

2011

Educational qualification and racial attitudes: does educational qualification really matter?

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EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION AND RACIAL ATTITUDES: DOES EDUCATIONAL
QUALIFICATION REALLY MATTER?

A Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

in

The Department of Sociology

by
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December 2011

DEDICATION

To my best friend and beloved husband, Braja.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe a debt of gratitude to several people for their assistance during the course of my thesis research. First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to my advisor Dr. Susan A. Dumais for meticulously guiding me in writing my entire thesis. She has been a strong and supportive advisor throughout the entire process and always given me freedom to pursue independent research.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the other members of my committee - Dr. Troy C. Blanchard, and Dr. Mark J. Schafer for their supervision, guidance and advice. I am deeply indebted to them for sharing their knowledge with me. I am also grateful to Dr. Yoshinori Kamo, Director of Graduate Studies, who always helped me and supported me to survive in this country as a graduate student. I am also thankful to other faculty members of the department of sociology for providing meaningful graduate education which have helped me how to think about sociology as well as social stratification and social inequality. It is needless to mention that I am also obliged to Tonya Duthu for her continuous flow of information regarding registration and administrative works.

I would also like to thank my parents, Meera and Swapan Kumar Ray, my brother Sourav Kumar Ray, my in-laws, Anita and Ananga Mohan Ghosh, my sister-in-law Arpita Ghosh, and the rest of my extended family for all the love, encouragement, and support they have given me throughout my entire life.

I would also like to thank my friends and well-wishers (to name a few: Anirban, Asokda, Ayan, Bijeet, Debangana and Suparno, Debjani, Keyadi and Tarunda, Krishnendu, Moumita and Avishek, Nahid and Jamalbhai, Rahul, Rajib, Sandipan, Somadi and Soumyajitda, Somnath,

Sourav, Srinibas, Surma and Ram Shankar, and Trina) who always inspired me, encouraged me, helped me, and amazed me to survive during my difficult times in this foreign country.

Finally and most importantly, I would like to thank my best friend and husband, Braja. He showed me the way to make my dreams a reality. Without his care and support this journey would have been unthinkable. Braja, I love you and thanks for your love, encouragement and emotional support.

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ABSTRACT

Most of the literature on social inequality reports that traditional old-fashioned, overt racism has been transformed into a modern symbolic form of covert racism in contemporary American society. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva asserts that “color-blind racism” is the dominant form of racism that persists in the post-Civil Rights period in the USA. A large body of research argues that education may not make too much of a difference in individuals’ racial attitudes. Studies also show that despite the fact that education is a crucial social institution, it cannot make the ills of intolerance and negative racial perceptions cease to exist. Given the fact of the subtle, complex role of higher levels of educational qualification, this thesis contends that Whites’ higher levels of educational attainment do not necessarily ensure decreases in negative racial perceptions/attitudes toward minorities. Also, it is hypothesized that parents’ higher levels of educational attainment do not have any positive effect on decreasing negative racial perceptions/attitudes toward minorities. The present study produces the following findings: 1) there is a negative association between Whites’ educational attainment and their perceptions about the differences between them and African Americans. Specifically, education is negatively associated with beliefs that African American-White differences are due most African-Americans’ having less in-born ability to learn or lacking the motivation or will power to pull themselves up out of poverty. However, interestingly, the association between education and Whites’ perceptions about the differences between them and minorities being due to discrimination remain non-significant in this analysis. 2) Parents’ educational attainment is negatively associated with Whites’ perceptions of the differences between Whites and African Americans being due to discrimination. 3) This study does not report any significant relationship of the interaction term between Whites’ educational attainment and African American

interviewer. Interestingly, the existing evidence does not provide a clear pattern of support for the hypothesis that Whites' educational qualification and racial perceptions/attitudes are not inversely related to each other in the American social structure.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Social science research shows that Whites' racial attitudes toward African Americans have improved dramatically in the USA since the post-Civil Rights era (Bonilla-Silva and Forman 2000; Bonilla-Silva 2003; Bonilla-Silva, Lewis, and Embrick 2004; Dasgupta 2009). Despite the fact that systematic inequalities exist in each and every country and the United States of America is no exception, several social science studies show that racism is pervasive and adversely influences the quality of life of the racial minority groups in American social structure (e.g. Williams and Williams-Morris 2000). More specifically, the racial stratification system of the USA in "economic, political, social, and educational spheres, is the real cause behind the persistence of racial inequality in America" (Epps 1995:600). Furthermore, American racial ideology is the combined product of collective normal racial actions of all the people who are in a superior, dominant position (Bonilla-Silva, Lewis, and Embrick 2004). However, most of the literature on social inequality reports that the traditional old-fashioned, overt racism has been transformed into a modern symbolic form of covert racism in contemporary American society. Research also depicts conflicting results regarding Whites' contemporary racial views. On one hand, survey results show that in the post-Civil Rights era, a large proportion of Whites claim that they believe in the principle of integration and equality, namely, residential integration, their children's interaction with African American children, interracial marriages, not allowing racist leaders or government (Bonilla-Silva and Forman 2000; Bonilla-Silva 2003). On the other hand, most Whites do not support programs that reduce racial inequality, such as welfare or affirmative action, send their kids to all-white schools, and live in all-white neighborhoods (Bonilla-Silva

and Forman 2000; Bonilla-Silva 2003; Brezina and Winder 2003). Additionally, researchers find discrepancies between survey and interview-based studies. Unlike survey reports, interview-based research consistently shows that Whites are highly prejudiced about minorities (Bonilla-Silva and Forman 2000).

The conflicting results of the studies on the contemporary racialized social structure in America draw attention of the present researcher to the “liberalizing effect” of education, as it has been the most significant agent of socialization that aims to transmit liberal values and reduction of intolerance and prejudice among socially segregated individuals (Hello 2004). In other words, the liberating role of educational qualification is expected as a consequence of both the greater internalization of democratic norms and improvement in individual’s cognitive skills (Federico 2005). Studies show that despite the fact that education is a crucial social institution, it cannot make the ills of intolerance and negative racial perceptions cease to exist. Education may weaken the stereotypes, prejudice, and negative racial perceptions of African Americans but the higher level of cognitive and reasoning skills associated with higher levels of educational attainment also reinforces the reasoning skills or justification power consistent with the basic predispositions of racism (Federico and Holmes 2005).

Existing social science studies focus in detail on various aspects of racism, education, and social inequalities in the American social structure, for example: comparative historical works of traditional and modern forms of racism, residential segregation and its consequences, domains of inner city and modern ghetto, affirmative action and welfare dependent African Americans, education and numerous forms of social stratification, and the persistence of racism within contemporary American society (Massey and Denton 1993; Greenwell, Leibowitz, and Klerman

1998; Virtanen and Huddy 1998; Anderson 1999; Steele 2003). However, to date, no quantitative studies have attempted to systematically combine and measure whether there any significant effects of individuals' educational attainment on symbolic racial attitudes (racial perceptions, stereotypes, and prejudice) of Whites toward their fellow African American citizens in the United States. This domain is very crucial to be studied because almost all social scientists agree that although in a new and more complex guise racism still perpetuates in this country. Perhaps, old-fashioned prejudice still exists and lower rates of interracial marriages and higher rates of White opposition to individualistic governmental policies for African Americans are the evidence (Virtanen and Huddy 1998).

The present study seeks to explore the association between higher levels of educational attainment and contemporary symbolic forms of racial attitudes of Whites in the USA by using recent three years (2004, 2006, and 2008) of data sets from the General Social Survey (GSS). This exploratory study focuses on both social inequality and social psychological literatures to analyze whether higher levels of educational attainment (of both individual and parents) and racial attitudes of any individual are inversely related to each other or the role of educational attainment is non-significant.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Race is a social construction (Gilbert, Fiske, and Lindzey 1998) and it is one of the categorical mechanisms (along with class and gender) of social inequality in American society (Massey 2007). As a consequence, racism is an organized system of subjugation of a specific racial group relative to others. An ideology of inferiority is positively associated with the system of racial subjugation because the subjugated racial group is categorized and placed in the lower strata of the social ladder by the dominant and superior racial group (Williams and Williams-Morris 2000). Social science studies show that racism is pervasive in the United States of America. Studies find contradictory patterns for racial inequality between majorities and minorities in America. Some social scientists contend that racial inequality is persistent compared to the past in America, whereas, some survey data consistently suggest that racial inequality between Whites and African Americans in the spheres of education, economy -- namely income and occupation -- and the health care system has been reduced since 1960s. However, some researchers claim that the intensity of racism in American society has changed significantly during the last seventy years (Fischer, Hout, Sanchez, Lucas, Swidler, and Voss 1996; Schuman et al. 1997; Bonilla-Silva and Forman 2000; Bobo and Fox 2003; Dasgupta 2009). A growing number of studies show that the decline of “old-fashioned,” “redneck,” “Jim Crow,” or overt racism has been replaced by a new form of subtle racism or covert racism. In other words, traditional racism has been transformed into “symbolic racism.” According to Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2006), this symbolic racism perpetuates without racists in American society. He asserts that the “color-blind racism” is the dominant form of racism that persists in

the post-Civil Rights period in the USA. Moreover, he points out that it is “discrimination with a smile.” In other words, it is Whites’ animus toward African Americans in its contemporary guise which is politically potent (Sear and Henry 2003; Gomez and Wilson 2006).

