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dealing with experiences of treatment based on race and each person is given approximately 3 minutes to tell a story related to the topic. After everyone has had a chance to tell their story, the moderator facilitates a discussion to recognize common elements of the stories and possibly identify a theme or themes. In the circles used in this study, two separate prompts and themes were used in each story circle, resulting in twenty-eight stories and four subsequent discussions.

The purpose of using story circle techniques is to use powerful first-hand accounts of racism and discrimination to awaken participants who may not have realized the extent to which racism exists. Because everyone is allowed to participate and is uninterrupted, this method allows for an environment of acceptance, without the fear of being judged. The results of story circles can often be surprising. Smilar prompts may result in discussions that stray far from one another but provide equally relevant information in studying race issues. In most story circles, the first story or first few stories guide the direction of subsequent stories and can influence the discussion as well. The effect that this has on the research is that in many cases, there arises one theme or aspect of race with the most powerful and numerous support. The stories analyzed here, while clearly focused on certain race issues, bring to attention many connected themes of race in America today.

The information accrued as a result of recording and transcribing story circles provides qualitative data to the researcher to complement quantitative research in addressing race. However, one of the greatest assets of story circles is that the stories humanize the information represented by numbers in empirical analyses. The participants in a story circle provide primary information that not only provides evidentiary support for findings, but adds an emotional quality to research by putting faces to the numbers. For example, much quantitative research has been done to confirm racial profiling by police and show its prevalence, but hearing stories from individuals who have been treated with malice by police, people who fear the police, tugs at the emotional side of a person.

Racial profiling is one of the most controversial race issues of today, and it is consistently reported in the news. Indeed, it is the most central theme discussed in the story circles used in this study. There are many others including white privilege, racial bias in the courts and criminal justice

regarding explicit and implicit racism. While one story circle put an emphasis on the switch from explicit racism, the out-in-the-

racism, where race is used as a factor in jobs, policing, and the courts, the other circle contains evidence to support that explicit racism is not as rare as it might seem. Together, these themes outline the broader perspective that race is a characteristic that is more divisive and troublesome than any other social issue in America today.

The format of the presentation of this information follows the pattern of completion of each portion of the research. First, there is a broad overview of Orcle Number One, followed by arguments supporting each of the themes of the circles more 2che rms frathe tha 612(sfr)10()3(at)10(het)-4(ha 612(sf(ws)8(t)-3(ha 612(sf(ws)8(

an analysis of the relevant statistical data supported by the narratives. Finally the paper wraps up with a conclusion tying together the main ideas of the circles and empirical research.

Analyses and Identification of the Themes of the Two Story Ordes

I. Analysis of Story Orde Number One

Throughout the first circle, themes of racism an

| revere as God ar | nd who | died, no | t just for l | me, to | clea | | | • | | | • | | |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|-----------|---------|---------|----------|-------|---------------|---------|----------|--------|---|
| sins. People in a | all sever | n contine | nts, peop | ole all d | over th | ne worl | ld, then | n why | in the | e world | d do you | ı hold | |
| | | | | | • | • | • | • | · <i>·</i> :‡ | | | • | |
| worshipping lo | • | | , ,,,, | | | | | | • | • | | • | • |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

living to try and be a decent person, to try and do the right thing, race is such a small thing.

Based on their own information gathered from the stories, the participants in the circle represent a very diverse group. There are women and men of various ages, backgrounds and racial makeup. Because of the diversity of this group, the results were a mixture of people experiencing discrimination and/or racism and people witnessing discrimination and/or racism. The difference was often along a racial divide. For the most part, the Black participants had stories in which they experienced racism, whereas the white participants were more likely to tell a story of how they witnessed racism within a social group, or noticed discrimination in some aspect of society. Often, the stories told by African Americans were surprising and appalling to white participants, who, by their own admission, were ignorant of the extent to which Blacks face discrimination in the nation today. For example:

| @ | | | | | | | | @ | | | | | | | | | | • | | | • | | ·@ | ·@ | |
|---------|---------|------|------|-------|-------|------|-----|------|-------|------|-------|-----|-------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|-----|------|------|-------|---------|--------|
| | | | • | | • | | • | *1 | ' | | @ | | | • | | | | | | • | | | | | • |
| hillbil | lly red | dned | cks. | Ana | l nev | ver, | we | hao | ' my | bes | t fri | ena | l tha | at I | tolo | d be | efor | e tha | at v | vas | in k | ind | derg | garten | was |
| the o | nly n | nino | rity | in th | ne ei | ntir | есс | ount | y. Ar | nd I | mo | ved | ир | hei | e to | go | to | scho | ol | and | this | S VI | vas i | my fir. | st, it |
| | • | • | | • | | | | , , | • | | • | • | | | | • | • | | | | @ | | • | ·@ | • |
| have | | • | | • | | , | @ | | • | | | • | | •11 | | | | @ | | , | | | • | • | |

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Expanding upon the thoughts of these predecessors,

circle, there seems to be only one solution to addressing the inequality minorities are still struggling with today, and that solution is personal responsibility. It is the responsibility of the privileged whites to acknowledge that there is a racial conflict, rather than deny it. It is the responsibility of those who already know to have the important discussions that will lead to an understanding of the struggles of their fellow Americans. And it is the responsibility of those with the power to rectify these injustices to use this power to create a more fair and just society.

