

**YOU BLIND? WHAT, YOU CAN'T SEE THAT?: THE IMPACT OF
COLORBLIND ATTITUDES ON YOUNG ADULTS' ACTIVIST BEHAVIOR
AGAINST RACIAL INJUSTICE AND RACISM IN AMERICA**

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Human Development and Family Studies

Spring 2017

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful for the village that has supported and poured into the development of the man and professional I am today. I want to acknowledge my thesis committee: Drs. Palkovitz, Trask and Earnshaw. Dr. Earnshaw, you came into my life at the perfect time, and you are truly gifted in your abilities to teach and guide others. I am very grateful for having the opportunity to learn from you! Dr. Trask, you have believed in me since day one. You saw something that I did not; you took a risk, and you have done more than I can imagine ensuring my growth and success. I cannot write or tell my story without you! Thank you for everything! Dr. Palkovitz, you too have been with me since day one, and I have always looked up to you. You are faithful, consistent, challenging and encouraging. Thank you for taking the lead with walking me through this adventure! Thank you, committee, for supporting me and building trusting relationships!

I am thankful for the University of Delaware and specifically, the Department of Human Development and Family Studies for the opportunity to explore my research interests. Big thanks to my wife, Shenise for “holding us down” and our two sons for always giving me reasons to push forward. To my in-laws that have supported me through it all. To my grandmas, parents and siblings, "we made it!" To my fictive

kin, Uncle Bill and Aunt Phiney for taking care of us. To my best friends and supportive brothers: Chris, Grant, Trey, and Pride, thanks, brothers. Thanks, Jasmine, Stephany, NaKhia and Angel for being awesome sisters. Thank you, Pastor Jones, Pastor Mason, Ibn and Coach Feeley for being much-needed mentors in my life. Thanks, to my InterVarsity family that has given me community. To Grandma Claudia, Trice, Coach Feely and nephew Elijah, rest in peace. To Professor Eidelman and Drs. Worden, Dorit, Carrano, Ferrari, Hustedt, Ruth, Vu, Settles and Gaines-Hanks for pouring into me and being amazing professors, support and teachers of life to me. Finally, to J.C. and His father for raising me. You have been part of my life even before I was born and you have never left. Your love and discipline have allowed me to be resilient through it all. Keep up the good work!

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ABSTRACT

Colorblind ideology and social dominance orientation are two social attitudes that contribute to the continuation of racism in the United States. Colorblind ideology encourages people to no longer see color (race), so when color does matter they cannot see it. Social dominance orientation reflects the extent to which people support group equality. Given the importance of racism and the racial climate in today's society, the current study was conducted to examine if those social attitudes affected young adults (age 18-35) activist behavior to act against racism and the negative racial climate in America. Two hundred twenty-two participants completed a survey comprised of previously validated scales; Colorblind Scale (Neville et al., 2000), Social Dominance Orientation_{7(s)} (Ho et al., 2015) and the Activism Orientation Scale (Corning & Myers, 2002). The survey was distributed on the University of Delaware campus with results revealing that colorblind attitudes and social dominance orientation significantly associated negatively with activist behavior. I conclude with explaining the importance of combating colorblind ideology in the fight against racism and the racial climate in America.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

On August 28, 1963, at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. passionately delivered one of the most remembered speeches in American history. In his speech, Dr. King (1963) shared his vision for America during a time in which overt racism and racial discrimination were not only common but also legal. Dr. King shared his dream that someday his children will not be judged by their skin color but rather by their actions (King, 1963). Dr. King had a vision that one day American society will no longer be a “Whites and then everyone else” society, but a country where people are treated equally, no matter the demographic. Fifty-four years later, there has been change in some areas, but core issues have remained the same since that famous speech. Instead of progressing from overt inequality, American society¹ has transformed into a covertly segregated society while promoting the message of colorblindness (Lewis et al., 2000; Ullucci & Battey, 2011). Racism was known to be a systemic issue of racial inequalities up until the post-Civil Rights era, but since then racism is currently seen as a problem of individual attitudes (Bonilla-

¹ For the purpose of this study, when referring to the U.S., America and the American society and public it is in reference to the American population.

Silva, 2006). The shift has been caused by the methodological change from in-your-face racism to kill-you-slowly racism with the help of colorblind attitude. Chants of “no Blacks allowed” turned to “I don’t see color.”

Colorblindness simply explained, is the belief that race should not and does not matter (Kemple et al., 2015). Colorblindness can be defined as a discourse and as a racist ideology. As a discourse, colorblindness “presumes the existence of colorblindness (race no longer matters concerning rights of citizenship, access to the American Dream, etc.), but the desirability of a culture, dominant institutions and worldview that doesn’t see, recognize, or consider race (color)” (<http://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/colorblind-discourse/4522>, 2016). As an ideology, Kretsedemas (2010) defined colorblind racism as “the deliberate or systematic use of colorblind racial discourse to advance a racist ideology” (p. 159). The underlying issue with colorblindness is that it seems to promote unity, but it gives people the room to exacerbate, disregard or be oblivious to the racial climate in America (Husband, 2011).