In this present chapter of this thesis, the social science literature on the meaning and implications of symbolic racism or covert racism will be discussed first. Then the literature on social psychological aspects and the mechanisms behind the symbolic racism/modern forms of racism, namely, social categorization, stereotypes, and prejudice will be discussed. Finally, relevant literature on the role and implications of educational attainment and racial attitudes/perceptions will be discussed.

Symbolic Racism or Covert Racism

Kinder and Sears (1981) originally define symbolic racism as “resistance to change in the racial status quo based on moral feelings that blacks violate such traditional American values as individualism and self-reliance, the work ethic, obedience, and discipline” (p. 416). In other words, the authors determine that change in the racial status quo has been resisted as the combined product of the Protestant work ethic and prejudice against African Americans. As the contemporary political belief system or new form of racism which is called symbolic or modern has taken shape over the old-fashioned, overt form of racism, the number of Americans who favor residential and schooling segregation or support negative racial statements like African American people’s inborn inability or unintelligence has declined (Virtanen and Huddy 1998). However, this new kind of *racetalk* or symbolic racial ideology continues to support White supremacy by safeguarding Whites’ racial privilege while managing to avoid overt racial discourse (Bonilla-Silva and Forman 2000). While survey results show the declining significance

of older forms of overt racism, discrimination in the sphere of education, in terms of resegregation through white flight to the suburbs and to private schools, segregation within schools, tracking, and housing still perpetuate (Bonilla-Silva 2001). In other words, Whites have become superficially liberal; particularly, in their opinions about social distance between the majority and minority races, biological inferiority of African Americans, and discrimination against minorities (Sears and Henry 2003). Bonilla-Silva and Forman (2000) contend that in a society where Jim Crow racism is a taboo, the end of the Jim Crow era does not ensure the end of White supremacy; on the contrary, color-blind racism has replaced the Jim Crow racial structure by reproducing White supremacy in a nonracial covert manner. For example, Whites' privileges in the economic, political, social, and educational domains have been continuously maintained by avoiding direct/overt racial discourse, justifying the color-blind racial attitude, such as blaming the African Americans for their poor work ethic or claiming that discrimination is non-existent in contemporary America, perpetual residential segregation in a covert fashion by not advertising available units to the minorities, unequal access to loans or securing high paid jobs only for Whites (Bonilla-Silva and Forman 2000; Bonilla-Silva 2003).

The benefits and advantages received by Whites compared to African Americans at all the levels of the American racialized social structure, namely, at political, economic, social and even psychological levels perpetuate into racism through establishment of the notion that African Americans are culturally and biologically inferior (Bonilla-Silva 1997; Bonilla-Silva 2003). Bonilla-Silva (1997, 2003a, 2003b) argues that color-blind racism is indirect, slippery, and apparently non-racial and he operationalizes post-Civil Rights American racial ideology as an interpretive repertoire. For instance, Bonilla-Silva (2003) explores racial stories and testimonies

by pointing out four storylines of Whites generated from the 1998 Detroit Area Study. The storylines that Whites have produced in justification of their new racial ideology are “the past is past and present generation of Whites are not responsible for the mistakes of the past,” “I did not own slaves,” “my (friend or relative) did not get a (job or promotion) because an African American got it,” and “if others (Jews, Irish, Asian, Italians) have made it, how come African Americans have not?” Moreover, it has become quite a norm for Whites to use phrases and associated generalized negative racial statements for African Americans similar to “I am not a racist, but...” “they are lazy,” and “they are dependent on affirmative action” (Bonilla-Silva and Forman 2000). In other words, these consistent and generalized storylines help Whites to justify their color-blind racial ideology while also helping to sustain the existing racialized social structure. Bonilla-Silva and Forman (2000) compare White college students’ responses to survey items with in-depth interviews and claim that symbolic racism helps Whites to maintain their superior and privileged status by remaining in disguise of being nonracist. They find significant differences, contradictory racial views and specifically, more prejudiced responses in in-depth interview responses of Whites on affirmative action, interracial marriage, and discrimination against African Americans compared to their responses in the survey. The authors report that they find similar patterns in the in-depth interview responses compared to the survey responses on the affirmative action, interracial marriage, and discrimination questions in which respondents’ approval rates dropped 50 to 60 percent. Moreover, Bonilla-Silva and Forman (2000) claim that respondents use several phrases in in-depth interview, such as “I don’t know,” “I am not sure,” “I am not prejudiced,” “I agree and disagree” to avoid/hide their overt racial views.

Additionally, Bonilla-Silva, Lewis, and Embirck (2004) argue by analyzing the 1997 Survey of College Students Social Attitudes and the 1998 Detroit Area Study (DAS) that only 15% of the college students and 12% of the DAS respondents are racially progressive because those persons support affirmative action, interracial marriage, and view that racial discrimination still persists in America. The authors claim that the most Whites are color-blind racists, given the very small percentage of racially progressive individuals. However, Bonilla-Silva (2001) also remarks that only 4 percent of the DAS White survey respondents would have qualified as racially progressive if very strict criteria for measuring that was employed to their study.

Moreover, several researchers depict some widely held racial perceptions/beliefs in contemporary American society. The beliefs are that racism is non-existent in contemporary America and it is a phenomenon of the past, it does not have any significant effect on the African American population, and any racial or social inequality is the consequence of individuals' (i.e. African Americans') cultural deficiencies (Brezina and Winder 2003; Sears and Henry 2003; Zamudio and Rios 2006). Whites believe that African Americans exaggerate when African Americans complain about social inequality or discrimination against them and undeserving African Americans receive benefits from special government treatments (Virtanen and Huddy 1998; Bonilla-Silva and Forman 2000). Studies find that the Civil Rights movements prepared the ground work for racial equality by eliminating Jim Crow racism. However, contemporary Whites possess new kinds of prejudice and negative feelings about African Americas and as the consequence racial equality remains only in principle (Sears and Henry 2003). For example, Sears and Henry (2003) assert symbolic racism stems from the combined source of Whites' racial prejudice and their general conservative attitude against African Americans. The authors

find that Whites believe that African Americans lack individualistic values of America. In other words, Whites view racial disparities between them and African Americans as the product of individualist attributions such as a poor work ethic and lack of intelligence of the minority community (Gomez and Wilson 2006).

Similar to Bonilla-Silva's notion about color-blind racism Bobo and Kluegel (1997) also depict symbolic racism as "laissez faire racism." The authors assert that this covert form of racism is markedly different, more complex and subtle compared to traditional Jim Crow racism. This new form of racial ideology perceives that African American culture is inferior compared to the culture of Whites and is the sole cause for the lower social and economic status of African Americans (Bobo and Kluegel 1997). Moreover, according to Dasgupta (2009), the color line that differentiates between White American and African American groups has become illegitimate and unethical compared to the rigid, legitimate racism that existed fifty years ago (Grant-Thomas and Orfield 2009). She argues that the American color line is becoming increasingly more complex compared to sixty years earlier as a consequence of immigration and globalization (Grant-Thomas and Orfield 2009). Fiske (1998) also asserts that in spite of the social science survey reports that document White Americans' significant positive attitudes to school integration, African American presidential candidates, and cross-racial intermarriage, in reality "the true attitude of white Americans remain quite negative" (Gilbert, Fiske, and Lindzey 1998:359).

Furthermore, Virtanen and Huddy (1998) assert using 1990 GSS dataset that old-fashioned racism does not wither away; it has changed its form only. In summary, most Whites support the *blame the victim* mentality by generalizing that African Americans are solely

responsible for their lower social status. It is needless to say, African Americans still continue to experience substantial disadvantages in most aspects of their life in this era of this new racial ideology (Sears et al. 2000). For instance, residential segregation remains almost unchanged in contemporary American society compared to the old racialized social structure, although in a covert fashion, such as not showing all available units, quoting higher rents or prices, and not advertising available units to African Americans (Massey and Denton 1993; Bonilla-Silva, Lewis, and Embrick 2004). Employment advertisements are published in mostly White networks or newspapers which help to ensure to keep disadvantaged African Americans with limited job opportunities and upward social mobility. When “smiling face” discrimination occurs in the economic field by tactfully managing to avoid potential African American employees (for example, by saying “we don’t have jobs now, but please check later”), racial gerrymandering or annexation of predominantly White areas remain effective in the political sphere (Bonilla-Silva, Lewis, and Embrick 2004).

Proponents of symbolic racism such as Bonilla-Silva et al. only compare and remark on the old-fashioned and the modern form of the racialized social structures in the broader social nexus in the USA. However, there is a large body of research in the field of Social Psychology that focuses on the social-psychological aspects of Whites’ perpetual negative racial perceptions of minorities. By describing the processes of social categorization, racial perceptions, stereotypes, and prejudice, the social psychological literature will clarify the mechanisms behind symbolic racism in America.