II. Analysis of Story Orde Number Two

The research provided by the use of story circles is valuable due to the diversity of information that may be gathered in each cycle. Two separate circles may provide totally different themes and ideas, or they may be very similar. With the second story circle, the themes were much more obvious and focused. While the theme of racial profiling was central to a few of the stories in the previous circle, here there is much more evidence of race-based policing and police brutality. Contrary to the findings of the first circle, there is much evidence that, in addition to the implicit racism witnessed by biased police activities, explicit racism and discrimination still exist and still cause pain. Finally, the discussion also focused on the impact of culture, more specifically Black culture on stereotypes and racial profiling by the police.

Racial Profiling and Police Brutality

| . F , but I see you right there so why | |
|--|---|
| @ ' ?T ' @ ' ' 'The standard land to de the de sus files and the standard land to the standar | , |
| number one reason. oh u). They told me I hadta do my finger print and | 1 |
| finger print on the summons or I had to go to the county. @ , for what? What did I do @ | |
| goin to the county for nothing. @ | |
| Participant #6 | |
| As bad as racial profiling by police officers might be, it is even worse when that bias comes out | |
| in the form of brutality. Everyone is familiar with the brutal attack by Los Angeles Police officers on | |
| Rodney King. Unfortunately this was not an isolated incident, but in most cases of police brutality the | |
| videos are either police property from a dashboard camera or witnesses to the beatings will not come | |
| forward. However, that does not mean that the stories of excessive force and unnecessary violence do | |
| not exist. | |
| | |
| k '@''' the | |
| [city name] Airport and to pick up his mom so he come he get me we comin down um state rd. we | |
| see police cars everywhere. We in [city name] we s | |
| o 'k ' ' [street name] | |
| or Main Street so we took the [street name] way instead of going straight down Main so we goin | |
| down [street name] we see [city name] police out too. Apparently somebody um shot somebody | |
| like [street name] going um down the hill (inaudible) all the cop cars all the way up the hill they was | S |
| like a really steep hill so mind you they said the guy was in a rusty Chevy Caprice mind you a blue one uhh my friend had a Chevy Caprice 4-door but uh he got a very clean Chevy mind you so uh you | , |
| lieutenant he pulled right in front of the car matter of fact um try to ram us kinda in front of the car | - |
| like cut us off so he had to throw his car in park without hitting the cops you know so he hopped ou | t |
| they all hopped out surround us like 6 cars (inaudible) with their guns pointed at us. I was scared. I | |
| ? Get your hands get your hands up my hands alread | y |
| | |
| down on the ground get down on the ground my hands in the air you know the dude just I dunno it | 7 |
| | |
| had the taser in my face and he had the regular gun in my face and um I was really scared and um | |
| he yanked us out the car he throw my arm behind my back like like all in one motion I was already | |
| on my knees and he like just he kinda like throw me to the dirt and I remember his partner just | |
| comin over and just stomped me in the face like my tooth gone til this day right here just stomp me | |
| in the face kicked me at least 3 times. T | |
| ou know what I | |
| mean and my sister reported it went down there and complained and everything. Like a week later | |

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mind you they um the suspects they was lookin was in a rusty car a 300lb guy so this is a big dude you know @ sad how they just cuz one black person did somethin we all suspects now you know (inaudible) I guess I heard the sayin you know I guess we all look alike but uh you know

Her family, it was mainly her mother um her father basically went along with what mom said you

#

and

So they disowned her so of course my family had already welcomed her into the family um then but when um the baby came along her mom started comin around a little bit but it made me very uncomfortable that you would disown your own child but now you want to try to attempt um to embrace your grandchild.

rlfriend, who is now her sister-in-law

was also the target of angry treatment from some members of the African American community. She specifically mentioned the verbal abuse her sister-in-

sister-in-law caught a lot of flat from black females because she was dating a black male and so she got It is clear that on the

subject of interracial relationships, there are strong opinions and there are people who are not afraid to let these opinions be known.