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Colorblindness was birthed after the Civil Rights era and consequently, studies conducted to understand colorblindness can be found dating back to the beginning of the post-Civil Rights Movement. Colorblindness is not something that is marketed or taught explicitly. Meaning, a colorblind attitude is not developed by being taught... “you need to be colorblind and here is how.” Rather, colorblindness is developed through its subtle indoctrination within the education systems (at all levels of education) (Brown, 2005; Husband, 2011; Kemple et al., 2015), through the media (television, movies, photo images) (Kretsedemas, 2010; Gregory, 2010) and other institutions in America, including the family (Kemple et al., 2015).

“Schools and classrooms are not raceless, nor have they been. They are the sites where the rules of race are taught and reinforced” (Brown, 2005, p. 7). For example, at a public elementary school (grades Kindergarten through fifth grade) in Delaware, there is a poster of three cartoon children from three different ethnic backgrounds holding hands that reads, “we are all the same.” On the surface, the message promotes that people should get along with one another and that people have more similarities than differences. It teaches young children to look past differences and to view people as the same. The Civil Rights Movement was not a movement for minorities to be seen as the same as Whites but to be equal to Whites. Being viewed as the same is not interchangeable with being equal. The issue with the poster is that all people are not the same and that differences should be embraced and not overlooked.

The subtle colorblind message that people are the same is taught at a critical age of development. Children from a young age can notice differences in other children and are trying to make meaning of those differences (Husband, 2011) and in fact want to explore those differences (Kemple et al., 2015). Children come to make conclusions (albeit, temporary or permanent case by case) from the information they receive from their environment, including messages from their parent/guardian, schools, books, friends and other sources (Kemple et al., 2015). A poster such as the one in the elementary school in Delaware is just an example of the subtle messages of colorblindness taught in the American education system. Researchers, such as Husband (2010), have found there is a belief that one of the reasons children are taught to be colorblind is because children are thought to be too young to critically discuss race despite the fact that children begin to develop their racial identity as early as the preschool years (Ramsey, 2009). The assumption is children can handle the “neutral” message in colorblind attitudes instead of the complexities of racial differences. In fact, Derman-Sparks (1989) advocates for a proactive approach to combat colorblindness taught to children called “color-filled.” Derman-Sparks argues that a color-filled approach teaches children to celebrate differences while developing one’s racial identity, which is considered an anti-colorblind approach. One method in which color-filled approach thrives on is the encouragement of children to not passively dismiss their curiosity about differences but to pro-actively talk about them (Derman-Sparks, 1989). However, color-filled is more so about embracing physical differences and does not include the embracement of cultural differences.

In a colorblind society, educators are unable to teach their students of different backgrounds because people are unwillingness to see how race is a predetermining factor of racists' experiences and systemic discrimination. Brown (2005) asserts that it is valid to question whether the education system has the best interest at heart for minorities, including women, because of the U.S.'s long history and continuation of cultural hegemony in favor of White males while including every other group as a secondary thought. Ullucci and Battey's (2011) study on colorblindness in teacher education states that if educators continue to minimize the adverse effects of being a person of color and only see racism as an element of a bygone historical era, then educators will not be able to teach their growingly diverse classrooms effectively. Not only does colorblindness shape the worldview of children as they develop through the lifespan and affect an educators' ability to educate their students effectively, but it also affects how educators mentor Students of Color. McCoy, Winkle-Wagner and Luedke (2015) sought to examine how White faculty in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) programs mentor Students of Color in graduate programs in a predominately White institution (PWI) and a historically Black college and university (HBCU). The ideology of not seeing color is the attempt to treat people the same by disregarding their backgrounds, but instead it continues to send negative messages about race and gender; specifically, that Blacks are inferior to Whites (McCoy et al., 2015; Mills, 1997). This may be due to the negative underlying views those with a colorblind mindset continue to have towards minorities. McCoy et al. (2015) found despite White faculty admittance to "equal treatment" between races the faculty felt

the Students of Color were not on the same level as White students academically and did not receive the same time investment of mentorship that White students received. The message was sent that they should assimilate in order to succeed (McCoy et al., 2015).

Lewis (2000) and colleagues documented social interaction amongst peers in the educational setting also. The researchers found that White students who professed to be colorblind were blinded to see that they were still very color-conscious and it showed through their actions. This qualitative study revealed that many Students of Color perceived their White peers to have stereotypical thoughts of them and to not view them as equal to Whites. Those stereotypes were both academic and behavioral (Lewis, Chesler, & Forman, 2000; Bell & Hartmann, 2007). Although the goal of perpetuating a colorblind attitude is for people to have a race neutral ideology (Williams & Land, 2006), stereotypes such as “Blacks and Mexicans do not care about education as much as Whites” and “Asians are good at math” continue to remain in the minds of those that identify as colorblind (Lewis, Chesler, & Forman, 2000).

Colorblindness not only affects Whites but it can affect people of all races. Dr. King (King, 1963) in his “I have a dream speech” said

We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to

the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood (King, 1963).