Social Categorization, Stereotypes, and Prejudice against African Americans

Studies within social psychology show that Whites negatively stereotype African Americans and that negative racial stereotypes against African Americans are pervasive in American society (Moore 1988). Stereotypes clearly differentiate one social group from other groups. Studies show that the universal tendency of social actors to cognitively categorize people reinforces “in-group favoritism” (Sears, Fu, Henry, and Bui 2003). While in-group stereotypes are associated with powerful favorable images toward their in-group members, the opposite is true for the out-group. In other words, while positive attributes are associated mostly with in-group members, out-group members are stereotypically viewed possessing negative attributes. In-group perception is positively associated with worthiness, whereas; out-group perception is associated with derogation (Dasgupta 2009).

Social psychologists claim that the cognitive categorization process is unconscious and automatic in nature. This automatic, constant, and unconscious process is triggered by individual group differences that are visually prominent or on the basis of some trivial individual characteristics such as race, gender, and age. In this vein, the social categorization process segregates social actors into “in-groups” and “out-groups” or in other words, into “we” and “them” (Fiske 1998; Bonilla-Silva 2000). In other words, “categorization processes lead to the identification of social groups and individuals gain a sense of identity” (Delamater 2003:272). Theorists of symbolic racism argue that similar to old-fashioned racism, prejudice against African Americans and associated modern forms of racism or symbolic racial attitudes are also transmitted from one generation to the next through early childhood socialization and persist into adulthood (Virtanen and Huddy 1998; Bobo and Fox 2003).

Stereotypes take a crucial role within a social structure because individuals categorize themselves and others in any social interaction (Howard and Hollander 1997; Howard and Renfrow 2003). In other words, stereotypes clearly differentiate one social group from other groups because these are the mental images that guide an individual's interactions with other people. Reskin (2002) describes stereotype as an inferential process of individual characteristics that human beings habitually associate with a specific social group members. Moreover, stereotypes are the definition, descriptions, prescribed perceptions, attitudes, behaviors, and feelings about a specific social group (Hogg 2003). While Gilbert, Fiske, and Lindzey (1998) point out that repeated exposures in the culture make racial stereotypes more efficient and robust by validating it, Dasgupta (2009) admits that learned stereotypes negatively influence African Americans in adverse social situations.

Additionally, social psychologists find that in-group favoritism is associated with "status beliefs," the social differences or socially recognized reputations about a social category that develop and are shared by individual social actors in a social network (Ridgeway 2006). These status beliefs or cultural rules create the distinction between socially worthy or unworthy person and it is needless to say that the distinction created by status beliefs is an important component of group stereotypes (Brezina and Winder 2003). Brezina and Winder (2003) maintain by examining 1990 and 1998 GSS datasets that as race is salient in the United States of America even in the post-Civil Rights era when expressed belief of innate inferiority of African Americans has declined significantly; negative stereotypes or status beliefs about African Americans perpetuate. The prominent negative racial stereotypes of American Americans are lazy, inferior, unwilling to support themselves, and lack of effort or initiative, and less deserving.

It is noteworthy that Whites' belief in superiority, rationalizes their belief about the biological inferiority of African Americans in the USA (Hall 2001). Several studies show that African Americans or the "people of color" experience higher levels of unfair treatment because of their stigmatized social status. Hogg (2003) points out that intergroup conflict ensures increasingly extreme and resistant form of racial stereotypes. Tejfel (1981) also asserts that stereotypes may take the form of justification of the dominant social group that exploits a subordinate social group. The superordinate social group may stereotype the subordinate social group as unsophisticated or dependent (Delamater 2003). Social science literature depicts several stereotypes against the disrespected African Americans as primitive or rural, temperamental, enslaved, manual laborers, incapable, useless, unwilling to support them, irresponsible, ignorant, loud, musical, rhythmic, poor, stupid, worthless, powerless, unintelligent, lazy, violent or prone to violence, hostile, dangerous, sexually powerful, mentally dull, lacks self-control, and preferably welfare dependent (Brezina and Winder 2003; and Sears and Henry 2003; Federico 2005). Devine and Elliot (1995) report a consistent highly negative stereotype of African Americans, such as lazy, ignorant, musical, loud, aggressive, arrogant, stupid and low in intelligence, criminal, hostile, and poor. They study 147 undergraduate students of a White University of Wisconsin-Madison and operationalize stereotype assessment and personal beliefs assessment of Whites by analyzing total 93 adjectives associated with negative racial stereotype that are mentioned above in this thesis. The authors also include the 7-item version of the Modern Racism Scale (MRS) to assess prejudice in their study. Their research indicates that unlike the contemporary belief that racial inequality is declining, individual racial stereotypes are not fading in the USA. Perhaps, it seems from this study on college students that education cannot able to make significant difference in an individual's racial perceptions/attitudes.

Furthermore, researchers point out that stereotypes, prejudice, antipathy, and irrationality are associated with racial ideology (Taylor 1981; Bonilla-Silva, Lewis, and Embrick 2004). Social psychologists define prejudice as “the negative attitudes and beliefs or a uniform antipathy or contempt toward an out-group by both individuals and societal institutions across a variety of dimensions” (Williams and Williams-Morris 2000:244; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, and Xu 2002:878). According to Williams and Williams-Morris (2000), the categorization of African Americans as the members of an inferior racial group by Whites reinforces Whites’ racial prejudice against African Americans in the United States of America. Stereotypes against African Americans, Whites’ prejudice against them, discrimination, and racial inequality act like a “vicious circle” in America (Brezina and Winder 2003). While Brezina and Winder (2003) argue that the existence of racial stereotypes and associated prejudice are the main sources behind the placement of African Americans as a significantly inferior racial group compared to Whites in the American social structure, Williams and Williams-Morris (2000) claim that the stigmatized social status of African Americans reinforces racial inequality, such as unfair treatments of African Americans by Whites.

Thus far the pervasiveness of the new form of racialized social structure and the social psychological aspects of racism in America have been discussed in this thesis. Clearly, one of the components of this thesis is to combine Bonilla-Silva’s notion of color-blind symbolic form of racial attitudes with the social-psychological aspects behind it. However, this thesis also explores the role of education as one of the most important institutions of socialization of the symbolic racial perceptions and attitudes of Whites in the USA. Unfortunately, Bonilla-Silva only presents the new symbolic form of racism in American society without exploring the role or significance

of educational attainment on Whites' negative racial perceptions/attitudes. A growing number of studies depict the role of education as a socializing and liberalizing agent. For example, Gomez and Wilson (2006) assert that less educated Whites possess negative racial attitudes toward African Americans in contemporary America as well as in the Jim Crow racism era. However, a large body of research challenges this perspective. For instance, after reviewing the above mentioned study on college students, it seems that education may not work to make too much of a difference in individual's racial attitudes.

Educational Attainment and Racial Attitudes

Theoretically the role of education is to make individuals liberal from any formerly existing prejudice (Allen 1993). The association between education and increased racial tolerance is well established fact in social science literature (Federico and Holmes 2005). Education, particularly higher levels of educational attainment may be reflected through increased racial tolerance, norms of equality, elimination of negative racial attitudes, and increased positive attitudes toward African Americans because higher levels of educational qualification is clearly connected to higher levels of knowledge and awareness which tends to promote higher level of tolerance (Federico and Sidanius 2002). In other words, the liberating role of educational qualification is expected as a consequence of both the greater internalization of democratic norms and improvement in individual's cognitive skills (Federico 2005). As higher levels of educational attainment are associated with better internalization of the norm of equality, there should be a negative association between higher levels of educational attainment and negative racial perceptions of African Americans.

However, several researchers argue that contrary to the conventional role of education; the real situation is somewhat more complex compared to the expected socializing and liberalizing role of education. Studies show that despite the fact that education is a crucial social institution, it cannot make the ills of intolerance and negative racial perceptions cease to exist. Education may weaken the stereotypes, prejudice, and negative racial perceptions of African Americans but the higher level of cognitive and reasoning skills associated with higher levels of educational attainment also reinforces the justification power consistent with the basic predispositions of racism (Federico and Holmes 2005). For example, Federico and Sidanius (2002) contend that respondents with higher levels of educational attainment do not believe in the inferiority of African Americans. However, the authors also assert that education strengthens the relationship between Whites' perceptions about African Americans and their negative notions about affirmative action because educated and politically knowledgeable people possess the notion that affirmative action by itself is antiegalitarian in nature.

Similar to this finding, Federico and Holmes (2005) also argue that the impact of higher levels of educational attainment on anti-African American racial perceptions is complicated. They analyze the 1991 National Race and Politics Study, 1992 American National Election Study, and 1998 Los Angeles County Social Survey datasets to explore the relationships among education, Whites' racial perceptions of African Americans, and their criminal justice attitudes. They use measures of racial perceptions and resentment, political predispositions, concern about crime, fear of crime, aggressive responses to crime, criminal justice attitudes, and education. The authors contend that higher levels of educational attainment do not ensure uniform enlightenment on norm of equality. Additionally, Federico (2005:694) finds by analyzing the 1991 National

Race and Politics Study on educational qualifications and opinions about welfare that “when provided with a racial-category cue, college educated individuals’ responses to welfare may be more colored by their perception of the racial group stereotypically linked to welfare dependency, i.e., Blacks.” The author operationalizes welfare responses by using measures of work ethic perceptions and political predispositions. He finds that typical stereotypes of African Americans, such as lazy, irresponsible, and lacking in self-reliance are less prevalent among college educated Whites. However, on the other hand, college educated White respondents react negatively to a hypothetical “African American man” compared to a “man” in his study.

