University of Massachusetts Amherst

ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst

The Effect of Colorblind Racial Ideology on Discussion of Racial Events: An Examination of Responses to the News Coverage of the Trayvon Martin Shooting

Stephanie Lawrence
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umass.edu/masters_theses_2

Part of the Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Ethnicity in Communication Commons, Race, Ethnicity and Post-Colonial Studies Commons, and the Social Psychology Commons

THE EFFECT OF COLORBLIND RACIAL IDEOLOGY ON DISCUSSION OF

RACIAL EVENTS:

AN EXAMINATION OF RESPONSES TO THE NEWS COVERAGE OF THE

TRAYVON MARTIN SHOOTING

A Thesis Presented

by

STEPHANIE LAWRENCE

Submitted to the Graduate School of the

University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

September 2014

Communication

THE EFFECT OF COLORBLIND RACIAL IDEOLOGY ON DISCUSSION OF

RACIAL EVENTS:

AN EXAMINATION OF RESPONSES TO THE NEWS COVERAGE OF THE

TRAYVON MARTIN SHOOTING

A Thesis Presented

by

STEPHANIE LAWRENCE

Approved as to style and content by:

_____

Erica Scharrer, Chair

_____

Demetria Shabazz, Member

           _____

           Erica Scharrer, Department Head

           Department of Communication

DEDICATION

To my Grandmother.

ABSTRACT

THE EFFECT OF COLORBLIND RACIAL IDEOLOGY ON DISCUSSION OF

RACIAL EVENTS: AN EXAMINATION OF RESPONSES TO THE NEWS

COVERAGE OF THE TRAYVON MARTIN SHOOTING

SEPTEMBER 2014

STEPHANIE LAWRENCE, B.A., HARVARD COLLEGE

M.A., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Professor Erica Scharrer

This study explores how participants respond to news coverage of the Trayvon
Martin shooting based on their colorblind racial attitudes. The purpose of this study is to
understand how people's beliefs about the salience of race and racism, as well as how
framing within news coverage, contributes to how people privately respond to racial
events and their willingness to publicly express their views in discussions. Participants
answered questions about their racial ideology, their views about the role of race in the
Trayvon Martin shooting, and whether or not they were willing to express these views in
a discussion after reading articles that either promotes an overtly colorblind view of the
Trayvon Martin case, a race conscious view of the case, or only states the facts of the
case (for the control condition). It was found that there were racial differences in how
participants viewed the role of race in the Trayvon Martin shooting, even when
controlling for racial ideology, and that beliefs in colorblind ideology impacted views of
the Trayvon Martin case and willingness to discuss it, with participants with race

conscious views that were shown an article that presented the case from a colorblind

perspective reporting being less willing to discuss their views on the case compared to

those shown an article that presented the case from a race conscious perspective.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPENDICES

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Racial ideology is defined as the framework in which race is constructed and racial order is explained, and shapes the way that people view and understand the role of race in society (see Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Cohen, 2011; Domke, 2001; Hall, 1995; Neville et al., 2005). Because the U.S. is a racialized social system (Bonilla-Silva, 1997), racial politics and ideology influence many aspects of U.S. society, including politics, economics, and education (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Cohen, 2011; Doane, 2006). In the U.S., the current dominant racial ideology is colorblind ideology (Bobo, 2011; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Doane, 2006;Plaut, 2010; Smith, King, & Klinker, 2011). The stated goal of colorblind ideology is to develop a society where race no longer matters, and in which people interact without consideration for race (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Neville et al., 2000; Plaut, 2010). While the idea of the U.S. being a post-race society has become a more common view of race relations since the election of President Obama, the idea of living in a colorblind society has existed since the earlier Jim Crow era of American race relations as a part of the Civil Rights Movement (Bobo, 2011; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Plaut, 2010; Smith et al., 2011).

However, many critics of colorblind ideology cite how it is used to argue that race *currently* does not matter, with the consequence that current racial issues are ignored (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Lentin, 2011; Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004; Tynes & Markoe, 2010). While colorblind ideology has been researched to see how it can lead to increased interracial understanding and reduced prejudice due to reducing emphasis on racial group differences (Neville et al., 2000; Wolsko et al., 2000), researchers have found that it is

associated with racist attitudes, denials of racism, and negative attitudes towards anti-racist policies (see Awad et al., 2005; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Lentin, 2011; Neville et al., 2000; Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004; Tynes & Markoe, 2010; Wolsko et al., 2000).

While colorblind beliefs are more commonly held by Whites in comparison to people of color (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Neville et al., 2000; Tynes & Markoe, 2010), there are also people of color who support colorblind beliefs (Asumah, 2005; Major et al., 2007; Neville et al., 2005). However, people of color are more likely to be negatively affected by colorblind ideology during interracial interactions, where they report feeling more marginalized, uncomfortable, and ignored in colorblind environments in comparison to environments that acknowledge and value diversity (see Lewis et al., 2000; Plaut, 2010; Plaut et al., 2009; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008; Vorauer et al., 2009). People of color, and others that do not hold colorblind views, may feel pressure to conform to colorblind beliefs when interacting with others (Baynes, 2002; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Cohen, 2011; Lewis et al., 2000). In this way, colorblind ideology should be understood not only as individual attitudes about race, but also as a structural force that affects both those that agree and disagree with the ideology through others' behaviors, policies, laws, and media influences (Bobo, 2011; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Cohen, 2011; Lewis et al., 2000).

Discussions about race are affected by colorblind ideology, leading to the avoidance of speaking about race, or framing racial issues as being due to other economic or cultural factors (see Bonilla-Silva, 2002; 2006; Lewis, 2001; Lewis et al., 2001; Tarca, 2006). Many critics argue that colorblind ideology leads to a silencing of anti-racist viewpoints and making it a "taboo" to mention racism, and instead encourages ignoring

the role of race in racial events (Augoustinos & Every, 2010; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Garrett, 2011; Lentin, 2011; Schofield, 1986). This then leads to negative effects for current civil rights movements by dismissing their concerns as complaints that only encourage division amongst racial groups (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Lentin, 2011; Lewis, 2001). As the current dominant racial ideology in U.S. society, colorblind ideology, rather than leading to increased understanding across racial lines and a "post-race" society, leads to ignoring current racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Plaut, 2010).

Many of these criticisms of colorblind ideology are based on critical race theory. Critical race theory challenges the idea that we have achieved racial equality, and seeks to analyze the effects of racism (Baynes, 2002; Delagdo & Stefancic, 2012; Hesse, 2011; Lopez, 2003). Originally starting in the law tradition, it is also used in political and social sciences and education to examine how racism affects different aspects of life for Whites and people of color (Delagdo & Stefancic, 2012; Lopez, 2003). Critical race theory is critical of colorblind and other race-neutral ideologies that support ignoring race. It also supports understanding how racism is not only individual but also structural and shapes environments and ways of thinking about race (Baynes, 2002; Delagdo & Stefancic, 2012; Hesse, 2011; Lopez, 2003). It also supports the idea of privileging the narratives and viewpoints of people of color (Delagdo & Stefancic, 2012; Lopez, 2003).

While there is research on how colorblind racial ideology affects interpersonal relations and racial attitudes, there is less research on how colorblind racial ideology affects how people view and learn about race through media. Media play a part not only in reinforcing racial ideology, but also in how people understand and learn about race relations (Gray, 1987; Hall, 1995). The ways in which racial events are framed in media,

3

especially news media, have an impact on how people respond to these events, based on what information is emphasized as salient (Domke, 2001; Entman, 2007; Gandy et al., 1997; Spratt et al., 2007). The framing of racial events in news media is based on the racial ideologies and viewpoints that those news sources promote, whether they frame events that reinforce dominant racial ideologies that minimize racism, or provide counter-ideological viewpoints that promote civil rights (Domke, 2001; Entman, 2007; Gandy et al., 1997; Spratt et al., 2007; Squires, 2011). For example, both during President Obama's campaign and after his election, much of the media framed the coverage based on the idea that U.S. is "post-race," and reinforced the belief that we have finally moved beyond racism (Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich, 2011; Stiles & Kitch, 2011). Many reacted to the election with increased belief that progress towards racial equality had been achieved (Kaiser et al., 2009; Valentino & Brader, 2011). However, it can be argued that reactions would be different for events that challenge the idea that we live in a "post-race" society. It can also be argued that the way in which these events are framed in the media, as well as people's racial attitudes, contribute to how people respond to these events. This would have implications for understanding how people respond to racial events, as well as how colorblind ideology affects how we learn about, think about, and discuss racial issues.

The shooting of Trayvon Martin was a tragedy that has challenged the idea that the U.S. is a post-race society and has highlighted how racism is still an issue in U.S. society. On February 29, 2012, in Sanford, FL, Trayvon Martin was shot and killed by George Zimmerman while walking home from a convenience store. Zimmerman later stated that he thought Martin was suspicious and followed him. While details of their confrontation are still debated in the news coverage, it is known that Zimmerman

eventually retrieved a gun and shot Martin (CNN Wire Staff, 2012). He was initially not arrested due to Florida's "Stand Your Ground" doctrine. The Stand Your Ground doctrine stipulates that one can use deadly force when one feels that one is in danger (Florida Statutes, 2011). However, as of April 11th, he was charged with second-degree murder (Fineout & Farrington, 2012). In 2013, he was found not guilty and released (Bloom, 2014).

The role of racism in the Trayvon Martin shooting was a topic of debate in the news coverage of the case, and it can be argued that the different ways in which the case was framed in media coverage was in large part due to different racial ideological viewpoints. While there were some who saw the shooting as a racially-motivated murder, there were those who rejected the idea that racism had a role in this event and believe that Zimmerman did not find Martin suspicious or shoot him due to Martin being Black. There is also some evidence of racial division in opinion about the case, where Blacks were more likely to see race as a factor in the shooting compared to Whites (Gallup, 2012). Since White people are usually more likely to have colorblind views in comparison to people of color (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Neville et al., 2000), it can be argued that this partially explains the differences found between Black and White people in responding to the Trayvon Martin shooting (see Abt SRBI, 2012; Gallup, 2012; Pew, 2012). With that said, Black Americans also vary in their viewpoints about race and how they understand racism (see Asumah & Perkins, 2000; Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Unfortunately, this shooting is not an isolated incident, as there have been other similar shootings of other Black youth such as Renisha McBride, Jordan Davis, and Donald Davis, Jr. In the case of Jordan Davis, parallels in the news have been made between the

trial for Michael Dunn and George Zimmerman, with Stand Your Ground also playing a

role in the verdict for Dunn and used by his defense attorney during the trial (Bloom,

2014).

Colorblind ideology may have also affected how the Trayvon Martin shooting

was publicly discussed. While there were protests calling for Zimmerman's arrest and the

acknowledgement of the racial issues that impact people of color, these protests were also

criticized as being divisive and racist by those that did not believe that race was a factor

in the shooting. There are also examples of people acknowledging that race is a factor in

the shooting, but doing so while avoiding directly mentioning race or racism in their

public statements, such as President Obama's statement that "if [he] had a son, he would

look like Trayvon" (see Stein, 2012, p.1). Examining the responses to this case is

important not only because of its continuing impact on current U.S. race relations, but

also because it reveals how people currently speak about racial issues, and the current

pressure to avoid mentioning race even when not supporting colorblind views. It is

possible that those that publicly challenge colorblind ideology by acknowledging racism

still face pressure to silence their counter-ideological race-conscious viewpoint by using

colorblind rhetoric and minimizing any direct references to race. Therefore, examining

the responses to the Trayvon Martin shooting can be helpful in illuminating the effects of

colorblind ideology on how people perceive and speak about race and racism.

Based on a critical race theoretical perspective, I plan to explore the ways in

which colorblind racial ideology shapes how people understand the role of race in the

Trayvon Martin shooting, as well as how they discuss their opinions about the role of

race in the shooting, based on the ways in which the case is framed in news content. In

examining this, I hope to better understand how colorblind racial ideology shapes the way

that people perceive, understand, and react to racial events, as well as how that ideology

affects people through framing in news media content. If colorblind ideology can affect

how people view the Trayvon Martin shooting and the way it is framed in news reports,

then it is also possible that it can affect how people respond and speak out about the role

of race in this event.

As a dominant racial ideology, colorblind ideology has become a norm that

people may be pressured to conform to, if not in their beliefs, then in their actions

(Baynes, 2002). Examining these issues is especially important for people of color, who

are impacted by these racial events, and for whom media coverage helps to inform them

of race relations that have a direct impact on their lives. Also, while there is a lot of

conceptual research on colorblind attitudes highlighting these issues, there is less

empirical research measuring how colorblind attitudes affect views of media coverage

about race and discussion of racial events (see Awad et al., 2005; Neville et al., 2000).

Since media are an important part of reinforcing racial ideology (Gray, 1987; Hall, 1995),

it is important to understand how people understand media coverage about race that both

supports and disagrees with colorblind ideology.

The purpose of this study is to understand how colorblind ideology affects how

people interpret news media content about racial events, by examining how people with

different beliefs about colorblind ideology respond to the news coverage of the Trayvon

Martin shooting. In this study, I argue that holding colorblind beliefs leads to a decreased

acknowledgement of the role of race in the Trayvon Martin shooting, and that through the

framing of the shooting in news media, colorblind ideology can also pressure those that

hold more race-conscious views to either be silent or to use colorblind rhetoric when expressing their opinion about the shooting. Like previous studies on past racial events, the results of this study help to provide a better understanding of how racial events are understood in our current racial climate. The hope is that this study will be able to demonstrate how colorblind ideology leads to ignorance about racism and a silencing of voices that acknowledge and speak out against racism, under the guise of encouraging racial understanding.

CHAPTER 2

COLORBLIND IDEOLOGY AND MEDIA: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Racial politics in the U.S. has three stages: the *slavery era*, the *Jim Crow era*, and currently the *era of race-conscious controversies* (Smith et al., 2011). While colorblind ideology emerged during the Jim Crow era, colorblind racial ideology became a dominant racial ideology during the post-Civil Rights Era (Bobo, 2011; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Smith et al., 2011). In its beginnings, colorblind ideology was used during the Civil Rights Era to fight Jim Crow racism and fight for equal rights for people of color (Bobo, 2011; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Smith et al., 2011). However, it currently also extends to the belief that racial categories now no longer matter, and that we have moved beyond racism (Bobo, 2011; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Lentin, 2011; Neville et al., 2000).

Colorblind ideology is seen by many as a form of racism that supports equality in language, but not in practice. While referred to as colorblind racism, this paper will refer to it as colorblind ideology in order to highlight that colorblind ideology does not only consist of personal belief systems and attitudes towards people of color, but is also a systematic framework that shapes how people view race regardless of their agreement with colorblind views (see Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Tarca, 2005). Also, colorblind ideology differs from other forms of racism in that it does not refer to specific negative attitudes and/or hatred towards racial groups, but rather misconceptions about race and racism (Neville et al., 2000).

With that said, colorblind attitudes can still lead to racism and discrimination (Awad et al., 2005). In previous studies, colorblind attitudes are associated with laissez-faire and aversive racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Plaut, 2010; Tarca, 2005). Laissez-faire

racism refers to blaming African Americans for racial gaps in achievement as being due to character, and challenging policies meant to address racial inequality (Tarca, 2005). Aversive racism refers to having ambivalent attitudes towards racial groups and racism rather than overt hatred (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). Having colorblind views has also been found to be associated with a belief in a just world, modern racism, negative attitudes towards Blacks, racial and gender intolerance, and negative attitudes towards affirmative action (Neville et al., 2000; 2005; Plaut, 2010).

Individually, colorblind attitudes manifest in certain rhetorical patterns used to avoid speaking about race, or speaking about it in a socially acceptable way. Bonilla-Silva (2002) examined the ways in which White Americans speak about race, in order to support the argument that those with colorblind beliefs use several rhetorical patterns to avoid "sounding racist." The first pattern is avoiding directly using racial terms, and speaking of people of color in hesitant or coded terms. Bonilla-Silva (2002) did not find that any participants used racial slurs in public. However, they would still use racial slurs in private discussions. Another pattern is using "semantic moves" (p. 43), which are rhetorical patterns used to speak about racial attitudes. Typical phrases are "I am not prejudiced, but…" and "I am not black, so I don't know" (p. 49) when asked to speak about discrimination. The third pattern is the use of projection to see people of color as discriminating against Whites and as the source of racial discrimination. This was demonstrated through stating that people of color "segregate themselves" (p. 55), that they are prejudiced against Whites, and that things like affirmative action and the United Negro College Fund is discriminatory against Whites. The fourth pattern is using diminutives to speak about their views on racial issues. For example, saying they are

against interracial marriage, it would more likely be stated, "I am just a bit concerned about the welfare of the children." (p. 57). The last pattern is incoherence, where there will be grammar mistakes, stuttering, and pauses that increase when speaking about race.

Historically, colorblind ideology first began appearing during *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), where Justice Harlan stated that the Constitution was colorblind, in opposition to the separate but equal doctrine (Plaut, 2010). Colorblind ideology was used to fight slavery and Jim Crow laws under the idea that people should not be judged or restricted in rights due to skin color (Plaut, 2010; Smith et al., 2011). During the Civil Rights Era, colorblind ideology was used to fight discrimination and work towards establishing the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965 (Bobo, 2011; Plaut, 2010; Smith et al., 2011). Then conflicts started to arise over views of affirmative action, and colorblind ideology began to be used to fight against policies that were perceived to negatively impact Whites (Plaut, 2010; Smith et al., 2011). While some used colorblind ideology to support affirmative action and other policies for working towards racial equality, others used the same ideological terms to criticize these programs as disadvantaging Whites and being a form of reverse racism (Plaut, 2010; Smith et al., 2011). As this ideology became more popular throughout the post-Civil Rights era, later court cases began using colorblind rhetoric in their rulings against race-conscious policies (Plaut, 2010; Smith et al., 2011).

Knowles et al. (2009) view colorblind ideology as having opposing definitions of either an egalitarian approach of reducing racial division, or an anti-egalitarian view that focuses more on procedural colorblindness that reinforces the current racial hierarchy through ignoring it. *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No.*

1 (2007) is an example of how the same racial ideology can lead to differing viewpoints and conflict about how to address racial issues. In the case, the U.S. Supreme Court declared that taking students' race into account in order to integrate schools in Seattle was against the 14th Amendment. Both competing sides in the U.S. Supreme Court decision cited *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) as a part of their reasoning, where the winning majority was against the idea that the government should recognize race in its decisions, while the dissenting side saw school bussing as working towards promoting racial equality in schools through directly acknowledging and addressing racial inequality (Knowles et al., 2009). While it can be seen how colorblind attitudes can both support and challenge policies working towards true racial quality, it is also clear that the current dominant interpretation of the ideology is one that leads to ignoring current racial inequality.

The current iteration of colorblind ideology is based on the idea that we are currently a "post-race" society that has finally moved beyond racism (Ansell, 2006; Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Garrett (2011) describes post-race rhetoric as one where there is the belief that the changes in race relations and rights for minority groups has led to the current end of slavery and racism in the U.S. Because of this, any existing inequalities are due to cultural and/or personal reasons and have nothing to do with persistent racial structural inequalities (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Garrett, 2011). Also, discussion of racism or racial politics is thought to only perpetuate racism, and therefore should not be discussed (Augoustinos & Every, 2010; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Garrett, 2011).

The idea of a post-race society has been strongly perpetuated in the media since the election of President Obama, with his election being seen as a signal that racism had

been overcome (Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich, 2011; Lee, 2011; Smith et al., 2011). However, this declaration also ignores the racism that was directed at Obama during his campaign and after his election, as well as the current inequalities in housing, education, and income that existed and still persisted after he was elected (Bobo, 2011; Plaut, 2010; Smith et al., 2011). Based on this post-race belief, colorblind ideology is then used to frame current issues of race in "race-neutral" terms that instead explain racial inequalities in terms of culture or economics (Bobo, 2011; Plaut, 2010; Smith et al., 2011). In this way, colorblind ideology is not only used to avoid acknowledgment of discrimination, but also to also avoid addressing how to counter racism and take steps towards actively establishing racial equality (Bobo, 2011; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Lentin, 2011; Plaut, 2010). While seeming to be against racism, it is instead against race-consciousness, regardless of its goal (Knowles et al., 2009; Plaut, 2010).

