

**PROTECTING THE IVORY TOWER: AN EXAMINATION OF HOW
WHITENESS IS UNDERSTOOD AND ENACTED BY INSTITUTIONAL
ADMINISTRATORS**

A Dissertation

by

DAVID FLINT MCINTOSH

Submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Chair of Committee,	Yvonna S. Lincoln
Co-Chair of Committee,	Christine A. Stanley
Committee Members,	Wendy Leo Moore
	Fred A. Bonner
Head of Department,	Fredrick M. Nafuhko

December 2015

Major Subject: Educational Administration

Copyright 2015 David Flint McIntosh

ABSTRACT

American higher education has long been a space reserved for the privileged, based on any number of identity characteristics including race, gender, and socioeconomic status, to name just a few. Since education remains a compelling means of social mobility, the underrepresentation of groups has devastating consequences within the broader social context. In the past 50 years, many higher education leaders have incorporated calls for expanding diversity and greater equity in their institutions. Beyond this rhetoric, there is still a demonstrable gap in participation and success for traditionally underrepresented populations across higher education. While there have been many studies that have undertaken to understand the depth of the problem, there has been little examination of the higher education leaders themselves, particularly as it relates to issues of race. If institutions are to truly become equitable spaces, it is critical that those making the decisions that affect race have an understanding of race issues.

In order to address this pressing need in the literature, this study sought to understand the ways that whiteness is understood and practiced at a predominantly white, research university in the south. This qualitative study utilized naturalistic inquiry as a method to collect and analyze data from 16 administrators (nine white administrators, and seven administrators of color). Further, critical race theory was utilized as a theoretical lens in which to understand the data and illuminate the lived experiences, ideological perspectives, and philosophy on race, for both administrators of

color and white administrators. The research site was a single research university in the South, called State Research University as a pseudonym.

Notably, this study found that administrators of color experienced a hostile and marginalizing environment replete with examples of overtly racist interactions as well as microaggressions, creating a situation called white institutional space. The white institutional space described at State Research University (SRU) appears to function as a result of the actions of white administrators who demonstrated a dissonance in understanding the experiences of people of color, as well as unapologetic, willful ignorance regarding the ways that race operates in society.

In conclusion, this study has found that many problematic and marginalizing tactics are utilized by white administrators (implicitly and explicitly) to create hostile environments that people of color must navigate in order to live and work in institutional white spaces. The implications and findings from this study should be used for training institutional administrators and other decision makers (such as mid-level managers), as well as white allies who join people of color in pursuit of equitable spaces.

DEDICATION

For Liam and Kellen:

May you always stand up for truth and justice.

I also dedicate this study in memoriam to my sister Bridget Sommer Doyle. I think about you every day and while I can't remember all of the things we talked about, I can always recall the sound of your voice and infectious laughter.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It has been a tremendous privilege to engage in this type of critical work that seeks to expose injustice and illuminate the voices of the marginalized. I am in the debt of all of those who participated in this study and shared their candid observations and experiences with me, as well as all of those who served as informants at State Research University, all of whom made sacrifices that enabled this study.

I must also acknowledge my distinguished committee who served as mentors in this research process. I am deeply appreciative of the contribution each of them made to my intellectual growth. Dr. Yvonna Lincoln, as a luminary in the field of qualitative inquiry, I came to study with you and learn your method firsthand. It was an honor to be one of your students. Your balance of rigor and support is something I deeply appreciate and will never forget. Dr. Christine Stanley, as a thought and opinion leader in the field, it has been an honor and a pleasure to serve as an employee in your department, as well as your student. Truly, in each conversation we have, class is in session as I have learned about educational leadership firsthand. Dr. Wendy Leo Moore, I cannot say enough about all of the support and guidance you have provided. As the one who wrote the book on white space, I continue to stand in awe of your critical work and leadership in this field as well as in your daily life. Further, words cannot express how deeply appreciative I am of your willingness to work with me and to be part of my family. Dr. Fred Bonner, I am deeply thankful of your thoughtful contribution and support through

this process. As a prolific scholar, I look forward to our continued collaboration as our work continues to intersect in the future.

This work could not have happened without the love and support from all of my family and friends. In particular, my fifth and unofficial committee member, Dr. Becky Pettit, you have been a supervisor, a colleague, a mentor, a friend, and the big sister I never had. I have been exceptionally blessed to have you as part of my life. You have been challenging and supporting my learning for so long that I am not the person that I am today without you. Further, my most deeply held friendships include those who have known me for the longest and with whom I shared many experiences and laughs. Truly I would give anything for these friends who are more like family, including Paul Barribeau, Brett Burger, Derek Fay, and Glenn Bracey.

My career in higher education has afforded me the opportunity to develop many relationships at many institutions. This academic family is indeed wide and includes too many to name individually. Suffice to say that I deeply treasure my many friends and colleagues at Ripon College, Fisk University, Texas A&M University, the University of Missouri, and Michigan State University. However, I must acknowledge the following with a special thanks: Leilani Kupo, Christy Schwengel, Tom McGagh, Pete Mahler, Cindy Hutter, Chris Clarke, Kwofi Reed, Robert Harris, Leigh Jones, Sue Foster, Mike Krenz, Rick Turnbough, Kate Parks, Carolyn Sandoval, Dallas Ramsey, Charles Schroeder, Frankie Minor, Vicki Rosser, John Purdie, Troy Lillebo, Jane Olsen, Eduardo Olivo, Jason Kitchen, Katie Stolz, Ricardo McCrary, Shweta Kurvey, Amanda Higgs, Todd Dragoo, TJ Jourian, Daniel Guild, Morgan Paschal, Kanchan Pandey, Dianne

Kraft, Phia Salter, Jenni Mueller, Karan Chavis, Wanda Watson, Filo Maldonado, Lisako McKyer, Verna Keith, Rebecca Hankins, Robin Fuchs-Young, Barbara Gastel, Jennifer Reyes, Alija Baber, Cerci Hammons, and Laura Wimberley.

I am also deeply appreciative of my family members who have shown love and support throughout this process. While our family context is often complicated, our relationship is something I deeply treasure. As your son, brother, and uncle, I love each of you dearly. In particular, my mother and step-father, Barbara McIntosh and John Weir, as well as my brother and sister in law, and their family, Jed, Jen, Ryan, and Ethan Doyle. Further, I am so deeply fortunate to have been accepted into large and loving families, including the Tuttles, Johnsons, Corwins, Brueners, Malotts, Woods, Pauls, and Timmons.

Finally, I am forever in the debt of my best friend and the love of my life Jenny. Your love and support is boundless and means the world to me. We have only known each other for two years when I haven't been a student of some sort, demonstrating a patience that is unparalleled. I look forward to all that our future holds. Also, I love all that Kellen and Liam add to our lives - it's rarely easy raising these little boys, but it has always been rewarding.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	ii
DEDICATION.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
LIST OF TABLES	xii
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
Problem Statement	4
Research Purpose and Questions.....	6
CHAPTER II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	10
Whiteness and the Construction of Race.....	11
Implications of Whiteness	12
Whiteness as Structural Advantage.....	13
Whiteness as a Lens to See Other People, Society, and Self	21
Whiteness as an Unnamed Cultural Practice.....	25
Post-Racial America.....	31
Whiteness in Higher Education.....	33
Gender and Intersectionality	38
Summary	40
Higher Education Organizational Structures and Behaviors.....	41
The Historical Legacy of Exclusion in Higher Education	42
Higher Education Organizational Types	46
Higher Education Organizational Defining Characteristics.....	47
Higher Education Organizational Behavior	51
Structural Theory.....	52
Human Relations Theory	57
Culture Theory	58
Institutional Decision Making.....	63
Summary	68
CHAPTER III DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH METHODS	69
Choice of Paradigm.....	69

Theoretical Framework73

Method75

Participants82

Data Analysis92

 Race and the Researcher.....95

 Responsibility of Researcher.....102

Significance of Study103

CHAPTER IV WHITENESS AND WHITE SPACE AT STATE RESEARCH UNIVERSITY105

 Context for State Research University107

 Administrative Whiteness111

 A Model: White Institutional Space at State Research University112

 Institutional White Space: How the Environment Feels115

 Political Context.....116

 Hostile Environment at SRU.....122

 Geographic and Physical Spaces for Hostility122

 Effects of Hostility133

 Racial Fatigue.....142

 Lack of Trust148

 Gender149

 Intersectionality.....154

 Circling the Wagons: Tactics for Creating and Maintaining White Space156

 The White Administrator’s Mind160

 Ignorant Leadership.....161

 Parochial Administrators.....164

 Administrators Without a Race166

 White Fear168

 White Administrative Tactics.....172

 Color Cognizant Decision-Making172

 White Control of Bodies of Color182

 SRU as Property of White People190

 Commodification of People of Color196

 Commodification of International People as Hispanic200

 Illusion of Progress in Diversity.....204

 Stereotypes/Expectations of People of Color.....211

 People of Color as Troublemakers214

 Deceit218

 Intentional, Active Neglect226

 Circling the Wagons.....239

 Support Staff as the First Line of Defense239

 Administrative Tactics248

 Role of Policy.....260

Human Resources.....	268
Professional Development.....	268
Recruitment	270
Hiring/Supervision	274
Xenophobia	286
Language and Identity.....	286
Assumptions of Internationals.....	289
Confronting Whiteness.....	293
Duel Responsibility	296
Summary	301
White Cognitive Dissonance.....	303
Locating and Narrating Self	306
Narrating Self	306
Racial Identification	307
Being White.....	309
Shifting Context	315
Locating White Space at SRU.....	324
The Unique SRU Experience	326
Travel as a Credential.....	334
Faith Tradition.....	339
Advocacy.....	342
A Critical Perspective.....	346
Protecting and Maintaining the White Space	350
Claims of Racial Equality.....	351
Minimization	351
Intentionally Dismantling Safe Havens.....	357
Discrimination is Accidental: Racism? These are Good People!	362
“Misunderstanding” the Experiences of People of Color	367
“Diversity” as Racial Discourse	375
Appreciating Difference	376
Other Marginalized Identities.....	380
White Heroes	382
Wishy-Washy Kumbaya	390
Blissful Ignorance: “I don’t know, but...”	393
Laissez-Faire Leadership.....	401
People of Color as Chattel.....	404
Showcase Diversity	406
The Epistemology of Race	408
White Victimhood	414
White Decision Making	418
Peeking Backstage: White Executive Decisions	419
Comfort in Exclusively White Meeting Spaces	430
Strategy.....	435
Agency.....	442