In another study on Whites’ welfare attitudes, individualism, and educational attainment; Federico (2006) also finds similar results. Drawing data from the 1991 National Race and Politics Study, Federico (2006) operationalizes individualism using measures of political predispositions and black stereotype endorsement. Several other studies also find that the impact of educational attainment is nonsignificant in affecting views on racial inequality in America. For example, in any school system, the teachers are the main agents of socialization and they possess required educational qualifications to perform their jobs. Epps (1995) shows that the relationships between African American students and teachers are more dominant and authoritative than their White American counterparts. Studies show that school teachers have negative racial stereotypes and expectations about their African American students compared to their White American students. The People of color are viewed as incapable of learning complex and abstract subject matter, expected to fail, racially discriminated by their teachers and forced to study in disorderly learning environment (Epps 1995).

Zamudio and Rios (2006) contend that the persistence of racial inequality, racial discourse, Whites' privileges, and White students' negative racial attitudes in higher educational institutions like American universities reinforce the view that education cannot fulfill its liberalizing role. Their qualitative study on students' (majority are Whites) journals at an American university supports Bonilla-Silva's coinage of color-blind racism. The authors study the students' descriptions of a situation that involves race. They argue that color-blind racism is practiced in everyday life and "they do take place in a liberal public institution where the rhetoric of equality is foremost does, however, problematize the role of the institution in the racial formation of the liberal era" (Zamudio and Rios 2006:499). Additionally, studies show a significant interconnection between racial hostility and policy evaluations for minorities among Whites who have a college education (Federico 2006).

Bonilla-Silva, Lewis, and Embrick (2004) find that most white college students in their study are color-blind racists. They show that the symbolic form of racism perpetuates among college students through some significant testimonies like "the past is the past," "I didn't own any slaves," "if Jews, Italians, and Irish have made it, how come blacks have not?," "I didn't get a job because of a black man" (Bonilla-Silva, Lewis, and Embrick 2004:563-567). Zamudio and Rios (2006) also claim that in contemporary American society the universities contribute toward the reinforcement of the superiority of Whites through the universities' silence on on-campus racial issues. Moreover, Omi and Winnant (1994) argue that American universities provide the larger social setting for the racial formations through the racial discourse in the institutional setting. Franklin et al. (1996 -1997) point out the prevalence of racism in prestigious American educational institutions. Similarly, Feagin and Sikes (1995) also surprisingly find that even in

Ivy League institutions negative racial attitudes toward African Americans exist. The authors argue that the campus cultures in these top ranked US universities are essentially white in nature. Racist jokes, stereotypes and prejudice like “all African Americans are athletes,” and subtle racial discrimination are significant. Federico (2005) claims that the effect of an individual’s educational attainment would remain non-significant unless the racial discourse and negative racial perceptions of African Americans become nonexistent in the American social structure.

The primary connotation associated with color-blind racial ideology is that Whites have become only “superficially” liberal, while discrimination against African Americans perpetuates in every aspect of life through cognitive categorization, stereotypes, and prejudice. While literature on symbolic racism and social psychology primarily focus on the different aspects of these two spheres, research on the sociology of education focuses on the role, significance, and implications of educational attainment on individuals. While higher levels of educational attainment do not ensure uniform enlightenment on the norm of equality, several other studies also show that the impact of educational attainment is nonsignificant in elimination of racial inequality in America. Bonilla-Silva does not address the role or implications of higher levels of educational attainment in his study on color-blind racism. Clearly, the significance of higher levels of educational attainment is a theme in this study. While common sense perception depicts that higher levels of educational attainment should be associated with increased tolerance and more positive attitudes toward African Americans, Federico and Holmes (2005) find that the implications of higher levels of educational attainment are more subtle and complex in nature. By applying the combined themes of Bonilla-Silva’s notion of color-blind racism and Federico’s complex nature of educational attainment the present research seeks to explore whether higher

levels of educational attainment are inversely associated with negative symbolic racial perceptions/attitudes of Whites in the American social structure or not.

Additionally, this current study also seeks to explore the impact (if any) of parental educational attainment on an individual's racial perceptions/attitudes. Parents are the most crucial and primary agents of socialization in an individual's life and thus, the parents' higher levels of educational attainment should have different effect on an individual's racial perceptions/attitudes compared to the parents' who have less education. However, to date, no quantitative studies have attempted to systematically measure whether there exist any significant effect of parents' educational attainment on Whites' racial perceptions/attitudes or not in the United States.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses in this study specify relationships between educational attainment and Whites' racial perceptions/attitudes. Specifically, the current research hypothesizes that Whites' educational attainment and racial perceptions/attitudes are not inversely related to each other in the American social structure. The conventional notion says that higher levels of educational attainment ensure increased racial tolerance and more positive attitudes toward the People of color. However, education may not work effectively to reduce negative racial perceptions; perhaps, the role of higher levels of educational attainment is somewhat more complex. If higher levels of educational attainment and negative racial perceptions/attitudes are inversely associated, social science studies would have found consistent patterns about the association. The negative racial stereotype and prejudice against African Americans are still in its full bloom, although in a newer form of color-blind racism. Researchers do not find consistent findings that

would show that higher levels of educational attainment, such as a college degree does appear to eliminate negative racial stereotypes and prejudice against African Americans.

The existing social science literature mainly focuses on the causes and consequences of racism, welfare programs, and affirmative action. Much of the existing literature ignores the question of whether there is an association between symbolic racism and higher levels of educational attainment. Based on the above discussion to combine Bonilla-Silva's notion of color-blind racism to higher levels of educational attainment and to explore the possible association between Whites' educational attainment and negative racial perceptions about African Americans the present study put forth the following hypotheses:

- 1) Given the fact of the subtle or complex role of higher levels of educational attainment, there will be not a negative relationship between Whites' educational attainment and negative racial perceptions/attitudes. In other words, Whites' higher levels of educational attainment do not necessarily ensure decreases in negative racial perceptions/attitudes toward minorities.
- 2) Also, if Whites' educational attainment and racial attitudes are not inversely related to each other, parents' higher levels of educational attainment do not have any positive effect on decreasing negative racial perceptions/attitudes toward the minorities. It was noted earlier in this thesis that family, more specifically, parents are the most crucial and primary institution/agents of socialization in an individual's life. If education effectively fulfills its conventional role to reduce the ills of social inequality, discrimination, and racial intolerance, then the Whites, whose parents possess higher levels of educational attainment, should have different (positive) racial attitudes

toward minorities compared to the Whites whose parents do not have higher levels of educational degrees. In this regard, if the parents' higher levels of educational attainment does have a positive impact on the individual's own racial perceptions, the association between Whites' educational attainment and negative racial attitudes should be in negative direction.

To explore about the association, the present study combines datasets from the General Social Survey year of 2004, 2006, and 2008.

CHAPTER 3

DATA AND METHODS

Data

This research is a secondary data analysis. The datasets for this analysis come from the General Social Survey (GSS - NORC) years of 2004, 2006, and 2008. The GSS is a survey that has been conducted either annually or biennially by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) since 1972. The GSS provides social science researchers several hundred survey questions on socially relevant issues like racial attitudes of a cross section of the American adult population. In other words, the GSS is a full-probability sample of English-speaking adults and surveys both males and females about their racial attitudes using numerous race related questions. To employ the most recent, nationally representative data and a larger sample size, GSS data set from three years (2004, 2006, and 2008) have been drawn and combined in this study. Based on extensive personal interviews of a total of 10,881 English-speaking adults living in the USA, the data were collected by NORC. Given that the - particular interest of this current study is on racial perceptions/attitudes and educational attainment, only White respondents (n = 7,943) from these three years were incorporated into the analysis.

Measurement

Dependent Variables

This study includes three dependent variables, all of which are straightforward measures of racial perceptions. For the first dependent variable, respondents were asked, “On the average (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) have worse jobs, income, and housing than white people. Do you think that these differences are mainly due to discrimination?” The second dependent variable measures respondents’ opinions on the biological inferiority of African Americans.

Respondents were asked “On the average (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) have worse jobs, income, and housing than white people. Do you think that these differences are because most (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) have less in-born ability to learn?” The third dependent variable asks the respondents “On the average (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) have worse jobs, income, and housing than white people. Do you think that these differences are because most (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) just don’t have the motivation or will power to pull themselves up out of poverty?” All of these three dependent variables are recoded in the same fashion; yes = 1, no = 0.

