**CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION**

**Introductory**

In this chapter, the study results were compared and contrasted with the literature, conclusions were drawn, and recommendations were made. Using Critical Race Theory (CRT; Bell, 1995) and various socio-political concepts as the framework for conceptualizing the attitudes and perceptions of middle-class African Americans, the current study investigated the relationships between race-related stress and my study population’s perception of injustice among 63 participants. This chapter presents the findings and interpretations of the primary analyses. The limitations of the study were discussed. Implications for sociopolitical understanding and racial reconciliation were also discussed.

**Purpose and Research Questions Review**

The purpose of the study was to examine the potential relationship between race-related stress and the perception of injustice among middle-class African Americans in Chattanooga, TN. The problem was that middle-class African Americans experienced race-related stress due to the influence of political ideologies, which informed their perceptions of injustice (Kivikangas et al., 2021; Leong et al., 2020). However, the sociological relationship between race-related stress and the perceptions of injustice among middle-class African Americans in Chattanooga, TN, was unknown. This problem was of particular concern in the American Southeast, where there is a dynamic of historical racism (Anderson, Span, 2016). Therefore, Chattanooga, TN, was selected as the geographical delimitation for this study because Chattanooga, TN, is in the heart of the Southeast United States, and Tennessee is the historical, foundational origin of the Ku Klux Klan (Chalmers, 1987). The research question emerged from the purpose statement. The hypotheses aligned with the research question to support the purpose of the study. The results of the study answered the research hypotheses.

Research Question:

What relationship, if any, exists between an African American’s self-assessed race-related stress and self-assessed perception of injustice?

Ho: No statistically significant relationship exists between levels of race-related stress and perceptions of injustice among middle-class African Americans in Chattanooga, TN.

Ha: A statistically significant relationship exists between levels of race-related stress and perceptions of injustice among middle-class African Americans in Chattanooga, TN.

**Review of Key Results From Chapter 4**

The quantitative correlational research study evaluated, via self-assessment inventories, middle-class African American race-related stress, perception of injustice, and the potential relationship between the two. A total of *N* = 62 respondents participated in this study. Using the procedures described in Chapter 3, Pearson’s *r* bivariate correlation analyses were used to address the hypotheses. The sample's IRRS-B composite (mean) score was compared to the PIQ composite (mean) score.

The following null hypothesis was tested:

Ho: No significant relationship exists between a middle-class African American's self-assessed level of race-related stress and self-assessed perception of injustice.

Table 1 displays the frequency counts for the demographic variables. All were either Black/African American or Black/African American with an additional racial/ethnic designation. The respondents’ ages ranged from 30-40 years to 61+ years, with a median age of *Mdn* = 55.50 years. There were more men (53.2%) than women (46.8%) in the sample. Sixty-one percent had an income of over $93,000/year. Job titles ranged from laborer/staffer to business owner, with a median job title being management. Seventy-four percent had earned at least a master’s degree (see Table 1). Table 2 displays the psychometric characteristics of the two scale scores. For race-related stress, the mean score was *M* = 3.32 on a five-point scale; for perceived injustice, the mean score was *M* = 2.67 on a five-point scale. Both Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were acceptable measures (Cronbach, 1951) (see Table 2).

According to the Laerd Statistics website (Laerd, 2024), five assumptions are needed for Pearson correlations. Assumption 1 (continuous variables) was met with both scale scores having Cronbach alpha scores greater than .70 (see Table 1). Assumption 2 (paired variables) was met by the study's design, with the respondents’ stress score being paired with the respondents’ injustice score. Assumptions 3 (linear relationship) and 4 (no significant outliers) were met after inspection of Figure 1. Figure 1 shows a clear, linear, positive relationship between the two variables. In addition, no significant outliers were observed (see Figure 1). Assumption 5 (normality) was addressed in two ways: Skewness and kurtosis statistics (see Table 2) as well as normality statistics (See Table 3). The skewness and kurtosis statistics were within normal limits (± 1.0, Cronbach, 1951).