Working Toward Equality.....	454
Acknowledging White Racism.....	455
Personal Responsibility.....	458
Challenges to Racial Progress.....	461
Consequences for Pursuing Racial Justice.....	464
Summary.....	467
 CHAPTER V SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE.....	 475
Summary of Findings.....	476
Findings for Research Objective #1.....	476
Findings for Research Objective #2.....	483
Findings for Research Objective #3.....	490
Findings for Research Objective #4.....	493
Additional Findings.....	498
Limitations.....	500
Areas for Future Research.....	501
Broader Implications for this Work.....	504
 REFERENCES.....	 507

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1: Study Objectives	7
Table 2: Study Research Questions.....	8
Table 3: Roadmap for Categories and Themes from Administrators of Color	106
Table 4: Roadmap for Categories and Themes from White Administrators.....	305

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The script for the impending racial crisis in American higher education has been clearly articulated. In the United States the great demographic shift is underway: as reported by the United States Census Bureau, one in three people are classified as a racial minority and this is a trend projected to not only continue, but accelerate (United States Census Bureau, 2014). This demographic shift represents a potential crisis since the number of people of color who participate in higher education is significantly lower than that of white people. Taken to the logical conclusion, shifting demographics could have a detrimental effect on the wellbeing of the economy, since there will be fewer people with a college degree eligible to enter the workforce and take the highly technical jobs that appear to be our collective future (with many of the manufacturing jobs that once characterized the American economy outsourced and shifted to inexpensive international factories and sweatshops). Given these factors, it seems obvious that American higher education will simply adapt by enrolling an increasingly diverse student body, but it is likely not that simple. At its core, American higher education has always been for white people, a foundation and legacy which can be seen even today when one considers who the leaders at many institutions are, who attends institutions, and who ultimately succeeds in the academy. American higher education is at a crossroads. Higher education is very tradition-laden and slow to change. However, institutions are long overdue to reconsider fundamentally who the institution seeks to

serve and how the institution can best serve the needs of society and truly fulfill the mission that many institutions are chartered to provide: service to and for the people.

The statement of the problem described above illustrates the patently racist way that higher education has been framed and delivered. That the question even needs to be asked (how can higher education respond to demographic shifts in society?) illustrates the white supremacy that has characterized higher education. The underlying truth is exposed: higher education is really intended to only serve white people. This racist framing is further exposed when one considers the literature that describes the disparities in college success and degree attainment. These reports and articles frame the problem as an “achievement gap,” which describes the inability for people of color to succeed in higher education, as if these institutions were meritocratic spaces from the day that the doors opened. Few of these reports actually consider the role that systemic racism plays in creating and maintaining these “achievement gaps,” (Feagin, 2001, 2006).

Ironically, nearly every higher educational institution has an espoused commitment to “diversity”, “inclusion”, “equality”, “pluralism”, or “multiculturalism”. Such a commitment is often a visible demonstration that the institution is attempting to create an experience consistent with the Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Conner’s idea: that there is a value in having people from different racial backgrounds in college classrooms to learn from each other.

While Justice O’Conner’s framing remains important for many who work to promote social justice in higher education, it also illustrates the inability of white people to understand (or acknowledge) the experience of marginalization that people of color

endure on a daily basis in America. In Justice O’Conner’s vision, the implicit utility of people of color in higher education is as a benefit to white students who will be able to learn about different people, while people of color will be exposed to the same lessons of oppression and hegemony that they’ve been exposed to every day of their lives (Moore, 2008). When people of color are viewed as chattel, the commitment to “diversity” (or whatever the term happens to be) is only useful to the extent that it benefits white people. This is not a difficult argument to demonstrate, when one considers that many of the campus diversity plans frame people of color negatively (as a problem to be solved) and the fact that over half of the hate crimes *reported* on college campuses were racially motivated (Dervarics, 2008; Iverson, 2007). If higher education institutions are truly dedicated to realizing their imperative to fulfill their public trust by serving an increasingly diverse population, the racial culture of higher education will have to be understood and the systematic barriers and oppressive structures must be dismantled. Further, arguments such as the one that was utilized at the start of this study (that the demographic shift in America is a cause for reconsidering who is to be served by higher education) will be recognized as racist since, again, in this argument people of color only have utility for higher education to the extent that the economy (i.e., white people) is affected. Short of a demographic shift, there would not likely be an imperative to address the disparity in access to higher education, evidenced by the fact that people of color have been underrepresented in higher education since the day that the first American institution opened its door in 1636, and here we sit nearly 400 years later with a legacy of exclusion.

Problem Statement

To date, the literature has documented the experiences of students and faculty of color on college campuses (Feagin, 2001; Feagin, Vera & Imani, 1996; Gusa, 2010; Hurtado, 1992, 2007; Hurtado, Carter & Kardia, 1998; Hurtado, Clayton-Pedersen, Allen & Milem, 1998; Milem, Chang & Antonio, 2005; Milem, Dey & White, 2004; Moore, 2008; Stanley, 2007). It should come as no surprise that the experiences of these traditionally underrepresented people are marked with ongoing marginalization (on and off campus), and micro-aggressions, as well as covert and overt hostility. This literature deftly describes the effects of structures which work to oppress and marginalize people of color in higher education (albeit not comprehensively, as much work remains).

One of the important concepts to come out of this literature is *institutional white space* which describes how environments in higher education perpetuate hostile and marginalized environments for people of color (Feagin, Vera & Imani, 1997; Gusa, 2010; Kivel, 2004; Moore, 2008; Purwar, 2004). White space is particularly effective since the tactics are bound in common, daily interactions with policy, practices, norms, history and traditions, and though less obvious, interactions such as the hidden curriculum of the institution. Importantly, institutional white space is created by administrators (typically white) who make decisions that create, maintain, and reinforce a racist environment that people of color are forced to endure (Feagin, Vera & Imani, 1997; Gusa, 2010; Moore, 2008). Most of the previous studies of institutional white space in higher education have focused primarily on the experiences of students. In this study, I will investigate the ways that administrators (white and of color) understand and

experience white space as it may exist at one particular university, State Research University (a pseudonym). While a difficult task for anyone to describe the experience of another, this is precisely the job of an administrator: they are ultimately responsible for understanding the needs of the people in the educational community and create the best environment and circumstances for all students, faculty, and staff to succeed. Similar to nearly every research university, there is ample campus climate data at State Research University to describe how people of color experience this environment. Despite this information, the question remains: are these data really understood by those people in the important decision making roles at the university? Further, complicating this issue is the fact that the data are almost exclusively gathered from questionnaires, which often do not describe the experience at the highest levels of the organization¹. Consequently, understanding how the effects of whiteness and white space are brought to bear by administrators is a critical next step both in mapping the effects of whiteness in higher education, and in theorizing how this potential form of oppression might be altered.

As an important delineation, it is beyond the scope of this study to seek to understand *how administrators arrive at decisions* that have an impact on race. To truly get into the minds of people and understand the myriad factors that influence a decision is a difficult, if not impossible, proposition that the decision maker themselves are likely unable to describe. Instead, this study will focus on the consequences of decisions made.

¹ Campus climate data gathered at State Research University is done with a questionnaire which utilizes quantitative measures and open-ended response data which are then aggregated and stripped of context. For the purposes of this study, it will be important to understand the experiences of administrators (both white and people of color), which would be impossible to discern from the existing climate data.

Research Purpose and Questions

[The] academy, as an institution, is a politically charged bastion of patriarchal, hegemonic power that has survived for centuries in large part because of the protection offered by its ivy-covered tower. Keeping the public at arm's length and keeping the research gaze trained outward have helped to conserve, insulate, and protect the university from public intervention and change (Cole, 2001, p. 167).

Consistent with this quote, I intend to examine this institutional hegemonic power which operates to oppress people of color. Specifically, the purpose of this study is to understand and document how whiteness functions to create, maintain, and reproduce oppressive structures and spaces.

As Clark, Guskin & Guba, (1977) in Worksheet D described “the objectives of a proposal delineate the ends or aims which the inquirer seeks to bring about as a result of completing the research, development, or evaluation undertaken” (p. D-1). In this way, the objective consists of an action and content. For this study, there are multiple objectives, described in Table 1, including (Table 1 adapted from Clark et al., 1977):

Table 1: Study Objectives

Action	Content
Depict	The experience of administrators (white and people of color) at the institution
Describe	The structures, decision, and practices that reify whiteness and white institutional space
Investigate	How institutional administrators (white and people of color) understand white institutional space
Illustrate	How white administrators' understanding of whiteness and white institutional space may contribute to racist structures, decisions, and practices, and contribute to potential consequences for administrators of color

This study represents a values problem, and will seek to better understand the racial experience for institutional administrators at a predominately white institution. The understandings that this research will provide are important for three of the reasons that Clark et al. (1977) described. First, this undertaking has heuristic value, meaning that this research is contributing to new knowledge at the intersection of the higher education administration and sociology literature. In this way, the application of multiple theoretical frameworks in this investigation will shape a new understanding of the institutional environment. Second, this study will have programmatic value, particularly in the realm of training higher educational administrators. Specifically, the results of this study will better inform preparation programs of the potential issues that decision makers must understand in order to build and advocate a community which at a minimum does not oppress people of color, but ideally which is socially just in orientation. Third, this research may be of social and research utility by providing new

examples and tactics which are part of the hidden curriculum of the institution and thereby inform future studies.

The research questions that will guide this inquiry must align with the research objectives stated above. For each objective, I have attempted to link meaningful and appropriate research questions, summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Study Research Questions

Objective 1: Depict the experience of administrators (white and people of color) at the institution	Question 1: What has been the experience for administrators of color at the institution?	Question 2: What has been the experience for white administrators at the institution?
Objective 2: Describe the structures, decisions, and practices that reify whiteness and white institutional space	Question 3: What are the structures, decisions, and practices which explicitly or tacitly effect race?	Question 4: Do the structures, decisions, and practices that have an effect on race serve to mask whiteness and, overtly or covertly, oppress people of color?
Objective 3: Investigate how institutional administrators (white and people of color) understand the institutional white space	Question 5: Are structures, decisions, and practices created/enacted with a recognition of whiteness and white space?	
Objective 4: Illustrate how white administrators' understanding of whiteness and white institutional space may contribute to racist structures, decisions, and practices, and contribute to potential consequences for administrators of color	Question 6: Do the structures, decisions, and practices foster democracy and equality?	Question 7: What are the consequences of structures, decisions, and practices on the racial climate at the institution?