Independent Variables

To explore the association between racial attitudes and educational attainment two independent variables are used in this analysis. The first independent variable is respondent’s highest year of school completed. It is coded in years, ranging from 0 = no formal schooling to 20 = 8 years of college. The second independent variable is the respondent’s parents’ highest year of school completed. There is no variable that reflects parents’ combined educational attainment in the GSS, so the average of both father’s and mother’s highest year of school completed was computed for this research. It is also coded in the same fashion, in years as respondent’s highest year of school completed. It ranges from 0 = no formal schooling to 20 = 8 years of college. It was noted earlier in this thesis that parents are one of the most important agents of socialization and parents’ educational attainment may have significant impact on an individual’s own racial perceptions/attitudes, despite his/her own educational attainment. To explore about the significance/non-significance of parental educational attainment, the second independent variable was included in this analysis.

Control Variables

The demographic control variables of this analysis are respondent's age, sex, marital status, religious preference, total family income, subjective class identification, and region of interview. Age is coded in years and ranges from 18 to 89 or older. A dummy variable for female status (female = 1) was generated from the GSS dichotomous dummy variable sex. Respondent's marital status has been recoded as dummy variables for married and single (widowed/divorced/separated combined) categories and never married as the reference category. Religious preference of the respondent has been recoded as dummy variables for Protestant, Catholic, and other (Jewish, other, Buddhism, Hinduism, other Eastern, Moslem/Islam, Orthodox-Christian, Christian, Native American, and inter-nondenominational combined) categories, and none as the reference category. Total Family income is measured by combining the total family income variables of GSS years of 2004, 2006, and 2008. A new variable called "income" was generated by combining these three years. The income variable is recoded with total 23 categories ranging from 1 (under \$1,000) to 23 (\$110,000 or over). The "refused" category was dropped from the total family income variable of the year 2008. Subjective class identification is recoded as dummy variables for middle class and upper class, with working class (lower class and working class combined) as the reference category. Region of interview was recoded as dummy variables for Northeast (New England and middle Atlantic combined), Midwest (East North Central and West North Central combined), and West (Mountain and Pacific combined) with South (South Atlantic, and East South Central, and West South Central combined) as the reference category.

Two control variables measure the political predispositions of respondents. These two control variables are respondent's political ideology: whether the respondent thinks himself or herself as liberal, moderate, or conservative. It is on a 7 point scale, 1 indicates extremely liberal, whereas 7 indicates extremely conservative. The other control variable that measure respondent's political predisposition is political party affiliation, based on respondent's self-placement as Democrat, Independent, or Republican. It is recoded as dummy variables for Democrat (strong Democrat, not strong Democrat, and independent, near Democrat combined) and Republican (independent, near Republican, not strong Republican, and strong Republican combined) and independent as the reference category. The "other party" category was dropped from the political party affiliation due to its very low frequency.

The other control variables are respondent's opinion about in general, how close does he or she feel to African Americans (it is on a 9 point scale, 1 = not at all close 9 = very close), does he or she think that Whites are hurt by affirmative action (it is on a 3 point scale, 1 = very likely, 3 = not very likely), how they feel about having a close relative or family member marry an African American person (it is on a 5 point scale, 1 = strongly favor, 5 = strongly oppose), and interviewer's race. In this analysis, a new variable called "intblack" was generated from GSS variable interviewer's race. Interviewer's race has been recoded as dummy variables for black or African American (intblack = 1) and other (White, American Indian, Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Vietnamese, other Asian, other Pacific Islander, some other race, and Hispanic). Also, an interaction term is used to explore the impact of African American interviewer and respondents' educational attainment in the study. The relationship between the

respondents' educational attainment and the dependent variables, specifically, Whites' positive racial perceptions would be stronger in the presence of an African American interviewer.

Given the fact that the three dependent variables are binary variables (yes = 1, no = 0), the analytical method of this study is Logistic Regression. Four models are estimated for racial attitudes and educational attainment through the use of the logit command in StataIC Version 11. The first model includes only the control variables. One independent variable, namely, respondent's highest year of school completed has been added to the set of controls to the second model. In the third model the interaction effect between respondent's highest year of school completed and interviewer's race is added. Finally, the average of respondent's parents' highest year of school completed has been added to the fourth model. In all four statistical models the weight WTSSNR was used because "due to the adoption of the non-respondent, sub-sampling design, a weight must be employed when using the 2004-2008 GSSs" (GSS Cumulative Codebook:3103).

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Descriptive Analysis

Table 1 reports the detailed descriptions, measurement ranges, means, and standard deviations of the three dependent variables, two independent variables and individual characteristics, preferences or opinions that are controlled for in this study. The average year of school completed by the respondents shows that they have completed at least one year of college education (13.71, highest value = 20). However, the average year of school completed by the respondents' parents is (11.92, highest value = 20). The mean age of the respondents reports that they are middle aged (48.76, highest value = 89 or older), most of them are female (55%), and married (53%). Protestant as a religious preference is high, i.e. 52%. The average total family income of the respondents is between \$35,000 to 39,999; self-identified working/lower class (48.5%) and middle class (48%) respondents are almost same in numbers. About 42% respondents are Republican and moderate (4.2, highest value = 7). On average, the respondents neither feel they are very close to African Americans nor they are at all close to them (5.5, highest value = 9) and also they neither favor nor oppose if their close relative marries an African American (3.1, highest value = 5). However, the respondents, on average think that it is somewhat likely that Whites are hurt by affirmative action (2.2, highest value = 3). 35% of the interviews took place in the South, and only 8% of the interviewees are African Americans.

Only 8% of respondents believe in the biological inferiority of the African Americans and 31% of respondents think that the differences in terms of jobs, income, and housing between African Americans and Whites are due to discrimination in the USA. However, the percentage

for the respondents who believe that African-Americans have worse jobs, income, and housing compared to Whites are because lack of motivation or will power to pull themselves up out of poverty is high (50%) compared to respondents' opinion about inborn disability of African Americans.

Table 1: Descriptions, Measurement Ranges, Means, and Standard Deviations of the Dependent, Independent and Control Variables

<u>Variable Name</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Metric</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>
<i>Dependent variables</i>				
differences due to discrimination	Respondent was asked “On the average (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) have worse jobs, income, and housing than white people. Do you think that these differences are mainly due to discrimination?”	0 = no 1 = yes	0.306	0.461
differences due to inborn disability	Respondent was asked “On the average (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) have worse jobs, income, and housing than white people. Do you think that these differences are because most (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) have less in-born ability to learn?”	0 = no 1 = yes	0.083	0.276
differences due to lack of will	Respondent was asked “On the average (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) have worse jobs, income, and housing than white people. Do you think that these differences are because most (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) just don’t have the motivation or will power to pull themselves up out of poverty?”	0 = no 1 = yes	0.504	0.500

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Independent Variables

highest year of school completed	Respondent's highest year of school completed.	Coded in years. Ranges from 0 = no formal schooling to 20 = 8 years of college.	13.712	2.937
parents' highest year of school completed	Average of father's and mother's highest school year completed.	Coded in years. Ranges from 0 = no formal schooling to 20 = 8 years of college.	11.919	3.378

Control variables

age	Age of respondent.	ranges from 18 to 89 or older	48.764	17.189
female	Respondent's sex.	0 = male 1 = female	0.548	0.498
married	Marital status of respondent. Respondent was asked "Are you currently married, widowed, divorced, separated, or have you never been married?"	0 = no 1 = yes	0.529	0.499
single	Marital status of respondent. Respondent was asked "Are you currently married, widowed, divorced, separated, or have you never been married?" Widowed, divorced, and separated are combined as single.	0 = no 1 = yes	0.276	0.447
never married (reference category)	Marital status of respondent. Respondent was asked "Are you currently married, widowed, divorced, separated, or have you never been married?"	0 = no 1 = yes	0.196	0.397
Protestant	Respondent's religious preference. Respondent was asked "What is your religious preference? Is it Protestant,	0 = no 1 = yes	0.519	0.500 (Continued next page)

Catholic	Catholic, Jewish, some other religion, or no religion?" Respondent's religious preference. Respondent was asked "What is your religious preference? Is it Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, some other religion, or no religion?"	0 = no 1 = yes	0.242	0.429
some other religion	Respondent's religious preference. Respondent was asked "What is your religious preference? Is it Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, some other religion, or no religion?" Jewish, Buddhism, Hinduism, other Eastern, Moslem/Islam, orthodox-Christian, Christian, Native American, inter-nondenominational are combined into other category.	0 = no 1 = yes	0.073	0.261
no religion (reference category)	Respondent's religious preference. Respondent was asked "What is your religious preference? Is it Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, some other religion, or no religion?"	0 = no 1 = yes	0.166	0.372
total family income	Combination of GSS income98 and income06 variables. Respondent was asked "In which of these groups did your total family income, from all sources, fall last year – 2005 – before taxes, that is. Just tell me the letter."	Ranges from 1 = under \$1000 to 23 = \$110,000 or over. Mean family income ranges from \$35,000 to \$39,999.	17.128	5.166
working/lower class (reference category)	Subjective class identification. Respondent was asked "If you were asked to use one of our four names for your social class, which would you say belong in: the lower class, the middle class, or the upper class?" Lower class and working class are combined as working/lower class.	0 = no 1 = yes	0.485	0.500
middle class	Subjective class identification. Respondent was asked "If you were asked to use one of our four names for your social class, which	0 = no 1 = yes	0.480	0.500 (Continued next page)

