, was I 18? I might have been about 18, I can't remember. I would have to talk to mom.

I: Why does that incident ring a bell for you? Is it because of what your parents have told you about it? Or why when I say Department Store D an incident at Department Store D. What is it, since you can't remember the specifics about it? What is it about it that stands out in your mind?

R: Because Department Store D. There have been articles in Department Store D over the years where, you know, they obviously had issues with equality. Okay. And there are articles that were written in our local paper. And you know how you remember that, you'd go, yes I remember that time I was there and blah, blah, blah. It's one of those things, but it wasn't a life changing thing. Like Boutique B was my dream place when I was 16 because I wanted to get my prom dress, okay. That Nissan place was there because that was gonna be our first car.

You know, it wasn't a life changing event like, you know the reason I remember the rental place, that was the first time I had ever been denied to stay somewhere because of my color.

I: Okay.

R: I mean they were first's. They were something that stood out and all that other stuff sort of just falls, you know, on the roadside. The side of the road, you know.

I: Is it that it happens so frequently that they don't stand out unless it's something special, or?

R: Right. And I have a tendency, what I do is I focus on what I gotta do. Like the time I told you about the job. It was the first time that I went up against management and I did it as an individual. All the people you think that come to your aid, that's a farce. You stand alone. Because people start thinking about, they got bills to be paid. You know you've got single mothers. They can't afford to lose their jobs. People who are married can't afford to lose their job. You know people get scared and all of a sudden their courage just goes to the wayside. So, I ended up standing alone and that's why that incident is so fresh in my mind. A lot of the incidents that I remember, they were turning points for me.

I: That incident at Department Store D,

R: That wasn't a turning point.

I: So that didn't prevent you from shopping at Department Store D again. Did you shop at Department Store D subsequent to that? Do you currently shop at Department Store D?

R: No. I don't shop at Department Store D ever.

I: Why not?

R: The reason is probably because they sell cheap clothes.

I: So it doesn't have anything to do with,

R: I remember just not liking Department Store D. I'll be honest with you, from that point on; I probably didn't shop too many times at Department Store D. Because, I'm the type of person, I might do it one time and then I get thinking, you know what? I'll get this one thing and not come back in here again. Because I haven't shopped in Department Store D, I'll probably tell you for good seven or eight years.

I: Why?

R: Something. Probably after my brother. I'm thinking Frankie, because Frankie's incident was after mine.

I: And what do you recall? You said that Frankie went to Department Store D and something to the effect that he got loud. What else do you recall about his particular experience?

R: I just remember that happened to my little brother and I think at that point I was like, you know I'm not spending another penny in there. None of the managers were black; none of the upper management were black. I started doing a little research, you know about them and you know.

I: What research did you do?

R: Oh you know, go on-line, you know how you can see boards and meetings. And I was working at US Cellular later on and there were a lot of people who knew people at Department Store D and I was trying to inquire, well hey, such and such. Who works there? Blah, blah, blah and get my little information from there and I sort of formed my opinion from there. And I said, you know what? I'm not going there anymore, and I didn't. It wasn't something that was pivotal to me, and I just made that decision and I didn't go back.

I: Okay. Do you recall shopping at Profitts when you were young?

R: Girl yes.

I: Tell me about that.

R: Profitt's. You know what; I have to tell you, you are probably better speaking to my mom because my mom shopped at Profitts when I was young. And you know I haven't shopped at Profitts I don't think, as an adult.

I: Why?

R: Um, well I moved away. And Profitts, there is not one where I live. I live in South Nashville. When I lived in Smyrna they didn't have one.

I: But when you come up here that's not a place you visit?

R: I think they used to follow us. It was like, you know how sometimes you could sense an atmosphere?

I: Tell me about that.

R: I can only remember a few times when I would be with my mom. And it was almost like they looked at her, I can't believe you are here. Can you afford this? You know looking back, you have to remember, I would look at them like, why would they say that? Or I just remember I didn't like Profitts that much. And I can't remember why, and I've never really shopped there from that point on and never having to worry about avoiding it because as a young adult that chain didn't exist where I lived. So it was like, oh well, great. So, I have J C Penny's of course and Hex you know. Those are the big stores, you know Green Hills Mall you don't deal with Profitts.

I: You said that you think that they used to, someone there at Profitts used to follow you all around the store or something. Is that something you personally recollect or is that something you remember your parents talking about? Tell me about that.

R: No, it would be something, I don't remember mom or dad ever telling me that, ever. I mean they might have, but that's not something I really recall off my head. I sort of remember a time, a lady, a store was just sort of following us and my mom was just looking through some clothes with me. And I was like, what is she doing? You know, my first thought was is she a stalker? Is she trying to rob us? Of course, they were thinking that about us and I was thinking that about them. So I was thinking, what is she doing? I mean do I need to watch my mom's purse? Cause me and my mom, you know we're famous, we just sling it somewhere, you know they are so big and heavy, we keep everything in it. I was being real cautious thinking, what is she trying to do?

I: Do you recall saying anything to your mom about it?

R: Probably not. I probably didn't say anything to my mom. If I did, I might have said it after, when we got in the car. I would be like, momma, when we were in there, this lady, da, da, da, And she probably already knew.

I: Why do you say that?

R: Because my momma is not one to have to point stuff out to you, she will quietly observe.

I: Do you recall an instance where she did that regarding a racially charged incident?

R: My mommy, she probably has. I mean, you have to understand, the reason why I don't remember my mom's. Her reactions are not as explosive as my daddy's. She is much more subtle. Her tone won't change. Her body

language is just smooth, so it doesn't really stick out to you because that is how she is all the time. You have to remember what she said, and my memory's not that good. Whereas my daddy, his body stance changes, his tone is gonna drop.

I: Do you recall an incident where he did that?

R: When my daddy did that? I don't know. I didn't go shopping with my daddy a whole lot.

I: Oh, okay.

R: Daddy didn't go shopping with me a whole lot. I mean there was a few times, but I don't really recall that, you know shopping with him.

I: Are there any other incidences that stand out in your mind in a retail environment?

R: In a retail environment, probably some, but I just can't remember.

I: What do you think is the difference between,

R: I know just one, I called the corporate office. I emailed the corporate office.

I: Tell me about that.

R: I gotta remember, I emailed the corporate office. It was years back, I just got so angry. I found out their corporate office. I think it was a fast food chain girl, I think it was a fast food chain. I got angry enough I sent email to the regional office; I wanted the regional manager to know.

I: What happened?

R: Something happened; obviously they pissed me off about food. I don't remember if she was just, I can't remember. I just remember the feelings. And I'm sorry I'm not good about.

I: That's okay, tell me about the feelings.

R: I was angry, I was frustrated, and I was extremely angry. Because for me to want to find out who your regional manager is, and I wanna find out your corporate office, and find out how to file a complaint. Do you know how time consuming that is? Okay, that's fueling some anger.

I: Go back to that. Go back to that moment. Feeling that angry, that pissed off and up set where you are asking around for all that information. Do you recall what spurred that, or do you recall anything at all about that particular incident that triggered those emotions?

R: I think the girl threw my card, my debit card back at me, you know flung it at me. I'm like, I know you didn't. And that's all I can remember.

I: Do you recall who you were with?

R: My husband was in the car.

I: Was your daughter with you?

R: No, we were just married. This was pre Talia.

I: Anything else on that? Anything about the scenery, anything else around you?

R: You know what it was, I was by myself, and the only people were the other customers and other people at the cashier.

I: Did you follow it up with a letter; you got the information about the manager because you were so upset. Did you follow it up?

R: The only thing I did was, I called her manager the next day,

I: The next day?

R: It was the next day and I did an email. I never even get a response.

I: Wow,

R: It's not like oh we will replace this, you know how Cracker barrel got sued. I will tell you, they are very non-responsive, very non-responsive. You can send those emails, you can follow up, you can have names, cause I'm big about getting your name. Amy who worked such and such shift, blah, blah, blah did this. And they won't even call you, they won't even acknowledge it. So when I see stuff like Cracker Barrel and stuff, I imagine that they got so many complaints. They probably got a couple attorney letters and they'd be like, oh we better do something now.

I: What do you think is the difference between, because that's the case of where it was one case piled onto a lot of other cases that went to that class action suit. In this particular case against whoever, the only difference is that it didn't go

onto the next level. Do you wish that there was anything that you would have done in that case, looking back, different? To follow up?

R: No. I mean, I've been back to that particular store. One, the people were all fired, okay. I had a great experience the next time.

I: Why do you know they were fired, if

R: Well they were no longer there and I've been there several times.

I: Do you recall where it was?

R: It was in Nashville, this was in Nashville.

I: Do you recall the place?

R: I wanna say it was Arbys but I'm not sure. I didn't wanna tell you that and then it not be Arbys.

I: Okay. So, do you think that your experience there was just an anomaly in that case? It was just based on the people that were dealing with you that day, and not a corporate wide.

R: Right. Even though they weren't responsive, but from my experience up to this point, most companies aren't, even when you work for them.

I: Why do you think that is?

R: Because, when I worked and complained at HR, usually a mediator, a response. Nothing. In fact, they were almost irritated that I even had the nerve to complain. And at this point I felt like I had nothing to lose, so yeah I was gonna complain. So you're gonna hear my voice regardless of whether you do something or not. And plus with the EEOC, I never heard anything. I was going to take a day off and go out there and find out what was going on. Nothing.

I: So when you complain, you have this in the back of your mind that it's not going to lead to anywhere, what is your purpose in complaining?

R: Because I remember the Class Action Suits that you read. Apparently, enough complaints will warrant somebody's attention. Even if they are sitting on a shelf getting dusty. Somebody's going to notice. It was a mole hill, I mean it was a little mound, then it became a hill and once it becomes a mountain. It might not have been yours that was right at the top that spurred everything, but you are helping creating that mountain.

I: And what resolutions are sufficient to you in cases where you feel you've been treated negatively because of your ethnicity? What would be a sufficient response in those cases for you to think, okay, I'm happy?

R: In my particular experiences, directly I would prefer that people would be given an opportunity to be re-trained and understand an acknowledgment of my complaint. Okay. The only time I got people to get fired is when my dad got into a car wreck and the white guy who hit him; they were trying to see if my dad is drunk. And my daddy is pinned in his car. Now, those people should have been fired, reprimanded, never work in law enforcement again. Because to me the severity is so great, there is no excuse because it goes beyond common sense. It goes beyond helping, you know, this man could have died. He's a diabetic for god sake. He could have been a bleeder, they had no clue. To sit down and let him die of pain because they wanna try to exonerate the guy who hit him at a stop light because he is white.

I: What does acknowledgment of your complaint mean to you?

R: It could be as simple as a receipt saying thank you so, and so. We have gotten your complaint. We are going to further investigate this matter. I mean something just to acknowledge that you got it. You would be surprised how many companies are not set up to even give you that. Now I'm working for Countrywide, Countrywide are not like that. You do a complaint; somebody's going to be down there in 24 hours asking what's going on.

I: I was going to ask you about that, whether you were in a different capacity. One of my good girlfriends worked with Countrywide over in the LA office.

R: In the Las Vegas office?

I: Los Angeles,

R: Oh Los Angeles.

I: She's a corporate attorney with Countrywide.

R: Really.

I: I actually think this concludes the interview. I have everything which is of importance to me, is there anything that you feel you need to let me know that I didn't inquire about?

R: No, retail wise I think I've covered it.

I: Have you ever worked, and maybe your mom mentioned this, as a manager on the retail side.

R: Well yeah, I did. I was a branch sales manager for Beneficial, oh, and I didn't think of it with retail, but I was working, you know what I'm saying.

I: Tell me about that.

R: Oh well, I got my assignment in Mississippi and the customers would not give me their money because they did not want a colored girl touching their money.

I: How do you know that was the reason?

R: Because I was inquiring with my other co-workers who were white and they realized that I really didn't know. I was like, what's wrong? Are they mad because Rob's not here and I'm here. What's wrong are they Cajun, they don't understand me, am I talking too fast? And one of the white ladies said, honey they don't want you touching their money. I said what do you mean? Is it dirty? She said no sweetie, there's some backwards folks up in here, they don't want you touching their money.

I: Then how did you deal with that?

R: I looked at her like, I couldn't get mad at her? Do you know what guts it takes a white person to come up and tell you what they are saying and why? You know, I had to show gratitude. And try to cover my shock all at the same time. I said oh, Linda, thank you for letting me know, I appreciate that, we'll proceed as usual. I was the branch sales manager there, I could not let my views color what I needed to do there. Because it meant changing a whole society. I could not, it was a pole dunk town maybe 2,000 people.

I: There are two ways of looking at that. There's a way of looking at changing the customer base that you are dealing with, or there's a way of looking like, this is unacceptable as managers. You deal, regardless of who you are dealing with on our side. You have something that's due at a certain time and you have to pay it regardless of who it is that's trying to collect it from you. What did you feel was the culture on your side of the fence? Versus the other side of the fence?

R: With Linda and they way were so forthright to me, I felt they were honest people. And you have to remember, I was there for a week. Even though they offered me the job after the week. Yes, what you say is appropriate because girl, I would have to go and get other clients. I would have to build other business, because I was not going to deal with that.

I: Okay.

R: But I was there for five days and

I: That does put a different perspective on it.

R: Yeah, cause I was like I can't change nothing in 5 days. I am the only minority they probably ever saw in this branch. They are probably in shock. I remember seeing the black customers coming in and they were like, are you the branch manager? Yeah baby come on. That felt good because they were good people. But I realized I had to put it into perspective. You have to gauge yourself. I knew I was there for five days. And I had to go, okay. My focus here is, I didn't know they were trying to set me up to give me this job at the time. They asked me to go down there and compile a report as to why the branch was doing so poorly in numbers and give them an assessment on the personnel that were in the office.

I: Okay.

R: And I'm like. Here I am, do you know how old I was? 24/25 years old. Why would you ask a 24 or 25 year old to do that? Okay. I'm not an experienced HR person.

I: Okay, let's fast forward now 14 years later.

R: 14 years later.

I: What would your response be?

R: Well my response would be, well then, you know what. I probably would have took the money. But that would have been in haste and I think that would have been wrong. And once again, I was doing five days and I know my tolerance, it's low, I have almost no tolerance level for some things. I don't care how you're gonna feel. At that time, I was so young I just was like, you know what, I can't change this right now. I'm only gonna be here for four more days. I need to get what I need to get done. And whereas I would take the money. They probably would have pulled out a gun or something, cause they were backwards people. They would come in there with dirt and all kinds of stuff.

I: Do you think things have changed now in that area?

R: I would hope so girl, because I was in shock. I had never seen a house on stilts until I went to Mississippi. I called home, I said momma, the houses are not on the ground. You know I had never seen that before. I didn't know you could

do that to a house. And I was like, why are they doing that to a house, why are they not putting the house on the ground? You laughing at me but girl, I ain't never seen that before, until I went down there. I was like what?

I: So you hope it's changed.

R: I hope to god. Girl when they offered me that job, it wasn't even two seconds, I was like no. I didn't even think about it, no but thank you. There was no thinking. I don't need to call you tomorrow; I don't need to call you in an hour. I'm gonna let you know my answer today.

I: I have one more question I know I'm out of time cause you all are going out to dinner.

R: No we're not.

I: You're not. Okay then, what do you see as the prognosis for the future for your daughter, and do you see how much, I know she's only two years old now, how much do you think you will divulge to her about what you see as race relations being at this time.

R: I would probably be very honest. I have taken several steps, one of them is the neighborhood we live in is 40-50% black. I never got that as a child and I feel that's extremely vital. You know, one of the things is I always felt that, you won't believe this but I am probably more aggressive than most of the blacks here. They would never make a complaint to HR. They would never stand up for their rights. They would not even go back and observe. They just sort of take it. And I feel that I don't ever want Talia to take it. It's unacceptable. Yes, you have to make decisions sometimes that are hard because you have to deal with such ignorance but it doesn't mean that is what you will become. If that makes any sense.

I: Tell me about that.

R: If you notice in each and every situation I had varying degrees of action. Okay. I went from not saying anything to writing a letter to corporate to EEOC to you know just generally focusing on that. I don't want to become a person who never does anything, saying oh well, you know, bygones be bygones that's just how things are. No, that doesn't mean that's how things are. And I don't want Talia to become that way and I feel like, sometimes when you are in a situation where you don't get to see your ethnicity you become, you think you are less. Almost on an unspoken level.

I: Tell me about that. Was that a personal experience for you?

R: It was a group experience for me and my girlfriends. Like, do you know why we all tried out for cheerleading? We got tired of being excluded all the time. To the point where we became mad and did something. Kids shouldn't be mad. Kids are supposed to be kids. You're supposed to be learning about yourself and not thinking about you know, the social implications of never having a black person in this club and you know, never on this team. You know, teenagers shouldn't have to be thinking about stuff like that, okay. And that was something we fought as a group. You know it's hard enough to be a teenager these days let alone put in the stage where you are not invited to parties. Back then, you pick up something with the beautiful people and nobody looks like you. Or at that time, I had very long hair. And girl I was hearing about weave before I even knew what weave was. A girl asked me, do you have a weave? I'm like what's a weave. Do you mean wig? Because I knew about wigs. My momma has some wigs, I play with them. I knew about that. And because of the ignorance of the culture over here. People didn't realize, they would look at me and deduce things. People used to ask me whether I was a black Puerto Rican. I'd be like, do I look like a black Puerto Rican to you? Does my mom look Puerto Rican? Does my dad? Because my hair was long, because quote unquote I guess I didn't fit in the box. That people thought I should look like and I don't want my daughter to go through that.

I: Do you think the world has changed for your daughter?

R: No, I do not. I think it's an illusion. One of the things that I really want to watch is the black white episode by Ice Cube it starts on March 8, next Wednesday on FX and I think that people are going to get their feelings hurt because everybody has this envision that we have got so far, we have done so many things. When you think things, no. I think the face of racism has changed but it has not gone away.

I: How do you think it's changed then?

R: Whereas when we read the books, of course I wasn't there in the 50's and 60's. You know, when I watch "What the Lord Made". I forgot it was a good movie, something the Lord made. You see how racism was so prevalent. They would call us boy or nigger as if it was our name. You know it was right there in your face, so it wasn't nothing to hide about it. Now it's so much more sophisticated. Oh I, I think you are wonderful but such and such has great qualifications we feel that this is a better fit. Now I You've got a PhD you probably been doing it for five years and you helped train her. But she got the promotion with a Masters and zero experience. That actually happened to me. When I worked for Bank of Oakridge. I learned about what Tom was trying to do by going to the Tennessee Banker's Association in Nashville, I was living here. I was newly married to my husband and I had a wonderful opportunity to open up a mortgage department, all on my own. Do my own marketing plans, I was scared

to death because I didn't think I could do it, I mean you're talking about I was responsible for everything, from ordering the furniture to structuring out the policies how everything was going to be, everything. And I took it, I ran with it and I was a success. I joined my whole team up to the Tennessee Banker's Association because being a new department; I felt that we needed to affiliate ourselves with certain other organizations. We need to branch out, find out what others were doing so we keep abreast of others in our market place and just in the market in general. We were out on some bus or some committee and some white boy who was playing golf or something was bragging, yeah I got a buddy Tom wants me to run his department at Oakridge. Now Oakridge is only this big. Oh yeah he's got some little girl getting everything to work up for me. I ain't dumb. I confronted him. Well basically I, he did a whole dog and pony show in front of me which answered my question. And he said well you know, you can train him and you can still do da, dah. Girl, when he said train, if I had acid I think I would have split it all over his face.

I: How did you resolve that?

R: Oakridge, I thought about making a complaint. When I talked to some friends, they said it ain't gonna do nothing. It was a good ole boy system. They said that letter is going in the trash. So I did something worse. I hurt them in the pocket. So they would remember me when I'm gone.

I: How's that?

R: I shredded every document for the last two weeks and deleted all the documents. I said okay, if my voice wasn't going to be heard. These dollars will be heard for a long time.

I: Did you hear any repercussions from them?

R: He never got off the ground. That mortgage department never got off the ground. Girl I shredded everything, do you hear me? I was going to meetings, and I made a plan. A little white girl I was working with. I said I'm leaving, you do what you gotta do. I mean I wasn't going to shred anything because we were partners at that time and I wasn't going to do that to her. She said, I ain't staying here with that racist SOB. I said, do you wanna leave? She said yeah, but she was scared. I said, if I find you a job would you leave? She said yeah. So I found her a job. I said this is what we're going to do. She was really meaner than me. She was the one who came up with, I was just gonna shred some documents, she said no, we should shred them all. We shredded everything; someone said what you'll doing? I said we just doing spring cleaning. Girl, we would be there until 9-10:00 o'clock. For a whole week. We deleted all the software from the computers. All the contact numbers were either erased or put fake ones in there.

Nothing, we left it totally empty like the way he gave it to me. And I turned in my notice on Monday, girl he was shaking, he was so mad at me.

I: He never said anything in regard?

R: Oh no, I gotch ya. Because I the first time I probably did play a little bit of politics. I said Tom is there anything I can do for you, I can do anything you may need. I just smiled and leaned over. I said, if you need any help, you just call and let me know. Girl, he was shaking I have never seen a white man that made. I mean turning red. I think he was this far from trying to physically hit me. And I didn't care. I remember one of the old ladies that I had meet. A great contact she worked for a Trust Company. She said oh, I wondered how long you were going to work for that SOB. She said not only is he racist, but he's sexist too, I said I wish somebody had let me know a few months ago and I wouldn't have wasted my time. I said thank you. She said you were great. What you did for me was awesome. I said thank you, I'm glad you're happy. I just went on my merry way. I chalked it up to, oh well a lesson learned. That's when I started realizing that you can fight back in more than one way.

I: Let me get back, we were talking about the future and your daughter. What do you, because what I have heard in other interviews and from other people that as African-American parents with children that are in a largely environment where they might be a minority to a significant degree. More so than their grandparents were or their parents. You want to protect your children, or you want them to have the ability to feel protected against racism. But, you also realize that they might be in an environment where they might be the only person of color. How do you think you handle that, or will handle that cause your daughter is still very young, what do you see yourself telling her or what tools do you see yourself giving her about these experiences that you've had. How do you see yourself either equipping her to handle these things, or do you feel that ignorance is bliss and if she goes in, if somebody calls me green I'm not offended.

R: Okay.

I: Do you hear what I'm saying? Because that doesn't..., I know I'm not green so that doesn't even bother me. So, if I'm in a racist world that I don't see that as an issue, am I more equipped to deal with it or less equipped to deal with it?

R: It depends on the situation, I believe. In some situations I believe that ignorance can be bliss. But in other situations it can be extremely damaging. Because you could present yourself in a fashion that could be totally untrue. And you can suffer other consequences from not, I guess, letting it be known where you stand.

I: Tell me about that.

R: I worked at another retail place, I'm starting to remember stuff. At um cars of America? No, Truck Stop, Truck Stops of America. Um, and I remember my manager had just hired an African and he made, what I considered at the time to be a racist comment, a derogatory comment. He said is this Country all white. I said I don't agree with that, I said do you consider all black people like that? He just looked at me, he was so startled. Now the African laughed, I didn't think it was funny. But he never did that with me again. I never got fired, I never got pressured. But he understood I wasn't going to go there with him. If I had not said anything or laughed like the African did, that sort of endorsed his behavior, his views, his reactions, going forward.

I: Okay.

R: And that's what I mean in a situation like that. Sometimes you can endorse people's ignorance. You know, you have the choice to make them think, or at least be mindful, that's not appropriate with you. Now and they can make their choice on how they want to proceed. Um, what I'm gonna do to help Talia, I'll try to build on what my parents did. My parents talked to me, but my parents didn't tell me about all the situations they had. I'm going to try to, with her father. I'm going to try to be really, really detailed in our experiences and definitely our feelings, you know, and how you cope with those feelings. You know as black parents. They give you instruction on what you need to do next, but what about the feelings of being devalued, ignored, lonely and depression that can come from a particular situation or situations. I think I really want to build on that and help Talia. One of the programs I told you I was involved with was Jack and Jill, if it hadn't been for that,

I: Are you still involved with Jack and Jill?

R: Oh no, you don't get back in until your child becomes of age. I'm grandfathered in, but Talia has to be a certain age before we can join.

I: Okay I wasn't aware of that.

R: And I'm going to involve her in Jack and Jill.

I: You were involved with that as a Youth, as a child?

R: Um hum.

I: Okay.

R: I don't think they have anything going on with Toddlers. I think you have to wait until they reach middle school or something like that.

I: I have a cousin who is involved in Jack and Jill. She has a little boy that is a little older than Elizabeth. They are 5 and 4. She has a five and four year old.

R: Okay, so they are involved. I think they have to be in school and once she reaches that point, I'm going to put Talia in there because she needs to be exposed to other blacks besides the ones in our family. I think it's immensely important.

I: Why do you think? What is it about that, you feel is important?

R: As I got older, there is a different mentality between blacks who haven't been raised in like a black environment. And I'm talking about, in Knoxville when I was growing up there was 2-3%, okay. I don't consider that to be predominately black. Anything above 25-30 I would say is predominately black because in communities, you're gonna see each other at those percentage levels. Girl, you could go a week in Knoxville and not see any other black folks. Not a one. You know I'd go to the Mall and I'd see one. What happens, you have to understand the messages that you learn as a child, said and unsaid. Like every time I watch the news, I remember saying, Daddy every time a black person commits a crime around here they have their photo up and I always knew when it was a white person, not because they said white person, but because they'd say, well John Steer is a brunette who is 6foot 4 and weighs approximately 195 pounds.

I: And they didn't show the picture.

R: And they didn't show a picture. Now that plays on a kid's psyche because what it does, it implants, it makes you think a certain way, because every time I heard something bad I saw a picture, black. And something else was bad and it was white I didn't see a picture, so I didn't have anything visually or an impression in my mind when it would be on the other side. Another think I want to avoid, I want her to deal with it emotionally. That is the biggest thing with racism is how to deal with it emotionally. In my opinion.

I: Tell me about that, what does that mean to you?

R: It means oh, how to put...? Be honest with yourself. Not if it depresses you, frightens you, scares you, frustrates you or angers you, recognize it and learn how to deal with it appropriately and intelligently. And that is what I want my children to know.

I: What do you think an intelligent response is?

R: I think an intelligent response is, the few times that I let, that guy, that Realtor and I said I wish I had gone back and complained to his boss. I should have said something to him. I said what you are doing is not right. That's what I want my children to know from the get go. I know what you are doing is wrong and you shouldn't do it.

I: At the time?

R: Yeah. Deal with it right there and do it appropriately. You don't have to be shaking your head. You don't have to get loud. But you can look at somebody and give what you feel and tell them what you feel and why you feel, eye to eye.

I: Okay. I have plenty of meat from you and I know I have gone way over the time I told you, so I will conclude this interview. Thank you.

INTERVIEW FOUR

Participant: AA Female
Married
Early 50s
Mother of two teen daughters and an adult son
Grandmother of an 11 year old boy

I: Today is May 2, and I am with interview subject # four. We are about to get started, you know the topic of my dissertation has to do with experiences with discrimination in retail settings, but I'm interested in your unique experience with that. So, before we get started on my main topic, I just want you to tell me anything about yourself that will let me know more about your unique experience with the topic on hand. So, just anything about yourself that you'd like to share with me.

R: Um, probably that, gosh shopping used to be one of my biggest hobbies. I enjoy bargain shopping and um, gosh, one of those habits of accessorizing. Shopping for jewelry, watches, even different eyeglass frames. Shoes, bags, all of that. And um, other things I enjoy, maybe antique shopping as well and um, sometimes different antique maybe objects or furniture. And I don't get to do that as much as I used to. I've lived in different parts of the country so.

I: Where are you from originally?

R: Originally from Columbia, South Carolina. And I grew up in Columbia, went to High School there. My first year of college was at Johnson C. Smith in Charlotte, North Carolina but I actually completed my undergrad Degree at the University of South Carolina in Columbia. Um, let me see. I've lived in the state of Maryland and worked in Washington D.C. for about six years. I worked at Howard University Hospital as their Business Manager for a couple of years. I have lived in Carbondale, Illinois. I moved to Carbondale after I got married and left the D.C., area and moved with my husband to Carbondale, Illinois and worked at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. A very small little, I guess you would call it, it's not really mid-west, but it's sort of like south mid-west something. It's not south west, but it's sort of a little bit of the south and a combination of mid-west. And from there I moved out to Seattle, Washington, still with my husband. And I worked in insurance claims, eventually being a District Claims Manager for a large company out there called Pimco Financial Services. And I was there for about six or seven years. Then moved back to the state of Maryland where I worked not at Howard University again, but at the University of Maryland as their um, Assistant Director for student financial aid

and in charge of counseling services. And from there, moved to College Station, Texas.

I: You have lived in lots of places haven't you.

R: Yes. College Station, Texas where I worked at Texas A&M University as the Assistant Director for Human Resources in charge of benefits, retirement and leave management. And I also got my Master's degree from Texas A&M, so I'm an AGI, as well as a Game cock, that's quite a combination. And no of course I'm working on my PhD here at UT and um, I've been here at UT since '99.

I: Is that what brought you here, the PhD program?

R: No, my husband's job brought me here. Because I was working on my PhD at Texas A&M before we moved and, at Texas A&M where I got my Master's in Educational Human Resource Development I also went immediately into the Ph.D. program, but I put it on hold as my daughters were pretty young at the time, they were both in elementary school and they really needed me to focus some attention on them.

I: So, you have two daughters?

R: Um hum.

I: How old are they now?

R: 15 and 18. So it's time for me to look back at getting a life. Yeah and I have an adult son and he is 36. I have a grandson who is 11, perfect young man. Brilliant child and he lives in Southern California with his mom and step-dad. So I've lived in different parts of the country and had an opportunity to experience different retail situations all across the country.

I: Okay, well let's move into that area then, where we look into negative retail experiences. You mentioned a moment ago that you used to love shopping. Tell me about that, what is it about shopping that you love?

R: Um, for me it's relaxation. Just sort of an opportunity to unwind. A lot of times I want to stop somewhere before I go home. Just to get out of the car and walk around. To me it's just a sort of, you know mindless time. And time to myself as well. I'm an "off the charts" introvert. So by the time I've had all that people interaction at work, I really need a little bit of a break before I get to the people at home, so shopping was something that was really that for me. The other thing too is I tend to be a very giving person, so for special occasions or things going on for people I usually want to look for just the perfect thing, or perfect gift. Um, Administrative Professional's day, I shop forever trying to find just the

perfect thing for the three people who report to me, and I usually do things like on special occasions like, um Easter. I went to great lengths to get them something unique in the way of a little basket and healthy treats because they are all, or we are all trying to do better about how we eat. So, I put some healthy treats in it and just one or two bits of candy, but so that all comes as part of the shopping with me. I spend quite a bit of time doing those kinds of things when I do go out to shop. I don't spend nearly as much time shopping as I used to though. The reason I don't anymore is just, probably a little bit of impatience with crowds and I tend to run into more crowds and it's not as calming as it used to be. Rarely, will I go to the Mall for that reason. If I'm going to go shopping, I'll choose something in a strip Mall or something like that. A Ross or T J Maxx or some of the other stores, you know that maybe specialty stores.

I: What are your favorite stores?

R: Right now, probably um, locally um Silk Purse, Ross, T J Maxx used to be but it got sort of pushed aside because Ross and the Silk Purse. There is what's it called? Apricot Lane, which just opened at um, Turkey Creek. Turkey Creek is up and coming and going to be my hang out place. Where you can just get out and walk and have everything right there. Entertainment, food, shopping. And um, Boutique C used to be way up there, but because of an incident there it's sort of slipped and I just started going back to Boutique C. But I had an incident that I felt so strongly about that I stopped shopping there, after I had been shopping there for years.

I: Okay. Before we get to why you stopped shopping at Boutique C, tell me about the Silk Purse, what is it? I'm unfamiliar with that store, so first of all just tell me about what kind of store it is, where it is and what is it about shopping there that you enjoy?

R: Well it's off the beaten path there, off of Kingston Pike, and Kingston Pike, you know how busy Kingston Pike is but it's sort of like tucked away back there, but if you don't know that it's there you won't find it. It's on Carr Street right off of Kingston Pike. If you are going out Kingston Pike just past Mercedes Plaza and there's some little bar or something called Toddy's...

I: Yeah.

R: Yeah well, you make a right turn, if you are leaving town, if you are leaving campus headed west, you make a right turn and two blocks up the Silk Purse is there on the left.

I: Okay.

R: And what I like about it is the things there are unique, you don't find them. You know how you go into some department stores and there are racks of the same thing. You go in there and rarely will you find, you know racks of the same thing. You find unique items in there. Um, rarely will they have shoes; if they have shoes it would be maybe a few sandals. But they do have, you know, slacks, jeans, skirts, dresses, outfits, dressy outfits, casual outfits. It's not a real big store. Um, it's probably the store itself is maybe about 3 times the size of this room. And that's the entire store. But there is stuff in there that my daughters can wear. There is a section for men as well, a small section for them. They also have accessories there. Like jewelry, lots of jewelry, belts and purses, scarves. So you really can go in there and just put a complete outfit together right there in the store. They have unique watches. And what's really good about them is their prices are good. My cousin who lives in Charlotte, North Carolina, my sisters – one lives in Columbia, South Carolina, the other one lives in Gaithersburg, Maryland but they usually come here for Thanksgiving and that's their regular stop. You know, it's become a ritual that we go to Silk Purse and they've gotten on the mailing list so they know what's happening. So anytime they are in town it has to include a trip to the Silk Purse and the people who work there. Of course it's you know, proprietor owned. They are very cordial, very friendly; they are helpful without being pushy. When you walk in the door you hear a greeting from out of no-where. Sometimes you have to look to see where they are, but they recognize you as soon as you come in the door and everything. They do a really good job. They have just simple white bags that they put your things in and then they tie them with tulle. You know white tulle and it just, you know, makes it feel just like a really special experience.

I: Any particularly pleasant experience there stands out in your mind? Or are they all...?

R: Um, not too long ago I was in there and I bought this necklace that was on sale. It was a necklace and earrings for Nat, the whole set was like \$4.00. Apparently one of the earrings fell out, it fell on the floor and I didn't know it and they searched through every receipt they had around that time to find and started calling people to find out who the earring belonged to. And it was a couple of weeks before I was able to get back to them, because I was in and out of town for work. And I'd forgotten about it. And um, you know they called me and said, you know, we think this is yours, if it is please call us back or if you are able to come pick it up or if not let us know how we can get it to you. And so, I just didn't have time to go back over there or even. I said I would get over there some time. It was several weeks before, it may have been even a month. But I was in the store and I said, you know some time ago, a few weeks ago you guys called me about a blue earring. She said yes, and they still had it. Right there at the register the lady knew exactly. She said you know I thought it was yours and I didn't know if I called the right number or what, it just bothered me, but I just held onto it. And it was only a \$4.00 set but they took all that time for something

that I only paid \$4.00 for in the store. So, that to me, you know, was just an indication that they go out of their way for, you know \$4.00 sale, that they'd certainly go out of their way for bigger things as well.

I: You mentioned that it's become a ritual for your sisters and your cousin to go there when they come here to visit. Before you took them there, did you share with them your experience there or did you just take them there for the merchandise, or how did that unfold when they first,

R: I just took them there, because there was a sale and I had my little coupon at Thanksgiving, I said do you guys want to go with me? Well they would see things like my jewelry and they would admire and say, where did you get that? I said well I'll take you over there. And that's how things started.

I: Okay. Well that gives me a lot of history about that. So let's switch gears again then, and talk about negative experiences while shopping, particularly I'm interested in situations where you have been shopping in any kind of retail environment whether it is what we would refer to as a luxury, niche establishment or even it could be a Wal-mart where you felt that you were being treated differently because of your ethnicity. Tell me about a situation that stands out in your mind.

R: I could probably think of one as a real old situation. Really old and I was at, where were we living at the time? Oh, we were out in Washington, Washington State. That surprises me because they're, I usually, my experiences out there were above the board, have been really, really great. The attitudes out there, when we lived out there were certainly a whole lot more welcoming than in most parts of the country. But we had bought this house that um, we had gotten a great deal on and we had it as our project, we were living in it, but we were going to take and every summer we would add something to it or, you know do something to fix it up and improve the looks of it. So, I was planning on um, putting drapes and getting some tailored drapes for the house and I went to Department Store E and I was in the tailored drapes department. Knew exactly what it was, I knew the fabric that I wanted, I knew the style that I wanted. And um, I don't know what I had on that day, but as I was talking to the sales person and was telling her I wanted drapes and she said to me, oh these are tailored and they are very expensive you know. And I just looked her right in the eye and said, I'm well aware that they are tailored and that's exactly what I want. That's the only way to assure that you get what you want and I'm not concerned about what the cost is. And she turned a little red. Another one I could think of, I'm trying to think have I shopped at Department Store C's recently? No because I sort of wrote them off as well.

I: Before we get to that one, let me go back to the one at Department Store E. Um you mentioned, one of the first things that you said when you were talking

about the experience, you said you don't remember what you had on that day. Is that something you conscientiously think about when you go shopping?

R: Yes, I shouldn't but I,

I: Tell me about that.

R: I do because I've noticed that there is a difference, generally there is a difference. Now I know at Silk Purse, no matter what I have on, they are, you know I've gone in there in sweats before and you know they treat me the same, no matter what. But there are places, if I go there right after work and I'm in work attire. I could go back the next Saturday from my daughter's softball game and get completely different treatment. And I don't know if that's based on the way I'm dressed or because of a combination of you know the color of my skin and the way I'm dressed. But it's a certainty that assumptions are being made or values are being placed based on something that's happening there. General things have happened, you know, and none that just jump right out at me. Of being overlooked. You could be standing right there in front of a register and someone look and say well who's next even though it's obvious you are standing right there. Or having a white person jump line in front of you. I had something... I went in the new Department Store F at Turkey Creek, the day that they opened. I went in there to get a birthday gift for my husband and had two Tommy Bahama shirts in my hand and um, a sweater vest that was a Tommy Bahama, so we're talking about a couple of hundred dollars, okay. So obviously, you know, I'm spending some money. They weren't on sale and I was in line and stood there a while and I was the next up and this lady um, who was white and very well dressed. It was my opinion that they were pulling from one line, okay. So there was a person in front of me, I was the very next person and there were a couple of people behind me and this lady comes up and she just walks right up to the second cashier even though, you know we were in line there and I'm next up and I'm expecting that cashier to say well, you know I'm gonna take the lady whose next in line. He didn't, he didn't. He went ahead and took her things. Um, I wasn't very pleased about that and what made it even worse is that when she got up there, she had misplaced her charge card and left it at another register, so he put her stuff aside and you know waited for her to come back, she still hadn't come back. Then finally there were some people in front of me, I don't know what was going on with their transaction, but they were doing all sorts of weird stuff. But I'm still patiently standing there with the Tommy Bahama stuff, finally he said well, it doesn't look like she's coming back right now, so I can go ahead and take you. And I said, let me say a little prayer here, and not act like I have had no Christian up-bringing. I need the model here. So, just as I started to walk over to him, what do you think happened?

I: She showed up.

R: She shows up and she says, oh you can go ahead and wait on her, it's just like she's doing me a favor. You know sort of that tokenism thing and um, I said no. Go ahead since he had started with you, I don't you know, go ahead and I was just gracious about it. And um, then she had all sorts of stuff going on, so he had me sort of standing there and um, I wanted a gift box and he was still sort of fooling around with her even after he came back to me, and it was just. He didn't apologize. She just acted as if it was her right to just move in front of you knows the next person in line. And you know, I wasn't person in line, but I was the very next person and I happened to be a person of color, I just wondered if the next person in line had been someone white if she would have done that, and if the cashier would have just let that go, or if he would have instructed her, you know hey that's the line right there.

I: Do you think the cashier was aware of your perception of the situation? Did you do anything to let your displeasure of the situation be known?

R: Um um. No, because really what I wanted them to see was, you know she did not act like a nasty person in here. She did not act like; you know I think they probably would have expected me to go off. I really do and he really looked sort of puzzled as to why is she not getting mad. And he was really a little nervous with me, because he really didn't know what to expect and I was still very polite.

I: That was a conscious choice?

R: Yes it was. Because that's certainly not what I wanted to do, because I was tired. I had been standing in that line for I don't know how long. You know, because I made my selection fairly quickly. I came in there and in five minutes I knew exactly what I wanted and um all I needed was someone to take my money and let me go.

I: You mentioned that you were purchasing quite a bit of, well a few items, but very expensive items. Do you think, is that something that makes a difference in your mind, whether or not you had chosen a five dollar shirt?

R: It should not make a difference at all.

I: Does it in your mind?

R: No, it does not. Not at all, um the only reason I mentioned that is that, from a sales perspective if you are purchasing more, they tend to pay a little bit more attention to you.

I: Is that something that you think about when you go shopping, does that?

R: No, really because I usually don't. I usually like to bargain, so no it doesn't matter.

I: Okay.

R: Trust me, if I had been a bit more proactive about the birthday shopping I would not have just gotten the, you know, regular priced Tommy Bahama stuff. I loved what I had; they were really nice but if I had, had more time, I could have, you know, done a better job of shopping, bargain shopping.

I: Okay.

R: But no, my mind does not, and should not make a difference. But I know that um, salespeople tend to cater to those who are spending more money. My daughter just accepted a position at Victoria's Secret and I sort of laughed at some of the things that they were telling her in orientation about um, pressing people to purchase more and more expensive things and stuff like that. And I'm like I don't wanna hear anymore.

I: Did you mention what store that happened at?

R: Department Store F, a new Department Store F store at Turkey Creek.

I: You did, you did, I just didn't write it down.

R: Like I said, just sort of general things, having people break in front of you, as if it's their right to go before you and not having the sales people intervene to say, okay you're not next. Or this person is next, are really both disappointments to me.

I: One of the things that you noted when that happened that the thought, 'the tokenism thing' came through your mind. What does that mean?

R: Um, well it would be kind of hard to explain the look that she gave me that the lady who broke in line gave me. Oh, you can go ahead and take her. Sort of a, how do you explain? Slightly over the shoulder sort of side-ways glance. Sort of get this little person out of the way so you can come back to you know handle me, sort of thing.

I: How did that feel to you at the time? You told me about what happened, tell me about some of the emotions that you were feeling at the time.

R: Well, by that time, um I'm self assured enough that rather than making me feel small, just pisses me off. That's not very lady like language, but I know that it is an attempt to make you feel small and I just refuse to allow people to control

me that way. So, what I do is, you know, just the opposite. I looked her dead in the eye and said, well no, please you go ahead and finish. In other words you're not doing me any favors.

I: Looking back retrospectively, do you think that, is there anything that you wish you would have done differently in that situation in terms of how it was resolved?

R: Couple of things. One, I thought about um, that the clerk needed some training. The other is, I step back and say well maybe it was an isolated incident because it was opening day. It was hectic and um, you know how big of a deal was it for me to maybe get him in trouble on what may have been his very first day at work. So I just decided to leave it alone. Because, he may not have been trained to handle that type of situation. And, I really had my doubts about whether or not retail stores train their cashiers to handle those types of situations. Okay, what do you do when someone breaks line? Or even when they open up another register, rather than saying "I'll help someone over here" what about training them to say, "I will take the next person in line". Because 9 times out of 10, it's someone who looks like me whose been waiting, who is still left waiting there when they open that extra register. Because they look past you to that person who just walked up behind you who looks different, a couple of shades lighter than you do.

I: Tell me about that statement, '9 times out of 10 it's someone like me'.

R: Well it's probably very unfair but I guess the way my luck runs it looks like that. And I wonder if, um we are more conditioned not to just run. That we are conditioned to maybe hold back and I think that's what happens. We have been conditioned not to just jump out there. I don't care how self assured we are, um we have been conditioned to defer to others, others being not necessarily white people, but I think generally in our culture, our upbringing has been to, at least with mine, it's been basically to defer to others.

I: Okay. You mentioned a few moments ago, you started to talk about Department Store C's but I stopped you; let me have you return there. Tell me about your experience at Department Store C's.

R: I was in the men's shoe department. I guess I buy a lot of stuff for my husband.

I: He has a good wife.

R: I'll have to remind him of that.

I: How long ago was this?

R: This has been a couple of years because it was at West Town Mall. I was in the men's shoe department and um, I was in there buying some shoes for him. It had to be either Father's day or birthday, or Christmas for my husband.

I: You are good to him 3 times per year? (Laugh)

R: (Laughs) Trust me no, I bought him a couple shirts last week and it was not father's day or his birthday. And um, the store was basically empty and there were about two different clerks around and um, I had you know these shoes in my hand. And um wanted to get my husband's size and everything and they were sort of chatting with each other and sort of glanced at me. You know I was sort of standing there trying not to be rude and they gave me that sort of sideways look and um, I remember I wasn't really dressed that great that day either. When I say that great, I mean I probably had on jeans or something. Or sweats or something because I don't know where I'd been to workout or. I think I'd been working out and went late again to get my husband some gift and just got really ignored. I actually had one of them just walk off. And um, then I had to finally say excuse me, can you help me, then have them say, oh did you need some help? No, I'm just standing in the middle of this store holding this shoe for no reason. And um, the one that walked off, there was someone white who was no even right there. Who was almost on the other side of the department, that they went all the way over to see if they could help? And then the person who brought the shoes back just basically plopped them down and then went off to help someone else, rather than just sort of, you know sticking with me. So I've not bought anything from Department Store C's since then.

I: Did you buy those shoes that day?

R: No. As a matter of fact, you know what? I ended up walking, leaving the shoes right there in the seat, because they didn't come back to me or anything, so I just walked off and left them. And then that concerned me about doing that because I didn't want them to think that I, I didn't want them to come back and say I'd stolen the shoes or something.

I: Did you verbalize your concerns at all, either at that time or at a later time?

R: No I didn't and I don't know why I didn't. But I just said well, you know it shouldn't matter what I had on. It was just awful service and um, I just, you know, didn't bother to go back.

I: Did you tell anyone else about your experience there?

R: Oh I've told plenty of people about it, I've even told some white people about it.

I: Was it enough to stop you from shopping there again?

R: I've not shopped at Department Store C's since.

I: Really?

R: I have not.

I: How about your daughters, what have you told them about that incident?

R: I told them about it too. Um, they rarely shopped at Department Store C's. I don't know if they've ever bought anything from Department Store C's.

I: What has the response been when you've told other people, black or white?

R: Well there is one friend of mine who is white and said, well that she had noticed that it depends on how you are dressed. Um, and um you know, I've had a couple of other friends who are black and said, yeah I know exactly what you mean, it depends on which sales people are there. So some people have told me it depends on which Mall you go to as well.

I: And you were at the West Town Mall in this particular case? At what point during that exchange do you remember thinking this is because of my race?

R: Very early on when I was standing there trying to be polite and not interrupt the two salespeople's conversation. I knew that they saw me.

I: And they gave you no acknowledgement at all?

R: None whatsoever. Like I said when the one finally brought the shoe over he just plopped them down and walked away.

I: Did he or she ever say anything to you?

R: Well I just asked for a size, well yeah we do have these. There was more than one pair, I was trying to decide. Here we have these and walked off.

I: I asked you this a few minutes ago, I'll ask you again here. Retrospectively is there anything that you wish you would have done differently, or that you would do?

R: I wish I had contacted management, to let them know, because to at least be given a chance for something to be done about, because I really don't think they do training that's effective enough on customer service.

I: Are there any other incidences that stand out in your mind?

R: Oh, Boutique C.

I: Tell me about that.

R: That's probably one of the worst. Boutique C at West Town Mall. As I said I rarely go to West Town Mall anymore.

I: How long ago was this?

R: Oh, it's been a couple of years, about two year's maybe. But I had been a customer of Boutique C for probably about five years. And they have this little card system that after you spend, I think like \$500.00 in the store then you start to get like 5% discount with each purchase and every month they send you their little catalogue with what's coming out and you get coupons. It's really, really a great practice you know. Um like you get coupons you get 50% off of one item one month and maybe \$25.00 off an item another month. Every month there is something in there, so you'd look, we used to really look for the 50% off coupon. And I was in there this day, In fact it was my birthday and I had taken the day off and I had on these jeans. The washed denim, you know the ones that look dirty. I had on this loose top that tie dyed all through but you know it has the big sleeves and I've forgotten what you call those kinds of tops, but it was just a real comfortable top and I had on sandals that matched the top, sort of cloth looking sandals that matched the top. And I was just comfortable so I was just bumming around, went in Boutique C, just sort of walked in there and you know there wasn't the usual, you know greeting that I normally get, no-one said anything to me and that store is not that big. You know you can see, if you stand at the register you can see people almost half way down you know, to the other door of the Mall. So, and, the store was, this was during the week, so a weekday, so you can imagine there was no traffic in there.