The Research Question was, What relationship, if any, exists between a middle-class African American's self-assessed level of race-related stress and self-assessed perception of injustice? The related null hypothesis was Ho: No significant relationship exists between a middle-class African American's self-assessed level of race-related stress and self-assessed perception of injustice. To answer this, the footnote of Figure 1 contains the relevant Pearson correlation. Specifically, a significant positive correlation was found between stress and injustice for the Pearson correlation (*r* [60] = .40, *p* = .001). These findings supported rejecting the null hypothesis (see Figure 1). The primary hypothesis (stress related to injustice) was supported (see Figure 1). In this chapter, the researcher compared these findings to the literature. Conclusions and implications are delineated with a series of recommendations.

**Comparison of Results to Chapter 2 Literature Review**

**Literature that was Additive to Chapter 4 Findings**

The results of this study were consistent with Cruz & Palmer, 2015; Driscoll, Reynolds, & Todman, 2015; Hunter, Case, Joseph, Mekawi & Bokhari, 2017; Utsey, Chae, Brown, & Kelly, 2002 who found that not only do middle-class African Americans, specifically in Chattanooga, TN for this study, experience race-related stress due to actual or perceived racism. However, middle-class African Americans reacted to racism in a variety of ways: for example, by participating in political activism or by excelling in American society (see Table 1). The study found that there was a positive correlation between race-related stress and the perception of injustice in middle-class African Americans in Chattanooga, TN (see Table 4). Emerging social trends indicated the need to understand any possible relationship between race-related stress and one's perception of injustice. This result was consistent with Utsey, 1999; Neumann, Berger, & Kizilhan, 2021. In light of these findings, it was not surprising that many middle-class African Americans in Chattanooga, TN, found an explanation for their perceived oppression by the white hegemon in the rationale of CRT or that they embraced Marxist ideologies as potential remedies to society’s sociopolitical afflictions concerning race, employment opportunities, educational disparities, DEI, or conflict over shared national history. People perceived different actions as unjust and reacted differently to injustice experiences. This subjective perception of injustice could determine their actions, mental health, or race-related stress (Fetchenhauer, Huang, 2004). Current research on people suffering after traumatic accidents showed that people who subjectively perceived their situation as less just felt pain longer and more strongly (Trost et al., 2017; Sullivan, 2020; Carriere et al., 2020). To better understand the impact of injustice experiences on mental health, it was necessary to validly assess experiences of injustice with appropriate instruments (Fetchenhauer, Huang, 2004). The data was precise in its demonstration of the self-reported experiences of the study population concerning lived experiences regarding racism due to the questions the items asked in the surveys. The study results presented many possibilities for future studies concerning the specific coping strategies of the study participants.

**Variant Literature Compared to Chapter 4 Findings**

To argue that racism does not exist, has not existed, or does not play a part in U.S. shared history is not only an exercise in futility but also disingenuous (Kendi, 2019). While this study found that middle-class African Americans in Chattanooga, TN, did experience race-related stress and that race-related stress did affect their perception of injustice, Thomas Sowell would disagree that a single variable like race-related stress would serve to derail an entire population (Sowell, 2019; Sowell, 1960). Sowell would argue that many variables come together to result in an individual or population succeeding or not in the face of racism. According to Sowell, no equal distribution exists in any permutation, manufactured or naturally occurring. Again, this is not to say there have not been considerable abuses by the hegemon (Sowell, 1960). However, writers like Glenn Loury would also agree and disagree with the study results: that a single factor could have been responsible for so much causation (Glenn Loury, 2021). One possible way that race and ethnicity might have introduced themselves into the matter is by contrasting behavior in contractual relationships with minority groups by others. This introduction might have hindered the ability of minorities to convert their assets into social mobility results. This notion was referred to as the discrimination paradigm in the study of *Social Mobility* (Loury et al., 2005). The result that individuals with the attitude that “things will generally be all right with the world” are more inclined to take up activism activities for social change seemed counterintuitive based on the body of literature (Leath & Chavous, 2017). On the contrary, the literature implied that those suffering from race-related stress favored social activism and did not believe that everything would be all right with the world. Therefore, the two goals of the current study were to add to the literature on socio-political attitudes and better understand how the variables were related concerning race-related stress and the perception of injustice in the study population.