upper class	would you say belong in: the lower class, the middle class, or the upper class?" Subjective class identification. Respondent was asked "If you were asked to use one of our four names for your social class, which would you say belong in: the lower class, the middle class, or the upper class?"	0 = no 1 = yes	0.035	0.184
Democrat	Political party affiliation. Respondent was asked "Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, Independent, or what?" Strong Democrat, not strong Democrat, and independent near Democrat are combined as Democrat.	0 = no 1 = yes	0.400	0.490
independent (reference category)	Political party affiliation. Respondent was asked "Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, Independent, or what?"	0 = no 1 = yes	0.177	0.382
Republican	Political party affiliation. Respondent was asked "Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, Independent, or what?" Independent near Republican, not strong Republican, and strong Republican are combined as Republican.	0 = no 1 = yes	0.423	0.494
think of self as liberal or conservative	Respondent was asked "we hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. I'm going to show you a seven point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal—point 1—to extremely conservative—point 7. Where would you place yourself on this scale?"	1 = extremely liberal 7 = extremely conservative	4.195	1.411
how close feel to blacks	Respondent was asked "In general, how close do you feel to Blacks?"	1 = not at all close 9 = very close	5.532	1.836
whites hurt by affirmative action	Respondent was asked "What do you think the chances are these days that a white person won't get a job or promotion while an equally or less qualified black person gets one instead? Is this very likely, somewhat likely, or not very likely to	1 = very likely 3 = not very likely	2.154	0.692

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	happen these days?"			
close relative marry black	Respondent was asked "How about having a close relative or family member marry a black person?"	1 = strongly favor 5 = strongly oppose	3.074	1.131
Northeast region	Region of interview. New England and Middle Atlantic coded as Northeast region.	0 = no 1 = yes	0.163	0.370
Midwest region	Region of interview. East North Central region and West North Central region coded as Midwest region.	0 = no 1 = yes	0.262	0.440
South region (reference category)	Region of interview. South Atlantic region, East South Central region, and West South Central region coded as South region.	0 = no 1 = yes	0.350	0.477
West region	Region of interview. Mountain region and Pacific region coded as West region.	0 = no 1 = yes	0.225	0.418
Interviewer is black	Interviewer is black	0 = no 1 = yes	0.083	0.275

Source: General Social Survey 2004, 2006, and 2008.

Logistic Regression Results

Table 2 reports how the respondent's and respondent's parents' educational attainment (highest year of school completed) are associated with racial attitudes of Whites in the United States. To explore the possible association between educational attainment and Whites' racial attitudes four separate models were run with the dependent variable that operationalize White respondents' opinion regarding whether the differences between them and African Americans are due to discrimination. In Model 1 (control model) how close Whites' feel to African Americans and Whites' belief that they are hurt by affirmative action are significant. In other words, while the closer Whites feel to African Americans and believe that Whites are not hurt by affirmative action, assert that the differences between them and racial minorities are due to discrimination. Also, the three regions of interview; Northeast, Midwest, and West remain significant in this model. Therefore, compared to South, White respondents of Northeast,

Midwest, and West regions believe that the differences between Whites and African Americans are due to discrimination. The effect of African American interviewer variable is also significant. Perhaps, in front of an African American interviewer, the White respondents show their belief in social equality and the differences between them and African Americans are due to discrimination in the USA. While total family income, political party affiliation as Republican, political views (liberal/conservative), and opinion about a close relative's marriage to African American variables are significant, the associations with the dependent variable are negative. Thus, while the respondents with higher total family income and conservatives (in political views) do not support the notion that the differences between them and African Americans are due to discrimination, compared to Independent supporters, Republican supporters have a lower log odds of believing that the differences between Whites and African Americans are due to discrimination. Moreover, the respondents who strongly oppose interracial marriage, specifically, a close relative's marriage to an African American person, also do not believe that the differences between Whites and African Americans are due to discrimination.

Model 2 adds the independent variable respondent's highest year of school completed after controlling for all the variables that are included in Model 1. In Model 2 all the control variables are significant in the same directions that are significant in Model 1. The newly added independent variable i.e. respondent's education remains non-significant in Model 2 and subsequent models. Interestingly, it partially supports the first hypothesis of this study. If education effectively fulfills its conventional role to reduce the ills of social inequality, then White respondents' educational attainment would have been significantly associated with the first dependent variable in the positive direction.

To explore the possible interaction between respondent's highest year of school completed and interviewer's race, an interaction term is used in Model 3. However, in Model 3 and in the subsequent Model 4 the interaction term remains non-significant. Surprisingly, this interaction effect is not as it was expected because respondents' racial perceptions are neither significantly strong nor weak, in the presence of an African American interviewer. It is quite possible that the respondents remain neutral in honestly admitting their opinions in front of an African American interviewer. Model 3 also shows a similar pattern of significance as Models 1 and 2 show except interviewer's race becomes non-significant after adding the interaction term.

Another independent variable is added in the last model. The new independent variable is respondent's parents' highest year of school completed. Model 4 depicts that this newly added variable is significant in negative direction. This finding supports the second hypothesis of this study that Whites' educational attainment and racial attitudes are not inversely related to each other, parents' higher levels of educational attainment do not have any positive effect on decreasing negative racial perceptions/attitudes toward the minorities. The effect is in the expected direction and it shows that the respondents, whose parents possess higher levels of educational attainment, do not favor the notion that the differences between them and African Americans are due to discrimination. However, after adding parents' highest year of school completed, the effects of some control variables change. The control variables Northeast region, Midwest region, and West region are associated with the dependent variable with increases of approximately 0.118, 0.254, and 0.167 in size. Interestingly, compared to South, more respondents in Northeast, Midwest, and West regions do believe that the differences between Whites and African Americans are due to discrimination. Additionally, political party affiliation

as Republican, Whites' belief that they are hurt by affirmative action, and interviewer's race become non-significant in this model.

Table 2: Logistic Regression Predicting Whites' Opinion Regarding Differences between Whites and African Americans are Due to Discrimination

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
age	0.009 (0.005)	0.010 (0.005)	0.010 (0.005)	0.010 (0.007)
female	0.161 (0.155)	0.158 (0.156)	0.156 (0.156)	0.055 (0.180)
married	-0.171 (0.216)	-0.169 (0.215)	-0.168 (0.216)	-0.143 (0.245)
single	0.006 (0.252)	0.004 (0.252)	0.012 (0.254)	0.089 (0.284)
Protestant	0.131 (0.213)	0.133 (0.213)	0.132 (0.213)	0.087 (0.239)
Catholic	-0.165 (0.233)	-0.158 (0.233)	-0.153 (0.234)	-0.366 (0.269)
some other religion	0.074 (0.313)	0.066 (0.314)	0.069 (0.315)	0.241 (0.376)
total family income	-0.051** (0.017)	-0.053** (0.017)	-0.053** (0.017)	-0.049* (0.021)
middle class	0.285 (0.170)	0.270 (0.175)	0.269 (0.175)	0.051 (0.203)
upper class	0.337 (0.484)	0.314 (0.488)	0.312 (0.488)	0.043 (0.604)
Democrat	0.022 (0.222)	0.013 (0.223)	0.010 (0.223)	0.207 (0.269)
Republican	-0.511* (0.230)	-0.524* (0.230)	-0.531* (0.230)	-0.240 (0.274)
think of self as liberal or conservative	-0.155** (0.061)	-0.152** (0.061)	-0.150* (0.061)	-0.159* (0.072)
how close feel to blacks	0.103* (0.048)	0.101* (0.048)	0.101* (0.048)	0.118* (0.054)

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whites hurt by affirmative action	0.275* (0.122)	0.270* (0.123)	0.274* (0.124)	0.223 (0.141)
close relative marry black	-0.217** (0.072)	-0.216** (0.072)	-0.217** (0.072)	-0.210** (0.084)
Northeast region	0.495* (0.234)	0.485* (0.236)	0.482* (0.237)	0.600* (0.278)
Midwest region	0.559** (0.202)	0.553** (0.202)	0.546** (0.204)	0.800*** (0.232)
West region	0.684*** (0.211)	0.674*** (0.212)	0.673** (0.212)	0.840*** (0.248)
Interviewer is black	0.615* (0.265)	0.607* (0.265)	0.043 (1.204)	1.314 (1.526)
highest year of school completed		0.014 (0.029)	0.009 (0.030)	0.063 (0.036)
respondent's education*black interviewer parents' highest year school completed			0.039 (0.083)	-0.029 (0.104)
Constant	-0.641 (0.645)	-0.777 (0.726)	-0.725 (0.737)	-0.725 (0.953)
Observations	1237	1236	1236	939
Pseudo R-squared	0.093	0.092	0.093	0.1084

* $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$ *** $p \leq 0.001$

Standard errors are in parentheses.

Source: General Social Survey 2004, 2006, and 2008.

In summary, the findings in Table 2 support the two hypotheses of this present study. As the previous literature suggests that the role and implication of higher levels of educational attainment are more subtle and education fails to effectively diminish the ills of social inequality and discrimination against African Americans (Federico 2004; Federico 2005; Federico 2006),

the association between respondents'/respondents' parents' education and the first dependent variable also suggests the similar pattern. In the first analysis, the respondents' educational attainment remain non-significant, whereas respondents' parents' educational attainment is negatively associated with the dependent variable, i.e. respondents' belief that the differences between them and African Americans are due to discrimination in the USA.