During the Civil Rights era, the Black church was a vital instrument that aided in fighting against systemic racism. Barber (2012) would argue since the post-Civil rights/colorblind era the Black church has engaged in what Dr. King called “the luxury of cooling off” (King, 1963). Again, colorblindness allows for people to view racism as an individual problem and not a systemic issue. When colorblindness was birthed, it infiltrated its way into the church as well. The church and its members began to no longer view racism as systemic, but as an individual issue, and from that, birthed a self-empowerment movement (Barber, 2012). Members of the Black church began to see no need for protests and boycotts because racism was no longer a systemic issue. Another aspect of colorblindness is what Barber (2012) calls “blame the victim,” which means that minorities who not do well must be lazy because race is no longer an issue. Black people have also taken on that attitude as they have embraced a colorblind attitude which may affect one’s racial centrality. Racial centrality is the level of which one’s race or ethnicity is essential to one’s identity (Gibbons et al., 2012). Colorblindness and self-empowerment allowed for the Black community to decrease its intentions for activist behavior.

Activist Behavior

Social justice advocacy is defined as organized and spontaneous efforts aimed at raising awareness of injustice and influencing public attitudes, policies and laws to

create a more socially just society (Nilsson & Schmidt, 2005). Klar et al. (2009) explained that activism, by definition, involves behavior. Meaning, there is no such thing as activism without displayed action. Activism is a behavior, which may be absent or minimally expressed in those with colorblind ideology. Knowledge of activist groups, reading of activist publications and being male were predictors in the Lee (1997) study of student activism in South Korea. Behavior acts as a marker of awareness and/or an attempt to understand a social problem such as racism. Without behavior, awareness or the attempt to understand another worldview does not exist, which is why activism is critical to fighting against racial injustice.

Connection, Gap and Question

Adopting the message to be colorblind has been one way the American society has responded since the Civil Rights Movement to continue with business as usual while brainwashing people to believe racism no longer exists and that race does not matter. Through the many institutions embedded in the U.S., colorblindness seeps through its very functioning by perpetuating and proselytizing its message. From early ages, colorblindness is being indoctrinated through systems such as schools and family and it continues through the lifespan. Colorblindness affects all people from all demographics, and it impedes relationships. Such relationships include neighbors, educators, students, and peers. It also has an impact on a person's worldview and how they interpret media portrayals of minorities (Gregory, 2010; Kretsedemas, 2010).

It is important for people to be aware of the colorblind attitude and its messages because of its negative effects in society and personal relationships (Lewis et al., 2000; Bell & Hartmann, 2007). People who are colorblind, disregard race, which inhibits people from acknowledging when racism and its effects matter (Husband, 2011). It is important for Americans to be aware of colorblind attitudes and the racial climate because that enlightenment may motivate people to work against such a system and progress towards unity that embraces difference.

Gini et al. (2008) conducted a study on the bystander effect around bullying, in which the researchers illustrated that the bystanders' passive behavior (i.e. lack of involvement) is a negative behavior and contributes to the continuation of bullying. The researchers reported that the perception of bullying contributed to whether the bystander intervened or not during an occurrence of bullying. Most participants agreed that bullying was wrong but positive perceptions of the victim related to interventions while negative perceptions related to standing by and doing nothing (Gini, Pozzoli, Borghi, & Franzoni, 2008). Similarly, the colorblindness' message to disregard race may lead to passive behavior, like standing by and doing nothing, which contributes to the continuation of racism, which is why the awareness of colorblindness and education of the racial climate in America is critical.

With the advancement of technology over recent years, there has been more media coverage of police brutality, mostly involving Black males with many ending up killed by police. There has been an outcry that things are getting worse on the one side while the others claim that things have never changed, it is just that these events

are being videotaped now. The American public has shown that it is a divisive multi-headed monster regarding race. As protest and riots have increased over the past few years, starting from the Trayvon Martin case in 2011, the American public has revealed how uncomfortable things can be when race matters. People from all demographics can be found on either side of the question of whether racism exists versus it being non-existent. “Race matters penetrate the core of human emotions...and societal fabric” (Brown, 2005, p. 5). Social media (e.g. Facebook & Twitter) have given people an outlet to express their opinions on what they see in the news or as they encounter racial experiences. Through social media, the rest of the world can either agree or disagree with a person’s opinion on the matter. Through posts, attitudes can be reinforced or dismantled.

Lastly, social dominance orientation (SDO) is a measure of support for group equality. According to Ho et al. (2015), the less someone supports group equality the stronger one’s social dominance orientation is. If colorblindness truly promoted unity, then people who are colorblind would be low in SDO. What is yet to be seen statistically is how American attitudes are coming together today with racial tension revealing itself and working against colorblind attitudes. The current study was conducted to help understand the questions, “are racial centrality, colorblind attitudes and social dominance orientation associated with young adults’ (18-35 years of age) activist behavior against racial injustice and racism in America and does racial centrality associate differently with activism for Students of Color versus White students?”

Chapter 3

METHOD

I conducted a quantitative study based on an electronically administered survey that tested for social attitudes and activist behavior against the racial injustice and racism in America. Qualifications to complete the survey were: be between the ages of 18-35 and be either an American born citizen or a non-American that at minimum finished six years of education pre-college through the American educational system. The data for participants that did not meet the requirements were discarded and not included in the analysis. The justification for using this age group was to ensure that participants grew up in the post-Civil Rights era when colorblind attitudes have been prevalent. Due to the American education institution contributing to the continuation of racism and colorblindness, it was important that participants' education was influenced by the American education institution for at least half of their pre-college academic career. Results of an a-priori power analysis using G*Power indicated that a sample size of 98 participants would be sufficient to detect small effect sizes (0.15) with an alpha of 0.05 and power of 0.80. Because I intended to examine group differences in associations among Students of Color versus White Students, I set a recruitment target of 200 participants.