**Synthesis of Literature**

Based on the literature, there were many reasons why some studies agreed and some disagreed. There was no dispute concerning the existence of racism. Scholars and societies have reached a consensus in this regard (Stone, 2012). Two prevalent areas where scholars disagreed were the magnitude of the existing effects of racism and egalitarian subjects. Scholars had wide-ranging opinions concerning the impact of historic and institutional racism. Some believed the effects of racism were as prevalent today as they were during the Jim Crow era (Kendi, 2019), yet not as overt (Dyson, 2020). There were those scholars who believed the effects of systemic and institutional racism were not as prevalent in that the ability to achieve or access wealth was no longer the barrier it used to be for people of color (Sowell, 2019). Institutional and systemic equality had been “leveled” on the societal playing field.

Much has been written about Marxism and conflict. Ghous (2020) wrote that drawing on different schools of Marxist thought established the case of ideology as one of the many potential sources of social conflict. There were economic scholars (Glenn Loury, 2021; Thomas Sowell, 2019) who believed economic determinism could not solely cause social conflict. Ideology had a part. Insistence upon mere economic vernacular and eliminating consciousness and moral elements will limit the scope of the social conflict theory. Ideology was a permanent feature of social and political life. Ideology shaped and reshaped society. Ideology led to group identification and conflicting preferences and choices (Ghous, 2020). Individuals and groups entered the political arena with different expectations and preferences. Sometimes, these differing preferences resulted in sharp divisions. Heterogeneous societies suffer more from differences and divisions than homogeneous societies (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014). With all the benefits diversity brought, it also presented many specific conflicts. Ideological conflicts differ from personal and other conflicts in that all other conflicts might occur due to non-moral actions, whereas ideological conflicts could be purely value-based (Ghous, 2020). However, it was evident that economic determinism was also responsible for social conflict.

Dr. Ibram X. Kendi, Harvard African American Studies professor, is an influential contemporary writer on CRT. Kendi is a leading author on what became known as anti-racism and how to become an anti-racist (Delgado et al., 2017). CRT significantly affected contemporary fields such as economics, sociology, psychology, African American Studies, American History, and many other fields of study (Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020). Ibram X. Kendi observed that racism was not the only social factor determining an individual's life. Kendi agreed with Sowell concerning single factors derailing an entire population. Kendi wrote that, for better or worse, we all see ourselves in a particular way. For better or worse, others see us the way they see us. However, how I see myself might not be reality. How others see me might not be reality. My environment and experiences (nature and nurture) significantly influenced my perception, how I see others, and how others see me (Kendi, 2019, p. 37). I must own myself. I must feel free and be free to be - imperfections and all. I am my representative and expression of freedom (Kendi, 2019, p. 205).

**New Contributions to Literature**

A new contribution to the literature was Deborah Stone’s book *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making* (Stone, 2012). In chapter two, she covered the topic of equity and its complex challenges. She wrote that it was necessary to remember from the outset that equity was the objective for all factions in a distributive dispute. The strife often arose over how the parties envisioned the distribution of whatever “it” was. Stone elaborated on the challenges of equity by using the slices of a cake to demonstrate complexity: “equal slices but unequal invitations, unequal slices for unequal ranks but equal slices for equal ranks, unequal slices but equal blocs, unequal slices but equal meals, unequal slices but equal value to recipients, unequal slices but equal starting resources, unequal slices but equal statistical chances, unequal slices but equal votes” (Stone, 2012, pp. 40-41). The paradox in distributive problems was made clear by Stone’s illustration: Equality may mean inequality, equal treatment could require unequal treatment and equal distribution might be seen as equitable or inequitable depending on one’s point of view. This meant that any policy argument must have offered a moral, supported reason why it was proper or improper to categorize situations or cases alike or different (Stone, 2012).