For these questions, the operational definitions will come directly from the literature review where the concepts of whiteness and administrative decision-making

are described. For the purpose of this research, institutional decision maker and administrator will be used interchangeably and defined as the people within the higher education institution who are in a position (through their formal job description or through formal or informal interaction) to create policies and practices, and/or make decisions that affect large parts of a unit or the university, and/or control the outcomes of a person or unit within the university.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature that will undergird this study will be informed by Critical Race Theory (CRT) and the higher education culture and leadership literature. While many of these strands of literature naturally overlap in only a few instances, it will be the purpose of this review to ensure that the seminal ideas are reflected and discussed. As a researcher, this allows me to identify the boundaries of our understanding of these phenomenon and add new knowledge to enhance our understanding of race and higher education.

As important note at the outset: race is heavily investigated, in particular within higher education with many studies that seek to identify the dramatic underrepresentation of people of color pursuing a degree or to understand the climate in higher education (how people of color are treated on college campuses). Often, this literature fails to embrace a true critical stance by naming the people and social structures responsible for these disparities. For example, there are numerous studies by seminal writers in the higher education literature that report students of color feeling marginalized on predominantly white campuses (Cabrera, Nora, Terenzini, Pascarella & Hagedorn, 1999; Hurtado, Clayton-Pedersen, Allen & Milem, 1998). However, these studies fail to take a critical approach by naming the white social structures that enable these outcomes. By absencing whiteness (Bracey, 2015) these authors actually unintentionally protect the structures that enable these harmful and disparate outcomes

for people of color. This does not diminish the important role that these studies fulfill, but rather to illustrate the difference in framing the study, which will of course produce different types of results.

Whiteness and the Construction of Race

As discussed below, there are unearned privileges associated with being white in America (Feagin, 2001). Whiteness is a social structure or a social construct whereby being white has been assigned a greater social value than being non-white (Crenshaw, 2011; Roediger, 1991, 1994; Frankenberg, 1993; Lopez, 1996; Ignatiev, 1995; Moore, 2008; Harris, 1993; Feagin, 2001, 2006). At different times in American history, different groups of people have been considered white and as a result have been able to participate in the privileges and benefits associated with whiteness; in this way whiteness has come to be viewed as property or an asset (Lopez, 1996; Harris, 1993). Understanding who has been included as white and what this means for their status, opportunity, behavior, and perceptions of others will be an important undertaking for this section of the literature review. To do this, an operational definition of whiteness will be proposed as a framework for understanding concepts such as the social and historical construction of race in America and the evolution of this continually changing structure. The definition of whiteness will provide an appropriate framework with which to discuss the implications for whiteness in our contemporary society, including how whiteness is defended through the creation of white spaces (Crenshaw, 2011; Harris, 1993; Feagin, 2001, 2006; Moore 2008) and through the use of a colorblind ideology (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). Following this, a discussion of how the whiteness literature

interfaces with higher education administrators will be necessary in order to expose the substantive gap which will be the focus of this my proposed research.

Implications of Whiteness

As Ruth Frankenberg described in her groundbreaking book *The Social Construction of Whiteness: White Women, Race Matters*, it is difficult for many white people to define what it means to be white or what constitutes a white culture (1993). In her interviews, Frankenberg found that most all of her participants utilized a “race-evasive” or a “power-evasive” ideology which sought to emphasize the sameness of people (1993). This ideology is one that is considered safe by white people because it seeks to deny the atrocity of the American racialized past by insisting that all people are equal (Frankenberg, 1993). Such a view assumes a collective forgetting of the past (Feagin, 2006) and asks people to disregard race in favor of classifying all people as human instead (Frankenberg, 1993). In her analysis, Frankenberg came to define whiteness in terms of three linked dimensions: first, whiteness maintains the “structural advantage of race privilege” over people of color (1993, p.1); second, whiteness is a perspective through which white people are able to see: society in general, people within the society, and the person themselves (a self-reflexive view); third, whiteness consists of “cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed” (1993, p.1). This comprehensive understanding of whiteness is particularly useful because it defines whiteness as it exists and is reified through different mediums; that is whiteness is not only a structure, but it is also a perspective, and a behavior. Each of Frankenberg’s

dimensions has been discussed in the literature and will provide a framework through which the whiteness literature can be organized for this review.

Whiteness as Structural Advantage. Structural whiteness refers to benefits of whiteness that are built into our society through the social construction of race (Frankenberg, 1993). The social construction of race refers to the values that are attributed to being “white” and being “non-white” (Feagin, 2001; Frankenberg, 1993). To best understand how whiteness came to have value, a consideration of race in the law is necessary (Bell, 2004; Crenshaw, 2011; Feagin, 2001; Lopez, 1994, 1996; Harris, 1993; Moore, 2008;). As Lopez stated so succinctly “Race is not, however, simply a matter of physical appearance and ancestry. Instead, it is primarily a function of the meanings given to these. On this level, too, *law creates races*. The statutes and cases that make up the laws of this country have directly contributed to defining the range of meanings without which options of race could not exist” (1996, p.15; *emphasis added*).

The first example of this can be seen when considering the Constitution of the United States, which serves as the foundation for our legal system, a system of government which was established by white men who considered people of color as chattel (Feagin, 2001). The distinction between white and Black people was articulated in the Constitution, where slaves were not to count as a person, but rather three-fifths of a person (Feagin, 2001; United States Archives, n.d.). This means that from the very first day of our nation (and the 168 years before the technical birth of the nation), people of color have been structurally excluded from the benefits of the democracy (Franklin & Moss, 1996). While the Fourteenth Amendment repealed this particular dehumanization

of Black people, it must be noted that this Amendment simply changed one particular facet of oppression; systemic exclusion was (and is) still allowed and practiced in our legal system (Lopez, 1996; Feagin 2001, 2006; Moore 2008). For example, in order to justify unequal treatment of people, subjective distinctions were made between white people and non-white people so as to determine who was eligible to be a citizen and who was to be excluded (Lopez, 1994, 1996). This process of determining who was to be included and excluded began with the Naturalization Act of 1790, which deemed that “free white persons” are the only ones that are eligible for citizenship (Jacobson, 1998; Lopez, 1996; Moore, 2008). The justification for this stringent requirement was that free white people were the only ones fit for self-government (Jacobson, 1998).

While overtly racist in the standard and justification, the Naturalization Act was neither specific nor exclusive enough because what followed was a debate about who was to be considered white (Jacobson, 1998; Lopez, 1996). Between 1840 and 1924 there was a huge influx of immigrants to the United States with questionable credentials for whiteness and self-government (Jacobson, 1998; Lopez, 1996). Therefore further clarification was necessary regarding what was to be considered white. The criteria for race became hinged to biological “evidence” where specific characteristics of people classified them white or non-white (Jacobson, 1998; Lopez, 1996). For example, in Lopez (1994) there is a description from the *Hudgins v. Wright* case (in 1806) where Judge Tucker creates a test for race, which evaluated characteristics such as complexion and “a flat nose and woolly head of hair” to delineate people of African descent (p.2).

Further, Lopez (1996) and Moore (2008) discussed two landmark cases, *United States v. Thind* (in both 1920 and 1923) and *Ozawa v. United States* (in 1922) where biological “evidence” was used to determine that Thind and Ozawa were not white. Specifically, the court found in *Ozawa* that skin color is an insufficient determinant for whiteness; rather to be white meant that a person had to be Caucasian (which refers to a region of ancestry and phenotype) (Lopez, 1996; Moore, 2008). However, this legal precedent did not last long, for the *Thind* case (which involved a South-Asian (Caucasian) who was originally granted citizenship) repealed it only one year after *Ozawa* challenged the legal standard of whiteness (Lopez, 1996, Moore, 2008). The court in *Thind* changed the criteria of whiteness and decided that “familiar observation and knowledge” would be the standard for determining a person’s race (Lopez, 1996). As more immigrants came to the US, the biological criteria for whiteness were constantly changing and shifting (Moore, 2008; Lopez, 1994, 1996; Ignatiev, 1995; Jacobson, 1998). In fact the criteria were not necessarily devised to decide who was white, but rather designed to exclude and decide who was not white (Moore, 2008; Lopez, 1994, 1996; Ignatiev, 1995; Jacobson, 1998; Feagin 2001, 2006). In this way, there was no definition of whiteness, only non-whiteness. To ensure that only white people were granted the privileges of whiteness and citizenship, these prerequisite cases were decided on a case by case basis rather than using an established standard (Lopez, 1996; Moore, 2008). For example, different courts proclaimed Syrian people to be white including: *Najour* (1909), *Mudarri* (1910), *Ellis* (1910), and *Dow* (1915) (Lopez, 1996).

However, in subsequent cases different courts deemed Syrians not white: *Shahid* (1913), and *Dow* (1914), (Lopez, 1996).

The law also served to socially construct race when courts maligned and disparaged those who were not deemed white (Lopez, 1994). A list of negative (purportedly biological) characteristics was attributed to people of color including being lazy, unintelligent, sex-crazed, and criminally mischievous (Lopez, 1996; Feagin 2001). “The prerequisite courts in effect labeled those who were excluded from citizenship (those who were non-White) as inferior; by implication, those who were admitted (White) were superior” (Lopez, 1996, p.28). In this way, whiteness was created in conjunction with Blackness; that is, whiteness is simply the opposite of Blackness and relies on this negative construction of Blackness in order to exist (Lopez, 1996; Feagin 2001). This construction of race serves to benefit white people by denigrating the humanity of Black people.

However, figuring out who falls where in the racial continuum was difficult work because (as cited above), the criteria of whiteness was malleable (Moore, 2008; Lopez, 1994, 1996; Ignatiev, 1995; Jacobson, 1998; Feagin 2001, 2006). So in order to understand how whiteness has changed and shifted and what the implications for Black people were, it is useful to consider how some Europeans (in particular the Irish and Jewish) became white (Ignatiev, 1995; Brodtkin, 1998; Jacobson, 1998; Roediger, 1991). Many of the European ethnics to migrate to America were not actually considered white by the Anglo-Saxon standards and therefore were separated into separate races using scientific evidence and eugenics (Jacobson, 1998). To this point, Jacobson described

this differentiation between whites and Irish by writing “At issue now was simply which ‘white persons’ *truly* shared what an earlier generation had indiscriminately conceived of as in James Fenimore Cooper’s phrase, the ‘white man’s gifts’” (1998, p.69).