Scales

The independent variables (IV) in this study are the degree of colorblind attitude and social dominance orientation (SDO), which were measured by previously

validated scales. According to Ho et al. (2015), SDO is a measure of support for inequality between social groups and is better understood within the context of its subgroups: SDO-dominance (SDO-D) and SDO-antiegaltarian (SDO-E). SDO-D, which Ho et al (2015) considered “old fashioned racism” (p. 1011), is a measure that supports the continuation of overt, even violent, oppression of lower status groups by higher status groups. SDO-E is a measure of support for covert and justified inequality. However, SDO-E support is for intergroup access to power instead of one hierarchy of power (Ho et al., 2015). The latest version of the SDO scale created by Ho and colleagues, which is SDO₇ was used in the current study. The scale has a long and short version; this study used the short version of SDO₇ (s). The eight items from this scale are scored on a 7-point favor/oppose Likert-scale (i.e.: 1. Strongly oppose...7. Strongly favor). The eight items test for both SDO-D and SDO-E by using four items that tests for pro-and con-traits for each. Also, used in the current study were the four items from Ho et al.’s study that tested for racial centrality which was originally derived from Sidanius et al. (2008). The SDO scale can be viewed as items Q11.1-Q11.8 in Appendix A.

Neville and colleagues’ (2000) Colorblind Scale (CoBRAS) was used for this study to test for colorblind attitudes. The twenty items from this scale are scored on a 6-point Likert-scale (i.e.: 1. Strongly disagree...7. Strongly agree). The researchers divided the scale into three factors: Factor 1 tests for “racial privilege” ideology, which refers to the blindness to the existence of White privilege; Factor 2 tests for “institutional discrimination ideology”, which refers to the blindness to (or limited

knowledge of) systemic forms of racial discrimination and exclusion; Factor 3 tests for “blatant racial issues” ideology, which reveals blindness to general racial discrimination (Neville et al., 2000). The CoBRAS scale can be viewed as items Q12.1- Q13.10 in Appendix A.

The dependent variable (DV) in this study is the person’s self-reported activist behavior. The Activism Orientation Scale AOS (Corning & Myers, 2002) is a 20-item scale that tests for the frequency of engagement in low- and high-risk activism behaviors. The three core concepts of activism according to Corning and Myers (2002) are: 1. The behavior must be in the best interest of a group and not the individual; 2. Behavior must be aimed at addressing some perceived problem, injustice or disadvantage that affects the group; 3. Behavior is aimed at either making change or preventing change that is promoted by another group. These basic concepts were used for the current study to test for activist behavior. The AOS scale (Corning & Myers, 2002) was used to test only for low-risk activism behavior, including learning behaviors (i.e. reading a book on racism). The items that were chosen had a previous factor loading of at least .4² in the Corning and Myers study. These behavioral and motivation items are scored on a 7-point frequency Likert-scale (i.e.: 1. Never...7. Always). The behavioral items are assumed to reveal how active a participant is in

² Question number 44 “Participate in a protest march or demonstration fighting racism and/or racial injustice?” scored .38 on the factor loading (Corning & Myers, 2002) but I believed it to be an important question for the current study

displaying behavior that fights against racism in America. The AOS scale can be viewed as items Q14.1-Q14.6 in Appendix A.

Survey

To effectively measure these variables, an online survey using Qualtrics was created for online distribution. The University of Delaware Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the survey and distribution began in January 2017 (See Appendix C). The survey proposed little-to-no risk and included consent and confidentiality information before the beginning of the survey. Participants were recruited by professors who distributed the survey to their classes via email at the University of Delaware. Demographics such as race/ethnicity, economic status and nationality were asked and then used as control variables in the analysis. The survey included four questions (items three-six) used to test for racial centrality (RC). The four items came from the SDO7 (Ho et al., 2015) scale and are graded on a 7-point Likert-scale where the higher scores of closeness and level of importance translate to a higher level of RC. Possible scores ranged from 4-28. SDO7 items are Q11.1-Q11.8 in which SDO-D pro-trait items were Q11.1 and Q11.5. SDO-D con-trait items were Q.11.2 and Q11.6. SDO-E pro-trait items were Q11.4 and Q11.7. Finally, SDO-E con-trait items were Q11.5 and Q11.8. Total possible scores range from 8-56. Possible scores ranged from 2-14 for each pro/con-trait of SDO-D and SDO-E. Each con-trait question was scored in reverse. Colorblind items were Q12.1-Q13.10 on the questionnaire. Factor 1 items were question numbers: Q12.1, Q12.2, Q12.6, Q12.8, Q13.2, Q13.5 and Q13.10.

Factor 2 items were question numbers: Q12.3, Q12.4, Q12.9, Q13.3, Q13.4, Q13.6 and Q13.8. Factor 3 items are question numbers: Q12.5, Q12.7, Q12.10, Q13.1, Q13.7 and Q13.9. Question numbers Q12.2, Q12.4, Q12.5, Q12.6, Q13.1, Q13.2, Q13.5, Q13.7 and Q13.10 were reversed scored. Total possible scores ranged from 20-120. Factor 1 and Factor 2 possible scores ranged from 7-42. Factor 3 possible scores ranged from 6-36. The AOS items are question numbers 39-44. These items were scored on a 7-point frequency Likert-scale with possible scores ranging from 7-42.