**Alignment with Theoretical Framework**

Marxism framed this study with critical race theory as its actuator. It could be established that much contemporary social conflict can be attributed to Marxism through critical race theory (Ghous, 2020). The statistical results of this study aligned with the theoretical framework of critical race theory in that the study population believed they were actively experiencing racism or had experienced racism, which motivated them to believe sociopolitical activism was a worthy cause. However, a statistical majority of the study participants did not think violent revolution was the remedy. Several other theoretical frameworks might have explained the study participant’s lack of motivation to engage in violent revolution. These theoretical frameworks might have been religious or spiritual practices, counseling and therapy relationships, self-actualization, or a greater capacity to forgive (Wittrock, 2020). The exploration of these delimitations might offer different results and explanations concerning the study population’s lack of motivation for violent revolution in light of their reported experiences with racism and race-related stress (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014).

Sociopolitical attitudes of the study population suggested emotions regarding facts or the perceived state of the unique combination of social and political factors in a sociopolitical environment (Chaiklin, 2011). Sociopolitical could have included beliefs about gender equality, government responsibilities, adherence to social norms that affected the citizenry, support for civil liberties, inclination to participate in political activity or activism, and perspectives about maintaining order (Campbell & Horowitz, 2016; Nugent et al., 2016). Sociopolitical attitudes were often affected by political orientation and ideology (Campbell & Horowitz, 2016; Furnham, 1985; Haidt, 2012; Proch et al., 2019; Tansey & Kindsvatter, 2020).

Political ideologies like conservatism or liberalism were fundamental contributors to individual attitudes concerning their sociopolitical environment (Kivikangas et al., 2021; Leong et al., 2020). However, it is vital to note that there were cultural and subcultural differences in how political ideology, moral foundations, and sociopolitical attitudes related. In a cross-cultural meta-analysis, Kivikangas and colleagues (2021) found that research on political ideology, moral values, and attitudes results were smaller in samples that did not consist of individuals who were white, American, or had political interests. Further research on the African American population's political ideologies and sociopolitical attitudes is needed.

**Implications**

Based on the literature, material differences (economic, political, legal) sometimes affected groups designated as racial minorities – a designation based mainly on census statistics. However, many of the material differences were not racial at all. One could empirically demonstrate that many of the issues ascribed to systemic racism were indeed classism matters, not actual racism, as the term was understood just a short time ago (Holman, et al., 2021). The definition of racism has evolved substantially in the last four to five years. Theorists of postmodernism have been attentive to social systems, focusing on detecting implicit biases, points of view, and even subconscious racial assumptions. These positions are counter-liberal in sentiment. Traditional liberalism was more concerned with equality at the different levels of society and stressed progress incrementally (Neuwirth, 2023). Critical race theory in the hands of the novice is a potentially destructive revolution as it seems to be fueled by emotional fervor instead of sound reasoning. While there is no such state as color-blindness regarding race (a form of racism), many traditional liberals and conservatives believe there is. How can one both celebrate and ignore the outward racial and cultural traits of others and celebrate them simultaneously (Glenn Loury, 2021)?