I: Right.

R: This was not on the weekend, it was a weekday, and I can't remember what day of the week it was. Let me see if my birthday is on a Saturday this year, it was probably like about a Wednesday maybe. Okay.

I: Were you shopping for your birthday?

R: No, this was just something that I just started doing for myself that I'd just take off from work on my birthday every year.

I: Okay.

R: You know, just to have, you know the day off and just a tradition that I started for me a few years ago. So no, I was just bumming around, really wasn't really shopping for my birthday, but you know if I came across something then hey. So anyway I was in there and wasn't really shopping for anything in particular just sort of checking, seeing what they had in new and um I saw this skirt and one of the sales people came up and sort of almost bumped into me as I was looking at this skirt and I was walking around the store trying to find a top to go with the skirt, and I was looking and no-one, not once, asked me can we help you, or can I help you, you know match that, and I'm obviously have this skirt going from rack to rack, no-one says a word to me. There are about four different sales people in there, okay. One was behind the register, one was putting some things out, I think between two of them they were putting some things out on the floor and um, so I ended up putting the skirt back because I never could find a top. So I just started to look at jewelry and I was just looking at some jewelry and the lady from behind the register kept sort of looking at me, but never would say anything about well can I help you? Because they have their jewelry just sort of out. And, the jewelry that I was looking at was sort of mid-way between the register and the door so I'm looking at it, just picking it up and looking at the watches and things and I could see her, you know, just staring at me, well not just staring, but I could see that she kept her eyes on me. And I went back to, they had some sale things back by their dressing rooms which is sort of back in a corner and um I always check that out and I went back there, of course, still not asking me "is there anything I can help you with?" but under the pretence that she is doing something in the backroom or something and she's basically following me around thinking that I don't know that she is following me around. So I finally decide that there is this watch that I see that I want to get, that doesn't have a price tag on it. So I go up to the counter with the watch in my hand and um, two of them standing there talking and I'm trying to, you know, be polite not interrupt, they wouldn't stop, just as if I was invisible. Finally the one that was on the floor walked away and then the lady at the register finally turned and said well, can I help you with something. And, before I could say, yes I'd like to find the price of this watch, the lady who was putting out stock came out and asked the lady a question well do you know where such and such is, and she said well I'm not sure. I mean didn't say excuse me or anything. Not only did she continue the conversation, she walked off. Left me standing there, went out on the floor with this other lady, didn't come back and I'm still standing there looking with this watch in my hand like, what in the world. I was in that store for about 45 minutes and I never had anyone say anything to me about can I help you or anything. When I finally did get to someone at the register she just anyway totally blew me off. So, what I did, I stood there at the counter, I put the watch down. I took their

little card out, broke it up into many, many pieces. I mean I was right there in plain sight. It didn't matter to them that I was doing that; I was still totally invisible to them. And finally the lady who had been going back and forth, you know pretending to be getting something out of the back room when I was looking at the sales stuff, came up and I asked her, "do you have a trash can?" and she said well yeah. I said well could you put this in the trash for me, and I handed her the card. She said oh sure, never questioned me or anything and it was obvious that it was their little card. And she just threw it in the trash and just went on about, you know just completely turned away from me. I started to walk out of the store, and I'm like, well surely someone's going to say something, no-one said a word, they just let me go on out of the store. I wrote um the store, customer service, I wrote them a long email explaining in detail what had happened.

I: Did you direct that to the local store here or did you send it to the chain?

R: I sent it to the chain.

I: Okay.

R: I didn't receive a response. I did not receive a response and they continued to send me their flyers and I asked them to please take me off their mailing list, that I no longer wanted to be contacted by them because of the poor service and how I'd been treated and for their lack of response to how I'd been treated. Like I said, that by far is probably the worst.

I: In order for you to have gotten that card you said you had to have spent at least \$500.00 in the store. What do you think was the difference between your prior experiences when this was probably one of your favorite stores, and this one experience this time?

R: When I'd gone in there before it's been like directly from work and I think what may have been, when I've gone in from work I would have had on some Boutique C clothes, because I'd shopped there so often. So when you walk in there, if you already have on their clothes, they are going to recognize. There had been a couple of times when I've gone in there and not had on their clothes and had someone say, do you know how our sizes run? And I said yes I shop here quite a bit, you know, and I'm sure they ask other people that, but I had been in there when they had not asked people other than me that. They've not asked, I've not seen them ask white customers that. And you know, some of that I just sort of dismiss, but I think if I'd been in there with some Boutique C clothes on they would have, you know, oh she's already an established customer so she's okay. But there I was and um, there was um, there was a white woman who came in she didn't have on Boutique C stuff. She really wasn't dressed a whole lot better than

I was and they bent over backwards trying to help her and I'd shopped at Boutique C enough to recognize their clothes, so.

I: How did you feel during that experience?

R: Well it didn't really bother my self esteem I was just really, again ticked at being treated that way.

I: Do you think they could detect..

R: That I was angry?

I: Yes.

R: Yes, if they had taken the time to care.

I: Do you think they did?

R: No, I don't think they care.

I: Did you recognize the sales people as anyone that had waited on you previously.

R: Yes.

I: You recognized at least one or all of them?

R: Yes, the lady that I tore up my card and that I gave the card to, yeah I'd seen her more than once in that store. But obviously she had not even taken the time to get to know who I was and, trust me I've spent much more than \$500.00 in that store over a couple of years. Because their clothing is not inexpensive, unfortunately I have spent more than \$500.00. I'm sure my husband is glad that I'm mad with them.

I: This is a day when you weren't shopping for your husband.

R: That's right, but um, that's probably the only store where I would go in and pay full price for stuff, because I really liked it that much and it was really unique and um, and I would not make a habit of going in and paying, you know, those kind of prices for jackets and skirts and blouses, but for me because they were just a little different and not, you know, not really traditional, but things that I could just mix and match and just up, you know.

I: Have you told other people about your experience there?

R: Yeah, I sure have.

I: What's the reaction been?

R: Um surprise.

I: Do you have other friends of color that continue to shop there and have they had similar experiences or has their experience been different.

R: Not at that particular Boutique C, my cousin who lives in Charlotte, and I shop with, that was another of our common things. She shops at Boutique C and she continues to shop at Boutique C, but again she's not shopped at the one here. Okay. She's shopping in Charlotte. And um, there have been a couple of times I've gone in, different Boutique C stores in the last couple of years. Like that is an outlet, like the store my cousin goes to in Charlotte, I went in there with her, but I didn't buy anything. Um, and there is a store in Columbia, South Carolina where I didn't buy anything in there either.

I: Is that a conscientious decision not to buy anything at those other Boutique C or is it just more so you just didn't?

R: For the longest it's been really conscientious. But it took me a while to even go back in the store, because it wasn't just that the Knoxville store, you know, treated me badly, it was just the overall, where I wrote that complaint and I never got a response, so that reflects,

I: Nationwide.

R: Yeah, so for me that was a reflection overall. And um I have bought one thing from Boutique C since that time; it was a brown skirt that I could not resist. It's really funny because my daughter, what did she buy for me in Boutique C? She said don't kill me but I bought you something from Boutique C. Um she washed, there's a pair of jeans that I had, that had glitter butterflies or something across the butt. Favorite jeans that didn't make me look huge and really fit nice and I loved them. And I came home, I had went out of town, and she put them in the dryer and the little glitter things came all off. And I was not very happy about it, and so she was trying to make amends so she went to Boutique C and she bought me these jean Capri's. She said, well you're gonna hate me, and uh. I said well you know Boutique C is kind of expensive, you should have gone like City Trends or something and get me some jeans for like, you know, \$20.00 or something. And she said I got them with your 5% discount. Well what 5% discount, I tore up my card, I'm not even there. She said well, I gave them your name; you're still in your system. And I said you're kidding? She said nope, she looked you up and you are still in the system.

I: Oh?

R: But she went to the one at Turkey Creek, there's a new one at Turkey Creek, she didn't go to West Town Mall and um, so, my daughters are aware that I shop there. Matter of fact they bought me some jewelry for Christmas from Boutique C. Yeah. They were on a little sale rack in the back at the corner; they probably got followed as well.

I: Have they (her daughters) ever been with you when you've been out shopping and thought that you were treated negatively because of your race?

R: Um, we've been together when they were and they've been afraid of my response.

I: Tell me about that.

R: There was a um, hat store, my youngest daughter who is 15 used to be into ball caps and there was this cap that she wanted to buy and the sales clerk, she wanted to buy it, she had her money and everything, treated her badly. She said that he just sort of snatched the cap out of her hand and asked "well are you planning on buying this" or something like that. And um, she said well I have to go ask my mom or something because it cost like \$30.00 and she didn't want to pay \$30.00 for a hat, but she really wanted it. She said well, there's a hat in there but I'm afraid to go back because the guy, I think probably thought I was going to steal it or something. And um, so I said well we're going back in that store. She's like oh mom, please, please, please. So, we went back in there and I said now is this the store where you were that you want and the guy could see me looking and his eyes were getting big. And I'm like is this the hat that you wanted to buy? And she's like yeah and the guy came over, you know rushed over, oh can I help you, can I help you? I said my daughter was in here earlier and I believe she said she wanted to buy this hat. And he said oh yeah, yeah and I said Lindsay what you do, you don't just accept that kind of treatment. I said normally what we would do is, you know go away and maybe not patronize their business. I said but he needs to understand that, you know, that just because you are black, you're not in here trying to steal anything, that you have money and you don't you know.

I: Did you say that in front of the salesperson?

R: I said that loud enough for him to hear it. I wasn't real loud but I was talking to her in a tone, that you know, he was right there and I'm sure he heard me and she's looking like, okay mom. Or sometimes I'll be places with them and I'll say I think they could benefit from some customer service training and they'll like roll their eyes, mom please just let it go. I'm like no, I don't want you guys to grow up just taking this sort of stuff, you don't have to take that kind of

treatment from people and you shouldn't. So, we were at oh gosh this is really bad, my daughters and I were, cause I said I like antique shopping, there was at um, what's the fairgrounds where they have this big antique event I think in the Fall or something and I took them with me. We had not been here in Knoxville very long, and we were just piddling around watching things and we came across this table of watches and my youngest daughter likes watches just as much as I do, so she had a couple that she wanted me to look at and she was still walking around and she had them in her hand, still very, very close to the table and I was on one side of the table and she was on the other. And the man behind there, who was an older white gentleman, started screaming at her. Put those down, you're trying to steal those. And I said wait a minute she's not trying to steal those. You have but 30 watches here, we could afford to buy your entire stand if we wanted to. And I said Lindsay put them down, we don't want to buy anything from him, and I mean we're out in this big hall and he's screaming and the attention of everyone and it was total embarrassment for both my girls and they wanted to leave at that point. I said no, we are not going to have him cause us to leave something that we are doing. And so, we started to walk away and there was an older white lady. She said honey, don't pay any attention to him, he is just crazy and mean. And she said that was really wrong, what he did and we were standing over there and I said that's okay and he came over there and said I see you over here talking about me you guys over here talking about me. And I said you need to get away from me. And I told the lady, where is the security office? Because I'm going to go and report him. And I went and reported it to them, and I said now, you know we don't appreciate the way we were treated. I notice when we look around, you know, there are not too many black people in here and I have to believe that it was because of that. And at that time I don't usually use my husband's job, but I said my husband is an Assistant Football Coach at the University of Tennessee; we can buy anything in this place that we want. And I never use that, but at that time I wanted to make a point. You know, and even if we didn't. Even if we couldn't we do have a right to be in here to shop. We didn't come in here to steal anything, but my girls were so uncomfortable and I've never been back to that event, even though you know, I've always wanted to. Because of that, I have never been back to that event.

I: What was their reaction? When you told security about that and explained your position.

R: They were very apologetic; I don't think they did anything about it. They took you know, his name and everything, you know they noted who I was and everything. They were very apologetic and um, as a matter of fact they said oh yeah we know who you are talking about. So apparently aware of his behavior and if he was still coming back there to have a booth space they didn't do anything about it.

I: Is there a response that they could have done that would have made you more likely to patronize that place again?

R: If they had given me, maybe a, if they had followed up with a written apology and to have indicated to me that they had talked to him about his behavior and about it being inappropriate, um that really would have helped.

I: Okay.

R: That really would have helped.

I: Um, I realize that I am over the hour that I promised you but I have one more last question. One of the first things that you said, um when you talked about one of the earlier situations, you said it happened in Washington State and that really surprised you that it happened in Washington State. Do you think that these kinds of incidences are more likely to happen in certain geographic regions?

R: Yep.

I: Tell me about that.

R: Um there are still certain regions that typically hold on to prejudicial beliefs. Um, unfortunately this area is one of them and as, when I was working with students, with a focus group it really brought some things to home, from outside of my little world in Knoxville, because I'm pretty insulated.

I: How long have you been here in Knoxville?

R: I've been here since '99 but I really don't interact with the community outside of the University of Tennessee and my church family and very close friends that much, because of all the time that work and the University take up. I really don't have the opportunity to interact. And, when I do, I do see a difference um in how people treat me until they find out who I am and I really have had people that I'd like not even been bothered with because they come back to me, "oh I didn't know that you were so and so's wife" I don't care that should not make a difference. Treat me like I am a person. And um we have had problems or incidents at my children's school that I've gone over and talked with the Principal that they have had to deal with that should not be happening in this day and age. Um, my daughter who is a senior, who will be graduating in a couple of weeks was hearing the same jokes when she went to Farragat High School that my youngest daughter who is coming, you know 3 years after is hearing the same thing, same old stupid joke about um, my family tree has black people on it and they are still hanging there and I shared that with the principal along with other things of my daughters, things being said to them of a racial nature. Um, so this area is not very welcoming and I used to think, up until this

year, I really thought that we wanted to retire here in Knoxville, as soon as my husband decides to retire or move on from his job, you know I totally made a conscious decision that we don't want to stay here, um because of that. I used to think, because again, my little insulated world, that you know Knoxville was a good place to be, I don't feel that way anymore and looking specifically at things my children have endured and once we cease to be nobody again, as people see it, and I'm saying that because we are certainly people regardless of what our titles are or anything or what kind of job we have,

I: In the eyes of Knoxvilleians?

R: In the eyes of Knoxvilleians, because they can see my husband on TV or read about him in the paper, okay, that makes you okay. And, you know that really leaves a bad taste in my mouth. That really does leave a bad taste in my mouth. And it's amazing how, you know because most of the time people don't know who my husband is and it's a conscious effort on my part not to tell them who he is, um because I'm an individual, see me as who I am and um, a person of value, and had a lot of success in, you know, what I do here at this University. Look beyond what the color of my skin is, my gender and you know what my husband does. So, other parts of the country, probably we, were in southern Illinois, and this has been a long time, my son was a sophomore in High School and he'd never heard anyone use the 'n' word towards him and he did and it really hurt really deeply. But there were people who came up who were white who comforted us and said, you know they are really ignorant people we are really sorry about that they were obviously visiting from somewhere because we were at a park and stuff like that. And um... everything. Out in Seattle my husband and I were like the odd couple because we were not an interracial couple so we were like the odd couple, if that gives you an idea of what the West Coast.

I: I have a girlfriend that lives in Seattle.

R: Yeah what the West Coast is pretty much like, we were like the odd couple. You know, rarely did you see two African Americans married to each other walking around out there, so we were definitely like the odd couple, so certainly things tended to be a whole lot different out on the West Coast. Um Texas, I'm trying to remember. I don't remember anything really, but again relatively insulated. Well no out and about I really did not run into major issues in Texas concerning the issues of race. Even outside of my little world when I traveled and stuff, I never really had any problems in Texas that made me feel that I was being mistreated one way or another because of, you know, because of my race or anything. Because I really, did not run into any problems out there.

I: How about D.C.?

R: No, no really not. No really did not run into any problems there either, that I can recall, that really stand out in my mind because again African Americans are pretty much in the majority there. So, but I cannot recall anyone treating me differently because of my race.

INTERVIEW FIVE

Participant: AA Female
University faculty/administrator
Married
Mid 50s
One adult son

I: Today is May 4th and I'm with interview participant number seven and as you know the subject that I am talking about is discrimination in retail settings. Before we talk about that particular topic though, um I'm really interested in your unique experience with that. So, anything that you can tell me about yourself that just kind of gives me some information about you so later.

R: Just me in general?

I: Yes Ma'am just you in general.

R: Okay, um I've been here 24 years.

I: In xxxxxx?

R: In xxxxxx, at the University. I have a Ph.D. in German language and literature and I'm interested in comparative Literature. I've studied languages all my life. I have an undergraduate degree in French and my graduate degrees are in German. And I still love learning languages. Um the other thing I like to do is gourmet cooking.

I: Impressive!

R: That's my hobby, when I have time, especially food from other countries, so you could see I'm really interested in international and inter-cultural things. When I first came here I was an Assistant Professor and then after several years I've moved up through the ranks and became Associate and then full Professor. Then I, I was in the German Department, they combined it with the other languages and we became one big department and I became the Department Head. I did that for five years and then two years ago, I came over here and I ran for the position of xxxxxxxxxxxx and I was selected for that position. And I've enjoyed it. I always wanted to be a teacher, ever since I was about five years old. I love the classroom and that's what I decided to do and stuck with it. Uh then I moved more into administration. I do miss the students; I still work with students on dissertations and thesis. Um, but I like what I'm doing because I can really

mentor faculty and still students, I still work with students and then train them. I see people realize their professional development goals, so it's very interesting for me. It is very different changing from being a faculty member to full-time administrator because you don't have the kind of free time you have as a faculty member and I don't think they appreciate it until they get out of it, but it's been a good experience being here in Knoxville. I grew up in New Jersey and then I went to school, graduate school in Chicago. So coming to the South was new for me and um, I had never really heard of Knoxville. The year I came they had the World's Fair. My husband is a Southerner but the South was new for me. I had visited with him, but I've had a pleasant experience in Knoxville. I really can't complain. Culturally it's different. When I was in Chicago I was used to um a lot of diversity of people around me all the time. But I've actually gotten, I have that in a sense here now because the University does have a fairly diverse community and um, I've enjoyed it. I stayed and I've been able to move forward and do a lot of things.

I: So you mentioned you were married. Do you and your husband have any children?

R: Yes, we have one son he's 25-years-old. He was a year old when we came here. He's 25 and he is a computer engineer, he has a Master's in Computer Engineering. My husband is also a professor here. He's in XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX.

I: Okay, so your son went through the school system here?

R: He went through the school system here and then he went up North for undergraduate and graduate school.

I: Okay.

R: I think it was good for him to get away from where he had been all his life. Go to a different part of the country and it's kind of hard for him he didn't want to come to a school where both his parents worked.

I: You couldn't bribe him to stay here.

R: It would have been cheaper but he said no.

I: Anything else about yourself that you'd like to share, that I should know?

R: Very independent person, determined. Um, I've not minded being alone and reading and thinking about things. I like to read a lot too and travel. I have a small circle of friends, but I really enjoy meeting different people. I think if I weren't a Professor I would like to be a Psychologist, or Psychiatrist 'cause I just,

I could sit in an airport and spend an hour just watching people and wonder what makes the tick and why they do what they are doing. And it interests me to see different personalities, that would interest me. Either that or a Rock Star.

I: Talk about very opposite poles. Okay. Now we're gonna move kinda to the um environment that we are going to be talking about, which is the retail environment. Just tell me about your attitude towards shopping in general.

R: Um, that's a good question. I have to really be in the mood. Because um, I like to take my time. Usually if I go out looking for something, I know I'm not going to find it. So, I need to be able to take my time and look around. And I'm not a fast shopper. I'll see something, think about it, maybe come back. One of my girlfriends always told me, do not let it go. Even if you have to take it back, it won't be there when you go back. But um, I just like to look around a lot. Or if I see a pair of shoes I like I might, I go out looking for a skirt, I see shoes I like and I might come home with three pairs of shoes because I like them and I don't have time to go look for them on a regular basis. So I might buy a whole bunch of things at once. Or four suits at once because if they happen to work, it makes it easier for me. So I don't mind shopping, but I really have to have the time, and if I've got other things I'm worried about doing, it's hard for me to just take off and go shopping.

I: Do you shop often then?

R: Not a lot. I haven't been to the Mall in a long time, just because I end up coming to the office, or doing something at home. I think, oh I'm gonna go to the Mall tomorrow. And then I don't because I have to do something else, so it's not real frequent. Although I don't mind it, it's just that I really want to be able to have time and do it. And I like to go to a lot of different places and compare things.

I: When you shop, do you usually shop by yourself or with others?

R: I usually shop by myself, I have one friend I like shopping with, but when I went with her, I just watched because she is such a fast shopper, knows exactly what she wanted to go with what, I sort of just trailed along and watched her. And in the last couple of years I've done a little bit of online shopping but that ended up being mostly books. I've bought a couple of things online. Yeah. I've looked at a lot of catalogues. I've just started getting a lot of catalogues now and thinking about that, so.

I: What are your favorite stores to shop in? Do you have any favorites?

R: For clothes, I like to go to Chico's and you can find them almost anywhere. Um, it depends on what you're talking about. Oh I shop in

Department Store C but you know sometimes I can find things. I really like Chico's. I like some of the smaller boutique stores because you can find things that are different and not just the same thing that six million other people are wearing.

I: Any [boutique store] pop in your mind particularly?

R: Um, Ann Taylor, Chico's. There's probably another one, but see I'm so poor at shopping I don't... There's actually one downtown that's not that old, Vagabond Deal, I've bought a couple of things in there. But I do go in the retail stores, the big ones like Department Store C and what used to be Profitts for things like shoes. I often buy shoes in there, one of those stores.

I: I'll go back to Chico's since that's the first one you mentioned. What is it about Chico's that you enjoy?

R: Um, it's, much of it is closer to traditional type clothes you can wear most anytime, anywhere. I mean they do have some frilly things. I don't like things that are frilly. I'm sort of on the keep it straight, plain, not too overdone, mix and match. That's what I like. It's easy to travel with and it's mix and match, you can do a lot of that with it. And it's easy to take care of. You throw them in the washer and pull them out and you like fine. Because I'm terrible about ironing, I hate to iron. I take things to the cleaners or it has to be, look good when I take it out of the dryer, so I don't have to deal with it.

I: Is there anything else about the sales staff or environment at Chico's that you like or dislike?

R: Yeah, they are very helpful, they are very um, they are very attentive and they make suggestions to you. Because it's a smaller store they can be more personal as opposed to the large stores where they have to keep an eye on everything and they watch people all the time. They are much more personal, I like the personal attention I think that's why I like the smaller boutique stores. My favorite is to go into stores that have cooking things. Um Williams Sonoma is one big store at the Mall I love because it has all kinds of things for cooking, and I like stores like that a lot.

I: Can you recall a particularly pleasant experience shopping at any store where you were just like, that's noteworthy for whatever positive reason.

R: Uh a very specific one, um. Well when I went to Vagabond Deal last year. That's a very small store downtown and not only was the person helping me friendly but the other ladies in there and they were all commenting on what I was trying on and helping me out. Uh, Chico's. I've been to Chico's all over the country and they are always very nice and helpful because they do make

suggestions. They say have you looked at this? You look good in this color what about matching these together, because I'm terrible about figuring out what I'm going to wear to something. And so, there is always the personal attention and that's just happened a lot in that particular store. But I really do like fancy stores, and we don't have them around here, like Lord and Taylor, Macys, Nordstrom's. I visit those when I go to big cities. I've always been treated well in those stores. They tend to be, well I guess I visited them in Atlanta, but when I go to more of the cities in the North, I've been to those stores.

I: And again, any particular occasions ring out in your mind as a pleasant experience?

R: Not really. Oh one time I was in New Orleans and I can't even remember the store we were in, shopping with a friend. We found some good bargains. It was a pretty big store. It must have been comparable to something we have here I just don't know and um, the people there were very nice to us. I bought several things 'cause my suitcase was very heavy when I came home. Only because I was with my shopping friend, she forced me to shop.

I: Okay, that tells me a little bit about that background. Now we're going to delve into the specific area I'm interested in which is discrimination in retail stores. Can you recall an example of a time that you felt you were treated poorly?

R: I do. There is one that sticks in my mind and I hate it, it happened here. And I don't remember having an experience like that anywhere else. I was in the Department Store C and my son was with me and I think it was holidays and we were walking back and forth looking at all the special gift things, one afternoon; I don't know if it was either a Friday or Sunday. But he must have still been in high school. He was still young enough to want to go to the Mall with me from time to time. And I noticed this guard and I saw him looking at us, but I thought you know, they all do. And as I moved along I saw him approaching, he was following us and I was so upset about this, that he was following me and my son, I just could not believe. And I kept looking back and he kept following us and I really wanted to make a scene in that store, but I didn't want to do it with my son there. I was really going to tell him off, but I didn't want to do it with my son there. So I went home and I called Department Store C and I really made a big fuss about it and said that, you know, I was very upset, I didn't want to shop there again. I don't understand why this man thought he needed to follow me around. I'd shopped in Department Store C a long time. I had more credit cards than he could ever think about and I called them up and they apologized. Actually when I went back there, not too much later, I never saw him again. But, it really upset me because I had never been followed like that. Um, I just hadn't experienced it and it just really bothered me terribly.

I: That was about 10 years ago?

R: Yes something like that.

I: Tell me about when you initially realized that you were being followed. How that played out..., I want to go back to that moment in time and tell me just you were thinking, seeing.

R: I saw him moving closer, I'm thinking. I looked and I thought, I haven't pick up anything and my son and I, we would stop and look at things, and I thought. And I'm trying to remember whether I said it. I was going to turn around and say, can I help you? But I kept looking back and he kept following as we moved along. And I stopped and one lady did ask me about something and, she was at the counter and I said no, and I went on, but he still continued to follow me and she was right there. It just was a horrible feeling for me because I just couldn't imagine why he followed, and I know they watch people in stores, but I was just very insulted that he was following the two of us around, that had never happened to me before.

I: You said that you didn't want to make a scene with your son, there.

R: I didn't I really wanted to make a scene and I don't often, but I thought, well I don't want to do this with my son here. Later I wished I had, but I thought well, I didn't want it to turn into something that could then backfire and it would be then bad for him too, and I just didn't want him to have to deal with that. Although I did talk to him about it when I went home. I talked to him and my husband about it.

I: That was my next question, tell me about the conversation you had with your son about it.

R: I asked him if he noticed and he did, and we talked about the fact that people do follow you in the stores and I warned him about, just being sure when you are in the store that, you know, how you handle yourself, and he always had. But I just let him know that I was very upset about that when I saw that man watching me and um, I don't know what triggered it and I said to him, well of course I guess they have to do this. Maybe its holiday time, I just let him know that I think it's horrible that it has to happen and I didn't like it and I told my husband about it. And I did call Department Store C and I just went on and on for a long time on the phone.

I: You called the same Department Store C that you were at?

R: The same Department Store C it was over at East Town Mall, in fact I live in xxxxxxxx xxxx, over east and it was at Department Store C.

I: Did you speak with a Manager there? Do you recall who,

R: I did, I asked to speak with a Manager.

I: How did he handle...? Tell me about that conversation.

R: He seemed very understanding. He said that he would check into it and I can't remember it might have even been, I can't remember if it was a man or a woman, but I told him as many specifics as I could about who it was and they took all my details and listened to me and said that they would check into it. And I guess I should have followed up, I didn't because it was just hard for me to deal with.

I: Hard for you to deal with, tell me about that.

R: It was hard for me to deal with because here I felt I was this up standing citizen. It's just nothing like this had ever happened to me; I've always had plenty of money and credit cards, always paid my bills. And it doesn't occur to me to think that I could be a suspicious person. But then it occurred to me that well yeah, many people are and often black people are. And I thought, I guess that's what they are operating on, but I don't like the way it feels. And I thought I guess this is how a lot of people feel at times and I just hadn't thought about it before. But that's the only one that sticks in my mind. I mean I guess there are times in the stores where you feel ignored, but I've never felt like it was because of race. It's more because people are busy and not paying attention to you. Sometimes it does bother me that as soon as you say, can I help you? When you walk in, they have to make sure that you are looking for something; you can't just wander around and look at things. I thought well I know they are asked to do that. And I have seen people that I've suspected are not really customers but are just walking around checking out people, then I figure I know that's their job, I just don't want to be hassled as if it looks like I've done something. So, I try to keep that in my mind. Although I will say this, there are many times where, and I guess I've done this in retail because I don't want people to make assumptions about who I am or what I'm there for. I use my title; I say I'm Dr. XXXXXX. And while sometimes you might think that, I kind of hate to do that, but sometimes I have to, to get the kind of attention and respect that I want. I will say it's Dr. XXXXXX just to make sure they know that I, of what level they are speaking to. And I have done that in retail.

I: You mentioned that because you've always had a certain amount of resources available to you when you go shopping, you know that you are comfortable because you know you can purchase what you want. Do you ever dress, does how you dress enter your mind when you go out to retail stores?

R: That's a good question. Not always. I mean, on weekends I can be a jeans and t-shirt person and I don't feel I have to dress up and that may have something to do with it. I have a friend, she doesn't live here anymore, she's a professor. She would never leave the house without looking like she is stepping out of a fashion magazine. In a sense, people do treat you differently because of that, and I don't think that you should have to dress like that, and I don't necessarily. I don't look like I'm a bum, but I don't necessarily get dressed up, and people make assumptions if you want. I guess maybe that's why sometimes I use my title because unless I'm dressed up in a suit, they may make certain assumptions so I'll use my title. But if I'm comfortable, I figure I don't have to get dressed up, no. I've worn flat shoes today; you'll have to put a gun to my head to make me wear high heels.

I: I wear heels all the time (laughs). [Pointed down at my shoes]

R: I know, my friend did too, like this. Always, she would not leave the house without them. She had to go pick up her daughter from church and it was summertime, her daughter was at camp or something, and she was home in her shorts and she didn't want to go like that. I said what's the matter, you're just going to pick up, she wouldn't go out in public like that. Whereas me, hey. But that is a factor though, how you're dressed and I don't necessarily get dressed up. I mean I'm clean, but it might be a t-shirt and pants and running shoes or whatever, but I don't necessarily feel like I have to get dressed up and I know that they do make certain assumptions.

I: Because they make certain assumptions and you hadn't encountered this by yourself in other situations, do you think it was because your son, who is an African American male was with you at this time, that you might have gotten more,

R: You ask a very good question and that's probably why I hesitated to make a scene. I think that had something to do with it. He was with me, he was also looking at things and he is a very good boy, I mean you can't ask for a better child, but I think that was probably part of why he was following us around. And I hated it and I guess that's what deep down really hurt me. Yeah.

I: Did he, when you all talked about it at home, your husband, yourself and your son. How did your son feel about the incident? He noticed it, but did he have any feelings about it?

R: He didn't really seem to express any real strong things about it. He's sort of very quiet and pensive and takes things in. And, we talked about it in general but he didn't get upset about it. He just listened to me and we talked about, you know how to be careful. Cause I never had any fears about sending him out on his own and doing what he needed to do. He never had any problems growing up

here in Knoxville, he had white and black friends and it worked fine. So, he just sort of took it in. He's always been kind of mature for his age, and so you know, we had our discussion, but he didn't get upset about it.

I: I think you've probably answered this but just to make sure, were there any other instances where you all discussed racial issues and potentially negative situations outside the retail environment at all?

R: We have a lot at home, on and off, yeah because I think he needs to be aware of that. And another reason why we did from time to time talk about it a lot, my husband is from Mississippi and he's had many tough experiences and so he wanted to be sure my son was aware of that. I talked about some things growing up, um because there's always something in your life growing up, so we did from time to time talk about these issues with him so he would be aware, that never be surprised about things that happen. No matter how good you think your friends are in a group. And actually I tell young people today, especially like yourself. No matter how good you are at something and no matter what award you get on a particular day, and they all praise you, I feel like every day sometimes when I walk in here I'm starting all over, because often they fall right back into a certain way of thinking. And you are starting all over all the time. And I don't let that get me down, I just think well I have to be who I am and do what I know is right. But you never have completely made it to a point where I don't have to worry about it, they are never gonna make any assumptions about anything about me. There's always somebody around who is going to do that. And I just wanted him to understand that too. And I was brought up that way, you always have to do your best and do what's right. You don't know who is watching you and you don't know whose going to come into the picture who doesn't care about whatever's in your background and doesn't care to know. They'll make assumptions about you before knowing that.

I: How do you think that kind of, having that kind of weight on your shoulders how does that manifest itself to you? Is that something you think about on a daily basis, or just when you are reflecting back?

R: Not on a daily basis, just from time to time in certain situations. Cause if you think about it on a daily basis you won't get through the day. And um, and of course as you get older you have many things to weigh it against in terms of good things that happen to you too. And you sort of see that, well here's how I dealt with that and I can continue to deal with it in this way. So, it makes a difference as you get older, but I don't think about it every single day because there are a lot of good things, a lot of good people that I know, that you interact with and when new one's come on the scene who don't quite get it, you deal with them.

I: How do you deal with them?

R: Um, well it depends on the situation. Um, one thing that you learn to do as you get older and wiser is to, what my friend used to call, interrupt. If someone is doing something or says something that's not appropriate, you let them know. Or they make some assumption or general statement, over generalized statement, you let them know. Xxxx xxxx xxxx xxxxx xxxxx [Makes statement referring to how she deals with a particular person]. And I can do it with him because he is very open, he is very open to that, but I don't let him get away with anything. Even if it's about women in general and he thinks he's very open about gender issues and he is, but if he makes some comment, I let him know it's unacceptable or I'll make a comment. And you can do it in a way where it's not that you're attacking. It's not that you are trying to bring them down, but you are just reminding them, well no, we don't necessarily have to look at it that way. You know, think about what you're saying. Cause something happened in one meeting, we all had a good laugh about it, but he said, I'm not gonna forget that. Some comment he made, I forget now, and I said are you talking about xxxxxxxx women or are you talking about all women, and the others all laughed because he had made some comment about women and he says wow I better stop. And I crossed my arms like this. Um and we had a good laugh about it, but you know he said to me, he said you know as open minded as I think I am, I have a lot to watch out for too.

I: Okay. Let me ask you about this. Growing up in New Jersey when you were younger, do you recall ever going shopping with your parents and um facing a situation at that time that?

R: Um, going shopping with my mother, I don't remember. Every once in a while she would take us in the City. I don't remember any really bad situations. I do remember when I lived in Chicago which I loved. My husband and I went to a restaurant one time, that we read about, it sounded good and by the time we got there, we realized, and this was in Chicago in the North, oh this is a part of the city that you usually don't see any black people in. And we went in there anyway and they were nice to us, but they were sure staring at us, and I thought oh my god I can't believe this. But we went in and ate, and they served us and it wasn't a scene, but we laughed about it later, what were we thinking to go there. We just wanted to go to this restaurant because there were parts of the city that were like that. It's not that they would do anything to you, but it was just, I forget who lived in that part of town, but it was way south west I guess, black people just didn't go over there. But before we realized that's where this restaurant was, and we heard all these good things, we just went and it worked out okay.

I: But when you were there you didn't feel other than them staring at you?

R: Well, we could tell that people were kind of looking like, boy they have some nerve.

I: Other people meaning other people in the restaurant or the servers?

R: In the restaurant. But the servers served us and we ate and we went and it was okay. That's the only thing I remember about when we lived in Chicago. But growing up, I really don't remember any bad experiences going shopping with my mom, no. But we were always warned about how to behave in stores too.

I: When you were warned about how to behave, did your mom say because you are black you might face these kinds of things in stores or ...?

R: They were honest and open with us, yeah. Absolutely. I mean they watch a lot of people, but they will especially be watching you. Yeah I was very much aware of that. And I still feel that if I know there are detectives in the store. Its like are they looking at me because I'm black. I guess I don't think about it that much but I know they are in stores really to watch everybody but you always feel like well they've really got to keep any eye out for you.

I: Let's see if I'm missing anything here. Looking back, retrospectively now, that day at Department Store C is there anything that you would do differently if that experience were to happen today?

R: I probably would confront the person and ask if there's a problem or is there something. I probably would confront that person, that guard because it was just so obvious he was following me, I probably would turn around and confront him.

I: Why, why would you choose that option now and you didn't choose it then?

R: Well maybe because I am so much older, I've paid my dues and I think that sometimes people need to be questioned to make sure their motives are what they should be. He's maybe doing his job. And maybe I would say, I'm sure you're doing your job but you know is there some reason, is there something I can help you with, is there some reason you need to follow me around or just something you want to see in my bag. Um the older you get the less you want to put up with. And I've been around too long and not had any trouble. I think I would now want to ask about it. And that's easy to say sitting here and I do have to think. And I would have to be comfortable where I am. I might do that here, I wonder if I would do that if I were shopping somewhere in say, New York where there are hundreds of people all the time going around. Or in um another place. I think people are better at doing it now, they are watching what's going on. They are not as obvious. I mean this was, see cause I know people are watched and I know that's why they are always on you saying, can I help you? Is there

something you want? If you linger too long looking at something. This guy was particularly bad at it, and so if it were that kind of situation, I would ask again. I might not just do that anywhere because if you are in a big department store, in the City you have to assume that people are going to be detectives going around looking, and of course they are better at it than he was, so. If it were that obvious, I would have to be comfortable about where I am because I don't want to start a fuss and get taken hostage. Like this lady recently, I don't know if you heard about it, was it in Nashville? She was going to go into some building, she didn't have her ID. The policeman came up to her and insisted on it and I think she hit him or something and it caused a big terrible fuss and she was black. And it was some government office.

I: Was it in Washington D.C? It was one of the US Representatives,

R: Yes, that's what it was, and so that interested me briefly and I thought, I wonder if there's more to this. And then my husband said, well do you think that she should have apologized cause didn't she apologize later and I said, well I have to think about it. It depends on what really happened in the situation.

I: Okay, well I think I have enough for my research so I'm going to officially end this interview.

R: I'm sorry I don't have any more stories, that's the only one that stuck in my mind so I assume that anything else was not enough to trigger anything in me, I was very upset that day. It took a while for me to get over it.

INTERVIEW SIX

Participant: AA Female
Professor
Mid 50s
Married
Two teenage sons

I: Today is May 10th and I am with interview participant # 6. As you know the topic for my dissertation is perceptions of discrimination in retail settings. Before we start talking about that specific area of interest, I just need to an idea about you, because I'm interested in your unique experiences. So, anything that you can tell me about yourself that would help me understand who I am speaking with.

R: Okay. I grew up in Mississippi, I grew up primarily in the 60's so I'm familiar with discrimination and I guess it was on the fringes of segregation and de-segregation so I guess throughout the years I've had a variety of experiences in retail.

I: Okay. Tell me about growing up in Mississippi.

R: I grew up in the time where Woolworths still had the segregated sections. The bus stations were still segregated. Movie theatres were segregated, um even the big department store down town had a separate elevator, we rode up on the freight elevator. Water fountains still had colored water fountains.

I: What size family did you come from?

R: Four girls, I'm the youngest.

I: Um, tell me about going shopping in the 60's in that kind of environment. Are there any instances that you recall that young that stood out in your mind?

R: No not really, I think probably during that time that was just a time when just accepting that's how we operated. So, it wasn't a big deal.

I: Tell me about one of your first experiences then shopping outside of the segregated environment. Does that stand out in your mind; do you recall that at all?

R: Um, I think the only thing that really stands out is being watched, you know. And coming from a proud family and parents who were not afraid to speak

out. You know, we usually would just stop and ask them. You know, can I help you? And that usually would bring it to their attention of what they were doing.

I: That's how both of your parents handled it?

R: My mother more so than my father. My mother would handle it that way, my father would, took the attitude of just ignore them. But my mother was the type of person who spoke out about things. You know, as a matter of fact, and this isn't retail, but um we were taking a bus to Chicago one year for Christmas and the bus was overcrowded. They left Vicksburg with half of the people standing. So, my mother, we got on early and got seats, but finally my mother went up front and told the bus driver this is illegal and at the next stop you need to ask for another bus because everybody on this bus paid for a seat. She had a seat, and he did. She was the type of person she didn't fuss or cuss, she just handled things, you know appropriately and talked to people the way she wanted to be talked to but um she was forthright.

I: Okay, I'm gonna move to the retail environment now, but before we talk about negative instances, just tell me what your attitude towards shopping in general is?

R: I don't shop a lot, I generally go if I've got something I'm looking for specifically, but just to go out and shop and make a day of shopping, I don't really do that.

I: Has that always been the case or has that changed recently?

R: I think that has probably pretty much been the case for me. Now I have a sister who every Friday you're supposed to go shopping, you know, but I'm not like that. If I need something, then I'll go shopping. But otherwise I don't.

I: Okay. What stores do you enjoy shopping in, when you go shopping?

R: I don't like mall environments. So I generally will shop at boutiques or discount stores that are not in Malls. Don't like crowds or crowded environments.

I: Are there any boutique stores that you would say are your favorites or that you really enjoy shopping in?

R: Um, not really. I like Department Store G .

I: What is it about Department Store G that you like?

R: I guess I like the layout and um the clothes, the quality.

I: Any other stores?

R: No not really. I'm the type of person who shops, you know if somebody has a sale on and it's something I want, then I'll go. I'm a coupon queen.

I: Can you recall any instances out shopping whether it was at Department Store G or another store that you had a particularly pleasant experience that stands out in your mind?

R: I think one experience, and it wasn't necessarily mine, but it was recently at Kroger. Um the man was in a wheelchair and the young lady who was doing the bagging was so gracious and patient with him. You know and I told the manager, I said you guys really need to do something special. I don't know if you all had gone the extra mile in training, but I said it really says a lot. Because you know a lot of times people get so impatient when people are disabled or slower and are slowing down the line, but she was so patient.

I: Did you make it a point to seek out the manager and tell him that?

R: Yeah I did. I went and found the manager and told him her name and she was you know a young lady and I said, that says a lot. We always hear negative things about our youth, but I was so impressed and I told her, you know I said that was really sweet of you, I said you probably made his day.

I: Any other instances of really pleasant experiences stand out in your mind?

R: Um, just you know when you've had pleasant cashiers or, those are positive experiences.

I: Any specific instances that you can recall?

R: Nothing that particularly stands out, because I think now, you expect people to be, you know and so when are pleasant that meets your expectations. It's when things occur outside of your expectations that they take you aback or surprise you.

I: Alright tell me about one of those instances, a negative occasion that stands out in your mind.

R: Believe it or not it was in Department Store G. It was Department Store G in Walker Springs before they closed that store down and in that instance I went and I sought out the manager also.

I: Tell me about that instance.

R: I was really walking around looking for a baby shower gift and um the sales person kept asking me, could she help me? And I said no, I'm just looking, but thank you. And then other people were walking around and she'd ask them and then go on. And then she'd come back to me again. And I said are you watching me or something? You know I said because you've asked me once and I told you I thank you and I appreciate it but I'm looking. I just said "you are really being disrespectful after I've told you that I'm looking and that if I need your assistance I'll ask". I said "you have all these other people, you haven't asked them or you've asked them only once, what's the reason?" She says well ma'am I'm just trying to be helpful. I said no, you're trying to be more than helpful, so what's the reason? So, she walked off in a huff and I said, before you leave where's your manager? So she says he's back there. And I went back there and I spoke with him. I said would you come out because I would like to point out the sales person to you. I said you all need to do something about your training or something I said because she was making a distinction in how she was approaching me. He said, well ma'am I don't really think so. I said I know so, you know the customer's always right, remember that.

I: Tell me about that situation. Were you by yourself when you were shopping?

R: Yes.

I: You said that you usually go shopping when you are shopping for something special, was this an occasion when you were looking for something special?

R: Yeah, I was looking for a baby shower gift.

I: Oh you did say that.

R: So, you know you're looking and you don't really know well should I get clothes, should I get something else. So I'm just walking all over and looking at things and trying to make up my mind you know, what it is I want to get. So finally, I just walked out and didn't get anything.

I: When you were walking around the store and after she's approached you the first time and you told her no I'm just looking. Tell me about when you realized you were being treated differently than the other patrons.

R: When I saw other people in the same area who had been there for the same amount of time.

I: Did you make it a point to stop and look and see how she was treating those other people or just ...

R: You know I just observed. You know, I said well these people have been here the same time. I guess I really didn't notice until the third time. You know, and I'm thinking, why are you still watching to see what I'm doing. You know, you've come over here the third time.

I: There are a lot of different emotions that may spring to somebody..., what were you feeling as that was happening?

R: I guess really it made me angry.

I: Tell me about that.

R: I basically felt that she was watching to make sure that I didn't steal anything and you know, I wondered, well, what is it about me? I'm dressed, you know, nicely I think, so what's...? What about me is causing her to feel that I'm not in here to buy anything?

I: After you decided to go to the manager. Tell me about your conversation with the manager.

R: That was my conversation with the manager.

I: That the sales person was following you around and made you feel...

R: I just basically said, she's assuming I'm going to steal something, I said so she's made a distinction.

I: How did you feel about the way he resolved the situation, did you feel he resolved it?

R: He didn't resolve it. He didn't resolve it. So basically I just left and brought it to his attention.

I: Did you carry it any further than that?

R: No, I just left the store.

I: Did you shop at that particular Department Store G again?

R: No.

I: Was that a conscientious decision?

R: Yeah.

I: Did you tell other people about your experience there?

R: No I didn't.

I: Are there any other instances that stand out in your mind?

R: No I don't think particularly, I just remembered that one.

I: Looking back now, is there anything that you would have done; how long ago was this?

R: Oh wow, maybe about 10 years ago.

I: Retrospectively is there anything that you would have done differently if that situation happened again?

R: No, I don't think there is. I just always believe that you need to bring something to somebody's attention. They can say okay, I wasn't aware. But once you bring it to their attention then they no longer have that excuse.

I: Is there any instance or any occasion where you would follow up to a higher level of management than store manager?

R: I never have. No I never have.

I: Can you think of any occasion that might precipitate that, where you might think that was warranted?

R: If the manager had been nasty to me, then I would have. If he had been disrespectful.

I: You said that one of the things that occurred to you when that exchange was going on was, what is it about me that's making her treat me this way. You said well I'm dressed appropriately. Does the way that you are dressed ever cross your mind when you are out shopping?

R: Sure.

I: Is that something you consciously consider when you go out shopping?

R: Yes.

I: Tell me about that.

R: I think I'm conscious as far as hair combed. You know I don't go out with rollers and a head scarf on. You know, but I don't think that's just a matter of shopping. That's just the way that I was reared. That you didn't leave the house looking any old kinda way. So, it's not just a matter of shopping.

I: There is this phrase that I've come across in doing these interviews called "wearing your class". And in speaking with educators, doctors one of the things that they say they sometimes do in stores is use their title, or they dress so that their status is obviously known to the person that they are dealing with. Is that something that you've ever, is that something that's crossed your mind or do you think that you do retrospectively?

R: I don't think I've done that while shopping, I've done that while making hotel reservations and things like that, but I don't think I've ever done that while shopping.

I: How about the wearing your class in terms of the way that you dress, is that something that?

R: I don't, I don't we're laid back, you know, as soon as summer comes the sandals come on, no more pantyhose or anything like that for me. I believe in comfort.

I: How about in terms of, shifting away from the retail environment just a little bit, in terms of while you've been out dining in restaurants or while you've been on vacation in hotels. Have you ever experienced negative treatment in any other kind of retail in that you are paying for services, that you experienced negative treatment?

R: I've experienced negative treatment in being ignored; you know you're sitting there waiting to have your order taken, things like that. Those are situations where, after I've called and tried to get their attention, yeah I do go to the manager. I'm one of those people who really embarrass my children because, you know, when things occur I'm gonna go and speak up about it. Or I'm gonna go and get the right person to address it.

I: Tell me about one of those times.