Control Variables

In the current study control variables were age, gender and ethnicity. Age was coded as a continuous variable by using the person's age in years. Gender was coded as 0 = *male* and 1 = *female*. Ethnicity was dummy coded as 0 = *non-White* for People of Color (Black, Asian, Latino other) and 1 = *White* for White people.

Chapter 4

HYPOTHESIS

I hypothesize that SDO and colorblindness will be negatively associated with activist behavior, and that RC will be positively associated with activist behavior. Additionally, I will explore whether the associations between SDO, colorblindness, and RC with activist behavior differ between Students of Color and White Students.

Chapter 5

RESULTS

A total of 389 web links opened that connected participants to the survey with 222 true responses completed for a completion rate of .57%. A true response was considered a survey that had a recorded answer for each question. Any surveys with missing data were considered false and thrown out of the dataset. On average, participants were 20.75 years old. There was 6.3% that identified as Asian American, 14.4% identified as Black/African American, 5.0% that identified as Hispanic/Latino American, 71.2% identified as White/Caucasian, less than one percent identified as Native American and 2.6% identified as Other. Eighteen percent of participants were men, and 81.1% were women. The racial demographics of the study were generally like the racial demographics of the student population at UD for the 2016-2017 academic year which were: 5.1% Asian, 5.4% Black/African-American, 7.6% Hispanic/Latino, 73.3% White, less than one percent Native American and 4.3% Other (University of Delaware, 2016). The sex demographics of the study were not similar to the student population at UD (42.3% Men and 57.7% Woman) (University of Delaware, 2016).

Correlation analyses revealed that SDO and colorblind attitudes are significantly and positively correlated with one another ($r=.64$, $p=0.00$) (See Table 1). Thus, participants with higher SDO scores also scored higher on the colorblind measure. Social dominance orientation ($r=-.43$, $p=0.00$) and colorblindness ($r=-.62$, $p=0.00$) were significant and negatively correlated with activist behavior against racial

injustice and racism in America. Thus, participants with higher SDO and colorblind scores engaged in less activist behavior. Colorblindness had a stronger correlation with activist behavior than SDO. Racial centrality was not correlated with SDO ($r=.00, p=.97, n.s.$), colorblind attitudes ($r=-.00, p=.98, n.s.$) or activist behavior ($r=.03, p=.67, n.s.$).

A regression analysis was conducted to test associations between RC, SDO and colorblindness with activist behavior, controlling for age, race, and gender (See Table 2). According to the resulting R^2 value, the predictors accounted for 42% of the variance in activist behavior. Colorblind attitudes were negatively associated with activist behavior ($\beta=-.55, p=0.00$), indicating that participants who were more colorblind engaged in less activist behavior. SDO was no longer associated with activist behavior ($\beta=-.08, p=.23, n.s.$) in this multivariate analysis, and RC remained not associated with activist behavior ($\beta=.02, p=.72, n.s.$). Older students ($\beta=.16, p=.00$) and men ($\beta=-.12, p=.03$) also reported greater engagement in activist behavior.

Finally, three moderation tests were performed with the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2012) to determine whether ethnicity moderates associations between RC, SDO and colorblindness with activism. Ethnicity moderated the effect of racial centrality on activism [$B(SE)= -.59(0.16), p=0.01$]. As shown in Figure 1, among Students of Color those with greater RC engaged in more activism. Among White students, RC was not related to activism. Ethnicity did not moderate the effect of SDO

[B(SE)= .20(.23), $p=.38$, n.s.] or colorblindness [B(SE)=0.34(0.25), $p=0.19$, n.s.] on activism.

Table 1 Correlations between primary study variables

	Racial Centrality	Social Dominance Orientation	Colorblind
Racial Centrality	1		
Social Dominance Orientation	.00	1	
Colorblind	.00	.64**	1
Activist Behavior	.02	-.43**	-.62**
Note. ** $p \leq 0.01$. * $p \leq 0.05$			

Table 2 Regression predicting activism

<i>Covariate</i>	B (SE)	β
Age	.08(.03)	.16**
Race	-.21(.21)	-.06
Gender	-.48(.22)	-.12*
Racial Centrality	.03(.09)	.02
Social Dominance Orientation	-.14(.12)	-.08
Colorblind	-1.02(.13)	-.55**
R ²		.42**
Note. ** $p \leq 0.01$. * $p \leq 0.05$		