Between 1815 and 1850 there were between 800,000 and one million Irish people that immigrated to the United States, many of whom came as unskilled laborers escaping the potato famine which ravaged Ireland (Ignatiev, 1995). As unskilled laborers in a hostile place (the Anglo-Saxons which were the white American elite were the enemy of the Irish from the Saxon conquest (Jacobson, 1998)), the Irish became the lowliest wage laborer (Ignatiev, 1995). In describing the labor situation for the Irish, the expression “white slavery” became popular to illustrate the awful working conditions, low wages, and degradation of humanity and work (Ignatiev, 1995; Jacobson, 1998; Roediger, 1991). However, from this lowly position in the racial hierarchy, Irish people were able to become white by employing underhanded tactics (Ignatiev, 1995; Jacobson, 1998; Roediger, 1991). First, rather than allying with the Black people in America (the group that they had the most in common with due to their common position at the bottom of the racial hierarchy), the Irish allied with the Democratic Party which was strongly pro-slavery (Ignatiev, 1995; Jacobson, 1998; Roediger, 1991). The Democratic Party also made promises to the Irish that included protection from nativists as well as a favored position in society over Black people (Ignatiev, 1995). Second, the Irish took part in and organized mobs, riots, and other acts of violence perpetrated against Black people (Ignatiev, 1995; Jacobson, 1998). Such action not only had the obvious outcome of terrorizing and demoralizing Black people, but it also appeared to endear the Irish to

the whites, because the whites did not really attempt to stop the riots and mob attacks: “If the Constitution did not formally guarantee to whites the right to engage in mob attacks on Black people, that right was safeguarded in the Jacksonian age...the city relied on volunteers to defend public order” (Ignatiev, 1995, p.132).

Third, Irish people organized around labor to squeeze Black people out of their jobs (Ignatiev, 1995, Roediger 1991). This happened when unskilled Irish labor arrived in this country. Since nearly all of the Irish had no jobs, no money, and were unskilled, they were forced to take any job they could get (which as might be predicted were the worst jobs, in the worst conditions, paying the least amount of money) (Ignatiev, 1995). These jobs were typically being done by Black people before the Irish arrived, but since Irish were willing to take these jobs for less money, the Irish managed to squeeze Black Americans from their jobs (Ignatiev, 1995, Roediger, 1991). After this, Black Americans became the ones who were desperate and would be willing to do these jobs again for even less than the Irish, but this is not what happened (Ignatiev, 1995). Instead, the Irish organized and refused to work at all with Black people, so that white people and their jobs would be protected by force (Ignatiev, 1995). As Ignatiev described: “To be acknowledged as white, it was not enough for the Irish to have a competitive advantage over Afro-Americans in the labor market; in order for them to avoid the taint of Blackness it was necessary that no Negro be allowed to work in occupations where Irish were to be found” (1995, p.112). By organizing and refusing to even work with Black people, whites sustained a powerful advantage in the marketplace (through continued employment) and in society (by avoiding even the idea that they

would associate with Black people, Irish aligned themselves with the white elite) which translated to choosing the privileges of whiteness over the equality (Ignatiev, 1995; Jacobson, 1998; Roediger, 1991).

The journey for Jewish people to whiteness is another example of how whiteness is socially constructed and how these constructions change and shift in whom they include and exclude. Anti-Semitic policies and attitudes pervaded the American landscape prior to World War II and caused Jewish people to suffer through job discrimination, housing discrimination, and bias in not allowing Jewish people into the American colleges and universities (Brodkin, 2004). In order to overcome these barriers, many people propose the “boot-strap” argument as the way in which Jewish people were able to go on to success in business, successfully move into more desirable suburban areas, and receive quality educations by opening Jewish colleges and universities to serve this underserved population (Brodkin, 2004). A real American success story! However, as Brodkin described this success was also the product of whiteness shifting in favor of Jewish people, “I want to suggest that Jewish success is a product not only of ability, but also of the removal of powerful social barriers to its realization” (Brodkin, 2004, p. 26). While a hard work ethic was certainly a necessary ingredient, so too was the ability to take advantage of government programs such as the GI Bill and FHA and VA mortgages, which Brodkin called “forms of affirmative action...that allowed us [Jewish and other white ethnics] to float on a rising economic tide. To African Americans, the government offered the cement boots of segregation, redlining, urban renewal, and discrimination” (Brodkin, 2004, p.50-51).

Using Powell's description of a contemporary process known as "racing," whereby a hierarchy is created, the social construction of race for the Irish and the Jewish can be further illuminated. This hierarchy is created as:

A top-down process where the more powerful group first denudes the racial Other of its self-definition. This is often done by denying the racial Other its language and culture and then assigning a set of characteristics to this group that are beneath those of the more powerful group. The dominant group becomes the invisible norm by which all others are unfavorably measured. (Powell, 1997, p. 105-106).

In this racial hierarchy, whites are viewed as the most deserving and sit at the top with the positive construction of race. Black people are forced to the bottom of the hierarchy through the white reframing of their language and culture with negative social constructions, which serves to hold them in a place of subjugation (Powell, 1997, 2000; Feagin, 2001, 2006). In between these two groups, all of the other races fall with their own social constructions (as labeled by whites). For a time these in-between groups included the Irish, the Jewish, and other groups that immigrated into the United States. This hierarchy represents how socially constructed notions of race have permeated and persisted in the American society. While there are different levels of privilege and power, it is important to note that whites always sit atop the continuum, with their unearned privilege, while Blacks are always subsumed at the bottom (Bonilla-Silva, 2002; Feagin, 2001, 2006).

The structural advantage of whiteness takes forms in our contemporary society as well, specifically through what has been called “the property of whiteness.” As described by Harris (1993), Feagin (2001, 2006), Ignatiev (1995), Lopez (1996), and Brodtkin (2004) whiteness functions in a way that benefits other white people, specifically the psychological and economic benefit of white people. As Harris described, there have always been material benefits to whiteness: for example, Harris described how whites with less socio-economic power were conferred material benefits such as jobs, higher rates of pay, access to education (for themselves and their children), access to more amenable facilities, access to federal programs, and a host of other advantages, because of their race (1993). In this way, poor whites identified more strongly with elite whites than with Black people, which served to maintain the social construction of race as well as the racial hierarchy (Harris, 1993). In so doing, future generations inherited not only the material wealth, but also the social capital and social advantages of whiteness (Harris, 1993).

Whiteness as a Lens to See Other People, Society, and Self. The second component of Frankenberg’s definition of whiteness deals with the idea that white people view the world through a specific lens (Frankenberg, 1993). This component has been discussed in the literature, in particular by Feagin who refers to the *white racial frame* (2006). According to Feagin the white racial frame is “an organized set of racialized ideas, emotions, and inclinations, as well as recurring or habitual discriminatory actions, that are consciously or unconsciously expressed in, and constitutive of, the routine operation and racist institutions of US society” (2006, p. 23).

This frame serves to shape the interactions that white people have with people of color by creating a powerful understanding and interpretation of the world based on white stereotypes (Feagin, 2006). Further, this frame is persistent and pervasive in our American society with several unconscious and overt racialized cues which serve to perpetuate and reinforce the idea of white supremacy, such as the confederate flag as part of a state flag or ongoing segregation in housing and schools (Feagin, 2006; 2001).

This white racial frame has been further developed into four categories of what Bonilla-Silva refers to as color-blind racism (2003). Color-blind racism refers to the justifications that white people use to explain the racial inequality (that obviously divides the American society) which absolves white people from any wrongdoing (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). In this way, the white lens becomes strengthened as people become entrenched in the ideological justifications for racial difference. As a result, color-blind racism is the newest iteration of Jim Crow racism, or old wine in new bottles (Bonilla-Silva, 2003).

The first category is *abstract liberalism*, and this justification insists that racial equality is an achievable outcome by simply ignoring all of the past atrocities, and rather focusing on the present – so that all people from this point forward are allegedly treated the same way (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). This frame allows white people to ignore the racialized past and all of the unearned power and privileges that they have been beneficiaries of, including generations of residential segregation, job discrimination, higher wages, better schools, etc (Feagin, 2001, 2006; Bonilla-Silva, 2002, 2003). As Bonilla-Silva further pointed out, this frame claims to be consistent with Adam Smith

economics, where in a free market economy, all differences will eventually balance themselves out through market forces (2003). However, due to the nature of the nearly 400 years of indigenous poverty and discrimination that people of color have been forced to endure, the “invisible hand” of the economy seems like an unlikely solution (Bonilla-Silva, 2003).

The second category proposed by Bonilla-Silva (2003) is *naturalization*, which suggests that the racial differences in America are simply the result of choices that people have made. Again this frame asks people to suspend any notion of reality and expects one to believe that people of color would actively *choose* to live in racially segregated neighborhoods, or that people of color *choose* to associate exclusively with other people of color (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). This is tempting to believe for most white people, primarily because the data suggests that white people are in fact the ones who are choosing to not associate with people of color (Feagin, 2001). Residential data exist to suggest that when the population of a neighborhood becomes eight percent Black that white people will consider moving out, and further when the neighborhood reaches 20 percent non-white, nearly no white person will move into the neighborhood (Feagin, 2001). Further Feagin (2006) described social interactions as having a similar disposition, since “most Black Americans have to work, shop, or travel with large numbers of white Americans, whereas relatively few whites do the same with significant numbers of Black men and women” (p. 247).

The third frame described by Bonilla-Silva (2003) is *cultural racism*, which is a conception by white people that attempts to explain the differences in racial equality

with a biological argument. This argument is actually not uncommon, nor is it new. As Feagin (2001) pointed out, the argument that whites are biologically superior is one that has been articulated by whites since well before the American Revolution, when different people were first classified according to their “race” (p. 79). This argument about the biological differences that exist between different races has been the subject of recent writing, including the book *The Bell Curve*, which found that people of color (in particular Black and Hispanic people) have lower standardized test scores (using the IQ test as the measurement) and inferring from this that Black and Hispanic people are genetically inferior (Feagin, 2001). This argument is made even more insulting by two important facts: first, the authors are not trained in genetics but still feel confident in advancing an overtly racist argument citing genetics as their source; second, as of 2001 this book sold over 500,000 copies (Feagin, 2001). It appears that the American public is buying into this idea figuratively and literally.

The fourth color-blind frame is *minimization of race*, which suggests that race is no longer a primary determinant of a person’s ability to succeed (nor serves as a primary barrier to success) (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). As Bonilla-Silva pointed out, people still recognize that discrimination occurs in our society, but many white people believe that the effect of this discrimination is nominal, an argument which is usually supported with arguments such as William Julius Wilson’s, who argues that socio-economic status is more of a determinant of a person’s ability to succeed than race (2003). In so doing, white people are not only denying the effect of a highly racialized history, but they are denying something which they are in no position to judge, that is how being a person of

color affects a person's life. The ability to name the experience of people of color is in effect a privilege of whiteness, as Feagin (2006) pointed out. The reality for people of color has been documented by many scholars, including Bonilla-Silva (2003) who found that "they [Black people] believe discrimination is a central factor shaping their life chances in this country, firmly support affirmative action, and are very clear about whites' advantageous position in this society" (Bonilla-Silva, 2003, p. 170-171).