R: I remember one time I was out with my sisters and we all are basically alike, so once we realized that we were being ignored.

I: Where were you? Do you remember?

R: Where were we? We were at a Shoneys in Vicksburg and um when we realized that we were being ignored we basically went and got one of the black

waitresses. And she said, but that's not my area and I said, I know that but she's you know ignoring us. She said well I'll get the manager. I said well you can get the manager or you can get a good tip.

I: What happened? Did she come wait on you or did the manager come?

R: No, she came on and waited on us. I think it made the other girl angry but um, you know. I said well if the manager says anything we'll tell him. And there have been incidents where we didn't get good service and my husband waited tables through college so he's big on tipping and that's how he got through. And usually if we are in a situation and we are getting poor service, you know, he basically would tell them. You're not getting a tip today because you gave poor service. For some reason you didn't think to value us as customers. But I think the biggest thing that just rubs me in dining is being called 'hon'.

I: Tell me about that.

R: And usually when people do that I ask them not to do that, or I'll call them 'hon'.

I: What do you dislike about that?

R: To me it's being disrespectful and I guess probably having grown up in Mississippi during the time that I did. You know, seeing black women, you know, treated disrespectfully has always, I guess just kinda rubbed me wrong. Or 'you girls' when everybody there is over 40, at the table is over 40. Sometimes I'll tell them, you know, jokingly I really appreciate the compliment, but my girl days are long over.

I: In any of those instances have you taken it to management or do you usually just address it?

R: No, just address the person.

I: You mentioned that your children are sometimes embarrassed with how you handle things, how many children do you have?

R: Two boys.

I: How old are they?

R: 16, and 13.

I: Sometimes African-American males are more likely to be considered suspects in retail environments, are you aware of any situations that they have faced in retail environments that are negative, or I'll leave it there for the moment.

R: No, but I think part of the legacy of being black and having gone through certain things, is that I'm very cautious with them. You know, I had just drummed it into their brains; you don't leave a counter without a receipt. You know, no matter what, I don't care what the object is, how small it is, you ask for a bag. You know there are just certain things that you try to think of, you know they are black males so automatically people are going to think they are stealing or they are dishonest, so that is just something that I have just burned into them. You know or don't go shopping or doing things with a crowd. And even now when looking at vehicles for my 16-year-old and this was something curious, the other day I was talking to another parent or two other parents and I told them that I was looking for, you know, a safe car and the insurance company had sent this list of um, recommended vehicles or first vehicles for teens. And one of them was um an Impala. And I said you know I think I'm gonna try to find an Impala. He said oh no don't do that, that's what the drug dealers drive. I'm like, what! He said don't get a Capri, don't get an Impala. He said if you want him to get stopped constantly. He said a black male driving that, they automatically think drug dealer. I never knew anything like that. Had you heard of it?

I: I've heard of the Ford, is that Capri?

R: No that's a Chevy, both of those are Chevies.

I: There is one by Ford that I've heard of. But Impala doesn't surprise me though. I hadn't heard it, but it doesn't surprise me.

R: Yeah, that's what he told me, so I said that's good to know. And my older sister was getting rid of her car, she has an old, old Mercedes. I said as a good aunt I'd just give it to your nephews. She said, can you imagine the attention he would get in a Mercedes. She said you don't want that. You know, get him something that would draw no attention to him. And isn't that something, we have to think of things like that.

I: You said that you are cautious with your sons. How does that, I know it's not anything that you all consciously think about or talk about, but that being said you want to prepare your children to be equipped for the challenges that they might face, but it's also for them to have to worry about those things is kind of a burden that sometimes as parents you don't want to ...

R: Pass on.

I: Yeah. How do you handle that?

R: It's a thin line. It's a very thin line. Because we are in an environment... I grew up in an all black neighborhood. I guess today would be considered a ghetto. We didn't consider it a ghetto, you know. Dead-end street, railroad track right in front of your house, but there was a strong sense of community and now we are in an environment where we are the only black family in the neighborhood. My children grew up, at least my older one because there were so many kids his age and now a lot of them have moved onto their second homes, grew up just playing with everybody in the neighborhood and um, he made a comment to me just yesterday. He used to ride to school with one of the guys but they moved onto a different neighborhood and he's been riding with me lately. So I said, you know, you and Harrison aren't hanging out much lately. He said no we're not. And I was like, I didn't like the way he said that. So I said what's wrong you guys had a falling out? He said mom don't you know as you age race becomes significant. See these are boys who grew up back and forth to each other's houses every day. You know, these are boys that stayed at my house, went in my refrigerator, you know just one of the boys. And now he told me that race, he's made a distinction. He said you know we talk about being integrated, he said but in the cafeteria the black kids have their section and the white kids have theirs. He said so Harrison and I don't even lunch together, we don't hang together, not at school. Now we can hang together on the weekends sometimes with just us, but not at school. So that kinda hurt me, you know. I said these guys have grown up and just been aces since 2nd grade and here they are in 11th grade and starting to pull apart.

I: What do you think? Do you think that will change in the near future? Are there things that would facilitate that changing so when you are in 10th and 11th grade it's the same as it was back in 1st, 2nd, 3rd grade?

R: I don't think so, because I think at that stage their parents are starting to talk to them about what it takes to be successful and knowing the right people and being with the right people. So I don't think so and you know, um because even looking at the job that his friend has. His friend works at the Gettysbew[sp?] Country Club. So I said, you know, you ought to talk to him about getting, about hooking you up. He said, no his grand daddy is a member, my grand daddy isn't, so. And at that stage deciding that you know, he's gonna be a business man we've gotta connect him with the right people and so forth, so. I don't think so.

I: You said that you had a sense of community growing up. Do you think your children have a sense of community?

R: Not in our neighborhood, no. I think my older son, I really credit him with making himself a part of the High School community and not isolating himself the way a lot of the black kids have. Um, at a predominately white high school. He's excelled academically. He's involved in, not just sports. But um, and the

activities he's in I said, encourage some of your friends to do that. I said we look at the year book and I said where the black kids' pictures are. I said we have you know, picnics and parties stuff too. He said well they don't submit pictures. I said well you start talking to them. I said people will look at this year book and wonder where all the black kids are. I said you know we cannot remain isolated. If we're gonna be there, we've got to truly be there. So he's on the year book staff and just, you know, a lot of different things and I encourage him to do that. So that's made him a part of the overall community at the High School.

I: In wrapping up, this is gonna be my last question. What um, give me three words to describe yourself?

R: Three words to describe myself. I guess stubborn. What I believe I believe, so I don't know, you know what word you would use for that. I'm curious. I'm the type of person who, um, has to know something for myself and once I know it, I'm faithful. What I believe in, I'm true to.

I: Stubborn, curious and faithful?

R: Yeah.

I: How do you, I said that was my last question, I lied. How do you identify yourself? Do you identify yourself as an African-American female, a black female, a female, a Doctor? What identification is important to how you live your life?

R: Christian.

I: Christian.

R: And I think that, more recently that has become my motivating factor. It started when I read "purpose driven life". And you know just sat back and started taking a real close look at who I am and what I do, how I interact with people and realizing that it all has to be geared towards being faithful, you know. Because you know the Bible says if you love me, you'll keep my word. So I think first and foremost I try to live as a Christian. So even when you encounter negative things and negative people, you know to try to pray and deal with it from a loving perspective. You know, like even when you correct people, try to do it lovingly. And not do it with anger or bitterness and I think as a black female having grown up in segregated Mississippi I do have a different perspective and I think that as a black female we really have to work hard not to be bitter. You know, not to be angry, not to be um ready to pounce, you know in an instant, but to be able to um, sit back and wait a minute and pray for discernment on how to handle the situation. And, you know my dad used to say, the person that's stepping on your feet and you don't say anything, they always have the excuse that they didn't

know it. But if they are stepping on your feet, you say excuse me you're on my feet and that makes me uncomfortable, please don't do it anymore. And then if they do it again, then you know where they're coming from. So I've just always kinda taken that approach that if people do something to me, I don't like to let them know, but let them know then as opposed to letting it fester and react in anger. But like with shopping or whatever the case is, you know, I let people know. Or I will ask, why are you watching me? Why are you following me? You know, and I guess too, like I said I probably have tried to tell my kids things to do when they are shopping. There are things too, like my mother would say, "don't just pick things up you know you're not gonna buy". And those are things that unfortunately our white counterparts never had to deal with.

I: I hoping that my research gives a sense of what it's like for somebody to experience that because those are issues that most people don't have to think about on a daily basis. They can go in a store and, you know pay for goods and put it in their purse without thinking about it.

R: Exactly, exactly.

I: Or whatever it is. So I'm really hoping that I can articulate what that experience feels like for somebody. I think I've gotten quite a bit from you xx xxxxxxxx so I'm going to conclude our interview now.

INTERVIEW SEVEN

Participant: AA Female
Early 40s
Single, no children
Self-proclaimed 'air force brat'
Professor

I: Okay, today is May 10 and I'm with interview participant number nine. As you know, we were just talking about the topic of my research, which is negative treatment in retail stores attributed to race. But before we get into your specific experience with that, just tell me anything about you so that I understand your unique experience more, anything about yourself you'd like to share with me.

R: Well, I'm actually an Air Force brat, my father spent 20 years in the Air Force so I have lived in a variety of places, Alaska, Florida, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and I've grown up in a very diverse community because my father was in the service. So um they did a very good job of protecting us in many ways from what was happening with racial situations, especially when we were in Alaska. I mean we were so far away we would get the news like 2 weeks after it had happened, not the news but major things, except for sporting events I mean like the Super Bowl we got when it happened. But everything else, uh TV shows and sometimes produce and things like that, because they had to fly it in and this was back in the early 70's so we were not very current. But once we left Alaska and got back down to the States, um even then it was interesting because we were used to growing up with a variety of folks and then my daddy retired and moved into a black neighborhood and ...

I: Where was that?

R: In Nashville.

I: Okay.

R: So that was I guess acculturation shock.

I: How old were you at that time?

R: 14, so I had to adjust a bit and that took a while, but an appreciation and understanding other cultures is something that I was brought up with.

I: When you moved to Nashville, what stood out in your mind as different, you said it took some getting used to; tell me a little bit about that.

R: Well the Church that we went to was all black, which I liked. In fact my parents are still members of that congregation and that's the home congregation. And so, the ministry, the singing, all of that was different from you know, when you went to a black church you knew you were going to a black church and that kinda stands out. The other thing that stands out of course is the school, especially for me. When I went to an integrated school but a school where there were a lot of blacks, um I was picked on because of the way I talked. I had the, they said "you talk very proper", and so as a kid you know, growing up, you know adolescence, it was somewhat difficult. But, you know, you learn to live with it and move on.

I: Did you bring up those conversations at home, did you have conversations with your parents about your experiences and what did they tell you about that?

R: Oh yeah, oh people are different and um there's nothing wrong with you, basically just pay attention to the school work and um move on. So that's kind of, you know, what we did.

I: Did you have any siblings?

R: Oh yes, I'm the oldest. I have four brothers and sisters so there's five of us all together and that's one of the reasons why I believe my family structure is very strong is because my dad and mother took us everywhere. I mean my dad when he went to Alaska, we went to Alaska. When he went to Florida, we went to Florida and so the family unit was always together. And we've been blessed because it's still together.

I: That is a blessing. Okay, do you recall any early instances growing up of being in retail settings early on and being treated differently because of your race?

R: No, and that's what I'm referring to when I said, parents kind of shielded us from that. The, um, the one experience that I recall and it wasn't my experience but it was my grandmothers, and I'll never forget this, it was um in Nashville. We had come down to visit, you know, in between, I don't know where we were going but we were going somewhere and we would make that 2 week stop to Tennessee. And my grandmother was on the phone talking to an owner of a shop who was white and she changed her voice. She changed her voice to sound white and I remember, thinking man that's odd, but afterwards you know, it became clear that was how she negotiated and got some things by trying to disguise her voice. At the time I didn't really understand, but in hindsight, I know exactly what she was doing. And that was, maybe I was 10, or 11 years old

when I heard my grandmother change her dialect or accent or whatever you want to call it.

I: You said you didn't know what that meant then, when did you realize what that meant?

R: You know, that's a very good question. I don't know. Um, I really don't know. Maybe as a High School student, but I just thought that's how she, my grandmother owned her own business and so she was a business minded woman and um sometimes she didn't always tell you what she was doing, she would just do it. Or you would ask her a question and she wouldn't answer you, she'd just let it, you know, that was her way of saying I'm not gonna answer the question. But um, I just remember her changing her voice and thinking that was odd but you know, as I stated hindsight now, you know, I realize why she did it.

I: Have you ever found yourself doing that? Have you ever done that?

R: You know, if I said no, I think it would be a lie. I think perhaps I have, but I don't do it as often and rarely have I done that.

I: Is there any situation where you have done that and intentionally done it, stand out in your mind?

R: Restaurants.

I: Tell me about that.

R: Oh it just, you've got a group of friends and you want to go out to eat and sometimes if you change your voice, sometimes, occasionally you might get a better seat. But as I stated, I don't do that often, but I would be lying if I said I've never done it.

I: As we are in a restaurant area let's stay there for a moment. Can you think of any experiences when you've been in a restaurant and felt that you were treated differently because of your race?

R: Not really, the experience that I have, and this is something that, I don't know if it has to do with race but I'm a slow eater and so, and I talk while I eat so that means the waiter or waitress will come back to my table and, you know, it happens on a regular basis. It happens generally speaking on a regular basis. You know, I'd be with a group of individuals, it doesn't matter what color, but the waitress or waiter will ask me several times, you know have you finished, and I have to tell them no, I'm not finished I'm still eating and they will take my plate away, they'll come and take my plate away. And I'm like, don't touch it, I'm not finished. It happens all the time and that's no matter if I'm going to, you know,

Cracker-barrel, or if I'm at Bravo's or Peerless or whatever. They will, I'm like, what is it about me that makes you think that I'm finished, you know, when you still see me with my fork in my hand. But it happens all the time.

I: How do you handle those situations when that happens?

R: Over the years I just tell them, look I'm not finished, you know and the people that I'm with will sometimes say, now look, don't bother us. You know occasionally sometimes we may not tip them, or I may not tip them as much. The most recent thing happened when I went to S.P.R.[department conference] in March, was in Atlanta and I was with my colleague, Dr. Jones and um, we were at the restaurant, you know the hotel restaurant and there was some confusion about dessert and I specifically told the waitress that I wanted um oh, excuse me it wasn't about the dessert, there were several things going on, but before we gave her the order, we both said we want separate checks. Well um she said that's no problem and we ordered and then I ordered, she came for dessert and I said I would like some ice cream and she said we don't serve ice cream but I know um, that perhaps we can make an allowance so I got my ice cream. Well after we were finished, now grant you, she came back several times and she did try to take my plate and I had to tell her, I'm not finished. But what was somewhat upsetting to me was the fact that when she gave us the ticket she did not separate the orders and we both specifically said separate checks. She said that we said no. And I looked at her and I said no, I need my own check, go back. And I told her, you have to separate that check and she didn't want to do it, but she did it. But, I had to put my foot down and she said that we didn't say, and I said no we did say at the very beginning, separate checks, so I want you to go back and do that, and she did.

I: What did you attribute her behavior to?

R: Um, not taking us seriously and I say us, maybe not taking me seriously, um but I felt the need to assert myself in this situation, um so I did.

I: Um your colleague that you were with, was that a person of color or not.

R: No, we were just at a conference, eating and um we specifically said, and I remember telling her separate checks and then when she said that we didn't say that, well that's when I said well, it doesn't even matter if we didn't say it, she's still supposed to, you know, what the customer wants, they're supposed to get, so.

I: Um, I'm going to switch over to the retail setting now, um before we talk about negative experiences, tell me about your attitude towards shopping in general. How would you describe your attitude towards shopping?

R: I'm for shopping.

I: Do you enjoy it? Is it something you dread?

R: It depends on what I'm shopping for. My M.O. is usually I write down what I need to do, what I need to get and I try to stick to that list. So I go in to shop for a purpose. My shopping tends to be for a purpose. I don't see myself, I don't do this very often, I have done it, but I tend not to do it. I tend not to just go to the Mall for the sake of just going to the Mall. I'd rather stay at home, so when I step into a Mall or Target or Wal-Mart it's to get something specific.

I: Okay,

R: No I may come out with more stuff, but I went there to get what I was supposed to get.

I: Do you have any stores that would say are your favorites in shop in?

R: Yeah, Target. I like Target.

I: What is it about Target you enjoy?

R: There's something there for everyone and you can see the merchandise, you know, spacious, clean, not very crowded and uh, so as they call it Tar-jay, prices are reasonable.

I: Any other stores you enjoy shopping at?

R: Lowes, you always need a good home improvement store if you have a house. And that's really about it. I like sporting goods stores, except for I can't go in them unless I have a purpose because I don't shop very well in those stores.

I: What does that mean?

R: It means that I have a tendency to go in, and pick up stuff I don't need so I avoid.

I: So even having your list there doesn't help.

R: No.

I: How often do you go shopping?

R: That's a good question, not very often. I don't go shopping you know, like for clothes or whatever. I tend to do my shopping when I'm out-of-town. So when I travel, when I go home to Nashville, I tend to be more receptive to

shopping. When I go on a trip, you know, for a conference no matter where it is, I have to find a store, just my way of saying I was at that city. But do I shop here, um nah.

I: Um, do you have any, the focus is on negative experiences, but do you have any particularly pleasant experiences while you were out shopping that stand out in your mind?

R: That stand out in my mind, yeah usually when I go to, when I shop with my family when they come up to see me, they like to go to, you know, different places like, Turkey Creek. Recently we went to Turkey Creek and we went into Bradens, you know the lifestyle store. That was a good experience, the sales people were courteous to us, they were not overbearing. They appeared to be very sincere and I personally left the store saying, I will come back. Now, have I been back? No. It was a pretty good experience.

I: How many people were you out shopping with that day?

R: Let me see, um five,

I: Pretty big group.

R: Well, it was my family yeah. And I had not been to that store, so it was my first time. We'd been to the store, you know,

I: Downtown.

R: Downtown, but this was the new one at Turkey Creek and we walk in and it's like ah, so the ambience had a lot to do with it. But the people were, I thought were just the right. They were very appropriate. I would say that they were appropriate and I felt comfortable there.

I: What does appropriate mean to you?

R: Um, they didn't hound you, you know, they didn't follow you around the store. They didn't bug you with a thousand and one questions, they just let you shop and when they saw you they spoke and then if they saw you standing, they gave you some time, and if you stood there long enough, then they would come. If you moved on, then they wouldn't say because they could tell you weren't interested.

I: Were you looking for anything in particular?

R: No. Just window shopping.

I: Did you end up purchasing anything that day?

R: No. It was just to see what was in the store.

I: Okay. On the flip side of that, tell me about a negative experience you've had.

R: Okay, now this is one that really I boycott the store and it happened several years ago and it was at, I'll just go ahead and say it, Specialty Store A which is located off of Campbell Station Road. One of the things that I do for the department is I throw, I mean I help direct a fundraiser and our fundraiser is a golf tournament. So, one of the things that I hate, and this ties into the negative experiences is that initially when I started directing this golf tournament, I would do a lot of the leg work, in terms of getting sponsors, getting donations and things of that nature. First of all, I don't like to do that, just because that's not me. And I also don't like people to, "would you please give us a hundred dollars", I mean that's something I don't like to do, but I know that there are plenty other people who like to do that. But um, uh when I was getting in to running golf tournaments I would do a lot of the leg work and I got turned down, and I'm kind of digressing, but it gets to the point. I just hated asking people and then coming back and either they didn't give me what I wanted or they gave me less than what I wanted. But in this particular case it was something that I almost went ballistic, but I didn't. I had called and talked to the assistant manager of the store and the assistant manager said, hey that's no problem, we'll give you some coupons, we'll also give you some merchandise that you can use as a raffle or door prize or whatever. And I was excited, I said great. I'm gonna go down to Specialty Store A and I'm gonna get this stuff. Well I had with me some of my friends from out of town, they just happened to be visiting when I was trying to get some of this golf stuff together, and so, we all went down there, to Specialty Store A, when I said friends, I was with another colleague. So we went down there and I knew, you know how you get this feeling, I knew when I walked in to the store that I wasn't going to get what I asked for and the reason was, I saw who ran the store and I hate to say this, but Arabic in nature. And also, at the same time, Jimmy Hines the radio celebrity, Jimmy Hines and another person, they were actually doing a radio broadcast from Specialty Store A. So, I walk in and I see who's running the store, but you know, that really didn't stop me, I'm thinking okay, so and I asked to see the manager and the son, at the time who I can tell you two stories about him. Initially when I walked in the son was behind the, I can't recall his name, but I can see his face, the son was behind the counter and I say, hey, I'm here to pick up my gift certificates and door prizes, whatever. And he said no. The son actually said no, we don't do that. Well then I said, well I talked to the assistant manager a few days ago and she said that there would be no problem. Well then he calls his father and his father comes up and his father is just arrogant, both of these guys are very arrogant and when I said well. He said the assistant manager had no authority to give you access basically. And I'm

thinking, okay. Jimmy Hines is here, they are doing a live radio broadcast. I could go ballistic and just get, you know, just really act up. But there were other people in the store and I thought, and I thought, but I got so angry and so mad when both of them stood there and I mean, they are Arabic, they are either from Turkey, or Iran or Iraq I don't know where they are from, but they stood there and said no. But said we have these coupons. Well I didn't want the coupons, they had a whole store full of balls and ball retrievers, and t's, and shirts, they had the whole store and they tell me all we can give you are coupons. I took those coupons, tore them up and threw it back at them and said I would never go back into Specialty Store A. Well I did, 2 years passed and I was with another friend and she said, Deb, you know Specialty Store A has been good to our organization and they do support our organization so you need to, you know, it's not gonna kill you to go back in there. So I did and I bought a club. Well it was a little more, the son, oh I can't think of that guy's name,....

I: They were still there?

R: Oh yeah, they are still there, they are still there, so I bought the club, but I wasn't really satisfied but it was one of these impulse buys where I needed this club and I said okay, I'll just go ahead and buy it, and my friend was with me and she said, Deb you can swing it, and we went and we swung it and we said okay, alright. So that was a half-way decent experience and another year passed and last year, going back to the same store, Specialty Store A on Campbell Station Road, do not shop there, they are not friendly. What happened is I went to the United Way Golf Tournament last year and as part of your goody bag they gave away coupons for Specialty Store A. Now the coupons were specific, it was a sleeve, and a sleeve is 3 balls, 3 golf balls, a sleeve of balls and they had, noodle was the name of the balls, a sleeve of noodle balls with the presentation of this coupon. Well I got two coupons, one for me and one for my friend. And what's interesting, she's the one who secured because she was co-directing the Tournament and she said Deb go, you know give me your coupon, I mean, she said Deb take my coupon and go get some balls. Okay and I thought hey, balls. So I go to US Gold, Campbell Station Road and I walk in and the son, Alex is his name, Alex is standing behind the counter, there's nobody in the store, just me and Alex. I walk in and I say, hey you know I got this coupon. He acts kinda funny but he says hey the balls' over there and I go over there and I grab two balls and I give him two coupons. He says you can only have one sleeve of balls. I said, what? I said I have two coupons. He says no, it's one coupon for one sleeve of balls. And I said no, no. And he said look we stood there and argued for maybe two minutes about the sleeve of balls. He did not let me have that other sleeve of balls. No what I should have done was leave both, but I said no, I'll take the one sleeve of balls but I will never dawn the doors of Specialty Store A. He, with that, he said now see every coupon has a sleeve of balls and it's one per person. I said how do you know I'm not going to give this to my friend. I mean I was just being, how do you know. I mean I'm picking up these. But that wasn't

the point, the point was good business. I had two coupons; I was supposed to get two sleeves. You know, it's not like I ran those things off because they were hand, the numbers were in um ink, so it wasn't like I was reproducing these coupons. It was clear that this was a coupon that they had given for United Way. He told me no, and so I said I'm going to be back tomorrow. I said I'll be back tomorrow for the other ball and he didn't say anything. Well of course I didn't go back, I'm not going to drive all the way there but, they have not changed. They are money grabbing, prejudiced dogs.

I: Is it, I'm familiar with the name is all, is a franchise or is it locally completely owned, is it part of a larger national chain, or?

R: I have not idea; all I know is that the people that run Specialty Store A on Campbell Station Road are not receptive to the needs of the community with regards to women. Oh I can, we have had some run in's with that company before. They treated the President of EWGA, which is where I belong, the Executive Women's Golf Association, they wanted to be one of our major sponsors and they were good for a while but then we cut them back because they were trying to capitalize on our chapter and they didn't like that, so the bottom line is, they went out and they verbally trashed our President at the time, XXXXX XXXXXXXXXX and they are not very friendly. I just think that they have poor public relations skills and um, they are all about the Benjamin's but, I had never been so, just irate when I had my colleague with me and we went in there just to pick up, I said let's stop here, let's pick up the stuff. When I went in the first time and talked to the woman, the assistant manager after I called, nice, but when I went in the second time, it was clear that um, you know Alex said you have to talk to my father after he told me I couldn't have anything, in this massive store. No even a T, I mean nothing. The only thing they wanted to give me was these coupons. I can get coupons all day long, I wanted merchandise and it was the, for the Psychology Department Graduate Students and the assistant manager said she would have some things laid out. And when I got there I didn't see anything but the coupons.

I: So at what point, who do you attribute the mix up to? Do you think the assistant manager failed?

R: No, I don't. You know, I attribute the mix up to, it's not even a mix up. Um, if you own a store you have the right to do whatever is it you want basically with that merchandise. They do that all the time. I'm sure Jimmy Hines and his colleagues got something.

I: The organization, when you said that you finally went there two years later because you were going with someone within the organization. Was that the organization that you were a part of the EW?

R: Yeah, the EWGA, I'm still a part of it. Um and uh, yeah.

I: And you said, they had said they had a positive experience with the store.

R: Initially, they have had a positive experience, but lately it has been negative. And I have made it clear now, I still think that we are in some way tied to them, don't know how, but I have let other people know within my organization, this golf organization that I will not be dawning the doors of Specialty Store A. Now if they want to give me balls and I just happen to be there and they throw me a ball, I'll hit a golf ball. But I ain't gonna buy anything from them.

I: Did you share, I probably know the answer to this one, but did you tell, that day when you left after the first experience and you said that you were really angry and really upset, how did you resolve those feelings. Did you tell other people, did you, what did you do about it?

R: I told a few folks, but I didn't. I had to watch what I said because at that time Specialty Store A was a new company and they had just actually opened up sometime during that year, so uh when they told me no. I knew that EWGA was trying to work out a deal and so, I actually kept it quiet and I really didn't verbalize my discontent with them until last year. Which is when I got the same bad treatment with the stupid little coupon and the golf balls? Alex did that to me twice, then I said okay it's time for me to just, and I let it rip.

I: Did you make it a point of learning who he was, who you were dealing with the first time?

R: No.

I: It was the second time was it?

R: It was the second time, yeah.

I: Do you think he recalled you being there?

R: Oh yeah, I'm the only black woman that plays golf in Knoxville, no there are actually was three or four of us. But he knows who I am and I know exactly who he is, and I don't know who his daddy is. I've only met his daddy once. But I know Alex, I could pick him out in a line-up.

I: You are hoping to. [laugh] Okay when you think about it, I see there is still the same anger and frustration there. What would um, is there anything that would make you take it to the next level? Say for example it was a franchise and there is a higher level of management that you would do?

R: No.

I: Why not?

R: Because, it's just how I operate and I know what I'm not going to do. I mean I did good boycotting the store for a long time and not even saying anything about Specialty Store A, to any of my golfing friends. But after the second time, you know, let it be known. Then I found out that they had treated some of my golfing buddies the same way. Or, in different ways, in a not, in an inappropriate way. Um, and when I became aware of how they treated our President at the time, um, I just simply said we need to boycott Specialty Store A and just take them off of our sponsorship role, but um. I think they are still associated with the chapter in some way. So, um they must be stroking some folks right. They're not gonna stroke me though.

I: So you won't ever go in that store again.

R: Nah, no. Too many other golf stories I could go into and, plus you can buy stuff online.

I: Are you a big online shopper?

R: No, I've never done that

I: But you know that option.

R: I know that option is out there.

I: Have you never purchased anything online?

R: No, won't do it.

I: You won't do it?

R: Well I don't know if I won't do, I won't say that, but I've never done it, I've never done it. Not secure. Well I mean, I don't know if it's not secure, it's just not me.

I: Okay. Getting back to the other topic, I am fascinated by that but I could do a whole dissertation about who shops online and who doesn't. Have there been any other experiences of negative treatment in stores that you can recall?

R: Okay that was probably the one that made me the maddest, but yes, as we were talking, I was thinking of another incident, but I'm going blank right now.

Um, oh I remember what it was. Going back to that golf thing, um when I had to go and ask for a donation or whatever, you know I had to get used to people telling me no. I use this as an example; this is when I knew it was time to give it up. I should have known it when Alex and his father, but anyway, I went to Fast Food Restaurant A down here, oh this is going to sound bad, but it's the truth. Went to Fast Food Restaurant A off of Chapman Highway, and that Fast Food Restaurant A was also owned by a person or Arabic or Turkish, whatever you want to call it, background. And he had the audacity when I showed him the little old letter. I said hey you know, we're having a little golf tournament. I have been turned down before, but there's a way to do it. And I said is there a, would you like to donate to this you know, whatever. He said no we have coupons in the paper that you can cut out and give. Well I couldn't believe it. Coupons in the paper, Fast Food Restaurant A. So I tell everybody when Fast Food Restaurant A turns you down for prizes, you're missing something.

I: When he said that, what thought crossed your mind?

R: I can't say it. I was, 'asshole'.

I: Did you say anything? What was your reaction?

R: I just left. I just turned around and left. I mean because I'm still representing the University of XXXXXXXXXXXX and I never want to see myself taken away in chains. It ain't worth it. So um you have to have restraint.

I: Have you been back to that Fast Food Restaurant A?

R: No, is it still there?

I: I don't know.

R: Uh huh, no.

I: Was that a conscience decision or did you just frequent there before to begin with?

R: Well I didn't really frequent there but I know it's still there and I just, nah. Now I like Fast Food Restaurant A, don't get me wrong, love Fast Food Restaurant A but um those are two. No it sounds like I'm being um but no, I'm telling you my experiences, and my experiences have been, the ones that I recall with in that situation. I'm talking about Arabic.

I: Right. Are there any other instances that come to mind?

R: Yes and this would clear up, perhaps the racial. And again, it has to do with, maybe because I've had to go out. Let me state this, when I realized that I didn't have the knack and this is still really important in terms of seeing the haves and the have not's if you will. We have people in my organization, EWGA that can go out and get money from a turnip. I mean they can, it's unbelievable. I can't, I have not, I don't have that and I don't know. Of course when I was collecting and being involved in securing door prizes and coupons and whatever, my first thought was black. It's always at the back of my mind. If I were white I would get different treatment and nobody can take that away from me, that's my perception. It took me about two or three years to realize that and I knew there was something different because graduate students can go out now and get just about anything. In fact I turn it over to them. I tell them if you all want to have this tournament you're going to have to go out and get the stuff, because I don't have that touch. But the last time, not the last time but one incident that I rank up there with the Specialty Store A happened at another golf facility and there was a club maker who made one of my clubs at another golf facility and he had left that job to go to this new job and I knew he was over there and I said well Frank is over there. Frank made my first club, he knows who I am. I'll go over there, and I felt very comfortable and he'll, you know give me something for the tournament. So I go over there and he's there, Frank is there and he says Deb, I will make you, I just called my name, but you can erase that. I will make you a club and you come back in one week and you can pick up this club. I'm blocking what kind of club it was, it wasn't a driver. I think it was like a fairway wood, I was like a club, yes. He's gonna make us a club and we can raffle that off. Well I go in when he told me, he said give me a week. What I should have done was call before, but I didn't I said well I'm making these rounds, I'm picking up stuff, I'm checking on my feelers whatever, so let's go and swing by and see if the club is ready. I walk in and Frank is nowhere to be found and I'm looking around and I'm not getting the type of reception that I thought I was going to get and so I go up to one of the sales people and I said I'm so and so and I'm looking to pick a club that Frank said. And the guy said I'm sorry Frank can't make that club because we've already made our yearly donations. I said okay, and I walked out. I have not been to that store in Franklin Square which is also a sponsor of ours, have not been since then.

I: You never called Frank to sort it out?

R: I don't even know if Frank's alive, I haven't seen him. And that was probably 3 years ago. So I haven't been back to that store. I know where it is I ain't going back.

I: What about that situation makes you attribute it to, in the context that you are saying you attribute it to your race, what about that?

R: I went in and I saw three white men and there was me in Franklin Square asking for the donation of a golf club.

I: In hearing you talk about it I don't get the same sense of anger that you felt at the Specialty Store A.

R: Oh very perceptive.

I: What about that, tell me about that?

R: Well, actually they are under new management. The people that were there when this club incident occurred are no longer there. And I have met the new managers and that's the difference.

I: Okay,

R: Very perceptive. But I'm still not shopping at that store.

I: You still won't ever shop there?

R: Nah, no.

I: Have you told anyone about that experience?

R: No, I was embarrassed. With that experience I was more embarrassed than angry and the reason is because I had told the graduate students that I was getting a club. And I ended up, well we had a club, we'll just put it like that. But I was embarrassed more than anything else and I can't, I don't know, I think the club came after, the club incident came after the Specialty Store A incident so after a couple of years I realized I just don't have it. I'm missing something, I'm missing whatever. I just don't see it the way other people see it, so I just decided I'm not going to worry about it, it's not my forte. There are other people that have that skill, god bless them let them do it.

I: When you um, I've conducted a few interviews now with Professors and one of the things that I've heard come up is the feeling that when they go into retail stores or hotels, when they call to make hotel reservations that they use their title in order to convey, you know that they expect a certain level of respect from the person that they are dealing with. Is that something that you do either consciously or?

R: No, occasionally I will say Dr. XXXXXXXX, you know, but I'm more apt to do that if I'm trying to get into a good restaurant because I know that works. Um, but I have two experiences that I wanna share. One is based upon ABD and the other one is based upon PhD. My first job interview was at Xavier in New

Orleans and I didn't know what to expect you know they said well we will fly you out and um, we'll put you up in this hotel. I'm saying cool, you know this is good and I go in and I get off the plane and take a cab and get into the hotel and I go and I stand there. It's been such a long time ago, it's been almost 17 years ago but let me see if I can recall what happened. I was standing there and the manager or somebody that works behind, you know one of the workers, came out, now okay I remember. I was dressed like um; I just had on slacks and very casual okay. Very casual, and my bags, this is important, my bags were, cause the counter was high, so the person could not see my bags. I was just kind of standing on the side of the counter and waiting. I hit the bell and I was just kind of waiting for someone to come assist me. And finally the guy comes and he sees me and he says the cleaning, it wasn't the cleaning area but the cleaning something is around the corner. Now what happened, they had called for some type of cleaning service he thought I was with the cleaning service, he did. Now I'm forgetting the particulars but I remember he thought I was with the housekeeping, that's what it was, housekeeping. And I'm standing there and I'm thinking well I'm not dressed like a, I'm not in uniform. I have on a big shirt and slacks, he couldn't see my slacks, but um what would give him, he was white. What would give him the, and I'm thinking I'm in New Orleans now, what would give him the idea that I was looking for housekeeping. And then I said no, I'm Dr. XXXXXXXX and he went huh? And he looked and he pulled, if they had, Xavier had said, they didn't call me ABD, they said Dr. XXXXXXXX was here and that's how they set up the room. And you talk about somebody doing back flips. And I was thinking wow the power of that. I mean I actually had that, I said wow the degree matters. And then I got mad because I said it shouldn't have mattered, that's what made me mad. But yes he thought I was waiting for something in housekeeping. He just kinda, sashayed and thought I was for housekeeping and I'm thinking you didn't even ask. You just assumed and of course he had egg on his face when I told him who I was and I actually jumped the gun because I was ABD but I had to say it cause I was feeling so dissed, if you will. Now that was many years ago. Last year I went to LA, again for a conference and um I was with another colleague who lets everyone know of her status. She's high fluting and so I'm thinking this is going to be the trip from you-know-what, anyway. But I saw something that was impressive to me. We were at the counter, trying to, you know, check in and the people and again I have to say this, but they were all foreign to the United States, now maybe they were born in the United States, but you know what I'm talking about. I don't know but they were definitely of Eastern descent. So we in that, we were in the downtown Hilton and my colleague took the lead, the receptionist kept calling me ma'am and my colleague said she's not a ma'am she's a doctor and we're both doctors and I mean she went off. And she's white, but she went off, she said now you refer to her as doctor. And I was looking at her and I'm thinking, oh, okay cool. But it was pissing her off that she kept calling me ma'am. And she just said look, she's not a ma'am she's a doctor, you call her doctor and you call me doctor. And the woman says, you know of course yes ma'am, but Doctor so and so. She stood up, actually I

thought she was giving the woman grief, I thought she was giving the receptionist grief but that let me know that she was sensitive to perhaps my feelings of not being respected in that way and um she didn't have any problems of telling, I call her little girl, she wasn't a little girl she was a young woman. But what the deal was, and um I said wow.

I: Did you use your title in the exchange with Specialty Store A or at the other golf store.

R: No, no. I mean they knew who I was. Actually I did I said, here I'm Doctor so and so. But it didn't matter, plus I had the paper. I mean I didn't go in there with no identification or paperwork because that's what you're supposed to do, present paper or some type of documentation and then usually people will call you back or they'll tell you no right then when they see the paper. I would have preferred for them to tell me no right then, than to tell me yes and then I show up and then they tell me no. Well whatever.

I: One of the things that you said was when you called, at least in the case of Specialty Store A, you got one reaction when you called and you said before your grandmother had a way of changing the inflection in her voice, and when you are making solicitation calls that ability is probably a little bit more helpful than not.

R: Yeah

I: Are those instances when you consciously choose to do that or no?

R: I don't do that. I mean, I can't think of a time when I've actually changed my voice. I just know that if I told you no. That would probably be a lie because I probably have done it but I can't recall doing it in order to secure prizes for a golf tournament.

I: Okay. That's a very succinct answer. Okay, I think I have enough meat for my interview today unless there are any other experiences that stand out that you'd like to tell me about.

R: The Specialty Store A, if you drive by,

I: You know the next time I'm on Campbell Station Road I'm gonna have to go look for it myself.

R: It's by the hotel, you know there's a major hotel called um, used to be I think it was the Comfort Inn or something.

I: I don't even think I'm over that way very often; I stay on Kingston Pike pretty much I'm not from this area.

R: Oh well, if you go down like you're going to XXXXXX on XXX going west and you get to the XXXXXXXXXXX then you look up and you'll see this big old sign to your right that says Specialty Store A. Can't miss it.

I: I'll look for it next time.

End of Interview

INTERVIEW EIGHT

Participant: AA Female
University Employee
Mid 20s
Newlywed
Step-daughter age 8

I: Today is May 17 and I am with interview subject # 10 and as you know the subject to my dissertation is on negative experiences attributed to race in retail settings. But before we get started on those specific phenomena I just want you to tell me anything about yourself that would help me understand your unique experiences better.

R: Well um I'm African-American, of course and I'm a fairly young person,

I: How old are you?

R: I'm 25, 25 years old. So you want to know about any experiences I've had in the retail settings?

I: I do wanna know that, but that's gonna come later, right now I just want to know just something about you, where are you from, any kids, are you married?

R: I'm actually from here Knoxville, Tennessee recently married. I have a step-daughter who is 8 and I work at the University in the College of Education, helping to recruit more black teachers.

I: So you've lived in Knoxville all your life?

R: Most of it. I left for about six years and then returned.

I: Where did you go?

R: Chattanooga, not very far. So basically I've lived in East Tennessee my whole life.

I: Tell me, you're relatively young, so did you grow up in a small family, large family?

R: Very large family, very large extended family. My immediate family was just my mother, my father and three siblings, three of us. Whereas my extended

family was very large. Many aunts and uncles and great aunts and great grand parents and cousins. So it was a very large extended family.

I: Okay. Tell me about growing up in Knoxville.

R: I guess when you've not seen anything else it's kind of hard to compare it to something else. I did live in Washington DC probably 3 or 4 years of my life, probably between age 4 and 7, so I have this very small pigment of my time where I felt like I was exposed to culture and I can definitely say there is a difference, even when I look back on my pictures of my friends when I lived in DC, a lot more diverse than what I'm exposed to here in Knoxville. But growing up generally I would say I had good experiences. I'm not sure how you want me to answer that question.

I: Just, there's no right or wrong answers, so just whatever comes to your mind that you want to share with me is fine. You said that in terms of diversity it was different in Washington. Describing your friends here as you were growing up, did you have a mostly diverse group of friends or was it?

R: I had two sets of friends actually, I had a set of white friends and I had a set of black friends. Somehow I kind of fell in the middle and I even remember being in Elementary School I would go and play with my black friends and then I also had a separate group of white friends. And it always kind of stayed that way, I guess as I got older the group kind of meshed together. But I remember when I was younger I would have sleep over's with these people and then I'd have sleep over's with these people and it went on probably all the way through middle school. I grew up in a smaller town outside of Knoxville, it's called Alcoa.

I: Okay.

R: And so, once I moved to Knoxville I became more integrated, but there weren't, I'm not saying there weren't many black people in Alcoa but I guess the community that I lived in I was surrounded more by Caucasians, white people, whichever you'd rather.

I: How would you describe your up-bringing in terms of, um were your parents upwardly mobile, was it average, was it...?

R: Um not upwardly mobile at all. I would say my family. My mother was a single mother for a large portion of the time, so I would say we were pretty poor. Um for a large portion of my life, probably until I was in my teens when she re-married and then I would say my family became middle class. But the majority of my childhood years if I had to rate my family income, we were probably low income.

I: Okay.

R: And it's interesting because now my family is middle class and I have a younger brother that has so many other things that myself, that I never had. So it's always so funny, we say you're so spoiled. I mean he just went to prom and he's a junior and my parents paid for everything. I remember when I went to Prom I was like working at McDonald's struggling to have a nice dress, to even try to get a limo and you know, they were like, oh just go, get your tux and go do this, you know they spent all this money on him, and so there is definitely a difference in our up-bringing.

I: Tell me about that, when you were younger you said you worked.

R: I did.

I: Was it something that you did in order to have money to do fun things, or was it something that you did out of to help out with the household or?

R: I would definitely say it was not to have fun things. I guess at a certain age I realized that asking mommy for everything was just. Not that they couldn't give it to me, I just felt like it made more sense for me to work for myself once I needed to. I mean it got to the point where I didn't want to ask for lunch money because they were like, dang we just gave you money and I was like, you know what I'm getting a job.

I: What age did you get a job?

R: At 15 I went to Kroger, it was my very first job over the summer and I said I am never asking for money again. And that's the difference in my mentality compared to my younger brother. He's 17 and still doesn't work, but my parents are just forking it out. And so at 15 I got a job because I didn't want to have to ask my parents for lunch money. If I wanted a new pair of shoes, I wanted to know that I could go buy those shoes. And so, ever since then I kept a job.

I: That's interesting. So that means that because you were earning your own money that when you would be out shopping as a young girl it was your money that you were spending most of the time, in comparison to your parents.

R: Definitely. I would say after my sophomore year in High School my parents did not buy me clothes anymore. Granted they still had a say so in what I wore, but I definitely started shopping for myself. And I think it gives you a sense of independence.

I: Do you recall any experiences when you were young shopping in retail stores that felt negative for any reason.

R: Well, my problem, and it's not the stores, my problem as a young child I was extremely overweight so shopping for me was never fun because my mom would buy me clothes and then, I guess she would expect me to be able to wear them for a couple of seasons, not Jamie never, and so I remember shopping was dreadful. I would call myself thunder thighs because nothing would zip, nothing would button and I would need to be able to wear those clothes for multiple seasons, so shopping did not become fun for me until I was a teenager when I finally was able to shed the pounds.

I: So you lost weight during your teenage years?

R: I lost; yeah I lost weight during my teenage years. But until then, it was not pleasant, nothing was pleasant about shopping.

I: How's shopping for you now?

R: Much, much better. Much, much better.

I: How would you describe your attitude towards shopping in general?

R: Oh I enjoy it. I enjoy it um and I just remember as a young girl, as like a 10-year-old I would have to wear clothes that were not made for a 10-year-old. So I was wearing adult women's clothes because of my size and they didn't really have clothes that look like a child, does that make sense?

I: It does.

R: And so I felt like I looked more grown up than I was just because I was tall and I was heavy and then I dressed older. And I don't know if that's what made me more mature, I don't know what it was, but I just remember from a young age always having to wear older clothes. I mean I was wearing my mom's clothes in elementary school.

I: Do you recall, you said your mom would buy you things and bring them back home, do you recall going out shopping at that age in the stores, going to the grown up department looking for clothes?

R: I do, and it's just one particular outfit that I remember and it was in 6th grade, and I don't know that it was necessarily a department store but it wasn't a children's store and I was trying to find something for picture day and I could not find anything that would fit me to make me look like I was a 6th grader. And I ended up getting this sailor looking suit, it was horrible. Even when I look at the

pictures now, and I guess I thought it was cute because it fit me and it didn't look bad and so I got it. But now when I look back I think as a 6th grader I had on a sailor suit. And it really wasn't a sailor suit it was like a short's set with like sailor hats or something, horrible.

I: But at the time you said you didn't think it was bad?

R: I thought it was okay but at the same time I would have much rather to have worn something age appropriate, but it just was not easy. And I think now they do a, marketer's or designers do a better job with plus size clothing, as opposed to when I needed plus size clothing, it was a struggle.

I: Okay, so you said that now you enjoy shopping? How often do you go shopping now?

R: How often do I need to go shopping?

I: No not do you need to, how often to you go.

R: I'd say it's on a monthly basis. I would definitely say it's on a monthly basis. I think it depends; I only shop when I'm happy with my weight. So when my weight fluctuates, like right now I feel like I'm 7 pounds above what I need to be, so I'm not shopping right now. But once I lose 7 pounds, I'll probably shop again. So my shopping is definitely tied to my weight.

I: That's very interesting.

R: When my weight fluctuates, like if I know I've gained 5 pounds I'm not going to go try on clothes. So at this point even though the seasons have changed, I haven't bought any new spring clothes because I won't go.

I: Have you always been that conscientious, does that go back from when you were a child?

R: No, well, maybe. No not really because once I got to High School all the weight just kind of fell off. And I was a lot smaller than I am now when I came to college even; of course it went back up. And so all the way through High School I was okay and I wasn't that conscientious about my weight. It wasn't until I gained weight in college. I gained weight my second year in college and I went up a size in clothes and for a while I was okay with it, oh it's the freshman 15, I'm okay and then I started looking at pictures and I realized it's not okay and so for the past couple of years I've been kind of obsessed with staying in a certain range. Like I want to be able to continue to wear the same size clothes. Now would it be nice if I could wear a smaller size? Yes, but I definitely don't want to buy any clothes that are larger than what I have now. So at this point I'm not going

shopping because Jamier needs to eat something where she can continue to wear her pants. So now I'm very conscious about it.

I: So tell me when you go to a store and let's say right now, since you say right now you feel like you're 7 pounds over where you need to be. Do you just not go to stores as a result of being 7 pounds over or do you go and you get frustrated or. How does that manifest?

R: I try not to go, or I'll buy shoes. Um, I try not to go. I mean cause usually I know and even when I start trying to lose weight once I feel like I've made a significant difference I'll go and try on clothes and see if there is a difference in the way my clothes fit. But at this point I won't go try on pants. I probably wouldn't try anything, not for another couple of weeks I wouldn't but I would buy shoes, but I wouldn't go buy clothes.

I: Okay, so do you go shopping for shoes?

R: Not often, not often.

I: What are your favorite stores to shop in?

R: My favorite store in Knoxville is Lerner New York. I feel like their clothes really work well with black women. I feel like their sizes, I don't know maybe their sizes just make me feel good about myself but I feel like their clothes are shaped or fit, or designed to fit a black woman. I like Boutique D and I guess I have a hard time going into department stores because of all the different brands, all the sizes run differently and so I get into, oh in this store I wear size 12, in this store I wear size 16, or in this store I wear size 14 and so I know if I go into Lerner I wear the same size in everything, and so maybe it's psychological but at that point that's my favorite store.