The politics of colorblind ideology

Politics in the U.S. have been traditionally affected by racial politics, and the history of colorblind racial ideology is closely linked with political ideology (Smith et al., 2011). Racial ideology is born out of the politics and hierarchies that shape racial "common sense" (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). In the past, racial ideologies were usually distributed evenly along political party lines, with those pro- and anti-slavery being in both political parties (Smith et al., 2011). However, there is a current division in racial ideology in politics, where those that support colorblind ideology are largely conservative and Republican, while those that support more race-conscious ideologies like multiculturalism and anti-racism tend to be liberal and Democrat (Ansell, 2006; Smith et al., 2011). The main aspects of conservatism are individualism, limited government

regulation for economic and political competition, and ability to obtain material goods through hard work (Asumah & Perkins, 2000). One can see how these beliefs can also be related to the belief that racial inequality should not be dealt with through government intervention, and that racial issues are instead individual failings rather than due to structural forces.

The ruling for *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1* (2007), and other cases like it, demonstrate that colorblind ideology is not only a matter of personal beliefs about diversity and race relations, but is also reinforced by political forces and structures. Klarman (2011) argues that decisions like the one for *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1* (2007) are largely influenced by the conservative politics of the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court is majority Republican and tends to use colorblind ideology when making rulings on cases involving race (Klarman, 2011; Smith et al., 2011). This has been shown in cases such as the *United States vs. Armstrong* (1996), where the Supreme Court ruled that Black defendants had to show that Whites had not been selectively racially prosecuted before making a similar claim against their prosecution for their case (Klarman, 2011). In past rulings, the conservative "Rehnquist Court" also made rulings against school desegregation and affirmative action while rejecting rulings addressing racial discrimination (Klarman, 2011). Cases like these demonstrate how colorblind ideology is reinforced by political and institutional forces that support and maintain White privilege rather than addressing racial inequality (Ansell, 2006; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Plaut, 2010).

While colorblind ideology is associated with conservatism, it is also associated with liberalism. Specifically, colorblind ideology is associated with what Bonilla-Silva

(2006) calls "abstract liberalism" (p. 26), where the liberal ideas of independence, universalism, choice, and equal opportunity are abstracted in order to explain issues of race (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). For example, opposing affirmative action is framed as not wanting to show unequal favor to minorities and marginalized groups and disadvantaging Whites. In this way, colorblind views are framed in the language of liberalism in order to sound egalitarian while simultaneously defending White privilege (Ansell, 2006; Bonilla-Silva, 2006). The liberal ideas that were espoused during the Civil Rights Era and used to highlight individuality rather than racial group were then used as a way to support a view of inequality as an individual responsibility rather than structural oppression (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Tarca, 2005). Currently, colorblind ideology is also associated with liberalism through Obama's campaign, and his stated colorblind views on racial issues (Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich, 2011; Stiles & Kitch, 2011). Therefore, while colorblind ideology is associated in practice with those that hold conservative views and largely fits with the tenets of conservatism, based on ideology there are also those who hold liberal views that also support colorblind ideology.

In current politics, addressing race is seen as something to be avoided. In his campaign, President Obama avoided addressing race and instead focused on change, and tried to appeal to those who supported both colorblind and race-conscious views (Smith et al., 2011). While Obama did give a well-known speech addressing racial inequality in the U.S. in 2008, this speech has been criticized for also defending White privilege and framing racial issues as "a two-way street" (p. 201), where policies taken to address racial inequality for Black Americans lead to resentment amongst White Americans (Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich, 2011). Lentin (2011) writes about similar politics in Europe, where

actions taken to support diversity and cross-cultural understanding from the government are largely phrased in colorblind terms, and ironically focus on similarity and avoid any language that acknowledges differences between racial and ethnic groups. Lentin (2011) criticized the "For Diversity, Against Discrimination" campaign launched by the UK Commission for Racial Equality for emphasizing similarity between marginalized groups without acknowledging the actual differences and concerns these groups had. While promoting understanding between groups, it avoids directly addressing racial politics and essentially ignored the historical and political issues that members of marginalized groups faced (Lentin, 2011). All of these examples demonstrate how colorblind ideology is largely tied to politics, and the negative consequences it can have for attempting any structural solutions to racial issues.

Criticisms of colorblind ideology

These attempts of being race-neutral when addressing issues of race are what have led Lentin (2011) and others to be critical of colorblind ideology. Research on the topic has occurred in multiple disciplines, and while some research has examined how colorblind racial ideology can be used to reduce prejudice, many have been critical of how it does not address the current role of race in society (Neville et al., 2000; Tynes & Markoe, 2010). Instead of directly addressing racial inequality, colorblind ideology promotes racial equality while also making the mention of race and/or racism a social taboo (Augoustinos & Every, 2010). In a press release, the American Psychological Association (1997) wrote that colorblind ideology leads to ignoring current racial issues and experiences of people of color. For many, colorblind ideology is seen as a form of racism, in that it helps to perpetuate the racial status quo through ignorance of racism

rather than directly stated hatred (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Lentin, 2011; Plaut, 2010).

One of the main and often-cited criticisms of colorblind ideology is that it leads to ignoring and misunderstanding racism. Even if one believes that colorblindness is the way to work towards equality, by ignoring race, colorblind ideology also ignores the current racism that impedes social equality. Hesse (2011) refers to the way that race is ignored as the "privatization of race" (p. 156), where racism is no longer seen as political or structural, mentioning race is seen as threatening to nationality, and issues of race are seen as "racial without being racist" (p. 156). Frankenberg (1993) describes colorblind attitudes as having two aspects: color-evasion and power-evasion. Color evasion refers to emphasizing similarity rather than racial identity, and contributing to the invisibility of whiteness (Frankenberg, 1993). Power-evasion refers to believing that everyone has equal opportunities and that racism does not contribute to differences in achievement (Frankenberg, 1993). Bonilla-Silva (2006) cites the minimization of the importance of racism as one of the frames of colorblind ideology, where racism is seen as "no longer a central factor affecting minorities' life chances" (p. 29). Racism is seen as an excuse rather than a salient factor for issues such as racial gaps in academic, employment, and economic achievement. This then leads to reasoning that it must be because of individual or cultural deficiency (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Lewis, 2001; Plaut, 2010; Schofield, 1986).

The effects of ignoring racism have often been researched in school settings. Schofield (1986) researched colorblind racism at a desegregated middle school, and found that faculty tended to view race relations in the school in colorblind terms and state that race did not matter to the students, despite the fact that students reported that there was racial stratification in the school. Students also noted that they realized that

referencing race upset school faculty. Based on these data, it is clear that due to their colorblind views, the faculty of the school did not address the racial division amongst the students, and instead were against recognizing race rather than working towards their stated goal of interracial harmony.

Lewis (2001) also researched the colorblind attitudes of teachers and parents at a predominantly White elementary school in a White suburb, and found that school administrators' colorblind attitudes led to either ignoring or excusing racist incidents in school. They also expressed an understanding of racism that was individualized and saw racism as something that a few people did, rather than a larger social and structural force (Lewis, 2001). However, they also acknowledged that they felt that race was an important issue, and yet also expressed views that were against directly addressing issues of race, considering it "un-American" (Lewis, 2001, p.794). Tarca (2005) also found similar results when researching colorblind ideology in a rural town school district. Black students' lower academic performance scores were seen as due to the students' lack of aptitude, rather than a consequence of the tense race relations and racist treatment towards Blacks in the town.

Tynes and Markoe (2010) researched how colorblind attitudes affected college students' perceptions of racism by measuring responses to images of a race-themed Halloween party. They measured participants' level of colorblind attitudes, and their public and private reaction to the picture. They found that those that were not bothered by the pictures had higher average reported colorblind attitudes compared to those who were offended, with colorblind attitudes decreasing with increased likelihood of being offended. They also found that White participants held higher levels of colorblind

attitudes compared to Black participants, and that those who were not bothered by the pictures were more likely to be White and have higher levels of colorblind attitudes. In contrast, Black participants were more likely to be bothered by the pictures and have lower levels of colorblind attitudes. While they did not directly examine if the racial differences between reactions was driven by differences in colorblind attitudes, the results support the idea that it is a salient factor.

One of the consequences of ignoring racism and minimizing its impact is that it leads to a lack of support for policies made to address racial injustice. Awad, Cokley, and Ravitch (2005) researched how colorblind attitudes affect views on affirmative action. They found that colorblind attitudes predicted attitudes towards affirmative action, such that the more colorblind attitudes one held, the less likely they were to support affirmative action (Awad et al., 2005). Oh et al. (2010) examined White, Asian, Latino, and African American participants' views about race and affirmative action. They found that White participants were less likely to positively endorse affirmative actions compared to minority participants, and that Black participants were the most likely to support affirmative action. They also found that those with higher levels of colorblind beliefs were less likely to endorse affirmative action, and those that defined racism as structural social issue were more likely to endorse affirmative action than those who defined racism in terms of abstract liberalism or did not see racism as a relevant social problem. They also found that, when combined, participants' colorblind beliefs and beliefs about racism were better at predicting attitudes towards affirmative action than only racial identification (Oh et al., 2010). These results can also lead to arguing that racial differences found in perceptions of affirmative action and racism can at least

19

partially explained by differences in colorblind beliefs.

This evidence supports the idea that colorblind attitudes lead to less support for race-conscious policies. This viewpoint becomes even more of an issue when there are examples that can be used to validate the idea that racism is no longer an issue. Kaiser et al. (2009) studied perceptions of racism and racial justice before and after President Obama's election, and found that participants reported less support for policies made to address racial inequality, and that less was needed in order to achieve racial equality after Obama's election. These results also support the idea that colorblind views about race relations can have negative consequences for support of race-conscious policies, especially after President Obama's election and increased support for the idea that we live in a "post-race" society.

Another consequence of ignoring racism is perpetuating racism and maintaining the racial status quo. As previously stated, colorblind ideology does not require hatred towards racial groups, but can still lead to the marginalization of those groups. This also promotes the invisibility of whiteness, which is another aspect of the racial status quo that is defined by a lack acknowledgement of White racial identity and White privilege (see Gushue & Constantine, 2007; Nakayama & Krizek, 1995). This "invisibility" also contributes to how whiteness is normalized and essentialized; the position of White identity in racial hierarchy is not examined or questioned, and other racial groups are marked as "Others" (Gushue & Constantine, 2007; Nakayama & Krizek, 1995). In this way, the lack of acknowledgement of White identity and whiteness as being socially perceived as the "norm" can also be seen as related to colorblind attitudes about racial identity in general. Gushue and Constantine (2007) found that attitudes about the salience

of race were related to respondents' attitudes and identification with their own White racial identity, with those that were more aware of racial issues were also more likely to acknowledge being White their racial identity. By deemphasizing racial identity, it leads to a lack of acknowledgement of the role of race in both the racial marginalization and racial privilege that is a part of the racial status quo.

Colorblind attitudes tend to be associated with modern racism, aversive racism, negative attitudes towards Blacks, and negative attitudes about race and gender (Awad et al., 2005; Neville et al., 2000; 2005). While those who hold colorblind views may intend to address inequality and be egalitarian, colorblind ideology can ironically lead to marginalizing people of color and perpetuating racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Neville et al., 2000). In Tarca's (2005) study, programs in the school made to address the behavior of Black female students in the school were framed in colorblind terms ("Classy Living and Social Skills" program), but discussions with administrators revealed that it was targeted to deal with girls that were seen as a problem in the school, and served to marginalize Black female students as being unacceptable due to not conforming to local norms (Tarca, 2005). This evidence demonstrates how the initial notion of no longer regarding race to define character has been warped into an ideology that perpetuates racism rather than combats it. While there have been changes to work towards establishing more rights for people of color, it is not to the point that we have gone "past" racism.

Another main criticism of colorblind ideology is that it silences the viewpoints of people of color and those that do not agree with colorblind ideology, ignores diversity, and has a negative impact on interracial relations and perceptions of people of color.

Recent evidence of this is the bill passed in Arizona that bans any school curriculum that "advocates ethnic solidarity instead of the treatment of students as individuals" (see Arizona Revised Statutes, 2010). This devaluing of racial and ethnic diversity leads to people of color feeling marginalized (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Lewis et al., 2000; Plaut, 2010).

Colorblind ideology, while it may be seen as egalitarian for those that hold these views, is often seen as marginalizing by people of color, who feel that their viewpoints and identities are being ignored (Lewis et al, 2000). In this sense, even when colorblind ideology is not being used to ignore racism, ignoring racial identity in itself is still an issue. It conveys the message that one looks beyond the racial identity of a person, and otherwise sees how they conform to White cultural standards (Gutierrez & Unzueta, 2010). While not intended, not noticing or addressing race leads to a continued privileging of whiteness that is usually invisible and believed to be the "norm". In *Are We Born Racist?,* Blais (2010) discusses how her colorblind beliefs led her to not realize that she only covered topics related to White writers in her class, and never recognized other authors of color. This led to the students of color in her class feeling marginalized, and rather than feeling like their race did not matter because they were equal, they felt their race did not matter and therefore that they did not matter. This demonstrates that even in more well-intentioned forms, colorblind ideology cannot erase the history of oppression and marginalization that people of color live with and cannot as easily choose to ignore (Lewis et al, 2000).

Previous research on interracial interactions highlights how it can cause anxiety amongst all participants, particularly when navigating discussions about race-related

topics (Trail et al., 2009; Trawalter & Richeson, 2008). People of color feel increased

anxiety when expecting prejudice from White participants in interracial conversations,

though this level of anxiety varies by racial group (Mack et al., 1997; Trawalter &

Richeson, 2008). The research on how colorblind ideology affects people of color in their

interactions with White people highlights how invoking colorblind ideology in interracial

conversations can further add to this anxiety. Lewis and colleagues (2000) researched

how college students of color reacted to colorblind rhetoric and behaviors from White

students. Their experiences reflect the effects of colorblind ideology from the perspective

of people of color, who experience the consequences of the attitudes and behaviors

associated with colorblind ideology. Many students expressed discomfort during times

when discussions of race would arise and White students would dismiss their opinions,

try to emphasize similarity rather than acknowledge difference, or criticize them for

personally attacking them. One student wrote that they felt that White students "don't

want to see color and want to be unified. They want us to be White and not have to deal

with us being Black." (p. 82). Students also felt that they simultaneously felt that they

were expected to be representatives of their racial group while also chastised for not

assimilating to White culture (Lewis et al., 2000). Students also reported "letting go" of

instances of racism rather than publicly addressing them, and being ostracized by White

students when in class and socializing on campus, and then criticized for segregating

themselves. Negative attitudes towards affirmative action from White students led to

many students of color being accused of being "token" students that were only accepted

due to skin color and would be able to achieve more while being less talented than their

White peers. Lewis et al (2000) concluded that this led to students of color having

stressors while pursuing their education that made their "cost" of education higher than their White peers. The results of this study demonstrate how colorblind ideology has a negative effect on people of color through negative interracial interactions.

Similar results have also been found in studies that examined the reactions of people of color in environments that supported colorblind ideology. Purdie-Vaughns et al. (2008) examined how institutional cues affected the comfort of Black participants in different workplaces. Participants were asked to report what concerns they anticipated having when working in a place that was presented as either promoting colorblind ideology or valuing diversity, and were presented with a picture of workers that featured either high or low minority representation in the company. They found that for companies with low minority representation, participants in the colorblind condition were more likely to be concerned about being devalued due to their race than those in the condition where they were presented with a company that valued diversity. They also found that participants trusted the company with low minority representation significantly less in the colorblind condition compared to those in the value diversity condition.

In the research on the effects of racial ideology, colorblind ideology is often compared to multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is a racial ideology that emphasizes that group identities should be acknowledged and differences celebrated (Takaki, 1993). Richeson and Nussbaum (2004) researched how colorblind and multicultural ideology affected responses for implicit and explicit racial attitude measures. They found that those exposed to a colorblind ideological message showed a greater pro-White bias than those exposed to a message that promoted multiculturalism. They concluded that these results demonstrate how racial bias is affected by racial ideology, and support criticism

from Bonilla-Silva (2006) and other scholars that colorblind ideology does not lead to better race relations.

Holoien and Shelton (2011) also compared colorblind ideology and multiculturalism in how they affect interracial relations. In their experiment, White participants were paired with either a White, Asian, or Black partner. In the experimental conditions, pairs were given an editorial that either supported a colorblind or a multicultural viewpoint, and were then asked to discuss ethnic diversity in schools. After the discussion, they were asked to do a Stroop task to measure their cognitive performance in order to measure how cognitively drained they were. Judges watched the recorded discussions and rated the behavior of the White participant for perceived prejudice and offensiveness, which was combined into an overall score of prejudice. They found that Asian and Black participants were more cognitively drained in the colorblind condition than the multicultural condition. They also found that ratings of prejudice for White participants predicted minority participants' performance on the Stroop task and mediated the relationship between the condition and Stroop test performance. Also, judges rated White participants with higher levels of prejudice in the colorblind than the multicultural condition. They concluded that the results supported the idea that colorblind ideology, at least in the short term, affected White participants' behavior to be more prejudiced and had a negative effect on their Black and Asian partners, and that colorblind ideology can have a negative effect on interracial relations.

One aspect of the research on how colorblind ideology affects perceptions of racism that is not often explored is the contrast between personally held attitudes and those that are expressed in public. Racial ideology frames not only how people

understand race, but also how they speak about it (see Bonilla-Silva, 2002; 2006; Neville et al., 2005). While the basis of critiques of colorblind ideology is that it changes how race is spoken about, rather than reflects true attitudes of wanting to work towards racial equality, this is usually examined based on opinions on larger racial issues, and not specific moments of racism. Lewis et al. (2000) reported that students often would be silent when bothered by racially insensitive comments rather than risk a confrontation. Also, while Tynes and Markoe (2010) found that those with colorblind views were less likely to be upset by a picture from a race-themed Halloween party, they also found that there was a contrast between those that personally reported being upset by the pictures, and what was said in their public comments in response to the pictures. They noted that student responses that they categorized as "bothered-ambivalent" often featured responses where participants reported being bothered in their personal response to the pictures, but did not indicate those feelings when writing their public response, and would either indicate that it was funny or otherwise not publicly state that they found the picture to be racial offensive.

This difference in public versus private reactions to racism may be due to pressure to not speak out against the dominant racial ideology. Since mentioning race and racism is criticized and seen as a taboo (Augoustinos& Every, 2010), people may feel pressure to not publicly state when they find something racist, and otherwise avoid mentioning race for fear of negative consequences (Baynes, 2002). As a dominant ideology, colorblind ideology pressures both those that agree and disagree with it to conform to its norms (Baynes, 2002). For those that see colorblind ideology as a tool for modern racial oppression, this consequence is seen as a large part of how colorblind ideology supports

racial hegemony. By silencing criticism of racial inequality by silencing the language used to address it, change towards improving racial issues is stopped, and the racial status quo is maintained (Bonilla-Silva, 2002; 2006; Doane, 2006). Counter-ideologies can challenge these views, but there is still pressure to conform to colorblind ideological viewpoints (Doane, 2006). This demonstrates how colorblind ideology affects how people are able to speak out about racism, and negatively impacts those that try to challenge racism by them being criticized as being racist (see Augoustinos & Every, 2010; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Doane, 2006; Lentin, 2011).

These criticisms of colorblind ideology demonstrate how it is used to perpetuate racism. Regardless of its original intention, colorblind ideology supports racial hegemony and White privilege by declaring that race does not matter. Colorblind ideology contributes to the everyday experiences of racism that people of color face. However, understanding the consequences of colorblind ideology based on when Whites hold these views does not give a complete picture of the consequences of colorblind ideology. While Whites are more likely to hold colorblind views in comparison to people of color (Neville, et al., 2000), there are also people of color that hold colorblind views, and have specific reasoning and consequences for these views.

People of color and colorblind ideology

While studies have examined how colorblind ideology affects racial attitudes for Whites, and how people of color are affected by these ideologies, there is less research examining the implications for people of color that hold colorblind views. It is important to acknowledge that not all people of color have the same views about race, and that not all people of color are against colorblind ideology. For example, while Schofield's (1986)

study did not specifically examine colorblind attitudes in African Americans, the Black teachers and administrators she interviewed also expressed colorblind views, and the belief that race did not matter to them or their students.

While there have not been many studies examining colorblind attitudes in people of color, the research has generally pointed to negative consequences for people of color who hold colorblind views. While not specifically examining colorblind ideology, Major et al. (2007) examined the role of holding a meritocracy worldview on how Latino American participants responded to discrimination. Meritocracy is the belief that everyone has equal chance of being successful with hard work and talent (Pratto et al., 1994). This ideology is then used as a way of explaining and justifying inequalities in society, by framing them as a matter of receiving what one deserves rather than seeing how people are affected by environmental factors (Major et al., 2007; Pratto et al., 1994). While not colorblind ideology, one can see how this overlaps with the colorblind view that idea that structural racism does not contribute to racial inequality. Since people tend to desire and interpret information in a way that confirms their worldview (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Major et al., 2007), Major et al. (2007) expected that those that were given information that challenged their meritocratic view would react negatively. They surveyed Latino participants, and found that participants with high levels of meritocracy ideology reported lower self-esteem when having a higher perception of discrimination against Latinos. For those with high levels of perceived discrimination, meritocracy ideology was negatively correlated with self-esteem. They also found that those with high levels of meritocratic attitudes reported being less vulnerable to prejudice, and reported lower self-esteem when exposed to information on discrimination against Latinos. They

also found that the more one believed in meritocracy ideology when exposed to information about discrimination, the more they would blame Latinos for their social inequalities. These results demonstrate how, for some people of color, holding colorblind views not only leads to negative consequences for self-esteem, but also a lack of understanding of how racism affects them personally and their racial/ethnic group as a whole.