Racism will never be irradicated entirely from the human experience. The research revealed that participants wished to be left alone to live as they saw fit. However, the understanding of what racism is has been diluted. Everything that goes against the mainstream, neoliberal opinion is considered racist (Holman, et al., 2021). People tend to have preferences, likes, dislikes and wants. Society sees those as intractable who do not prefer the company of someone on specific or general grounds: they are labeled a bigot or intolerant. One can no longer love someone and simultaneously disapprove of their life or behavior. Not only does everyone have to accept everything about other's lives and behaviors, but everyone has to celebrate every idiosyncrasy of every other. Perhaps one does not dislike another person, one does not prefer their company; one must still comply or be cast out as an ignorant bigot. Critical analysis, cultural sensitivity, educating oneself to different cultural norms, and living a life rich with diverse perspectives are essential to Western civilization (Glenn Loury, 2021). However, forcing individuals to accept, condone, celebrate, and prefer everything about another is not enlightenment. It is undoubtedly not wiping out the blight of racism - societal or systemic. The notions of identifying implicit bias and making someone's lack of agreement or acceptance with every aspect of others should not have been commingled. Actual racism will never be eradicated by society if everything is racist. The "war" against racism was the new Gotterdammerung. All must be sacrificed to win the struggle. However, there can be no "winners" if all is sacrificed to win (Thiele, 2021).

For scholars and practitioners of social sciences and social research, the focus is not to attempt to align social sciences (social studies) with the natural sciences. Social science is just that – social, hence, dynamic (Merton, 1949). Unlike research in the natural sciences, the social sciences are based on dynamic social research. Social research is not static. A did not always equal B. B did not always equal A. Sociologist Robert Merton wrote extensively on what it was to be functional or dysfunctional concerning society and the perspective of whom one engaged within a research or social context (Merton, 1949). One theory did not fit everyone everywhere. Even with the best intentions, societal systems and policies inherently have consequences for all involved. Merton wrote of manifest and latent functions. Manifest functions were outcomes that were intended and expected. Latent functions were those outcomes that were not intended. However, all latent functions did not always mean adverse effects or results (Merton, 1957). Social scientists should avoid mega theoretical constructs influencing one's worldview: politics and ideology. Social science should have replaced these influences with what Merton coined Middle Range Theories (Merton, 1949). It is not social science's responsibility to solve all of society's ails. Instead, social science should systematically integrate social theory and empirical research, using plain, nibble language rather than dense, cumbersome scientific jargon. Race-related stress and the perception of injustice are complex topics together and individually because society is complex in its ever-changing and shifting social dynamics. Social scientists should concentrate on the delimiting aspects of social phenomena (Merton, 1949).

**The Sample and The Population**

This study will benefit the study population, the study demographic, and the field of social research. The population consisted of 62 African American, middle-class respondents. Middle class was defined socioeconomically using U.S. Census Bureau data (U.S. Census, 2018). The study data showed that though all respondents reported having been victims of racism currently or in the past, they were still able to achieve personal and professional milestones in their lives, specifically in their education and professional careers (see Table 1). The data demonstrated the resilience of the demographic in attaining what is anecdotally referred to as the American Dream (education, land ownership, business ownership, senior management, retirement plans, wealth to pass on to descendants) through hard work, determination, and initiative despite the institutional and systemic confinements of the hegemony. This study will benefit the field of social research because it provides a quantitative study that demonstrates that the study population and demographic might not be as oppressed as society at large might purport or that racism might not be as monumental an obstacle as once believed. This study opened new directions of inquiry: race and class.

**The Study and Society At Large**

Individuals tend to make choices based on perceived group averages. Group averages extend across a wide range of social contexts. The choices one makes can range from the annoying and trivial to the significant. Though significant, they could be virtually undetectable by the study population that reported having experienced racism. What is significant concerning the point of view regarding social mobility is an outsider’s estimation of group averages, and their claim that those averages projected onto individuals may have considerable consequences concerning acquiring job experience, education, or material assets (Loury, 2002). For example, suppose someone was to use the ethnic or racial makeup of a neighborhood as a representation of quality. In that case, it may have served to suppress property values in neighborhoods some might consider having the “wrong mix." This dynamic could have affected some lenders’ willingness to lend in said neighborhoods. In addition, if employers were to evaluate Asian applicants based on perceived group averages (Asians are good with technology), many applicants whose fundamental qualities fall below the group average might have obtained an unearned advantage in the labor market. One possible advantage Asians might have had was getting on-the-job experience. As a consequence, this dynamic may, in the end, have fulfilled the implicit group stereotype some attribute to Asians and technology or other minorities in their respective neighborhoods (Loury, 2002). This study's results offset the inference that African Americans have an implicit, insurmountable hurdle blocking their path to the "American Dream." This study also served to demonstrate the resilience of African Americans in the face of actual or perceived racism.