I: You said in Knoxville, so outside of Knoxville are there any other stores.

R: Well, I mean. I guess it just depends. I mean I like to go to Macys of course we don't have a Macys here. I wouldn't say I necessarily have another favorite store just whoever has the sale.

I: Do you do online shopping at all?

R: Very seldom. Victoria's Secret every now and then. I think I joined their list about five or six years ago so every now and then I'll shop on Victoria's Secret.com.

I: Any other stores?

R: Nine West. Com, but that's it. I don't really do much online shopping for clothes because I have to try everything on. I do. And my husband and I have this problem because every time he tries to buy me clothes it's never successful. And he bought me shoes for Mother's day and he felt so good about the shoes and they were just a half inch off. And I was like this is great. He's like I'm never buying anything else and I said, I promise, don't be made I'll go exchange them for the exact same thing but it's just hard because I have to try everything on. And I don't know if all women have that problem, but.

I: Um, we're still on positive experiences shopping right now. Have you ever been shopping and had a particularly pleasant experience that stands out in your mind?

R: Yeah every time I leave with a shopping bag it's a pleasant experience.

I: Just what the whole experience was like, that was a really good experience.

R: Well I think most recently my best shopping experience has been shopping for my wedding dress.

I: Oh, tell me about that.

R: Now, then I still have this negative side because all I wanted to do was to wear a size 12 wedding dress just because I worked so hard to be in a size 12. Then I go to find out that European dresses are, you have to go up a size. So, at first I thought it was going to be negative, cause I thought I had taken all these dresses into the room, they were all size 12 and then I was barely breathing. So, that day I felt I'm not shopping for dresses for a while I'm just gonna go lose weight so I can wear a size 12. Then I realize, okay that's not gonna be realistic. And so, once I got past that, once I found the perfect dress it was just perfect and I didn't care that it was.

I: Tell me about that, what store were you at?

R: I was at David's Bridal and it was actually a really good experience, um all of the bridal attendants were very helpful with helping me find a dress that would compliment my figure. Um, and of course not trying to encourage me to buy the most expensive dress because I was on a budget, so that experience was good. I ended up buying a dress that was out of my budget, but it was just the perfect dress for me, so when I left even though I knew I had spent a couple hundred dollars more than I had budgeted for I felt like this was absolutely the perfect dress for me and so there was no guilt. Now the dress is hanging up in my closet I have nothing to do with it, I'm thinking why did I spend so much money, but it was worth it at the time. So that's my most positive.

I: You said that the attendants were helpful, tell me about that.

R: Um, I guess they are supposed to be helpful, that's why they are there. Helpful in making sure I knew how to put it on, making sure I had all the right accessories, making sure I picked Bridesmaids dresses that would look good with that particular dress, so they were just there, I guess in a sense to provide the service as making sure I was comfortable in my dress and with the wedding party's attire.

I: Okay. Now, we're going to switch to the domain that I'm interested in, the negative experiences. Tell me about an experience that stands out in your mind.

R: The most negative experience I can think of at the moment didn't happen here in Knoxville, it actually happened at the beach. Eric [her husband] and I went on vacation a couple of years ago, to Destin and we were walking around the little outlets and we stopped in a department store, kinda similar to a Profitts or a Macys and we were talking to the lady, I think we were trying to find out if there was a Profitts, for some reason and we were asking her where are there stores to visit and she was like oh this is a great shopping mall and she was like, but there is a Bose Store here in the Outlet. And we had never said anything to say we were looking for music or speakers or anything of that nature and that's the only store that she told us about in the whole Outlet. And I was standing there and I was thinking, here we are two young black adults. I mean we were dressed fairly nice and we had on, you know, casual beach wear and we asked this lady, you know, what nice stores should we go to and she said oh you should really check out the Bose Store, and that's the only store she recommended to us out of the whole strip mall, huge strip mall at the beach. That was hidden racism. I've never gotten over it; I think I talked about it the whole day and the whole drive back. And even to this day we'll talk about it, just in a jokingly manner, but I don't think she realized it was, I wouldn't necessarily think it was racist, but it was oh we're black we're really interested in speakers and that was all she said. And I just thought, wow.

I: When she said that, what was your reaction to her?

R: I don't remember, that's the bad thing is I don't remember. I wanna say I just kind of walked off, I was like are you serious, or I really don't remember, I wish I did remember I didn't buy anything from her, I know that, I immediately left her store and I just thought, so we look like we just wanna buy speakers?

I: What was your conversation, tell me, when you walked away from that store and you were with your future husband, did you all talk about it immediately.

R: Yeah we talked about it. We probably talked about it in her face because I was just so shocked that was the only store she, I mean out of all the stores in the Mall that's the only thing she could think that we would be interested in, and I was like, I guess it's, I said that was because we're black, I was convinced. I said that's gotta be because we're black or a young black couple and she just assumed that we wanted to go buy speakers. Um and of course she tried to cover herself, cause she says yeah my husband always wants to go to the Bose Store, but at that point the damage was already done. And I was like, that was truly hidden racism. I said if we would have been anybody else and we had asked what stores can we shop in, I guarantee she wouldn't of told me that, I was so sure of it. I mean because there was every outlet you could have thought of and she told me to go to the speaker store.

I: What was her reaction after you, do you think she tried to cover it up?

R: Well she said the Bose store and I guess I kind of made a face or, I know my facial expressions can be a little dramatic and then after she said that, she said, well I know every time me and my husband go shopping, he always wants to go check out the Bose store. But by then I had already formulated in my mind that she had put us in the box and said well you're black and you need to go buy speakers. I'm gonna say the conversation ended after that.

I: What was your husband's reaction?

R: He agreed. He agreed with everything that I said. Now I don't know what his initial thought was, but I know once I said well we gotta go to the Bose store. He was like, yeah that was kinda messed up and then of course we continued to talk about it. He may tell you the same thing when you talk to him, he may not even remember the experience. So that's my most recent negative experience where I feel like someone did something to me specifically because of my race, because there was really no reason.

I: There are lots of different emotions that could have evoked, some people might have been sad, some might have been angry, some might have been disappointed. How do you remember feeling when this happened?

R: I was disappointed, because she didn't even realize. I don't think she realized that it was a racist comment or a comment that was derived from her perception of race, so I was disappointed. Then I was kinda angry cause I thought, you know she really could have recommended me to a very nice store where I could have bought a cute top or a cute skirt or some sunglasses, but instead while I'm on my vacation she thinks I'm thinking about speakers, so I was offended, I was offended.

I: There are different levels of attribution you could make. You could say well that was just her being unaware of what she was saying; you could say well that's because she's not used to dealing with people of color that come into her store. In your mind, what is it that you think caused her reaction?

R: I can't make any excuses for her. I do think that we all have a perception of race in our head and she may not have clearly thought black people want speakers, but obviously there was an association there, um so I really can't make any excuses for her and I guess I could blame it on the media, I mean the images that portray us in the media to make it look like black people love music and love loud music, but I can't make any excuses for her.

I: Were you planning on buying anything from that store before that happened? Had you been shopping in that store for a while before you asked her, or had you just gotten there?

R: We were really just browsing, I mean we were on vacation so, I mean you just buy things I think just because when you're on vacation, um almost like we were looking at cologne. And we possibly could have purchased something, I mean we ended up going through the Mall and we both left with shopping bags, so I can't say. We probably would have stayed in the store a little longer, but I left.

I: Did you tell anybody else about that exchange, outside of your husband that day?

R: Yeah. We talk about it a lot, I think we told everybody. We were like, can you believe this woman? And I still tell people about it.

I: How long ago was this, you said a couple of years ago?

R: Yeah, two years, probably 2004, yeah I think it was 2004.

I: And when you share your experience with other people, what's typically their reaction?

R: They just kinda laugh and they say, oh that's funny. Or she's just ignorant, or that's kind of messed up, you know. Granted I can be convincing so I can make someone think that it was wrong even if she didn't really mean any harm, but I do still share that story.

I: Why, why do you share it?

R: Because, some people are still ignorant. Or some people, I don't know. Because if I was in the same situation and someone asked me what store to go to,

usually I can look at the person and try to figure out. Okay, look at their style, the way they talk to me and kinda figure out where they might rather go. But, for her not to say oh why don't you go to Gap, or why don't you go to Geoffrey Bean and look at, no. She didn't do that, she didn't even try, so I don't know, I don't know. I would think that people would. I mean, if I walked up I wouldn't expect someone to tell me to go to the Hot Topic store where they sell the Goth stuff. I wouldn't expect that, I don't look like I'm Gothic. Um, so I would think that people would try to size you up before they recommend something and I guess that's all she pulled up at that moment. She could have sent me to the Food Court, but she sent me to the speaker store. I mean,

I: Are there any other experiences that stand out in your mind, negative experiences?

R: I can say that I am definitely treated differently when I go shopping based on the way I dress. Like if I go shopping after I get off work I feel like people are more attentive, can I help you? Glad to see you again, yada, yada, yada. Can I help you in the dressing room? Whereas if I leave the gym and go in my workout clothes, it's like. I mean I know that if I go in the store, if I'm in there for like 5 minutes and no-one talks to me, I'm usually like, what's going on? I have money just like anybody else in here. But if I have on my gym clothes I feel like oh, it's because I'm dressed down, I'm not getting any attention. And so, I purposely try to never go shopping unless I'm fully dressed. And I don't know if that's crazy, at least shopping for clothes and shoes because I do feel like people treat you differently. And before I married Eric I used to date a guy who was real urban and I think he would have more situations than I would. And I remember particularly we were at the Mall and he had pulled up outside and was waiting to pick me up and he had on like a white t-shirt or whatever and I felt like he was being harassed just because he looked like this little urban guy.

I: Why do you feel like he was being harassed, what was going on that gave you that?

R: Well he was parked in the fire lane and they were telling him to move and I was walking out and he was like, well the person is walking out. And they were like; well no you need to move right now. It was kinda one of those and I thought humm. Now granted he was in the fire lane, so he was in the wrong. And we used to always have this argument, I say people treat you differently based on the way you look, and even to this day, I think he's improved on trying to not be so urban all the time, but at some point.

I: Do you think that's more attributed to race or just class? Cause those are two,

R: Sometimes they go hand in hand. I would say class, but I think class is one issue, but then when you have the class and the race issue, if you are looking lower class and you're black then you're pushed way down.

I: Can you think of any experiences when you were dressed from working out that stand out in your mind as particularly negative?

R: I guess I have an experience where, I shop in Boutique D on a regular basis and I normally get attention or people ask me if they can help me, whereas if I go, I can think of one situation where I went into Boutique D, I had on like workout pants and a jacket and no-one ever said anything to me and I thought this is really strange, you know, this is really strange. Why has no-one asked me if I want a fitting room? Why has no-one asked if I need any help, and in that moment I kept saying to myself in the store, it must be because I look like I don't have any money, or I like I'm not about to shop. And I really try not to go shopping unless I'm dressed in my regular clothes.

I: That day, did you ever bring that up to any of the sales people that were there?

R: No, I didn't. I don't think I bought anything, I just think I kinda left.

I: Is there any occasion where you would let a sales person know that you were uncomfortable or the lack of attention that you were getting?

R: No. I guess unless I was. I mean I think it would have to be an extreme situation for me to complain about it because this could all just be my perception. They could think, oh she comes in here all the time, she doesn't need help. It could just be my perception thinking; oh they didn't feel like helping me today. So I don't think I would call them out on it.

I: You said earlier that Boutique D was one of your favorite stores. So, the fact that the sales force might treat you that way when you are not dressed appropriately doesn't deter you from shopping there?

R: No it doesn't, Should it? Probably, um but I guess I have more positive experiences than I have negative experiences and their clothes fit me and they fit me nice, so I continue to shop there. Now, if someone blatantly said we're not serving you, or we can't take your credit card or something like that, and I feel like it was blatant, then I would have a problem, but nothing like that has ever happened.

I: Have you ever, when you were younger, when you were out shopping with your mom or by yourself, had any negative experiences. Sometimes just like we think people treat us negatively because of our race, people can treat you

negatively because of your size. Did that experience ever occur to you when you said that you were an overweight child?

R: I don't know, or maybe I just didn't pay attention. I mean I never felt like people we, like oh that's the fat girl. Granted, I don't know what people say when I'm not listening. I mean my friends were very loving to me, um I can't think of a negative instance where I felt like someone discriminated against me because of my weight. Or it could have happened and I just missed it.

I: That's one of the things that I'm interested in too. If it happened and you didn't notice it, then did it happen? Do you know what I'm saying? It's your perception that ultimately matters. If a third party sees something happen and they think it. That's one thing, but what happens in these situations. One of the things you said was that, the behaviors were subtle, or they might have had other reasons for it. But if it's your experience that it's because of race and that's a real, you know, that's a real experience for you, whether or not a third party can identify it or not, so yeah the experiences you've shared are great on that. Any other stand out in your mind? And when I say retail I mean it very broadly, it can be Wal-Mart, Target, you know any.

R: I'm thinking that, well this is not necessarily my experience; this is my husband's experience. He um, got some shirts from Profitts and they didn't fit, they were gifts, and he tried to take them back and said they were gifts and they lady would not do anything. She basically had an attitude about, well if you don't have a receipt, well we can't do anything. And he was like, can I get store credit, something of that nature. And she just kept beating on, we need a receipt, we need a receipt. And I kept saying,

I: You were with him?

R: I'm trying to think if he called to say, I'm definitely having a fuzzy memory. Maybe he told me. But basically he was telling me that she was not being like she wanted to exchange the shirts or whatever because he didn't have a receipt. He was trying to explain to her that it was a gift, he didn't have the receipt and so, I kept thinking, why does it have to be like that? If you want a store credit and if you're going to give them the shirt back it shouldn't be that you have to bring the receipt and all this stuff and I kinda felt that was driven by race, but that didn't happen necessarily to me.

I: Do you know, what ultimately happened, did he just take the shirts back?

R: Eventually he took them back, eventually I think he took them back or he was able to get the receipt back from his mother. But I know that he doesn't have the shirts anymore. But I remember there was this ordeal with her saying that if he wanted to return the shirts he was going to have a receipt.

I: I look forward to talking to him about that gift.

R: I don't know I mean I recently purchased a car. It was a female sales person and like, everything she was really trying to sell me this car and so we kept driving cars over and over again and she'd be like don't you feel sexy, don't you feel sexy and I was like this is not about being sexy. And it was interesting that it was a female and she was an older female, she was probably in her 60's and every car she'd get in, she'd be like, oh this is so sexy. And I was like, I'm not really looking for a sexy car, but I ultimately did not buy a car from her but,

I: Did you say that to her?

R: No. I don't know every car we got into, and I don't know if it was because of my race or because I was young or because I'm sexy I don't know, but. And I really didn't expect that, one from a female, secondly from an older female, I mean. I just remember, every car she brought to me she was like, oh you'll be so sexy in this, oh this is so sexy. And I really did not buy a car from her and she was extremely pushy. Then I ended up going to a male car salesman and it was totally different.

I: Oh, was this at the same dealership?

R: No, I went to a different dealership. And he never once said sexy, granted he probably should have. But it was more about how the car performed and safety and that was really what I was interested in. Of course I wanted to have my style, but I don't know. So it wasn't really negative, but it was awkward because every car I got into had to be sexy. Watch I'm gonna think of a negative thing in my sleep tonight.

I: You mentioned that you have an 8 year old step daughter and you said that one of things that you are aware of when you go out is how you are dressed. Do you have conversations with her about that?

R: Um hum.

I: Tell me about that.

R: I do because her mother, we're totally different. Her mother probably doesn't care I guess per se, um but like dirty flip flops. I'll buy her flip flops and then the next day they are brown. I'm like what have you been doing? And then she'll want to go with me somewhere, I'm like you're not wearing those dirty shoes, I mean because you have clean shoes so why would you choose to wear the dirty shoes? Just to let her know that she should always try to be dressed in a respectable manner. Um, so that's been a challenge cause I've only been her step

mother for five months, so I still have a lot of time to work on grooming her. But as far as her hair being combed, she wallows and before you know it she's got an afro and I'm thinking now you wanna go to church, no, we need to fix your hair and to her she doesn't care. And I guess with her mom, her mom is like get in the car, let's go. Whereas me we're not leaving the house until you have on clean shoes and your hair is combed and that's just the way I am. Um, and I don't know how she perceives me at this moment, whether I just like to be clean because she knows that if I have to go somewhere, I'm gonna try to be presentable. Um, so I am trying to enforce in her that you do need to be conscious of your appearance and don't wear your dirty flip flops to your best friend's birthday party. Don't do that, because then people see you and they think why didn't her mom clean her feet. Or why didn't her mom comb her hair. Because I know when I see dirty children I think, why didn't they just take a bath? You know and I don't want people to perceive her that way. Especially when it's something so simple.

I: Let me see if there are any questions that I have to ask you that I forgot to, my cheat sheet. Well I guess I don't have any further questions for you then, but this does give me some insight into those experiences for you so I thank you for that.

End of Interview.

INTERVIEW EIGHT

Participant: AA Female
University Employee
Mid 20s
Newlywed
Step-daughter age 8

I: Today is May 17 and I am with interview subject # 10 and as you know the subject to my dissertation is on negative experiences attributed to race in retail settings. But before we get started on those specific phenomena I just want you to tell me anything about yourself that would help me understand your unique experiences better.

R: Well um I'm African-American, of course and I'm a fairly young person,

I: How old are you?

R: I'm 25, 25 years old. So you want to know about any experiences I've had in the retail settings?

I: I do wanna know that, but that's gonna come later, right now I just want to know just something about you, where are you from, any kids, are you married?

R: I'm actually from here Knoxville, Tennessee recently married. I have a step-daughter who is 8 and I work at the University in the College of Education, helping to recruit more black teachers.

I: So you've lived in Knoxville all your life?

R: Most of it. I left for about six years and then returned.

I: Where did you go?

R: Chattanooga, not very far. So basically I've lived in East Tennessee my whole life.

I: Tell me, you're relatively young, so did you grow up in a small family, large family?

R: Very large family, very large extended family. My immediate family was just my mother, my father and three siblings, three of us. Whereas my extended family was very large. Many aunts and uncles and great aunts and great grand parents and cousins. So it was a very large extended family.

I: Okay. Tell me about growing up in Knoxville.

R: I guess when you've not seen anything else it's kind of hard to compare it to something else. I did live in Washington DC probably 3 or 4 years of my life, probably between age 4 and 7, so I have this very small pigment of my time where I felt like I was exposed to culture and I can definitely say there is a difference, even when I look back on my pictures of my friends when I lived in DC, a lot more diverse than what I'm exposed to here in Knoxville. But growing up generally I would say I had good experiences. I'm not sure how you want me to answer that question.

I: Just, there's no right or wrong answers, so just whatever comes to your mind that you want to share with me is fine. You said that in terms of diversity it was different in Washington. Describing your friends here as you were growing up, did you have a mostly diverse group of friends or was it?

R: I had two sets of friends actually, I had a set of white friends and I had a set of black friends. Somehow I kind of fell in the middle and I even remember being in Elementary School I would go and play with my black friends and then I also had a separate group of white friends. And it always kind of stayed that way, I guess as I got older the group kind of meshed together. But I remember when I was younger I would have sleep over's with these people and then I'd have sleep over's with these people and it went on probably all the way through middle school. I grew up in a smaller town outside of Knoxville, it's called Alcoa.

I: Okay.

R: And so, once I moved to Knoxville I became more integrated, but there weren't, I'm not saying there weren't many black people in Alcoa but I guess the community that I lived in I was surrounded more by Caucasians, white people, whichever you'd rather.

I: How would you describe your up-bringing in terms of, um were your parents upwardly mobile, was it average, was it...?

R: Um not upwardly mobile at all. I would say my family. My mother was a single mother for a large portion of the time, so I would say we were pretty poor. Um for a large portion of my life, probably until I was in my teens when she re-married and then I would say my family became middle class. But the majority of my childhood years if I had to rate my family income, we were probably low income.

I: Okay.

R: And it's interesting because now my family is middle class and I have a younger brother that has so many other things that myself, that I never had. So it's always so funny, we say you're so spoiled. I mean he just went to prom and he's a junior and my parents paid for everything. I remember when I went to Prom I was like working at McDonald's struggling to have a nice dress, to even try to get a limo and you know, they were like, oh just go, get your tux and go do this, you know they spent all this money on him, and so there is definitely a difference in our up-bringing.

I: Tell me about that, when you were younger you said you worked.

R: I did.

I: Was it something that you did in order to have money to do fun things, or was it something that you did out of to help out with the household or?

R: I would definitely say it was not to have fun things. I guess at a certain age I realized that asking mommy for everything was just. Not that they couldn't give it to me, I just felt like it made more sense for me to work for myself once I needed to. I mean it got to the point where I didn't want to ask for lunch money because they were like, dang we just gave you money and I was like, you know what I'm getting a job.

I: What age did you get a job?

R: At 15 I went to Kroger, it was my very first job over the summer and I said I am never asking for money again. And that's the difference in my mentality compared to my younger brother. He's 17 and still doesn't work, but my parents are just forking it out. And so at 15 I got a job because I didn't want to have to ask my parents for lunch money. If I wanted a new pair of shoes, I wanted to know that I could go buy those shoes. And so, ever since then I kept a job.

I: That's interesting. So that means that because you were earning your own money that when you would be out shopping as a young girl it was your money that you were spending most of the time, in comparison to your parents.

R: Definitely. I would say after my sophomore year in High School my parents did not buy me clothes anymore. Granted they still had a say so in what I wore, but I definitely started shopping for myself. And I think it gives you a sense of independence.

I: Do you recall any experiences when you were young shopping in retail stores that felt negative for any reason.

R: Well, my problem, and it's not the stores, my problem as a young child I was extremely overweight so shopping for me was never fun because my mom would buy me clothes and then, I guess she would expect me to be able to wear them for a couple of seasons, not Jamie never, and so I remember shopping was dreadful. I would call myself thunder thighs because nothing would zip, nothing would button and I would need to be able to wear those clothes for multiple seasons, so shopping did not become fun for me until I was a teenager when I finally was able to shed the pounds.

I: So you lost weight during your teenage years?

R: I lost; yeah I lost weight during my teenage years. But until then, it was not pleasant, nothing was pleasant about shopping.

I: How's shopping for you now?

R: Much, much better. Much, much better.

I: How would you describe your attitude towards shopping in general?

R: Oh I enjoy it. I enjoy it um and I just remember as a young girl, as like a 10-year-old I would have to wear clothes that were not made for a 10-year-old. So I was wearing adult women's clothes because of my size and they didn't really have clothes that look like a child, does that make sense?

I: It does.

R: And so I felt like I looked more grown up than I was just because I was tall and I was heavy and then I dressed older. And I don't know if that's what made me more mature, I don't know what it was, but I just remember from a young age always having to wear older clothes. I mean I was wearing my mom's clothes in elementary school.

I: Do you recall, you said your mom would buy you things and bring them back home, do you recall going out shopping at that age in the stores, going to the grown up department looking for clothes?

R: I do, and it's just one particular outfit that I remember and it was in 6th grade, and I don't know that it was necessarily a department store but it wasn't a children's store and I was trying to find something for picture day and I could not find anything that would fit me to make me look like I was a 6th grader. And I ended up getting this sailor looking suit, it was horrible. Even when I look at the pictures now, and I guess I thought it was cute because it fit me and it didn't look bad and so I got it. But now when I look back I think as a 6th grader I had on a

sailor suit. And it really wasn't a sailor suit it was like a short's set with like sailor hats or something, horrible.

I: But at the time you said you didn't think it was bad?

R: I thought it was okay but at the same time I would have much rather to have worn something age appropriate, but it just was not easy. And I think now they do a, marketer's or designers do a better job with plus size clothing, as opposed to when I needed plus size clothing, it was a struggle.

I: Okay, so you said that now you enjoy shopping? How often do you go shopping now?

R: How often do I need to go shopping?

I: No not do you need to, how often to you go.

R: I'd say it's on a monthly basis. I would definitely say it's on a monthly basis. I think it depends; I only shop when I'm happy with my weight. So when my weight fluctuates, like right now I feel like I'm 7 pounds above what I need to be, so I'm not shopping right now. But once I lose 7 pounds, I'll probably shop again. So my shopping is definitely tied to my weight.

I: That's very interesting.

R: When my weight fluctuates, like if I know I've gained 5 pounds I'm not going to go try on clothes. So at this point even though the seasons have changed, I haven't bought any new spring clothes because I won't go.

I: Have you always been that conscientious, does that go back from when you were a child?

R: No, well, maybe. No not really because once I got to High School all the weight just kind of fell off. And I was a lot smaller than I am now when I came to college even; of course it went back up. And so all the way through High School I was okay and I wasn't that conscientious about my weight. It wasn't until I gained weight in college. I gained weight my second year in college and I went up a size in clothes and for a while I was okay with it, oh it's the freshman 15, I'm okay and then I started looking at pictures and I realized it's not okay and so for the past couple of years I've been kind of obsessed with staying in a certain range. Like I want to be able to continue to wear the same size clothes. Now would it be nice if I could wear a smaller size? Yes, but I definitely don't want to buy any clothes that are larger than what I have now. So at this point I'm not going shopping because Jamie needs to eat something where she can continue to wear her pants. So now I'm very conscious about it.

I: So tell me when you go to a store and let's say right now, since you say right now you feel like you're 7 pounds over where you need to be. Do you just not go to stores as a result of being 7 pounds over or do you go and you get frustrated or. How does that manifest?

R: I try not to go, or I'll buy shoes. Um, I try not to go. I mean cause usually I know and even when I start trying to lose weight once I feel like I've made a significant difference I'll go and try on clothes and see if there is a difference in the way my clothes fit. But at this point I won't go try on pants. I probably wouldn't try anything, not for another couple of weeks I wouldn't but I would buy shoes, but I wouldn't go buy clothes.

I: Okay, so do you go shopping for shoes?

R: Not often, not often.

I: What are your favorite stores to shop in?

R: My favorite store in Knoxville is Lerner New York. I feel like their clothes really work well with black women. I feel like their sizes, I don't know maybe their sizes just make me feel good about myself but I feel like their clothes are shaped or fit, or designed to fit a black woman. I like Boutique D and I guess I have a hard time going into department stores because of all the different brands, all the sizes run differently and so I get into, oh in this store I wear size 12, in this store I wear size 16, or in this store I wear size 14 and so I know if I go into Lerner I wear the same size in everything, and so maybe it's psychological but at that point that's my favorite store.

I: You said in Knoxville, so outside of Knoxville are there any other stores.

R: Well, I mean. I guess it just depends. I mean I like to go to Macys of course we don't have a Macys here. I wouldn't say I necessarily have another favorite store just whoever has the sale.

I: Do you do online shopping at all?

R: Very seldom. Victoria's Secret every now and then. I think I joined their list about five or six years ago so every now and then I'll shop on Victoria's Secret.com.

I: Any other stores?

R: Nine West. Com, but that's it. I don't really do much online shopping for clothes because I have to try everything on. I do. And my husband and I have this

problem because every time he tries to buy me clothes it's never successful. And he bought me shoes for Mother's day and he felt so good about the shoes and they were just a half inch off. And I was like this is great. He's like I'm never buying anything else and I said, I promise, don't be made I'll go exchange them for the exact same thing but it's just hard because I have to try everything on. And I don't know if all women have that problem, but.

I: Um, we're still on positive experiences shopping right now. Have you ever been shopping and had a particularly pleasant experience that stands out in your mind?

R: Yeah every time I leave with a shopping bag it's a pleasant experience.

I: Just what the whole experience was like, that was a really good experience.

R: Well I think most recently my best shopping experience has been shopping for my wedding dress.

I: Oh, tell me about that.

R: Now, then I still have this negative side because all I wanted to do was to wear a size 12 wedding dress just because I worked so hard to be in a size 12. Then I go to find out that European dresses are, you have to go up a size. So, at first I thought it was going to be negative, cause I thought I had taken all these dresses into the room, they were all size 12 and then I was barely breathing. So, that day I felt I'm not shopping for dresses for a while I'm just gonna go lose weight so I can wear a size 12. Then I realize, okay that's not gonna be realistic. And so, once I got past that, once I found the perfect dress it was just perfect and I didn't care that it was.

I: Tell me about that, what store were you at?

R: I was at David's Bridal and it was actually a really good experience, um all of the bridal attendants were very helpful with helping me find a dress that would compliment my figure. Um, and of course not trying to encourage me to buy the most expensive dress because I was on a budget, so that experience was good. I ended up buying a dress that was out of my budget, but it was just the perfect dress for me, so when I left even though I knew I had spent a couple hundred dollars more than I had budgeted for I felt like this was absolutely the perfect dress for me and so there was no guilt. Now the dress is hanging up in my closet I have nothing to do with it, I'm thinking why did I spend so much money, but it was worth it at the time. So that's my most positive.

I: You said that the attendants were helpful, tell me about that.

R: Um, I guess they are supposed to be helpful, that's why they are there. Helpful in making sure I knew how to put it on, making sure I had all the right accessories, making sure I picked Bridesmaids dresses that would look good with that particular dress, so they were just there, I guess in a sense to provide the service as making sure I was comfortable in my dress and with the wedding party's attire.

I: Okay. Now, we're going to switch to the domain that I'm interested in, the negative experiences. Tell me about an experience that stands out in your mind.

R: The most negative experience I can think of at the moment didn't happen here in Knoxville, it actually happened at the beach. Eric [her husband] and I went on vacation a couple of years ago, to Destin and we were walking around the little outlets and we stopped in a department store, kinda similar to a Profitts or a Macys and we were talking to the lady, I think we were trying to find out if there was a Profitts, for some reason and we were asking her where are there stores to visit and she was like oh this is a great shopping mall and she was like, but there is a Bose Store here in the Outlet. And we had never said anything to say we were looking for music or speakers or anything of that nature and that's the only store that she told us about in the whole Outlet. And I was standing there and I was thinking, here we are two young black adults. I mean we were dressed fairly nice and we had on, you know, casual beach wear and we asked this lady, you know, what nice stores should we go to and she said oh you should really check out the Bose Store, and that's the only store she recommended to us out of the whole strip mall, huge strip mall at the beach. That was hidden racism. I've never gotten over it; I think I talked about it the whole day and the whole drive back. And even to this day we'll talk about it, just in a jokingly manner, but I don't think she realized it was, I wouldn't necessarily think it was racist, but it was oh we're black we're really interested in speakers and that was all she said. And I just thought, wow.

I: When she said that, what was your reaction to her?

R: I don't remember, that's the bad thing is I don't remember. I wanna say I just kind of walked off, I was like are you serious, or I really don't remember, I wish I did remember I didn't buy anything from her, I know that, I immediately left her store and I just thought, so we look like we just wanna buy speakers?

I: What was your conversation, tell me, when you walked away from that store and you were with your future husband, did you all talk about it immediately.

R: Yeah we talked about it. We probably talked about it in her face because I was just so shocked that was the only store she, I mean out of all the stores in the Mall that's the only thing she could think that we would be interested in, and I was like, I guess it's, I said that was because we're black, I was convinced. I said that's gotta be because we're black or a young black couple and she just assumed that we wanted to go buy speakers. Um and of course she tried to cover herself, cause she says yeah my husband always wants to go to the Bose Store, but at that point the damage was already done. And I was like, that was truly hidden racism. I said if we would have been anybody else and we had asked what stores can we shop in, I guarantee she wouldn't of told me that, I was so sure of it. I mean because there was every outlet you could have thought of and she told me to go to the speaker store.

I: What was her reaction after you, do you think she tried to cover it up?

R: Well she said the Bose store and I guess I kind of made a face or, I know my facial expressions can be a little dramatic and then after she said that, she said, well I know every time me and my husband go shopping, he always wants to go check out the Bose store. But by then I had already formulated in my mind that she had put us in the box and said well you're black and you need to go buy speakers. I'm gonna say the conversation ended after that.

I: What was your husband's reaction?

R: He agreed. He agreed with everything that I said. Now I don't know what his initial thought was, but I know once I said well we gotta go to the Bose store. He was like, yeah that was kinda messed up and then of course we continued to talk about it. He may tell you the same thing when you talk to him, he may not even remember the experience. So that's my most recent negative experience where I feel like someone did something to me specifically because of my race, because there was really no reason.

I: There are lots of different emotions that could have evoked, some people might have been sad, some might have been angry, some might have been disappointed. How do you remember feeling when this happened?

R: I was disappointed, because she didn't even realize. I don't think she realized that it was a racist comment or a comment that was derived from her perception of race, so I was disappointed. Then I was kinda angry cause I thought, you know she really could have recommended me to a very nice store where I could have bought a cute top or a cute skirt or some sunglasses, but instead while I'm on my vacation she thinks I'm thinking about speakers, so I was offended, I was offended.

I: There are different levels of attribution you could make. You could say well that was just her being unaware of what she was saying; you could say well that's because she's not used to dealing with people of color that come into her store. In your mind, what is it that you think caused her reaction?

R: I can't make any excuses for her. I do think that we all have a perception of race in our head and she may not have clearly thought black people want speakers, but obviously there was an association there, um so I really can't make any excuses for her and I guess I could blame it on the media, I mean the images that portray us in the media to make it look like black people love music and love loud music, but I can't make any excuses for her.

I: Were you planning on buying anything from that store before that happened? Had you been shopping in that store for a while before you asked her, or had you just gotten there?

R: We were really just browsing, I mean we were on vacation so, I mean you just buy things I think just because when you're on vacation, um almost like we were looking at cologne. And we possibly could have purchased something, I mean we ended up going through the Mall and we both left with shopping bags, so I can't say. We probably would have stayed in the store a little longer, but I left.

I: Did you tell anybody else about that exchange, outside of your husband that day?

R: Yeah. We talk about it a lot, I think we told everybody. We were like, can you believe this woman? And I still tell people about it.

I: How long ago was this, you said a couple of years ago?

R: Yeah, two years, probably 2004, yeah I think it was 2004.

I: And when you share your experience with other people, what's typically their reaction?

R: They just kinda laugh and they say, oh that's funny. Or she's just ignorant, or that's kind of messed up, you know. Granted I can be convincing so I can make someone think that it was wrong even if she didn't really mean any harm, but I do still share that story.

I: Why, why do you share it?

R: Because, some people are still ignorant. Or some people, I don't know. Because if I was in the same situation and someone asked me what store to go to,

usually I can look at the person and try to figure out. Okay, look at their style, the way they talk to me and kinda figure out where they might rather go. But, for her not to say oh why don't you go to Gap, or why don't you go to Geoffrey Bean and look at, no. She didn't do that, she didn't even try, so I don't know, I don't know. I would think that people would. I mean, if I walked up I wouldn't expect someone to tell me to go to the Hot Topic store where they sell the Goth stuff. I wouldn't expect that, I don't look like I'm Gothic. Um, so I would think that people would try to size you up before they recommend something and I guess that's all she pulled up at that moment. She could have sent me to the Food Court, but she sent me to the speaker store. I mean,

I: Are there any other experiences that stand out in your mind, negative experiences?

R: I can say that I am definitely treated differently when I go shopping based on the way I dress. Like if I go shopping after I get off work I feel like people are more attentive, can I help you? Glad to see you again, yada, yada, yada. Can I help you in the dressing room? Whereas if I leave the gym and go in my workout clothes, it's like. I mean I know that if I go in the store, if I'm in there for like 5 minutes and no-one talks to me, I'm usually like, what's going on? I have money just like anybody else in here. But if I have on my gym clothes I feel like oh, it's because I'm dressed down, I'm not getting any attention. And so, I purposely try to never go shopping unless I'm fully dressed. And I don't know if that's crazy, at least shopping for clothes and shoes because I do feel like people treat you differently. And before I married Eric I used to date a guy who was real urban and I think he would have more situations than I would. And I remember particularly we were at the Mall and he had pulled up outside and was waiting to pick me up and he had on like a white t-shirt or whatever and I felt like he was being harassed just because he looked like this little urban guy.

I: Why do you feel like he was being harassed, what was going on that gave you that?

R: Well he was parked in the fire lane and they were telling him to move and I was walking out and he was like, well the person is walking out. And they were like; well no you need to move right now. It was kinda one of those and I thought humm. Now granted he was in the fire lane, so he was in the wrong. And we used to always have this argument, I say people treat you differently based on the way you look, and even to this day, I think he's improved on trying to not be so urban all the time, but at some point.

I: Do you think that's more attributed to race or just class? Cause those are two,

R: Sometimes they go hand in hand. I would say class, but I think class is one issue, but then when you have the class and the race issue, if you are looking lower class and you're black then you're pushed way down.

I: Can you think of any experiences when you were dressed from working out that stand out in your mind as particularly negative?

R: I guess I have an experience where, I shop in Boutique D on a regular basis and I normally get attention or people ask me if they can help me, whereas if I go, I can think of one situation where I went into Boutique D, I had on like workout pants and a jacket and no-one ever said anything to me and I thought this is really strange, you know, this is really strange. Why has no-one asked me if I want a fitting room? Why has no-one asked if I need any help, and in that moment I kept saying to myself in the store, it must be because I look like I don't have any money, or I like I'm not about to shop. And I really try not to go shopping unless I'm dressed in my regular clothes.

I: That day, did you ever bring that up to any of the sales people that were there?

R: No, I didn't. I don't think I bought anything, I just think I kinda left.

I: Is there any occasion where you would let a sales person know that you were uncomfortable or the lack of attention that you were getting?

R: No. I guess unless I was. I mean I think it would have to be an extreme situation for me to complain about it because this could all just be my perception. They could think, oh she comes in here all the time, she doesn't need help. It could just be my perception thinking; oh they didn't feel like helping me today. So I don't think I would call them out on it.

I: You said earlier that Boutique D was one of your favorite stores. So, the fact that the sales force might treat you that way when you are not dressed appropriately doesn't deter you from shopping there?

R: No it doesn't, Should it? Probably, um but I guess I have more positive experiences than I have negative experiences and their clothes fit me and they fit me nice, so I continue to shop there. Now, if someone blatantly said we're not serving you, or we can't take your credit card or something like that, and I feel like it was blatant, then I would have a problem, but nothing like that has ever happened.

I: Have you ever, when you were younger, when you were out shopping with your mom or by yourself, had any negative experiences. Sometimes just like we think people treat us negatively because of our race, people can treat you

negatively because of your size. Did that experience ever occur to you when you said that you were an overweight child?

R: I don't know, or maybe I just didn't pay attention. I mean I never felt like people we, like oh that's the fat girl. Granted, I don't know what people say when I'm not listening. I mean my friends were very loving to me, um I can't think of a negative instance where I felt like someone discriminated against me because of my weight. Or it could have happened and I just missed it.

I: That's one of the things that I'm interested in too. If it happened and you didn't notice it, then did it happen? Do you know what I'm saying? It's your perception that ultimately matters. If a third party sees something happen and they think it. That's one thing, but what happens in these situations. One of the things you said was that, the behaviors were subtle, or they might have had other reasons for it. But if it's your experience that it's because of race and that's a real, you know, that's a real experience for you, whether or not a third party can identify it or not, so yeah the experiences you've shared are great on that. Any other stand out in your mind? And when I say retail I mean it very broadly, it can be Wal-Mart, Target, you know any.

R: I'm thinking that, well this is not necessarily my experience; this is my husband's experience. He um, got some shirts from Profitts and they didn't fit, they were gifts, and he tried to take them back and said they were gifts and they lady would not do anything. She basically had an attitude about, well if you don't have a receipt, well we can't do anything. And he was like, can I get store credit, something of that nature. And she just kept beating on, we need a receipt, we need a receipt. And I kept saying,

I: You were with him?

R: I'm trying to think if he called to say, I'm definitely having a fuzzy memory. Maybe he told me. But basically he was telling me that she was not being like she wanted to exchange the shirts or whatever because he didn't have a receipt. He was trying to explain to her that it was a gift, he didn't have the receipt and so, I kept thinking, why does it have to be like that? If you want a store credit and if you're going to give them the shirt back it shouldn't be that you have to bring the receipt and all this stuff and I kinda felt that was driven by race, but that didn't happen necessarily to me.

I: Do you know, what ultimately happened, did he just take the shirts back?

R: Eventually he took them back, eventually I think he took them back or he was able to get the receipt back from his mother. But I know that he doesn't have the shirts anymore. But I remember there was this ordeal with her saying that if he wanted to return the shirts he was going to have a receipt.

I: I look forward to talking to him about that gift.

R: I don't know I mean I recently purchased a car. It was a female sales person and like, everything she was really trying to sell me this car and so we kept driving cars over and over again and she'd be like don't you feel sexy, don't you feel sexy and I was like this is not about being sexy. And it was interesting that it was a female and she was an older female, she was probably in her 60's and every car she'd get in, she'd be like, oh this is so sexy. And I was like, I'm not really looking for a sexy car, but I ultimately did not buy a car from her but,

I: Did you say that to her?

R: No. I don't know every car we got into, and I don't know if it was because of my race or because I was young or because I'm sexy I don't know, but. And I really didn't expect that, one from a female, secondly from an older female, I mean. I just remember, every car she brought to me she was like, oh you'll be so sexy in this, oh this is so sexy. And I really did not buy a car from her and she was extremely pushy. Then I ended up going to a male car salesman and it was totally different.

I: Oh, was this at the same dealership?

R: No, I went to a different dealership. And he never once said sexy, granted he probably should have. But it was more about how the car performed and safety and that was really what I was interested in. Of course I wanted to have my style, but I don't know. So it wasn't really negative, but it was awkward because every car I got into had to be sexy. Watch I'm gonna think of a negative thing in my sleep tonight.

I: You mentioned that you have an 8 year old step daughter and you said that one of things that you are aware of when you go out is how you are dressed. Do you have conversations with her about that?

R: Um hum.

I: Tell me about that.

R: I do because her mother, we're totally different. Her mother probably doesn't care I guess per se, um but like dirty flip flops. I'll buy her flip flops and then the next day they are brown. I'm like what have you been doing? And then she'll want to go with me somewhere, I'm like you're not wearing those dirty shoes, I mean because you have clean shoes so why would you choose to wear the dirty shoes? Just to let her know that she should always try to be dressed in a respectable manner. Um, so that's been a challenge cause I've only been her step

mother for five months, so I still have a lot of time to work on grooming her. But as far as her hair being combed, she wallows and before you know it she's got an afro and I'm thinking now you wanna go to church, no, we need to fix your hair and to her she doesn't care. And I guess with her mom, her mom is like get in the car, let's go. Whereas me we're not leaving the house until you have on clean shoes and your hair is combed and that's just the way I am. Um, and I don't know how she perceives me at this moment, whether I just like to be clean because she knows that if I have to go somewhere, I'm gonna try to be presentable. Um, so I am trying to enforce in her that you do need to be conscious of your appearance and don't wear your dirty flip flops to your best friend's birthday party. Don't do that, because then people see you and they think why didn't her mom clean her feet. Or why didn't her mom comb her hair. Because I know when I see dirty children I think, why didn't they just take a bath? You know and I don't want people to perceive her that way. Especially when it's something so simple.

I: Let me see if there are any questions that I have to ask you that I forgot to, my cheat sheet. Well I guess I don't have any further questions for you then, but this does give me some insight into those experiences for you so I thank you for that.

End of Interview.

INTERVIEW NINE

Participant: AA Female
University Employee
Early 50s
Divorced
Breast Cancer Survivor
Teenage son

I: Today is May 18th and I'm with interview participant # 9. You already know the topic of my dissertation. Because I'm interested in your unique experience with it, I'm gonna ask you just a couple of general background questions initially before we get into the meat of the subject, so starting off. Tell me about where you grew up.

R: Let's see, born in Pennsylvania, raised in Jackson, Mississippi.

I: So was I.

R: Were you? Went to Junior High and Senior High back in Pennsylvania. Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania as a matter of fact, very West Pennsylvania not far from Pittsburg. Went back to Mississippi for college and what-have-you until a job opportunity at the Job Core Center here in Knoxville, Tennessee became available and I ended up working there. And I have been in Tennessee, in Knoxville, rather since December 1979. So this is home now.

I: So, where did you spend the majority of your growing up years? In Jackson or in Pennsylvania?

R: I would say that's kinda like a balance.

I: Okay, tell me about growing up in either of those, or one or the other.

R: Well see, I grew up in Jackson, Mississippi during the Civil Rights era so that in of itself is an experience. And it's interesting because lately I've been talking a lot with students about my experiences and letting them know that Civil Rights was not that long ago and that I remember it as a kid. I still remember going to the segregated waiting rooms when my mom would take us to the doctor. I still remember being in segregated areas when she would take us to buy shoes. I remember where it was colored only; see so I remember a lot of that stuff.

I: What time period are we talking about here? Are we talking about 50's, 60's?

R: I was born in '53.

I: Okay.

R: Uh huh, so we are talking about my remembrances in the 60's.

I: 60's.

R: Uh huh, late 50's I guess you would say, but mostly that in the early 60's, so yeah I remember a lot of that. And, you know like I tell them, I said for some of our kids now it's not. It's like, that was the past, but until you find an elder who is still a contemporary, that's when you start to realize that it's just not that far in the past. Being in Pennsylvania was a different kind of situation and circumstances and what was really interesting, the discrimination that I got there came more from my own folk than it did from anybody else.

I: Tell me about that.

R: Because I was discriminated against because I was from Mississippi, cause the assumption was I was dumb, and I was backwards. I had very long hair, so I was trying to be white. So I had all those issues. I was, I did well in school and I wasn't supposed to. So I had all those kinds of factors.

I: Was your environment mostly integrated or was it mostly what we call African-American, but black back then?

R: In Mississippi?

I: In Pennsylvania.

R: In Pennsylvania there was somewhat of a balance. But my best friends in school ended up being white,

I: Okay.

R: Yeah, because of the way I was being treated by my own.

I: Did you come from a "mixed" background from your immediate folks?

R: No, no. My mom's side of the family, I do know that I'm descended from slaves. I remember my great, great grandfather and his parents were slaves. And um, on my dad's side I don't know a whole lot about them; I do know that there is a strong Native American influence hence the reason for my hair texture and length at the time and different things like that. My dad was adopted, but I met his

real mother after I was grown, I was married and she was on her deathbed and that's when I finally met her. I had seen pictures of her, but I finally met her and you could see the Native American in her. She had a particular influence. So, my background, home wise was it was a balance and it was an interesting balance when I think about it. It wasn't as though it was, there wasn't an effort to be Afrocentric, we just were. Okay, because that was the community you grew up in. I grew up in a community where it was not only my family, but your neighbors were family too. You know what I'm saying.

I: That was in both places that you lived?

R: Um Pennsylvania, not as much. But Mississippi, yes. Because if you messed up and the neighbor saw you, it was during those times when they spanked you and then you got another when you got home. So, I know every time you hear people talk about that, it was like yeah that was real. Don't play, that was really real.

I: That might just be a Mississippi thing because I grew up not too long ago and it was the same way then.

R: Yeah, but you know the interesting thing is, is that I always describe myself as the best of both worlds.

I: What does that mean?

R: That means that I have my southern heritage and roots and then I have that northern experience. And somehow there has been a balance for me. Because I've been able to look at situations and probably a little differently than most because of the experiences I had to know well enough to know that there is good and bad on both sides. But I don't prostitute who I am because of it. And I know what my experiences are. I know my family history, so therefore there is a sense of pride in who I am, but I can also transfer when I meet you no matter what ethnicity you come from, we can still hold our own and I can respect your heritage, but you're gonna also respect mine. And it just kinda happens that way.

I: Interesting.

R: Because I find meeting people from different cultures is a good thing. I like doing that, um but I'm not afraid to find out anything about somebody else's culture as well. Because I've seen the good and bad, in, especially in us. I've seen the good and bad in us. Just like I've seen it in somebody else.

I: You said that your great, great grand parents were descendants of slaves on your mother's side. Was that something that you grew up knowing, that was talked about in the household a lot. Tell me a little bit about that.