The idea that those with meritocratic views also perceive discrimination may seem to be contradictory. However, the results demonstrate that people of color may have a conflict between their ideology and what they acknowledge as a reality for their racial/ethnic group. This also has implications for those that support colorblind ideology. It may be those that believe in colorblind ideology also recognize the conflict between their ideology and their actual experience as a person of color. In this way, they would not ignore discrimination, but also not see it as a determinant for success. This idea is supported by their further results that those with high levels of meritocracy beliefs believe they are less vulnerable to prejudice, and react differently to discrimination in comparison to those that reject meritocracy ideology, and tend to victim blame (Major et al., 2007). In this way, it can be argued that for people of color, colorblind ideology is not a matter of ignoring racism outright, but rather believing that it is not necessarily an important factor and that it can individually be overcome. This is also supported by the individualized view of racism that is a part of colorblind ideology, and a lack of acknowledgement of how racism in structural and not only about individual interactions.

Barr and Neville (2008) examined how Black parents' racial ideology and racial socialization affected their children, and found that parents' level of colorblind beliefs

negatively correlated with protective racial socialization, such that the higher the level of colorblind beliefs, the less likely parents were to speak to their children about racism. They also found that the more children were taught by their parents about racism, the lower their level of colorblind beliefs. These results suggest that colorblind ideology not only affects how people of color perceive racism, but also how they teach their children about racism. This implies that colorblind ideology may also be affected by how one is socialized about race, and that colorblind ideology negatively affects how children of color are taught about racism and learn how racism affects their lives.

In their validation of the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS), Neville et al. (2000) also included African Americans and Latinos in their analysis, and found that Whites tend to hold more colorblind attitudes compared to Blacks and Latinos. However they also acknowledge that colorblind attitudes have different implications for people of color in comparison to Whites. While for White Americans, colorblind attitudes serve as a protection against acknowledgement of racial inequality and White privilege (Neville et al, 2000; Bonilla-Silva, 2006), colorblind attitudes for people of color may indicate a limited acknowledgement of discrimination, referred to as "false consciousness."

False consciousness refers to holding beliefs that are a part of justifying status hierarchies, but also are "contrary to one's personal or social interest" when one is a member of a disadvantaged group (Jost & Banaji, 1994, p. 3). False consciousness entails a failure to recognize inequality, fatalist feelings about being able to change inequality, rationalization of inequalities, blaming minorities for oppression, internalizing oppression, and resisting change to existing social structures (Jost & Banaji, 1994). For

people of color, false consciousness refers to holding views that support the racial status quo and blaming one's racial group for their marginalization (Neville et al., 2005). In their study, Neville et al. (2005) examined how false consciousness related to colorblind beliefs of African American participants. They measured false consciousness by examining participants' justification of social roles, attribution of blame, and internalized oppression. They found that colorblind attitudes positively correlated with false consciousness, such that the higher the level of colorblind attitudes, the more likely they were to attribute blame to victims of discrimination, justify racial inequality, and internalize stereotypical beliefs about African Americans. This evidence supports the idea that for people of color, adopting colorblind views affects their views and understandings of racial discrimination just as it does with Whites, but with the implication that they justify negative consequences happening to their racial in-group, rather than a racial out-group. Along with Major et al.'s (2007) results, this suggests that there may be a buffer in which people of color with colorblind beliefs see their experience with discrimination differently than they do for others, and therefore blame members of their own racial group for their discrimination because they do not fully see how discrimination is affecting them. This would then also be similar to Whites who hold colorblind views and do not see discrimination in the same way because of their status as a member of the dominant racial group and lack of experience with racial discrimination (Bonilla-Silva, 2006).

Another factor that may affect colorblind attitudes for people of color is politics. While many studies have examined how Blacks view racism in comparison to Whites, there are fewer studies examining the different viewpoints and racial politics within the

Black community. Previous studies tend to paint a picture of Blacks as having a unified viewpoint on racial politics and race relations, when there are many various perspectives within the Black community (Asumah & Perkins, 2000; Lewis, 2005). While Black Americans are generally viewed as liberal in politics, there are also Black conservatives, and many sub-factions within Black conservatism (Asumah & Perkins, 2000). Black conservatism is defined as believing that conservatism (materialism, individualism, and limited government) is the way to solve issues in the Black community (Asumah & Perkins, 2000; Lewis, 2005). This leads to the belief that Black Americans do not need government intervention through policy to address racial inequalities, and that the free market will lead to a "trickle down" effect that will benefit Black Americans (Asumah & Perkins, 2000). This is based on the belief that the issues faced in the African American community are "the result of nihilism and lack of moral rectitude"(p. 62), and see issues for Blacks in terms of economics instead of race (Asumah & Perkins, 2000). They also report not identifying with racial issues of the Black community, and do not acknowledge racism within conservative policies (Asumah & Perkins, 2000; Lewis, 2005).

When examining the tenets of Black conservatism, it can be seen how it overlaps with colorblind ideology. Both have a focus on phrasing racial issues in economic or cultural terms rather than acknowledging racism as a factor of racial inequality. Black conservatism is also similar to colorblind ideology in that Black conservatives often ignore racism within conservative politics, blame the Black community for their racial oppression, and do not acknowledge how they are personally affected by racism compared to how it affects others within the Black community. While there have not been studies testing whether colorblind ideology is correlated with conservative beliefs,

on a conceptual level they are related, and one can argue that Black conservatives are more likely to hold colorblind views.

All of this previous information demonstrates how colorblind beliefs for people of color have different implications than the same beliefs held by Whites. As a dominant ideology, some people of color may feel pressure to conform to those beliefs, and feel conflict between these beliefs and the reality of their personal experience. This research also demonstrates why it is important to better understand the implications of colorblind beliefs for people of color, since it impacts how they understand racism and how they teach their children about racism. As racism is a salient factor for people of color, regardless of their acknowledgement of it, colorblind ideology also has the negative consequence of hampering people of color's perceptions of racism, as well as their ability to speak out against racism without negative consequences. However, before understanding more about colorblind ideology for people of color and Whites, it is also important to understand how colorblind ideology is reinforced. In order to understand this further, I will explore the specific role of colorblind ideology in news media.

CHAPTER 3

NEWS, RACE, AND COLORBLIND IDEOLOGY

Media are important in creating and circulating ideologies, and are an important part of how people learn about their social world (Gray, 1987; Hall, 1995). While the research on colorblind ideology has mainly focused on its effect on perceptions of racism and interpersonal interactions, there is also research on the role of media in spreading racial ideology, and how colorblind ideology affects perceptions of media coverage of racial events. Since media play a role in Black Americans' understanding of race and racial identity (Davis & Gandy, 1999), it is important to also understand how colorblind ideology affects how Black Americans and other people of color understand race based on what they see in media, especially in regard to media coverage of racial events. Since media like television play a role in socializing Black American youth (Stroman, 1991), it is important to understand not only how the ideology they learn from their parents, but also the racial ideology used in media teaches them and other people of color about race. While Tynes and Markoe (2010) studied how people responded to social media content, there are fewer empirical studies examining how colorblind ideology affects perceptions of traditional media content.

U.S. media have a history of stereotypical representations, or underrepresentation, of people of color. In both fictional and non-fiction media, Black Americans are often portrayed in stereotypical roles that reinforce racial hegemonic beliefs that Blacks are inferior to Whites (Hall, 1995). Media not only construct definitions of race, but also the ideologies in which we understand the role of race in society (Hall, 1995). Media has shaped views about race since early in U.S. history, when news reported and influenced

34

people's views about the Supreme Court's decision about the "separate but equal" doctrine (Domke, 2001).

Media also reproduce social ideologies through the ways in which they portray race relations. Gray (1987) examined an NBC special on race relations, and found that the issue was framed such that Black families and communities were in crisis, and the program framed issues with unemployment and economic hardship in terms of personal deficiency and circumstance rather than racial discrimination. By not giving proper context to these issues, this coverage perpetuated stereotypes about Black Americans that reinforced dominant racial ideological beliefs about racial inequality being due to cultural deficiency in the Black community (Gray, 1987). Gray (1987) emphasizes the fact that the news does not report facts, but the interpretation of facts, based on ideology and newsmakers' understandings of society. Because the press is seen as a source of information, the audience does not often take the framing of events in the news into consideration, and the press' view of events is perceived as truth (Gray, 1987).

Past research has examined the ways in which media portray people of color in the news, as well as how people's responses to events are affected by these portrayals. According to framing theory, the news reports of events are framed by re-telling events in such a way it promotes a certain view of that event (Domke, 2001; Entman, 2007; Gandy et al., 1997). This framing affects the audience by priming certain information as salient while ignoring others (Entman, 2007). When portraying information about people of color and/or issues regarding race relations, the way that the news portrays this information influences how people respond to these events, and has further implications for people's general views of people of color and race relations (Domke, 2001; Gandy et

al., 1997). Gandy et al. (1997) note that past research has mainly focused on the different ways that media framing influences people's perceptions of racism and racial groups, while not paying as much attention to the differences in people's initial racial beliefs when encountering this media content. Examining both people's perceptions of race *and* how the news frames racial issues and events is important to understanding the role of media in the effects of colorblind ideology on how people think, learn, and talk about race.

The way racial issues are framed in news content can affect how people respond to these issues, and has done so since early in U.S. history (Domke, 2001; Gandy et al., 1997). Domke (2001) examined the past news coverage about Supreme Court decisions about the "separate but equal" doctrine and how the news reinforced beliefs about civil rights after the abolishment of slavery. This examination was based on the idea that media content reinforces racial ideology through normalizing beliefs about race as "common sense" and affects public discourse about race (see Domke, 2001; Hall, 1995). Domke (2001) found that there was a shift in expressed support for civil rights for Black Americans, with news coverage in 1883 supporting Black civil rights, and later coverage in 1896 shifting in the opposite direction by expressing support or indifference towards the *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) decision. Also, articles in 1883 wrote about working towards positive race relations between Black and White Americans, while articles in 1896 tended to predict that racial inequality would persist. One thing of note is that whether supporting or opposing civil rights for Black Americans, the articles framed these racial issues from the perspective of White Americans concerned about the state of race relations and the consequences of racial tension. Domke (2001) concludes that these

articles reflected the concerns of White Americans about racial equality and Blacks

achieving equal social status, which were fueled by beliefs in social Darwinism and the

idea that Black Americans should not receive government protection against racial

inequality. The way that these issues were framed in the news was particularly important

in shaping White Americans' opinions about Black Americans and race relations, since

there was not as much contact between the two racial groups at the time. These findings

not only demonstrate the long history of conflict in how issues about race relations and

racial inequality are addressed in the U.S, but also how news media have a history of

shaping how these racial issues are understood.

The ways in which racial issues are framed is not universal, and can also differ

between news sources. Spratt et al. (2007) also examined the frames used by news

sources in their coverage of the murder of Emmett Till, and found that mainstream

newspaper sources (*The Daily Sentinel-Star*, *Greenwood Commonwealth*, and *Chicago

Tribune*) framed the murder as having no bearing on race relations, racism, or civil rights

in Mississippi, and that Emmett Till was responsible for instigating his own murder. In

contrast, *The Chicago Defender*, a Black American press newspaper, framed the murder

as a case that reflected on racial tension and racism against Black Americans, and

emphasized Emmett Till's innocence and a desire for justice during his trial and for other

civil rights issues. It can be argued that the framing of the case in mainstream sources

promoted a colorblind view of the murder that ignored how racism played a role in

Emmett Till's murder. The counter-ideological framing in the coverage in *The Chicago

Defender* led to a narrative that emphasized the opinions and voices of those in the Black

American community that challenged racism and fought for civil rights (Spratt et al.,

2007). Squires (2011) also found that counter-framing can occur in news media through editorial and opinion pages by examining how editorial pages highlighted the racial issues in the recent mortgage crisis. While there were an equal number of pieces that emphasized either blaming individual borrowers or the role of discrimination as a factor in the mortgage crisis, Squires (2011) concludes that the counter-ideological editorial pieces are important in that they provide another source of information for news audiences that challenges dominant ideological views about racial groups and social issues.

The common ways in which people of color, and especially Black Americans, are framed in the news often revolves around news coverage of crime and violence (see Dixon, 2006; Entman, 1900; Mastro et al., 2011). In examining how local news promotes modern racism, Entman (1990) found that local news coverage that featured Black Americans was most often about violent crime, and that news reports were often framed to emphasize that Black criminals were violent and intimidating. Entman (1990) concludes that this reinforces modern racist beliefs that Blacks are more violent and dangerous in comparison to Whites. Mastro et al. (2011) also obtained similar results, and found that Black athletes are more likely to be portrayed as criminals in news coverage in comparison to White and Latino athletes, and that the coverage was more likely to focus on the crime and negative consequences of the crime and be more critical of Black athletes. In this way, Blacks are not only portrayed more disproportionately as criminals, but also portrayed more negatively compared to others who have committed crimes. This framing can also has an effect on how news audiences' views on social issues. For example, Dixon (2006) found that for those that held stereotypes about Blacks, they were

more likely to report supporting the death penalty after seeing news coverage of Black criminals. Dixon (2006) also found that heavy television viewers were more likely to think that the world is dangerous after viewing news coverage featuring Black criminals.

While past research demonstrates how people are influenced by how news coverage frames racial issues and Black Americans, there is evidence that this acceptance of news as fact does not always occur, and that not all people are similarly affected by how the media portray Black Americans. One example of this is represented in how people responded to the coverage of Hurricane Katrina. After Hurricane Katrina, many people began to criticize the amount of time it took to aid people affected by the storm, and question whether this was related to the fact that many people displaced by the storm were Black Americans (Haider-Markel et al., 2007; Kaiser et al., 2008). Much of the coverage of Katrina portrayed survivors in a negative light as either violent or passive, reinforcing the usually negative stereotypes of people of African Americans as either violent lawbreakers or passive victims, and mainstream sources were more likely to highlight individual responsibility for not being able to evacuate New Orleans rather than environmental factors (Dixon, 2008; Gross, 2008; Voorhees et al., 2007). However, when interviewing survivors, Voorhees et al. (2007) found that people were displeased with the coverage and had a general mistrust of the news coverage. This demonstrates how not all viewers take what they see in the news as unfiltered truth, and recognize bias in media coverage. While the news may frame events in certain ways, people still interpret them based on their own personal views. For example, while Dixon (2006) found that there was a direct effect between being exposed to news coverage of Black criminals and beliefs about the death penalty and social dangers for those that had pre-held beliefs

about Blacks, no significant effect was found between exposure to news coverage of Black criminals and views about danger and the death penalty for all participants. This suggests that news content alone cannot account for the effect that news coverage can have on perceptions of social issues, and that personal beliefs influence how news coverage can affect its audience.

Other research also demonstrates how perceptions influence how people respond to news coverage of social events. Research from the Pew Research Center (2005) found that Blacks and Whites had different views of Hurricane Katrina. When asked about how race was a factor in the response time to the disaster, 66% of Blacks saw race as a factor, compared to 77% of Whites not seeing it as a factor (Pew, 2005). Also, when asked whether it shows how racism is still a problem in U.S. society, 71% of Blacks agreed, compared to 32% of Whites (Pew, 2005). Most Black respondents (77%) saw people who stayed behind during the flood as unable to escape, compared to 55% of Whites (Pew, 2005). Blacks saw those who took supplies during the flood as doing what was needed for survival (57%), compared to 37% of Whites who saw this as a criminal act (Pew, 2005). This shows that even with the discriminatory coverage of Katrina, audiences still retained their own interpretation of Katrina despite the negative coverage.

Colorblind attitudes also have affected how people reacted to Hurricane Katrina, with those that held colorblind views holding less sympathetic and more negative views towards the idea of victims receiving assistance (see Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich, 2011). While there may be racial differences in perceptions, one cannot always predict views of events based on these racial differences, and that the way these differences are highlighted in the news without explaining context lead to reinforcing racial division

(Gandy et al., 1997; Squires, 2011). Therefore, it is important to understand differences in responses to news coverage of racial events, but also how salient contextual factors, such as racial ideology, can explain these differences.

Currently, media often emphasize the idea of a "post-race" society as the way to work towards racial equality. One of the more recent important ways in which colorblind ideological frames have been used in media content is in the coverage of President Obama. As previously stated, the coverage of President Obama's campaign and subsequent election led to the media's emphasis on the U.S. being a "post-race" society (Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich, 2011; Lee, 2011; Smith et al., 2011). Smith et al. (2011) argued that while Obama criticized the idea that America was "post-race" in his writings, his campaign "stress[es] color-blind or race-neutral approaches without rejecting all race-conscious policies" (p. 130). While Obama occasionally made reference to race during public speeches, he mostly used colorblind rhetoric by emphasizing unity, similarity, and nationality rather than race (Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich, 2011; Smith et al, 2011). Bonilla-Silva and Dietrich (2011) argue that Obama's election, and his stances on race reflect colorblind ideology rather than the achievement of a "post-race" ideal. While acknowledging that racial equality hadn't been fully realized, Obama still referred to social achievements for race relations as being close to realized, and emphasized taking personal responsibility for achieving that goal rather than by addressing larger social factors that affect racial inequality. This emphasis on individual versus structural racism, and de-emphasizing the continuing salience of racism demonstrates how Obama is more representative of the negative effects of colorblind ideology than as an example of achieving a post-race society. This is also reflected in his famous speech about race in

41

2008, his views on affirmative action, and his decision to not attend the 2009 World Conference on Racism.

Lee (2011) notes that during much of the journalistic coverage of Obama's appealing to voters and his chances for the 2012 election, race was rarely considered or addressed in the news coverage. In their analysis of the post-election commemorative coverage of Obama, Stiles and Kitch (2011) found that the coverage either highlighted Obama's race and how his election was an achievement for the African American community and civil rights and a signal of achieving equality, or avoided discussing race and framed Obama's election as a symbol of how the country has made unified achievements. They conclude that in both instances, the texts still use colorblind ideology to frame Obama's election as a symbol that racism has been overcome, and marginalize the existing struggles for racial equality (Stiles &Kitch, 2011).

However, despite the "post-race" ideology that was commonly conveyed during his campaign, the discourse about Obama's campaign still demonstrated how racial beliefs were being used to frame coverage surrounding his campaign. Colorblind ideology was also used during the coverage of Obama during the controversy over Jeremiah Wright. Jeremiah Wright was associated with Obama as his past reverend (Herman & Peterson, 2008; Oliha, 2008). Controversy began over his comments about race and politics, and from early in Obama's candidacy considered the link between the two figures to be a liability (Herman & Peterson, 2008; Oliha, 2008). Conservatives, liberals, and eventually Obama himself criticized Wright's comments about race, where he was called divisive, racist and anti-American (Herman & Peterson, 2008; Oliha, 2008). The overwhelming coverage about him was negative, in comparison to other

White religious figures associated with the other presidential candidates, including ones that were noted for making offensive statements (Herman & Peterson, 2008). The criticisms of Wright match those usually made within colorblind ideology of those who highlight the salience of racism. Oliha (2011) found the online discourse about the controversy revealed beliefs that the U.S. had overcome racism, and that claims about racism from Black Americans were simply complaining. In this way, one can appear not racist by projecting by seeing racism as stemming from bias from Black Americans, and seeing racism as a taboo and divisive topic (see Bonilla-Silva, 2002). The fact that he was disproportionally criticized compared to other White religious figures associated with the presidential candidates also shows how colorblind ideology reinforces racism while appearing race-neutral and tries to discredit criticisms of racism from people of color (Herman & Peterson, 2008).

The effect of Obama's election and media coverage has led to a strong support and reinforcement of colorblind ideology. However, the evidence on people's reactions to Obama's election and media coverage reflect that it has had negative consequences for people's views on race relations. Kaiser et al. (2009) found that after Obama's election, people's belief that the U.S. had made large achievements in racial equality increased. However, it also led to a decrease in support for race-conscious policies and need for future progress (Kaiser et al., 2009). It can be argued that Obama's declarations that America had made most of the progress it needed to racial equality had a negative effect on making the efforts needed to work towards racial equality.