Table 3 reports the association between educational attainment and Whites' opinion regarding differences between them and African Americans are due to the African Americans' inborn disability to learn. Similar to the first logistic regression analysis four separate models are run to explore the association between educational attainment and the second dependent variable. In the first model (control model) respondent's age and Catholic religious preference are the only two control variables that are positively significant. Aged and Catholic respondents believe that the differences between Whites and the racial minorities are due to African Americans' inborn disability to learn. Whereas, compared to males being female and Whites, who do not believe that they are hurt by affirmative action, have lower log odds of believing that the minority people have biological inferiority because these two control variables are significant in negative direction.

After adding respondent's highest year of school completed in Model 2 as the first independent variable, female status and Catholic religious preference become non-significant while the other two control variables age and Whites' belief that they are hurt by affirmative action remain significant in the same direction as those were in Model 1. While the newly added independent variable is significant, its association is negative with the dependent variable. Contrary to the first hypothesis of this study, this negative significant association depicts that

increase in each additional year of respondents' education is correlated with 19.7 % decrease in their opinion that the differences between Whites and African Americans are due to the biological inferiority of the minority community.

To explore the possible interaction between respondent's highest year of school completed and interviewer's race an interaction term is used in Model 3. In both Model 3 and subsequent Model 4 the interaction term remains non-significant. Similar to the finding for the association with the first dependent variable, this interaction effect is not as it was expected because respondents' racial perceptions are neither significantly strong nor weak, in the presence of an African American interviewer. However, age and Catholic religious preference again become positively significant after adding the interaction term in this model. Moreover, similar to Model 2, Whites' belief that they are hurt by affirmative action and respondent's highest year of school completed variables are negatively significant in the third model.

In Model 4 the newly added variable, respondent's parents' highest year of school completed, is not significant. Thus, as expected the respondents' parents educational attainment does not have any significant positive effect on respondents' racial perceptions/attitudes. After adding this new independent variable the only two significant variables are Whites' belief that they are hurt by affirmative action and respondent's highest year of school completed variables. However, these two variables have a negatively significant association with the dependent variable. Thus, the respondents with higher levels of educational attainment and who do not believe that Whites hurt by affirmative action, are not in favor of the notion that the differences between them and African Americans are due to the inborn disability of the People of color. Moreover, other religion category was omitted from this model due to collinearity.

Table 3: Logistic Regression Predicting Whites' Opinion Regarding Differences between Whites and African Americans are Due to Inborn Disability to Learn

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
age	0.025** (0.009)	0.022* (0.009)	0.023* (0.009)	0.018 (0.012)
female	-0.524* (0.269)	-0.478 (0.270)	-0.497 (0.266)	-0.466 (0.327)
married	0.068 (0.410)	-0.043 (0.422)	-0.022 (0.427)	-0.209 (0.512)
single	0.566 (0.426)	0.499 (0.430)	0.576 (0.432)	0.331 (0.529)
Protestant	-0.062 (0.375)	-0.101 (0.384)	-0.090 (0.388)	0.124 (0.511)
Catholic	0.781* (0.367)	0.697 (0.384)	0.748* (0.386)	0.856 (0.498)
some other religion	-0.543 (0.888)	-0.461 (0.918)	-0.497 (0.826)	
total family income	-0.044 (0.031)	-0.015 (0.032)	-0.015 (0.031)	-0.014 (0.042)
middle class	0.077 (0.302)	0.298 (0.296)	0.288 (0.295)	0.409 (0.373)
upper class	-0.272 (0.769)	0.059 (0.772)	-0.007 (0.782)	0.530 (0.951)
Democrat	0.541 (0.418)	0.617 (0.426)	0.567 (0.422)	0.455 (0.578)
Republican	0.299 (0.410)	0.524 (0.439)	0.476 (0.432)	0.354 (0.600)
think of self as liberal or conservative	0.015 (0.108)	-0.012 (0.109)	-0.009 (0.105)	-0.077 (0.135)
how close feel to blacks	-0.093 (0.085)	-0.065 (0.076)	-0.061 (0.075)	-0.126 (0.087)
whites hurt by affirmative action	-0.622** (0.203)	-0.612** (0.204)	-0.592** (0.204)	-0.822** (0.268)
close relative marry black	0.120 (0.125)	0.111 (0.120)	0.107 (0.119)	0.095 (0.135)
Northeast region	0.447 (0.404)	0.611 (0.406)	0.610 (0.398)	0.504 (0.530)

(Continued next page)

Midwest region	-0.221 (0.321)	-0.084 (0.317)	-0.111 (0.316)	-0.133 (0.379)
West region	0.041 (0.369)	0.233 (0.360)	0.252 (0.362)	0.041 (0.452)
Interviewer is black	0.465 (0.510)	0.516 (0.555)	-2.670 (1.771)	-1.164 (1.734)
highest year of school completed		-0.197*** (0.046)	-0.226*** (0.050)	-0.185** (0.060)
respondent's education*black			0.239 (0.134)	0.088 (0.110)
interviewer parents' highest year school completed				-0.069 (0.043)
Constant	-2.176 (1.280)	-0.252 (1.265)	0.013 (1.217)	1.729 (1.567)
Observations	1261	1260	1260	905
Pseudo R-squared	0.117	0.148	0.154	0.168

* $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$ *** $p \leq 0.001$

Standard errors are in parentheses.

Source: General Social Survey 2004, 2006, and 2008.

In summary, the findings in Table 3 surprisingly, do not support any one of the two hypotheses of this present study. In this second analysis, the respondents' educational attainment is negatively associated with the dependent variable, i.e. respondents' belief that the differences between them and African Americans are due to African Americans' in-born disability to learn. However, respondents' parents' educational attainment remain non-significant in association with the dependent variable. The previous literature suggests that higher levels of educational attainment determine Whites' superficial liberal attitudes; particularly, in their opinions about social distance between the majority and minority races, biological inferiority of African Americans, and discrimination against minorities (for example, Sears and Henry 2003). Perhaps,

speculation can be made that the role of education is not straight forward as expected. Respondents with higher levels of educational attainment may not reflect their true racial perceptions/attitudes.

In Table 4 the association between educational attainment and Whites' opinion regarding differences between them and African Americans are due to African Americans' lack of motivation/will power to pull themselves up out of poverty is explored. In Model 1 (control model) the coefficients for political views (liberal/conservative) and opinion about a close relative's marriage to an African American are significant and the associations with the dependent variable are positive. The respondents, who are extremely conservative and who strongly oppose their close relative's marriage to an African American individual believe that the differences between Whites and African Americans are due to lack of will of African American people. While other three control variables are significant in this model, namely Whites' belief that they are hurt by affirmative action, West region, and interviewer's race variables are negatively associated with the dependent variable. The respondents from the West region and who do not believe the notion that Whites are hurt by affirmative action do not believe that the differences between Whites and African Americans are due to lack of will of African American people. Interestingly, the presence of an African American interviewer shows that the respondents do not favor the notion that the differences between Whites and African Americans are due to lack of will of African American people.

In Model 2, a new independent variable is added similar to the first two regression analyses, i.e. respondent's highest year of school completed. All the significant control variables of Model 1 remain approximately same in Model 2. The newly added independent variable is

significant and negatively associated with the dependent variable. In other words, respondents' each additional year of education ensures 15% decrease in their opinions that the differences between Whites and African Americans are due to lack of will of African American people.

Similar to the first two logistic regression analyses, to explore any possible interaction between respondent's highest year of school completed and interviewer's race an interaction term is used in Model 3. In both Model 3 and subsequent Model 4 the interaction term is non-significant. However, all other control variables remain same in Model 3 and 4 as those control variables were in Model 1 and 2 except interviewer's race variable becomes non-significant in Model 3 and Model 4. In Model 4 only another independent variable, respondents' parents' highest year of school completed which is non-significant is added. Thus, as expected the respondents' parents educational attainment does not have any significant positive effect on respondents' racial perceptions/attitudes.