Feagin and Bonilla-Silva provide a framework to understand how whiteness is a lens through which white people view society, people and self. In this conception, white people view themselves not as the perpetrators of oppression, but rather as bystanders who have no role in racism (Frankenberg, 1993; Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Ditomaso, Parks-Yancy & Post, 2003). From this comfortable position, white people continue to assign value which places a premium on whiteness, while denigrating those who are non-white (Feagin, 2001, 2006; Bonilla-Silva, 2003). Problematically, white people who view society through this racialized white frame tend to only view the most horrendous behavior as racist, such as KKK activity, while other acts of institutionalized and systemic racism are explained away through the vehicles cited above (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). As a result, Frankenberg's contention that whiteness is a lens is confirmed in the literature.

Whiteness as an Unnamed Cultural Practice. The third component of Frankenberg's definition refers to how white people interact in society, specifically how white people interact in ways that assume whiteness as the "norm" (Frankenberg, 1993). As Frankenberg described, "Whiteness, as a set of normative cultural practices, is visible

most clearly to those it definitively excludes and those to whom it does violence” (1993, p. 228- 229). Frankenberg goes on to say that “In the context of these [white] women’s narratives, it seems to me that the ways in which specific cultures or identities could be named and described is linked to the extent to which those cultures are viewed as separate or different from normativeness. This in turn is for the most part linked to their non-dominance or relative lack of power” (1993, p. 229). The women that Frankenberg interviewed had memories of being viewed as non-white when their parents arrived as immigrants, and this distant memory served as the memory of marginalization and this was the perspective through which many of them described whiteness (1993). As such, their contemporary lives as white women were not viewed as relevant, because they had been subsumed by “normalcy” (1993). However, the white perspective does have a way of creating and sustaining impossible notions of normalcy, but in fact works to reinforce the hegemony of white norms, perspectives, and ways of living (Frankenberg, 1993; Feagin, 2001, 2006; Moore, 2008; Scheurich, 1993, 1994).

There are several examples in the literature of how whiteness is practiced as an unnamed norm. For example, in her study, Moore (2008) found that elite law schools perpetuate a racist society through their creation and maintenance of institutional white space within their curriculum, through the institutional response to racist incidents, through the images that permeate the campus (particularly of white people as heroes in the law), and through the teaching of the law in ways that promote and perpetuate the hegemony of whiteness in society. Moore described how the history of exclusion of people of color from traditionally white spaces (such as educational institutions) was a

practice that created educational institutionalized white space (2008). It is in these white spaces that whiteness becomes an unnamed practice that is reproduced through the white norms and policies (Moore, 2008). “Yet, because most people in these institutions, as well as most social scientists who study institutions, fail to make the connection between historical racist exclusion and contemporary institutional norms, much of the white frame remains tacit, thereby reifying whiteness within the space without need for intentional action to do so” (Moore, 2008, p. 28). In this way, the practice of whiteness becomes the normal way of life, which is only distinguishable when contrasted against the experience of people who do not fall within the norm (i.e., people of color).

This institutional white space can be particularly difficult for faculty members within higher education institutions to navigate, because of the multiple pressures placed on faculty of color. As Bonner (2006) discussed, institutional white space is part of the daily life for faculty members within the academy: “What I have found to be endemic to my life as a faculty member of color – particularly as an African-American male – is the requirement to be both a multicultural and multicontextual genius. Many of the cultural norms and traditions that are a standard part of my cultural community are regarded as abnormal or nontraditional when viewed through the academy’s lens” (p. 86). In this way, the norm of whiteness is practiced in an institutionalized way, by making people who do not fit the white standard feel un-included and overwhelmed (Scheurich, 1993, 1994). This unnamed practice is simply justified as part of the environment or ethos of the institution, which protects the practices that reinforce it, but also diverts attention away from the actual problem (Feagin, Vera & Imani, 1996).

Another way in which whiteness is practiced in an unnamed way in our society is through residential segregation. Feagin (2001) went on to describe how whiteness in practice reinforces racism every day, covertly and overtly. Residential segregation is painfully obvious in this country, and is characterized by white people leaving neighborhoods when Black people move in (Feagin, 2001). This ‘white flight’ is motivated by the white racial frame which makes white people uncomfortable when the Black population reaches a modest level (Feagin, 2001). Residential segregation is maintained through unnamed practices such as real estate agents steering Black perspective home buyers away from white neighborhoods, through Black renters being discriminated against by not allowing them to rent in white neighborhoods, and by gentrifying Black parts of cities to build upper class housing (Feagin, 2001). This unnamed practice of residential segregation also has dire effects for employment, because in many cases the businesses (which are largely operated by powerful whites) follow white families to the suburbs, leaving people of color in the city centers without easy access to the jobs (Feagin, 2001). Further unnamed white practices in employment can be seen through the disparity that Blacks suffer in compensation (Feagin, 2001). Black workers receive lower wages, unequal benefits, and little opportunity for advancement, which are all justified by the white frame which insists that Black people are lazy, less intelligent, and inferior (Feagin, 2001). Also, in the hiring process there are numerous examples of white employers choosing employees based on ‘feel,’ which can be interpreted as a candidate’s ability to conform to the white norm (Feagin, 2001).

The unnamed practice of residential segregation and employment discrimination is also complicit with other unnamed white practices, such as the pursuit of education (Feagin, 2006). As Feagin discussed, white people with access to non-discriminatory education were better able to attain better paying jobs (2006). With better paying jobs, white people are able to afford to live in better neighborhoods and send their children to better schools (Feagin, 2006). As a result, the ability to receive a non-discriminatory education translates to an opportunity for social mobility (Feagin, 2006). The opportunity for this social mobility is attached, of course, to being able to access the resources of whiteness. However, this unnamed practice of residential segregation creates a cycle whereby whiteness is privileged and non-whites are systemically disadvantaged.

Yet another way in which whiteness is an unnamed practice is through a process known as interest convergence. Derek Bell (2004) described this process whereby “relief from racial discrimination has come only when policymakers recognize that such relief will provide a clear benefit for the nation or portions of the populace” (Bell, p. 49). In practice, this means that oppression and discrimination will be fought systematically by whites only when there is a compelling white interest (Bell, 2004; Milner, 2008). In the example that Bell provides, that compelling white interest was diversity in higher education: in the *Grutter v. Bollinger* (an affirmative action case) Sandra Day O’Connor who traditionally voted with conservatives on issues related to affirmative action voted to approve the University of Michigan’s policy (Bell, 2004). The rationale articulated by O’Conner was summed up by Bell who said “She [O’Connor] evidently viewed it as a

benefit and not a burden to nonminorities” (p.151). In this way, it was alleged to be advantageous for white people to have people of color in the Michigan law school, therefore, O’Connor voted in favor of affirmative action (in a strictly tailored way) (Bell, 2004). The use of race and people of color in this way is alarming, since affirmative action was not evaluated for the potential benefit to people of color, but was instead considered only through the lens of continued advantage for white people (Bell, 2004; Feagin, 2001).

Finally, Lopez (1996) cited other ways in which whiteness is protected through unnamed practices. In this example, there is evidence to demonstrate that people of color are discriminated against in the courts of law through what Lopez refers to as “unconscious racism.” A study of 700,000 cases cited by Lopez found that Hispanic and Black people get significantly worse deals than white people when plea bargaining (1996). Further, Lopez argues that statutes which appear to be racially-neutral do in fact have a negative consequence for people of color: “With the elimination of laws aimed expressly at imposing racial inequality, facially neutral laws with discriminatory effects arguably constitute the prime legal mechanism for the maintenance of racial hierarchy” (Lopez, 1996, p.141). In this way the practice of law reproduces and reifies whiteness as the ultimate unnamed practice because what appears to be racially neutral, actually has a devastating outcome for Black people.

W.E.B DuBois spoke to this issue of whiteness in his discussion of two-ness: “It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks

on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness – an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder” (DuBois, 1903; 1979, p. 3). In this most basic example, Black people are socially constructed as different, and as a result, DuBois is forced to reconcile what this means, being Black and an American. It is understood through this review of the literature, that the ideals of an American are those that have been imposed by whites, which reinforce the white norms, traditions, and practices. In reviewing this literature, it becomes obvious that whiteness is not normal, but a systematized approach to creating an environment which is acceptable by white standards, and defended through the law, through rhetoric, and through discrimination so as to disadvantage people of color across a myriad of variables.

Post-Racial America. In the years following the election of Barack Obama, renewed arguments that reify whiteness have sought to undermine the movement to create racial justice through claims of living in a post-racial society (Crenshaw, 2011; Zuberi, 2011). This framing myopically relies upon a single example (the election of a Black president) to argue that American society has somehow left behind the vestiges of racial discrimination as a distant dark memory in American history. In reality, this argument is simply an extension of the colorblind rhetoric that frames whites as innocent from any responsibility for racial injustice and ignoring social structures that enable disparate outcomes by race (Crenshaw, 1988, 2011; Kim, 2012; Zuberi, 2011; Moore, 2014). However, as Crenshaw (2011) and Moore (2014) point out, the deterioration of

the civil rights legislation starting in the 1980s rests on the same tenants. The courts have been operating using this white logic to substantiate and support patently racist projects that seek to substantially cripple, if not obliterate, any progress made in the 1960s (Moore, 2014). The evidence can be seen seemingly daily, for example there are states suing the federal government to prevent the review of voting district gerrymandering, and several states enforcing voter identification laws, each of which have a deeply negative effect on voters of color (to name just a couple). This retrenchment in legislation is line and verse for white policy makers who throughout history have explicitly undermined racial progress with tactical maneuvers designed to ensure the racial status quo is maintained (Moore & Bell, 2011).

The attempt to frame the American racial environment as post-racial is just another example of how white decision makers and leaders will co-opt any situation or circumstance to advance the fallacy of a meritocratic society that relies upon racist portrayals of people of color to justify largely oppressed and disparate outcomes. In fact, as Moore (2014) described, this is also an opportunity to frame white people as the victims: “Moreover, this notion of white innocence serves as a basis for challenging policies designed to remedy racial inequality, such as affirmative action, and thus turn whites into the victim of racial discrimination vis-à-vis such remedial state policies,” (p. 13-14). These are exactly the types of arguments that ensure the oppressive white state is maintained since there will be no remediation for the ongoing injustices people of color endure.