Valentino and Brader (2011) also examined how perceptions of race relations and racial policy changed after Obama's election, and found that there was a 10 percent

decrease in perceptions of discrimination between before and after Obama's election.

There was a higher percent change between White (11.5%) compared to Black (8.5%)

participants, and levels of perceived discrimination were higher for minority groups,

women, Democrats, liberals, and those with lower levels of racial resentment. However,

all groups measured, regardless of race, age, economics, partisanship, or ideology,

showed a reduction in perceptions of discrimination. They also found that those that

reported lower amounts of perceived discrimination after the election were also more

likely to have more negative attitudes towards Blacks, more racial resentment, and less

support for affirmative action and immigration.

This research demonstrates how colorblind ideology affects media coverage of

people of color and people's understanding about race. The research on the coverage of

Obama particularly demonstrates how colorblind ideology, in both media coverage and

people's personally held beliefs, affects people's reactions to an event that confirms the

assertion of a "post-race" society. One might also wonder whether the Black male as

violent criminal stereotype disproportionally advanced in news media content influenced

the chain of events that led to the shooting of Trayvon Martin. However, this still leaves

the question of how people would currently react to coverage of an event that challenges

colorblind beliefs. In order to understand how media coverage of events may challenge

dominant racial ideology, I will next examine the media coverage of the most recent

widely-covered case that has challenged people's view of race: the Trayvon Martin

murder.

The Trayvon Martin murder

The Trayvon Martin murder has had a large impact on perceptions of race

relations in the U.S. Like examples of violence against Black Americans in the past, this case is another demonstration of how Black males carry the stereotype of being violent aggressors, and the consequences they suffer due to these beliefs. Many rallies and protests have been held to try to get Zimmerman arrested and to advocate for awareness of discrimination. Media figures have also commented on the shooting, with some receiving criticism, most notably Geraldo Rivera for insinuating that Martin wearing a hood was a part of the reasoning for him being shot (Fung, 2012). President Obama also commented on the case, and is quoted as saying "If I had a son, he'd look like Trayvon" (Stein, 2012 p. 1).

While a large amount of the coverage has framed this murder as an example of how racism still exists in the U.S., there are still many articles, mostly from conservative-leaning sources, that frame the murder in more political terms, and either challenge coverage or viewpoints that examine the role of racism in the case, or highlight or undermine details of the case, or try to cast a negative light on Martin's character based on common stereotypes about Black Americans (see Boyle, 2012; Gibson, 2012; Lee, 2012; Rainey, 2012; Rudd, 2012; Stableford, 2012a; 2012b). There is also contestation about the details of the murder, including whether or not Zimmerman was attacked by Martin, and whether Zimmerman's shooting of Martin was racially motivated (Rainey, 2012).

Politics also had a large role in people's views about this case. While Obama made the comment that his son would "look like Trayvon," invoking the idea (in race-neutral terms) that race was a central issue in the shooting, he was then criticized by Republican presidential candidate Newt Gingrich for suggesting that the shooting had

anything to do with race, who said that "turning it into a racial issue is fundamentally

wrong" (Huffington Post, 2012a, p.1). Gingrich used colorblind language to frame the

shooting in terms of nationality instead of race by stating that, "we ought to talk about

being Americans" (Huffington Post, 2012a, p. 1) rather than discussing race. There is

also the fact that, while Gingrich criticized Obama's indirect statement about Trayvon

Martin's race, Obama did not mention directly mention race or racism when he

commented on the shooting, but instead emphasized nationality when discussing his

response to the tragedy and how everyone "as Americans" is impacted by the event,

rather than any discussions of how the case has affected U.S. race relations or the Black

American community (see Stein, 2012). Obama and civil rights leaders were accused by

conservatives like Rush Limbaugh of using the Trayvon Martin case as a political

opportunity in addressing how Trayvon Martin's race was a factor in the shooting

(Huffington Post, 2012c).

The coverage and public commentary on the Trayvon Martin shooting also varied

by politics, where liberal and conservative viewpoints battle between viewing this murder

as an example of how racism in the U.S. did not disappear with the election of Obama,

and claims that the shooting is being over-sensationalized and has nothing to do with

racism (Huffington Post, 2012c; Rainey, 2012; Rudd, 2012). Conservative sources tended

to state how there is too much coverage of the Trayvon Martin case, and that the case is

being exploited (Huffington Post, 2012a; 2012c; Rudd, 2012). While ABC reported not

seeing any injuries on Zimmerman in the released video, the Daily Caller, an online

conservative publication, reported that they saw a gash on Zimmerman's head (Rainey,

2012). Overall, the coverage of the case has been varied, and no clear, unified picture of

the event has been given across all sources beyond the main details (Rainey, 2012). These debates about the details of the Trayvon Martin case demonstrate how the facts of the case were likely being framed based on perceptions about race and stereotypes about Black males as violent, as well as colorblind ideological views that encourage the avoidance of mentioning race and the belief that discussing racism is racist and divisive.

One can see how the coverage of the Trayvon Martin shooting is framed based on colorblind ideology. Many irrelevant details are highlighted by media sources and commentators, such as the fact that some believe that Martin shouldn't have worn a hoodie on the night of the shooting (Fung, 2012), or that Martin used marijuana in the past (Stableford, 2012a), or the fact that some believe pictures of Martin represent him as innocent and are therefore misleading and manipulative (Stableford, 2012b). These are all examples of how media sources were framing the case based on colorblind ideological beliefs and ignoring that racism was a factor in the shooting and providing justification for why Martin was seen as threatening by Zimmerman and shot. However, other articles were framing the case based on the belief that this shooting was a case of racist violence that should lead to more examination of the persistence of racism in U.S. society (see Carey, 2012; Huffington Post, 2012b). This contrast in how the case is framed in the news is tellingly similar to the frames examined by Spratt et al. (2007) for the news coverage of Emmitt Till, where Trayvon Martin's murder is either framed as an isolated incident provoked by the victim, or as a demonstration the current state of racism in the U.S. that should prompt action towards addressing larger racial issues.

The Trayvon Martin murder prompted a large response from the media, and according to polls from the Pew Research Center and other research organizations, the

public closely followed the coverage. During 2012, the public was reported to be following the coverage of Trayvon Martin's case more closely than other major media topics, including the economy and the Presidential election (Pew, 2012). While there is a general acknowledgement that the shooting is a tragedy, public responses have varied on how to understand the role of race in the case.

Based on the coverage and responses from activist groups, one can see how the Trayvon Martin shooting had a large impact on views of race relations. However, what information there is on people's reactions to the case also indicates that not all people acknowledged the role of race in this shooting. In a Gallup poll, the largest percentage of people (35%) reported that they believed that race was a major factor in the shooting (Gallup, 2012). However, another 25% reported that it was a minor factor, 23% that it was not a factor, and 17% had no opinion (Gallup, 2012). This indicates that there were still many people that did not think that Trayvon Martin's race was an important factor in the shooting. The information on people's opinions about the case also reveals that there is a strong racial divide in how people viewed the case (Thompson & Cohen, 2012). In 2012, while the majority of people were following the coverage of the case, 52% of African Americans followed it very closely, compared to 19% of White Americans (Gallup, 2012). Also, while on average, the majority reported that there was not enough evidence to tell if Zimmerman was guilty of a crime (52%), the majority of Black respondents believed that Zimmerman was guilty of a crime (51%), compared to 11% of non-Black respondents (Gallup, 2012). When it came to the role of race in the shooting, 72% of Black Americans believed race was a main factor, and 73% believed that Zimmerman would have been arrested earlier if Martin had been White, compared to

31% and 35% of Whites, respectively (Gallup, 2012). Another survey also found that 80% of Black Americans believed that the shooting was not justified, compared to 38% of White Americans (Abt SRBI, 2012).

However, it would be a mistake to only view the differences in people's opinions about Trayvon Martin's case by race alone. Since Whites are more likely to hold colorblind views in comparison to other racial groups, it could be argued that colorblind ideology can at least partially account for the racial differences found in these poll results. There is also some evidence to suggest that views of this case are influenced by colorblind ideology. In an article examining views of residents of Sanford, FL, there were conflicting views about race relations in the area (Simon, 2012). Some expressed that they felt that it was only a tragic isolated incident, and did not reflect on the state of race relations in the area that were generally positive (Simon, 2012). However, others worried about commenting about the case for their safety, and yet said that the Trayvon Martin case was not unusual and did reflect on racial tension in the area (Simon, 2012). While the Trayvon Martin shooting has had a large impact on the African American community, it would also be a mistake to believe that all Black people have the same view of the case. While the large majority reported believing Zimmerman is guilty and that race is a major factor in the case (Gallup, 2012), this does not represent all of the views Black Americans have about the case. Based on the information about Black conservatism and false consciousness, it is also possible that there are African Americans that have interpreted the case based on colorblind ideology even if they believe that Zimmerman is guilty and that Trayvon Martin's race is an important factor in the shooting, and believe that the shooting is an isolated incident and does not reflect on race relations as a whole.

Another thing to note in the coverage of the Trayvon Martin shooting is how it was discussed during protests. Even for those that were participating in protests, colorblind rhetoric was still used in their campaigns. One protest t-shirt displayed the printed statement "It's not a black or a white thing, it's a right or a wrong thing" (see Thompson & Cohen, 2012). In protests, there were often references to "Trayvons" as indirect references to race (see Huffington Post, 2012b). While for a completely different purpose than commenters that used colorblind rhetoric to state that race was not a factor in the shooting, this language is similar to Obama's statement that avoided directly referencing Trayvon Martin's race. In this way, indirect references to race are being used to refer to how Trayvon Martin's race is believed to be a factor in the shooting. In this way, even when asserting the idea that race was a factor in the shooting, avoidance of mentioning race occurs during public statements. I argue that this demonstrates how colorblind ideology, even when it is not agreed with, still affects public discourse, and demonstrates its power as a dominant ideology.

However, there are limits to the extent that those with counter-ideological viewpoints are being silenced. Since it was such a high profile case, and there are examples of people speaking out and giving multiple views of the case, there may not have been as much fear of voicing a dissenting opinion. Also, since the case had such an impact, people may have felt more motivated to give their opinion, despite public disapproval. However, based on what has been publicly stated about the case in the media, it would seem that the silence is less in whether people are expressing their "true" opinion, and more in *how* they are expressing their opinion. While opinions that race is a central issue are not silenced, direct reference to race and racism are largely silenced.

Dominant racial ideology serves to silence other viewpoints, and influences even those that do not agree with it, and shapes how people think and speak about race (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Therefore, one would also expect that even for those that do not agree with colorblind ideology, Tynes and Markoe's (2010) results suggest that their public statements would be affected by that ideology, because it is dominant.

The trial in 2013 ended with George Zimmerman being found not guilty, and the information currently available demonstrates how colorblind ideology affected the discourse surrounding the case since it first was reported in the news. As a dominant ideology, colorblind ideology affects both those that agree with its views, and those that challenge them. While people may have different views of the case overall, it may also inform how they react to specific news pieces about the event, and specifically their ability to see how race plays a part in the coverage of the shooting. The poll results and framing of the shooting in the news coverage suggest that colorblind ideology shapes how this case continues to be interpreted and discussed.

CHAPTER 4

ARGUMENT

While previous studies tend to focus on the larger structural issues of colorblind ideology, the goal of this study is to examine the ways in which news media play a part in the larger process of how racial ideology is reinforced and understood. Colorblind ideology refers to both personal attitudes and larger structural forces that deny the salience of race and racism, and it is important to understand how these two aspects interact. By focusing on the effects of exposure to news coverage, my hope is that there can be a better understanding of how the ideological frames in news content influence how people respond to these events. Also, while the news coverage of the case has highlighted racial differences in how people have responded, this study focuses on revealing how colorblind attitudes inform views of this case and can help to explain these reported racial differences.

In this paper, I am making the assertion that, as in previous cases in the literature, colorblind ideology is affecting public discourse surrounding the Trayvon Martin shooting, in such a way that it can lead to a diminished recognition of the role of race in the shooting. The available information on the Trayvon Martin shooting has supported the idea that colorblind ideology may have shaped the coverage of the case, as well as public responses from protesters and public figures. The Trayvon Martin shooting is also important in that it challenges the current notion of a "post-race" society, and it is important to understand how it is being understood in the current racial climate. While there are reports about people's views on the case, there has been no structured examination of how colorblind ideology may have affected how people view and speak

about this case.

Also, while the previous literature has briefly examined how colorblind ideology affects how people of color view racism, there have been few examinations of how it affects perceptions of specific racial events. Therefore, this study explores how people view the Trayvon Martin case, and with an additional focus on how people of color view this case, and whether or not they are applying colorblind ideology to their understanding of it. This is important because it not only leads to an understanding of how colorblind ideology obscures understandings of race, but also how it ignores the consequences of racism, and silences dialogue that would otherwise promote working towards solutions to racial issues. It is also important in terms of understanding how colorblind views are shaped. Will people's responses be different for events like the Trayvon Martin shooting that challenge the notion of a "post-racial" society, compared to the coverage of events like President Obama's election? Or are racial events only interpreted within confirmation of one's racial worldview?

In order to support my argument, I conducted a study where participants were asked to read an article about the Trayvon Martin shooting. Like other articles about the shooting, the article excerpts made for this study either actively promoted a colorblind viewpoint of the shooting (the colorblind article), promoted a race-conscious viewpoint of the shooting (race-conscious article), or did not promote either colorblind or race-conscious viewpoint of the shooting (the control article). This study examined how participants respond to the articles based on their beliefs in colorblind ideology.

While polls did measure opinions about the Trayvon Martin shooting, there is still the question of how colorblind attitudes may have been a factor in the racial differences

they found in their results. Based on the past literature, it can be argued that those with more colorblind views would be less likely to acknowledge that race and racism were a factor in the shooting. Therefore, based on this argument, and the recent poll results, the following hypotheses were tested:

H1: The higher the reported level of colorblind attitudes, the less participants will believe that race was a salient factor in the Trayvon Martin shooting.

H2: There will be a significant difference between participants' responses to poll questions based on racial identity, such that non-White participants will more strongly believe that race was a salient factor in the Trayvon Martin shooting compared to White participants.

H3: Colorblind attitudes will be a factor in the racial differences in perceptions that race is a factor in the shooting, such that when controlling for colorblind attitudes, a smaller difference will be found between racial groups.

This study not only examined people's opinions about the case, but also whether they chose to express this opinion to others. While Lewis et al. (2000) examined how students of color feel silenced due to colorblind beliefs, and Tynes and Markoe (2010) found that people's public reactions can sometimes differ from their private ones, there has not been a study that specifically examines how people's public expressions about racism are affected by colorblind ideology. People may feel pressure to not express race-conscious views when in spaces that support colorblind ideology since colorblind ideology is a dominant viewpoint. Since colorblind ideology is a dominant ideology, this would then lead to hearing more that supports colorblind ideology while silencing other viewpoints and further reinforcing its dominance. For responses to the Trayvon Martin

shooting, this is only hinted at by examining the available reported responses to the case. However, based on previous research, it can be argued that for those who hold a race-conscious view of the Trayvon Martin shooting may not always feel fully comfortable expressing their views of the case in discussions with others. While there are many examples of people protesting to publicly express their view that Trayvon Martin's race was a factor in the shooting (see CNN, 2012; Huffington Post, 2012b), this does not mean that all people would feel comfortable expressing these race-conscious views to others. Tynes and Markoe's (2010) results, as well as those from Lewis (2001) and Lewis et al. (2000) suggest that people do feel pressure to not express views that acknowledge racism in contexts where colorblind ideology is supported.

While colorblind ideology is a dominant ideology, this does not mean that everyone agrees with it, but it still shapes how people think and talk about race (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Like Tynes and Markoe's (2010) results suggest, people may not feel comfortable publicly expressing their acknowledgment of race and racism. While the audience may have different reactions to the specifics of the news content, the ideological framing of the shooting in the article may influence people's comfort in expressing their views about the shooting (see Domke, 2001; Gandy et al., 1997). Based on seeing how people respond to articles that frame the Trayvon Martin shooting from either a colorblind or race-conscious viewpoint, one can understand how news content may be affecting the public responses to the Trayvon Martin shooting through how it affects people's willingness to voice their opinion about the case to others. The results could then possibly lend support to the criticism that colorblind ideology silences race-conscious dialogue (see Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Lewis, 2001; Plaut, 2010; Schofield, 1986).

Media can influence how people view racism and race relations (Gray, 1987), but it is also important to understand the ways in which the racial ideological frames used in news coverage of the Trayvon Martin shooting affected how willing people were to express their opinion about the shooting to others. Therefore, this study also examined how this news coverage could affect discourse about the event, and tests the following hypotheses:

H4: Among participants who read an article that promotes a colorblind view of the Trayvon Martin shooting, participants that disagree with the article will be less likely to state that they would be willing to express their opinion to others in a discussion of the article in comparison to participants who agree with the colorblind views of the article.

H5: Among participants who read an article that promotes a race-conscious view of the Trayvon Martin shooting, participants that agree with the article will be more likely to state that they would be willing to express their opinion to others in a discussion of the article in comparison to participants who disagree with the race-conscious views of the article.

H6: Participants that read and agree with the article that promotes a race-conscious view of the Trayvon Martin shooting will be more likely to state that they would be willing to express their opinion to others in a discussion of the article, in comparison to those that disagree with the article that promotes a colorblind view of the shooting.

This case has also had a strong response from the Black American community. The fact that 72% of Black Americans are reported to believe that race was a major factor

in the shooting (Gallup, 2012) supports the idea that Black Americans tend to not hold colorblind views. However, it may also be the case that while some Black Americans do hold colorblind views, they still saw race as a factor in this event due to either personal connection to the event and/or being influenced by responses from the Black American community. As previously mentioned, many of the beliefs within Black conservatism also overlap with colorblind ideology (see Asumah & Perkins, 2000). Based on this overlap, there is also the question of whether differences in beliefs about race and racism also affected how Black Americans viewed the case. Therefore, this study also attempted to explore how colorblind attitudes relate to perceptions of the Trayvon Martin shooting specifically for Black Americans. This would also be an opportunity to expand the available information on colorblind beliefs among people of color, and see how it affects perceptions of racial events that involve their specific racial group, rather than larger, broader policies such as affirmative action. Also, since Black Americans and other people of color are often criticized when making claims of racism or mentioning race (see Augoustinos & Every, 2010; Bonilla-Silva, 2002; 2006; de B'beri & Hogarth, 2009), they may feel more pressure to avoid publicly expressing race-conscious views when having discussions about race and racism with others. This may be the case especially after Gingrich's criticism of President Obama's remarks on the shooting (see Huffington Post, 2012a), and other criticisms of civil rights leaders' responses to the case (see Huffington Post, 2012c; Lee, 2012; Rainey, 2012). However, it is also possible that articles that framed their coverage of the Trayvon Martin shooting based on a race-conscious view of the case may have encouraged discussion amongst those that shared the same viewpoint. Therefore, the following research questions were also explored:

RQ1: For Black participants, will it be that the higher the reported level of colorblind attitudes, the more likely they will agree with the colorblind article/disagree with the race-conscious article?

RQ2: For participants in each condition that express that they support a race-conscious view of the Trayvon Martin shooting in response to the article, will Black participants significantly differ from participants of other racial groups in their likelihood to state that they would be willing to state their race-conscious views in a discussion about the article?

RQ3: Will Black participants who agree with the view of the race-conscious article be more likely to state that they would be willing to publicly express their views in a discussion of the article in comparison to those who read the colorblind article or the article that does not promote either a colorblind or race-conscious view of the case?

All of these hypotheses and questions have implications for understanding how people's views are shaped by colorblind ideology. The hope is that this research can add to the literature on how colorblind ideology affects how people speak about race and racism, as well as how audience beliefs and media frames affect reactions to news about racial events.

CHAPTER 5

METHODS

For this study, an online survey experiment was conducted, where participants were assigned to three conditions and asked to respond to questions based on a mock article they read about the Trayvon Martin shooting. Based on the condition, the articles either framed the case based on a colorblind viewpoint, a race-conscious viewpoint, or a "neutral" viewpoint that does not directly promote colorblind or race-conscious ideology.

Rather than ask about opinions about the role of race in the Trayvon Martin shooting in general, the survey focused on a specific aspect of the case in order to attempt to account for any factors surrounding the case that could influence participants' answers outside of their views on race and racism. The focus of the articles and response questions used in this survey was about the role of Trayvon's race in Zimmerman's decision to shoot Martin. While opinions about other aspects of the case have been addressed in previous surveys (e.g., opinions about whether Zimmerman is guilty of a crime; Gallup, 2012), participants' answers to those questions may now be affected by the fact that Zimmerman has since been arrested and other facts that have been reported since his arrest. In order to avoid this possible bias in participants' answers, participants were asked to give their opinion on Zimmerman shooting Martin, since it is the key issue of the case that is frequently addressed in articles and other media reports, and is based on the central aspect of the case that cannot be changed by any future presented evidence.