R: It wasn't talked about a lot. It was just kinda like; we have a very strong family, on my mom's side. Um, and the family historian and mom are real close cousins. So you know, I'd hear them talk about the history and then my brother and I would go spend the summer out in the country with my great grand parents at the country home and you know, people talked about, you know, well you remember when. You know they talked about cousins and uncles and grandpa and all of this. And, when you're out in the country and you don't have TV or anything and you sitting on the porch and you know people are talking and they weren't saying anything that kids couldn't hear. Just talking about family stuff or saying you know did you know that your grandfather was this and we did this, you know those kinds of things. So, that's kinda how, kinda like in the story telling part.

I: Okay. How large of a family do you come from in your immediate family?

R: Immediate family it's just my brother and I.

I: okay.

R: My mom, it was three of them and then, uh her dad, it was maybe about I think three of them as well, but his mom came from a family of, it was 13 kids and then from there, you know it was like, you know, 13, 13, just huge.

I: Were you close with your extended family growing up?

R: A little, yeah. The move to Pennsylvania, you know it's like where we would spend the summer, my brother and I would spend the summer out in the country with you know, cousins and grand parents and stuff. As they got older and they died we weren't doing that as much and then that move to Pennsylvania kinda stopped, brought some of that to a halt as well.

I: So most of your family was in Mississippi, then?

R: Yes.

I: Okay, since you were born in Pennsylvania I assumed that's where your home base was.

R: No because my mom's mother lives, at least she lived in Pennsylvania.

I: Okay.

R: And when my mother and father were married, they met and married in Mississippi, and my dad was in the military. And my mom, when she got pregnant with me, stayed in Pennsylvania with my grandmother and that's how I ended up being born there.

I: Okay, that explains that.

R: Yeah.

I: Can you recall any early incidences where either you or your family were treated differently because of your race in,

R: Well, like I told you, I remember one time going shopping for shoes and, you know, when you really take the time to think, you can remember stuff. And I remember the way we had to go in,

I: Where was this, first of all?

R: This was in Mississippi, and the way we had to go into the store, it wasn't like, it wasn't the front entrance and we had to go in through another side and there was like this room sectioned off for black folk. And then the white folk were over on the other side to the door. Just like going to the doctor's office, and I remember on time that waiting room door was open for some reason or it had, or somebody must have passed through, and I remember asking my mom, why are they sitting over there and we're sitting over here. And there was an obvious difference, you know.

I: What was your mom's response to that?

R: I don't remember, but I remember my mom telling us as we were growing up that don't ever let anybody treat you any differently. Don't ever feel that you are better than somebody else, but don't allow anybody to treat you as though they are better than you. That you have to treat everybody right, no matter how they treat you.

I: Do you recall any incidences where your mom, when you were with your mom and she was in a situation that might have felt negative and she confronted someone about that?

R: If she did, she wouldn't let us see it.

I: Okay. Tell me about that.

R: Because I think my mom was more concerned about us being equitable in the way we treated people. And tried not to influence any of the negative and I

think that was for our survival. More so than anything else. Now she would talk about different things that would happen and it would be after the fact and it would be as we were getting older. But, at that point in time, you know, around with impressionable kids, it's like what do you model before them. And if she's trying to impress upon us equity, then it wouldn't be very equitable if, you know, she was preaching one thing and demonstrating something else. But that's my mom, that's the way she is.

I: Okay. We're going to move a little bit into the future then, tell me about your life now. You've told me a little bit about your history, tell me about yourself now.

R: Uh, let's seen, I've been here at [University X]. I've been at [University X] for 24 years and I have a 17 year old.

I: Son, daughter?

R: Son. I got my Bachelor's degree at Jackson State University,

I: So did I.

R: Did you really?

I: I did.

R: And I got my Master's here at UT, and I started my course work towards the Ph.D. here, so I understand where you're coming from. But, you know, I don't know it's hard for me to describe my life here because I have had so many different experiences. I'm a 3 time cancer survivor and I have just been through a lot of things. I've had a lot of highs; I've had a lot of lows. I've had good times, I've had bad times, and then I have had extremely bad times. And I've had extremely good times. So, I've kind of run a gambit, gone through the gambit here at the University, but I'm still here. Even in Tennessee when we moved here, I was married at the time. I have since been delivered, and that's the way I consider my divorce because my marriage was just not..

I: I haven't heard that term [delivered], I like that.

R: Oh yeah girl I was delivered, I can't speak for nobody else but sister was delivered, okay. I'll tell anybody that. And I'm not saying that, you know. I'm not going to say I was the best wife in the world, but a lot of what I went through, nobody deserved it and so, it was good and bad on both parts and that's the way, and you know I'll just say that because it takes two to keep it going and it takes two to mess it up. But I really was delivered on my end. I don't know what homeboy thinks but I know what I think. So it's been my son and I for a long

time now. Cause let me see, I've been single now for about 10 years. And it's, and see I didn't grieve over my delivery, I was tickled. So every time I would hear people talk about, you know, being depressed and all this, I'd be thinking, well there's something wrong with me. And I remember calling a friend of mine, and I was telling her, you know I was like, you know all these folks really having a hard time, and I was like, I'm not. And she reminded me, she said remember now, you grieved while you were still married. I was like, oh yeah I did, so it made a difference, but I have been re-discovering who I am since that time and I've been blessed to be able to do a lot of things, meet a lot of really interesting people. To be in the company of people that you read about or see on TV. So it's just been really. I have lived a very blessed life in spite of all craziness. My son just turned 17 last month and I enjoy having a teenager in the house and I know that's not what you normally hear. Now don't get me wrong, there are days when his hormones get out of wack. It's like dude, uh huh, no don't. And we have our challenges but for the most part I don't have a lot of the issues a lot of other parents have with teenagers. So I know that I'm blessed, I really do know that I'm blessed and he's a good kid. You know, we have the best conversations, he was sitting up telling me about these girls chasing after him and all this kind of stuff, and I was like, and I enjoyed talking to him. He always has had good conversations. So, you know, I hope I'm answering your question in terms of what I do here. I work a lot with the students. I'm mom to everybody so.

I: Okay, that helps a lot. That tells me a lot about you.

R: Oh, okay.

I: Now we can move onto the general domain I'm interested in which is the retail environment. Before we look at negative experiences, just tell me about your attitude towards shopping in general.

R: I like to shop, but it's like, for instance. I had the best Mother's day because on Saturday I did what I wanted to do. I had my manicure and my pedicure then I went shopping. And I was looking for a specific item, I went to different stores I'm looking at doing some, just really tearing my place apart and putting it back together the way I want it. So I looked around at different ideas and different specialty shops and things.

I: What kind of stores were you going to?

R: I went to; I went to K-Mart. I went to Bed, Bath and Beyond. Um I did go to Department Store G and, where else did I go? I went to Wal-Mart for a little while. So I was just kinda out and about, looking around at different things and different places, yeah and I did what I wanted to do. And then I wanted spaghetti so I went to Gondoliers and ordered my spaghetti. I mean it was one of those days where I didn't have anybody asking me any questions. I did what I

wanted to do, I didn't have to rush and I had a ball. I got a lot of different ideas and I don't do that very often, but when I do, I just thorough enjoy it. And it gives me an idea to see what's new on the market and you know different things like that, so I just had a good time.

I: Did you purchase anything?

R: Oh yeah. Oh yeah I did real well. And what was so interesting is that I was looking for a cutlery set and I have been looking for a really good cutlery set for a while, I had some nice steak knives that I hadn't used in a long time, actually I've never used them at all. They were still in the box and I was looking at them, I said since I haven't used these, I gave them to somebody as a wedding gift and I don't know how long ago that's been but I did. So, I started looking at the stuff that I have and I've been switching out pots and pans, I got new stuff and you how you gradually do with the kitchen, and I said I never really had a good set of knives to cook with or anything like that, and I started looking around for the cutlery. And I went to those particular different stores like the K-Mart, Bed Bath and Beyond and Department Store G because I wanted to just kinda compare prices and you know, I said if I see something here, I'll go over here and if I get a better deal here, I would come back, you know that kind of stuff. Long story short I ended up buying a very, very, very nice cutlery set,

I: From where?

R: Actually, I got it from Bed, Bath and Beyond and it was a Cuisinart, 21 pieces for \$150.00 that included the base. I was like okay, given what I was looking at, and the different prices that was the best buy for my money and it was the last one they had in the store, yeah I knew this was mine. It was really nice, and you know you look at the Wusthoff and what is it, J A Kennel or something like that, you look at the really expensive knives and it's like oh yeah. But I know Cuisinart is a good brand, so I was like, I can trust this.

I: Did you consult any sales people while you were shopping that day, on what you were looking for, whether it was the knives or anything else?

R: No. The only time I asked a sales person something, I was like I couldn't find the section and I can't remember which store I was in, and I was like where are the knives, I know they got them. And usually I can just maneuver my way around a store because it gives me an opportunity to just kinda look around and just kinda eye things and stuff, but once I was over a certain section for so long, I was finally like, okay so where are the knives? And a young lady showed me where they were, and for some reason I wanna say was it in Bed, Bath and Beyond or in Department Store G? Might have been in Department Store G, yeah. And the thing about it was, I had passed it a couple of times, but I just didn't see it. That's what it was.

I: I'm gonna back up a few minutes. Um when I asked you what was your attitude towards shopping. The first thing you said was, I like to shop, but. And then you told me about your pleasurable experience on Mother's day. I wanna get back to the but. What,

R: The but?

I: Yeah, tell me about that.

R: The but is when I go to a store and in my mind it's obvious I need help and it's just like I'm invisible and I will give you a prime example. I go to Department Store G and I like to go there and look at the shoes and the jewelry and things like that. Now their jewelry counter is notorious for having people behind the counter who just. I don't know if they just don't see people, if it's just their personality, what the deal is, but I would be looking around when I first get to the counter and then it's like humm. And if it's something in the case, you know I'll stand there and they would be waiting on somebody, so I stand and wait my turn. And then they just turn around and walk off and I'm just kinda standing there and thinking, okay now how are you going to respond to this. And then I might say excuse me. Or, it's like, you're not getting my money today, you just lost a sale. That's what I'm thinking and I'll just leave and go someplace else. Well, um I think it was around the holidays I had gone to Department Store G and here I am at the jewelry counter again. There was a young lady, at the time I walked up there were other people there and she was asking folk "may I help you?" and different things like that. Well when I walked up and I was looking around she said, ma'am can I help you with anything today? And I was like no, but thank you. And then I finally went back to her and I said, let me just say something to you. I said I wanna thank you for asking me if there was anything you could do for me. I said this is the first time, out of all the times I've been going to this store when I come to this counter that anybody has ever even acknowledge my presence and even asked me if I needed assistance. And I wanted to say thank you. She was stunned, and I could tell she was stunned. And she just kinda smiled, she said well, you're welcome and if there's anything you need, she said thank you so much. I felt as if that was something that I needed to do, I needed to acknowledge that and let her know so that hopefully, maybe in a nice way she could let her colleagues know. Guys, let me tell you what happened and maybe we need to... because that makes me feel more comfortable about spending my money in some place, if you just pretend like, is there anything I can do to help you. That's the but that you hear.

I: Okay.

R: And see, I'm the one that if you are, um, if you are really off the chain I will, and then you finally decide after however long, may I help you. My first

response would be well yes as a matter of fact you can. May I speak with the Manager please?

I: Tell me about an incident where that's happened.

R: Where was I? I don't remember where I was, but I was looking for some shoes, I was going to make a purchase and there was this young man and this young woman who worked in the shoe department and the only reason I knew that, was because I had seen them helping other people. Well, they started talking to themselves, you know, just having their general conversation between them. And at this point I'm needing some assistance. So, I'm looking around, I could hear them but I couldn't see them anymore, so when I finally saw them, and you know, I'm trying to get their attention, they basically ignored me and it was very obvious that they ignored. So I kind stood there, and was like humm, I'm not gonna let this one slide so um, when I finally approached them "oh did you need some assistance?" and I just was like, yeah as a matter of fact I did, however I need to speak with your manager. "Was there anything we could do?" I said no, you messed up, I need to speak with your manager. So when I talked to the manager and I told her what had happened.

I: Tell me about your conversation with the Manager.

R: My conversation with the manager. I told her, I expressed to her what I had just told you. I said um it's one thing to just kinda overlook somebody, I said but when you know, and there was someone with me, I said when you know people are just ignoring you. I said and the sad part about this whole experience is that I was a sure sale. I said now, I'm not buying anything out of this store; you can't even give it away to me free because I don't want it. I said but you needed to know what your staff is doing. Now what you do with them is not my issue, but you at least need to talk to them about customer service and even if somebody different comes in here who they may not like because of appearance sake, they still need to treat everyone with respect and dignity. And she was just, she was very red, but I wasn't yelling and I wasn't screaming, but I was letting her know, you need to talk to your folk and do better than this.

I: What did she say in response to this?

R: She was very, very apologetic and she really was wanting to help me, you know to make a purchase and I had to tell her a couple times I'm not spending any money in here now. As a matter of fact, I'm not coming back and I'm going to tell as many people as I possibly can not to come here.

I: Did you go back to that store?

R: No. Haven't set foot back in there and it's been years since that happened. Once I severed the relationship, I don't go back and I do not recommend places.

I: Tell me about how you see the difference between your experience at that store and one of the things that you said a few minutes ago was that Department Store G is notorious at the jewelry counter for not approaching people, I assume you mean people of color. What is the difference in your mind?

R: But then I started noticing this one lady in particular she doesn't approach anybody.

I: Okay.

R: So I try to give balance to everything, to make sure that okay, you need to assess it first. And then I'll watch and sometimes I'm not looking at jewelry anymore I'm watching to see, do you do this to everybody? Now if you do this to everybody that's just who you are. But when I see you making a deliberate difference I'm gonna say something.

I: Have you seen a deliberate difference at Department Store G at the jewelry counter?

R: I have.

I: Have you called that to either that person's attention or a manager's attention?

R: I did call it to a manager's attention.

I: Tell me about that.

R: Um, very apologetic as well and I was like, and basically, this particular time, I said now, I don't know if this is something that they do all the time, I know you all were swamped. Because usually when I find myself at Department Store G it's around Holidays and stuff cause they have the good sales and that kind of thing. But I'm like, you know, you need to talk to her, you need to just talk to her. And this is a lady who is probably around my age, so I know what the mind set is. It's like okay; you're still way back there bless your darling heart.

I: Tell me more about that, people might not know what you mean when you say I know what the mind set is, what does that mean?

R: That means that they are still carrying some of those old prejudices and stereotypes. When I graduated from college, from Jackson State. I had put, there was a store there called Department Store H,

I: It was still there until this year.

R: I had put an outfit on layaway for my graduation, that I was gonna wear. So, I went to get my outfit out of layaway and my mom went with me. I was all excited and everything. I go up to the layaway counter and there was this older white lady there and she was like, you know, she went and got my layaway, my dress, and oh it was so cute, and I just knew that I was going to be cute, and I'm just so excited. This woman turns around and looks at me and she says, oh here's your layaway slip, can you write? Now when she said it, now when we get out to the car my mom tells me how she was responding cause she knows me, okay. She said she just stopped breathing and started praying, she said oh god no. Please don't let this girl start clowning with this woman up in her, Lord why did this woman ask her that. And she was just. Now I'm seething and I'm like, cause I was a little on the militant side anyway, I was like no she didn't just ask me that. I thought okay. And I remember, it's like what you gon' do? My first inclination was to take my ink pen and hold it in my hand and carve an X through the paper and tell her no, I can't write, I just graduated from college, but I didn't do that, I was so nice. I said yes, I can write and I signed my name and she's like oh thank you. Because it's like, okay, how am I gon' help her? And I try to look at things as teachable moments. Now I haven't always been that smart, but it's like there has been something in me that when I'd be wanting to clown for real, I can't. I'll rehearse what I'm getting ready to do and something different will come out my mouth. And sometimes that just makes me so angry, but I guess that's really the way I've been taught. That's that equity coming in that my mom has drilled into us all this time. But I was very nice and walked outside, and momma was like, hey I was so proud of you cause I was so scared you were going across that counter. And I looked at her, and I said don't think that the thought didn't cross my mind. But it's just, it's just really. I don't know. I even now, when I look at some of the younger people and they still have that old nasty stereotypical mentality where they treat you, and it's obvious that you're being treated in a second class manner, that bugs me to no end.

I: Do you find that happening now?

R: Oh lord yes. And usually what I will do, I'll look at them and I will smile and I said baby you know what, that's okay I changed my mind. Well I can, I was like um hum, that's okay I changed my mind. I said I can put this back or you can put it back if you want to, even going so far as having paid for an item and then it's just so bad it's like you know baby, give me my money back. And you take this back and you keep it.

I: Can you recall a time when that happened?

R: Uh let's see. It's happened in a lot of different places. It's happened at fast food places. It's happened at different department stores and things like that. It's happened at restaurants, you know. I'll tell you one place, the last place it happened that was really bad, that I had not set foot in, in about a year now is Specialty Store B of Peter's Road.

I: Tell me about that.

R: Oh it was so ugly. Because I was there waiting for some service for a very long time. I finally went up to the customer service desk and told them that I was needing some assistance and everything and where I would be. I ended up having to do that a couple of times and then finally, it was like, um I don't know. Well I bought some cards and um the other purchases I was gonna get, I was like, no, let me get outta here. So when the young lady, the cashier asked me was everything okay? I was like, actually it's not. Well come to find out the lady who came to help me, and she was really just kinda, she said well let me just call the manager and have her come up and talk to you for a minute. I was like okay.

I: Why was she having to call the manager to come up?

R: Because I told her that, when she asked me if everything was okay I was like, no it was not.

I: Okay.

R: Come to find out the manager was the woman who came back to help me who was just like, and I thought, no wonder. And she was trying to explain to me what was happening, what was going on.

I: What was she saying? How was she rationalizing it?

R: Well she was just rationalizing because they were short handed and different things like that, and I was like, okay. And I can understand short handed. So I'm like I'll give you the benefit of the doubt, because I know what it's like for us around here. But what I found very interesting was that now, I had my back to the cashiers. She was facing that area and she was also facing customers who were coming through. I kept my voice very low, as not to break attention that we were having a conversation. And I would notice her look up from time to time. And every time she looked up her voice would elevate just a little more and a little more to bring attention to the fact that we were talking. And I basically was telling her, when I made the comment to her, I said you know what? I said I don't think I'm coming here anymore and then she started talking about, well god forgives and if you're a forgiving person. And I'm looking at her and I told her, that is not necessary and it has nothing to do with this conversation.

And I walked off. This woman followed me to the car to talk to me, and I told her I said look,

I: What was she still saying at that point?

R: She was still trying to justify, her behavior and I finally looked at her and I told her. I said, you know what? I said you treated me as though I was a perpetrator and thief. I said when I never raised my voice to you and you were drawing attention to our conversation like I stole something. I said you couldn't pay me to come back in here. And I don't go back, I haven't been back. I have no desire to go back. Now I'll go to the Cedar Springs at the other location, but you can't make me go back to that store.

I: How were you feeling as that exchange was going on. There are lots of different emotions you might have been feeling, anger, and disappointment?

R: I was mad, I was pissed and what angered me was the way she was doing it. She was so subtle with it that if, because of what I do, I do diversity training, okay. And I do things in terms of sensitivity to environment and culture and things like that. Now, to the average person I don't know how they would have responded. They either would have been really mad or been, okay that's fine. But she was so subtle and insidious with the way she was doing it, I was just seething and she didn't even realize that I'm not like everybody else. So I know what you doing, and she still doesn't. I know to this day she still doesn't understand that I'm not upset anymore about this other stuff, I'm pissed at the way you handled me and you supposed to be the manager.

I: Did you carry your anger with that situation any further, did you write the owners of the store?

R: No, didn't even want to go there.

I: Tell me about that; are there any situations where you would do that?

R: Oh there are situations where I have done that, Fast Food Restaurant B , oh

I: Tell me about that.

R: The Fast Food Restaurant B by my house one day I had gone and gotten an order and went back to the house. And usually I check my stuff before I leave, this time I didn't. I go back home, I call them to let them know. You know my order wasn't dah, dah, dah. I want to speak to the manager. I was on hold so long, and this is not an exaggeration, that I told my son, I said you hold the phone and you stay on the phone, do not hang up under any circumstances and see if

they come back to the phone. I got in my car with the stuff. I drove over to the Fast Food Restaurant B, I walk in and there was the phone sitting on the counter, and the girl said "can I help you?" I said if you go on the other end, that's my son on the other end and that's how long we've been waiting and let me speak to your boss. Not only did I give them the food back, I told them I said give me whoever I need to call cause I'm reporting this. And he's like ma'am I said um hum, there is nothing you can say to me, give me the stuff. I reported them; I told em exactly what happened. They sent me coupons, they apologized, I tore everything up that I got in the mail from them, have not been back there since.

I: Have you not been to any Fast Food Restaurant B since then or was it just that particular one?

R: I did go to one not long ago because I was with someone else and that was what they wanted, otherwise, it's been years. It has been years.

I: What is the difference in your mind in the follow up that you had at that experience at Fast Food Restaurant B and failing the follow up or not following up with management additional management based on your experience at Cedar Springs?

R: Because at Cedar Springs, I don't think it would have made any difference.

I: Why?

R: I just didn't. I just, it's just that little gut that I have, that this is one of those places where even if you do say something it's not gonna make any difference, and I didn't wanna waste my time. I really didn't um, and knowing me, if I don't follow up it's because I got so many other things on my plate, I have to weigh what's important and what's not and is this something I need to be spending any time doing.

I: Was there any response that Fast Food Restaurant B's management could have given you that would have made you feel better about it?

R: No, there really wasn't. I mean for me to drive from my house and you still got the phone sitting there, nah I don't think there is anything you could say behind that. I was like no.

I: Okay. You've given me a lot already I'm just trying to make sure I've checked on everything. Are there any other experiences that stand out in your mind?

R: Yeah I was just thinking about one, and I guess this is more where, I don't know if it made a difference or not, but I felt good. I don't listen to Love 89, that's a contemporary Christian radio station here. There were times when I did, once upon a time I did. But then, you know, over the years it's just like it's not of interest to me. So one day I was channel surfing and I came across Love 89 and one of the morning DJ's was doing some kinda little skit. And it was Shaquiqua, Ganiqua or something like that and they was just, all I know is bottom line I about lost my mind coming to work. I was like no he did not, I was fuming. I could not get here fast enough to call to talk to the Program Manager who was not in and it was a good thing he wasn't because I really didn't need to talk to him that day cause I was furious. I had a chance to calm down. Um he called me the next day, wouldn't you know, when I called him back I told him I said I heard your little thing yesterday. I said I'm not a regular listener and I went on to explain to him how, I said probably not done intentionally, I said but do you not realize that, that one skit has offended a significant portion of the Knoxville population? I said you can't get anymore stereotypical than that. So he started explaining to me that, oh well this guy's not this and he didn't mean it. I was like okay, I said now you know that, I said and you've told me that and all I have is your word to go on. I said but what about the people who were listening in who really feel that way, he just validated their prejudices whether it was intentional or not. We talked a good 30 minutes. He finally told me, he said I'm gonna go back and look at some things, he said, but I'm gonna be honest with you. He said had you started ranting and raving with me I would have just totally ignored you. He said but you made some very valid points and we had a really good conversation on the phone, like I say we talked about a good 30 minutes and I explained to him, I said, let me tell you a little bit about who I am and what I do and then when I did, I said see I train people with this stuff as a part of what I do, so when I hear it, I'm knowing what the effects are and I know that sometimes people do things out of ignorance, not everything is malicious, but I said even so, you still have to be aware when you are doing anything where you can influence anybody. You have to be especially aware of what it is you are doing and how this is going to impact the people you are actually influencing. So I don't know if they ever changed, I haven't heard anymore, but I don't know if that's a result of our conversation or not. But, I think for me, what I have learned over the years and continue to learn, now, when I first hear about stuff I'm going off, I'm just not going to be well at all. But I'm also the kind of person, even in my personal life, if we are having a disagreement about something I am one who will back off. I need time to process and think about it before I come back to you and talk to you. Because I don't wanna have an idle conversation. If I'm gonna talk to you, we need to have an outcome, when we've finished talking. And it needs to be something that we both either can live with or whereupon it doesn't matter, even if it's an agree to disagree. But we need to have some type of restitution for that so that we can move on. I don't want to be ranting and raving and we still have an issue and we ain't talking or whatever. Or every time we have a conversation that comes back up again. So you know, it's like I remember my Pastor when he was ministering the other

Sunday he said I'm at the point in my life where I'm too old to be making a whole lot of silly mistakes. And he was right, and I was like amending on that one real hard because that's true, you know. And having had some of the experiences that I have had being a cancer survivor, having a doctor tell you I'm sorry. I'm not even supposed to be alive according to the doctors. But this time last year, right before Mother's Day I was in the hospital for it, I missed being in the hospital two solid weeks because I just refused to be in hospital on Mother's Day last year. But I was dying and didn't even know it. My vital organs were starting to shut down on me and stuff. I didn't know what was wrong, but I didn't realize it was that serious. So when you have had these kinds of things happen to you, your perspective changes and you know like when you were asking me about the Cedar Springs, it was like, it ain't that crucial. I just don't have to go anymore and I don't.

I: Let me ask you about this, you have a 17 year old son, um African-American males are probably more likely to be suspect in retail environments than African-American females, what have you done to either equip him to handle those situations when they occur or to equip him to prevent those situations from possibly arising?

R: I talk to him about it and let him know, you have to understand, because I know when he was a little younger, still a teenager but a little younger than what he is now and some of his friends' parents would take them to the Mall and let them go cruising the Mall and I was like you can't go. And he would be just all over the place. And I was like no. I said what you have to understand is innocent or not, if anything happens you're the first one they're going after. Well mom, um hum. I said let me tell you something else, when you're with your white friends and they start acting the fool, you better act like you don't know em and go some place else. Because they, I said son, like it or not, they are able to get away with things that you're not. I don't allow him to wear baggy nothing. I saw him one morning he didn't have a belt on when I dropped him off at school, I about lost my mind. I told him if you ever, and if I ever I'm gonna embarrass you in front of everybody. I don't do that, I don't play that. Um, I tell him you're not thuggish, you're not going to run around here acting like everybody else. Um even growing up he didn't wear a lot of the name brands and you know just like younger with a lot of Osh Kosh and Mickey Mouse, he would have those things but they were always subtle because I didn't want him to be label conscious and he's not label conscious. And he doesn't do all of the bags and sags because he knows if I catch him, he's in trouble. So, I don't and you know, and we talk about things, we talk about things. Plus he's growing up here. He's had conversations with the college students. He has heard things, he had seen things, they have talked about things, so he's got a pretty good head on his shoulders, so that's what I've done to prepare him and you know like I tell him, I said, you know you're still a black man, that doesn't change.

I: One of the things that's come up in other interviews and you've just mentioned it with your son, is this notion that if you dress a certain way, people have, might be more likely to think that you fit a certain stereotype. On the counter side, does it ever occur to you when you are going out shopping um, to intentionally dress a certain way in order to avoid suspicion?

R: Sometimes yes, I do.

I: Tell me about that.

R: Sometimes I will dress a certain way, even in my casual, just like I tell you Saturday, prime example I dress a certain way for a couple of reasons. Number one I had to dress to accommodate my manicure and pedicure and number two, I had to dress with the mindset, I'm gonna be out for a while, how do I wanna be approached and so I deliberately wore what I wore and I had a great time. Now had I just been a little, I know that my experience would have been different.

I: How do you feel about that? Is that just something you realize as a fact and you just, go with it?

R: Yeah, and after a while you get used to it because you can't, I mean if you dwell on it all the time you're gonna make yourself sick, I've had enough of that. So, it's like whatever, you know, that's basically the way I respond to it now, whatever yeah.

I: Other experiences that sometimes come up, we've been focusing on retail settings and you've given me a lot there, other setting where you sometimes feel people are treating you differently because of your race, like when you are out car shopping or house hunting or apartment shopping. Have you ever had that experience?

R: Yeah, different things. Car shopping, until I start talking and then it's like, oh yes ma'am, then it changes. Looking at a house. Well I'll tell you about looking at a house. Being here in this facility with it being a newer facility and stuff, and I was the facility person, I had to start looking at things differently because if something wasn't right in the building I had to be able to catch it. And then call and have the contractor, so I worked with contractors, I've heard some of the lingo and so I have a better perspective on things, so when I walk into a room, I'm not just walking into a room, I'm inspecting when I walk in and I noticed, I didn't realize how my senses in that had changed until I started. I like to go looking at houses, and I remember I had gone to some open houses and I was looking around and I finally caught myself. I was like oh, okay, this light bulb came on and I started noticing. I didn't look at houses the same way I used to look at houses, I look at them differently now because I'm inspecting them and I pick up stuff that ordinarily I would never have picked up and I never will forget

one day, we had just dealt with our air conditioning system here and we had been having all kinds of issues. So when I was looking at this one house, and the contractor was there and he and his wife, and we were talking. I started asking him some questions about the air conditioning system and he was answering me, not even, you know, and then all of a sudden he's like, now how do you know about that? I was like I just have to work around, I didn't even and we just kept talking but I find that when you, when you are able to articulate in a certain manner people will treat you differently. You know, oh yeah and I'm not smacking gum and popping gum and looking ghetto for lack of a better way to put it, let's just break it down. Then people do tend to treat you with more respect, because I think you have caught them off guard and surprised them. They didn't expect you to either be able to articulate anything or to be, have a certain kind of mannerism about yourself. That tends to throw people off with my son I've noticed. You know, just by him opening the door for people and saying yes ma'am, no ma'am, yes sir, no sir. And they are like, and people look at me and they are like is that your son? I say yes it is. He is so polite, and they are like you don't see that anymore. And he's smiling and saying please and thank you and things like that and then they treat him differently. And I remember my mom used to tell us, again, Manners will take you places that money can't buy, and I passed that onto him and he's been able to do things, that most people can't do, haven't been afforded an opportunity to do because of the way he presents himself and carries himself.

I: Interesting.

End of Interview

INTERVIEW TEN

Participant: AA Female
Bank Branch Manager
Early 50s
Married to minister
Two daughters

I: Today is May 18th and I'm here with interview participant #10. You know the topic of my dissertation. Because I'm really interested in your unique experiences that you might have had, I'm gonna ask you a few background questions first of all just to get a sense of who I'm speaking with. Again anonymity will be retained, but just to give me a feeling of who I'm talking with.

R: Alright.

I: So, where did you grow up?

R: Oh, uh gosh, my dad was in the Military so I was born in Atlanta, Georgia but we were everywhere. I spent my early years to Mainz, Germany and then later years on Okinawa, so, I was about 16 when we came back to the states.

I: So most of your formative years were spent overseas.

R: Yep.

I: How was that? What was growing up over there like?

R: It was good, um military life was good, we missed family cause you know I did know what family was like. I did know grand parents and all that, so it was always wonderful when you could come home and visit, but um sometimes it was hard to form friendships. You know, cause they wouldn't be long lasting friendships. And probably one of the harder things was that we were always in the minority too. You know.

I: Growing up, how many people were in your immediate family, your parents?

R: Okay, I'm the oldest of six,

I: Wow, that's a lot of company.

R: Yeah I'm the oldest of six, yeah definitely. Four girls, two boys.

I: Okay, so you relocated to the States when you were 16?

R: Yeah dad retired in Atlanta so I went to High School in Atlanta so, and that was probably the first time that I dealt with, actually was able to be in an African-American setting because it was a black High School, that was the first time for me. Just a black school period.

I: How was that?

R: It was good. I mean it was a comfort level that I didn't really know that was something that could be missed because I never had it before, you know, so it was good to be able to have girlfriends and that look like you, you know. But it was good. Looking back those were probably the most fond memories, versus being in the military and having to travel around so much. You know 'cause you don't really have a sense of really belonging. You always think of home as where your grand parents are. Or getting back to the States, you know we talk a lot about that, about getting back to the States.

I: What time period was this when you were growing up in Atlanta?

R: We came back, let's see that was the 70's, so um I missed the whole 60's movement to give you an idea. Of segregation and you know, the riots in the US and all of that, I got that from just history books and hearing about it. Not to say that I haven't experienced you know, racism it's just on that level.

I: Was that something that you ever experienced overseas?

R: Yeah, I was young, when we were in Mainz, in Germany that was the first time that I heard the 'N' word. And it was a hurting thing 'cause I was probably in about 2nd grade and didn't even know. And I still recall that day.

I: Tell me about that.

R: Well it was just um, one of the young kids just, we weren't even talking to each other and I think we were just in a crowd in um, he was the class bully anyway and um you know he just called me a name and it was obviously just cause it was just an outburst cause we weren't friends or weren't even talking to each other. It was just, he was showing off for some other kids, you know, but not hearing that before, you knew enough to know it certainly wasn't a compliment, you know.

I: Did you go home and mention that experience to your family?

R: No I didn't. It was just something that kinda stayed with me, you know, over the years, but.

I: What was your reaction to it when you heard it?

R: oh it was more um, my parents raised us pretty much to um, we are a Christian family and we were taught to treat everybody equally, with respect and just making people feel like they have merit and worth, you know, and dignity and um so it was one of those things where, my feeling was more of hurt, you know and um but I think that was the intention and to make you feel, the person that does it, it makes them superior. Or think they are superior, so. But it takes a family that teaches you that you are worth something and it's not about man's validation, you know that makes you worth anything, it comes from within and I thank god for parents that gave me that, you know, but when you're young you don't have that. That takes years and years. And I've got kids that I've had to teach that to. You know, the world doesn't love you, you gotta love yourself. It's okay to love people, but don't depend on them for validation.

I: Let's move up to now then. Tell me about your life now, you said you have kids?

R: Oh yeah, I've got two. One just graduated from University of Tennessee in Chattanooga, she's 22. She's going to be going into Pharmacy school, Pharmacy and my youngest, she's 18, graduates from High School this Saturday, so I've got a busy May, busy, busy, May.

I: Okay. Do you recall any early instances either overseas or when you moved to Atlanta where you were treated differently because of your ethnicity in a retail environment either by yourself or with your parents or family?

R: Um, well definitely more than one, um

I: Any that stand out in your mind?

R: You wanna hear about different ones? Um, in the retail environment right?

I: Um hum.

R: Okay. Um I can remember being in a store with my mom and um, she was next in line. I was probably about 16 then, and um the lady in front waited on someone else ahead of mom and it was clear that it was her turn. I mean it was a white lady and um, we were in Department Store E and mom didn't say anything. She's very um, how would I say? Non confrontive, you know, that's just her upbringing; she's just not going to say anything. And um, I'd say that she is

confrontive in different things, but that would not be one. In public would not be one, you know. It makes me think of choose your battles and being in public would not be one where she would choose a battle. She's very private and poised and not gonna cause a scene because that's what she would consider causing a scene, you know so. Even though she knew it was wrong.

I: Did she mention that to you afterwards?

R: Yeah, oh yeah.

I: What did she say to you?

R: Well she wanted to know did I see, you know, that this other lady did not have to wait and the store clerk took her first before my mom and didn't even acknowledge that maybe there was some confusion about people just standing around and not knowing who was next. She just, it was real clear, mom said it was clear to her too that she just was passed over, so.

I: What did she say about how to handle situations like that?

R: Um she didn't say, but that's her nature. Obviously it bothered her to a certain extent, but she wasn't gonna say anything.

I: How did you feel at that time?

R: Well I knew she was wrong, you know you wanna stand up for your mom, but um I don't know it just makes you feel like maybe someone's wanting you to feel like that's the way it should be, you know. You should be second, you know and less than a person. You know, as if that's standard practice. And uh it's a feeling of, I don't know, not having rights. You feel the injustice because of the color of your skin.

I: Did she talk about that experience to anyone else to your knowledge?

R: Um probably not. Dad was gone so much, she may have talked to her mom about it cause that's who she confides in, but I didn't hear them talking about it. You know, because my grand mother came up. My grand mother was in a factory most of her life and she dealt with the racism a lot. My grand mother pioneered, she was one of those that would not take abuse. They were under production each day.

I: Where was she growing up, was this in Atlanta?

R: Um hum and they, and the women were pushed to produce more and more clothing and they complained that the numbers were too great, you know, to be on

a sewing machine that much and my grand mother told me that she was the one that went to the supervisor to, as representing them. You know, and um they made her like a supervisor underneath them. Back in that day, grand mother's 91 so, back at that time, that was a big thing. So um, she has seen the sweat and she's worked in nursing homes and she's done a lot. But most of her life she worked in a sewing factory. And that's hard work, well she called it a sweat shop, basically. In light of the people today, like my kids would not, they wouldn't even believe it.

I: Probably not.

R: You know, they don't have a clue.

I: That world is so far removed from them probably.

R: They don't have a clue, they don't have a clue.

I: Um, moving into the area of retail but not quite yet into negative experiences, tell me just about your attitude towards shopping in general?

R: Well you know, I shop where I feel that people are gonna treat me well. I tend to shop in the same places over and over.

I: What places are those?

R: Like, today I went to Wal-Mart but my normal grocery shopping is Target. I'll pay more, it's a cleaner store, they are more professional, but I went in Wal-Mart today because I needed to get an air mattress and I knew I could find it there and Target didn't always have everything. And Wal-Mart is the price leader and I just said, I'll go in there. I know it's there and I'll go ahead and get this. But um, I can go in Target and have convenience and the groceries are there and the people are nice. And it's a clean store and that's important to me.

I: How often would you say you shop in Target?

R: Probably two or three times per week. Um

I: How about Wal-Mart, how often do you shop there?

R: Um twice a month, maybe and then um, I like places like Pier 1, um Deermore, it's more of an upscale shop but, you know people treat you nice, but that doesn't always mean, because you're spending more doesn't always mean you're gonna get respect or treated right. I'll give you an example, there's a furniture place Specialty Store C and I always feel, my girlfriend shops there and she likes the owner, but I always felt like he always took me to the cheap side of the store,

you know, where the lower price stuff was or not as nice furs and I always felt like, hey I'm gonna look on my own, cause they have leathers in there too, but um and the reason I say that is, my husband bought me a mink coat years ago in that same store but it was a previous owner and see he didn't know that I owned a mink coat and I saw the expression on his face when he looked in his archives and saw I have one in storage. You know, it's nothing to brag about you know, I've been married a long time, my husband wanted to give me one and he did, but

I: What was the look on his face?

R: It was just, it was surprise and shock, you know as if you know, there was. Cause his comment was oh I see you have a coat, well I'm thinking would you say that to Mrs. Jones who's Anglo, you know who has a coat in storage, would you say that to her, oh I see you have a coat. I mean that just gave it away to me and he's surprised that I have a coat and it's in his store, actually you should know your customers, you know.

I: Did you respond to that?

R: I just said yeah, yeah I have a coat, I've had it for years here, you know and he said oh I didn't realize that. I don't like shopping there and the only reason it's there is because the coat's in storage, you know.

I: Do you shop there?

R: I wouldn't buy anything else in there.

I: Do you make a conscious effort not to shop there, and is it that just that particular one 'cause Specialty Store C have lots of locations across the country, would you shop at others?

R: Probably not, because of him. Just the experience you know, and I love the coat, it's a pretty coat but I'll say too that the, I'm not one that's gonna run out and buy a lot of coats. But even if it was just a leather, you know, I think it's just the bad taste, you kinda walk away with. I'm one, if I don't have a good feeling, I won't go back. You know, I just, I won't go back. You know.

I: What I've heard in lots of interviews and what I think I hear you saying is that if you have a negative experience you might not verbalize it, you might not say anything, you might just leave and choose not to spend your money either at that particular time or ever again. Do you think that the owner was aware of your reaction to what he said that time?

R: Probably not, no. It's so, how can I say, I just felt like, the way he said it, oh you have a coat, came out to him it's probably um just fine, but to me that was

like, well why wouldn't I have a coat, you know, so. I'm 50-years-old, you know when do I get one at 75. Anyway, but it was more about color. It was more about the color of my skin, I know it was.

I: That's really something I've seen lots of times, that we might think that something is going on but because we don't say anything I don't think that retailers are actually aware that, that experience has happened, so you sharing that experience with me helps me a lot, it gives me support for that.

R: Yeah, I was just wondering, you know, if I had said something, like oh well Bob were you surprised that I have a coat? What surprises you about that? I mean I'm just wondering where that conversation would have gone. I could just see him probably getting defensive, no you can have a coat, you know I could just see where it would go, but the point is he doesn't realize the damage is done, you know just making the comment. You know, because it would not have been the same if it would have been an Anglo woman in there.

I: Can you think of any other instances that stand out in your mind?

R: Um, buying a car, if you consider that retail.

I: Tell me about that.

R: I hate buying cars, I don't buy cars by myself, but it could be a situation with my husband too but, we bought a Lexus here in XXXXXXX and um actually it had to go back in the store for service and um it was, the people were standing up in the service bay, behind the counter and there's like three guys standing there, two were just talking to each other, one is waiting on someone, but the two that are talking to each other, they don't even acknowledge that I'm standing there waiting, you know, and it's a busy time and um instead of them acknowledging, they just walk off, but they had another lady that walks up after me, you know, she's coming in to get her car serviced and they are ready to go help her. And um, it just ran all over me.

I: So did they actually approach somebody that came in after you had come in?

R: I'm still standing there waiting, but when this other white lady comes in there after me, then they come out and help her. And see that, now I did say something to one of the guys there, cause I said I was next, you know, and he says oh really I didn't realize you were here. I'm sorry; yeah they knew that I was there. I even told my husband about it afterwards cause he knows the guy that's up there for um, that takes care of the services, just I think part of it's color and part of it's gender. Treating women like they are stupid because they're in a car place, you know. Well I'm not going to ask you about the engine, I just wanna

know if the car is ready to pick up. I don't care what's in the engine, you know, so don't worry about getting into any dialog, anyway it just bothers me that people think they can just ignore you though.

I: Tell me a little bit more about the conversation you had with the person who you said I was next. What was his reaction, his response, did they stop.

R: Well see he deals with, I think his name is Jason. Jason deals with my husband and um and he knew that we were customers there so um when these other two guys didn't come back out, Jason was finishing up and he said, oh Miss Collins, I'll take care of you. So he knew me,

I: Okay, he wasn't out there initially when the other two were,

R: He had a customer though, he had a customer. And so then it was like oh Jason you got her, you're gonna take care of her. So it was like an after thought but you know, you guys saw me standing here and um. I think Jason really realized that um, things were not kosher the way it all went down because it was very obvious, you know that I was next, but who wants to have to go around and say hey I'm next, I mean I'm a person. I'm standing here, so um but like I said I told my husband about that afterwards. I said you know that really bothered me. I said you know, we searched around anyway for a car and Lexus here has a monopoly anyway, we were going to go out to Atlanta and just buy a car and you know when stuff like that happens, I wish we had. But you know somebody's gotta service it, um anyway but Knoxville's come a long way, I will say that but we still got a long way to go, yeah.

I: That was my next question, they do have a monopoly so you don't have a choice when it comes to servicing your car if it needs servicing again you're gonna have to take it that, hypothetically, if another dealership were to open up here would that be reason enough, would that kind of experience be reason enough for you to move your business to another dealership?

R: Oh absolutely. Just because you know, my husband and I are both at that point where you know we work really hard, we can spend our money, we get to choose where we want to spend our money so if we got a choice then yeah we will choose.

I: In the situation that you had at Specialty Store C and the situation that you just talked about, you, in both situations you kinda did what your mother had done in the earlier situation at J C Penny, which is kind of not create a scene or show your emotions, what was the phrase that you used earlier? You said your mom didn't want to cause a scene in public, is that something that you are aware of, is that response something that you think about in those situation?

R: Now you make a good point about um, me reacting the same way as probably my mother would have, but actually my mother would not have said, "I'm sorry I was next". My mother would have stood there, and um and so I guess I have been selective about when I do say something and when I don't cause typically most times I just don't go back to that place of business.

I: Are there any situations where you've gone to the next level of management, either a higher manager there or written a letter to the owner?

R: No. The only time I've done that is when we had some bad service in a restaurant and that was not an Anglo person that was an African-American person.

I: Tell me about that.

R: It was in a restaurant in,

I: Do you recall what restaurant?

R: Yeah it was Restaurant B right down here in Farragat and typically we can get pretty good service down there. I was down there with my one of my daughters and it was very clear that my waitress or server was having a bad day because she came over and instead of handing us menus she kind of slung them on the table, you know and it's all in how you do it. You can either hand a menu or you can just do that, so anyway I didn't say anything then, but um until we went on and ordered and the food was taking quite a bit of time so um I asked her about it, you know if she would check on the order because I was on my lunch hour and she came back and um she said they are just very behind and she said you'll just have to wait, or something like that. And I was like okay, and um so I even made the comment to my daughter, I said she's having a really bad day, you know it has nothing to do with us, it's just she's just not happy to be here today. So, anyway when the food did come she didn't apologize that it took so long and um it was just not a good experience and Lauren had to ask for something, dressing or something and it took her a long time to bring it back, so I mean it just seemed like the whole experience was really bad. I've been in restaurants before and you know the cooks can take a long time or, the food just takes forever, but what people do, they compensate, they give you a free dessert or they'll say, you know I'm so sorry you had to wait so long, you know what can we do? Here's a pass or something for your next visit, we want you to come back, you know that just wasn't the case, so um when the girl brought the bill she slung it too and I'll like, oh my gosh. So, um my daughter calls it hateration she says mom I think there's some hateration going on here. So okay I don't know what it is, where not confrontive people, we just don't. You can go to some places and you can tell when people are upset and they want everybody to know that they are upset and they're getting loud and that kind of thing, but that is, Restaurant B is one of my

customers here in bank, so I called the manager back and I said, because I asked the young lady I said, what is your name? cause she didn't have a tag on, and um cause I wanted to know her name. I just told the manager, I said she's not representing your company well. It was a bad experience and here's why. And he said well, we've had complaints before. So I said, I think you should know, you know, people have a choice where they wanna go eat, you know, he was very appreciative so. And actually we still go there, so. She not there but we still go there.

I: So you felt that his response was appropriate.

R: Oh yeah, yeah his response was appropriate, it was good. You know and it made me feel good that he cared about my experience.

I: Have there been any other occasions dining out when you felt that you were treated negatively?

R: I can't say so, no. Not dining out. I think that the most, for me, the most obvious signs of racism, I'll put it this way, being treated differently is usually in the boutiques or the smaller shops where you can tell it's owner occupied and they get to choose who they are going to take care of.

I: Like your experience at the fur salon.

R: Like the fur salon. Yeah it's a chain but he knows who his customers are. He knows who's in there a lot and he 'ought know who has a coat or not, but he doesn't. For instance there's a jewelry store down here, I don't go in his jewelry store. He designs jewelry, that's what he. He advertises that he will design jewelry, but he also has jewelry that's for sale, just like any other jewelry store. Well I've gone in there before and it was very clear that, you know if you weren't in there to have him make something, then, you know you're like low on the totem pole. Because, when I first went in there, you know I went in there for a watch repair and he says, well we design jewelry, that's what we really do. I said I thought your sign said you repair watches. And he says yeah, but that's like on the side for our customers.

I: Okay.

R: So, I took that to mean well then I gotta have something made, you know to get a watch repaired. Anyway, it was not a good experience. I can't say if it was because of the color of my skin or just the fact he wants somebody that's gonna spend a lot of money.

I: So you haven't been back there.

R: Won't go back, you know,

I: Are there any other experiences you can recall.

R: No, I really can't, probably right after you leave I'll probably think of something, but.

I: Sometimes experiences that stand out in people's minds are when they are shopping for something special. Like for a honeymoon or for a wedding anniversary or when they are out shopping with their children and something significant happens. Do you recall ever being out with one or both of your girls and feeling like you were being treated negatively then?

R: This is something that happened when Erica was little and to this day I don't know if this was intentional or not, but it really bothered me. This was a high-end store and it's down there by Tweeters. They do stereos and all of that, you know, anyway it was a clothing store just for children and they sold coats, and I can't think of the name of it. Anyway, I went in there to get a coat for church for my daughter and Erica was probably about four or five and the lady tried it on her and she zipped that coat up so fast that it caught her chin, she zipped her chin up and um that bother me so bad because it was kinda like, when we went in there the first time, we got this look as if they had not seen African-Americans before, you know, or they don't go in there often apparently. And so um, but I was just looking around cause they had some pretty things and I did find a coat and um, but then when she put it on her. I mean to this day it bothered me cause I thought did you do that on purpose or was that an accident. And had I not gotten that look as if they had not seen African-Americans I wouldn't have thought that, you know, but I just, the lady apologized but you know, it was just in retrospect, they just really, really bothered me. My baby was screaming.

