

## Chapter 9

# A Conceptual Framework of Racial Ideologies and Frames: Implications for Qualitative Research on Racial Discourse

**Kelly Burmeister Long**

 <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2332-9955>

*University of North Georgia, USA*

**Katherine Rose Adams**

*University of North Georgia, USA*

### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter explores prominent scholars' articulations of racial ideologies and frames used in discourse on race and racism. Focusing on qualitative research designs, the chapter aims to consolidate the insights from leading scholars into a consolidated conceptual framework for racial discourse. The conceptual framework draws on influential works, such as Helms' White identity statuses, to categorize racial ideologies, fostering a nuanced understanding of the complexities surrounding racial discourse and contributing to the ongoing efforts to understand societal views of race and racism. Then, this chapter discusses pertinent research designs that could be used in racial discourse analysis in deploying the conceptual framework of racial ideologies and frames.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

*Ideology, as articulated by scholars, embodies “a set of ideas employed in the justification and perpetuation of vested interests” (Spears, 1999, p. 6) and is also characterized by Giroux (2001) as the creation, use, and portrayal of ideas that can either mislead or clarify behavior (as cited in Earick, 2012, p. 143). Originating in the field of political science, ideology serves to document the ways individuals*

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-3306-8.ch009

and societies rationalize their existence (Knight, 2006). Ideologies can be either shared or highly individualized, often veering towards impractical and delusional notions (Knight, 2006).

The term *race ideology* refers to societal influences gradually molding both acknowledged and unacknowledged facets of race, influencing how individuals identify themselves or are identified within specific racial categories (Hernandez, 2001). Race ideology encompasses constraints on what qualifies as racism and extends to language and discourse that attribute significance to distinct forms of racial categorization (Hernandez, 2001). This conceptualization aligns with a key theme in critical race theory, asserting that “race and races are the product of social thought and relations” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2023, p. 8). Racial ideology is dynamic and fluid, shaped by both political and social conditions, with applications ranging from positive to negative contexts (Doane, 2017; Earick, 2012). Described by Bonilla-Silva (2006) as powerful expressions, racial ideologies function to both generate and sustain the prevailing status quo.

Past research has illuminated the diverse ways in which White individuals engage in discussions about race, ranging from overtly racist perspectives to more progressive antiracist ideologies (Hughey, 2022). The transmission of these ideologies occurs through various channels, encompassing language, images, and behaviors (Spears, 1999). For example, amid the COVID-19 crisis, researchers observed a notable increase in incidents of racism against Asian Americans (Tessler et al., 2020). Similarly, in the context of police brutality, instances of law enforcement officers killing Black Americans garnered attention and momentarily led to a surge in positive sentiment about Black Americans on social media, returning to a baseline of 49.33% negativity within a few weeks (Nguyen et al., 2021). During the Trump presidency, an examination of news media discourse, particularly surrounding the border wall issue, revealed a direct link between racial ideologies and the prevalence of racism, with potential implications for antiracism efforts (Kang & Yang, 2022). As these national examples show, racial ideologies are influential forces shaping societal attitudes and behaviors, emphasizing the need for continued examination and intervention to foster a more inclusive and equitable society.

Qualitative methods are considered the gold standard for understanding nuanced racial experiences and racial perceptions of individuals (Gillborn et al., 2018). Critical race theory (CRT) scholars have explained how most racial experience narratives have been from White Americans. However, CRT scholars argue that people of color are best suited to document racism (Parker & Lynn, 2002). This tenet is critical because the culture of Whiteness is so powerful that White people often have the final say about when racism has occurred and when it should be ignored (Helms, 2017). As Helms (2017) defined it, “*Whiteness* is the overt and subliminal socialization processes and practices, power structures, laws, privileges, and life experiences that favor the White racial group over all others” (p.718). Pertaining to racial perceptions, many researchers have sought to document the racial beliefs of White people, to reveal both problematic and helpful belief systems tied to Whiteness (Feagin, 2020; Helms, 2017). When participants talk about race and racism, saturation is often reached, such that perceptions can be coded to various frames that reflect broader ideologies (Bonilla-Silva, 2021).

A chief feature of ideologies are *frames*, or “set paths for interpreting information” (Bonilla-Silva, 2006, p. 26) which result in common patterns of speech (Vliegthart & Van Zoonen, 2011). Formed through personal experiences, popular wisdom, and media discourse (Vliegthart & Van Zoonen, 2011), these speech patterns play out in predictable patterns of discourse (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Racial framing, put broadly “refers to the racial perceptions, stereotypes, images, ideologies, narratives, and emotive reactions used to make sense of a given situation, experience, or issue involving racial matters, especially in the United States and other Western countries” (Feagin 2006, 2010 as cited by Wingfield

18 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:  
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/a-conceptual-framework-of-racial-ideologies-and-frames/351945](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/a-conceptual-framework-of-racial-ideologies-and-frames/351945)

## Related Content

---

### Meaningful Youth Engagement Through Media Usage

Yoshitaka Iwasaki (2017). *International Journal of Civic Engagement and Social Change* (pp. 31-47).

[www.irma-international.org/article/meaningful-youth-engagement-through-media-usage/201022](http://www.irma-international.org/article/meaningful-youth-engagement-through-media-usage/201022)

### Sustaining Livelihoods and Culture Through Tourism Development: The Case of Sriniketan in West Bengal, India

Priyakrushna Mohanty, Rupa Sinha and Jyothi Kumar (2023). *Exploring Culture and Heritage Through Experience Tourism* (pp. 270-285).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/sustaining-livelihoods-and-culture-through-tourism-development/333048](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/sustaining-livelihoods-and-culture-through-tourism-development/333048)

### The Sky From Earth, Now: S.U.N.F.A.R.M.

(2026). *Remote Space in the Architecture of Cosmology* (pp. 375-408).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-sky-from-earth-now/411274](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-sky-from-earth-now/411274)

### Disability and Careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

Elena Vladimirovna Fell, Natalia Aleksandrovna Lukianova and Leonid Vladimirovich Kapilevich (2022). *Research Anthology on Physical and Intellectual Disabilities in an Inclusive Society* (pp. 1923-1933).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/disability-and-careers-in-science-technology-engineering-and-mathematics/289156](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/disability-and-careers-in-science-technology-engineering-and-mathematics/289156)

### Current Trends of Education and Social Change in Balochistan: A Sociological Analysis

Naveeda Erum, Naima Saeed and Tansif Ur Rehman (2017). *International Journal of Civic Engagement and Social Change* (pp. 33-47).

[www.irma-international.org/article/current-trends-of-education-and-social-change-in-balochistan/191236](http://www.irma-international.org/article/current-trends-of-education-and-social-change-in-balochistan/191236)