Participants were also asked questions about their colorblind attitudes, as well as basic demographic questions. Participant responses were categorized based on their response to the colorblind, race-conscious, or "neutral" control article, and whether they

would choose to publicly voice this agreement/disagreement in a hypothetical discussion.

Participants

A total of $N = 329$ participants completed the survey. Participants were U.S. citizens or residents, age 18 and older. They were mainly recruited from CRTNET mailing list, UMass, and Amazon Mechanical Turk. Participants were also recruited through contact with local social justice and student organizations. Participants were located in several states in the U.S., including Massachusetts, California, Florida, and Texas. Recruitment was done in order to attempt to get a significant number of Black participants. Additional recruitment was conducted through contact with Black community organizations in Massachusetts and Connecticut, including the Boston, New Haven and Hartford NAACP, and student organizations at Spelman University and Northeastern University. At the end of the study, $N = 20$ participants identified as African American.

Variables

Colorblind attitudes.

Participants' colorblind attitudes are operationalized as their score on the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS; Neville et al., 2000). The CoBRAS is a 20-question survey designed to measure colorblind racial attitudes. Responses are selected on a rating scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Ratings numbers are added into a composite score that reflects the level of colorblind attitudes of the participant. There are three dimensions to the scale: racial privilege, institutional discrimination, and blatant racial issues. The statements on the scale ask respondents to report how much they agree with statements such as "Racism may have been a problem

in the past, it is not an important problem today," "White people in the U.S. are discriminated against because of the color of their skin," and "Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension" (see Appendix A and B for survey items).

The Cronbach's alpha for this measure in past research has been between .84 and .91 (Neville et al., 2000). For this study, the Cronbach's alpha was .922. It has been tested for social desirability effects, and has a low correlation with the Marlowe-Crowne social desirability scale at $r = .13$ (Neville et al., 2000). Participants received a final CoBRAS score based on the sum of their answers, where a higher score indicates more support for colorblind attitudes.

Race.

Race is operationalized as participants' responses to a question that asks them to report their self-identified racial group, out of the options: Asian/Pacific Islander, Black/African American, White/Caucasian, Hispanic, Native American/Alaska Native, and Other/Multiple racial identities. The last option allowed participants to enter whatever racial identities they identified as rather than select only one of the options above. It was measured in order to test the hypotheses about the racial differences in responses to the Trayvon Martin case, and the research questions about how Black Americans are responding to the case.

Article ideology.

Participants were asked to read parts of one or two articles excerpts on the Trayvon Martin shooting, depending on the condition they are assigned to (see Appendix A). All respondents are shown a short paragraph presented as a snippet of an article that gives a basic description of the case without being strongly framed by any specific racial

ideology. Participants in the control condition were only shown this article excerpt. The experimental conditions include the same descriptive article and an additional article that is framed by either colorblind or race-conscious ideology as the experimental manipulation. Due to the differences in how the case was framed in each condition, there were differences in the content in the articles between conditions. However, they were matched for format and the amount of information presented in each article, and had identical wording where appropriate. The content of the articles were based on information that has been previously presented in media sources. The articles can be found in Appendix A.

In the control condition, participants were asked to read a paragraph from one article that only reviewed the facts of the case, and did not include an article that promotes either viewpoint expressed in the experimental conditions. While the control condition article can also be seen as colorblind due to the fact that it does not directly acknowledge the role of racism in the Trayvon Martin shooting, it is used in the control condition since it does not overtly promote a colorblind or race-conscious view of the case and does not include information that supports or challenges the idea that racism was a factor in the shooting. This excerpt was the first shown in all three conditions.

For the colorblind condition, the second article excerpt does not mention Trayvon Martin's race. There is also information that supports the argument that Zimmerman shot Trayvon Martin in self-defense, and a quote that supports the view that Zimmerman is not racist. In the race-conscious condition, the second article excerpt mentions Trayvon Martin's race, includes information that supports the argument that Trayvon Martin was targeted due to his race, and includes a quote that supports the argument that race was a

factor in Zimmerman's decision to shoot Martin.

In each of the conditions, there were two manipulation check questions to assure that participants understood the ideology that the article promotes. Participants will be asked to what extent they feel the articles promote the idea that race was a factor in the Trayvon Martin case. Only those that indicated the correct answers for each condition could be included in analyses for hypotheses 4, 5, and 6 and research questions 2 and 3 ($N = 191$ respondents passed the manipulation check). Respondents passed the manipulation check by answering that the article indicated that Trayvon Martin's race was not an important factor in the colorblind condition, was neutral in regards to Trayvon Martin's race in the control condition, or indicated that Trayvon Martin's race was an important factor in the race-conscious condition.

Reported attitudes about the Trayvon Martin shooting.

After the manipulation check, participants were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with the idea that Trayvon Martin's race was an important factor (1) in this case and (2) in his shooting. This was done in order to better be able to validate participants' understanding of the articles (as the manipulation check) and their personal views on the topic, by differentiating between the Trayvon Martin case overall and specifically the event of George Zimmerman shooting Martin. Both answers help to give a more complete picture of how participants understood the role of race in the shooting, rather than assume that a general answer would apply to all aspects of the shooting. In the interests of time, rather than ask about several aspects of the case, the shooting was chosen specifically since it is the key event of the case. These questions were asked in each condition in order to determine if they personally have a colorblind of race-

conscious view of the case. Their choice of responses was on a scale from 1 ("Trayvon Martin's race was definitely not a factor") to 7 ("Trayvon Martin's race was definitely a factor"). When needed for analysis, scores from 5 to 7 were categorized as "Race-conscious," scores from 1 to 3 categorized as "Colorblind", and 4 categorized as "Neutral". Participants that answer between 5 and 7 were then asked how important they feel Trayvon Martin's race is in the case/shooting, where 1 is "A little important" and 7 is "extremely important". In order to be included in the analyses for hypotheses 4, 5 and 6, and research questions 2 and 3, participants needed to have their answers to both questions categorized as either race-conscious, colorblind, or neutral (18 cases were removed, for a total $N = 173$).

Participants were then asked to imagine that they would have a discussion about the articles, and asked whether or not they would be willing to express their views based on their answer to the previous question in that discussion. This was asked in order to measure their comfort in publicly expressing their race-conscious or colorblind views of the shooting in a public discussion. Answers were on a 1 to 7 scale, where 1 is "Definitely will not discuss my viewpoint during the discussion," 7 is "Definitely will discuss my viewpoint during the discussion", and 4 is "Not sure/Equally likely or unlikely". For those who responded between 5 and 7, they were asked how comfortable they would be during this discussion, where 1 is "Not comfortable at all" and 7 is "Very comfortable".

Demographics.

In order to understand the relevant details of the population used for the study, and to try to mask the purpose of the study, participants were asked for their gender,

education and age along with their race. They were also asked about their politics, on a rating scale from "very liberal" to ("very conservative"), with a separate option for "Neither liberal nor conservative".

In order to attempt to control for the differences in previous media that participants have viewed about the case is not significantly different between groups, participants were also asked about how much they kept up with the case in the news, and the sources that they have been using to keep up with the case.

Procedure

After consenting to participate in the study, participants were randomly assigned to either the colorblind, race-conscious, or control condition. Those in the experimental conditions were asked to read excerpts from two articles. In the control condition, participants were asked to read an excerpt from one article that states the facts of the case, and then that Zimmerman was eventually arrested.

After reading the article excerpts, participants were asked to what extent they feel that the articles promoted that Trayvon Martin's race was a factor in the case and shooting, and then asked to what extent they feel Trayvon's race was a factor in the case/shooting. Afterwards, they were asked to imagine that they were going to have a discussion about the article, and asked whether they would be willing to express their opinion about the case (based on their answer to the previous question) during that discussion. After these questions, participants were given the CoBRAS, with the question order randomized for each participant. Finally, participants were given the demographic questions. Participants were then thanked for their time and debriefed.

CHAPTER 6

RESULTS

A total of $N = 329$ participants completed the survey. A total of $N = 329$ participants were included in analyses for H1, H2, and H3, and a total of $N = 173$ for analyses for H4, H5, and H6. A total of $N = 20$ Black participants were included in analysis for RQ1, and $N = 8$ were included in results for RQ2 and RQ3.

For the total sample, the average CoBRAS score was low and trended towards having less colorblind views ($M = 62.05$, $SD = 18.09$). The majority of the sample was White (75.7%). Most reported keeping up with coverage of the case either somewhat (41.9%), not so closely (32.8%), or not at all (11.8%), compared to 10.3% that kept up with the case closely, and 3% very closely. Most of the sample reported keeping up with the news through CNN (27%), local television (13.1%) or other online sites (27.4%). Most of the sample identified as liberal (66.3%), and most reported having some college education or degree (88.1%). 47.4% of the sample identified as female, 51.4% as male, and 1.2% did not identify their gender. See Table 1 for details of the sample demographic information.

For the sample that was included in analyses for H4, H5 and H6, and RQ 2 and 3, the average CoBRAS score was similarly low ($M = 61.87$, $SD = 18.27$). The majority were White (78%), liberal (65.3%), and college educated (91.9%). 49.7% of the sample identified as female, 49.1% as male, and 1.2% did not identify their gender. See Table 2 for details of the sample demographic information. For the analysis, $N = 35$ passed the manipulation check for the control condition, $N = 81$ to the race-conscious condition, and $N = 57$ in the colorblind condition. See Table 2 for details of the demographic

information for these participants.

For H1, it was hypothesized that the higher the reported level of colorblind attitudes, the less participants will believe that race was a salient factor in the Trayvon Martin shooting. A Pearson's *r* correlation was run to determine the relationships between participants' CoBRAS scores and rating scale scores for each question on how likely they believe that Trayvon Martin's race was a factor his case and shooting. Consistent with the hypothesis, there was a significant negative correlation between respondents' CoBRAS score (*M* = 62.05, *SD* = 18.09) and their reported belief that Trayvon Martin's race was a factor in the case overall (*M* = 5.35, *SD* = 1.57), *r*(328) = -.439, *p* < .001. The stronger their colorblind attitudes, the more they reported Trayvon Martin's race was not a factor in his case. There was also a significant negative correlation between respondents' CoBRAS score and their reported belief that Trayvon Martin's race was a factor in his shooting (*M* = 5.48, *SD* = 1.6), *r*(328) = -.461, *p* < .001.

For those that reported that Trayvon Martin's race was an important factor, they were also asked to rate the level of importance. Post-hoc analyses were conducted in order to see if there would also be a negative correlation between CoBRAS score and the level of importance attributed to race as a factor for those that reported that it was an important factor. There was also a significant correlation between respondents' CoBRAS scores (*M* = 59.09, *SD* = 17.5) and how important they found Martin's race as a factor in the case (*M* = 5.95, *SD* = 1.14). The stronger their colorblind beliefs, the less important they reported Martin's race to be in the case, *r*(259) = -.31, *p* < .001. For those that reported that they thought Martin's race was significant, there was also a significant correlation between respondents' CoBRAS scores (*M* = 58.89, *SD* = 17.43) and how

important they found Martin's race as a factor in his shooting ($M = 5.95$, $SD = 1.09$),

$r(254) = -.349$, $p < .001$.

For H2, it was hypothesized that non-White participants would more strongly

believe that race was a salient factor in the Trayvon Martin shooting compared to White

participants. An ANOVA was run to determine if there is a significant difference between

the scores for views of the case between participants in different racial groups. When

comparing responses about the importance of Trayvon Martin's race to his case, the

hypothesis was partially supported. There were significant differences based on race on

their reported belief that Trayvon Martin's race was a factor in the case ($F(5, 323) =$

2.868, $p = .015$, $\eta^2 = .043$). Black participants had the highest average score ($M = 6.70$,

$SD = .470$) and Asian participants had the lowest average score ($M = 5.11$, $SD = 1.62$).

White participants had the second-lowest average score ($M = 5.46$, $SD = 1.581$). Between

these scores were the average scores for Hispanic participants ($M = 5.56$, $SD = 1.9$),

Native American/Alaska Native participants ($M = 5.67$, $SD = 1.16$), and participants with

multiple racial/ethnic identities ($M = 5.77$, $SD = 1.36$). See Table 3 for average scores

across racial groups.

In the post-hoc Bonferroni analysis, there were significant differences between

responses from Black participants and White ($M_{\text{diff}} = 1.24$, $p = .01$) and Asian participants

($M_{\text{diff}} = 1.59$, $p = .008$), where Black participants reported a stronger belief that Martin's

race was important in the case ($M = 6.7$, $SD = .47$) compared to White ($M = 5.46$, $SD =$

1.58) and Asian participants ($M = 5.11$, $SD = 1.61$).

When comparing responses about the importance of Trayvon Martin's race to his

shooting, hypothesis 2 was not supported. There was a non-significant difference based

on race on reported belief that Trayvon Martin's race was a factor in the shooting ($F(5,$ 323) = 1.94, p = .09, η^2 = .029). Though non-significant, there were similar average scores to the previous analysis, with Black participants having the highest average score (M = 6.35, SD = .875) and Asian participants had the lowest average score (M = 4.96, SD = 1.621). Between these scores were the average scores for Hispanic participants (M = 5.31, SD = 2.21), White participants (M = 5.47, SD = 1.59), Native America/Alaska Native participants (M = 5.67, SD = 1.16), and participants with multiple racial/ethnic identities (M = 5.77, SD = 1.24). See Table 3 for average scores across racial groups.

For those that reported that Trayvon Martin's race was an important factor, they were also asked to rate its level of importance. It was also found that among those that said that Martin's race was an important factor in the case, there were significant differences between racial groups in reported level of importance, $F(5, 254)$ = 2.82, p = .017, η^2 = .053. Black participants had the highest average score (M = 6.65, SD = .587), and multi-racial participants had the lowest average score (M = 5.4, SD = .843). Between these were the average scores for Native American/Alaska Native participants (M = 5.67, SD = 1.16), White participants (M = 5.89, SD = 1.18), Asian participants (M = 5.89, SD = 1.13), and Hispanic participants (M = 6.55, SD = .93). See Table 3 for average scores across racial groups. A post-hoc Bonferroni analysis revealed that the differences between responses from Black participants and White participants approached significance (M_{diff} = .76, p = .062), and all other differences were non-significant.

Another post hoc-analysis was done to see if differences in CoBRAS scores accounted for the differences found between racial groups (see Table 4). An ANOVA was run to compare CoBRAS scores between racial groups. The difference between

racial groups was non-significant, $F(5, 323) = 1.8161$, $p = .101$, $\eta^2 = .028$.

For H3, it was hypothesized that colorblind attitudes will be a factor in the racial differences in perceptions that race was a factor in the shooting, such that when controlling for colorblind attitudes, a smaller difference will be found between racial groups. An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was run, where race is the independent variable, the reported level of belief that Trayvon Martin's race was a factor in his case or shooting is the dependent variable, and the CoBRAS score is the covariate. This was done in order to see if the difference in answers is of less magnitude than the results attained for H2. The hypothesis was partially supported. When examining the same comparisons in H2 when controlling for CoBRAS score, there was still a significant difference for their reported belief that Trayvon Martin's race was a factor in the case, $F(5, 322) = 2.289$, $p = .046$, $\eta^2 = .034$, and the effect was smaller than the results for H2 (compared to $\eta^2 = .043$ for H2). The difference between racial groups for whether they found Trayvon Martin's race as a factor in his shooting was still non-significant when controlling for CoBRAS score, $F(5, 322) = 1.954$, $p = .085$, $\eta^2 = .029$. In a post-hoc analysis, it was also found that among those that said that Trayvon Martin's race was an important factor in the case, there were significant differences in reported level of importance after controlling for CoBRAS score, $F(5, 253) = 2.314$, $p = .044$, $\eta^2 = .044$.

For H4, it was hypothesized that among participants who read an article that promotes a colorblind view of the Trayvon Martin shooting, participants that disagree with the article will be less likely to state that they would be willing to express their opinion to others in a discussion of the article in comparison to participants who agree with the colorblind views of the article. A t-test was run to see whether participants'

willingness to publicly express their viewpoint, and their level of comfort, was

significantly different between those that agreed and those that disagreed with the article

in the colorblind condition. In the colorblind condition, those that had their views of the

case categorized as race-conscious were classified as being in disagreement with the

article, and those with colorblind views as being in agreement with the article. This was

assumed based on 1) all participants included in this analysis correctly interpreting this

article as promoting a colorblind view of the case, and 2) participants were asked about

their views of the case in the survey as an implied comparison to how they interpreted the

viewpoint in the article (see Appendix B for survey questions).

The hypothesis was not supported; there were no significant differences in

reported likelihood in discussing the article how comfortable they would feel during a

discussion of the articles between those that agreed ($M = 4.82, SD = 2.09, N = 11$) or

disagreed ($M = 5.05, SD = 1.72, N = 38$) with the article in the colorblind condition, $t(47)$

$= -.379, p = .71, d = -0.12$. Both groups on average were willing to engage in the

discussion. Among those that were willing to discuss the article, there was also no

significant difference in expected comfort between those that agreed ($M = 5.83, SD = $

$1.47, N = 6$) versus disagreed ($M = 5.15, SD = 1.66, N = 27$) with the article, $t(31) = .932,$

$p = .36, d = 0.44$. Both groups on average were likely to be somewhat comfortable

participating in the discussion.

For H5, it was hypothesized that among participants who read an article that

promotes a race-conscious view of the Trayvon Martin shooting, participants that agree

with the article will be more likely to state that they would be willing to express their

opinion to others in a discussion of the article in comparison to participants who disagree

with the race-conscious views of the article. A t-test was run to see whether participants'

willingness to publicly express their viewpoint was significantly different between those

that agree and those that disagreed with the article in the race-conscious condition.

Similar to the analyses done for H4, participants in the race-conscious condition had their

views of the case categorized as race-conscious were classified as being in agreement

with the article, and those with colorblind views as being in disagreement with the article.

The hypothesis was supported; there was a significant difference between those

that agreed or disagreed with the race-conscious article, $t(76) = 2.5 \ p = .014 \ d = 3.55$,

where those that agreed with the article were more likely to want to discuss the shooting

($M = 5.65$, $SD = 1.45$) than those that did not ($M = 2$). However, in this analysis, there

was only one participant that disagreed with the race-conscious article. Only participants

that agreed with the article noted that they would participate in the discussion, and they

were likely to report that they would feel comfortable discussing the article ($M = 5.85$,

$SD = 1.21$).

In order to better understand the results for H4 and H5 and how views about the

case are a factor rather than simply a reaction to the viewpoint expressed in the article

content, a post-hoc analysis was done to compare the results for the control article based

on respondents' reported views about the Trayvon Martin case (also classified as

colorblind, race-conscious, or neutral) based on if they thought that Martin's race was a

factor. The difference between groups approached significance ($F(2, 32) = 3.1$, $p = .059$,

$\eta^2 = .162$), where race-conscious respondents expressed more desire to want to discuss

the article ($M = 5.51$, $SD = 1.6$, $N = 27$), followed by respondents with colorblind views

about the case ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 1.53$, $N = 3$) and lastly those with a neutral view ($M = $

3.80, $SD = 1.64$, $N = 5$).

For H6, it was hypothesized that participants that read and agree with the article that promotes a race-conscious view of the Trayvon Martin shooting would be more likely to state that they were willing to express their opinion to others in a discussion of the article, in comparison to those that disagree with the article that promotes a colorblind view of the shooting. A t-test was run for those whose responses to the article were categorized as race-conscious, to see whether the number of participants' willingness to publicly express their viewpoint was significantly different between those in the race-conscious condition compared to those in the colorblind and control condition.

The difference approached significance, $t(113) = 1.949$, $p = .054$, $d = 0.378$. Those that disagreed with the colorblind article expressed less desire to participate in a discussion of the article ($N = 38$, $M = 5.05$, $SD = 1.72$) compared to those that agreed with the race-conscious article ($N = 77$, $M = 5.65$, $SD = 1.45$). Those in the race-conscious condition also felt significantly more comfortable ($t(85) = 2.214$, $p = .03$, $d = 0.48$), though both trended towards feeling comfortable with having a discussion in the race-conscious condition ($N = 60$, $M = 5.85$, $SD = 1.22$) versus those in the colorblind condition ($N = 27$, $M = 5.15$, $SD = 1.66$).