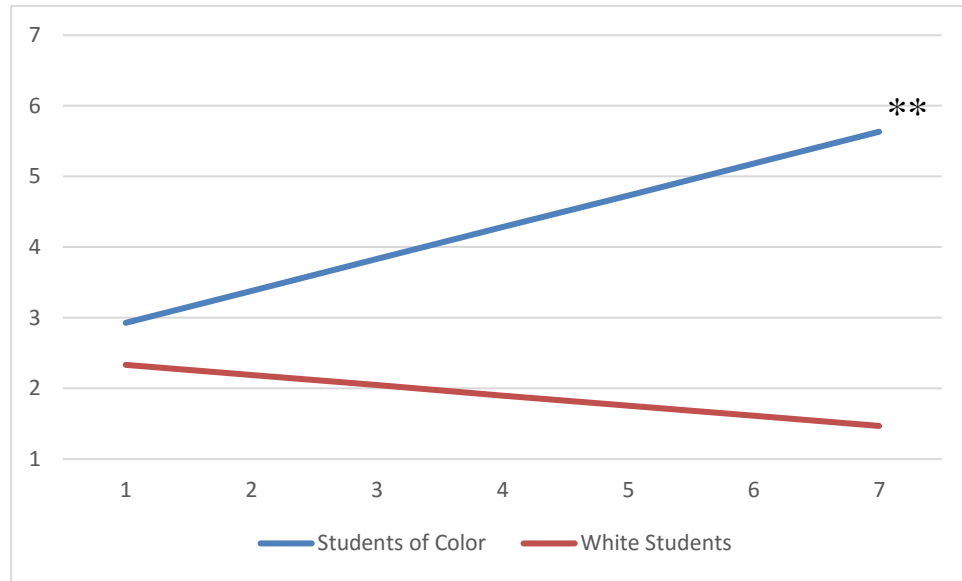


Figure 1 Moderation between RC, Ethnicity and Activism
Note. ** $p \leq 0.01$. * $p \leq 0.05$

Chapter 6

DISCUSSION

The current study examined if colorblind attitudes, social dominance orientation and racial centrality were associated with young adults' (18-35 years of age) activist behavior against racial injustice and racism in America. Also, it examined if these associations were different for Students of Color versus White students. Data were collected using an online survey at the University of Delaware, surveying its undergraduate and graduate student population. The final sample of 222 completed and true (every question answered) surveys were used to analyze the data. The first hypothesis was found to be true. Social dominance orientation and colorblindness were positively and significantly correlated with one another (See Table 1): as one increases/decreases so does the other. In multivariate regression analysis, only colorblindness had a significant effect on activist behavior against racial injustice and racism in America. Social dominance orientation and colorblindness were like one another, yet colorblindness was the more powerful predictor of activism. The relationship between SDO and colorblindness on activism suggests that people's activist actions were more strongly related to level of believing that color matters rather than their social dominance orientation. Colorblindness is the message that race does not matter and allows people not to see race even when it does matter, hence why colorblindness and activism are negatively associated.

Examining people's social attitudes can be extremely complex. For some participants, their answers were consistently either for or against group inequality and colorblindness. For others, contradictions were revealed throughout the survey. For example (See Appendix B), the White male respondent answered *strongly favor* to the SDO-D pro-trait question "An ideal society requires some groups to be on top and others to be on the bottom." The respondent then answered *strongly favor* to the SDO-D con-trait question "No one group should dominate in society." The example shows the complexity of the issue and how one can hold contradictory beliefs about social groups. The contradiction may be due to misunderstanding the questions or because the participant may believe that some groups should be on top but not solely one group should dominate. Another possible reason that may explain the contradiction in White participant's responses is White fragility. White fragility is when a White person acts in a defensive way due to any amount of the presence of racial stress, even a minimum amount (Bonds & Inwood, 2015; DiAngelo, 2011). What helps to form White fragility is being in a social environment where "White is normal," and there is protection from race-based stress. One form of protection is being around predominately White social groups (environmental) and having very little interaction with minority people and culture that would expand their worldview of other racial groups. White fragility permits White people from recognizing privilege and therefore makes it much harder to recognize inequality (Bonds & Inwood, 2015; DiAngelo, 2011). When White people do not have to often think outside of their comfort zone often, a survey like the one utilized in the current study may be the first time they must think about such

questions. Such contradictions make it difficult to classify a person as one thing or the other due to the internal (thoughts) and external (environmental influence) complexities.

Participants who scored lower in colorblindness were revealed to have a higher frequency of activist behavior. Those participants are assumed to see color and its role in racial privilege, institutional discrimination ideology and blatant racial issues (Neville et al., 2000) and choose to act to fight against them more frequently than those who scored higher in colorblindness. Being less colorblind is to be more conscious of racial injustice, while consciousness is a predictor for activism in young adults (Jacobs & Taylor, 2011; Urrieta, 2007; Bonnett, 1993). The current study examined college students because it is in higher education settings that many become aware of potential challenges to traditional societal authority, and it is the time when people become active in their fight against injustice (Bonnett, 1993). To display activist behavior against racial injustice the results of the current study suggest that one must be able to see color and the injustices that are perpetuated against People of Color. It also suggests that those that “see less” are more likely to not engage in activist behavior against racial injustice and racism in America. This may be due to the individual’s state of not seeing color and their current inability to realize that race does matter when it comes to access to resources, privilege and incarceration. If the individual believes that color has nothing to do with any injustices, because they do not see color, they will less likely feel the need to participate in a protest or raise awareness about racial injustice using social media.