I: Did you end up purchasing that coat?

R: My baby was screaming. Yeah, I did end up purchasing that coat only because the lady was apologizing but it just, someone else came over and really kind of took over, took over the whole situation and kinda calmed it down and um the manager did. So.

I: Did you continue to shop at that store?

R: No, didn't go back. And it was one of those things where I liked the coat and we needed it at that time but never went back in there. You know, so your giving me examples and making me think, okay here's all the places you didn't go back to, probably just unconsciously, you know or consciously but I won't, I won't go back.

I: Something else that has come up from my interviews is the notion of feeling like you have to be dressed a certain way to go shopping in certain stores. Is that something that you've ever been conscious of?

R: Absolutely. Now, during the um, during the week I'm having to dress here in the bank usually wearing hose and everything else. And then on the weekends I like to wear jeans and um, you know, dress down. But, if I'm going to go shop at Talbot's, I'm gonna, I can wear jeans but I'll wear a nice top, you know or I'll carry a nice bag. You know, and I definitely won't go, I don't go anywhere without lipstick so that's not even an issue. But there are some places you'll go and you can say okay, I can be a little rougher than other places, but I know that there's certain stores, you won't get service if you just don't, you know, look like you're not there just to loiter, like you're really going to spend money.

I: You mentioned Talbot's specifically, are there other stores that you think about that when you go shopping?

R: Oh, any of those down there, like Humber and that area down there where Sequoyah Hills is and Western Plaza, all of them are like that. Every one of them. Fresh Markets is probably not like that now, it's more of a high-end grocery store but um, now they are more grocery store than they are specialty shop, so they are taking in the masses now, so I'm thinking they are more about getting the money. But Talbot's definitely, they have a customer base, they know them by name, you know, they know who comes in.

I: Are you known by name when you go in there?

R: I am at um, not in there cause I don't shop in there. My daughter used to work for them down in Chattanooga, but she says it's a world of difference between that one and this one here. Chattanooga is closer to Atlanta.

I: Chattanooga's a different

R: Yeah, it's just different, so um it's just, weird.

I: Have you had conversations with your daughters about these things?

R: Oh yeah, yeah. And they have, they have very good taste, both of them. Erica likes to shop at Banana Republic, you know, it's expensive and Ann Taylor, they like to go there.

I: She does have expensive taste.

R: Yeah, I'm like, I better get a real job, for real. But um yeah. But Erica's very outspoken, my oldest from college and if she in the least bit, thought someone was mistreating her, she would go to the top. She will cause a wave. She is not going to be like mom and just, and as my mother would say, not cause a scene. She would go to the manager, she would write a letter to corporate. That's just how she is and my youngest would probably do the same thing, she idolizes her sister and they are very quick to see where injustice is being done. Probably because they are kids who are not used to being treated badly. You know when I say, society treating them badly. They haven't dealt with just, obvious racism, it's been subtle. Erica felt like she's dealt with it in the classroom in college, but you know it's one of those things you have to deal with and she says the only thing that will overcome that it just make the grade. You just gotta make the grade, so. Anyway.

I: Let me see if there's anything else that I haven't touched on.

R: We went in the store the other night, Williams and Sonoma that is a large; you could spend a lot of money in that store, that's an expensive store. My husband was with me, we have a gift certificate and that's not a store that we usually would spend money anyway. But it was obvious that you had your locals there, cause this was in the Mall, cause they had a cooking class and then everybody was kinda talking to each other and they knew each other and we're just kinda walking around and browsing. No-one said can we help you. It was after we had made a selection and then we walked up to the counter, you know there was a young lady walking around but she didn't ask us if they could help us with anything. That was our first time being in there. Pots and pans are \$1,500.00. I mean it's expensive. No wonder I've never been in there. It's incredible, it was major sticker shock. I'm like, okay.

I: Oh my, it's a good thing I haven't been in there with my mouth they would have known not to come over to me.

R: It is, I mean they've got spices and pots and pans and table runners but it is all very expensive. I'm like, oh my gosh. Pretty store but that was it.

I: Would you shop there again,

R: Probably not.

I: Did you and your husband have a conversation about your experience there?

R: Yeah, it was more that, it was more like a club. They were having their club time. You know, they were enjoying, smelling the food chef was there cooking and the employees were into that whole scene so anybody that kinda of

walked in; they were just on the outside. But you know, you could tell there were some locals there, the people who are used to coming, they probably do this class every week, cause they're known for it. In fact, I mentioned it to my daughter when I got home; I said they have cooking classes there. She says oh yeah I know that, but they are very expensive. I was like yeah and they weren't paying attention to other folks coming in either.

I: Were any of the people there for the class people of color?

R: No.

I: Okay. Well I think you have given me a lot of information to work with. So I thank you.

End of interview.

INTERVIEW ELEVEN

Participant: AA Female
Late 20s
Married
Homemaker

I: To begin with, how frequently would you say you shop at a mall or a department store?

R: Two times a week.

I: Are there any other types of stores that you shop in? Um, an example might be an antique store, hardware store, a salvage or consignment shop ?

R: Um, I would say like a Walmart.

I: Walmart?

R: Yeah, Walmart, Target.

I: Any other types of stores, whether they're retail stores or more specialty stores? I know you've been doing lots of home repairs so are there any...?

R: I'd say like uh, ...accessories, um I don't know what you'd call that...

I: Specialty stores?

R: Specialty stores. Uh,huh.

I: Alright. In general, what would you say your attitude toward shopping is?

R: Oh, I love it! (Participant laughs)

I: You love it?

R: Love it!

I: What is it about shopping that makes you feel that way? What is it that you love about shopping?

R: Um... I like.. going to stores, seeing the new things, seeing how things are put together, the creativity, colors.....

I: Is there anything else about shopping that makes you say you love it?

R: Uh, just purchasing new items. (slight laugh).

I: Aside from the actual purchase of the item is there..., saying I love

shopping is real, really very... It's a very strong statement. So aside from the purchases you're making, the sale, what else is it about shopping that makes it an enjoyable experience for you?

R: Uh, I guess, huh. You got me on that one.... I just like... (participant laughs).

I: There's no right or wrong answer, just kinda.... (interviewer coughs)

R: Yeah, I know, I'm just trying to even, you know, I'm trying to feel that question out... I go to the store. Uh, I guess the clothes. I would say... fashion, being in style, um....

I: Are those, is that the shopping experience you enjoy most then? Shopping for clothes?

R: Um, yes. Shopping for clothes.... Clothes, shoes, purses.

I: Everything? (Laughs)

R: I guess I'd say, okay, I'd like shopping for clothes and accessories the best, versus shopping for um, home items.

I: What makes that a more um pleasurable experience for you?

R: Um, I guess because I can put them on. You know, I can, uh, I wear it.

I: So it's the interaction with it while you're shopping?

R: Uh, yes. Right.

I: What stores do you enjoy shopping at the most?

R: Um, let's say... Dillards. Banana Republic. Lerner's. Those three here would be the main ones.

I: Were there other stores, I know you moved recently, are there a couple of stores that stand out in your mind that aren't available here that you enjoyed shopping at?

R: Um, Nordstrom's. I guess that's the main department store I'd say, Nordstroms. (second sentence very softly spoken.)

I: In addition to it being an enjoyable shopping experience, how else would you describe your shopping experience at Dillard's? What else is it about Dillard's that you enjoy?

R: Um, the clothes that they have, they always stay current with uh, what's new, what's hot.

I: Okay. How about Banana Republic? What makes that an enjoyable shopping experience for you?

R: Their sales.

I: When you say ‘their sales’ is it that you feel you’re getting a bargain?

R: I’m getting a bargain. Yes. Because of, uh, the original price is, you know, kind of expensive and then you know, you can get the same thing two weeks later for a lot cheaper. And its quality, quality stuff.

I: Okay, what is it about Lerner’s that makes shopping there enjoyable?

R: Uh, I guess the fact that it’s a store only for women. Um. The clothes, you know, they have nice, cute clothes. They focus, their focus is for women. And also they try to stay, um, you know they have current clothes but the prices aren’t as pricey as is Dillard’s or Banana Republic but they still have stylish clothes.

I: Okay. For Nordstrom’s. Are there words other than ‘enjoyable’ that you would use describe your shopping experience at Nordstrom’s?

R: Um, other words besides enjoyable...um. Probably not. Enjoyable is... uh, I guess another thing I like about Nordstrom’s which doesn’t have anything to do with shopping is their café. They have a nice café. That you can go and have lunch....

I: I wasn’t aware of that. I don’t think I’ve ever visited a Nordstrom’s department store before.

R: And it’s an upscale store so its kind of, you know, it’s different than your average Dillard’s department stores. You know, upscale.

I: So one of the things that you mentioned um, about some of the other stores was the fact that you can get a bargain on still quality merchandise. Um, based on what you just said, I assume that you don’t stop at Nordstrom’s because you can get a, a bargain on the quality merchandise there. What then, in addition to it being upscale, what, what is it about that particular store that makes shopping there enjoyable?

R: Because of the upscale, I mean Nordstrom’s you really can’t get a sale or a bargain there, because, you know you have people who come there everyday and pay original price for it so, I usually will go to Nordstrom’s if I’m, if price is not a factor or if I’m looking for a certain designer outfit or a designer purse or designer shoes. Um, they would be likely to carry them. Well they do carry them. Um, versus uh a Dillard’s. You know. I can’t go to Dillard’s to get a Gucci purse, but I can go to Nordstrom’s to get a Gucci bag.

I: Are there other stores that you enjoy shopping at that you put in the same category as Nordstrom’s?

R: Um..... Nope.

I: Can you tell me about shopping experiences that you may have had

that you wouldn't describe as enjoyable, just in general?

R: Uh, yes, there was a store in _____, _____,
Southern City, State um, do I name the store?

I: Yes, you can.

R: It's called Department Store I. And Department Store I sold .. um, shoes, purses, lots of jewelry, costume jewelry, and um, earrings, hats, you know, things of that nature. So um, we were preparing to go out of town somewhere and I wanted a a necklace? I was looking, I went to the mall looking for a necklace and for a toe ring cause we were going to the beach, that's what it was. And I had passed by that store um previously, maybe two weeks before that, and saw they had these cute toe rings so I said, I just made it a point like , you know, whenever it was closer to the point that we were going out of town I'm going to stop by Department Store I to check it out. So, I go in Department Store I and I walk in. I walked directly to the counter that sold the um necklaces and looked around, picked one out. Um, it took me a while to pick it out, I guess probably uh, 20 minutes cause you know I'm pretty indecisive. And, uh and mind you, during this time, no one has come to say, hello, welcome to Department Store I, we have a sale over here... you know, how you doing? Do you need some help? You know, nobody had said that. So I guess it took me about 20, 25 minutes to pick out the necklace. I picked the necklace out and then I go to another counter and look at the toe rings and I look at them for, um, probably another 20 minutes, so this is 40 minutes, let's say 45 minutes that I've been in the store and no one has said anything. So I kind of recognized that after I picked out the necklace that, okay, nobody has said anything to me and um, during this time, several other customers, um, have walked into the store. Several other customers of the other persuasion. And, uh, immediately, you know, they were, um someone said something to them. Either, hello, hi, how you doing, you know, welcome to the store. Do you need any help? Um, and when I realized that that happened, I just kind of sat back and just observed and you know I just wanted to wait it out to see how long it was gonna take for somebody to come up to me. So I started, um I had picked out the necklace, I picked out the toe ring, so I, and that's all that I wanted, but I just walked (cough) walked around and looked at other things just to give these people a chance to come to say something to me. I looked at the shoes for awhile. Um, and there was a salesperson standing right next to me while I'm looking at the shoes and never said anything. I looked at the purses for awhile, nobody said anything. I guess I was in the store for, an, hmmm, a little over an hour. Nobody said anything. So at this point I made up my mind that I wasn't going to buy it because of this and there was a salesperson that walked um, from the office in the back of the store and she hadn't been out there that whole time. She walked out from the back and um, she immediately you know

just came out and said hey, how you doing, do you need any help? (Slight laugh). And so I told her, you know, I told her, well I'm very upset. Um, I had two things that I wanted to purchase but um, you know I've been here, I've been in this store for a little over an hour. Nobody has come to ask if I needed any help, if I needed some assistance, to tell me what sales were going on, to say hello, hi, anything, and while, since I have been there, there have been several other customers who have walked in the store and you know they have been helped and all of that, so, you know, you just, you missed out on a purchase and I am not going to purchase this and I will tell other people what happened. And I put the things down and I walked out.

I: And what was the salesperson, when you were telling um, your experience to the salesperson that came down, did she...what was her response?

R: She said, oh, I am so very sorry. You know we've been busy, her ex-, she said uh, we've been busy today, really, really busy, so I am sorry that, I'm so sorry that happened. And do you need any help right now, you know, I'll check you, I'll check you out right now. So she was apologetic..... But at that time, that didn't work for me.

I: When you um, first were at the counter, when you were looking at the necklaces, and you noticed that 20, 25 minutes had gone by and nobody had come over there to, to assist you, at that particular point what were you thinking? Had it occurred to you at that point that - that was unusual, or just, what -what was going through your mind at that particular point in the experience?

R: At that point I was like, okay well maybe nobody, um, you know maybe they're busy, you know, I see there was a lot of people in the store so I just kind of was like okay, you know, let me go over to the um, to look at the toe rings and I'm sure, you know, at that time, somebody will come. Yeah.

I: So when did your um, your perception that you were being treated differently begin to occur? Was it as you were looking at the toe rings? Or was it... when did that feeling happen?

R: It was after, after looking at the toe - while I, during looking at the toe rings. That's when it occurred to me because I, when I started observing the people coming in. You know, first of all, I was the only African-American in the store. And then when I started seeing the people come in, you know, they were all uh white-Americans, you know, just coming in and they were being helped, so I'm like, Okay, now I see that, you know, this is because I was black, you know, I assumed that.

I: Um, when you, there are, there are overt things or overt behaviors that

people can do or not do that can give people certain perceptions and in this case it sounds like the fact that no one was coming up to you was clearly an overt behavior that signaled to you that something might have been going on.

R: That's right. Exactly.

I: Were there any subtle behaviors that you noticed? Um, did anyone recognize your presence? Did any of the salespeople that were working there acknowledge your presence in any sort of way or in?

R: Um, no, actually they didn't. But I know...(excuse me) that when I was looking at the shoes I was right, you know, shoulder-to-shoulder with the salesperson. She never gave me any eye contact, she didn't look my way. She, you know, say anything. And I know (emphasis on know) that she knew that I was there cause we were just so close to each other.

I: Did you feel that she was making an obvious attempt to ignore your presence?

R: Yes.....(pause). She gave me no eye contact whatsoever. You know, if somebody is standing that close to you, you know....

I: How did you feel at that particular point in... in the store?

R: I was upset. I was pissed. Ticked off!

I: Did you... I know you'd say that you'd pretty much made up your mind that you were going to leave then. Before you decided to walk out the store, and you already, you were at the point where you were 'pissed off' as you said already, um, did you do anything to make sure that your feelings were being known at that particular point?

R: Um, when I said that I was pissed?

I: Um, hum. Do you think that anyone, the fact that you were pissed is something that anyone would have been able to ...

R: Recognize?

I: Yeah.

R: Um, no. Not at that point. I know they were able to recognize it when I talked with the salesperson, but at that, you know, when I'm like, okay... I'm pissed. No, they wouldn't have no. I didn't make any noises or throw anything down or anything. But when I talked to the salesperson and expressed myself, I got, you know, loud and let her know that I was angry and... I kind of tossed the items on the counter.

I: You said that the salesperson came out of the back, do you think that she was a, a manager, do you think she had a management capacity, or do you think she was just a floor-level salesperson?

R: I think she was just....well, I really can't say. I don't... No, I think s he was probably just a salesperson.

I: Did your complaining to her make you feel better?

R: Yep. At that moment it did.

I: Um, so you were pissed off up until that point. After you vocalized your opinions to her, were you less pissed off?

R: Um, a little (Laugh)... not a lot. I mean it just kind of, it was a temporary thing. It just kind of released it. When I was leaving out of the store, I was still upset, but I wasn't ...pissed. So, I guess, you know, talking to her it did help a little bit.

I: You said that you were still um, that you made a point of going home and telling other people about your experience.

R: Uh, huh.

I: Um, did that, how did telling other people about it make you feel?

R: Good.

I: It made you feel good. Did you... did reliving the experience with other people get you worked up again? Or did you feel like you were....?

R: Um, kind of over it?

I: Yeah.

R: Um, yeah, I felt kind of over it after I uh, you know, when I would talk to people about it, it wasn't like it was traumatic and I was reliving it, I was just telling them, I went to Department Store I and this is what happened. Girl,

do not go, you know, cause And, but then it did.... I would kind of relive it when I would go back to that mall and walk past there, you know like, damn, you know... Cause they had some cute things in that store! (Laughs) And I, you know, even before, that wasn't my first time shopping at that store. You know, I had been there, you know, several (emphasized), several times had been there. So that wasn't, you know, my first time.

I: So in, in your previous experiences there at the store, had anything happened that would ...have made you anticipate being treated differently or had your other experiences just been normal?

R: The other experiences had been normal.

I: In talking about your experiences with your friends, had any of them uh, vocalized similar experiences at that same store?

R: Um, no. Most of them had never been gone in the store, so..... Well, no, there was just a couple of them had gone in there, but the other ones had never experienced that.

I: (Sound of paper turning). It sounds like you were by yourself during that encounter, am I correct in assuming that?

R: Yes, I was by myself.

I: During your um, prior visits to the store, were you usually there by yourself or were you with others?

R: Um, usually with others... my husband.

I: And about how many times had you been to the store before? Do you

recall looking back? Numerous?

R: Uh, ... numerous, um, hum. Um, because I guess I can say, you know, based on what I told you, I go the mall maybe two or three times a week. Um, every time I went to the mall I would usually stop by that store.

I: Okay, are there any other occasions, uh, other stores where you felt you were being treated differently because of your ethnicity?

R: Um,yes. I'm trying to think of some.... (delay). Um, I guess this, I wasn't... I was a little younger and I was with my mom. She was really doing the shopping. I was kind of looking in another department at the things, and ... I guess it really doesn't have anything to do with me purchasing something?

I: No, it doesn't have to be about purchases....

R: Okay, but at the time, I had on a long leather coat and um walked in the store with my mom. She was looking at some, some clothes and I wanted to go to the girl's section. So, she told me okay, go ahead, go to the girl's section. I went to the girl's section and a security guard came up and asked me if I was by myself. I said no, my mom's over there, I'm just waiting for her, and he followed me around. Yep. He followed me around. And I made it a point to go to where my mom was and you know, I kind of whispered, like this man this, you know, this security is following me around. She said, really? Yeah. And um, so she said well walk around some more and see... So I walked around some more and he, you know, followed me, for a good ten minutes and then I went back to where my mother was. She, uh, asked the security guard, why are you following my daughter? He said, uh, I'm not, you know, I'm just doing my job, we just go around and you know make sure everything is okay in all of the different departments, I'm not following her, she said. And I told him, yes you were, you've been following right behind me. He just denied it and said no he wasn't.

I: You said that uh, when you went to your mom and left the second time and he was still following you that that was about ten minutes. Um, from the start of him following you until the end, how long to you think that encounter was? I know it's hard looking back...

R: Um.... I would say, from the total time that he followed me? Probably about 20 minutes.

I: You said that you were younger, do you recall how old you were?

R: I was probably, say, ten, eleven? This was at Department Store C in Kansas City.

I: Um, okay, I know it's hard to recall, this was when you were ten or eleven and I know you're at least 15, 16 years older than that right now, do you, if that was one of your initial experiences with being treated

differently, do you recall what you were feeling during that encounter?

R: Um, feeling a little confused, a little hurt, because I'm like I haven't done anything, why is this man following me? Um, there was a question of like, is he going to try to do something to me? Or, does he think that I've taken something, you know, it was just kind of a mix-up, but I was, you know, kind of like upset.

I: I know in retrospect, it's easy to see that you were probably being treated differently because of your ethnicity, but at the time that it was going on, as the security guard was following you around the store and you were ten or eleven years old, did you think then that the fact that he was following you around had anything to do with your ethnicity?

R: Um, yes. Yes. Um, hum.

I: What was it that made you think that? What was it about the experience that made you think that it was because of your color, your ethnicity?

R: Well, I don't know if it was the experience but just knowing...um, how life is. You know my parents were very frank with me in you know, about prejudices, and you know, sometimes you go into a store, and you're black, they will follow you just, you know, they think you've taken something and uh, especially if it's an upscale store. Um, the location of this Department Store D was on the plaza which is a luxury shopping area in Kansas City, so, uh, you know...I just kind of knew.

I: You said that your mother asked the security guard why he was following you around, and he said he was doing his job. Did she uh, carry her complaint further? Did she complain to any of the management at the store or...?

R: No, she didn't.

I: How did you feel when your mother was, in essence, letting the security guard know that she didn't appreciate his treatment?

R: It made me feel pretty good. (Laugh)

I: Do you know um if your mother or you told anyone else about the experience?

R: Um, yes. I know my mom told my father when we got home. Um, I'm sure she's told some of her friends as well.

I: How about you, did you spoke about it to anyone else?

R: Um, I told a couple of my cousins what happened. (Pause). Yes, I did, because it had happened to them, um, maybe not too ... uh, before that pretty recently. Before the incident happened with me it happened with them as well.

I: At the same store?

R: At the same....Not at the same location, it was at Department Store D but it was at a different mall and uh, they were, it was three guys.

I: Another Department Store D there in Kansas City?

R: Um, hum, in Kansas City yeah, but at a different mall.

I: Was that Department Store D one that you and your mom visited frequently?

R: Yes.

I: I'm going to go back up to your encounter at that store that you were telling me about a few minutes ago, um...

R: Department Store I?

I: Yes, Department Store I. You said that you had visited there on numerous occasions, usually with your husband, did you notice other black customers at the other times that you visited the store?

R: Um, no. We were...everytime I've gone in there, I was, we were, either him and I were the only blacks or I was the only black who was there.

I: How about any black sales uh staff working there?

R: Nope, never seen any. (Delay) And they do have, they have two locations in XXXXXXXXXX. Uh, even.. I've gone to the other location as well. There were never any other black customers or salespersons.

I: Can you recall any other times when you were shopping and felt that you treated differently because of your ethnicity?

R: Um, shopping, let me think about it, um..

I: And when I say shopping, I'm focusing on a retail setting here, but it can be... retail can mean anything from Walmart to the upscale Nordstrom's that you were talking about, so it's a wide spectrum.

R: Um, let me think, um, no. I can't think of any other ones.

I: Do you feel that there was anything that you could have done in either of those situations um to prevent, to prevent what happened from occurring?

R: Um, no. (Delay) Well, not unless I can say that I uh, after realizing that they (cough) weren't going to come up to me to ask for help, I could have gone to them and said I needed help. You know what I mean? But that's the only thing I can think of but I shouldn't have to do that cause you know, cause I'm the customer, so....

I: Do you feel that those experiences have altered your shopping behavior in general?

R: Um, what do you mean?

I: Um, do you feel that because you've had those experiences, that they altered your shopping behavior, is there anything that you do differently when you're shopping because of those experiences that you've had? As opposed to if you had never felt that you were perceived differently because of your ethnicity.

R: Um, yeah, I guess they have altered them because if I don't um. I'm always looking, or counting how long it takes for a salesperson to um acknowledge me. (Delay) And also very aware of security, uh, you know, if they're following or ... (Delay). Even on the intercom system. I'm to the point where if I hear, if I'm going in a store and I hear, they say security aisle three, I'm looking to see if I'm on aisle three.

I: Do you feel, you've given very good specific examples of how this altered your shopping behavior, but do you think those um experiences altered you as a person?

R: Um.... Altered me as a person? Well, just I'm a little sensitive I guess, I'm just more aware, you know, place close attention to the secure..you know the intercoms or if security is watching me, or you know.... Almost to the point of ...um, I guess more aware? Sensitive?

I: Up to this point we've been discussing um differential treatment in retail settings, now we're going to kinda switch to a different heading, talk about dining experiences, um experiences you may have had felt differently while you were dining out. And again, when I use the term dining out here, it can mean from the nicest, sit-down restaurant or it can mean going to McDonald's and feeling that you were treated differently by the salesperson behind McDonald's, so, with that in mind, can you think of any times you felt that you were treated differently while you were dining out?

R: Yeah, there's one in particular that sticks out. Um, I was younger as well, maybe eleven, twelve. (cough) There was about seven of us and we were going to Fast Food Restaurant C in Kansas City. We ordered our food. Um, yeah, ordered our food and (excuse me) you pay for your food before you even get it. You order your food and then you pay. So um, my mom paid for the food and uh, they gave her a receipt. She came, sit down. Gave you a receipt you know cause we were waiting on the food to come. And she looks at the receipt and notices on the receipt there was um handwritten seven b-l-a-c-k (spelled out), with a circle around it..., seven black. (Slight laugh) So. My mom, you know, sitting down, she's like, what is this? So you know, we were, the adults who were there were looking like, what?!, you know, and I'm looking like, seven black, why did they put, oh, its seven of us, so... My mom goes up to the counter and just goes off. What is this? Why do you? Why is this written on here? Why do you have seven black on here? Do you, you know, what is this all about? Um, the people were like, well---, um... The, evidently, the cashier, the person who wrote it, kind of went to the back when she saw my mom come up there, she ran off to the back. And so, you know, my mom's like, well why is she running off, and... She's like, well I don't know. The manager came out because my mother was very loud and said, you know, I'm sorry I don't know why she wrote that down, sometimes

we just write um things like that down to identify what people so we know who to bring the food out to and so my mother goes up to another table, white people, and uh, asks to see their receipt and nothing is on their receipt, so she's like, no, you're lying, -dah, dah, dah, (etc.)- we don't want the food. They gave, the manager did give my mom the money back but uh, it was just a big ordeal and we left (laughs).

I: The manager gave your mom the money back, did your mom feel that that was a sufficient resolution to...for the conflict, to the experience she'd just had?

R: No. She didn't. I mean she took the money, but um, and um, she didn't pursue it or go to anybody higher you know, it was just, that was you know,

I: As a child that's sitting there that's seeing that, this going on, what were you feeling at the time?

R: Um, like, it's happening again. You know. Because, like the incident with, the Department Store D incident with me and the coat, you know, I experienced that. I knew that my cousins had gone through being followed in a store before. Um, just been aware of it from family members or my father talking about it or, you know, that can you get treated differently because you're black, so I'm like here we go again (claps hands), wow.

I: How um sincere did you feel that the manager was in the explanation that he gave your mother and his attempt overall to squash the issue?

R: Oh, no, he wasn't sincere. I mean, I think he was kind of shocked because, you know,Um, he was kind of shocked uh, because of my mom's response to it. I mean, you know, I think he was kind of caught off guard but he wasn't um, you know.... I mean he apologized, but, he wasn't very apologetic, I mean it wasn't, it wasn't sincere I guess. I just said he was sorry because he had to.

I: Was that a Fast Food Restaurant C that you all frequented a lot?

R: Um, yeah, it was. Yeah.

I: And prior to that, had you had any experiences there that you felt were unusual?

R: No, we hadn't. And we had eaten there you know in the restaurant several times and you know, never um, there was never on any of our other receipts.

I: Was it, since you had visited there several times before, uh was it your mother's opinion that that was more a reflection of that particular salesperson, or the store policy in general?

R: I think it was the salesperson, the cashier. Because it had never happened, you know, never happened before and the fact that the cashier when my mom came up to the counter, and was like what is this, the fact

that she went to the back you know, she did it. (Laughs).

I: Have there been any other occasions when you've been dining out and felt that you were treated differently because of your ethnicity?

R: No, not that I can recall.

I: (Pages turning). Do you feel that um, you've given me a couple of examples of being treated differently while you were out shopping, and an example of being treated differently while you were out eating, out dining. Which do you perceive is um more likely to happen? Based on your experiences?

R: Which one do I feel is..?

I: Is more likely to happen, the differential treatment in which setting?

R: Um, um probably shopping. Yeah.

I: What makes you say that?

R: Because maybe, I don't know, I'm at the mall pretty often. Um, yeah, I guess.

I: How often do you dine out now, currently?

R: Maybe, once a week?

I: Alright, um, I just have a couple of other questions in general that I want to ask you. If were to ask you to describe yourself, what are the first words that come to your mind, when you think of who you are?

R: Who am I? (softly spoken). Caring. Just one word?

I: As many as you can think of, the first ones that come to your mind...

R: Child of God. Black woman. (Delay). Giver.

I: Anything else?

R: Um, um, no.

I: Since different words can mean different things to different people, I want you to tell me what each of these words means to you. What does caring mean to you?

R: Um, caring is..... trying to think of words to describe it... having um, trying to think here... caring is.. respecting...other people's feelings, having compassion for their feelings, trying to understand their feelings or what they're going through, or their situation, wanting to help.

I: Okay. What does being a child of God mean to you?

R: Um, being a Christian, believing in God.

I: What does being a black woman mean to you?

R: Being strong. (Delay) Um, able to do whatever needs to be done by any means necessary.

I: Um, what does being a giver mean to you?

R: It means that I try to ... make oneself a distribution center.

I: Being a distribution center? What does being a distribution center mean to you?

R: Um, that means just helping people, um giving time, giving money, giving energy, uh to whoever in need. Giving without wanting um or expecting something in return.

I: Do you feel that your race limits you in any way from attaining any goals you may have, whether those goals are personal goals or career goals?

R: That my race limits me? Um, um. No.

I: What experiences have you had that give you that, that help you come to that conclusion? Why do you say that?

R: Um, Because I guess all of the goals or things that I wanted to accomplish at this point in my life I've been able to do that. Pretty much. Whether it be school, job, whatever.

I: In general, how do you feel about current race relations in the United States?

R: Um, to be honest, I really don't - get involved or listen... Um, you know, I don't, I don't know. (Laughs).

I: This doesn't have to be your um informed view based on anything that's going on in the world, or media or politics. Basically it's just your opinion that I'm interested in.

R: Um, I guess there's just some, some issues that still, I mean, there's still a lot of work that needs to be done, or education. Um, ...

I: Education of whom?

R: I would say both parties, the blacks and the whites. There still seems \ to be a lot that they don't know about us and that we don't know about them. We do one way, you know, ... the things we do, they don't know or understand why and vice versa. Um, I know when I was working, I became close friends with a white person and uh, sometimes we'd just sit and talk. Um, she would ask me questions, I would ask her questions. Um, there's just a lot that they were like, wow, I didn't know that, you know, I mean it could be anything from like, we don't wash our hair everyday, and they're like, you don't wash your hair everyday – what is that all about? Or just little things like that.

I: So you think that um, the fact that you said that there's a lot of education that needs to be done, you think more education and more communication from what you've just said, would lead to better race relations in this country?

R: Um, it could.

I: What is it um that makes you limit, that makes you qualify that by it could instead of definitively?

R: I guess cause maybe some people need more, I don't, I don't know. I

just, I think we'll always have issues with that. Regardless of how much education or communication.... You know, hopefully the education and communication will help, but I don't know if it will solve all the problems. I just think that they will always be an issue.

I: Thank you very much for your input today. And thanks for being so open and frank with me.

End of Interview.

INTERVIEW TWELVE

Participant: AA Female
Early 20s
Single
Full-time student; part-time retail manager

I: Okay, we're going to start off, like I said, with questions that are kind of general in nature, and the first one is how frequently do you go shopping in department stores or mall stores?

R: Um, probably at least two to three times a week.

I: And when you go shopping, do you generally have a purpose in mind?

R: I just go when I get bored and don't have anything else to do. I rarely go shopping, like looking for a particular thing, I just go...

I: Are there any other types of stores that you go to besides the mall or department store, an example might be like an antique store or consignment kind of shop?

R: No, I don't really go to any of those types of stores.

I: In general, how would you say you feel about shopping?

R: Its fun, it's like a way to relax for me.

I: And what is about shopping that makes it fun for you?

R: I don't know... I guess it's like it's kind of powerful cause you can get what you want.

I: It's powerful?

R: Yeah, I guess so.

I: And what else about shopping makes it fun?

R: That's all I can think of.

I: Typically, when you go shopping are you by yourself or with others?

R: Most of the time I'm by myself, sometimes I with others. I like to go by myself cause I can stay as long as I want to.

I: You also used the word relaxing in addition to fun. What is it about shopping makes it relaxing?

R: I don't know, you don't, I don't really worry about anything when I

shop. I just shop. Kind of just forget about everything else.

I: Can you tell me um about a time when you were shopping and that seemed to be particularly true, when you felt that you were just escaping from everything else?

R: Uh, I used to go to Pigeon Forge all the time. I would leave like early in the morning and go and just stay all day and just go from shop to shop to shop to shop... It got bad one time I'd go like two or three times out the week. And most of the stuff I buy, I don't even wear. Like I have stuff in my closet with tags on it that I don't wear. I'm one of those people, if it's on sale, I try to buy it because it's on sale then I never wear it.

I: I definitely understand that. What are some of your favorite stores to shop at?

R: I like to shop at Dillards. Old Navy. Proffitt's.

I: Any other stores?

R: Then just the outlet malls in Pigeon Forge.

I: What is it about Dillards that you enjoy?

R: Dillards always has good sales. That's why I like going there.

I: Anything else about Dillard's come to mind?

R: No, not really.

I: What is it about Old Navy?

R: Old Navy is like, it's just like a fun atmosphere inside the store. Sometimes they have sales, but not usually.

I: What is it about the atmosphere that makes it fun?

R: Its kind of upbeat, like the way the inside of the store looks, and then the employees that work in the store, they're all typically young people.

I: Is there anything else about Old Navy that stands out to you?

R: Um, un-un.

I: Okay, what about Proffitt's? What is it about Proffitt's that makes it one of your favorite stores?

R: Proffitt's is kind of like Dillard's. They always have good sales too. And I like Proffitt's and Dillard's just because you can get a lot of different kind of things in the same store. Whereas in Old Navy, everything is from Old Navy.

I: Is there anything, the first thing that came to your mind about Old Navy

was there atmosphere as opposed to their selection. Is there anything about the atmosphere of Dillard's or Proffitt's that you enjoy or that stands out in your mind?

R: Um, no. Not really.

I: What is it about the Pigeon Forge outlet store that would make you go there two or three times a week a couple of months ago?

R: They always – at least one store up there is going to have something on sale. And it's always a good sale. So I just go from store to store and... I usually can't finish that's why I keep going back. Or I'll buy something and not try it on and have to take it back.

I: You've used the words a 'good sale' a couple of times now. What does a good sale mean to you?

R: A sale to me is 50 to 75 % off. That's a good sale.

I: Can you tell me about a shopping experience for you that wasn't fun?

R: Yeah, anytime that I go shopping with my grandmother it's never fun. (Laughing). She likes to shop more than me and she will stay in the store ALL day looking at the SAME thing. Put it back, picking it up. Putting it back, picking it up. And then when she finally buys it, we'll just go back the next day and take it back, so.... It's never fun shopping with her.

I: (Laughing) So in addition to the longevity, the amount of time that she spends in the store, is that the primary reason that you don't enjoy shopping with her?

R: Yeah, it's like you know after so long whether or not you're going to buy it so.... Why you gonna keep picking it up, and putting it down and picking it up.

I: Are there any other times that you've been shopping in general that you can say that you didn't enjoy it?

R: Yeah, I hate it when I go in a store and the salesclerk act like you don't exist, like you just walk in the store and nobody says anything. And, somebody else walk in the store and they're trying to help them... with uh, different things. And it typically happens in like higher end stores. Like I went in a um ... this store today on... its down Broadway, I can't even think of the name of it, it's like a..... I was going to Big Lot's but it was next door to Big Lot's and they had a sale sign out so I thought I'd go in and see what they had on sale. But the lady that was in there, uh, she just staid on the phone the whole time... I was in the store. So, I walked in, walked around, and walked out and she never said a word.

I: Were there any other customers in the store when you were there?

R: Un, un. It was just me.

I: Was there, what did you attribute her treatment to?

R: I don't think she really took me seriously as a customer just because of my age. Cuz it was kind of like a floral boutique for people like to decorate their homes and things like that and it was expensive stuff. So I think she just kind of basically looked at me more or less as a browser than a shopper.

I: You said she never made any uh, overt attempts to greet you or anything, but there are other, more subtle behaviors that people can exhibit sometimes, like a smile or anything, did she exhibit any types of behaviors to you at all?

R: No! She was on the phone at her desk and I walked past her and she just looks up at me and looks off and kept on doing what she was doing. She didn't even make an attempt to get off the phone, you know most people try to get off the phone. She just looked like, whatever.

I: Are there any other times that uh, can you recall any other experiences that you've had where you felt that you were treated differently because of your ethnicity? While you were shopping?

R: Yeah, there's been other instances. I can't remember exactly like which stores and when, but just certain times when you feel like somebody's watching you and then when you look at them they're looking like ... strange. Or they're trying to look off like you haven't seen them staring at you the whole time you was there. But some people actually follow you around the store, can I help you? Can I help you?

I: Have you actually had somebody follow you around the store?

R: Um, hum.

I: Can you recall any time that that happened?

R: I can't remember like the particular time, I just remember, like I know it's happened before.

I: Typically at those times had, were you by yourself or were you with someone else.

R: With other people.

I: Do you recall who you were with during some of those experiences?

R: Um, some of my friends. We're all relatively the same age.

I: And what do you think is the primary reason they were treating you and your friends differently?

R: Like I said some stores, like high end stores, I think they really just don't think that we could afford their products?

I: Based on your age?

R: Both, like age and ethnicity. And then some stores... I don't know, I guess they're just cautious.

I: I want to go back to your experience that you had at that store today, how long would you say you were in that store during that ..?

R: At least 20 minutes.

I: And when you first walked in the store, what was your... what were you thinking, what...?

R: When I first walked in I was looking around to seeking if anyone was actually working in the store, cuz I had to walk through almost the whole store just to find anybody cuz she was toward the middle of the store, so she had a lot of flower arrangements and things so I couldn't see her. But you know most stores when you walk in, somebody greets you or something, but I never heard anything. And the first, when I first went in, I was just walking around just looking to see what they had in there. And then, you know, I found some things that I liked and I just started picking them up, looking at them, trying to see how much they were or whatever... And then, um, I walked on to the back of the store. That's when I past her. She just kind of looked at me and kept talking on the phone.

I: And when you first saw her and she looked up, she noticed you and um looked up from the telephone, what went through your mind then?

R: I was wondering if she was gonna get off the phone.

I: And when it was clear that she was not going to get off the phone?

R: Well, I probably just left after that, I was just like, okay, whatever...

I: What made you leave?

R: Well she really... I don't know, I just didn't want to be in the store anymore. It's like.... I don't know, its just... It was like a turn off to me.

I: What was like a turn off for you?

R: Just the level of customer service. I mean I didn't expect her to get off the phone and run right over. She could have smiled or you know, said I'll be right with you in a minute or something. She just looked at me like, okay, somebody walking through my store and....

I: What were you feeling? There's lots of different emotions that someone could have been going through at a time like that. Were you confused, were you upset....?

R: Um. I wasn't necessarily confused. I was slightly bothered, but I

wasn't necessarily upset either. But I one I saw that she wasn't really trying to make any attempt to ... help me, I just left.

I: Before you left, you said that you had gone around and picked up a couple of things and noticed the price, were you planning on purchasing anything?

R: I saw some things that I might want to purchase. But I wasn't sure if they had anymore because they didn't have 'em in boxes or anything and I didn't want to take it out... it was like figurines and stuff. I didn't want to take it out the store that way. You know most people when you pick up stuff in the store they'll ask you, can I help you with that or... She never did say anything.

I: You said that there've also been other experiences where you felt that you were maybe being followed around or stared at or something like that, in any of those cases um... what was, what was your response?

R: It depends on who I was with. Some of my friends are kind of crazy, so they might have said something to the effect that, you know, we weren't trying to steal anything, so basically just leave us alone. But most of the time, I just leave.

I: How did you feel about the way that it was resolved, or in some cases, the lack of resolution?

R: I didn't really... I didn't really feel anything.

I: Did you wish that you had complained or tried to bring your grievance to a higher level of management in any of those cases?

R: With that store today, I think she was probably the owner, it was kind of like a privately owned store. But, yeah, I probably could have said something. But most people that are like that typically aren't going to change anyway, so I just see it as a waste of time.

I: So you, do, it sounds like you're attributing the behavior to that person as opposed to being a store level, something that's going on on a store level that the managers might be aware of? Is that correct?

R: Right. Well, yeah. I guess it depends on the store.

I: Think of any of the stores, I know you can't really recall specific instances, but typically have your experiences all been at smaller stores that might be privately owned, or have you had those experiences at larger department stores as well?

R: That was my first time today at a smaller shop actually having that kind of experience because usually at those size stores people are really eager to help you because they need your business and it's not, you know, a whole lot of people in the store a lot of the times. But, um, its usually at

the bigger stores, like department stores, or like I said the higher end stores, that people typically follow you around, or maybe not even pay you any attention just dependent upon, you know, where you're at. But I've, you know, found that at different types of stores. Like, uh, department stores and then I remember um one time me and my best friend we were going, she was looking for a wedding dress at this bridal shop and things like that...

I: When you were shopping for a wedding dress with your friend, what happened then?

R: Well it was just, um, the eagerness to help you. They weren't necessarily rude to us, but they weren't necessarily giving us the same type of treatment they were giving some of the other, you know, people. They might have, you know, gave us a couple of dresses where other people they might have had twelve.

I: So you had an opportunity to uh, observe how they were interacting with other customers as well as how they were interacting with you?

R: Uh, huh.

I: In this particular uh store that you visited today, you didn't have an opportunity to see, you were the only person in the store when you went in and you were the only person other than her when you left, so you didn't have the opportunity to see her um interact with any other customers at all, be they white, black, green, purple or whatever, so, um, what makes you think in this particular case that she was treating you differently because of your ethnicity or age?

R: Yeah, I think it had a lot to do with my appearance in the store cuz I was looking kind of janky. So, she probably was looking at me like okay. It's somebody in here, she's just going to look and she's just going to leave. And then, like I said, it was a store... Like if you had a home you'd probably go there and shop. My mom would probably go there and shop. Most college students aren't typically looking for that kind of stuff right now.

I: So it sounds like you feel, you think that if you had been dressed differently today, you'd probably have gotten a different reaction from her.

R: Um, hum. Probably so.

I: Is that something that ever come your mind when you go out shopping on a general basis, how you dress and how you'll be uh treated by the sales people?

R: Un uh. Not really because I feel like you know it shouldn't matter how you go in the store you should still get the same level of service as everybody else. I think its just kind of like a self-conscious thing because I've even done it myself before, you know as a store manager, just, cause

you just watch people and just see... Especially if you've had a bad experience with somebody else. I don't necessarily think that you know people feel that everybody is like that, but it's just a self-conscious thing.

I: That's an interesting perspective. From your viewpoint as a store manager, you said you um, notice different behaviors in people. What stands out... what, when a customer comes in, what about that customer, a particular customer, would make you notice that customer more, sort of pay more attention to that customer as opposed to other customers in the store?

R: Well some of the customers that come in, some of them, you can just look at them and tell they have, you know, no place to stay, they really look just hard up and I'm, I'm just one of those people, I don't like to follow people around the store because I don't like to be followed, and I try to give everybody the benefit of the doubt. But yet and still, you know, I'm always going to be watching in some way or another. I'm not going to let you know that I'm watching but I'm always going to be watching because, um like you never know that person like I said just might have been dressed down like I was today. So, um, it's typically customers that come in that just really look, some of 'em actually are like dirty, or filthy or whatever, but then some of 'em like have worked you know all day, so it's just kind of a - a judgment thing, because sometimes we have construction workers and mechanics coming in the store, and you might think, you know, that they don't have any money, but when they go to pay or their merchandise, they have, you know, a wad full of cash, so.

I: So you use, um, basically, how they're dressed to determine whether or not it's going to be somebody that might, even though a moment ago you said you yourself when you go shopping don't necessarily think of how you're dressed in terms of how you expect people to treat you. Is that correct?

R: Um, hum. Yes. That and too, uh, kind of people's demeanor like the way that act when they come in the store. Like some people just act sneaky, like they're uh, watching their backs, or they're looking around you know to see who's looking and after, I guess, after you've worked in a store for so long you can kind of pick who's going to try something and who's not just because most of the people, I mean you've seen so many different tricks, cause people, some people come in and they'll get a basket you know like they're going to shop and they'll feel the basket up and the whole time they're shopping they're stealing but they still have a basket full of stuff and will actually pay for the basket of stuff and then walk on out with the other merchandise. So its just kind of watching you know the way they act and you know some people look nervous and then some people you never know just because of how calm they are.

I: On your shopping trip with your friend for the wedding dress uh did

either of you voice your concerns to either the salesclerk or the management in that particular case about being treated differently?

R: No, I don't think we did.

I: Do you feel, you mentioned a couple of instances of just a general feeling of being watched while you were out shopping, do you think that those experiences have made you alter your shopping behavior in any way?

R: Sometimes. Like just now, after working in the store and being a store manager and knowing, knowing how I watch people, I'm a little bit more conscious now when I go in stores cause when I used to go in Walmart if I wanted to see what something looked like I would open the package, you know, look at it, put it back, and feel it up. You know, now after watching people do that, I won't, I won't do it in the store, cause I don't want anybody thinking that I'm trying to steal. Or if I go in the store and if I have a bag, I'll try to leave it, you know, at the front counter or something, just because I don't want anybody thinking when I go in the dressing room that I'm stuffing my bag.

I: A lot of the um, details that you've given me, or descriptions that you've given me have been subtle behaviors rather than overt behaviors where somebody just obviously makes it known that they're treating you differently, have you ever experienced just over treatment, differential treatment, in a store?

R: I haven't really experienced just, you know, overt treatment. Most of it's been kind of subtle to the point to where you just kind of have to figure it out for yourself. Nobody's ever just came out and said you know and said well, you know I'm really not helping you, you need to go somewhere else, cause I'd probably voice my opinion in that case. But nobody's ever really done that.

I: Have you ever talked about this subject with, among your friends, some of whom you've actually been out shopping with when this has happened?

R: Yeah, we'll talk about it in the store while we're there or whatever. Some of my friends or kind of loud, so like I said they'll say you know whatever they want to say.

I: That's during the course of the event, have you ever retrospectively, once you've been removed from the situation, has that been anything that you all have ever discussed.

R: Oh after... No.

I: Is it anything that you've ever discussed with your parents or ... church members or anyone outside of me today in this particular setting, sat down and talked about these types of experiences with?

R: No.

I: Do you feel that um, your experiences, particularly your experience with your friend when you were shopping for her wedding dress, do you think that that was an isolated event for you two or do you think that that's something that happens with African-American customers who frequent that particular business?

R: I think it was probably an isolated event, then too... Like I said um, this was almost two years ago so we were all kind of young. She got married, I think she was 20 or 21 when she got married. So, then too, they were probably just thinking, you know, we didn't have that much money to spend on the dress and they weren't really going to spend all their time trying to help us, you know, find a dress. And then it was in Specialty Store D so most of their dresses were out of our range anyway.

I: Um, do you ever shop online?

R: I do, sometimes... Like for books I will, but for, I've never bought any clothes online because I like to see stuff before I buy it.

I: What's the importance of being able to see something before you buy it mean to you?

R: It means a lot because they can take a picture of a brand new shirt or something and put it online and then the shirt that you get looks like it's been worn ten times before they sell it to you. Like I had an instance um last semester where I bought a book off E-bay and the seller um had made the comment that the book was brand new, in the original wrapping and everything, so I chose to buy that book which was like \$10 more than the other books. I was like oh, this book's brand new. I'm going to get this one cause I thought it came with the cd. Well I got the book. It looked like it was wrapped in Saran Wrap. There was no cd. And you know, I sent the seller the e-mail or whatever, but of course she was gonna say that was the original wrapping she got it in but, it's just stuff like that... And then I try to look at um, what else they're selling on E-bay and how they describe it cause you're not going to have like fifteen copies of the original in the new wrapper, stuff like that, so I just try to see what else they're selling on there.