Table 4: Logistic Regression Predicting Whites' Opinion Regarding Differences between Whites and African Americans are Due to Lack of Will

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
age	0.009 (0.005)	0.007 (0.005)	0.007 (0.005)	0.004 (0.006)
female	-0.221 (0.149)	-0.208 (0.150)	-0.208 (0.149)	-0.194 (0.170)
married	-0.173 (0.209)	-0.211 (0.211)	-0.211 (0.211)	-0.411 (0.238)
single	-0.096 (0.239)	-0.117 (0.245)	-0.118 (0.244)	-0.261 (0.283)
Protestant	0.269 (0.209)	0.258 (0.214)	0.257 (0.214)	0.029 (0.240)

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Catholic	0.434 (0.229)	0.398 (0.229)	0.397 (0.229)	0.206 (0.250)
some other religion	-0.275 (0.356)	-0.252 (0.360)	-0.252 (0.361)	-0.568 (0.394)
total family income	-0.014 (0.016)	0.005 (0.017)	0.005 (0.017)	0.001 (0.020)
middle class	-0.206 (0.154)	-0.031 (0.159)	-0.031 (0.159)	0.021 (0.180)
upper class	-0.043 (0.452)	0.205 (0.464)	0.205 (0.465)	0.684 (0.553)
Democrat	-0.246 (0.236)	-0.187 (0.230)	-0.187 (0.230)	-0.220 (0.270)
Republican	-0.101 (0.237)	0.023 (0.231)	0.023 (0.230)	-0.089 (0.266)
think of self as liberal or conservative	0.140* (0.059)	0.120* (0.060)	0.120* (0.060)	0.150* (0.069)
how close feel to blacks	-0.023 (0.043)	-0.014 (0.044)	-0.014 (0.044)	-0.036 (0.050)
whites hurt by affirmative action	-0.282** (0.111)	-0.249* (0.113)	-0.249* (0.113)	-0.325** (0.132)
close relative marry black	0.364*** (0.070)	0.356*** (0.072)	0.357*** (0.071)	0.356*** (0.084)
Northeast region	-0.216 (0.230)	-0.115 (0.233)	-0.115 (0.233)	-0.427 (0.260)
Midwest region	-0.267 (0.183)	-0.213 (0.186)	-0.213 (0.186)	-0.298 (0.213)
West region	-0.537* (0.203)	-0.477* (0.206)	-0.476* (0.206)	-0.481* (0.233)
Interviewer is black	-1.277*** (0.307)	-1.226*** (0.314)	-1.088 (1.487)	1.558 (2.380)
highest year of school completed		-0.150*** (0.030)	-0.149*** (0.032)	-0.088* (0.038)
respondent's education*black interviewer			-0.010 (0.106)	-0.218 (0.167)

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parents' highest year school completed				-0.056 (0.031)
Constant	-0.549 (0.622)	1.038 (0.710)	1.027 (0.710)	1.667 (0.885)
Observations	1240	1239	1239	943
Pseudo R-squared	0.099	0.119	0.119	0.128

* $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$ *** $p \leq 0.001$

Standard errors are in parentheses.

Source: General Social Survey 2004, 2006, and 2008.

In summary, the findings in Table 4 also surprisingly, do not support the two hypotheses of this present study. In this third analysis, the respondents' educational attainment is negatively associated with the dependent variable, i.e. respondents' belief that the differences between them and African Americans are due to African Americans' lack of will. However, respondents' parents' educational attainment remain non-significant in association with the dependent variable. Previous literature suggests and it is possible, that in spite of the social science survey reports, in reality "the true racial attitude of Whites remains quite negative" (Gilbert, Fiske, and Lindzey 1998:359). These findings are discussed in more detail in the next section below.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this research indicate that controlling for other factors, educational attainment is not associated with the indicators of Whites' racial perceptions in a consistent way. The present study produces the following findings: 1) there is a negative association between Whites' educational attainment and two indicators of the negative racial perceptions of African Americans. More precisely, this research shows that increases in Whites' educational attainment (in terms of highest year of school completed) are inversely associated with their perceptions about the differences between them and African Americans are due to the fact that most African-Americans have less in-born ability to learn or just they do not have the motivation or will power to pull themselves up out of poverty. However, interestingly, Whites' perceptions about the differences between them and the minorities being due to discrimination remain non-significant in this analysis. Perhaps, education does not have any significant positive or negative effect on Whites' racial perception about discrimination. It is possible, as the previous literature suggest that the respondents believe that racial discrimination is a matter of past and does not exist in contemporary America or if other minority groups have made it, then it is the African Americans' faulty characteristics that is responsible behind their failure to succeed; therefore, the White respondents remain neutral in their opinion in front of an African American interviewer.

2) Despite the finding that educational attainment is inversely associated with Whites' perceptions about African Americans' in-born disability and lack of will, this research also reports that parents' educational attainment is negatively associated with Whites' perceptions of the differences between Whites and African Americans being due to discrimination. In other

words, an increase in parental educational attainment (in terms of highest year of school completed) decreases the log odds that Whites perceive that the differences between them and the minorities being due to discrimination. However, surprisingly, parents' education remains non-significant for the other two dependent variables. Perhaps, being raised and socialized in a family with parents' higher levels of educational attainment, reinforce the notion that discrimination against African Americans is past. Interestingly, while respondents' own educational attainment is negatively significant in association with the other two dependent variables, namely the differences between Whites and African Americans being due to biological inferiority and lack of will of the People of color, respondents' education remain non-significant for the first dependent variable. It is possible that in the era of covert racism, the inverse associations between respondents' education and their belief that the differences between Whites and African Americans being due to biological inferiority and lack of will of the minorities, are the consequence of their fake and superficial self-representation of being non-racist in front of an African American interviewer.

3) This study does not report any significant relationship of the interaction term between Whites' educational attainment and African American interviewer. While the presence of an African American interviewer is positively significant with the first dependent variable (Whites' belief that the differences between them and African Americans are due to discrimination), in the first two models, interestingly, it is negatively associated with the third dependent variable (Whites' belief that the differences between them and African Americans are due to African Americans' lack of will), in the first two models. However, as oppose to what was expected, the interaction term remain non-significant in all these three analyses.

In other words, the findings do not support all the three hypotheses of this study.

Interestingly, the existing evidence does not provide a clear pattern of support for the hypothesis that Whites' educational attainment and racial perceptions/attitudes are not inversely related to each other in the American social structure. However, studies contend that negative racial perceptions/ stereotypes /prejudice are finely ingrained inside the core American social structure, despite the transformation of overt expressions of negative racial perceptions/attitudes to covert expressions (Devine and Elliot 1995; Bonilla-Silva and Forman 2000; Bonilla-Silva 2003; Brezina and Winder 2003). Previous literature reports that contrary to its liberalizing effect, the role of education is subtle and less straightforward (Federico 2004; Federico 2005; Federico 2006). Like symbolic racism the association between higher level of educational qualification and racial perception is more complex. Educational qualifications cannot be able to work much to reduce the negative racial perceptions of Whites in the realm of affirmative action, welfare policies, and criminal justice attitudes (Federico 2005). Whites' perceptions that the People of color are welfare dependent, manual laborers, incapable, unwilling to support them, irresponsible, ignorant, loud, poor, stupid, lazy, violent or prone to violence, hostile, and dangerous (Brezina and Winder 2003; and Sears and Henry 2003; Federico 2005) still perpetuates in the USA.

The present study did try several control variables to explore the stronger relationship between educational attainment and racial perceptions/attitudes. However, all those variables and were later dropped from the analysis because the variables, such as government should aid African Americans, racial makeup of workplace, interviewer is Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino remained non-significant.

The unclear pattern of associations or the inverse association between the two indicators of Whites' racial perceptions and also the non-significance of the interaction term between Whites' educational attainment and African American interviewer can be speculated and explained as due to *social desirability bias*. Based on the discussion of previous literature, it has been contended in this thesis that the new racial ideology replaces direct/overt racial discourse by tabooing overt discussions of negative racial perceptions (Bobo et al. 1997, Bonilla-Silva and Forman 2000). Negative racial perceptions of African Americans increasingly have become illegitimate and unethical after the Civil Rights movement (Dasgupta 2009). In other words, perhaps, social desirability bias restricts people from exposing their true racial perceptions, stereotypes, and prejudice honestly. Higher levels of educational attainment make individuals cognitively more developed, sophisticated, and aware of democratic norms to present socially desirable responses/positive attitudes toward African Americans that are liberal, racially tolerant, and in favor of equality (Federico 2002; Federico and Sidanius 2002; Federico 2005). Studies show that support for equal opportunity (at least formally) is most evident among educated people (Federico and Sidanius 2002). For this reason, the present study speculates that in contemporary American social structure the role of education, especially, in the context of racial perceptions, is perhaps more complex and less straightforward because educated people are likely to be vigilant and thoughtful in their responses, particularly on sensitive racial issues. Higher levels of educational attainment may be associated with predispositions that are consistent with positive or negative racial perceptions.

There may be some issues associated with the data set also. This study has been conducted using secondary GSS data set and the results may not reflect the actual case. Several

researchers find that the end of the Civil Rights movement, there was a sharp decline in traditional forms of racism. However, this did not represent the real proportional reduction in Whites' anti African American racial attitudes, and this new form of racism was hidden from public view and thus poorly measured by survey instruments (Gomez and Wilson 2006). However, to explore the association between educational attainment and racial perceptions/attitudes with a secondary dataset, GSS is the best data source because it is nationally representative and moreover contains a number of suitable indicators of negative racial perceptions to study the association.

Further research is needed to examine the real nature and association between the role of educational attainment and Whites' racial perceptions of African American in contemporary American social structure. It is clear from the present analysis that secondary quantitative survey data does not allow any researcher to examine and explore the reality of racialized social structure and the role of educational attainment. In this vein, if the mode of data collection changes, the results may differ significantly and interestingly. Perhaps, participant observation or experimental techniques better reflect the real racial attitudes of White respondents with different educational attainments compared to secondary data analysis for this project. Additional longitudinal or experimental data may resolve the problem of social desirability bias.

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