Racial Centrality's Impact

The association between RC and activist behavior was significantly associated for Students of Color but not with White students. Racial centrality predicted activist behavior in Students of Color. As race became more important to participants, they displayed more activist behavior. This may be due to the student's relating, through their own experiences and/or feelings, a connection to the oppressed group(s) and the desire to advocate against the oppression. One's ethnic identity is closely related to having a strong political view against White supremacy, particularly with Black and Latinx identity (Szymanski & Lewis, 2014; Urrieta, 2007; Shingles, 1981). In other words, to identify more strongly as Black or Latinx American is to display activist behavior. Students of Color that scored lower in racial centrality may not have experienced being immersed within their ethnic culture, may be lacking an education that teaches their history (Szymanski & Lewis, 2014), and were not racially socialized by their parent or guardian (Bentley-Edwards & Stevenson, 2015) to develop their ethnic identity.

As hypothesized beforehand, RC associated differently with activism for White students. Racial centrality was not statistically significantly associated with White students' activist behavior. I speculate that when White people become aware of their Whiteness there are a few ways that it is displayed. Two are: 1. Feeling strongly connected to their Whiteness in a way that associates with White supremacy (Bonds & Inwood, 2015) or; 2. Feeling strongly against the oppressive nature of White American culture and history and being compelled to use their power to combat it

(Jacobs & Taylor, 2011). White people identifying closely to their Whiteness may have different implications with the level of activism they display, while People of Color that identify closer to their race are more likely to have an increase in activism due to activism being part of their ethnic identity. That being, having different meanings for how White people connect to their Whiteness and it being directed less towards activist behavior may explain why racial centrality was not statistically significant with activist behavior.

Either of the ways I suggest that White people display their connectedness to their Whiteness can be influenced by how young people are socialized (i.e. how they are educated). For example, one can be taught that Abraham Lincoln was the president that fought against enslavement and helped to delegalize it. That could be something to be proud of as an American; that a White man with power helped to end enslavement. However, another perspective can point to President Lincoln's letter to Horace Greeley in which he stated, "if I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that" (Lincoln, 1862). Lincoln's role in the abolishment of enslavement had very little to do with the freedom of the enslaved but more so with saving America as one nation. His statement "my paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and it not either to save or to destroy slavery" (Lincoln, 1862) clarifies his intentions furthermore. Approaching this time in history in a context that gives a fuller perspective should not warrant the same kind of pride of the former because a White man in power did not specifically

fight for ending the involuntary enslavement of African people but rather fought to save a nation. One sense of pride is based off a false narrative, while the other is based in historical context and evidence. Socialization is an important factor in developing one's identity and sense of pride (Bentley-Edwards & Stevenson, 2015; Stevenson & Arrington, 2009; Thornton, Chatters, Taylor & Allen, 1990). I posit that it is fine that one's Whiteness is important to people but how they display that importance may be the difference in their worldview and whether they act or not act.

Finally, another factor that may explain why RC was not statistically significant with activist behavior with White students is that White people do not think about their race often because it is normal in their environment. Being in a dominant culture that represents you in most places is a form of protection from the tensions of race and encourages the idea of "White is normal and then there is everything else" (Bonds & Inwood, 2015; DiAngelo, 2011). The results of this study suggest that White people can be active in their fight against racism, or not active, and be high or low in RC.

Chapter 7

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The current study was conducted to examine if SDO and colorblind attitude affected young adults' activist behavior. Data was collected using a survey that included previously validated scales distributed to the student population at the University of Delaware. A limitation to the study is the numerical difference between men and women responses and White and non-White participants. Women and White students made up much of the study compared to men and Students of Color. That is expected when distributing to the general student population at a PWI. Finding a smaller gap between groups would be ideal for a future study. Future research should look to extend the participants to more than PWI's to include HBCU's and the public. Including demographic questions such as major, occupation, highest level of education completed and income would add depth to the study and the control variables used to help look at associations between and within groups of people. Future research should also include a qualitative approach after the survey using focus groups. Being able to incorporate mixed methods in such a study would be beneficial to the fields of Social Science. While quantitative work allows for generalization and looking at trends, the qualitative work allows for cognitive and emotional insight. Examining how individuals process the questions posed above, will allow future researchers to understand participants' thoughts and emotions towards them that may not be able to be captured in quantitative work.

Chapter 8

CONCLUSION

In sum, this study contributed to understanding colorblind ideology and its influence on young adult's activism since the Civil Rights Movement. This study explored in greater depth, the influence of racial identity by adding racial centrality as a key component in understanding what influences a young adult to display activist behavior. It showed that RC was significant for Students of Color but not for White students. Even while considering someone's SDO and its relational similarity to colorblindness and controlling for sex, race and age, the study suggests that colorblindness is a driving influence on a person's choice to act against racism and racial inequality in America. Colorblindness is a hindrance to activism against racism and it can influence all people.

If people are not active in the fight against racism in America, then they are part of the problem, for inactivity allows for racism to continue. Activism is not displayed in any exclusive manner. It is essential for people to find which mode of activism they are willing to engage in and do it. Also, it is critical to combat against colorblind attitudes because it can influence people's activist behavior towards dismantling racism. Due to colorblindness being a subtle message, it is important for parents, educators, policy makers, religious and community leaders to intentionally combat it. With modes of activism increasing with technology (i.e. social media, videos, etc.), the more people are aware of racism and the racial climate in America the greater the chances are for people using their social platform(s) for activism. The

more people are active the harder it may be for racism to continue in any form (i.e. macro, micro, covertly and overtly). We need more people to become active in the fight and not be “blind” to the systems (i.e. education), policies (i.e. the war on drugs) and messages (i.e. colorblind attitudes) that continue to oppress People of Color. Without activism, racism continues, inequality continues and injustice continues. Hopefully, this study will empower readers to reflect and see where they are on the colorblind spectrum and how they can become active in the fight against racism and racial injustice in America.