**Recommendations**

What is known, suggested by the research results, is that institutional and systemic racism might not be the defining, negative influence that some were putting forward as the bane of modern civilization. Racism is real. However, the research results demonstrated that despite particular social challenges, African Americans achieved middle-class status and more. A moderate effort of study of American history will reveal this. What we do not know is how or why many African Americans fail to achieve middle-class status socioeconomically and why some succeed. It is not entirely understood how complex the notion of social mobility is for particular populations. There are many variables available to consider (Sowell, 2019). The results of this study introduced many new areas of inquiry - not only concerning race-related stress and its implications for one's perception of injustice. Some possible future study opportunities are conducting this study with lower-class African Americans, lower and middle-class Latin and Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and even lower-class Caucasians. Gaps could be addressed or filled by conducting the study with different populations, using a different research design, for example, adding a qualitative component, using a different data collection instrument(s), conducting pre and post-longitudinal studies, or holding topical training.

There were limitations in this study related to sampling, research design, measurement, and analysis. Participants with certain characteristics concerning the primary variables might have elected to participate in the study. For example, participants with fewer real or perceived experiences of race-related stress or more favorable attitudes toward CRT and the sociopolitical environment may not have felt it necessary to participate or share their experiences. Conversely, individuals with negative experiences or perceptions desiring an outlet for their voices may have more eagerly participated in this research. The study was limited in its ability to generalize to all middle-class African Americans in Tennessee or the U.S. since the participants were from a single city in a single county. Also, while racism is made more or less explicit by its complexity across the nation, certain regions/states might have better or worse tenor for people of color. Considering these concerns related to sampling techniques and location, future studies should attempt to recruit participants through random sampling or by gathering data from individuals whose demographics and location, for example, are diverse and representative.

Although power analyses revealed that my sample size was adequate to attain

acceptable power for my proposed models, the results found with the IRRS-B and PIQ analyses might have been sample-specific. Therefore, to assess the generalizability of my proposed model to other subgroups, cross-validation analyses need to be conducted by future investigators. All of this research project's participants were middle-class socioeconomically. This relatively homogenous sample further limited the generalizability of my findings to African Americans from upper-class and lower-class communities. Future researchers examining socioeconomic variables that influence the pattern of results need to provide more accurate information about the structure of race-related stress and the perception of injustice in a heterogeneous sample of African Americans.

This study employed a cross-sectional design. While appropriate for correlational

research, there are associated concerns with the internal validity and caveats concerning interpreting the results. For example, confounding variables could have systematically affected independent or dependent variables, and ambiguous temporal precedence prevents isolation of cause versus effect. In this study, race-related stress and sociopolitical attitudes were conceptualized as predictors of the perception of injustice and its impact. The researcher interpreted the study results as such. However, it was reasonable that bi-directional relationships may have existed among the variables. As an example, it may have been possible to interpret the relationship between race-related stress and the perception of injustice in a way that assumed participants who engaged in activities related to Black activism were more likely to have experienced, perceived, and reported increased race-related stress. To empirically establish causal relationships among the study variables and mitigate the effects of confounding variables, future researchers should consider using longitudinal and experimental methodologies.

Measurement and data collection may have contributed to the limitations in interpreting

the study results. The use of self-report questionnaires to collect data could have created challenges related to participant’s race-related stress. For example, some items on the IRRS-B that addressed Anti-White attitudes had strongly worded expressions of negative feelings. This dynamic may have caused increased participation or initiated social and ideological biases for participants who did or did not want to appear vengeful or angry. This consideration needed to be taken seriously for this and other measures administered. The self-report nature of the measures may also have introduced the possibility that participants’ general answers regarding sensitive subjects, such as racism, might not have been accurate due to stigma or social perception biases.