While interracial marriage might still be considered a somewhat controversial subject, blatant racism can still be witnessed in activities as simple as taking a trip to the convenience store, participating in a sporting event, or just trying to do a task at work. The next three stories are examples of explicit racism in which the participants were doing exactly what society asks of them, but were still treated with disrespect. Not only do these stories show how widespread blatant racist views may be, it also reveals the deep painful impact such actions have on the subjects of such cruelty. The first story is a reflection of the harsh language used to demoralize Blacks and shows the stereotype that has arisen as a result of the criminalization of African Americans.

ear my football coach he was like I have a couple schools lined up for you to go visit. One of the schools I . Ohio I think so um my mom took me to went to visit was my overnight visit. It was it was an alright school. My coach warned me there is a lot of white 'Icity namel '@' alright I can deal with it one night. So it was cool. They showed me love and everything, but then on ·@ · · · · @ · · · · · my w the school. It was still on campus. So we stopped at a convenient store and my mom she went to like ·@ · ·@ · · . . .@@ out me so my mom

know what I mean cuz you always hear stuff in school or like older people talking about how racism was back in their day I just I never fathomed that like it was still around but I guess it still is.

--Participant #8

The next example shows how when emotions take over, the deep-seeded hatred that has been passed down through generations can find itself exposed. Sometimes all it takes is something as simple as losing a game for anger to take over and hidden beliefs to come to light. When a rural high school

nouncing us and stuff to get our medals and everything, you could hear the white

atred the participant himself

Other times racism might just prove to be an unexplainable fear of a person. Participant #3, a nurse at a local hospital, witnessed this while trying to perform her duties. She spoke of how there was a certain patient who refused to let her draw blood. Because she was used to patients being afraid of getting blood taken due to a fear of needles, the resistance did not seem to be a big deal. Unfortunately, her elderly patient made her reasons for struggling painfully obvious. Participant #3 said,

These

forms of blatant and explicit racism counter the claim from Orde #1 that there has been a switch from explicit to implicit racism. In fact, while implicit racism may be on the rise, there is proof that explicit racism is still common and still unfounded, blind, and denigrating.

Racism and Culture

Ever since the beginning of settlement in America, several cultures have been in existence. While the culture of white settlers predominates the literature and the majority of the ideas passed on through history, there has always been a Black culture as well. Blacks were forced to create their own culture for several reasons. As slaves, their skin color

had rims and it was lower. They automatically associated him as being a drug dealer. our society has grown to believe that for a Black person to exhibit Black culture, that person must be a

> that was blatant racism discrimination you know this is a man married It has

become a crime for African Americans to have their own culture and to live in their own style, without breaking any laws. Storyteller #8 describes how it has become illegal to act Black: my chain. I got rid of all that man I got cause I was racial profiled. Like I was as a thug that sell drugs. You

around dean, this hard work right here.

During the discussion following the first set of stories in Orcle Number Two, one member of the group recalled her feelings when she read about a horrific crime and witnessed the reactions by community members to the crime. The crime occurred when a white male with a nice car pulled in front of his house and was confronted by an armed robber. The man told the other one to just take the car and not to kill him, but the robber killed him anyways in front of his girlfriend and baby, who were in the house. The issues that came to be important were issues that were totally irrelevant to the crime, according to the narrator: the bloggers were saying um pretty much when you act like a black person

(Participant #3). Not only do these blog posts imply that the victim was murdered because the Black culture in which he participated was a culture of crime and murder, but there is even a sense that these bloggers accept such crime. It is as though the only reason this was news was because the victim was white, and had he been an African American, it would not have been as tragic or newsworthy. In the

The ties between rap music and murder are clear through the music. For many African Americans, life on the street can be a brutal struggle to stay alive, and this is a theme that is reflected in y0003015A0s12(ucan)3(st)6(o)-5(ha)13(v)-4(e)7 blathBI7@18(y)es mea13(m)-4(e)9(. It (e)9(v)-ts)-2(acut)9(172.a52.59)

The best way to determine if racism affects society today is to talk to the people that may be affected by it. Story circles provide conclusive evidence that racism is a problem in the U.S today. The themes extracted from the two story circles examined above are not new themes. In fact, much research has been done regarding race issues in America, and there is much data to support the claims of the participants that race as a social construct today is a factor that causes a lot of harm to different groups of people, most notably the millions of African Americans who face discrimination and hatred daily. The idea of racial discrimination in policing and the criminal justice system is a theme that is most prevalent in both story circles. In addition, it is one of the more heavily debated racial issues in the U.S today. This paper is going to tie research on the practices of racial profiling, sentencing discrimination, and incarceration rates into the stories above. Then we will examine other aspects of race that have been exposed through the circles and provide scholarly support for these findings regarding: the