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Appendix A

SURVEY

Q1. How old are you?

Q2. What is your ethnicity?

- ☐ Asian American
- ☐ Black/African American
- ☐ Hispanic/Latino American
- ☐ Native American
- ☐ White/Caucasian
- ☐ Other (Please specify)

Q3. How strongly do you identify with other members of your ethnic group?

- ☐ Extremely identify
- ☐ Moderately identify
- ☐ Slightly identify
- ☐ Neither identify nor unidentify
- ☐ Slightly unidentify
- ☐ Moderately unidentify
- ☐ Extremely unidentify

Q4. How important is your ethnicity to your identity?

- ☐ Absolutely Important
- ☐ Important
- ☐ Slightly Important
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Slightly unimportant
- ☐ Unimportant
- ☐ Absolutely Unimportant

Q5. How often do you think of yourself as a member of your ethnic group?

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Usually
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Occasionally
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never

Q6. I feel close to other members in my ethnic group (Choose one of the following)

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Somewhat Agree
- ☐ Neither Agree or Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Q7. What is your sex?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Other

Q8. Prior to college, did you complete at least 6 years in the American education system?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q9. What kind of area did you mostly live in?

- ☐ Inner City
- ☐ Rural/farm
- ☐ Suburb
- ☐ Other (Please specify)

Q10. What kind of school did you mostly attend?

- ☐ Charter School
- ☐ Homeschool
- ☐ Private School
- ☐ Public School
- ☐ Other (explain)

Q11. Show how much you favor or oppose each idea below by selecting an answer below. You can work quickly; your first feeling is generally best.

	Strongly oppose	Somewhat oppose	Slightly oppose	Neutral	Slightly favor	Somewhat favor	Strongly favor
An ideal society requires some groups to be on top and others to be on the bottom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No one group should dominate in society.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Group equality should not be our primary goal.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We should do what we can to equalize conditions for different groups.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Groups at the bottom are just as deserving as groups at the top.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is unjust to try to make groups equal.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We should work to give all groups an equal chance to succeed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q12. Answer each question based on how you agree or how it reflects what you believe. You can work quickly; your first feeling is generally best.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Everyone who works hard, no matter what race they are, has an equal chance to become rich.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is important that people begin to think of themselves as American and not African American, Mexican American or Italian American.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Due to racial discrimination, programs such as affirmative action are necessary to help create equality.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Racism is a major problem in the U.S.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Race is very important in determining who is successful and who is not.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Racism may have been a problem in the past, it is not an important problem today.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Racial and ethnic minorities do not have the same opportunities as white people in the U.S.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
White people in the U.S. are discriminated against because of the color of their skin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q13. Answer each question based on how you agree or how it reflects what you believe. You can work quickly; your first feeling is generally best.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
It is important for political leaders to talk about racism to help work through or solve society's problems.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
White people in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Immigrants should try to fit into the culture and values of the U.S.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
English should be the only official language in the U.S.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
White people are more to blame for racial discrimination than racial and ethnic minorities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social policies, such as affirmative action, discriminate unfairly against White people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is important for public schools to teach about the history and contributions of racial and ethnic minorities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Racial problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Race plays an important role in who gets sent to prison.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q14. Answer the following questions based off your experiences since the age of 18.

	Never	Very Rarely	Rarely	Sometimes	Occasionally	Very Frequently	Always
Attend an informational meeting on racism and/or social justice?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Go out of your way to collect information on racism and/or social justice?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Present facts to contest another person's statement about race/racism/Black lives matter/social justice?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Confront jokes, statements or innuendoes about another race and/or racism?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Share information raising awareness on racism, Black Lives Matter, mass incarceration, etc?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Participate in a protest march or demonstration fighting racism and/or racial injustice?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix B

SAMPLE

Q11. Show how much you favor or oppose each idea below by selecting an answer below. You can work quickly; your first feeling is generally best.

	Strongly oppose	Somewhat oppose	Slightly oppose	Neutral	Slightly favor	Somewhat favor	Strongly favor
An ideal society requires some groups to be on top and others to be on the bottom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
No one group should dominate in society.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Group equality should not be our primary goal.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We should do what we can to equalize conditions for different groups.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Groups at the bottom are just as deserving as groups at the top.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is unjust to try to make groups equal.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We should work to give all groups an equal chance to succeed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Appendix C

IRB EXEMPTION NOTIFICATION



RESEARCH OFFICE

210 Hollihen Hall
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Fax: 302/831-2828

DATE: January 17, 2017

TO: Kendell Daughtry
FROM: University of Delaware IRB (HUMANS)

STUDY TITLE: [1002428-1] CBA Survey

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
DECISION DATE: January 17, 2017

REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category # (2)

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this research study. The University of Delaware IRB has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to federal regulations.

We will put a copy of this correspondence on file in our office. Please remember to notify us if you make any substantial changes to the project.

If you have any questions, please contact Nicole Farnese-McFarlane at (302) 831-1119 or nicolefm@udel.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.