As part of the data cleaning process, I removed the possibility of either measure not being completed. Most attrition occurred immediately after the informed consent or during the first measure due to the online survey not permitting participants to advance after not responding to an item. All items had to be answered in order to participate in the study. Any case where all items were unanswered would not allow for meaningful analysis of the study variables. Nevertheless, this premature dropout may have been related to concepts and variables crucial to the study, such as racial identity attitudes or sociopolitical attitudes. For example, those individuals who support racial identity attitudes, have low critical consciousness, or possess positive sociopolitical attitudes might have interpreted the study description and the initial questions as superfluous, complaining, and then terminated their participation in the survey. Similarly, individuals experiencing emotional fatigue or depressive episodes might have withdrawn due to the subject matter or the time and energy required to complete the survey. Acknowledging the inherent difficulty of the subject matter and the valuable time of participants necessary for data collection, future researchers might need to be more strategic in data collection techniques to lessen potential participant dropout.

**Best Practices To Improve Outcomes**

There were many potential solutions put forward to remedy the causes of race-related stress in the literature. None applied to this study population, as indicated by their responses. There could be many causes for this study population’s disposition concerning race-related stress and its potential causes and effects. The data from the study did not demonstrate a desire for violent revolution by the participants due to racial oppression. However, the points below posed some potential solutions in the form of best practices to improve outcomes:

* Re-establish the stable family as the stabilizing element of the societal structure.
* Include representation of all communal factions at the policy-making table by providing incentives for viable social solutions.
* Establish the understanding that education is primarily a family responsibility regarding culture and cultural identity.

**Lessons Learned**

The above points are not exhaustive in their recommendations. The study topic is vast and requires further investigation. A lesson that was learned from this research is that the relationship between race-related stress and the perception of injustice is a complex issue. A study conducted with a mixed methodology design would have produced more nuanced data. This study was conducted with a quantitative methodological design. There were time constraints to this study. If I had five years and unlimited funds, I could have performed more extensive research, including several more variables. Some examples of other variables that I could have included could have been more demographic background information about participants, religious affiliations, community involvement, therapy or counseling relationships, and past and current family makeup. Given unlimited time and resources, I could have done more to mitigate the study limitations. An example of limitation mitigation could have been to conduct the study with the demographic in different locations. An assumption was that the same demographic located somewhere else could have experienced or perceived life differently than the study population that participated. Other races with similar socioeconomic status in different locations could have also addressed this study's limitations.

This study presented notable suggestions for research on the experiences

of middle-class African Americans. Concerning contributions to contemporary research, this study added to the literature that explores the experiences of middle-class African Americans in Chattanooga, TN, using Marxism and Critical Race Theory as frameworks. The study investigated new relationships among variables previously studied in a dynamic, sociopolitical context to provide a more nuanced understanding of middle-class African American race-related stress and perception of injustice. This study extended the knowledge of the effects of the political era in which it was conducted and captured the unique experiences and feelings about that sociopolitical climate. Future studies utilizing mixed-methods or qualitative analysis to explore the experiences of middle-class African Americans could also provide a richer understanding and narrative of this sociopolitical era. Longitudinal studies could provide valuable insight into the long-term effects race-related stress might have on the psychosocial outcomes of middle-class African Americans. Future studies comparing these participants to participants who have or have not experienced significant social circumstances in their lifetimes may also be of value to the social research literature.

**Policy and Practitioner Recommendations**

Given what was discovered from this study and the literature, some recommendations addressing race-related stress and the perception of injustice in middle-class African Americans in Chattanooga, TN were proffered at the policy (national) and practitioner (local) levels. Given the study results, the study population will benefit from these recommendations. In some regards, the policy (or national) recommendations are theoretical because operationalizing benefits for individuals with national policy is often challenging. Policy is about the big picture.