Whiteness in Higher Education. Feagin, Vera, and Imani (1996) assert:

Traditionally white colleges and universities are white-normed spaces that are more than demographically white; they are white in their basic cultural components. African American students entering such campuses often find that they are expected to accept positions as racial subordinates and to accept one-way cultural assimilation as a legitimate goal. Many whites seem to expect African American students to view their educational experiences in the mostly white university as a great privilege (p.19).

In this way, the institutional climate itself serves to further subjugate students of color by enforcing an ideological frame which norms students to the white standard (Feagin, 2002; Feagin, Vera & Imani, 1996; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado & Gurin, 2002; Hale, 2004; Moore, 2008; Smith, 1995). This reinforcement of whiteness as the norm in higher education should sound familiar because it is the same framing used to socially construct race in the *prerequisite cases* (discussed above), and in the construction of a racial hierarchy (also discussed above).

Moore (2008) created a model which is helpful in explaining how whiteness is reified in elite law schools, which appears to have components that are also germane to the discussion of how whiteness is reified in higher education in general. In particular, the three components which appear to be transferable are: first, the “racial demographics and distribution of power along racial lines”; second, “racialized institutional and cultural practices and justifying racist ideology and discourse”; and third, “hidden signifiers of white power and privilege within the space” (Moore, 2008, p. 32). The first

category refers to the administration and how many of those in positions of power (where decisions are made) are by and large white, and therefore unable or unwilling to consider the deep historical impact of race in society (Moore, 2008). The second category refers to how policies and programs within the institution are often created using an institutionalized white frame, and therefore are not sensitive to the needs of people of color. Further many of these programs are replicated year after year without consideration of the consequences of potential impact (Moore, 2008). The third category refers to what Moore calls the “hidden curriculum” of the institution, which alludes to the markers and symbols found on campus that reinforce the idea that campuses are white spaces. Moore specifically discusses how paintings depicting white people as heroes of the Civil Right Movement are one such example (2008). This model provides a possible framework for understanding how whiteness is infused and reified into predominately white institutions.

In a study of campus climate at predominantly white institutions, Gusa (2010) coined a new term to describe the impact of whiteness: white institutional presence (WIP). While this term is new, the concepts that undergird this term have all been documented as part of the white racial frame, white space, colorblind racism, or simply a part of the definition of whiteness. WIP consists of four interrelated parts: white ascendancy (which like Feagin’s white racial frame describes thinking and behavior from white mainstream); monoculturalism (which consistent with the definition of whiteness attempts to frame white culture as normal and superior); white blindness (which consistent with colorblind racism, describes how white culture is protected by

being invisible and normal); and white estrangement (consistent with Moore's concept of white space, describes how white people create artificial spaces where white people are overrepresented and precludes the ability of people of color to enter the space) (Gusa, 2010).

As discussed above, higher education equates to a means of social mobility, so the ability to pursue education in a non-discriminatory environment enables one to improve their social status (Feagin, 2002, 2006). In addition to the difficulty pursuing higher education in general (leaving home, taking classes, finding new social networks, etc), there are other barriers specifically for students of color as they attend predominately white institutions (Feagin, 2002; Feagin, Vera, & Imani, 1996; Hurtado, et al., 1998).

Personally, structurally, and ideologically, white racism on college campuses and elsewhere in the society denies full human recognition to the racialized "others." This is achieved both through the fictions of whites as superior (the misrecognition of self-attributes) and through anti-Black prejudices and stereotypes (the misrecognition of the attributes of the racial other). These racial constructions are part of a mindset that influences behavior and alters emotions in regard to racial others" (Feagin, Vera, & Imani, 1996, p. 15).

Racism happens "personally, structurally, and ideologically," each of which appear to be necessary in understanding whiteness among administrators in higher education.

The concept of *diversity* has gained considerable traction within the higher education landscape and merits consideration since there are several positions on campuses dedicated to supporting diversity. Diversity is a term and concept which has been embraced by many decision makers including even Supreme Court justices, however this line of rhetoric is largely problematic since discussions of diversity prevent the level of discourse necessary to really engage structural inequality (Bell & Hartmann, 2007; Moore & Bell, 2011).

“The diversity discourse, or diversity without oppression, functions to shift the focus away from an explicit disavowal of race and racial inequalities toward a rhetoric that aspires to acknowledge and even celebrate racial differences. At the same time, the diversity discourse conflates, confuses, and obscures the deeper sociostructural roots and consequences...Race is both everywhere and nowhere, a deep cultural self-deception that is difficult to identify and counter,” (Bell & Hartmann, 2007, p. 910).

In this way, diversity can at times become a tool of whiteness by preventing genuine understanding and reflection on the nature of white supremacy (Bell & Hartmann, 2007; Moore & Bell, 2011). Ironically enough, diversity is largely lambasted by the right and those who advocate a colorblind and meritocratic society (see post-racial discussion above). Diversity, as it turns out is just another frame for white people to utilize to remain innocent of wrongdoing. In her study of white backlash against affirmative action, Pierce (2003) found similar arguments by whites who refuse to acknowledge the systemic nature of racism and rather attempt to attribute incidents and data on disparate

outcomes to individuals, which Pierce termed “racing for innocence.” In the constantly evolving nature of whiteness, diversity is just another tactic.

In the time since this study began, a handful of new studies have been published that consider race and the experiences of administrators and leaders. In their study, Chun and Evans found that administrators of color in higher education were made to feel invisible, excluded and unsupported, as well as having limited job authority and ability to make substantive decisions (2009). Additionally, administrators of color felt victimized by bullying behavior and veiled threats from faculty as well as other administrators (Chun & Evans, 2009). This is consistent with the findings from Stanley (2007) who documented the experiences of faculty members of color in the academy who similarly described spaces of overt and covert marginalization and discrimination.

Similarly, in a study of workplaces, people of color were found to be marginalized through preferential treatment for white employees, structural discrimination, lack of access to social networks, and spaces that include few people of color (Wingfield & Alston, 2014). Within these workplaces, there are racial tasks that force people of color into work that reinforces the institutional white space. These racial tasks are classified as: ideological (which seek to preserve the culture of whiteness within the organization); interactional (where the tasks reinforces emotional work to maintain white supremacy); or physical (where the work creates/maintains infrastructure to reinforce the whiteness in the space) (Wingfield & Alston, 2014). Not surprisingly, these workplaces seek to obscure the nature of the whiteness project by ensconcing the work with people of color so that it appears standard operating procedure. Again, the

white space appears normal and detractions from white framing are ostracized (Wingfield & Alston, 2014).

Nneka Logan (2011) published a study that examines whiteness in public relations positions, but has findings are similarly applicable to the higher education context. Logan described the *white leader prototype*, which is an “ideological discursive formation that organizes professional roles along racialized lines in ways that privilege people who are considered a part of the white racial category,” (p. 443). Similar to the nature of whiteness, the white leader prototype relies upon whiteness as a normal and natural part of the organization and marginalizes challenges to the white frame. Specifically, Logan found that Black people were tracked into racialized positions that focused on minority issues, and that these positions were not part of core-business and did not carry the credentials of the executive positions within the organization (Logan, 2011). Worse yet, once in these positions, it was nearly impossible to move up or laterally into other positions that were not tracked for minorities (Logan, 2011).

Gender and Intersectionality. The context for oppression in American society is such that oppression occurs along a wide spectrum of variables including race, gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, religion, ability level, country of origin, first language, etc. (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 2007). Similar to the frame for whiteness described above, oppression across personal characteristics relies on a socially constructed reality where characteristics ascribed to these groups are deemed inferior to the privileged positions of heterosexual, white, male, Christian, native English speaker, European background, middle class (or higher), etc. (Adams, et al., 2007). It is

important to know that some of these characteristics can be hidden, some of the time. For example, sexual orientation can often be hidden from society so that the marginalized person can be safe from discrimination. Other characteristics also have some element of being able to disguise so as to “pass,” with the most difficult characteristics being race, gender (although gender-expression and the strengthening transgender community are blurring these lines), socioeconomic status, and ability level (Adams, et al., 2007).

The gendered experience for women in the academy is also important to note, since the academy was slow to allow women into the ivory tower (Allan, 2003; Lucas 1994; Thelin, 2004). As noted by Guinier, Fine, and Balin, there is a difference in the way women experience law school. Specifically, the experience for women is characterized by structural disadvantages (which allege fairness since they treat people “equally,” not necessarily “fairly”), marginalization, and oppressive norms (1997). The authors go on to argue that in order to realize real and sustained change, there must be a fundamental shift in the “failures of conventional standards [which] embody important institutional or societal values” (Guinier, Fine, & Balin, 1997, p 21).

Taken together, the gendered and racialized experience creates a new important context to consider: intersectionality. Intersectionality has two dimensions in which oppression is reinforced (Crenshaw, 2007). The first is the structural level which includes many of the systems which reinforce oppression for women specifically and/or people of color specifically. Almost always it is impossible to separate which variable is primarily being discriminated against, and as such it is impossible to redress

discrimination along only one of these variables (Crenshaw, 2007). Second is the political dimension which refers to the need for the victim to exist in two or more contexts of oppression and fight equality in different (and at times opposing) arenas (Crenshaw, 2007). Crenshaw described how this experience has operates to move toward equality in one sense, which otherizing another part of a person's identity: "...racism as experience by people of color who are of a particular gender – male – tends to determine the parameters of anti-racist strategy, just as sexism as experienced by women who are of a particular race – white – tends to ground the women's movement" (2007, 178). Intersectionality is particularly important since this adds another layer of understanding to the "raced," "gendered," and otherizing experiences for those from a traditionally underrepresented background (Adams, et al., 2007). These contexts are important since they will frame the reality of the participants which I interview (among both white and people of color). Oppression is experienced and understood along a continuum where it is difficult, if not impossible, to decipher which variables or characteristics are responsible for the constructed reality of the participant. Due to the nature of this study, it appears that race and gender will likely be the most germane characteristics to consider.