I: You said that you love shopping in general, is that, do you have that same attitude towards shopping online?

R: Un, un. Shopping on line is too tedious to me because you've got to, you've got to go through much stuff to find what you're looking for. In a store, you can just walk around and look and if you don't see it then you can just leave. Online you've got to keep typing in this word, well maybe if I put this word in it'll come up. It just takes too long.

I: Um, up till now. We've been talking about retail settings, either the actual stores or online. I'm going to switch to a different hat now and talk about experiences dining out. When I use the word dining out, I can mean anything from a formal exclusive restaurant like the Regas, or

McDonald's. Have there ever been any experiences where you were dining out and felt that you were treated because of your ethnicity.

R: When my um, best friend's brother graduated from high school, like her mom and her brother and sister and my mom went out, we all went out to eat together at Restaurant B and there were a lot of people in the restaurant just because it was graduation. And there was a server and she was new, and every time she would come to our table, she would say something about her tip. She would come to the table and she would be like, well I hope you know I've earned that you know 13 % gratuity or whatever and then she would leave and you know she really wasn't doing anything outside the norm other than you know bringing out drinks or bringing the bread. And then she'd come back and she'd be like, well, yeah, I'm really working hard you know so I can get that 13 percent... It got so bad that I just put the tip on the table so she could just shut up about the tip. And I started not to leave the tip just to prove a point, but I knew that she didn't expect for us to tip her, so I just tipped her anyway just to prove a point that way, but I really didn't want to tip her at all just because I got tired of hearing her talk about the tip.

I: Now, she made overt statements that she wanted a tip, was there anything in her behavior that might have been more subtle that made you think it was because you all were African Americans as opposed to her mentioning her tip to every single table that walked in?

R: No, um, she really didn't do anything um, else like... Her behavior with the other tables in the area was just you know in the norm. I never heard her say that to anybody else. But, she could have, you know, I don't know.... We had this one, I remember one time, I was... it was at least about five or six years ago. We were on a church convention and our server, every time we would take a drink out of our glass she would fill it back up. And we would get up you know, to go get something to eat, cause we were at Restaurant C so it was a buffet, so every time we would get you know another plate, we'd come back to a full glass of drink.

And like I said, some of my friends are crazy, so my friend was like, if she fills my cup up one more time I'm going to go off. So my friend got up to go back to the uh buffet, so when she left, we called the server back over to the table and we said, you know, she said she'd like some more Coke, or whatever, so she filled her Coke up and when my friend came back and saw her glass full she just went off. (Laughing) She was like, everybody give me their money now I'm going to leave this tip right here right now, so you can leave us alone. So um, she just left after that, but... But it was

like every, it was to the point where it was just annoying. Like every time you would sit a glass down, you wouldn't even have time to.. we was so full from drinks that we didn't even know how much we had drunk because our glass never made it to half empty. She just kept filling it back up. (Delay) I hate it too when um you're at a restaurant and every five seconds the servers asking you, you know, how's everything, blah, blah, blah, how's everything? Like can I eat. Or when you're eating and as soon as they bring you your food, they bring you your bill right after they bring you your food. It's like okay, you're ready for me to go already? You know, and I don't really think they necessarily mean it that way, but that's just the way it comes off.

I: The Restaurant B incident that you mentioned, where was that?

R: That was in (City/Southern State).

I: How long ago was that?

R: That was a year ago.

I: Did you all mention anything about that incident to the server herself or to the managers at Restaurant B?

R: I wanted to but my mom wouldn't let me. She was like, XXXXXXXXXX, no. So we didn't say anything to anybody.

I: How did that make you feel?

R: I was frustrated cause I wanted to tell her so she could just shut up about it. Just this past uh, Sunday, me and two of my friends went to Restaurant B to eat and the server, everything, the service and everything was fine, but when he took everybody's money and their checks, when he left he kept my friend's change and it wasn't really you know a whole lot of change, it was about maybe forty, fifty cents or whatever, but she just hates when servers do that without asking, so she actually wrote him a note on the receipt and she was like, Paul, she was like, in the future, could you please not take my change without asking, she was like, it's not about the money, it's just the principle of the thing, and I would just like to have a choice in whether or not, you know, you keep the money. She was like, you know, you shouldn't just assume, that you know, I don't want it. She said I don't walk around with a purse full of change but I do collect it at home or whatever, so yeah, she's one of those people who just speaks their mind. I didn't want her to leave the note, because I didn't want that to ruin his day, cause everything else had been you know just fine and I know how it is when you have just a random customer that just ... Well one thing I've noticed too, um, whenever I go out to eat somewhere if I'm with a large group of my friends like the server will try to give us something free in order to get a tip.

I: Interesting...

R: Yeah, like say we'll order an entrée and a drink, well when we get our bill there'll be no drink on the bill. And it works, cause typically people, you know, use the money they were going to pay on the drinks and just give it to him or sometimes even give it, even give him more because you feel like you've gotten something free. So it works, but....

I: Is this something that the server typically does for all large groups or do you think he does it because you're just...

R: Um, um. I think he does it because... The stereotype is that most African American people do not tip and it's, it's true to some extent because some people really don't feel like you know they should have to tip, but I think he feels like he has to do that just in order to get, to get a tip. Cause most of us want something, you know, in return and we're not just going to give our money away.

I: Do you feel that you're more likely to be treated because of your ethnicity while you're out shopping, or if you're dining out?

R: Probably shopping.

I: What is it about shopping that makes you feel it's more likely to occur there?

R: Just because, um the risk of shoplifting is greater in a store than in a restaurant I mean you're either going to pay for the food or you're not going to pay for the food. And it's not going to be, you know, a big deal. You just lose the food in the restaurant. But in a store, I mean you could steal so much stuff from the store or whatever, so it's like a bigger deal stealing... And the stuff is worth a whole lot more money than just the meal at a restaurant.

I: I have just a few more questions that I want to ask you, and these are questions of a general nature, um, if I were to ask you to describe yourself, which I am, what are the first few words that come to your mind?

R: Hard-working, motivated and uh, dedicated.

I: Do you feel those words full capture who XXXXXXXX is as a person?

R: No.

I: Okay, so what other words would you use to describe yourself?

R: Well, like those words, I - they don't really say anything about my personality, they just say about the type of person I am. I think I'm typically a very fun person. I like to have fun. I'm very um, creative. I like doing stuff uh for other people. I'm one of those people that I guess that's kind of how I get my high you know just, just doing things for other people, but yeah, I guess that's kind of it.

I: Different words can mean different things to different people. What does hard working mean to you?

R: I just feel like I, just as a student, I work a lot harder than some of the other students in my class, just because, you know I have so much on my plate at one time. And I think that's just because that's the way I was brought up. Like my mom worked in a factory. So I grew up seeing her work, you know, twelve, thirteen hour shifts and then coming home and working and then getting in the yard, working, so she always had us doing something, so now it's just like I can't just sit around and not do anything.

I: What does motivated mean to you?

R: Um, to me it's just ... like I take the initiative on my own. I don't really wait for people to give me things I try to work to earn them. I'm not really one of the people who'll sit around hoping that you know this is going to come along. I'm one of the people who'll go out and try to find it and if I can't find it, you know, see what I can change so that I can get it so...

I: What does dedicated mean to you?

R: I uh, I think I hang in there a lot of times when most people would uh, quit. Just because I hate to lose and I hate failing at anything. That's like one of my pet peeves. I hate to fail. So I keep trying and keep trying and keep trying. And it's a problem sometimes, because most of the jobs that I have, I hate to quit. Just because I hate to tell the people that I'm quitting, so I typically have about three or four jobs at a time because you know they'll say, you know we really don't want you to leave, I'll go well maybe I can just work one day, and then... I don't know, I just hate disappointing people so...

I: Okay, what does fun mean to you?

R: Um, um, it's like, um being able to have a good time at all times and still being able to get done what you need to get done. I like, I feel like, you know it's a time when you're suppose to be serious and then I feel like it's a time you know when you're suppose to play and have fun. So, that's the kind of atmosphere that I like to have to have at work. I like to be excited about you know going to work. I don't want to have a job where I'm like, oh, my God, I got to go to work again today. Just because they're some uptight people in the world. So I'm one of those people who

always tries to make everyone have a good time, but I'm still, you know, going to make sure that everyone's on top of their stuff at the same time.

I: The last one you gave me was creative, what does creative mean to you?

R: I think about stuff um a lot of times in a different ways than a lot of other people or I'll think of a different way to do it. And most of the times, it seems odd to the people when I tell 'em just because they don't see it the way that I see it the way that I see it and then after it's done, they'll say oh, okay I didn't see that at first.

I: Um, do you feel that your race limits you in any way from attaining any goals that you might have, whether those goals are personal goals or career goals?

R: I don't think it does because I don't let it. I'm one of those people, I think if anything it just makes me work that much harder to get whatever it is that I'm getting, cause I don't want to feel like I'm getting it just because of my race, because some companies have, you know, that quota that they have to meet or whatever. I want to come out of the situation knowing that everything I got I earned it, so I don't, I don't think it limits me at all.

I: Can you tell me how you feel in general, about current race relations in the U.S.?

R: I don't think race was really a reality for me at first, just typically, I mean it's something you hear people talk about all the time, but it really never, you know affects you. I have a lot of people in my family of different races and... you know, I just forget, I remember one time, my sister-in-law is half-white and half-Mexican and I remember one time, when her and my brother first started dating we went to the mall together. So it was me, her, some of my friends and we were all just talking and I noticed every where we went, people just kept looking at us, and I was like what's wrong, and I'm asking my friends, and I'm like you know, what's wrong with us today, why everybody keep looking at us? And I never could figure it out, and I just kept walking and kept walking and it just kept happening. So I looked and I looked around and I like what in the ... and I looked at her and I said, oh, oh I forgot you were white Amy, and she just started laughing. And you know I guess it was odd for them to see us together because she was, you know, the only Caucasian in the middle of all these black chicks in the mall, you know, just acting a fool and even now, when we go places, if uh, if we have my niece, if I'm holding her, they always think that my niece is my baby instead of hers. Its just....

I: And what do you think that says about race relations in the U.S. now?

R: I think uh people are really in denial, especially a lot of people that have issues with people of different races. Everybody wants to say that they don't have issues about this and about that, but I think that really to some extent everybody does, because when it comes down to it, if you had to you know choose to do this to this or that to that, then you know it's going to come to the point to where you gonna have to make some kind of decision or whatever. But I think that you know it just really hit home for me my freshman year when I came to University X and I was walking to class one morning and I saw a noose hanging from a tree. And I just looked up and it was just, you know I had never, been exposed to anything like that even coming from Mississippi. So you know that was just like a shocking then for me and then to read the things that people had actually wrote in the paper about it. Like the girl that did it, she did it for her art project for one of her classes, but there was a twig like actually hanging in the noose and in her write up in the paper she was saying how she really didn't see you know why so many people were offended by that, you know how that could affect people and you know it's just explaining to her that you know if you've been through stuff like that like, you know we have, then seeing something like that that's the first thing you're going to think and it doesn't matter if you're black, white, whatever, because you know they were thinking the same thing that we were and then that same, that same week, somebody wrote on the walls in the dorms, I think it was something like go home whatever, yeah, and the university wasn't really trying to do anything to find out who did it. They were more or less saying, well, you know that could have been anybody that did that or whatever knowing that there are cameras on every hall and if they really wanted to, they could have found out who did that and they could have sent them home but they didn't. It's just stuff like that.

I: What bothered you more about that situation, was it the fact that it happened or that the university didn't seem to be....?

R: The fact that they padded the whole situation, it really made me upset, and just the fact that, too with the whole noose situation she could respect or even try to figure where we were coming from, you know, even after it was explained it's still like, well that was a long time ago, you know. That's kind of, I don't know, I think everybody should try to respect everybody's opinion and past and all this good stuff and yeah, that's, that's what upset me more than what was actually written on the wall because it was more or less a sign of approval of what happened.

I: Alright, thank you very much.

End of interview.

INTERVIEW THIRTEEN

Participant: AA Female
Married
Early 30s
No children
From St. Thomas Virgin Islands

I: Today is May 22nd and I'm with Interview number three today. You already know the topic of my dissertation. Because I'm interested in your unique experience with it, I need you to just tell me anything about yourself so that I can understand more of who I'm speaking with.

R: Okay. I am 32 years old. Originally from the Caribbean and I have lived in the continental United States since 1992. So, been in Tennessee for about 8 years and married, no kids. I work here at the University and I have done so ever since I've been here, 8 years.

I: Tell me about growing up in the Caribbean.

R: Beautiful, wonderful um.

I: What part?

R: St. Thomas Virgin Islands. Um and just fun, lots of things to do, great cultural experiences.

I: Did you grow up in, is that a diverse place, or is it?

R: It's predominately black,

I: Okay,

R: And um, so that was something different, growing up there and coming here, but it's predominately black in terms of that, but there are lots of different islands that I visited throughout my childhood that have a lot of diversity. We would always go over to Puerto Rico to do our shopping,

I: Okay.

R: And there are the British Virgin Islands and lots of other islands, so that diversity.

I: Sounds like a lot of fun. Tell me about living here in the Knoxville area now.

R: Okay,

I: What's that like for you?

R: Um, started off as a student and then um moved into a professional role, in this position. So I had kinda both experiences. As a student, I went to school over in Illinois and moved down to Knoxville. As a student it was a different experience um coming into a setting that was not as diverse as where I had been previously in terms of an institution of higher education, and building a support base in a new city and finding those connections that can make that transition a little easier. So once I was able to do that, it helped in terms of having a transition and a support base to help me through my program. And then, as a professional identifying with the young professionals in Knoxville and again looking for that support system within the community. That was somewhat different from being a student. And, let me see what else, it's been good. The University is almost kind of a cultural community within itself, you can become isolated from either one, working at the University it's easy to get caught up in that and disconnected from the community and I think vice versa. Um, so it takes an um, really intentional action to make sure that you are connected to both and not kind of separated but um, it's been good.

I: Interesting. You said that you experienced culture shock when you first came here from the University that you were at in Illinois, tell me about that.

R: Um, the institution that I went to had a had about 25 almost 30 per cent African American students. We also had a significant percentage of that I remember in terms of Hispanic and Latino students. So just in terms of those two populations that offered a lot more um, diversity in terms of the student population. So just having different experiences and then coming to the University X where the minority total population is, you know teetering at around 12%, it was a bit different and that was also reflected in the community and just being able to find um places that would offer opportunities to connect, churches and beauty shops and um different activities and events, that was a little more scarce here in Knoxville than it was in other places, so being able to find that. Also, where I was, I was closer to some larger cities so I could always go there and find some influences from the Caribbean to help, again keep that little bit of home.

I: Have you found that here in the Knoxville area?

R: Um, no. I always head down to Atlanta when I need my fix, I run down to Atlanta and do some shopping and bring back some good seasonings and all that fun stuff. But, that's been the closest to it.

I: Since you mention shopping, let's go there. Tell me about your attitude towards shopping in general.

R: Okay. Love to shop, probably shop too much.

I: Don't we all.

R: But it, I always like to shop and just to even sometimes window shop, so not always spending but just kind of seeing what's out there. I love finding great deals, so I would a lot of times just go and look around and when I find something that I like, keep my eye on it until it gets to the price that I need for it to be and then go and get it.

I: How often do you go shopping?

R: Um now, probably at least maybe once or twice per week. More once than twice.

I: And, what stores do you shop in most frequently?

R: Um, Marshall's, T J Max, um Dillard's, Lane Bryant, Rack Room Shoes. Those are the most frequent, I could go on.

I: Are those also the ones that you enjoy shopping at the most or you don't necessarily? Like, I shop in Wal-Mart probably 4 times per week, but that doesn't mean I enjoy shopping at that store. Are there other stores that you enjoy shopping at, but you don't get to shop at as frequently or you just don't shop there as frequently?

R: I do Wal-Mart, I love shopping at Wal-Mart, but where we are now, the Wal-Mart is not a Super Wal-Mart and they are working on making it a Super Wal-Mart. So it's in the midst of construction, it's been that way for a while, so it's not very convenient to shop there. If I go to Wal-Mart I prefer to go to the Super Wal-Mart cause then I can do all of my shopping at once, so I have to travel a bit of a distance to get to a Super Wal-Mart, so that's. You know when I wasn't living where I am now, Wal-Mart was right down the street so I'd always be at Wal-Mart cause I could do just about everything there. But now it's kind of you know going to grocery stores for some things and then going to other stores for other things. But yeah, I prefer Super Wal-Mart the best.

I: I'm going to go back to each of the stores that you named before so bear with me as I ask you a couple of questions about each of these.

R: And I was thinking shopping, shopping but Wal-Mart would be on the list too. Like I was thinking clothes, shoes, um you know, but yeah Wal-Mart would be on that list too.

I: What um, what is it that you enjoy about shopping at Marshall's?

R: Um, I think it's the value, um the hunt if you would. Cause you do kinda have to look around to find some good things. It's not you're traditional, um you've got five pieces of one item hanging on the rack and you just pick it out. Um, you know, they may have one of something, so I think it's the fact that they have some good quality items at reasonable prices.

I: Okay.

R: And the originality because most times you won't see five people walking around in the same thing.

I: How often would you say you shopped at Marshall's?

R: Um, I'd say at least once or twice per month.

I: Now, what's a typical shopping experience like for you at Marshall's? Do you go in looking for something specifically or do you go in browsing or.

R: It depends. Sometimes I'm on a mission, you know, I have to find something to wear for something, but most times it's just kind of um, let me stop here at Marshall's and see what they have and um kinda look around and then if something grabs me, then you know, then I'll get it. But um.

I: Tell me about your last shopping trip at Marshall's.

R: Um I was shopping for some items for my mother actually. She's at home so um shopping is somewhat limited there in terms of what they can get so a lot of times I'll do shopping for them. So, she was wanting, we had our Carnival celebration the end of um April and uh, so I was looking for some items for her. So, that was my primary mission. So, I was just looking for a few pants suits and some shoes and stuff for her so. And I found a couple items in there, went from one Marshall to the other. So that I was successful.

I: When you're shopping there are you typically shopping on your own or do you go to sales clerks and ask for help or on just a usual basis how does that work?

R: Usually shopping on my own, um I prefer not to be bothered, unless I just have a whole bunch of stuff and I need it taken to the dressing room. Um, and I prefer actually shopping by myself as opposed to shopping with people. Again it just gives me more flexibility to look and find and try on, buy and leave and do the same thing at another store. So, typically no, I prefer not to have the assistance of sales clerks.

I: Okay. And, T.J.Maxx, is your shopping experience at T.J.Maxx similar to Marshall's or

R: It is, it is.

I: They are similar stores.

R: Yeah.

I: How about Dillard's, that's a little bit different?

R: It is, um Dillard's is more of the, if they've got a really great sale um, then we check them out. That maybe one that I'd go to just to kinda see what they have and kinda keep an eye on some things, um, but usually when they get their great mark downs that's when I head in and do some shopping there. Um, they tend to have some nicer items. Um it's not; it is a hunt in terms of finding things in terms of my personal style. Um, the sales clerks are more attentive, I think there than at the other two stores, um but again I usually don't need the assistance of them. Um,

I: So, you say the salesclerks are more attentive, tell me about that.

R: Um, usually you know, just asking if they can help. Usually in Marshall's or T.J.Maxx rarely would anyone ask if you need help finding anything or, you know, can I put those in the dressing room for you? Or you know just anything along those lines. If you are in the dressing room, do you need another size in something, you don't quite get that at T.J.Maxx or Marshall's but you definitely get it at Dillard's.

I: Is that, now you said you prefer shopping on your own so when you get that kind of help is that something that you appreciate, would prefer not to have or?

R: Um, I prefer not to have it. I appreciate it in terms of them being attentive and just knowing that they are there if I do need them but because I don't um, you know, I'd prefer not to have it. When I'm in the dressing room and I do need a different size in something, that helps because then I don't have to run out and

kinda look for it. But, just kinda walking around on the floor, I don't necessarily need to have that.

I: How often would you say you shop at Dillard's?

R: Dillard's, probably um maybe once every two months or around there.

I: Okay. Tell me about shopping at Lane Bryant.

R: Okay. Um Lane Bryant is similar to Dillard's in terms of um, the shopping experience, um the clerks are usually attentive. Um they usually have a selection of kind of new arrivals and items that they are moving out. So, their more clearance and sale items. Um, so it's, you know I kind of browse in the front to see what's out there, but usually I don't buy anything unless I'm just looking for something specifically, I usually kinda pass through that first section of the store um and move to kind of the middleish where there are some mark downs, but not quite clearance and look around there. And then, also go and check out the clearance to see what's there. And that's kind of more of the sorting through and seeing um if there are any great deals and more likely than not that's where I would pick up something that I don't necessarily need to have but because it's such a great deal, um can't pass it up. I think in terms of attentiveness of the salesclerks, I think Dillard's would rank number one in terms of how attentive they are and Lane Bryant would rank a close number two, um to that just in terms of those stores that we mentioned.

I: How about the Rack Room?

R: Rack Room is generally. Sometimes I browse but most times I'm looking for something and um the salesclerks there are not too attentive. Um, maybe I usually go in probably about once per month and usually, um maybe every other time someone will ask me, you know, do you need any help? Or you know, I usually have to, if I need additional sizes or anything I would have to initiate that with the salesclerk. So, um I don't see that store as being particularly very attentive. And it maybe because of the design of the stores as well cause everything's kind of out there unless it's a brand new arrival, it's kind of a warehouse style so all the shoes are laid out and all the sizes are up so you just kind of look around and pick and try on and go. So, that may be more intentional in terms of the design than it is maybe the salesclerks or their model.

I: I wanna ask you about something you said. You used this word with a couple of the stores that you mentioned earlier. You didn't use it as much with Boutique E but I got the same sense that was going on, you said the hunt was one of the things that you enjoy at those stores, tell me about that.

R: Um finding something really nice at a great price.

I: And how does that make you feel?

R: Um it feels good. Um, in terms of um feeling like you're getting a deal. You're getting the best bargain and maybe something that other people may not have gotten. Um, so it's rewarding in terms of um actually finding something you like and.

I: Would you say, at least at the stores that you mentioned that's one of your motivators in shopping at those stores, it's the hunt?

R: Um, I would say so, yeah. Um, cause it's I think getting something that's really nice, um and um maybe something that's different from what other people would have, so yeah I think the hunt is a big part of it and the reward of the hunt.

I: Okay. Tell me about a particularly pleasant shopping experience for you. It could have been at one of these stores or at a different store. Just where you thought that, you know this was a really good time or something really stood out as exceptional.

R: Um, I think part of it has to do with my attitude going into it, um and even a lot in terms of how I'm dressed, in terms of being prepared for the actual shopping experience. If I've worked a long day and um, I'm in some high heeled shoes and I'm in a suit, you know have a shirt, a jacket, pants or skirt, pantyhose that's not going to lead to a great shopping experience for me because I'm going to be tired from work and my feet are probably going to be giving out on me in heels running around the store. Um and then if I find something and I think about trying it on, you know I have to take off all these stuff to put all this stuff on. So, that would, no matter how great the salesclerks were or were not, um or how great of a bargain I got the experience itself would be somewhat tainted by you know, just how I was prepared for it, so I think if I was dressed comfortably, two pieces, just a shirt and pants, preferably a button down, that I can get in and out of.

I: Are you going shopping when you leave here today?

R: No, I should though, I'm prepared. Um comfortable shoes and you know, and it could be you know, either going in to find something specifically or not, um but I think a lot of that has to do with how I interpret a good shopping experience, how prepared I am for the actual experience and that will determine how long I'll stay and look around or.

I: Does a particular occasion stand out in your mind? That was really pleasant?

R: Um, I'll go back to the shopping for my mom. I went to Marshall's and got some stuff and then I went to Dillard's. And ended up shopping for my mom, my husband and myself. But I was dressed comfortably um, and I had been into Dillard's a couple of weeks before and the same sales clerk was there, so um, she knew that, you know, hi how you doing? But I didn't need a whole lot of attention so; we had that kind of established. Um and just was able to find some great things. Um, it was not very busy, I think I went in, um it must have been, it was during the week sometime, so it wasn't real busy. It was early in the day, during the week um so it wasn't at a real busy time, so there weren't a lot of people there. Um so it was just, and I wasn't rushed to do anything and um, so I think the fact that I was dressed, I wasn't rushed, the sales person knew to kind of leave me alone and I was able to find some great things too.

I: Okay. Um, on the flip side of that, tell me about a negative experience that stands out in your mind.

R: Um, let's see. Does it have to be recent?

I: No, just one that you can recall.

R: I guess the worst shopping experience I had, it was when I used to live in Illinois, um I um was at Boutique E in Chicago and um I just went to another store, I had been shopping with my mom and um I forgot the store that I went to before, but had a couple bags, had bought some stuff there and I was in Boutique E and I had a whole bunch of stuff that I had put in there, in the dressing room, trying on some things and I had given the bags to my mom, so I didn't really have anything with me, I was in Boutique E by myself and I had a lot of stuff in the dressing room and um, I went in the dressing room trying on some stuff. In the midst of trying on things, I was like; okay I need to use the restroom. So you know I told them I'm gonna be back and can I just leave my stuff in here. So I ran to the restroom, they didn't have one in the store so they said, so I went to kind of the mall's restroom, came back and um the store clerk was asking me some questions about something that was in the dressing room and um, apparently something may have been missing I'm not quite sure and uh. That was my first experience in terms of actually having someone ask me about um shoplifting or taking something from a store and um, I was just. You know I think I was confused I wasn't quite sure what was going on, again that was kind of my, even growing up in an area where it was predominantly black, that was one of my first few experiences where I felt like I was discriminated against because I was black. I took it out; I said I have enough money in my pocket to pay for all of this stuff so why would I. So that was my first experience there and I think that was my worst shopping experience. Um because I was enjoying the experience and to come back and have to deal with something like that and at the time I didn't know how to deal with it in terms of taking it to the next level with the store and with the manager and just even processing that, so.

I: There are lots of different emotions that could have been evoked at the time, what were you feeling as that was happening?

R: I think I was, um I was angry. Um, I felt like um I was a little confused too because I'd never experienced it and felt like it was unjustified and why would, so I was questioning a lot, but I think that anger would be the primary thing that I felt at that point in time. Um and then even after, cause I was like, well I should have done something, you know um, to address it.

I: Did you purchase anything that day?

R: Um, not from that store, no.

I: Okay. Looking back retrospectively you said that you wished that you had known some things then that you know now, how would you have handled it differently now?

R: I would have asked some very specific questions, um and gotten more information in terms of the clerk that was um making those statements. Um, some very specific information in terms of the manager. I would have contacted their, um their regional director and then even the main office the corporate headquarters and filed a formal complaint and followed up on it.

I: Have there been any more recent situations where you've done that?

R: Um I have, but not because I felt like I was discriminated against. Just because, and it may have been, but I didn't initially perceive it that way.

I: Tell me about that.

R: I was, this is most recent, I was in Sams and um I went, I was standing in line and um there was a young man that was in another aisle kind of ringing up some other customers and um the Manager said well, you know, go over to his line cause it's slowing down. He then, kind of shut off his light and said I'm not taking anymore customers. Um, so I said excuse me? And he said, I'm not taking anymore customers, he just left so, I went over and politely shared with the manager you know what happened and he mentioned that he's had other complaints about that employee before and you know they'll follow up on it and you know just all that. So I got his information and about a week or so later I called to find out, you know, what had been done and just all that, and just that they were still dealing with that and just follow up. I didn't follow up beyond that, but that was something and I do guess I do complain when things go bad, but then when things go really good I also share that with the management as well.

I: Tell me about an occasion when you have done that.

R: Um let's see, um I'm trying to remember where it was. Um it was at a restaurant, does that?

I: Oh yes.

R: Okay.

I: I was going to ask you about negative situations in restaurants next.

R: Oh okay. This one was actually when I was um, out of town, we were down in Tampa um and my husband and I flew in on different flights, so I came in several hours before he did, so I went to um a restaurant to get something to eat, so I kinda sat by myself, I had my folder I was doing some work and had a waiter who was just really sweet, very attentive and you know he was just really friendly and just went above and beyond. Um so I um, you know I know his name because he had shared it and we had talked and I stayed there for a while. Um and when I left I got one of the cards when I was leaving and I just kinda called back and I talked with Manager and told him that I was really impressed with him and he had done a great job and um, you know well I said give him a raise. And he said thank you and he had been doing a really good job and um. I think even more recent than that, we were in Memphis this past weekend and um, my husband and I we went out to eat and um had a great waitress and when we were leaving we asked for the manager and kinda stopped and shared and apparently she was new and you know, so that really helped her a lot, so when it's good we do, we do share that.

I: As we are on restaurants, do you recall any negative experiences in restaurants?

R: Um yeah and a lot of times I'm not sure if it's just people having a bad day or that's not the kind of work they are cut out to do. Um, but just I guess the reverse of everything that I just shared in terms of um people not being attentive and you having to go out of your way to try and get their attention, um to get something that you need or to get your needs met. Um

I: Does a particular occasion stand out?

R: It does, I'm trying to remember the restaurant. I can't remember the restaurant, but I remember it was basic things like just water and um, it took a long time for our food to get there and um, you know, even if it takes a while, you usually have some little fillers, they'll come and you know, "your food will be out in a little bit" or "we have a little bit of a back up" but we didn't get any of that.

Um and you know we got out dinner and that was it until the check came, there was no checking back and so, just not having that type of service.

I: What did you attribute that service to, or lack of service to? You said it could have been a couple of things that they weren't cut out for that line of work, what was your initial thought?

R: Um, that person's having a bad day, that was my initial because I always kind look around to see kinda what's going on in our area if it's just us, or is it just that waiter or waitress and it appeared to happen at a couple of tables around us too, so it wasn't, at that particular instance it wasn't just us.

I: Okay. Are there any other negative experiences that stand out in your mind that you would attribute to racism or discrimination?

R: Um, and that would be restaurant or shopping?

I: Yeah.

R: I think sometimes the over attentiveness um can be, again people working off of their preconceived notions and keeping an eye on more so than being attentive to your needs. Um and that has happened in Department Store C um and um you know I finally had to say, you know, is there something I can help you with? Cause I you know.

I: Tell me about that, how it unfolded, tell me about that situation.

R: Um, just kinda shopping in one general area. There were a few other customers there um and I was just doing as I normally do, looking around at racks and sizes and looking at different things and it just seemed as though I was getting a little more attention than other people and not sure what that was about. It was an older white lady, um and you know, there were some older white women there and not sure why again, you know it seemed like they would need more help than I would, but it was just, you know, one of those situations.

I: How did you feel in that particular situation?

R: Um, I think some of the anger came up again, um and um just trying to understand um why. Um and um not being able to come up with those answers, other than, you know here's a black woman shopping let me keep an eye on her, so.

I: So when you finally responded "can I help you?" what was her response to that?

R: Um, she was just kinda like, no, I just wanted to make sure that you're you know, and we were fine after that but um, you know that's when I thought that it was.

I: How long ago was that?

R: That was probably about 5 or 6 years ago.

I: Okay. Retrospectively again is there anything that you would have done differently in that particular situation? The other situation was a little bit more blatant.

R: I think I would have asked some different questions. I mean not that question, but um but just kind of not only reacting to situation but also doing some education as well. In terms of telling her you know, I really feel as if you are giving me a lot more unsolicited attention than you are other customers, is there a particular reason why. And maybe having a dialog with her about um why that is and some of her experiences and some ways that she can help to really counter that.

I: Is there anything else that I haven't asked you about that you think I need to know about for my research.

R: I think my perspective has changed over the years in terms of, um operating mainly from the anger part of it um and reacting in that way, to looking at the big picture and looking at ways to um address that, with that particular person so that um the chances of it happening to someone else, who may react differently, the chances would be smaller. So looking at ways to really enlighten, educate. To help to build the level of understanding and civility with people that have definite biases and prejudices. And it could be based on, you know, their experiences or just what see, think, hear um, believe. So I think, I think my role has changed in terms of what I expect of myself in situations like that to understand and respect the fact that yeah, there's gonna be a little bit of anger but how can I, what's the greatest impact that I can have in terms of that person and using it as an opportunity, a learning opportunity for both of us.

I: Okay. Um, you mentioned something earlier I wanna go back to. You said that you are more likely to have a good, fun shopping experience when you dressed comfortably so that you can try on clothes easily. What's come up in some of my interviews is this notion that if you are dressed, when you leave work with your suit on you are more likely to receive service that you think is the appropriate service, versus if you are on a Saturday afternoon and have on jeans tennis shoes or whatever, you dress really comfortable but you are more likely to get the kinda stares and hyper vigilance from sales clerks. Does that thought ever cross your mind, how you dress in relation to going out shopping?

R: No, cause I think its kinda fun when I look really down, and then I just shop and then they are all. For me in my shopping experience it's all about comfort.

I: Okay,

R: So that's not something that I think about in terms of you know, just moving forward and really, you know, dressing a certain way to go shopping. It's more about if I have something else to do or, you know. To me a true shopping experience, especially going to the Outlet Malls or even just spending the day shopping, my top priority would be comfort and accessibility and whatever that means for me in that situation. Cause I think no matter what, people will have their preconceived notions about you based on how you look and how you dress and um you know. And some people, no matter what, will see you as a black person, a black woman, a black man no matter what you wear, so I think you should be comfortable in doing whatever you feel. But if you feel comfortable in a suit, then hey, go for it. But you know you should be comfortable first.

I: One last question, another notion that's come up in my interviews is um the feeling that although black women are likely maybe treated differently in stores, there is this notion or feeling that African-American males are a lot more susceptible to it than African-American females and since I'm gonna be interviewing your husband as well, I'm just curious if he shared with you any experiences that stand out in his mind that you can recall?

R: Um, yes.

I: Or have you been with him and seen any differences yourself.

R: Um, I haven't seen any differences when we are together, um but I know that he has had several while growing up and even recently um where you know, it's been there in terms of, you know his shopping experiences and even dining experiences. He's a big guy too so I think the intimidation factor um you know even comes in and not quite sure how to react or deal or you know. So I think not only him being an African-American man but being a tall, big African-American man also adds some other factors in there. But I do think, I think the threatening factor is also in there as well, so where you have preconceived notions about um race, issues in terms of that come into play because, um. You know, if you see an African-American man shopping, especially if it's a big African-American man um and um, you know, even though you may think certain things, you may or may or not be inclined to approach or um address that. But again the mindset is still there, so.

I: Interesting. Well I'm going to officially conclude the interview.

End of Interview.

INTERVIEW FOURTEEN

Participant: AA Female
Married to minister
Early 50s
Two children – daughter age 24, son age 19
Works part time as sales associate at department store

I: Today is May 22nd and I'm with interview participant number five today. You already know the topic of my dissertation research, but before we get started on that specific area, I'm interested in your unique experience. So tell me about where you grew up and tell me a little bit about yourself now.

R: Well I grew up in Birmingham, Alabama and came through the era of a lot of race discrimination of course. You know the hosing down of the people and the dogs being put on the people and also.

I: Do any of those incidences stand out in your mind?

R: No, just when I see movies that depict some of the things of whatever. It brings back memories or whatever.

I: No personally?

R: Well I was a kid, basically when it initially started, I was a child when Martin Luther King was assassinated and I can remember my mother standing in the kitchen crying and I asked her why, you know and she told me. But um the Pastor I grew up under he was the President of the SCLC back then. As a child we always wondered why all these guys in suits were always around him, well he had to have bodyguards because of threats and everything on his life, there was a lot of violence, especially on the young black men within the neighborhood and surrounding areas, so.

I: That's something you remember?

R: Yeah, yeah and I also had a cousin who was murdered by some guys and, this is second-hand from my aunt telling us that when he came up missing, a truck load of white guys passed by and said 'we've got Tony, you're not gonna get him back'. And when they did find him he had been tortured to death and mutilated. His private parts cut off. When they found him his tongue was hanging out from where they had strangled him, so and I was in the 9th Grade then, and that was in '72. So even in the early 70's you still had a lot of hatred going on as far as blacks and whites in the Deep South, as they say, yeah. But basically, I had a wonderful

childhood. There were six of us, six kids and my parents. We never wanted for anything, my dad worked for the Alabama Gas Company and my mom ran our Dry Cleaning Business. We own a couple of Dry Cleaning Stores and I was the oldest of the girls, three boys, three older boys and I have two younger sisters. Basically, like I said we had a pretty good childhood. We didn't view white people as a threat, so to speak, to us because we were always around them. My grandmother had people in her homes all the time, you know and so we grew up around white people. My mother worked for white people and I went to school with them. One of my best friends in 6th Grade this girl named Glenda. You know, I mean we just got along but that was basically because of my parents. My mom always told us to treat everyone as you would want to be treated, so we didn't see any difference, you know. Yeah, our skin color was different but that's the way god made us.

I: Do you recall, since that was the segregated '70's you were growing up in, do you recall any incidences of shopping in stores that you felt uncomfortable in?

R: Oh yeah, I mean you always had in stores. Of course you know we couldn't eat in Woolworths at the counters. There were certain areas; we didn't go out to eat a lot as kids growing up in Birmingham. My parents may bring home a bucket of Kentucky Fried Chicken or whatever, but as far as going out into restaurants and all, we didn't really do that. My older brother took me to my first movie and first restaurant at Shoney's Big Boy that's what they called it back then, but um, going into the stores, even grocery shopping as kids you would see them watching you in the store like you were going to steal something, you know; when basically we were just there to buy groceries and pay for our food just like anybody else. And, my mother, um we lived in what they called Roselyn Heights and there was this neighborhood service station. She would go and charge her gas weekly and pay monthly, it was a white guy that owned the station but, you had good white people then, you know, just like now, you know, in any culture you've got good people and bad people, so even back in the '70's you still had people that were fighting for rights for everyone, not based on the color of your skin or anything.

I: How would your mother handle it in those situations when you would go in stores and people were looking at you?

R: She would just basically tell us, "don't pick up anything, don't give them reason to accuse you of anything", you know and um basically she didn't really have to worry about us, because we knew better and she always taught us, "you don't steal, you don't cheat and you don't lie". You know just the basic rules. We grew up in church, so we knew the 10 commandments, you know and so we tried to live by those. So for us, but some of my friends, yeah they had problems a lot of them had run in's with the law or whatever. Basically, we tried to live right.

I: Do you recall any specific instances that stand out in your mind at that young age as especially negative?

R: Um, probably at the Elementary School I went to which was Curry Elementary and you had some bullies, of course and we would have to walk to school, we didn't have a bus service and we had some of the white kids that would of course try to pick fights with you, whatever. My brother was expelled from school for fighting with a white guy basically because the guy lied and said he'd had sex with me and he had not. You know, my brother knew this for a fact, you know and so. It's just little things like that, you know, we were a close family growing up um.

I: What kind of conversation did your parents have at home when your brother came home expelled from school for that reason?

R: They did not tell me for the longest why he was expelled. He told them why he fought with the guy, but they did not tell me for the longest time. And of course I was very naïve growing up, I was very sheltered. My kids today even tell me, mom you led such a sheltered life, you. But I was the only girl for six years, before my younger sisters came along and like I said, for the longest I guess I was maybe a senior in High School and he had already graduated and joined the Marines when they finally told me why he was expelled you know.

I: Okay. Tell me about your life now.

R: My life now, oh I've been blessed, it's wonderful. My husband and I we've been married it'll be 25 years August 22nd and we will be celebrating our Silver Anniversary. We're gonna do everything all over again and I have a son that's a student at UT.

I: How old is your son?

R: My son is 19 and my daughter graduated from UTC last May with a degree in Psychology, she lives in Birmingham now and works. And she's getting married next year also.

I: Now your daughter is how old?

R: She's 24.

I: Anything else about your life right now that you'd like me to know?

R: Well, I worked for a company for 17 years and they, they moved to Nashville and um, it's been really kind of hard trying to find a job in my field

paying what I was making then, you know and um I've been on several interviews of course and people tell you, well we can't pay you what you were making, so that's the most downside of it I guess, but I haven't given up. I have a decent job now, the people I work for are wonderful people and, like I said I work part-time in retail sales and the people I work with, they are just wonderful. They actually asked me "do you have other friends you can ask to come here and work?" you know.

I: Oh, okay. Well we're gonna switch to retail, since you just brought that up,

R: Okay.

I: But before we start on your specific experience, tell me about your attitude towards shopping in general?

R: Well if you would look in one of my rooms in my house you would say I'm a shopoholic because I have clothing hanging on the racks that I've had in my closet probably two or three years that I've not worn, the price tags are still on them. Several pairs of shoes that have not been worn and I love hats, so I wear a hat probably every Sunday to Church, maybe a couple times per year I don't but I love hats, my mother wore hats. So I always liked her hats and so um. I like to shop.

I: How often do you go shopping?

R: Well, seeing as how I work in the store I try to limit myself, if I see a really good deal, you know I just can't pass it up. Say for instance I bought a top, \$5.00 the top was regular \$58.00, I couldn't pass that up.

I: Oh no, you had to buy that.

R: Really, for the last two months I've been trying to control and budget because of the anniversary celebration that we've got coming up and using my money there. Basically, I took this part-time job because my son was supposed to be going to Tokyo this summer with the school, he plays drums.

I: Okay.

R: And um, they postponed it til next year, maybe going to Australia, so I've used the funds from there to help supplement the anniversary celebration because we've got about 250 people coming,

I: Wow, that's gonna be a big celebration.

R: Yeah, it's gonna be like a small family reunion.

I: Okay. You said you're a shopoholic, do you enjoy shopping?

R: I enjoy shopping. I got to be honest though, my mom used to love to shop.

I: What stores do you enjoy shopping in?

R: Here I like Parisian's, Marshall's, T.J.Max, Ross and of course everybody shops at Wal-Mart. And I like the Dollar store, I look for bargains. And one of the reasons you may find tags still hanging on my clothes, I don't wear everything I buy right away cause when it goes on sale, I go back and get my credit. Or sometimes I just take it back because I really didn't need.

I: Those impulse buys?

R: Yeah, yeah.

I: Those are some really different stores; Parisian especially is different from some other stores that you mentioned. What is it that you enjoy shopping, why is it that you enjoy shopping at Parisian, tell me about that?

R: Um, selection. The people are nice.

I: Did you shop there regularly before you became an employee there?

R: I shopped there some, I actually did not go to the Mall a whole lot, I would shop at like Marshall's or T.J.Max, Burlington stores like that. I used to hate going to the Mall because of the traffic and all, you know, but now that they've put Belts and all these other stores, I love Ann Taylor, now that they've put all these other stores out in Turkey Creek, you know, I could see myself going to those stores.

I: You mentioned that they have nice sales staff there at Parisian, was that something that you noticed prior to becoming an employee there?

R: Oh yeah.

I: Were there any exchanges there that were particularly pleasant or that stood out in your mind?

R: No not particular, maybe at the store in Birmingham, because I grew up in Birmingham, that was my first Charge Card right out of High School, so I just always loved shopping at Parisians anyway.

I: Okay.

R: And my husband like, the Men's Department there he likes Prestwick Moore shirts and he's a Minister. So of course he has to have his shirts and everything, so. It's just always been a good store to shop, as far as selection, I wear a fairly large size shoe for a women and Parisian has always had a nice selection as far as size.

I: Tell me about T.J.Max, what is it that you enjoy shopping?

R: Just um looking for the little bargains and the little unique things and sometimes I find hats there real reasonable. And their linen department you can find really nice things that you won't see anywhere else you know.

I: How often would you say you go shopping there?

R: At T.J.Max? Probably, if I'm looking for something in particular, probably about once a month. Of course since I've been working a second job I really don't have time for anything, but before then, probably about once or twice a month. There or Marshall's cause they are sister companies, I believe.

I: Okay. Is there anything different about shopping at Marshall's than shopping at T.J.Max that you prefer, or?

R: No. They are basically the same, usually if I'm looking for something and one store doesn't have it, I'll go to the other one.

I: How about Ross Dress for Less, is that in that same category or is it?

R: No Ross is a little different because you find your designer items there, just at a discounted price. Maybe items left over from the previous season or whatever. I found wonderful, my sons loves these polo shirts for golfing or whatever with his dad and they have a good selection on the Champs polo shirts and all so. And sports jeans, he likes FUBU jeans so I will shop those places for him. T.J.Max has a good selection on FUBU also.

I: How about Ann Taylor, that's a little different from the other stores you mentioned, tell me about shopping at Ann Taylor.

R: Um, their items are very different, unique and so I just like the feel of the store when you walk in, it's like a little boutique, you know. You can find something there that you won't see everywhere else.

I: How often do you shop there?

R: Oh, well I go in to pay my bill, so usually when I'm paying my bill, I'm usually walking out with something too but the last couple of times I haven't done that.

I: Very good.

R: Yeah, I've done really well, I've done really well.

I: Would you say that you've gone there once a week ?

R: No, once a month, like I said when I go to pay my bill. And, if I see something that I don't have time to shop for. Cause normally what I'll do is I'll try to run in when I know I've got to go onto work, so therefore I don't have much time to shop, you know. But if I'm out and about, I'll look, come back and check or I'll go online, if I'm looking for something in particular. Cause they had these beautiful pumps, black and white and it was really pretty and they didn't have it in the store. She said, you can go online and find it.

I: Is that something that you'd do?

R: No I didn't do it though.

I: Do you do online shopping?

R: I do.

I: What stores do you tend to shop online?

R: I've done Macys. Um, I've ordered items from a store called Barry Pace which is in Texas. It's a very um, pricey store, unique, but I got it on sale. A \$300.00 dress, I got it for \$98.00. So I bargain shop too and I like Oriental Trading because I like to do weddings and all, so I look for little items for my little event planning and all. And um, let's see what else. I've shopped online for J Rene shoes and Jones of New York, Casper just several different items, you know.

I: Now Wal-Mart is different from any of those stores, tell me about a typical shopping experience at Wal-Mart.

R: Wal-Mart probably if I'm going to get paper goods for the house, milk, you know grocery shopping basically or underwear, they have good prices on their underwear for men and women. Um music, you can pretty much find a CD or video, movie video at a good price, electronics.

I: How often do you shop at Wal-Mart?

R: About twice a week.

I: Now um tell me about a particularly pleasant shopping experience it could be at one of these stores, it could be at an out-of-town store, but just an experience that you had at a retail store where you left feeling really good about your experience there.

R: Probably at um, Bombay, Bombay Company in the Mall. There was this beautiful silver punch bowl I was looking for. I'd seen it up in Mason, Ohio and this was back in the summer. I looked here when I got back and they didn't have it. So, on my way to work one day I stopped in just to check and they had this beautiful bowl, of course I got it. It was \$125.00 at the store in Mason, I got it for \$50.00 here.

I: Wow.

R: I told you I was a bargain shopper. So of course I jumped right on it and at the time it was a sale where you got the additional 10% off and the salesperson she was real nice and I said let me think about it, maybe I'll come back tomorrow. She said "okay, that's fine". Now as I was walking out the door I noticed a sign saying, you know that the sale ends today. And I said well tell you what, your sale ends today so I won't get that additional off, she said that's right. I said well let me go ahead and get it now. She said "I think you made a wonderful selection." She said "this is a beautiful punch bowl." And I really liked it, so she was real helpful cause I was running late for work too, so she's trying to help me get everything wrapped up real good and, you know on my way.

I: Okay. Now, we're gonna turn to the flip side of that and tell me about a particularly negative experience that stands out in your mind.

R: Well there was one at, we had this store called Grocery Store A in Farragut, it's no longer there. I went in to buy groceries one time, I mean, at least you can have the courtesy to at least greet a customer, you know. You should always greet people when they come in. As I was checking out the girl didn't say hello, how you doing? Or anything. And when I finished, she didn't say thank you or anything. So, that kinda ticked me off, you know, everybody has problems, you have bad days but at least say hello and thank you for shopping with us, you know even if you're going through something. Now, I don't know she may have been going through something that day but the way she did it, you know, it just kinda ticked me off. The person in front of me she thanked them, which of course they were white and so I called back to the store and asked for the manager and I had my receipt with the cash register on it, you know telling

you what cashier waited on you or whatever and I explained to them that I would not shop there again, and I didn't.