RQ1 asked whether Black participants would be more likely to agree with the colorblind article or disagree with the race-conscious article the higher their reported level of colorblind attitudes. A Pearson's r correlation was run to determine the relationship between Black participants' ($N = 20$) CoBRAS scores and their answer about the importance of Trayvon Martin's race as a factor in his case and his shooting. The correlations were both non-significant, $r(19) = .068$, $p = .777$; $r(19) = .096$, $p = .689$.

CoBRAS score ($M = 52.3$, $SD = 11.27$) did not significantly correlate with their beliefs about the importance of Martin's race in his case ($M = 6.70$, $SD = .47$) or his shooting ($M = 6.35$, $SD = .875$).

RQ2 asked whether, of the participants that expressed race-conscious views in response to their article, if Black participants would significantly differ in their likelihood to state that they would be willing to state their race-conscious views in a discussion about the article compared to participants of other racial groups. An ANOVA was run to determine if participants' willingness to express their race-conscious viewpoint in a discussion was significantly different between participants in different racial groups. This test was run only run for participants in the race-conscious condition, since it was the condition with the highest number of Black participants ($N = 6$) compared to only $N = 1$ in the other two conditions. The results were non-significant, $F(5,71) = .891$, $p = .492$, $\eta^2 = .059$ (see Table 5). This may be likely due to the low number of participants in non-White racial groups included in the analysis. However, there was a significant difference in reported level of comfort during the discussion for those that said they would participate, $F(4,55) = 2.52$, $p = .05$, $\eta^2 = .155$ (see Table 5). Black participants reported the highest average level of comfort ($M = 6.17$, $SD = 1.17$), while Asian participants reported the lowest average level of comfort ($M = 4.5$, $SD = 1.64$). Between these were the average scores for Hispanic participants ($M = 5.75$, $SD = .96$) and White participants ($M = 5.98$, $SD = 1.1$).

RQ3 asked if Black participants who agreed with the race-conscious article would be more likely to state that they would be willing to publicly express their views in a discussion of the article in comparison to those who read the colorblind article or the

control article. An ANOVA was run with responses categorized as race-conscious from Black participants ($N = 8$) to see if the number of people who indicated that they would be willing to express their viewpoint in a discussion of the article is higher in the race-conscious condition compared to the colorblind and control condition. The results were non-significant, $F(2,5) = .539, p = .614, \eta^2 = .177$, with participants reporting willingness to discuss the case in the control ($M = 7$), race conscious ($M = 6.17, SD = .98$) and colorblind ($M = 7$) conditions. It should be noted that there was only $N = 1$ participant in the control in colorblind conditions included in the analysis, compared to $N = 6$ in the race-conscious condition.

In summary, the results support the argument that race and racial ideology impact how people believed race was a factor in the Trayvon Martin shooting, as well as how the ideological frames in news media content can possibly impact discussion of the shooting. The total results are summarized below:

1) The higher the reported level of colorblind beliefs (as measured by the CoBRAS), the less likely participants would support the idea that race was a salient factor in the Trayvon Martin shooting;

2) There were racial differences in how respondents viewed that race was a salient factor in the Trayvon Martin shooting, and that difference still existed after controlling for CoBRAS scores;

3) Participants that were exposed to an article framed by colorblind ideology were likely to be willing to discuss the article, regardless of whether they held colorblind or race conscious beliefs about the shooting. However, those that had a race conscious view of the shooting were more likely to want to discuss the case

after being exposed to a race conscious article compared to those with a colorblind view.

4) Participants that expressed a race-conscious view of the case were more likely to want to express their views in a discussion of the race conscious article compared to the colorblind article.

5) There were no differences found between Black participants in their likelihood to agree with the colorblind article or disagree with the race-conscious article based on their reported level of colorblind attitudes. There was no significant difference found in willingness to publicly express their views in a discussion of the article between Black participants who held a race conscious view of the shooting in each condition.

6) Black participants did not significantly differ in their likelihood to state that they would be willing to express their race-conscious views in a discussion about the article compared to participants in other racial groups. However, there was a significant difference in reported comfort, where Black participants reported a higher level of comfort with discussing the case compared to participants in other racial groups.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION

Overall, the results of this study suggest that the impact of colorblind framing in news media on discussions of racial events is complex, and dependent on factors such and racial identity and beliefs about race. The results also suggested that, while respondents' racial ideology did indicate the extent they believed that race was a significant factor in the Trayvon Martin shooting, there can be a distinction between one's beliefs about race and application of those beliefs to specific racial events. In summary, news media is only one aspect of a larger context that shapes how people discuss racial events.

The results of this study are in line with previous research about views of the Trayvon Martin shooting and racial differences in perceptions about the role of race in the case (see Gallup, 2012; Pew, 2012; Thompson & Cohen, 2012) and studies examining how colorblind attitudes impact views on various racial issues such as affirmative action or specific events such as the news coverage of Hurricane Katrina (see Awad et al., 2005; Oh et al., 2010; Tynes & Markoe, 2010; Voorhees et al., 2007). While previous research how colorblind ideology can silence discussion about race, especially for people of color (see Augoustinos & Every, 2010; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Doane, 2006; Lentin, 2011; Lewis et al., 2000), these results give hope that exposure to colorblind ideology does not necessarily dampen reported willingness to participate in discussions about racial events.

While the results for hypothesis 1 support the idea that racial attitudes affect how people respond to racial events, the results for hypotheses 2 and 3 which showed that there were racial differences in how respondents believed that race was a factor in the

77

Trayvon Martin shooting demonstrate how racial ideology is only one factor in how people react to racial events. The results for hypotheses 2 and 3, while they are similar to results from previous polls that found that there were racial differences in how the case was viewed (see Abt SRBI, 2012; Gallup, 2012; Pew, 2012), demonstrate how these differences persist when controlling for racial attitudes based on CoBRAS score. Also, in the results for hypothesis 2, there were not only differences in how participants in different racial groups rated whether race was an important factor in Trayvon Martin's case, there were also differences in reported level of importance, where Black participants had the highest average rating for both. This is especially significant considering that there were no significant differences found between racial groups in CoBRAS scores. This suggests that racial identity and identification with the group affected by the racial event is also a significant factor in respondents' reported belief that race was a factor in the Trayvon Martin shooting.

Neither differences in racial attitudes nor racial identity alone can explain racial differences in responses to racial events. This may be due to a discrepancy in expressing these beliefs and applying them to actual understandings of racist events. Wodtke's (2012; 2013) research suggests that White people may not always apply their race-conscious attitudes to actual racial events or anti-racist actions; while they may have general attitudes that bias should not be shown towards people of color, they might not have positive attitudes towards solutions that would remedy racial inequalities. When examining differences in racial attitudes between White respondents with higher and lower levels of education, those with higher levels of education expressed more racially tolerant views and understandings of racism, but their attitudes were not different when

comparing their attitudes about specific racist actions, such as housing discrimination practices (Wodtke, 2013). This helps to explain why White respondents reported a lower average belief that Martin's race was a salient factor in his case compared to respondents in other racial groups, even when controlling for CoBRAS score. Even though their COBRAS scores were low, their perception of this specific case may not be similarly reflected in their views about racism in general.

Racial affiliation may also play a factor, since Black respondents also reported the highest average belief that Martin's race was a salient factor in his case compared to respondents in all other racial groups. While current research on racial attitudes held by people of color focuses on how racial ideology is adopted and applied personally or towards people of color in general (see Barr & Neville, 2008; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Major et al., 2007; Oh et al., 2010), more research can be done to see how adoption and/or application of colorblind ideology by people of color affects views of racial events towards different racial groups, and see differences in how it is applied towards one's own racial groups versus people of color in different racial groups.

These results are similar to the results from Tynes and Markoe (2010), as both highlight racial differences in perceptions of racism. While this study asks about a hypothetical situation rather than simulate an actual one like Tynes and Markoe (2010), it similarly demonstrates the differences in how racial groups perceive and respond to racist events. These results are also similar to the results of Oh et al. (2010), which also included significant differences in how respondents supported affirmative action based on both race and CoBRAS score. While this study focuses on responses to a specific racist event rather than a larger policy, both support the idea that there is a complex relationship

between racial identity and racial beliefs in perceptions of racism. Oh et al. (2010) found that racial beliefs were a better predictor of support for affirmative action compared to racial identity. Further research and analyses could be done to see if these results could be replicated for responses to a specific racist event that involves a specific racial group, rather than a broader policy that affects multiple racial groups.

It was originally hypothesized that due to how colorblind ideology can silence the viewpoints of those with race-conscious views (Augoustinos & Every, 2010; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Doane, 2006; Lentin, 2011; Lewis et al., 2000), that exposure to an article with a colorblind or race-conscious framing of the Trayvon Martin shooting would significantly impact respondents' willingness to participate in a discussion about the case based on their own views about the role of race in the shooting. It is difficult to draw conclusions from the results for hypotheses 4 and 5 (that race conscious participants were more likely to want to participate in discussion of the shooting compared to colorblind participants in the race conscious condition but not in the colorblind condition) due to the low number of participants with colorblind views. However, the post-hoc results showing that participants with race conscious views of the shooting were more likely to want to discuss the shooting than those with colorblind or neutral views of the shooting in the control condition. Also, the results for hypothesis 6 showing that race conscious participants were more likely to want to discuss the case in the race-conscious condition compared to the colorblind condition. Both of these results offer more information on how the article content affected participants' desire to discuss their views. Tynes and Markoe's (2010) results also partially support this. Their research supports that there were participants that privately expressed that they were offended by the racist photos

they were shown while avoiding expressing their views publicly, there were participants that were very offended and did publicly post that they were offended, as well as try to explain why the photos were racist (Tynes & Markoe, 2010).

Also, as previously stated, while there were public figures like Gingrich and Limbaugh that criticized those that mentioned the racism inherent in the Trayvon Martin shooting (Huffington Post, 2012a; 2012c), there were still protesters and advocacy groups that spoke out against violence toward Black youth and provided public support for Trayvon Martin's family. Even though there are examples of how these public statements avoided direct mentions of race (see Thompson & Cohen, 2012), the public outcry still demonstrates how those that saw the shooting as racist violence were willing to publicly express this, even in a "post-racial" social climate. It could be that participants in both the race-conscious and colorblind condition would similarly be willing to discuss the case. Particularly in the colorblind condition, since participants are likely to have been previously exposed to news coverage about the case that was framed by colorblind ideology, the article may have had less of an impact of their willingness to discuss the case. Since this study did not examine what participants would have exactly said, it could be that the impact of colorblind ideology on discourse about racial events has more of an impact on the content and language used in discussion rather than directly on willingness. Further research would need to examine how actual exposure to colorblind ideology in news media would impact actual discussion about racial events.

The results for hypotheses 4 and 5 suggest that those with race-conscious views are likely to want to have a discussion about the case, in both the colorblind and race-conscious conditions. This may reflect the fact that, despite the article's ideological

framing, the case is one that is salient to those with race-conscious views. Therefore, the article content may be less of a factor in their willingness to participate in discussion compared to their feelings and beliefs about the case. This is also supported by the results of the post-hoc analysis for hypotheses 4 and 5 done that demonstrated that those with race-conscious views were more willing to discuss the case compared to those with other views in the control condition. However, the results for hypothesis 6 suggest that the article content had some effect, since those with race-conscious views of the case are not only more likely to discuss the race-conscious article with others compared to those with a colorblind article, and were also more likely to be comfortable doing so. These results support the idea that the article did have some impact on those with race-conscious views in their willingness to participate in discussion. Despite the fact that there were examples of people publicly calling the shooting an example of racist violence, the previous research demonstrates that people of color find exposure to colorblind ideology exhausting and frustrating (see Holoien & Shelton, 2011; Lewis et al., 2000), and therefore be less likely to be willing to participate in discussions about racism in that context.

These results suggest that article content can affect discussion (or at least self-reported willingness to engage in discussion), and supports the idea that colorblind rhetoric impacts those with race-conscious views to make them less likely to want to discuss it and/or less likely to feel comfortable doing so. This could then impact actual discussion and make it less likely for participants in discussions of racial events to want to express their views or alter how they would express their views, similar to studies examining classrooms where students of color felt less comfortable speaking about their

racial experiences in colorblind environments (Lewis et al., 2000; Lewis, 2001). More research would need to be done to examine how colorblind ideology in media affects actual discussions in those with race-conscious views, and whether the differences found in these results would translate to changes in the content of actual discussions about racial events. Assuming that self-reported assumptions about future actions may be optimistic, results from actual conversations would give better insight into how these articles would affect discussions of the case, and may reveal greater disparities between discussions after exposure to articles that are framed by race-conscious versus colorblind ideology.

Online anonymity may also possibly explain why participants with race-conscious views were willing to participate in discussions about the Trayvon Martin shooting in all three conditions. Previous research has summarized how colorblind ideology leads to the marginalization of viewpoints on racism from people of color (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Lewis et al., 2000, Plaut, 2010). However, it may be that online interactions provide a different environment where all people, including people of color, can feel more comfortable publicly expressing their dissent against racist actions and race-conscious views. This is supported by the fact that respondents with race conscious views were willing to discuss the shooting in all three conditions, despite those in the colorblind condition being less willing than those in the race conscious condition. While Tynes and Markoe (2010) found differences between respondents' private responses to seeing racist images posted to an online profile and their public responses not communicating how offended they were, they also found that some respondents that were strongly offended did publicly post that they were offended, with the majority doing so being Black respondents. They concluded that online anonymity might have led to their respondents

being more open in their responses. Even though this study only measured respondents'

self-reported willingness to have a discussion about the Trayvon Martin shooting rather

than the actual choice to participate in a discussion, more research could be done in order

to examine how the environment of a discussion (in-person vs. online) would factor into

how colorblind ideology affects participation in discourse about racial events.

Due to the low number of Black participants in the study, few conclusions can be

drawn from the results for the research questions. The data revealed little variation in

CoBRAS scores or answers to questions about willingness or comfort to have a

discussion about the Trayvon Martin shooting for the Black participants in this study.

Black participants tended to have race-conscious views, which is consistent with previous

findings in other studies (see Neville et al., 2000). Previous studies have found variation

in Black participants' views on racial issues like affirmative action or responses to racist

events, with those with colorblind beliefs being more likely to not support affirmative

action, internalize racial stereotypes and justify racial inequality, as well as less likely to

speak about racism with their children (see Barr & Neville, 2000; 2008; Jost & Banaji,

1994, Neville et al., 2005; Oh et al., 2010). It was planned within this study to examine

how the racial ideology held by Black participants would view the role of race in the

Trayvon Martin shooting. However, since Black respondents in this study had similarly

low CoBRAS scores, this likely accounts for the fact that all believed that race was an

important factor in the Trayvon Martin shooting. Future studies would need to examine

Black participants with more varying racial ideological views in order to determine if

there would have been a significant relationship between CoBRAS score and views on

the Trayvon Martin shooting.

Black respondents included in the analyses for research questions 2 and 3 reported a high level of willingness to participate in discussions about the case in all three conditions. Research has also examined how colorblind ideology often frustrates and silences people of color in discussions about race (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Holoien & Shelton, 2011; Lewis et al., 2000, Plaut, 2010). However, as was stated for the results for hypotheses 2 and 3, it may be that this does not similarly impact willingness to participate in discussions about racist events. For the analysis for research question 2 (asking whether Black participants classified as having a race conscious view of the shooting would significantly differ in their willingness to discuss their views compared to participants in other racial groups), it is interesting that while reported willingness to participate in discussion was non-significant, reported comfort was significantly different, where Black participants were the most comfortable. The results from Tynes and Markoe (2010) may also help to explain this finding. When publicly replying to the online post of racist images and explaining why they found the images offensive and racist, Black participants would specifically refer to a racist picture of Martin Luther King, Jr. that was included in the photoset (Tynes & Markoe, 2010). Like the results for hypotheses 2 and 3 where Black respondents were more likely to view race as a significant factor in the Trayvon Martin shooting, this suggests that identification with racist events that impacts one's racial group is another factor that should be considered in analyzing willingness and comfort with discussing these events. Black participants may have reported being more comfortable with discussing the Trayvon Martin shooting due to its impact on the Black community and likelihood of having discussed it before. However, these analyses were only conducted in the race-conscious condition. More

research would need to be done in order to see how articles framed by colorblind ideology would have affected reported comfort, and if there still would have been a significant difference between racial groups.

One factor that impacted the results for these research questions is that more Black participants were in the race-conscious condition compared to the colorblind or control condition, which suggests that there may be bias in the sample, where those that participated would be more willing to have a discussion about the case regardless of article content, while those that decided to stop participating in the colorblind or control condition would also be less comfortable having a discussion about those articles compared to those that completed the survey. More research would need to be done with more Black participants with varying views in order to draw more conclusive results, and to confirm whether article ideology would still have a non-significant impact on discussion.

Another point to consider is that the survey did not specify who would be in the discussion, and it is possible that these results may be due to participants thought of having this discussion with like-minded peers or people in the same racial group, rather than others that would disagree with them and/or others in different racial groups. Additional research could explore how reported willingness to have a discussion about the case would be affected when varying information about the group that would have the discussion along with the article content, and examine how reported or observed comfort would differ based on the racial identity of the discussion group members, and/or if they were members that previously expressed colorblind views.

The overall results demonstrate that there is a complex relationship between the

factors that affect discussion of racial events. This study suggests that the relationship between racial attitudes and willingness to discuss racial events can be affected by racial ideology in media content, but that this relationship differs based on racial identity. These results also help to give another dimension to the racial differences found in how people have reacted to and understood the Trayvon Martin shooting, and demonstrate the role of racial ideology in understanding racial events, as well as how holding certain racial attitudes may differ from actually applying them to one's understanding of racial events. In continuing research based on these results, future studies can further examine the complex relationship between racial identity, framing, and racial attitudes when examining discussions of racist events. Future studies could also examine actions beyond discussion of racist events, and measure how ideological frames in media play a role in how people respond to concrete anti-racist actions.

Limitations

One of the major limitations of this study is with the generalizability and external validity of the results. Since mock articles are being used rather than actual articles, participants' reactions to the articles may not have been the same as the ones they would have to actual articles on a news website. Also, the mock articles for this study were written to be aligned with one racial ideology, while real articles might be more complex in how they portray racial issues and may not clearly support only one viewpoint. Though previous studies have used mock situations to measure peoples' reactions (see Tynes & Markoe, 2010), there is still concern that the reactions measured in this study may not accurately reflect the reactions people would have to the actual coverage of the shooting. It may be that participants were more likely to express their views without feeling there

was any true social risk or pressure to conform to colorblind views since it is only a hypothetical scenario.

Another concern is the fact that this study was conducted online. Online surveys can be a good method of obtaining response from participants on sensitive topics due to the anonymity that is possible online (Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006). However, since the study was conducted anonymously online, the results from participants' indication of their willingness to discuss their view of the case in a discussion may only apply to online discussions, but not face-to-face discussions and other contexts where people are more likely to have discussions about race without this anonymity.

Also, because the results of the study are based on participants' hypothetical discussion of their opinion, participants' indication of their willingness to express their views on the case in a discussion may not reflect what they would actually do if they were truly in a discussion, since all participants were notified that their responses to the survey are confidential. While participants were told to imagine that they were having a discussion, they may feel that they have protection from any negative consequences since they did not have an actual discussion. Therefore, participants with race-conscious views of the case would feel less pressure to conform to colorblind ideology and their answers would not reflect their actual willingness to express their racial views to others.

However, the hope is that these factors would affect all participants equally and/or would be distributed across conditions through random assignment, and therefore this effect would not interfere with the expected difference in responses between those with colorblind or race-conscious views of the shooting. The believability of the article's authenticity is not as important a factor as the believability of the views expressed in the

articles, which are genuine. Therefore, the extent to which participants express agreement with these views in their responses should not be affected by participants' beliefs about whether the article was written by a professional. Also, since the purpose of the study is to understand the differences in how participants respond to the media coverage based not only on the content, but also their own ideological views, the hope is that the results reflect these differences and the pressure to conform to colorblind ideology, even if the exact behaviors do not reflect exactly what people actually do in public discussions about race. While the difference in the context of the discussion (face-to-face vs. online) could lead to different expectations in behaviors, the past literature and coverage of the case indicates that the pressure to conform to colorblind ideology and use colorblind rhetoric is present in both contexts (see Bonilla-Silva, 2002; Lewis et al., 2000; Tynes & Markoe, 2010).