Summary

This first section of the literature review has discussed whiteness as a system and structure which described how white people understand, interpret, and justify unearned privileges. This hegemony is important to understand since those who sit in seats of power within colleges and universities are overwhelmingly white. As described above,

the racialized white lens cannot be separated from the individual, so in studying individuals who sit in seats of power it will be important to discover how they conceive of their own whiteness. As Joe Feagin often says in classes he teaches “if you grew up white in this country you are either a racist or a recovering racist.” In this statement, Dr. Feagin illuminates the difficult resistance to the white framing of society that is necessary for white people to understand and work against the socialized, unearned privileges consistent with whiteness. This requires a cognitive decision that violates the norm, which Beverly Daniel Tatum described:

I sometimes visualize the ongoing cycle of racism as a moving walkway at the airport. Active racist behavior is equivalent to walking fast on the conveyor belt. The person engaged in active racist behavior has identified with the ideology of our White supremacist system and is moving with it. Passive racist behavior is equivalent to standing still on the walkway. No overt effort is being made, but the conveyor belt moves the bystanders along to the same destination as those who are actively walking. But unless they are walking actively in the opposite direction at a speed faster than the conveyor belt – unless they are actively anti-racist – they will find themselves carried along with the others. (1997, p. 11-12).

The overwhelming challenge for white people is to actively recognize and work against the destructive, socialized nature of whiteness to create equitable spaces for all people.

Higher Education Organizational Structures and Behaviors

Organizations themselves are not an end product of a process; rather an organization serves as a means by which to accomplish goals and tasks (Morgan, 2006).

As such, institutions of higher education are organizations where tasks are accomplished including: the creation and dissemination of knowledge, educating the populous, and serving the public good (Kerr, 1995; Thelin, 2004). However these roles for higher education institutions are rarely this clearly delineated or demonstrated (Birnbaum, 1984, 1988). This section of the literature review will describe how higher education organizations operate, including describing: the structure of organizations (how organizations function to accomplish outcomes); the ethos of an organization (values, traditions, and practices of the organization); and how decisions and policies are made within organizations. Taken together, the structure, ethos, and decisions of an institution (both in practice and symbolically) constitute the higher education institutional culture (Tierney, 1988).

Before exploring higher education organizational theory, it is necessary to set the appropriate context for higher education. To this end, a brief sketch of the hegemony that has characterized the history of American higher education will provide the backdrop for understanding the contemporary organizational structure and culture.

The Historical Legacy of Exclusion in Higher Education

American higher education has a history rooted in violence, segregation, and unearned privileges for white people (and in particular men) (Thelin, 2004, Franklin & Moss, 1994). Prior to the Civil War the prospects for Black people to receive an education was quite limited to clandestine and informal schools, Black colleges and

universities², and a handful of progressive white institutions (such as Oberlin College, Berea College, University of Michigan, Franklin College, Amherst College, and Bowdoin College) (Franklin & Moss, 1994; Harris, Figgures & Carter, 1975; University of Michigan, n.d.). While these institutions were racial trailblazers, the possibility of attending such institutions were limited by factors such as: location, financial resources, and the loss of productivity by being away from work to attend classes, which made attending college nearly unattainable for Black students (Franklin & Moss, 1994; Thelin, 2004).

The second Morrill Land Grant Act of 1890 provided hope that Black students might be able to receive a fair and equal education to that of white students, however the final writing of this Act declared that states could maintain their separate institutions for white students and were only bound to distribute funds on a “just and equitable” basis (Lucas, 1994). The *Plessy vs. Ferguson* decision of 1896 followed shortly thereafter which legalized the “separate but equal,” in terms of providing facilities and services for citizens (Franklin & Moss, 1994; Lucas, 1994) and extended the Jim Crow laws that were so pervasive into the educational sphere. This decision ensured that Black students would receive an inferior education (at every level – primary to post-secondary). In fact, it was reported that some Black colleges were only able to provide an education equivalent to that of a white middle school (Franklin & Moss, 1994; Lucas, 1994).

² In 1842, Cheyney State College in Philadelphia opened as the first school for Black students, followed in 1849 by Avery College in Pennsylvania (Lucas, 1994). Other institutions followed suit, with Miner Academy in Washington DC opening in 1851, Lincoln University in Pennsylvania opening in 1854, and Wilberforce in Ohio opening in 1856 (Lucas, 1994). It was not until later that such prestigious Black colleges as Fisk University (1866), Howard University (1867), and Morehouse College (1867) opened their doors (Lucas, 1994; Franklin & Moss, 1994; Thelin, 2004).

The *Brown vs. Board of Education, Topeka, KS* decision of 1954 famously overturned the *Plessy* decision, but integration of schools, colleges, and universities was far from a high priority (Thelin, 2004). In fact, racial integration was not pursued at some state institutions until the Civil Rights Act of 1968 and government intervention. Despite standing laws and public pressure, there were looming problems that required attention, for example: “integration” did not by any means equate to equality, and such there was not a clear plan for reforming admissions standards, for creating opportunities and protections so that Black students would feel safe and accepted on campus, nor ensuring equal treatment in the classroom by professors and students (Franklin & Moss, 1994; Thelin, 2004). As a result Black students “endured isolation, shunning, and sabotage, along with exclusion from “real college life” and the opportunity to participate in sports teams, dramatic productions, residence hall life, and dining commons” (Thelin, 2004, p. 304).

Sadly, this discourse has not changed much in the decades following the Civil Rights Act, enduring to today (Thompson & Carter, 1997). For example, there continues to be a dramatic underrepresentation of people of color in higher education, across the student body and positions of leadership, particularly at the large state and elite colleges and universities (leaving only service positions as those where people of color are over-represented) (Hurtado, Clayton-Peterson, Allen & Milem, 1998). Further, there are seemingly endless racist incidents in the headlines of university newspapers and occasionally making the national press. For example, hardly a Halloween or Cinco de Mayo passes when there is not a Greek or student group that has a costume party that is

themed in a patently racist way to draw on stereotypical aspects of racial identity in an attempt to demean and further ostracize those groups (Mueller, Dirks & Picca, 2007). Recent examples racist party themes on college campuses include: “ghetto,” “thug,” “MLK,” “Bloods and Crips,” “Asia prime” “pimps and hoes parties,” “border patrol,” and “South of the border,” and are held at campuses across the country including prestigious universities: Arizona State University, University of Alabama, Clemson University, Dartmouth University, University of Connecticut Law School, and Northwestern University, to name just a few that have become public (Gold, 2014; Scarano, 2011). While it may be argued that these sorts of parties do not have a direct effect on any individuals and are simply kids having fun, it is much more likely that the opposite is true. When groups of people come together to share and build on racist stereotypes of groups, not only is it hurtful to those who fall into the targeted group, but this is also then an opportunity for exchanging racist ideas and normalizing racist narratives for white people (Moore, 2008; Picca & Feagin, 2007). Also, consider the fact the Federal Bureau of Investigation which monitors hate crimes reported that of the 859 hate crimes documented on school and college campuses in 2007, over half (468) were cases revolving around race (Dervarics, 2008). There is clearly a toxic mix of racist attitudes and actions on campuses which creates a hostile environment making the daily experiences of people of color unbearable.

Illustrative of the power of whiteness, incidents such as the ones documented above are often met with initial outrage across the board and sometimes even culminating in a small protest or demands for administrative response. However, in

these instances, college and university administrators will quickly point out that civility cannot be legislated and that there is a First Amendment right that must be protected (Silverglate, French & Lukianoff, 2005). Rare is the case when the university administrator exercises their own (or the collective university) First Amendment right to acknowledge the student's right to express themselves, but then in the same breath express outrage and disappointment in myopic and hurtful decisions by students. As a result, there is a silent consent by university administrators of these racist events, which serves to reinforce the hegemony of whiteness for all members of the campus community (Feagin, Vera & Imani, 1996; Hurtado, Clayton-Peterson, Allen & Milem, 1998; Hytten & Warren, 2003; Lincoln & Stanley, 2007; Matsuda, 1993; Milem, Umbach & Liang, 2004; Moore, 2008; Rankin & Reason, 2005). Below, I will describe several of the relevant higher education organizational models and theories while weaving in relevant research on race that largely remains absent as a structural component of these models and theories.

Higher Education Organizational Types

Among the nearly 4,600 degree-granting institutions of higher education (2,800 four year institutions) there are distinct organizational structures and behaviors that characterize them by their unique position within society, their goals, the inputs and outputs of the higher education system, the coupling of systems, the open nature of the systems, and nature of decision making (Birnbaum, 1988, 1989; Baldrige, Curtis, Ecker & Riley, 1978; Peterson, Chaffee & White, 1991; Pusser, 2003). Since each institution has an ethos and culture that defines the organization and things that are valued, it will

be useful to briefly define the characteristics which differentiate higher education from other types of organizations, which will be the first part of this section. Following this, I will examine the literature which describes higher education organizational behavior. Finally, this section will end with a discussion of institutional decision making from within these institutional structures.

Higher Education Organizational Defining Characteristics. Baldrige et al. (1978), Peterson et al. (1991), and Birnbaum (1988) have described six defining characteristics for higher education organizations. First, there is goal ambiguity, which can be illustrated by asking the simple question “what is the goal of a university?” (Baldrige et al., 1978; Peterson et al., 1991). This question is difficult to answer because there are several different end users of the university’s “product” and as a result, there are several different expectations as to what higher education systems should produce (for example, most people expect universities to produce students with critical thinking skills, but there are several other roles including: the creation and discovery of new knowledge; the production of pragmatic tools and techniques that are applicable within our current systems (such as agricultural techniques); providing service to the state or region by providing information and resources that enable innovation; and serving as the marketplace of ideas where paradigm-changing thoughts are vetted and tested, to name just a few (Birnbaum, 1988, 1989; Baldrige et al., 1978; Kerr, 1995; Peterson et al., 1991).

Exacerbating this ambiguity, Birnbaum (1988) discussed how goals are at times competing, making them that much more difficult to accomplish. For example,

balancing the expectations of higher education between the needs of private industry (producing workers) and the public good (producing critical thinkers) are often at odds. Another example that Wendy More and Joyce Bell (2011) have discussed revolves around the example of free speech from above. Institutions have a responsibility to create an environment whereby people can thrive regardless of their identity (racial, gender, sexual orientation, ability, etc.), but also have a responsibility to reinforce the First Amendment, which at times creates hostile spaces for people of color and those who identify with a targeted identity (Matsuda, 1993).

Second, according to Peterson et al. (1991), the services that colleges and universities produce are “people-processing” (p. 31) and as a result, different inputs into the system rely on different environments to produce outputs (consistent with Astin’s (1993) discussion of the Input-Environment-Output (I-E-O) model). As a result the decisions made within the institution vary depending on the needs of the participants within the system (Peterson et al., 1991). In this way, the users of the system also have a voice in how the decisions are made and how the environment is constructed (Peterson, 1986). So, in the case of race, there are many users of higher education institutions who have a vested interest in ensuring that the institutional space remains explicitly white, not the least of which is the white students, staff, faculty, administrators, alumni, legislators, employers of the graduates, etc.