I: How did you feel about the manager's reaction when you spoke to him in that call?

R: He was very positive, he thanked me for letting him know and evidently someone else had already said something to him and I don't know if this person was black or white, but evidently it had been a problem.

I: So that was a conscientious decision not to shop at that store again?

R: Yeah.

I: Did you share your experience with anyone else?

R: Maybe a friend in passing or whatever, but the store, after that didn't last much longer. I think Buylows came in and kinda put them out of business, you know.

I: You said it kind of ticked you off, at what point in the exchange did you become ticked off?

R: When I told her, thank you, you know she didn't even acknowledge. So that was, like I say she could have been having a bad day so I was trying to, you know, at least give her the benefit of the doubt.

I: Do you think she was aware of your reaction to her? Did you do anything to make her aware that you didn't feel that was an appropriate response?

R: Well I looked at her, I looked straight and I said "thank you". And she looked at me like I didn't even exist.

I: Looking back, is there anything that stands out now, that might not have, that you might not have noticed at the time?

R: No, not that I can think of. And then just talking to the manager, he kind of pretty much validated what I thought, you know that she was rude to some customers but not to everybody.

I: Was there another experience that stands out in your mind, negative experience?

R: Um, probably when I was living in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. I slipped and fell in an A&P grocery store and I told the manager, I said you have grapes on

your floor over here and I just slipped on them. It was like, okay why are you telling me this? He didn't say "are you hurt?", "are you okay?" "can I get you anything?" you know.

I: What did you do, did you follow up on that with a higher level of management?

R: Oh no. I actually contacted a lawyer to file a lawsuit against them, but in the long run I didn't follow through. The lawyer, she didn't complete her items on, you know as far as following through with the law suit or whatever. In the meantime she sent me a "payable on demand" after a year or so, because she failed to follow through with the action and I think she said for the type of injury, which I wasn't really hurt, it was just that they didn't even say are you okay or anything. She said I would have gotten maybe \$1,250.00 out of it, so she sent me a barrier bond saying that, you know we'll pay you this in full at this certain date, but I told her don't worry about it. I tore it up and gave it back to her and I thanked her for, you know, her services. She was going through something with her mother at the time and I didn't know it when I sought her help on it and so. My attitude at the time was, He'll get what's coming to him, you know. Or you reap what you sow, you know, so I didn't worry about it.

I: Any other experiences stand out?

R: There was once instance when I went into this store in the gallery called Boutique F, they didn't even acknowledge you when you walked in, so you know what I did? Turned around and walked right back out the door. And I really don't understand that, and it may have been the people because I'd been there before and shopped and bought a dress and they send me these sales notices all the time, didn't even say hello, how are you, have you been in before, you know, anything. So, I'm the type, you know, you don't acknowledge me, I don't have to buy your goods. You know there are plenty goods out there that you can go to.

I: In that situation did you let a manager know at that time or at a later time about your experience?

R: No. I just never went back.

I: Any other experiences stand out?

R: None that I can think of, probably because, my daughter says I tend to overlook people when they are doing things negative to me, she says, mom you don't see what people are doing. She says how do you always think the good of everybody. So I really I guess I kind of overlook a lot of things and go on, you know.

I: Now I wanna talk to you from the other side of the counter. Tell me about um, do you all get any kind of training in regards to the diverse markets that you are working with on how to treat different markets based on either ethnicity or race?

R: No, not any training specific to that. No we don't, just basic courtesy, common courtesy.

I: Have you noticed any other employees treating customers differently based on their ethnicity or race?

R: I haven't noticed it, but my daughter did say that she came into the store one day down by the perfume counter. She said no-one even spoke to her, and that's, they pride themselves on greeting the customers when you walk in and she said that no-one spoke to her or anything. She left and of course my daughter loves perfume so she's gone in there to buy something in particular, so. Even though she would have gotten my discount she said no, that's okay I'll go somewhere else. And she works in retail too. She works at Chico's in Birmingham.

I: Have you ever noticed, even though you haven't seen any differential treatment from your co-workers, have you noticed any irate customers responding to what they perceive to be differential treatment?

R: No, I've never witnessed anything in particular myself. Now I will say that there was an instance when my husband, at the time he was working in construction said he had gone into a bank to deposit or cash a check and the teller at the time, when she waited on him, she took the check and held it up in front of him in the light to see if it was a fake check or a forged or whatever and that really ticked him off. So of course he left and of course we went back. Of course when he went back he had on his suit and tie, that was just that particular day and we went in and we asked for a manager and we went in and spoke to someone and they handled everything really well at First Tennessee Bank. And I have worked in the bank field before; I used to work for AMSOM and the manager I spoke with said that no customer should have ever been treated like that. If you had a question about whether or not the check was fake, then you take it aside out of the customer's view and view it yourself, but you don't do that in front of a customer. You know, that's like saying I don't trust you, right to your face, you know. Even if you don't trust them, there is a certain way you do things. So they apologized, they called and they sent a letter.

I: Did you feel their response was appropriate in that?

R: Yes I did, I did.

I: Something that's come up in my interviews is this notion of status dressing. Dressing to avoid being treated like a suspect when you walk into a retail store.

R: And that is very true.

I: That's true of your experience as a customer or as a sales associate?

R: Well let me put it this way, if you're dressed nice, people perceive you to be a different person and they treat you differently. Whereas if you came in dressed in construction clothing, like my husband did, you know, just because he was dressed that way they thought different of him. But, when he came back in a suit it was a different story, you know.

I: Is that something that you are conscious of when you go shopping, do you dress a certain way to go shopping in certain stores?

R: No, I don't myself, you know. Of course I try and dress appropriate whenever I go out anyway, I can probably count the times on my hand that I've been out looking, you know, like you've just got out of bed or whatever and that's basically because I pride myself on if you are going out into the public eye at least look decent and that's what I've taught my kids, so I have to be an example to them.

I: Something else that's come up in interviews is this notion that African-American males, young males around your son's age or younger are particularly susceptible to negative treatment in stores, um is that something that you have, have you had conversations with your son about that?

R: Well, he told me of one instance, he went down to Henix Furs to buy a wallet, cause usually at Christmastime I'd always stuff a little wallet in his stocking for Christmas, I know he's 19 but I'm still doing that, but I didn't get him one this year. And he was disappointed, so he went by there a couple weeks ago himself to get it. Of course he was dressed in his little work clothes and a baseball cap on and he walked in. He said the people came out and just kind of spoke and then he said I'm so and so, I'd like to buy a wallet, I think you know my mom. They said oh yeah, yeah how you doing, tell her it's time to bring her coat in or whatever for storage you know. And he was treated differently, and I don't really know if it's because they didn't know him because they have repeat customers that come in and all, but I've never been treated any different, you know, going there myself. My son is the type, he gets along with everybody, every restaurant we go to he knows somebody. Wherever we go, he knows somebody.

I: Since you mention restaurants, that's often another area where people feel like they have been treated differently, has that experience occurred to you?

R: Not that I can recall. We've always been given fair treatment.

I: Is there anything else that I haven't asked you about that you think researchers and marketers studying this phenomenon need to know?

R: I would say, being on jobs, different jobs you still have some discrimination as far as women and men. Still employers perceive men as the breadwinners and they will promote or give him a job over the women, don't matter whether you black or white, you know. I think gender plays a big role in it.

I: Anything else?

R: Not that I can recall. I have worked several different jobs, just about every job you're gonna have some form of discrimination there.

I: Alright I think we've covered all the areas that I needed to cover. Let's see if there's anything I've missed. I think we've touched on it all.

R: Okay

End of Interview

INTERVIEW FIFTEEN

Participant: AA Female
Single
Early 30s
8 year old daughter

I: Today is May 25th and I am with interview number one on this date. You already know the topic of my dissertation, but before we get started on your specific experiences, I just need to know a little bit about you that would help me understand your unique situation a little better. So just tell me anything about yourself you'd like to share with me.

R: Okay, I am a 32-year-old African-American female, single. I have one daughter aged 8, born and raised in Jackson all my life. I do get to travel a lot. I graduated with my Bachelors in Psychology from Tupelo College. I have a Master's in Counseling from Jackson State University. I currently do not work in my field; I'm an engineer for the telephone company which pays more, so. I actually enjoy the difference but I do plan to one day go back and get my PhD and get back in the field.

I: You said that you grew up here in the Jackson area; tell me about growing up in Jackson.

R: Well it was, I guess compared to now, um I always went to school with white kids, all my kids were always predominately black.

I: Where did you grow up in Jackson?

R: In the um, Presidential Hills area,

I: Okay.

R: My mother wanted to put me at St. Joe's when I was going into the 10th grade, that was back when High School was just 10th, 11th and 12th grades and I didn't want to be separated from my friends and didn't want to go to school with kids that didn't look like me, so she nixed that idea. Now that my daughter has been to private schools and now she's in a public school that's majority white, I see the difference in how she's growing up and how I grew up. First the times are different, but it's just interesting. I guest I didn't see anything wrong with growing up with; to me it was normal I was having a good time.

I: Did you have any other siblings?

R: I have a younger sister.

I: Do you recall any instances growing up with your mom, dad, and sister where you were out shopping and any negative,

R: Well we always went, my dad very rarely went shopping with us, so with my mom I can look back on certain situations now and I just, you know when you're growing up and your mom is talking crazy to the salesperson you just don't, she's just being crazy. But when you experience those things yourself, then you realize. There was a store called Department Store J and it was in the Jackson Medical Mall, well it was the Jackson Mall at that time and that area, well the area that the Mall is in was predominately black, or should I say it was black. And was, that was the Mall at the time before they built Metro and it was the only Mall for the area that was before all this came about, before the Metro Center and I remember that's were my mom always used to run in on Saturday's to buy her stockings for church the next day and the sales lady was just really rude and momma asked to speak to the manager and I just remember momma just going off. And I was embarrassed, but now realized that it might have been more to do with her skin tone, even though this was a Mall in a black area, once again, it was the only Mall for Jackson, so you know.

I: Do you recall if the sales associate that she was taking to was black or,

R: Oh she was white, she was a white lady.

I: Anything about that situation stick out in your mind now?

R: Well, and I guess because that was the first time, normally, like I said, every Saturday we went to Department Store J to get her stockings and that was the first time I can recall that there was a white salesperson. Normally the lady that was in that area was always black and she knew my momma. You know cause everybody was just accustomed to her coming in, and that's the only thing she went to buy, was stockings, so. We used to tag along even though we weren't shopping, but and so, and you look and I wonder with she, did momma escalate the situation but now that I look at it, maybe as an adult she recognized what was happening. As a child I just thought, like I said, my momma was acting crazy.

I: Did your mom mention anything about that situation to you or your sister later, afterwards?

R: No. She did tell my dad but she didn't. My sister was a baby at the time.

I: How old were you when this occurred?

R: I was 9.

I: Okay, we're gonna move up a little bit in time, tell me about your attitude towards shopping now.

R: You talking about as far as negative experiences?

I: No just your attitude towards shopping.

R: Well up until this year I hated shopping unless it was at the grocery store, at Wal-Mart. But um,

I: Tell me about that,

R: Why I hate shopping?

I: Yes.

R: I hate trying on clothes. If I could just go on a rack and pick something up and walk out the store with it I'm fine. But once McRaes turned into Belk's, I am loving shopping again.

I: Why?

R: I don't know what it is about Belk's but, I just fell in love with them. Now I do like to shop, at like the Outlet Malls. I do like going to Outlet Malls. But as far as the concept of everything under one roof, I don't know, it's just. And the only store that I will go is Belk's that's the only store I will go to. And Wal-Mart.

I: Tell me about a typical shopping experience for you. Are you generally looking for something when you go out to a Mall?

R: Yeah, I don't just go just to, you know how it's a social experience for people. Normally when I go, I'm looking for something. I'm either looking for something for me or a gift for somebody else.

I: Do you recall the last time you were out shopping?

R: Last week.

I: Tell me about that, you were out looking for something for yourself or somebody else?

R: I was looking for a graduation gift for somebody, didn't buy them anything, but I brought myself something. Three blouses.

I: Where, were you at Belk's?

R: Of course.

I: Anything particularly pleasant or unpleasant in that last shopping trip you just had that stands out in your mind? Anything out of the ordinary?

R: Yeah, it was something that kind of upset me and I just tell myself well maybe she couldn't apply it to my situation, but there was some coupons in the paper and I had given them to my co-worker because I had not planned on going shopping to Belk's. I was going to go get something from for the graduation gift, but then um, my friend told me that she had already purchased that for her child, so I had to re-think my plans. So I ended up going to Belk's. I was a little upset because I had given my coupons away and I didn't wanna ask for them back, so I went on ahead and like I said, I didn't find what I wanted to get her, but I found some tops that were on sale. And so, there was a young lady in front of me, she must have known the sales associate, the sales associate was an older black lady and um. The sales associate asked her "do you have your coupons?" she said no. She said hold on a minute and she went and found this booklet and used a coupon, but when I checked out, she didn't do the same thing for me. But I keep saying to myself, well maybe because my shirts were on sale and I couldn't remember, but I thought the coupon said you could use them on sale items, you know certain sale items, but that disturbed me. Cause I know, normally when I go, Even when it was Department Store H if you didn't have a coupon, you know they had some extra one's and all they had to do was just scan it. But that kind of upset, but I'm still gonna keep going, so.

I: Did you ask her about it?

R: No I didn't because I couldn't remember what the coupon said,

I: Okay.

R: But I'm almost positive the coupon said you could use it on sale items. But like I said, she knew that girl because she was asking her about people in her family, you know so there was a pre-established relationship there, so. But it kind of upset me she didn't use the coupon for me.

I: Okay, so that was when you were getting ready to buy the shirts for yourself,

R: Right um hum.

I: Alright. Before we go to negatives, you said you enjoyed shopping at Outlet Malls?

R: um hum.

I: What is it about Outlet Malls that you enjoy?

R: We normally, well the closest one we have is the Big Spur Inn. I love the Corningware stores, they just have stores that you don't see in the Mall. You just, you've got your Corningware store, you've got your Dickie Store, Osh Gosh Store.

I: How often do you go shopping at the Outlet Mall?

R: I would say maybe once every two or three months.

I: You said before that you usually don't go shopping as a social experience, is that true of the outlet malls as well, have you gone there for a purpose?

R: Well normally when I go to the Outlet Mall, now I would probably say that was social because I'm normally going with somebody else. And it's just, do you wanna go? It's just a ride. I'm not looking for anything when I go there.

I: Now tell me about a particularly negative experience that stands out in your mind that you attributed to discrimination.

R: Um, I hate, this is Department Store C, and this is probably why I don't like Department Store C. This happened really at Christmastime. We have a cotillion and I was looking for a formal dress and it was actually this Department Store C right here at North Park, and um the sales person was an older black lady and I was, they had a lot of clearance racks, plus regular dresses. I was looking through them and there was a lady, only one sales associate on duty and there was a lady in the dressing room. And I mean you would think this lady was, she was a personal shopper for this customer because she would bring stuff back and forth to the point where, every time I would ask her, can you help me? And she said um "I'll be with you in a minute". So I said okay. And I mean she never would, you know help me.

I: Okay you were telling me about,

R: I always normally buy my formal dresses from Department Store C because they have really good sales on their formal dresses at Christmastime. And it just really got to the point where I went to another register to ask somebody to help me and she said, "well I can't help you, that's not my area I

have to stay over here”. I said okay, she said but there is somebody over there. I said, well she’s not helping me, I said she’s told me three times that she’ll be with me in a minute, I said she’s constantly back and forth with the customer that’s in the dressing room and I said, I really don’t have that kind of time to wait on an individual like that. I said you know if she would just help me find something, cause the racks were just jam packed and they were not in order, you know, they were not how they normally have sizes going around the little circular thing but they were just different sizes and I said and I was just trying to get some assistance and I can’t get any. And I said, I really wanna buy my dress here. She said okay. So I went back over there and once again the lady was still, you know acting like I was invisible. So I went to the shoe department, the shoe department is like right next to the women’s department and I asked somebody if they could call a manager. And they said well, we have to call up to the um, customer service desk and see if we can get somebody down. I just said forget it, and I left and I didn’t get my dress. And well, I went back I would say right before March, we had a regional conference in Memphis cause and I wanted a new dress for that, since I didn’t. Because normally what I get at Christmastime is what I wear to the regional conference. Same sales lady and she was doing the same thing and I stopped her, I said you know I was in here before Christmas trying to buy a dress and I said you didn’t help me and I said, I’ve always purchase my dresses here and I said I don’t know if you work on commission and you thought I wasn’t going to buy anything, but you can ask any sales associate at Department Store C who’ve ever worked in this department. I always buy my formal dresses and sometimes I buy two. I said but you missed out on that sale and you’re gonna miss out today too because I refuse to shop here while you are working on duty, I’ll come back this afternoon. She got kinda huffy with me and I just walked away. And I have not been back to Department Store C since. Because I was really just that ticked off.

I: That second time when you went in has she approached you at all, or had you approached her?

R: No, I had to ask, you’re talking about the second time around?

I: Yes the second time.

R: Well no, I was looking and then I saw her running back and forth and I was just looking at that time. Then I saw her running back and forth, I said oh it’s the same lady again, and then that’s when I went up to her and told her about the incident. Because I really felt like she needed to know.

I: How did you feel the first time when that happened? You said that you felt invisible, tell me about some of the emotions that you were feeling at the time.

R: I was really peed off, it was really. You know, I could see the first time when she said I'll be right with you. But it was just constantly telling me that and just walking around. I mean there were times I could be standing at a rack and she was trying to find something for this lady and it was just as if I wasn't even standing there. You know, it didn't make a difference, she just kept looking on the rack and taking stuff in there. And I'm looking on the same rack and you could have said, well what can I get for you? But she never once said, what can I help you look for? It was always, I'll be with you in a minute.

I: Were you shopping by yourself at this time or

R: Yes cause normally I do it on my lunch break.

I: Did you mention it to management, the second episode?

R: No, I just left. And I've always contemplated writing a letter to them because, but you know, I don't wanna get anybody fired. But just to let them know that they lost a customer because I will probably never ever, especially now that Belk's is here, I'd never ever go back to Department Store C. And that's the only Department Store C in the tri-county area and I can see, in the sale papers I've seen shoes and purses that I would really like to have, but um, I just I'm not going back to Department Store C. And I guess the other thing that bothers me also is that this was a black lady. This was not a white lady, this was a black lady and every person I went to get help from the shoe department to the careers section, they were black. And it was just like the attitude you know. I guess I would expect something like that from a white sales associate but to get that from somebody that's black and I'm dressed in my uniform. Well just cause I'm dressed in my uniform you can't assume I can or cannot afford something. You're supposed to treat me just as well as you treat your other customers until, you know, you see otherwise. But, I was just, the attitude that I got from somebody like me was shocking.

I: Is that an attitude that you said the other sales associates seemed to have or was she different than?

R: Well, she, her thing was, and it could be the truth, was that she couldn't leave her register to go over there. Her register was, it was not, it was within eyesight but to walk away, then she would be neglecting her area and I can understand that. But she didn't offer any other alternatives. She listened to my story and was just like, oh okay, I'm sorry and that was it. Then when I went to the shoe department, it was basically as if they didn't wanna call management because I guess they didn't want a scene, I don't know. And it wouldn't have been a scene; I just would have stated my situation. If they had helped me, I probably would have got smart and said I need some help and I can't get any help. I wasn't gonna cause a scene, I wouldn't do that.

I: You said you were peed, did you tell other people about your experience there, or ?

R: Yeah, I told some of my friends. And not to discourage them, but because I just couldn't believe it. I mean, like I said, that was the, I can't recall if it's the first. It's probably not the first, but it's one of the most blatant mistreatments I've had by black people. Like I said, you know, that kind of stuff you expect from white people, but I um I just was shocked because I never had a negative sales experience at Department Store C. I've always had, I mean there have been times when I've wanted the sales people to leave me alone, but they were just that helpful, but and normally in the formal wear section you need help zipping up and they are always helpful. But um, this time I was just really ticked. And see they closed the Department Store C in Metro last year, or year before last and I always liked them too. So, see I had no alternative, I couldn't say well, forget them, I'll just go up to the other one. This was the only Department Store C.

I: Would you shop at Department Store C in other cities now or has your experience there soured?

R: That's a good question. I've said I'll never go back to Department Store C but I never thought, I'm thinking based on when I went to Memphis to visit my sister and we went to the Mall. I'm trying to think we didn't go to Department Store C because she doesn't like Department Store C so that was based on her decision. That's a good question, I don't know. Um, I actually like, I like their clothes they can be pricey, but they have good sales. When they have a sale they are good sales so I would say probably, possibly. When I go to Department Store C I'm looking for something specific, so it would have to be based on something I saw in the paper, I guess.

I: Looking back, is there anything that you would have done, if that situation were to happen now knowing what you know and with history on your side is there anything that would have done differently?

R: I probably would have said something a little more abruptly to the sales associate. But because I was on my lunch break and I was pushed for time, I just really did not have time to point out how she was treating me, but the next time I think I would wait to let her know.

I: What was her response, you said when you went the second time you told her that she had lost a sale. You said she was shocked, but did she say anything or do anything?

R: She tried to apologize but I was walking away. It was, to me it was too late, it was too little too late. I just really wanted to let her know cause I was

wondering, I kept saying I wonder if they work on commission around here, cause if they do, she needs to know what she's missing and she's done missed out twice.

I: Are there any other negative experiences that stand out in your mind?

R: Oh Discount Retailer B. I frequent Discount Retailer B too much and I guess that's why I get, um. I go, I visit Kim sometimes and where she lives and there's a Discount Retailer B out on Lakeland and I only go there when I'm going, when I'm like going to see her, if I'm in the area, which is very rare, but I went through this check out line and I remember, this was just a couple of weeks ago. April 1st as a matter of fact, we had an event, and I said well I'll just go to the grocery store up here right quick and I was looking in the meat department and I just, I was just remarking to myself, I said ooh they have a lot of different things, and I have noticed what I call the "white Discount Retailer Bs" have better stuff than what I call the "black Discount Retailer Bs" and I just said to myself, ooh this Discount Retailer B has a much better selection than the one on highway, on 18 and that's the black Discount Retailer B and the man that was putting out meat, he said "of course". He said of course and I said okay,

I: He said of course?

R: Yeah and I was just like, okay. So I walked off and went to check out and I checked out in the line and most of the people that shopped there tend to be white, you know people that actually live out there and the sales associate was white and she was just, you know, scanning my stuff like she was in a hurry actually to the point where I had to get a new carton of eggs cause she was scanning and I said, excuse me is there a fire? And she said no, and I said I used to work at Discount Retailer A, I said I know it can be frustrating. And she looked at me like, I ain't asked you nothing. And I was like okay. So I won't be going back to their Discount Retailer B.

I: Did you verbalize your feelings from that experience?

R: Because sometimes I'm always wondering, am I overreacting.

I: Tell me about that.

R: Because having worked in retail myself the customer before another customer can really tick you off to the point where unfortunately you might take it out on the next customer. You know and I guess it's why, when I used to work in McDonalds when I was in High School and when I go to McDonalds I know that sometimes the managers can be ratty about the smallest, craziest thing and that can display in your attitude, and that's why when I go, you know, you see some customers who are cut up or get mad because they asked for this, that and the other, but I try to always be patient and be calm and that's why I guess I really

looked at this situation at Discount Retailer B as, well was she being rude because I was black or was she being rude just because maybe she was having a bad day. And so you don't wanna just always throw out the 'race card', so I try to you know. In that case too, it wasn't worth it, I wasn't gonna get any satisfaction out of that, especially with the doubts I had in my head.

I: You said you had doubts in your head, but it was enough for you so you weren't going to come back to that Discount Retailer B anymore,

R: Right.

I: So tell me about that. You had some doubts but yet?

R: Well, between her and the meat man, it's just. I was I mean I think I was more taken aback by his comment than I was her attitude. And I knew he wasn't talking to anybody else because I was the only one. I was looking at some oxtails and I remembered the price of the oxtails at the one on 18, cause I never buy 'em cause they are so high. But they were cheaper at the one on Lakeland and I just looked at the freshness and the quality and I was like oh, you know and there was nobody else standing around so I know he was commenting on the remark I said. So that was, the attitude for him to say that. Now I don't like the store on 18 granted. Um,

I: What is it about that store that you don't like?

R: Like I said, it's a black Discount Retailer B. I mean even down to clothes, you can see the difference in the clothes. Even this Discount Retailer B right here you can see the difference in what they have. The selection, the layout of the store is nicer. Now the layout at Lakeland is one of the best one's around, um. It's just, but the store at Lakeland it seems as though the people are always watching you too. I've been there just to buy cotton balls onetime and it just seem like they look at you, you know. I ain't appreciating that, but um, the one on 18 is just, it doesn't look as bright and cheerful as the other Discount Retailer Bs, to me. In other words, it doesn't look like they put much effort into their store as they did the others. And it was one of the first, is it the first Discount Retailer B? Well this was a Discount Retailer B at one time then they knocked it down and scaled it back because it wasn't doing well and then I think they built that one on 18 and then this one got turned a year or two ago. But um.

I: This one is a Discount Retailer B here?

R: It is now, it started off as a regular Discount Retailer B then they changed it. No it was a 24-hour Discount Retailer B and then the 24-hour thing weren't working, then they went back to being a regular Discount Retailer B, then they re-

did it and made it a Super Discount Retailer B. But I think the first one was the one on 18, I believe that was the very first Super Discount Retailer B in the area.

I: How often do you shop there?

R: At that particular one or at Discount Retailer B period?

I: At that particular one.

R: I would say maybe, now. It was 2 or 3 times per week, but now that I work out this way in Madison I shop at the one in Madison more often, so I would say now, I would probably say I'm lucky to go once per week now.

I: Okay. Any other situations stand out in your mind or experiences?

R: Shopping?

I: Yes.

R: Okay. The hair stores unfortunately.

I: Tell me about that.

R: This was not a situation that necessarily involved me it Specialty Store E right here that's by the um, it used to be a Just for Feet store, but it's um a beauty supply store run by Chinese people, or Asians I guess they like to be called. And the lady was putting out some stuff and I always go in there to buy my little girl's barrettes because you can get 200 barrettes for 99 cents, so um. So I went in to buy some barrettes and two of the kids were behind the cash register and the little boy said "watch her, watch her". I said I know he ain't talking about me. And where I was it was like, this was the cash register and the burettes were against that wall and he kept saying, "you see her, you see her. What's she get, what's she took" And I said okay, so I'm getting ready to buy my barrettes and his mom, I guess I assumed it was his mother the one that was putting stuff out and he kept saying "she touched that, she touched that". I said okay, well I didn't get my barrettes I just left them. And now that situation could have, I'm glad my little girl wasn't with me, but that one kind of upset me because this was a child saying that.

I: Did you just, you had already gotten the merchandise and taken it up there to be rung up?

R: um hum.

I: Did you say anything to the sales person that was there?

R: When he said “she touched that, she touched that”. I told her don’t worry about it, I’m not gonna get anything and she looked like she couldn’t understand. I guess I was supposed to be too stupid to know that he was talking about me. But I knew who he was talking about, there wasn’t nobody else in the store unless they were further back in the store, before, but it was the two little kids, me and their mother. So and I have not been back to that one. The one that’s closer to my house, the people are very friendly. Very nice and it’s to the point that they know us and they know, you know I don’t get any remarks like that, but I was kinda ticked off by that one.

I: It sounds like; in the experiences that you’ve recounted for me it sounds like there are lots of different ways that you can resolve situations. But you chose to resolve it by not going back to that store. Kind of personal boycotting?

R: Oh most definitely.

I: Tell me about that.

R: I just, I mean I’m not gonna patronize your business if you don’t appreciate my money. My money is the same color, same President on it as everybody else’s and for you to mistreat me. If you don’t want me in your store. I mean legally I guess you can’t put a sign up there that says, you know, no blacks allowed or whatever. Or whatever you wanna say, but if your running retail, you have to treat everybody. I mean there is very little room for discrimination in retail nowadays and I’m just not going to give you my money, point blank. And you know some people say, well you still go to Discount Retailer B. Yeah but that Discount Retailer B may not do as much business as the other Discount Retailer B. Their sales are hurting. Yeah, all the money’s goes into one general pot for Discount Retailer B but each store is looked at and I know that, so that’s just a numbers they have to meet. And you know when I go to Discount Retailer B I spend money, so uh, uh.

I: Is there anything else that I haven’t asked you about that you want researchers and marketers to know about this experience.

R: Advertise, yes. I would look at advertisements and I guess because I am plus size, don’t show me plus size clothes on a size 12 person. I mean that’s just, to me because that another form of discrimination. I mean, I know, they say, you know, they wanna sell the clothes and it has to look good, but there are some nice plus size models. I can’t get, you know and then I go in a store and it don’t look anything like I did on the size 12 person. No, that ticks me off. You know I don’t ever look at what color the model is, but I do look at what her size is.

I: Interesting. That's um actually another area that I'm gonna be studying when I finish my dissertation is discrimination against people based on their size. Which do you think is more prevalent or do you feel that you experience more?

R: The size.

I: Really, tell me about that.

R: When you say in advertisement or do you mean in shopping?

I: In shopping.

R: Oh no, in shopping, no I don't think so because I stick to my size. I stick to, I'm either looking for me or. Now, some of the things I like for Mother's Day or Christmas when I look for my mom, and I self consciously say I know these people are wondering what I'm doing over here, but that's just me just being self conscious about it, but I've never had as far as shopping. I've never experienced anything.

I: Okay. Well I think I've touched on every area I need to touch on. I wanna make sure I don't have anything else to mention.

End of Interview.

INTERVIEW SIXTEEN

Participant: AA Female
Married
Early 20s
No children

I: Today is May 30th and I am with interview number one on this date. You already know the topic of my dissertation report, but we are going to start with you telling me just a bit about yourself, so tell me about yourself.

R: Well I'm a graduate student. I'm 23 and I'm from Virginia originally, just moved here about a year ago. Miss Virginia very much. I'm married no kids, one dog, um that's about it.

I: Tell me about growing up in Virginia.

R: Well it was very um, I have a lot of good memories, and I have some bad memories. It was very diverse because we lived near a, we lived near an Army base. So it was a lot of people there coming and going, so I met a lot of people from a lot of different countries, it was very interesting.

I: Were you, did you grow up on an Army base?

R: No I lived right outside of the Army base, so my father was retired so I could go on and off the base when I wanted to and then all of the students from the base were bussed out to our school.

I: Okay, so the school you went to had an um, really diverse population?

R: Yeah, I mean it was majority white but it was still diverse because the students that were ethnic were of different backgrounds.

I: Okay. Do you have any brothers or sisters?

R: I have four little sisters, um they live with my father and they live in Newport Beach.

I: Okay, oldest of five,

R: Yeah one just turned 18 and she's graduating in a couple weeks, so excited for her, yeah, they are getting so old.

I: Yeah it happens so quickly. Okay, tell me about your life now.

R: Right now I have no life. Like I said I'm a Graduate Student. I don't do anything but study and go to class. I sit at home and watch the dog wait for my husband gets home and go to bed, do it all over again, so I have no life.

I: Okay.

R: But I am making plans to go to the African Festival next weekend.

I: Where is that?

R: That's gonna be, the first one is gonna be at the Museum, I have to get your email and send you the whole thing, it's from Thursday til Sunday and at the park down in East, I don't know how to say the name Chilhowie

I: Yeah I know exactly,

R: two days they're gonna have vendors

I: I went to that last year, okay.

R: How was it?

I: It was okay, I was disappointed by the turn out, they did have, I liked the vendor and the shopping but it was a really, really small turn out there, it could have been a lot better, but maybe because it was just starting last year, maybe it will be better this year.

R: I hope so; I just want some shaved leather.

I: You can get shaved leather, I do remember seeing that.

R: I've been looking for it since I got here and I can't find it.

I: How long have you been married?

R: We just got married in December,

I: Oh, so you're a newlywed.

R: But we've been together for 7 years so. We're really not new.

I: Let me see what else I need to know about your life now. I guess that about covers it. We'll move onto the shopping area some, tell me about shopping. What's your attitude in general towards shopping?

R: I have a kind of a no-nonsense attitude when it comes to, if I go into a store and nobody greets me I'll walk out, because I just feel like customer service comes first. And if you don't greet me, you really don't care if I'm there or not, so I'll leave I don't wanna give you my money. I don't wanna give you my money, that's how I feel about it. But if I walk in the store and you greet me, but you don't kind hound me, I feel more comfortable that way. A lot of stores you'll go in there and they'll follow you around every 5 minutes, "can I help you find something?", "can I help you find something?", I don't like that because I just feel, I guess I'm claustrophobic too so I kinda feel closed in like you're following me, so I'll leave too.

I: Tell me what stores you enjoy shopping in.

R: Hum, I like heath food stores.

I: Okay, anyone in particular here?

R: No not in particular, I just go into whichever ones I can find. Me and my husband we like looking at stuff like that. Of course clothes, um I go in New York & Company, we also go in Express, J C Penny, Hex all the department stores, plus mostly we always stay in the department stores.

I: Any department stores that you particularly like?

R: I used to like Hechts a lot 'cause they have some good sales, but let me iterate I'm a graduate student so I have no money.

I: Okay, tell me about a typical shopping experience for you at New York and Company, how often do you go shopping there?

R: Oh I window shop a lot, so I'll walk in and I'm just looking. Usually New York are really good about customer service. There is this one lady there we really like, she's just really bubbly. But she'll come to you and she'll tell you about the sales and she'll say if you need any help, just let me know and she'll leave me be, you know, just to walk around and look at what you want.

I: You said she'll leave you be, tell me a little bit more about that.

R: Well, after she tells you the sales what's going on, she'll say if you need help. She'll tell you her name and she'll walk off and she'll go do what she needs

to do, but you know if you need help, she's there. You know if you need help, she's there that's what I like.

I: How often would you say you so shopping there or window shopping there?

R: At least once a week.

I: Okay. Does she know you as a regular customer there?

R: Well no, we don't. Cause every time I go there I look different. I always have my hair done differently, so. I don't think she's recognized me yet.

I: Okay, what is it about Express that you enjoy?

R: We go in there, me and my husband we go in there to see, we call them the cloths, it's not really clothes we call them pieces of cloth. So we go in there just to see what styles they have in. We just sit there and laugh at em. That's what we do in there.

I: So you don't typically purchase things there.

R: No. If I purchase anything it's accessories. Jewelry or anything like that, but clothes no.

I: What do you think about the sales staff there?

R: They really don't say much when you walk in there, um, but I really ignore them because I know I'm not there to buy anything. They don't say much to us.

I: Okay, tell me about a typical shopping experience at Hechts.

R: Hechts, usually when you walk into there's really no-one there to greet you unless you walk into a specific section. Um, I really don't remember anything negative or positive about Hechts.

I: When you go there are you generally shopping for something in particular or are you just browsing?

R: Usually I'm just browsing just to see what they have. I usually always go to the clearance first. And then, I'll just, you know walk around the store, just to see styles they have and depending on what's on sale, depends on what I buy.

I: Okay. No we are going onto a specific situation, tell me about, and you can take a few seconds to think about this or a couple minutes to think about it, a particularly pleasant shopping experience you've had. Where something just really stood out to you as enjoyable or memorable for whatever reason.

R: Oh, this happened yesterday, I went to Walgreen's that's where I shop, Walgreen's as far as Pharmacy and we bought a pregnancy test cause we were trying to figure out if we were pregnant or not. And, the lady at the front, she goes well I hop it turns out the way you want. And I was like, well thank , I had never heard anybody say that before.

I: That was a good response,

R: I liked that.

I: I won't ask you cause I'm dying to know if it turned out they way you want.

R: It didn't.

I: Oh well you're young

R: Yeah I have time,

I: You do, 23 is very young. I had my daughter when I was 28,

R: Oh really,

I: that was perfect timing for me.

R: My mom had me when she was 23 too, I just I'm just trying to carry on the tradition.

I: You do have plenty of time, looking back that just seems so young, 23. Um any other shopping experiences that were particularly pleasant stand out in your mind?

R: That was the most recent, so that kinda overshadowed everything else. I don't really remember much. I don't remember too much any other ones. Um, no.

I: Okay, that's okay we'll switch gears tell me about a negative experience that stands out in your mind.

R: Okay. We went into an international food store. Um, we weren't looking for anything in particular but since my husband, he was born in Germany and he has memories of certain foods so I guess he went in there looking for something. Well we went in there, it's owned by an Asians, we went in there and we were going up and down the aisles looking for what he wanted. The Asian guy would follow us, I mean he made no attempt to try to hide that he was following us and it was really pissing me off. And I told my husband, I was like, I know you see that. He was like yeah but, you know, this is a store, I'm not trying to. I guess he wasn't in the mood for it. But I was really getting heated and I wanted to say something to him, but my husband wouldn't let me. Because I was going to actually go up to him and point out the fact that he's following us around the store, there's no point in doing that. But I didn't say anything, and I've never gone back to that store. I won't go in there, even though the Laundromat is right beside and I needed change one day, I would not go in there. I went to another store, way, way, way, down just because I would not go in there.

I: That store's here in Knoxville?

R: Yes here in Knoxville.

I: How often had you all frequented that store before?

R: That was our first time,

I: That was your first time there.

R: Um hum.

I: Tell me about how you noticed him following you around the store, how that unfolded. Go back in time; just kinda tell me everything you remember.

R: We walked in the store, he was in the back. He came out and when I see someone I usually just smile. Um I smiled at him and he went to the front. He looked around, he went outside, he looked around um, we were in the first aisle. We went over to the second aisle. He came up behind us like he was following exactly where we were going. And he would adjust stuff on the shelves. He's adjusting stuff on the shelves, we'd move, he would move adjust something on the shelves and I'm like, I know these shelves are fine, you know these shelves are adjusted he doesn't need to sit there and do that. So I'm like alright, let's see what he does. We go to the next aisle, go around to the next aisle, sure enough two seconds later here he comes adjusting stuff on the shelves and that's when I said to my husband, "I know you see this". He's like yeah and that's when the whole thing, you know, I'm walking through the store, I'm getting madder and madder and my husband is just like, just ignore it. So I go, I can't ignore it, I wanna say something, but that's my nature and his nature is not confrontational.

I: Have you been in a similar situation like that where you have confronted a sales clerk who was responding that way?

R: No, that was the most blatant that I've ever seen it. Um, a lot of the other ones are more subtle. You know what's going on but at the same time you kinda question it because they are doing it to everybody, so it's like is it because of race or is it just because of the people who are in the store, you know, you really can't tell. And that's happened a couple times here in Knoxville and maybe once or twice when I was in Virginia.

I: Do any particular store stand out in your mind as memorable with that happening?

R: A lot of times actually it was in hair stores. The hair stores that are usually owned by Asians, it usually happens. Um, nothing really in any major stores, but one thing I did notice, it's kind weird. In Sally's if you notice the black hair care aisle is right in front of the register. So, it's like they don't have to walk around and watch you because they can see you right from the register.

I: I have not noticed that until you just mentioned it.

R: You never noticed that?

I: But you're right, I'm thinking about the one I go to out near Western, back there.

R: Maybe I'm just being too militant, but I notice stuff like that.

I: No that's, that is a fair conclusion I would think.

R: And then another thing CVS actually, they had something in the news where um they are only tagging the black hair care items with sensors and then if you turn around and look at something like, you know Rogaine costs like almost \$50.00 there's nothing on it.

I: You said this was in the news recently?

R: Yeah.

I: I missed that one somehow. I have to look that up. I want to return for a minute back to your experience at that international food store. You said that you were getting madder and madder and that it was really pissing you off. Tell me a little bit more about those emotions?

R: Um, well it was a lot of mixed feelings, I didn't want to cause a scene cause my husband was there and everything, but at the same time, I just felt like it was wrong. Even though we have the stereotype or whatever I just felt like there was no need for him to follow us so closely behind us. Its like, we didn't really present a threat, we weren't acting, like we weren't hunching over and stuffing stuff in our bag. I didn't understand why he would act like that. It just made me mad. It almost made me put all Asians into one group and I had to remind myself that you can't base one Asian on the whole population, so I had to, it was like a constant battle in my mind. It's like part of me is saying this bad stuff, this negative stuff about Asians and the other part is saying, don't think that way, this is just one time. But then I think about when I was back home and I was in the hair stores, and I'm like, they did it too. So, it's just, I don't know what to think anymore.

I: You used the phrase "a constant battle in my mind", tell me about that, I like that phrase, tell me what you mean by that.

R: Well, a constant battle, what I mean by that is I feel like African-American women always have to adjust themselves, so that's a constant battle that always goes on in my mind, so it's like do I come out and say something and appear as the stereotypical black woman or do I keep my cool and try to dispel those stereotypes. So it's like what do I do? Because, as the same time I feel like I'm not being true to myself if I don't do what my heart feels I should do.

I: You said that you wanted to respond at that time but your husband was saying no way you should calm down.

R: He's military, so he's learned how to deal with stuff like that. He's learned how to repress it, but I can't do that. I just, I don't know... I can't do that.

I: If you had responded, what would your response have been? What would you have said to the owner?

R: You know you always think about that after, like what would I have said. At the time I probably would have just turned around and said, why are you following us? But then I think about it and I try to go another approach and just walk up to him and just say, maybe start a conversation or something just to see how he reacts. Cause I don't wanna, if you come out defensively like that, of course he's gonna go on the defensive, but knowing me and myself just then, at that moment I would have done that.

I: Have there been any other experiences that stand out in your mind, negative experiences?

R: Um, one but I don't think it was, I think it was sort of by accident. When I first got here, I met some of the girls from my program. And they took me, I told them I do not like country music. I just don't and I don't feel comfortable being in a setting that plays a lot of country music because to me that's, to me it's a "redneck" place, but they took me to one anyway. So, I was the only African-American in there and I felt so uncomfortable I saw a Confederate flag and I have this big issue with Confederate flags and I felt really uncomfortable and I'm sitting there waiting for them cause they wanted to go to karaoke or whatever, but it was like, my senses where so heightened, it was like everything someone said, everything someone did, every time someone came near me, no matter what little action it was, I took it offensively, but I think it was just the situation, it wasn't purposely, I think it was just the situation.

I: Anyone, anything in particular stand out as offending you at the time?

R: Um, I was sitting at the bar and it was like, there were two people on both sides of me and they would keep knocking my chair and like they just keep doing it. Kicking it or bumping into, I'm like okay, maybe they were drunk but at that time, it was like, very offensive to me. Yeah, the bartender um never got my order, never acknowledge me whatsoever, so yeah, that right there. I don't know if that was my heightened sensitivity or if that's really how it was, but he never acknowledged my order or that I wanted anything or the fact that I was even sitting at the bar.

I: Did you confront?

R: No, I did not confront them because being that I had just met them, I didn't want them to think of me as being so racial, you know, I didn't want them to think of me that way, so I just, I kinda just let it go.

I: Did you ever ask the server "can I get some help over here?"

R: Well no, cause you know it's so loud in there, so what you do, you know you take out your money and you set it there, and they see your money and usually they come right over. But no, he never came.

I: Other times, in conducting these interviews restaurants seem to come up a lot. Have you had negative experiences in restaurants?

R: Um, I mean, we've had some, just really bad servers, but nothing, nothing, no nothing like that.

I: Nothing where you felt like you were being discriminated against.

R: No.

I: Other situations that sometimes come up are when people are shopping or a new home or an apartment or shopping for a car. In either of those situations have you encountered any negative?

R: I have noticed that, actually recently me and my husband went to go get a motorcycle. I went first, because I wanted to look to see what they had. And when we walked in, or when I walked in, no-one said anything. There was a lady who worked at the desk and she said Hi. So I said hi back to her, then I'm walking around and it took about 10 minutes for someone to finally come and asked me if I was looking for something in particular and I said no. By that time I was ready to go. So I just walked out. My husband went in there and it's like, as soon as he walked in the door everybody jumped on him. So I was like, okay it's a sexist thing. Everybody just jumped on him. And we went to another place together, this was a different motorcycle shop. We walked in there and the same thing happened, they just looked at us. Okay, then we walk around. Then finally someone comes up and says something to us. But that goes back to what I said before. I don't like when I walk into a place and no-body says anything or everybody just stares at you, it's like everything goes silent. I don't like that and I felt uncomfortable. And I told him, I was like do you notice that? He's like you're just so sensitive, but I see stuff like that all the time and I hate it.

I: You said you made a conscious decision back at the international food store not to shop there again. Have you made that decision at other stores because you were not greeted when you walked in, in a timely manner?

R: Um, I've made that decision at a couple of like fast food chains, but it's that particular store. I won't go into that particular one. I may go down to Farragut to go to the same store, but I won't go to that store. Um, if I can think of one in particular, Fast Food Restaurant B. There's a Fast Food Restaurant B on Kingston which is really close to my house, but they are so bad about when you walk in there, they are so bad about greeting you that I won't go there anymore. I really haven't been to a Fast Food Restaurant B in a while just cause I can't. I don't know where another one is.

I: Would you under any situations write an email to management, write a letter to management telling them about your situations, can you think of any instances where that would be warranted where you would do that?

R: Are you asking have I or would I?

I: Would you, retrospectively looking back on any of those situations or projecting yourself in the future if those were to occur again.

R: I probably would. I just, I feel like sometimes letters don't work because I feel when you train your employees, you train them how you are. So if your employees are like that, it's a reflection on the whole company, that's how I feel.

I: Interesting.

R: When I worked at McDonald's that's how it was. Some of the employees there, they would follow what the manager's did. So the managers, if they were you know, just going to the back and talking about customers and be like, whatever, you know, saying whatever they were saying. Of course members are going to pick up on that, and they are going to start acting like that. So that's why I feel like there's no point.

I: Interesting. Okay. Is there anything else that I haven't asked you about that you think um retailers or marketers need to be aware of when considering this issue.

R: Um, I think the biggest thing is just you can't always follow stereotypes because everybody, I feel like everybody is an individual and everybody is not going to follow those stereotypes. And when you start following those stereotypes that's when you really ask for trouble because people like me are out there and they might say something or do something or write a letter or do whatever, so. I think that what they really should focus on, is just dispelling those stereotypes.

I: On last question. Oftentimes, when we are in these kinds of situations we react the same way we've seen our parents react when they were in similar situations. Can you recall any instances when you were growing up and you were in a retail environment with one of your parents and you saw them being treated negatively and how they responded.

R: Well, I'm very different from my mom, should wouldn't say anything. She's very I wouldn't say laid back, but she's a non-confrontational person, so I grew up seeing that, and then she would get in the car and then she would rant and rave, and I'm thinking, well why didn't you say anything. But that's just my nature. So I grew up thinking that I wouldn't be like that, in the past what my mom was because I felt like it hurt her, and you know it did something to her but she didn't have the strength to say anything. And, I wonder, Like I ask her sometimes, is that because of where you grew up? She grew up in um far, far, country. Like deep country so it was a lot of the Jim Crow stuff going on and I think maybe,

I: What state is she from?

R: Virginia, but like on the North Carolina Virginia line, deep, deep country. So I figure maybe it's just the way she was conditioned growing up and conditioned not to talk back and conditioned, you know to respect your elders. I respect my elders, but when you start disrespecting me, then I'm gonna disrespect you because I feel like I'm an adult too.

I: Interesting.

R: So, I'll respect you to a point. After that, the whole disrespect comes in, that's when it stops.

I: Do any situations with your mom really stand out in your mind, do you recall any of those instances?

R: No. I don't know particulars or which store it was or what she was buying. I just remember being in the store and then we get out to the car and she's complaining. In the store I didn't see it. But when we got to the car and she's saying something about it I'm like wow did that happen, why didn't you say anything, so. Little stuff like that.

I: Okay. Well I think I've covered every area I needed to cover, let me see, I think we have, so I will officially conclude the interview now.

End of Interview

VITA

Edith Davidson graduated from Jackson State University with a B.A. in Economics in 1999 and from the University of Mississippi with an M.B.A. in 2002. She joined the marketing faculty at Auburn University (Auburn, AL) in the fall of 2006. Her research interests include minorities in advertising and the societal consequences and responsibilities of marketing in a diverse society.