Another limitation of the study is a lack of instructions for the survey questions regarding Trayvon Martin's race in order to ensure that they were understood as intended by the participants. As mentioned previously, the first questions of the survey asked participants to report to what extent they believed that the articles used in the survey supported the idea that Trayvon Martin's race was a factor in his case and his shooting, and then asked them to report their own views (see Appendix B). This was done in order to capture how participants understood the viewpoint expressed in the article and their own views regarding the Trayvon Martin case overall (including aspects after the shooting such as the investigation and the trial), and regarding the specific act of the shooting. However, since this distinction was not explained to participants in the survey instructions, it cannot be confirmed that this is the way that all participants understood

these questions. While the questions referring to the shooting are specific, the questions referring to the case may have been too vague to ensure that all participants had a similar understanding of what "the case" was referring to. It is possible that not all participants understood that those questions were asking them to refer to multiple aspects of the Trayvon Martin case outside of the shooting; this would then lead to some participants' answers not representing their views about the case overall. However, the hope is that participants were able to understand questions referring to the case as intended since similar wording has been used in news media to refer collectively to different aspects of the Trayvon Martin case. With that said, it would be important in future studies to clarify any potentially misinterpreted wording in the survey questions to ensure that all participants understand them as intended. Future studies could also ask about specific aspects of the Trayvon Martin case rather than ask about the case overall in order to offer further clarity in the question wording while also gaining a more precise and clearer understanding of participants' views.

Another limitation is that participants' responses may have been affected by social desirability and the desire to not appear prejudiced. Since colorblind ideology is a dominant ideology that has a goal of not appearing racist, it is assumed that people will not hesitate to express colorblind views. However, since the majority of the sample expressed more race-conscious views, there may have been pressure to answer the questions in such a way as to not appear prejudiced. While the CoBRAS has been found to have low correlations with social desirability in previous studies (see Neville et al., 2000), there can still be concern about social desirability effects for the responses to the questions about the article.

However, the purpose of the study is to understand how social pressure, specifically due to colorblind ideology, affects people's willingness to publicly discuss the Trayvon Martin shooting. Also, this social pressure is accounted for conceptually in colorblind ideology, which also includes pressure to not appear prejudiced when expressing views about race (Bonilla-Silva, 2002; 2006). While there is concern that social desirability effects may have led to finding differences between those with colorblind and race-conscious views that are actually not completely due to differences in racial ideology, social desirability effects are an expected part of the results since it is a part of holding colorblind views and being affected by colorblind ideology.

Another limitation in the study is the fact that the articles in the experimental conditions have different content, and were not completely identical in wording between conditions. This leads to the risk that other aspects of the articles affected responses to the articles. However, the articles were written in order to make sure that they are framed to their corresponding condition's ideology, and therefore needed to have different information, since certain aspects of the case supported one interpretation and not the other. However, efforts were taken to make sure that the articles were balanced in the amount of information presented, in bringing up similar aspects of the case with alternate interpretations (for example, Zimmerman's initial suspicion of Martin). While writing may be different in the articles in order to ensure that it seems realistic, the articles were similar in length for both experimental conditions, and the structure of how the information was presented was similar in each article (interpretations and additional information about the shooting, and then additional information about Zimmerman's character). The hope is that these similarities between the articles were enough to control

for any aspects of the writing that would influence participants outside of the content and its ideological leaning.

Another limitation was the use of a convenience sample, and the low variation in views within the sample. Even with significant differences, most average scores were still within range of race-conscious views of the case. CoBRAS scores were low, on average, and any colorblind views were in the minority. This may be explained by the results for the post-hoc analysis for hypotheses 4 and 5, where participants with race-conscious views of the case were more likely to want to discuss the neutral article compared to those with colorblind or neutral views. It may be that race-conscious participants would be more likely to also want to take a survey on this topic, and be more likely to complete the survey. This could also be explained by the education and political views of the sample. The sample skewed more towards being liberal and having higher levels of education (Bachelor's degree or higher). Colorblind attitudes are associated with conservative views and less years of education (Ansell, 2006; Smith et al., 2011; Wodtke, 2013). It is also likely that based on the nature of the survey itself, those that would be willing to discuss the case would also be more likely to participate in and complete a survey about the Trayvon Martin shooting compared to those that would not be willing. Also, more participants may have been less likely to say they would not be willing to participate in a discussion, since they had to express their views and participate in the survey. This is reflected in the fact that participants with race conscious views were on average willing to discuss the case in all three conditions. Also, those with race conscious views may not have wanted to complete the survey after reading the article in the colorblind condition; this is reflected in the fact that more participants completed the

survey in the race-conscious condition compared to the colorblind or control conditions. Therefore, those with race-conscious views that did complete the survey may also be more likely to want to discuss the article compared to those that did not complete the survey, and therefore the results may not be an accurate reflection of how people with race-conscious views react to colorblind ideology in media. A non-response follow up would need to be conducted in order to further examine the consequences of this bias on the results.

In order to address these limitations in future studies, other methodologies would need to be used in order to obtain responses from a variety of viewpoints. Focus groups, larger surveys that cover a variety of topics and hide the purpose of the study, and observations of discussions would be other methods that would help in obtaining viewpoints about the case that are not only race-conscious. The experiment could also be adjusted to use random or probability sampling to invite participants. In using a convenience sample, the results of this study are best used a preliminary guidance for future studies, rather than being used to generalize to any populations. However, these results do help to give insight into how those with race-conscious views have responded to the case, and how media may be affecting discussion.

Another limitation of the study is the low number of Black participants. Generalizable conclusions cannot be made from the low number included in analyses, though they do line up with responses seen in media and public polls (see Abt SRBI, 2012; Gallup, 2012; Pew, 2012). However, since there were not enough participants to do in-group comparisons, conclusions cannot be made about nuances in responses within the Black community, which polls have not explored. However, the results to give a starting

point for examining the factors that affect how Black participants discuss racial events with others, as well as how racial identity impacts discussion of racial events.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to test the previous criticisms that colorblind ideology has negative effects on how people view race and racism, and demonstrate how these consequences affect how people respond to the coverage of the Trayvon Martin shooting. While there are a variety of viewpoints about the Trayvon Martin case, media tend to support dominant ideology (Grey, 1987), so it is important to understand how people perceive the coverage and how articles that reinforce colorblind ideology are affecting discourse about the shooting. However, since there is also opportunity for people to receive news with counter-ideological viewpoints, it is also important to see if this media content can have a positive effect on discourse about the case as well. The hope is that the results of this study have helped to provide a better understanding of how colorblind ideology can have a negative effect on reactions to racial events, as well as how news coverage of racial events are understood, and how Black Americans and other people of color are affected by this framing in the media.

The results of this study suggest that the content of articles can impact discussion for those with race conscious views. While this effect was not demonstrated specifically for Black participants, the racial differences found in participants' willingness to have discussions about the case still has implications on inter-racial discussion about racial events. These results help to form an explanation of why racial differences in views about the Trayvon Martin shooting occurred in previous polls, as well as contributing further information on differences in expressed views on race (affected by personal experience,

94

social desirability, etc.) versus practiced and applied racial beliefs in understanding racist events. From these results, more work can be done to examine not only how this affects discussion, but also how this affects people's support of anti-racist activism.

The results of this study can guide future research on how colorblind ideology affects discourse on racist events. However, the results of this study also give hope that those with race-conscious views want to discuss racial events, even when faced with colorblind ideology. While colorblind ideology can affect discussion of the Trayvon Martin shooting and other racial events that have a large impact on U.S. race relations, those with race-conscious views are still able to see the racism of these events and willing to speak out against it. The hope is that this research can not only guide future research about the effects of colorblind ideology on this important discourse, but also guide research on how race-conscious and anti-racist discourse can be encouraged.

APPENDIX A

COLOR-BLIND RACIAL ATTITUDES SCALE

1. Everyone who works hard, no matter what race they are, has an equal chance to become rich.

(4.) Race plays a major role in the type of social services (such as type of health care or day care) that people receive in the U.S.

6. It is important that people begin to think of themselves as American and not African American, Mexican American or Italian American.

(7.) Due to racial discrimination, programs such as affirmative action are necessary to create equality.

(9.) Racism is a major problem in the U.S.

(10.) Race is very important in determining who is successful and who is not.

11. Racism may have been a problem in the past, it is not an important problem today.

(12.) Racial and ethnic minorities do not have the same opportunities as white people in the U.S.

13. White people in the U.S. are discriminated against because of the color of their skin.

14. Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension.

(15.) It is important for political leaders to talk about racism to help work through or solve society's problems.

(16.) White people in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.

17. Immigrants should try to fit into the culture and values of the U.S.

18. English should be the only official language in the U.S.

(19.) White people are more to blame for racial discrimination than racial and ethnic minorities.

20. Social policies, such as affirmative action, discriminate unfairly against white people.

(21.) It is important for public schools to teach about the history and contributions of

racial and ethnic minorities.

22. Racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.

23. Racial problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations.

(26.) Race plays an important role in who gets sent to prison.

*Items in parentheses are reverse scored.

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for participating in this survey. Please read the information below and choose whether you would like to voluntarily consent to the study.
Note: If you have already completed this survey, please do not take it a second time.

1. WHAT IS THIS FORM?
This form is called a Consent Form. It will give you information about the study so you can make an informed decision about participation in this research study.
2. WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE?
Any U.S. citizen or resident who is the age of 18 or older is able to participate.
3. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?
The purpose of this study is to examine how people understand and respond to media coverage of notable events.
4. WHERE WILL THE STUDY TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?
Participation in this study involves completing an online survey. It should take approximately 5 to 10 minutes, depending on your reading speed.
5. WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO?
If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to respond to an article excerpt, answer questions about the article and the topic it covers, and provide demographic information.
6. WHAT ARE MY BENEFITS OF BEING IN THIS STUDY?
You may not directly benefit from this research. However, we hope that your participation in the study may help you to better understand how people understand and respond to news content about important social and/or political issues.
7.WHAT ARE MY RISKS OF BEING IN THIS STUDY?
Possible risks and inconveniences in participating in this study include feeling discomfort at being asked questions about a sensitive social topic. However, all steps will be taken in order to minimize this discomfort during the study, and your responses will be kept confidential. Your participation is voluntary, and you can decide to not participate at any time.
8. HOW WILL MY PERSONAL INFORMATION BE PROTECTED?
The following procedures will be used to protect the confidentiality of your survey answers. All of your responses will be stored electronically will kept in a secure location on a USB drive (either in a locked filing cabinet or locked room) when not in use. Only the members of the research staff will have access to any collected information. At the conclusion of this study, the researchers may publish their findings. Information collected from this study will be presented in summary format and you will not be identified in any publications or presentations. No identifying information will be collected from you at any time during the study, and all of your answers will be anonymous.
9. WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?
We will be happy to answer any question you have about this study. If you have further questions about this project or if you have a research-related problem, you may contact the principal investigator, (Stephanie Lawrence, slawr0@comm.umass.edu). If you have

any questions concerning your rights as a research subject, you may contact the University of Massachusetts Amherst Human Research Protection Office (HRPO) at (413) 545-3428 or humansubjects@ora.umass.edu.
10. CAN I STOP BEING IN THE STUDY?
If you agree to be in the study, but later change your mind, you may drop out at any time. There are no penalties or consequences of any kind if you decide that you do not want to participate.

Please select an option below:*
 -By selecting this option, I am verifying that I am eligible to participate in this study, understand the terms of consenting to participate, and would like to continue.
 -I am not able/willing to participate in this study.

In this section, you will be asked questions about articles covering the Trayvon Martin shooting. First, please read this/these article excerpt/s about the shooting:

From May 1, 2012
On February 29, 2012, in Sanford, FL, Trayvon Martin was shot and killed by George Zimmerman while walking home from a convenience store. George Zimmerman later stated that he thought Martin was suspicious and followed him. In a recorded 911 call, George Zimmerman stated that he followed Martin, and then shot him. George Zimmerman was initially not arrested after the shooting was reported to police. However, as of April 11th, he was charged with second-degree murder and will stand trial.

[Control condition ends here]

Race-conscious condition article:

From March 14, 2012
On Wednesday, local civil rights activists and residents in Sanford, FL gathered at Allen Chapel AME Church for a rally demanding justice in the Trayvon Martin case, and advocating for George Zimmerman's arrest. The crowd cheered, clapped and shouted amen as leaders from the NAACP, Urban League and the Sanford City Commission pledged to fight for justice.
One of the speakers at the gathering, James Davis, like many others interviewed that day, thinks Trayvon was confronted — and ultimately shot to death — because he was black. The shooter, George Zimmerman, claimed he acted in self-defense and has not yet been arrested or charged. Sanford police say they don't have enough evidence to make an arrest.
But more than two weeks after the Feb. 26 incident, controversy continues to mount around the shooting and the Police Department's handling of the case. "What occurred here is tragic and horrific," said Davis, 64. "Every American citizen should be outraged." The fact that Trayvon Martin was unarmed at the time of the shooting, and that George Zimmerman found him suspicious and chose to follow him, has been cited as evidence that George Zimmerman found Martin suspicious not because of any actual threat, but due to stereotypes against black men as being threatening. A police report also noted that

Zimmerman made four reports of suspicious persons since August 2011. In every report, the suspect was a black male.

Colorblind condition article:

From March 15, 2012
This past Thursday, the Sentinel received an exclusive letter from Robert Zimmerman, George Zimmerman's father. In the letter, he spoke about George Zimmerman's character and public service, and stated that his neighbors believed that he was a leader in the local neighborhood watch group and a mentor in the community.
The letter does not provide details about what happened Feb. 26 on a walkway in the gated community where George Zimmerman lives and where Trayvon Martin was visiting. But it does challenge one basic assumption of the family's lawyers: that Zimmerman's intent when he got out of his sport utility vehicle was to confront Martin after calling police to report a suspicious person. "He would be the last to discriminate for any reason whatsoever ...," the letter says. "The media portrayal of George as a racist could not be further from the truth."
George Zimmerman was not initially arrested based on the Stand Your Ground law, and police did not find any reason to believe the shooting was not in self-defense at the time the shooting was reported. George Zimmerman stated that he felt threatened by Martin, and that this is the reason he acted in self-defense. After the case was made public, Zimmermann's family physician presented evidence of injuries to his nose, eyes and back, suggesting that he may have been attacked on the day of the shooting.

Now we will ask you a few questions about what you have just read. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions, so please be as honest and thoughtful as possible in your answers.

Please indicate to what extent you feel that the _article(s)_ support the idea that Trayvon Martin's race is or is not an important factor _in this case_. If you feel that they support neither view, please select "Neutral".
 1 Trayvon Martin's race definitely not a factor
 2
 3
 4 Neutral
 5
 6
 7 Trayvon Martin's race definitely a factor

Please indicate to what extent you feel that the _article(s)_ support the idea that Trayvon Martin's race was or was not an important factor _in his shooting_. If you feel that they support neither view, please select "Neutral".
 1 Trayvon Martin's race definitely not a factor
 2
 3

4 Neutral
5
6
7 Trayvon Martin's race definitely a factor

Please indicate to what extent _you_ believe that Trayvon Martin's race is or is not an important factor _in this case_.
1 Trayvon Martin's race definitely not a factor
2
3
4 Neutral
5
6
7 Trayvon Martin's race definitely a factor

How important of a factor do you feel that Trayvon Martin's race was in this case?
1 A little important
2
3
4 Moderately important
5
6
7 Extremely important

Please indicate to what extent _you_ believe that Trayvon Martin's race was or was not an important factor _in his shooting_.
1 Trayvon Martin's race definitely not a factor
2
3
4 Neutral
5
6
7 Trayvon Martin's race definitely a factor

How important of a factor do you feel that Trayvon Martin's race was in his shooting?
1 A little important
2
3
4 Moderately important
5
6
7 Extremely important

Imagine that you were given the opportunity to discuss this/these article/s with a randomly chosen group of people who have also taken this survey. You would not

see their answers to the survey, and they would not see yours.   When given the opportunity to talk about whether Trayvon Martin's race was a factor in the shooting, will you *express your viewpoint about this topic*, or will you *not discuss your viewpoint about this topic* during the discussion?
 1 Definitely will not discuss my viewpoint in discussion
 2
 3
 4 Not sure/Equally likely or unlikely
 5
 6
 7 Definitely will discuss my viewpoint in discussion

How *comfortable* would you feel while expressing your viewpoint about whether Trayvon Martin's race was a factor in his shooting during this discussion?
 Very uncomfortable   Moderately uncomfortable   Slightly uncomfortable
Neutral Slightly comfortable   Moderately comfortable   Very comfortable

In this section, you will be asked to share your opinion on several topics related to race and racism. Again, there are no right or wrong answers to these questions, so please be as honest and thoughtful as possible in your answers. Please indicate to what extent you agree with each of the following statements:

All answer choices are:
Strongly disagree
Moderately disagree
Slightly disagree
Slightly agree
Moderately agree
Strongly agree

Everyone who works hard, no matter what race they are, has an equal chance to become rich.

Race plays a major role in the type of social services (such as type of health care or day care) that people receive in the U.S.

It is important that people begin to think of themselves as American and not African American, Mexican American or Italian American.

Due to racial discrimination, programs such as affirmative action are necessary to create equality.

Racism is a major problem in the U.S.

Race is very important in determining who is successful and who is not.

Racism may have been a problem in the past, it is not an important problem today.

Racial and ethnic minorities do not have the same opportunities as white people in the U.S.

White people in the U.S. are discriminated against because of the color of their skin.

Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension.

It is important for political leaders to talk about racism to help work through or solve society's problems.

White people in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.

Immigrants should try to fit into the culture and values of the U.S.

English should be the only official language in the U.S.

White people are more to blame for racial discrimination than racial and ethnic minorities.

Social policies, such as affirmative action, discriminate unfairly against white people.

It is important for public schools to teach about the history and contributions of racial and ethnic minorities.

Racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.

Racial problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations.

Race plays an important role in who gets sent to prison.

Lastly, we will ask you a few questions about yourself.

Please report what state you live in.
 Alabama
 Alaska
 American Samoa
 Arizona
 Arkansas
 California
 Colorado
 Connecticut
 Delaware

District of Columbia
Federated States of Micronesia
Florida
Georgia
Guam
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Marshall Islands
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Northern Mariana Islands
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Palau
Pennsylvania
Puerto Rico
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virgin Islands
Virginia

Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

Please report your age, in years.
18-24
25-34
35-44
45-54
55-64
65+

Please report what racial/ethnic group(s) you identify with.
Asian/Pacific Islander
Black/African-American
Caucasian
Hispanic
Native American/Alaska Native
Other/Multiple racial identities:

Please report what gender you identify as.

Please choose your highest level of education:
12th grade or less
Graduated high school or equivalent
Some college, no degree
Associate degree
Bachelor's degree
Post-graduate degree

How would you describe your political beliefs? Would you say that you are:
Very liberal
Moderately liberal
Slightly liberal
Slightly conservative
Moderately conservative
Strongly conservative
Neither liberal nor conservative

How much have you personally kept up with media coverage of this case since it first started in early March 2012?
Not at all
Not so closely
Somewhat closely
Closely

Very closely

What news sources have you been using to get your news about the case?

Lastly, how did you find out about this survey?

You have now reached the end of the survey. If you would like to review and/or change your answers, please hit the "Back" button. Otherwise, please hit the "Submit" button below in order to complete the survey.

Thank You!

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. We appreciate the time you've taken to help us better understand how people have been responding to the news coverage of the Trayvon Martin shooting, and how their beliefs have informed their reactions.
Again, all of your responses will be kept secure and anonymous. If you have any questions or feedback about the study, feel free to email the Principal Investigator (Stephanie Lawrence, slawr0@comm.umass.edu).
Lastly, we ask that you do not share the specific purpose of this study or its questions with anyone who has not taken the survey until the survey has closed.
Article text sampled from The Orlando Sentinel.

For those recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turk:
Please use this completion code in order to receive credit for this survey: [survey("response id")] You can expect your submission to be approved very soon, but it may take up to 1 hour.

APPENDIX C

TABLES

Table 1.
Percentages for descriptive statistics: entire sample (N = 329)

Variables	%
Race	
White	75.5
Asian/Pacific Islander	8.5
Black	6.1
Hispanic	4.9
Native American/Alaska Native	0.9
Multiple racial/ethnic identities	4
Gender	
Male	51.4
Female	47.4
Did not identify	1.2
Age	
18-24	21.3
25-34	44.1
35-44	16.4
45-54	8.8
55-64	7.3
65+	2.1
Politics	
Liberal	66.3
Conservative	22.8
Neither	10.9
Education	
Less than college	11.9
Some college	30.1
Associates	4.6
Bachelors	32.2
Post-grad	21.3
How much have you been following the case?	
Not at all	11.9
Not very closely	32.8
Somewhat closely	41.9
Closely	10.3
Very closely	3

Table 2.
Percentages for descriptive statistics: for H4, H5 and H6 analysis (N = 173)

Variables	%
Race	
White	78
Asian/Pacific Islander	8.7
Black	4.6
Hispanic	4.6
Native American/Alaska Native	0.6
Multiple racial/ethnic identities	3.5
Gender	
Male	49.1
Female	49.7
Did not identify	1.2
Age	
18-24	21.4
25-34	41.6
35-44	17.3
45-54	11
55-64	8.1
65+	0.6
Politics	
Liberal	65.3
Conservative	23.7
Neither	11
Education	
Less than college	8.1
Some college	34.1
Associates	3.5
Bachelors	34.7
Post-grad	19.7
How much have you been following the case?	
Not at all	10.4
Not very closely	32.9
Somewhat closely	45.1
Closely	7.5
Very closely	4

Note. N = 173 respondents were included due to passing the manipulation check after viewing the articles in their assigned condition, and having their answers to both questions about their views on the case and shooting categorized as either race-conscious, colorblind, or neutral.