impact of Black culture and the media on soci

I. Racial Profiling and Bias in the Criminal Justice System

Throughout the twenty-eight stories and subsequent discussions explored in this study, the subject most repeated, widespread, and emotional was the criminal justice system, including the police, courts, and prisons. These complaints are not unsubstantiated. The fact is that despite virtually no increase in racial or ethnic rates of 70 percent white at mid-century to nearly 70 percent black and Latino today switch coincides with recent changes in police practices, political objectives, and is a result of a court system that is failing for Black Americans. Wacquant (2001) identifies the War on Drugs started by President Reagan and waged by subsequent Presidents as one practice that resulted in such an increase (p. 96). However, the problem is one that infiltrates all portions of the justice system. From the initial suspicion exhibited by police officers in their increased surveillance of African Americans to the arbitrariness of courtroom proceedings to federal policies aimed at criminalizing being Black, it is clear that there is a belief that being black is correlated with a predisposition to criminal activity.

Racial Profiling

Most stories about racial profiling by police officers in this study occurred when no laws were Fagan and Davies (2000), in their study of racial profiling in New York Oty, found that the implementation of Order Maintenance Policing (OMP), which was designed to increase policing of areas showing signs of physical disorder actually policing of poor

based resulted in a higher rate of stops and arrests in minority neighb

more police presence and suspicion in his own neighborhood, but his presence in a white neighborhood is even more likely to gain the attention of authorities.

Fagan and Davies (2000) hypothesize that profiling is a result of the misperception that minorities are more criminally active than whites (p. 458). Meehan and Ponder (2002) address the very question of criminality among minorities versus whites. In their study, they acknowledge statistical proof that there is no evidence of high

While the story circles reveal that the African Americans who have dealt with racial profiling may agree with this unfavorable view, they have the utmost respect for police forces. Building upon their prior findings, Weitzer and Tuch (2005) have identified police perception to now be a group sentiment. They argue that the dominant group is likely to see the police as an ally. Coinciding with the

being accused of stealing (Orde #1, Participant #2) or even be in a convenience store without being insulted and suspected of criminal behavior (Orlce #2, Participant #8).

Race and the Courts

While the first step toward the inequality of blacks in the criminal justice system is racial profiling by police, the disadvantages of being Black are not limited to greater police surveillance. The functioning of the courts and even the statutes that set the laws fundamentally contain racial biases. Regarding the courts, Participant #5, in the first story circle had this to say:

In addition to mandatory sentencing guidelines that often work to the detriment of African Americans, the arbitrariness of the court system also poses many problems. There is evidence to support that the pervasive stereotypes linking Blacks to crime interfere with the fairness of a trial by

To be

dear, the election of Barack Obama to the Presidency was a monumental event. In the words of

a religious experience as I shared a park

bench with a black lady on one side, a white young lady, college student who had worked for Obama

election really represents something serious and something special, that we were able to come together as a nation and do something that people would have laughed in your face about if you told them would

progress in race relations, discrimination and racism still persist throughout society and throughout the legal system.

Cho (2009) says that post-racial rhetoric is a twenty-first century ideology that reflects a belief that due to the significant racial progress that has been made, the state need not engage in race-based decision-making or adopt race-based remedies, and that civil society should eschew race as a central

Protestant work ethic is based on the idea that working hard results in success. White

Music is not the only part of Black Culture that is deemed unacceptable by the majority of the population. From the audio and transcripts of the story circles, there is a distinction among the dialects of English being spoken within the groups. While most participants were from the Akron area, there is a mixture of Standard English and African American Vernacular. John Baugh, a leading linguistic

story circles in adult education, as well as an introduction into other forms of education would greatly impact views on race and racism. Imagine a third grade classroom of mixed ethnicity where questions,

early age how painful words and stereotypes can be by witnessing the struggles that their fellow classmates go through. The story circles I examined reinforced theories that I had already accepted, such as white privilege and racial profiling, and made me feel more passionate about the pursuit of exposing biases and disproving stereotypes about race.

This study provides an outline of some of the most pervasive radial issues in America today. Radial profiling is a practice that has been around for years, and it is a practice supported by many who identify crime and race as interrelated. The same philosophy is responsible for sentencing mandates that punish crimes typically committed by minorities and for arbitrary sentencing in jury trials. This implicit idea that being Black is a precursor to being a criminal ties in with the explicit radism expressed through hate speech and radial slurs that can be heard every day. Yet whites, who are blind to the Standard English

at achieving their American dream. White society believes that if you act right and work hard, opportunities will make their way to you, but those same opportunities seem to escape the African American male who is pulled over and accused of being a drug dealer on his way home to his family after a 50-hour work week at a minimum wage job. The same opportunity to pick up a phone and call a real estate agent to ask about a home for sale is not the same opportunity when certain neighborhoods are off limits based upon racial assumptions made through a telephone.

America today is a society that is legally required to be made up of equal

advantages inherent in their race and the disadvantages of being non-white.