**Policy Recommendations (National, System, Institutional, Legislative, Long Term)**

* Enforcement of Federal and State Anti-Discrimination Laws, keeping in mind that no one approach is the "solution."
* Social Science is a teaching field. Realize that not all social problems are fixed by laws and policies. However, laws can help redirect negative social trends. Taylor laws to neither follow nor lead society.
* People only have those rights they can defend. Offense is not one of those rights. Do not allow legislation to control speech based on offense. National and state policy can be theoretical but should be as practical in purpose as possible.

The practitioner (or local) recommendations are practical. They focus on local communities and individuals through hands-on approaches. Practitioner is about the little picture.

**Practitioner Recommendations (City, County, Neighborhood, Focused, Applied, Therapy)**

* Conduct training to strengthen the family and community through community centers, churches, and non-profits.
* Train others to combat the "victim mentality" by educating them about reality through community centers, churches, and non-profits.
* Encourage people to seek counseling for anger, anxiety, and any other mental health issues. Connect/collaborate with community organizations like churches and non-profits to facilitate support groups and offer pertinent information.
* No propaganda! Train individuals and communities to avoid the rhetoric and ideology of national and local "race hustlers" looking to capitalize off of racial strife while offering no real-world solutions to real-world problems.
* Do not waste time looking for a handout. Get to work. Ignore those who always "cry wolf" or try to convince you that you are a victim.
* Teach people to take personal responsibility for their lives and families by encouraging them to believe that changing their socioeconomic position is within their influence.

These policy and practitioner recommendations are viable options to assist the study population with its race-related stress and perception of injustice on a personal level.

**Conclusion**

This study examined the relationship between race-related stress and the perception of injustice among middle-class African Americans in Chattanooga, TN. The racial attitudes and sociopolitical attitudes were examined as potential moderators of the relationships between race-related stress and perception outcomes concerning the perception of injustice. The results indicated that due to increased experiences or perceptions of racism, race-related stress was associated with worsened perceptions of injustice among middle-class African Americans. Negative sociopolitical attitudes were related to perceiving more injustice.

This study has implications for research and clinical practice with African Americans. The findings of this study will add to the literature on race-related stress and the perception of injustice and fill gaps related to the effects of the contemporary sociopolitical context. Social researchers are encouraged to provide research for processing current events, normalizing and validating feelings about these events, facilitating understanding and engagement with African American perceptions concerning injustice, and exploring racial conflict while suggesting culturally appropriate interventions to promote racial reconciliation.

In Chapter One, I laid out the particulars of the research project. I stated the problem, the background of the problem, and the purpose and significance of the study. I proposed research questions and a study hypothesis to address the particulars of the research project. I posed a theoretical framework and operational definitions of terms. I made assumptions, and the scope of delimitations was set. Finally, the limitations of the study were discussed. Chapter Two resulted from an extensive literature review of several sociological concepts. A literature review strategy was presented and explained, and the study's theoretical framework was promulgated. I identified a gap in the literature, and a plan to address the gap was discussed. I then reiterated the need for this research. In chapter three, the research methodology for the research project is presented. The research design and procedure were presented along with the study participants and demographics. The IRRS-B and the PIQ were discussed as instrumentation along with the data collection process. I discussed data collection, preparation, data analysis, reliability, and validity. I promulgated the ethical procedure for the research project. In Chapter Four, the results of the statistical analysis of the data were performed. Analysis data for demographics, race-related stress, and the perception of injustice were presented. I discussed the results of the correlational relationship in terms of positive, negative, or no relationship. I presented my thoughts, reactions, and recommendations to this research project in Chapter Five. I discussed the limitations and delimitations, aspects where the data agreed and disagreed with the literature review, discussed a synthesis of the two perspectives concerning the data, and discussed implications for future study possibilities. Finally, I made recommendations to benefit the study population in light of the results.