Table 3.

Beliefs regarding the role of Trayvon Martin's race in his case and shooting

Question	White	Asian/Pacific Islander	Black	Hispanic	Native American/Alaska Native	Multiple racial/ethnic identities	Total	F	p	η2	controlled for CoBRAS score F	p	η2
Reported belief that Trayvon Martin's race is an important factor in his case	5.46 (1.58)	5.11 (1.62)	6.7 (0.47)	5.56 (1.9)	5.67 (1.16)	5.77 (1.36)	5.53 (1.57)	2.87*	0.02	0.02	2.29*	0.05	0.03
Rated level of importance of Trayvon Martin's race as an important factor in his case	5.89 (1.18)	5.89 (1.13)	6.65 (0.59)	6.55 (0.93)	5.67 (1.16)	5.4 (0.84)	5.95 (1.14)	2.82*	0.02	0.05	2.31*	0.04	0.04
Reported belief that Trayvon Martin's race is an important factor in his shooting	5.47 (1.59)	4.96 (1.62)	6.35 (0.88)	5.31 (2.21)	5.67 (1.16)	5.77 (1.24)	5.48 (1.6)	1.94	0.09	85	1.95	0.09	0.03

Note. *=*p* < .05. Standard deviations appear in parentheses below the means. Answers were on a scale from 1= "Trayvon Martin's race definitely not a factor", 4="Neutral", 7="Trayvon Martin's race definitely a factor", and on a scale from 1= "A little important", 4="Moderately important", 7="Extremely important"

Table 4.
Average CoBRAS score by race

				Race						
	White	Asian/Pacific Islander	Black	Hispanic	Native American/ Alaska Native	Multiple racial/ethnic identities	Total	F	p	η2
CoBRAS										
score	63.21	59.54	52.30	58.44	73.33	62.00	62.05	1.82	0.10	.028
	(1.58)	(1.62)	(0.47)	(1.9)	(1.16)	(1.36)	(1.57)			

Note. Standard deviations appear in parentheses below the means. Scores were added from answers to 20 questions that were on a scale from 1 = "Strongly disagree, 2 = "Moderately disagree", 3 = "Slightly disagree, 4 = "Slightly agree, 5 = "Moderately agree", 6 = "Strongly agree".

Table 5.
Reported willingness and comfort with discussing views on the Trayvon Martin shooting (race conscious condition only)

	Race									
Question	White	Asian/Pacific Islander	Black	Hispanic	Native American/ Alaska Native	Multiple racial/ethnic identities	Total	F	p	η2
Reported willingness to have a discussion about the Trayvon Martin shooting	5.52 (1.54)	6 (0.89)	6.17 (0.98)	6.2 (1.30)	4 .	7 .	5.65 (1.45)	0.89	0.49	0.06
Reported level of comfort in having a discussion about the Trayvon Martin shooting	5.98 (1.10)	4.5 (1.64)	6.17 (1.17)	5.75 (0.96)	. .	7 .	5.85 (1.22)	2.52*	0.05	0.16

Note. *=p = .05. Standard deviatiosn appear in parentheses belwo the means. Answers were on a scale from 1= "Definitely will not discuss my viewpoint in discussion", 4="Not sure/Equally likely or unlikely", 7="Definitely will discuss my viewpoint in discussion", and on a scale from 1= "Very uncomfortable", 4="Neutral", 7="Very comfortable"

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abt SRBI, Washington Post, ABC News, April 5-8, 2012. Retrieved April 10, 2012, from The Washington Post. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/polls/postabcpoll_04082012.html

American Psychological Association. (1997). *Can - or should- America be color-blind? Psychological research reveals fallacies in a color-blind response to racism* [Pamphlet]. Washington DC: Author.

Ansell, A. (2006). Casting a blind eye: The ironic consequences of color-blindness in South Africa and the United States. *Critical Sociological, 32*(2-3), 333-356.

Arizona Revised Statutes § 15-111 & 15-112, 1 (2010).

Asumah, S. & Perkins, V. (2000). Black conservatism and the social problems in Black America: Ideological cul-de-sacs. *Journal of Black Studies, 31*(1), 51-73.

Augoustinos, M. & Every, D. (2010). Accusations and denials of racism: Managing moral accountability in public discourse. *Discourse Society, 21*(3), 251-256.

Awad, G., Cokley, K., &Ravitch, J. (2005). Attitudes toward affirmative action: A comparison of color-blind versus modern racist attitudes. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 35*(7), 1384-1399.

Barr, S. & Neville, H. (2008). Examination of the link between parental racial socialization messages and racial ideology among Black college students. *Journal of Black Psychology, 34*(2), 131-155.

Baynes, L. (2002-2003). Racial profiling, September 11th and the media: A critical race theory analysis. *Virginia Sports and Entertainment Law Journal, 2*(1), 1-62.

Blais, D. (2010). The perils of color blindness. In J. Marsh, R. Mendoza-Denton, & J. Smith (Eds.).*Are we born racist? New insights from neuroscience and positive psychology.* Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Bloom, L. (February 21, 2014). 4 Reasons Why Stand Your Ground made a difference in the Michael Dunn trial. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com

Bobo, L. (2011). Somewhere between Jim Crow & post-racialism: Reflections on the racial divide in America today. *Daedelus, 140*(2), 11-36.

Bonilla-Silva, E. (1997). Rethinking racism: Toward a structural interpretation. *American Sociological Review, 62,* 465-480.

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2002). The linguistics of color blind racism: How to talk nasty about Blacks without sounding "racist". *Critical Sociology, 28*(1-2), 41-64.

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2006). *Racism without racists: Color-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in the United States.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Bonilla-Silva, E. & Dietrich, D. (2011). The sweet enchantment of color-blind racism in Obamerica. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 634,* 190-206.

Boyle, M. (April 2, 2012). Zimmerman family member calls NAACP 'racists,' says 'there will be blood on your hands' if George is hurt. *The Daily Caller.* Retrieved from http://dailycaller.com

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

Carey, R. (April 17, 2012). Black males and the nature of suspicion: Uncovering what really killed Trayvon Martin. *Huffington Post.* Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com

CNN Wire Staff (April 11, 2012). Timeline of events in Trayvon Martin case. *CNN.* Retrieved from http://www.cnn.com

Cohen, C. (2011). Millenials & the myth of the post-racial society: Black youth, intra-generational divisions & the continuing racial divide in American politics. *Daedelus, 140*(2), 197-205.

Davis, J. & Gandy, O. (1999). Racial identity and media orientation: Exploring the nature of constraint. *Journal of Black Studies, 29*(3), 367-397.

de B'beri, B. & Hogarth, P. (2009). White America's construction of Black bodies: The case of Ron Artest as a model of covert racial ideology in the NBA's discourse. *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication, 2*(2), 89-106.

Delagdo, R. & Stefancic, S. (2012). *Critical race theory: An introduction.* New York, NY: New York University Press.

Doane, A. (2006). What is racism? Racial discourse and racial politics. *Critical Sociology, 32*(2-3), 255-274.

Dixon, T. (2006). Psychological reactions to crime news portrayals of Black criminals: Understanding the moderating roles of prior news viewing and stereotype endorsement. *Communication Monographs, 73*(2), 162-187.

Dixon, T. (2008). Understanding news coverage of Hurricane Katrina: The use of news frames and racial stereotypes by network television news. *Conference Papers – National Communication Association,* 1-21.

Domke, D. (2001). The press, race relations, and social change. *Journal of Communication, 51*(2), 317-344.

Drew, E. (2011). Pretending to be "postracial": The spectacularization of race in reality TV's Survivor. *Television and New Media, 12*(4), 326-346.

Entman, R. (1990). Modern racism and the images of Blacks in local television news. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication, 7*, 332-345.

Entman, R. (2007). Framing bias: Media in the distribution of power. *Journal of Communication, 57*, 163-173.

Fineout, G. & Farrington, B. (April 11, 2012). Murder charge brought in Trayvon Martin case. *Associated Press*. Retrieved from http://hosted.ap.org

Florida Statutes Justifiable Use of Force § 776.012 (2011).

Frankenberg, R. (1993). *White women, race matters: The social construction of whiteness*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Fung, K. (March 27, 2012). Geraldo Rivera apologizes for Trayvon Martin hood comments. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/

Gaertner, S. & Dovidio, J. (1986). The aversive form of racism. In J. F. Dovidio & S. L. Gaertner (Eds.). *Prejudice, discrimination, and racism* (pp. 231-253). New York: Academic Press.

Gallup, U.S.A. Today Poll, Apr 2-4, 2012. Retrieved Apr 14, 2012, from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut. http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu.silk.library.umass.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html

Garrett, E. (2011). The rhetoric of antiblack racism: Lewis R. Gordon's radical phenomenology of embodiment. *Atlantic Journal of Communication, 19,* 6-16.

Gibson, D. (April 4, 2012). Trayvon Martin case used for politics by President Obama, according to Richard Land. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com

Gray, H. (1987). Race relations as news. *The American Behavioral Scientist, 30*(4), 381-396.

Gross, K. (2008). Race poverty, and causal attributions: Media framing of the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. *Conference Papers – International Communication Association*, 1-40.

Gutierrez, A. & Unzueta, M. (2010). The effect of interethnic ideologies on the likeability of stereotypic vs. counterstereotypic minority targets. *Journal of Experimental Psychology, 46,* 75-784.

Gushue, G. & Constantine, M. (2007). Color-blind racial attitudes and white racial identity attitudes in psychology trainees. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 38*(3), 321-328.

Haider-Markel, D., Delehanty, W., & Beverlin, M. (2007). Media framing and racial attitudes in the aftermath of Katrina. *The Policy Studies Journal, 35*(4), 587-605.

Hall, S. (1995). The whites of their eyes: Racist ideologies and the media. I G. Dines & J. Humez (Eds.), *Gender, Race and Class in Media* (pp. 18-22). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Herman, E. & Peterson, D. (2008). Jeremiah Wright in the propaganda system. *Monthly Review, 60*(4), 1-21.

Hesse, B. (2011). Self-fulfilling prophecy: The post-racial horizon. *The South Atlantic Quarterly, 110*(1), 155-178.

Holoien, D. & Shelton, J. (2012). You deplete me: The cognitive costs of colorblindness on ethnic minorities. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 48*, 562-565.

Huffington Post. (March 23, 2012a). Newt Gingrich: Obama's Trayvon Martin Statement 'disgraceful'. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com

Huffington Post. (March 23, 2012b) Trayvon Martin case protests across nation culminate with show of strength in Florida. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com

Huffington Post. (March 27, 2012c). Rush Limbaugh: Obama is using Trayvon Martin as 'political opportunity'. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com

Jost, J. &Banaji, M. (1994). The role of stereotyping in system-justification and the production of false consciousness. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 33*, 1-27.

Kaiser, C., Drury, B., Spalding, K., Cheryan, S., & O'Brien, L. (2009). The ironic consequences of Obama's election: Decreased support for social justice. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 45,* 556-559.

Kaiser, C., Eccleston, C., & Hagiwara, N., (2008). Post-Hurricane Katrina radicalized explanations as a system threat: Implications for Whites' and Blacks' racial attitudes. *Social Justice Research, 21,* 192-203.

Karafantis, D., Pierre-Louis, J., & Lewandowski Jr., G. (2010). A comparison of the multicultural and colorblind perspective on the intergroup attitudes of college students. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment, 20*, 688-710.

Klarman, M. (2011). Has the Supreme Court been more a friend or foe to African Americans? *Daedelus, 140*(2), 101-108.

Knowles, E. Lowery, B., Hogan, C., & Chow, R. (2009). On the malleability of ideology: Motivated construals of color blindness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 96*(4), 857-869.

Lee, T. (2011). Somewhere over the rainbow? Post-racial & pan-racial politics in the age of Obama. *Daedelus, 140*(2), 136-150.

Lee, T. (March 27, 2012). Trayvon Martin's family vows to keep fighting amid 'character assaults,' official leaks. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/

Lentin, A. (2011). What happens to anti-racism when we are post race? *Feminist Legal Studies, 19,* 159-168.

Lewis, A. (2001). There is no "race" in the schoolyard: Color-blind ideology in an (almost) all-White school. *American Educational Research Journal, 38*(4) 781-811.

Lewis, A. (2005). Black conservatism in America. *Journal of African American Studies, 8*(4), 3-13.

Lewis, A., Chesler, M., & Forman, T. (2000). The impact of "colorblind" ideologies on students of color: Intergroup relations at a predominantly White university. *Journal of Negro Education, 69*(1/2), 74-91.

Lopez, G. (2003). The (racially neutral) politics of education: A critical race theory perspective. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 39*(1), 68-94.

Mack, D., Tucker, T., Archuleta, R., DeGroot, G., Hernandez, A., & Cha, S. (1997). Interethnic relations on campus: Can't we all get along? *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, *25*, 256-268.

Major, B., Kaiser, C., O'Brien, L., & McCoy, S. (2007). Perceived discrimination as worldview threat or worldview confirmation: Implications for self-esteem. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 92*(6), 1068-1086.

Mastro, D., Blecha, E., & Seate, A. (2011). Characterizations of criminal athletes: A systematic examination of sports news depictions of race and crime. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media, 55*(4), 526-542.

Nakayama, T &Krizek, R. (1995). Whiteness: A strategic rhetoric. *Quarterly Journal of Speech, 81,* 291-309.

Neville, H., Lilly, R., Duran, G., Lee, R., & Browne, L. (2000). Construction and initial validation of the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS). *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 47*(1), 59-70.

Neville, H., Coleman, N., Falconer, J., & Holmes, D. (2005). Color-blind racial ideology and psychological false consciousness among African Americans. *Journal of Black Psychology, 31*(1), 27-45.

Norton, M. & Sommers, S. (2011). Whites see racism as a zero-sum game that they are now losing. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 6*(3), 215-218.

Oh, E., Choi, C., Neville, H., Anderson, C., & Landrum-Brown, J. (2010). Beliefs about affirmative action: A test of the group self-interest and racism beliefs models. *Journal of Diversity In Higher Education, 3*(3), 163-176.

Oliha, H. (2011). In love and war: Racial disharmony and America's discordant racial articulations in the walk of the Jeremiah Wright media spectacle. *Journal of Multicultural Discourses, 6*(3), 257-271.

Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No.1, 551 U.S. 701 (2007).

Pew Research Center. (2005). *Hurricane Katrina Survey* [Data File]. Available from Pew Research Center website, http://www.people-press.org/2005/09/08/hurricane-katrina-survey/

Pew Weekly News Interest Index Poll, Apr 2-4, 2012. Retrieved April 14, 2012, from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut.http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu.silk.library.umass.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html

Plaut, V. (2010). Diversity science: Why and how makes a difference. *Psychological Inquiry, 21,* 77-99.

Plaut, V., Thomas, K., & Goren, M. (2009). Is multiculturalism or color blindness better for minorities? *Psychological Science, 20*(4), 444-446.

Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U.S. 537 (1896).

Pratto, F., Sidanius, J., Stallworth, L., & Malle, B. (1994). Social dominance orientation:
        A personality variable predicting social and political attitudes. *Journal of
        Personality and Social Psychology, 67,* 741-763.

Purdie-Vaughns, V., Steele, C., Davies, P., Ditlmann, R., & Crosby, J. (2008). Social
        identity contingencies: How diversity cues signal threat or safety for African
        Americans in mainstream institutions. *Journal of Personality and Social
        Psychology, 94*(4), 615-630.

Rainey, J. (March 31, 2012). Media gives ample coverage, little clarity to Trayvon Martin
        case. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from http://www.latimes.com

Richeson, J. & Nussbaum, R. (2004). The impact of multicultural versus color-blindness
        on racial bias. *Journal of Experimental Psychology, 40,* 417-423.

Rudd, C. (April 2, 2012). Matt Gutman and the mainstream media's anti-Zimmerman
        bias. *The Daily Caller*. Retrieved from http://dailycaller.com

Schofield, J. (1986). Causes and consequences of the colorblind perspective. In J. F.
        Dovidio & S. L. Gaertner (Eds.).*Prejudice, discrimination, and racism* (pp. 231-
        253). New York: Academic Press.

Simon, M. (March 30, 2012). Trayvon Martin's death leaves town divided, struggling
        with stigma. *CNN*. Retrieved from htttp://www.cnn.com

Smith, R., King, D., & Klinkner, P. (2011). Challenging history: Barack Obama &
        Americans racial politics. *Daedelus, 140*(2), 121-135.

Spratt, M., Bullock, C., & Baldasty, G. (2007). News, race, and the status quo: The case
        of Emmett Louis Till. *The Howard Journal of Communication, 18*, 169-192.

Stableford, D. (March 26, 2012a). Trayvon Martin's family on his marijuana suspension:
        Police want to 'demonize the victim'. *Yahoo News*. Retrieved from
        http://news.yahoo.com

Stableford, D. (March 26, 2012b). Trayvon Martin shooting: Debate over photos
        escalates. *Yahoo News*. Retrieved from http://news.yahoo.com

Stein, S. (March 23, 2012). Obama on Trayvon Martin case: 'If I had a son, he'd look
        like Trayvon.' *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com

Stiles, S. &Kitch, C. (2011). "Redemption for our anguished racial history": Race and the national narrative in commemorative journalism about Barack Obama. *Journal of Communication Inquiry, 35*(2), 115-133.

Stroman, C. (1991). Television's role in the socialization of African American children and adolescents. *The Journal of Negro Education, 60*(3), 314-327.

Squires, C. (2011). Bursting the bubble: A case study of counter-framing in the editorial pages. *Critical Studies in Media Communication, 28*(1), 30-49.

Takaki, R. (1993). *A different mirror: A history of multicultural America.* Boston, MA: Little Brown.

Tarca, K. (2005). Colorblind in control: The risks of resisting difference amid demographic change. *Educational Studies, 38*(2), 99-120.

Temple, C. (2010). Communicating race and culture in the twenty-first century: Discourse and the post-racial/post-cultural challenge. *Journal of Multicultural Discourses, 5*(1), 45-63.

Thompson K. & Cohen, J. (April 11, 2012). Trayvon Martin case: Poll finds stark racial divide. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.washingtonpost.com

Thornton, D. (2011). Psych's comedic tale of Black-White friendship and the lighthearted affect of "post-race" America. *Critical Studies in Media Communication, 28*(5), 424-449.

Trail, T., Shelton, J., & West, T. (2009). Interracial roommate relationships: Negotiating daily interactions. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *35*(6), 671-684.

Trawalter, S. & Richeson, J. (2008). Let's talk about race, baby! When Whites' and Blacks' interracial contact experiences diverge. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *44*, 1214-1217.

Tynes, B. & Markoe, S. (2010). The role of color-blind racial attitudes in reactions to racial discrimination on social network sites. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 3*(1), 1-13.

Valentino, N. & Brader, T. (2011). The sword's other edge: Perceptions of discrimination and racial policy opinion after Obama. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 75*(2) 201-226.

Van Selm, M & Jankowski, N. (2006). Conducting online surveys. *Quality & Quantity, 40,* 435-456.

Voorhees, C., Vick, J., & Perkins, D. (2007). 'Came hell and high water': The intersection of Hurricane Katrina, the news media, race and poverty. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology, 17*, 415-429.

Vorauer, J., Gagnon, A., & Sasaki, S. (2009). Salient intergroup ideology and intergroup interaction. *Psychological Science, 20*(7), 838-845.

Wodtke, G. (2012). The impact of education on intergroup attitudes: A multiracial analysis. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 75*(1), 80-106.

Wodtke, G. (2013). Are smart people less racist? Cognitive ability, anti-Black prejudice, and the principle-policy paradox. Population Studies Center Research Report 13-803, October 2013.

Wolsko, C., Park, B., Judd, C., & Wittenbrink, B. (2000). Framing interethnic ideology: Effects of multicultural and color-blind perspectives on judgments of groups and individuals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 78*(4), 635-654.