Related to this second issue is the third issue, problematic technology, which is the process that an institution employs so that they can translate inputs into outputs (Birnbaum, 1988, 1989). This process is difficult to define within the academy because

again, there is not a single process that the organization can establish that effectively fulfills the multiple goals for the end users (Birnbaum, 1988, 1989; Baldrige et al., 1978; Peterson et al., 1991). Further, there are very few processes within the institution where direct causation can be drawn from a process or program to the output; rather, the educational process is made up simultaneously of several different processes and programs that affect the end users in different ways and to varying degrees (Birnbaum, 1988, 1989; Baldrige et al., 1978; Peterson et al., 1991).

Fourth, professionalism differentiates higher education organizations from other types of organizations. Professionalism refers to the experts that permit the system to operate; within higher education those professionals are the faculty members (Baldrige et al., 1978; Peterson et al., 1991). Faculty members require tremendous autonomy not only in their research efforts, but also their teaching style and their curriculum (Baldrige et al., 1978; Peterson, 1986; Peterson et al., 1991). As a result, decrees from the university administration are often not closely followed by many faculty members as this is perceived to violate or impinge upon their professional autonomy (Mintzberg, 1979; 2000). In terms of race, there are multiple implications to be noted: first, because of the autonomy and the sheer volume of faculty members at a typical university, there is rarely agreement upon or an effort dedicated toward ensuring racial equality and social justice (particularly at institutions that engage tenants of shared governance), (Stanley, 2007). Second, since so many of the faculty members at a typical university are white, there is rarely an understanding of the issues related to race, so even if the university

administration pursued a commitment to racial equality, most faculty members would likely not understand, or be inclined to pursue such an agenda (Stanley, 2006).

Related to the concepts of professionalism and autonomy is the fifth concept, environmental vulnerability. Environmental vulnerability refers to the autonomy of the institution itself; as Peterson et al. described the situation, colleges and universities are not autonomous organizations such as a business, and also not “captured” like organizations such as public schools (1991). Rather colleges and universities fall somewhere in between on this continuum, since these organizations can declare their own mission and goals, as well as design their own policies and procedures to accomplish those goals. On the flip side, there are several external constituents that are able to exert pressure on institutions (such as the state and federal legislators, alumni/donors, private industry, etc.) which may force the hand of the institution (Baldrige et al., 1978; Peterson et al., 1991). Environmental vulnerability also has a racialized component, since from a social perspective, there is always a context to be considered. So, for example, many universities that are urban-serving institutions espouse stronger commitments to social justice and racial equality by virtue of the population they are serving or their history within these communities. However, at many of the land-grant institutions that are environmentally often times in rural communities, serving many rural interests in largely white communities, there is often time a lack of appreciation for understanding race and society³.

³ This is not to suppose that people of color only live in urban communities or that white people are only at land grant universities. Rather, this illustrates the dynamic that exists between the environment, commitment to justice, and the history of these disparate institutional types.

The final differentiation between higher education organizations and traditional organizations is summed up by Peterson et al. (1991) with the descriptor “organized anarchy,” which refers to the combined effect of all five of the forces listed above. Typical organizations are characterized by bureaucratic procedures, hierarchical authority, and clear goals, many of which are typically not found in higher education systems (Birnbaum, 1989; Baldrige et al., 1978; Peterson et al., 1991). As Peterson et al. suggest, certain organizations such as financial aid, plant and facilities, and many of the auxiliary services operate within a traditional bureaucracy, however, the core functions of the university (research, teaching, and service) are all characteristically organized anarchies (1991). The lack of structure created in an organized anarchy means that there are many more opportunities for dissonance to go unaddressed and unresolved, because there are varying interpretations of policy versus departmental/organizational practices (i.e. “the way it’s always been done”). Such an environment can have a deeply problematic impact on traditionally marginalized communities since there are often unclear or inaccessible opportunities for redress of grievances (Aguirre & Martinez, 2006; Chun & Evans, 2012; Davis, 2002).

Higher Education Organizational Behavior

The models that have attempted to explain institutional governance and behavior are broadly speaking, one of two types: structural theory or those theories that account for the human element (including human relations theory, cultural theory, social cognition theory) (Kezar & Eckel, 2004). Importantly, structural theory assumes that within bureaucratic organizations aspects of policy and decisions made in the

organization operate rationally, seeking the greatest efficiency and effectiveness for the organization to reach outcomes that are in the best interests of the organization (Baldrige, 1971; Kerr, 1995; Mintzberg, 1979, 2000; Weick, 1979). However, more recently, there have been studies that acknowledge the role of the human element of organizational governance, recognizing that higher education organizations rarely act in ways that are logical and rational, and instead are deeply affected by the individuals who are in positions of leadership (Birnbaum, 2002; Bolman & Deal, 1991; Cohen & March, 1986; Gumpert, 2002; Kezar & Eckel, 2004; March & Simon, 1986).

Structural Theory. The structural approach (also called the bureaucratic model) is consistent with Max Weber's description of a bureaucracy which proposes that bureaucratic institutions are characterized by their conformity to rules and regulations, a hierarchical chain of command, and a strong division of labor among the employees of the organization (meaning that each employee and the unit understand their unique responsibilities, for which their unit/individual is solely responsible, so as to prevent the duplication of efforts) (Baldrige, et al., 1978; Berger, 2000, 2002; Birnbaum, 1988; Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Further, when it comes to decision making, these organizations are predictably rational, meaning that "there is some conscious attempt to link means to ends, resources to objectives, and intentions to activities" (Birnbaum, 1988, p. 113). Such a rational orientation for the organizational structure is ideal because higher education institutions tend to be very complex organizations characterized by a high degree of decentralization, meaning that subunits in the organization are responsible for many decisions (Baldrige, 1971; Kerr, 1995; Mintzberg, 1979, 2000). As a result, the

modern university is organizationally held together through both centralized university-level decisions as well as a patchwork of decentralized decisions, which Weick termed coupled dependency (1979). In so doing, Weick acknowledged the interdependent nature of decisions made across the university, which is critical as the university responds to changes in the environment (legislative, political, and academic environment), external pressures, and problems that arise within the university (student unrest, faculty governance issues, etc.).

In their study of university leadership, Cohen and March (1986) described an “organized anarchy,” which describes the tension between the centralized decision making authority and the reality of decentralized decision making to chart a course for the institution. Similarly, Birnbaum (1988) and Berger (2000, 2002) discussed the anarchical model (1988). The anarchical institution has also been described as an “organized anarchy,” and is characterized by inconsistent and unclear goals (within a decentralized structure there is often incongruence between the goals of the central unit and the subunits); uncertain technology (difficulty in designating and measuring the inputs and outputs for the organization, particularly as they relate to the goals of the organization); and fluid participation (where there are many people who participate in decision making, but unfortunately these people are constantly changing by opting in and out, making consistency in decisions virtually impossible), (Birnbaum, 1988). Also unique to this model is *garbage can decision making* which relies upon coalescence of several issues (including problems, solutions, and participants) together in a metaphorical garbage can where some issues become intertwined with solutions and

people (Birnbaum, 1988; Cohen & March, 1986; Cohen, March & Olsen, 1972; Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Tarter & Hoy, 1998). The garbage can model, uniquely, does not need a problem to start the process nor a solution to end the process; rather, the problems, issues, and people can coalesce at different times for different reasons (Cohen & March, 1986; Cohen et al., 1972). The coupling of issues often creates problems since issues are not singular, but now have many potentially unrelated consequences (Birnbaum, 1988; Cohen & March, 1986; Cohen et al., 1972).

Ensnared in the metaphorical can are important institutional leadership tenants such as shared governance. Shared governance provides opportunities for structured roles for university constituents (typically faculty and administrators, although staff increasingly have a voice in governance) to participate in decision making processes, including charting a course for the university and assessing outcomes for their work processes (Cohen & March, 1986). While in theory, shared governance should respond to the needs of disparate groups on campus, there are several problems with this structure, which are the same as the problems are consistent with the anarchical model for institutions: unclear and at times inconsistent goals, unclear technologies, and fluid participation among members (Cohn & March, 1986; Kezar & Eckels, 2004).

An enduring aspect of the landscape of the modern university that is part of the structural model of governance is the committee, specifically the high-level committee (termed strategic planning councils, by Schuster, 1994). These high-level committees are borrowed from industry (and their focus on teamwork), and incorporate several components of higher education leadership, including collegiality, structured roles and

responsibilities, and a focus on priorities and planning. Again, these structures seem like a perfect solution to unifying aspects of centralized and decentralized leadership, but again failed largely because of a lack of sense of ownership by the participants and terribly inefficient structures (Kirkland & Regan, 1997; Schuster, 1994). Importantly, Schuster (1994) described how structure and process are discreet. That is, a strong structure (with important decision makers from across campus) does not ensure that the process or output of the structure will also be strong.

Another important structural element present in higher education organizations is open systems management, which seeks to acknowledge the interconnected nature of systems (Birnbaum, 1991; Hoy & Miskel 2008). Birnbaum's described this in what he termed cyberneticis, which recognizes the interconnectedness of the different subunits through overlapping feedback loops emphasizing multiple decision makers; simplifying and operationalizing goals; collecting data, and responding to feedback (Birnbaum, 1988). (Birnbaum, 1989, 2002). Institutions that utilize a cybernetic approach create opportunities to monitor the existing systems (utilizing multiple decision makers) and employ self-correcting feedback loops to remedy problems (Birnbaum, 1988). As Birnbaum described them, "Cybernetic institutions tend to run themselves, and upper level participants tend to respond to disruptions of ongoing activities rather than attempt to change those activities...this is a sign of institutional strength rather than of leader weakness" (Birnbaum, 1989, p. 248). As a result, decisions are made by the people who monitor the feedback loops, rather than responding to specific issues with self-corrections (Birnbaum, 1984, 1988). The cybernetic approach tends to be highly

effective because it is structured around feedback loops and self-correction of the organization. However, the cost for this effectiveness is that the structure tends to be terribly inefficient since the model relies upon redundancy throughout the system, to say nothing of the speed, which tends to be much slower than desirable (Birnbaum, 1988, 1989, 2002).

Berger (2000) has suggested a final structural component, the *systemic* dimension. The systemic dimension simply builds on the cybernetic framework described by Birnbaum (1988) and open-systems model described Hoy and Miskel (2008), where institutions are subject to pressures and expectations from outside the institution, such as state legislatures, alumni, public opinion, state and federal laws, etc. (Berger, 2000). In this framework, to best understand how and why an institution behaves in the way it does, it is most important to understand how the external variables work to control the internal structure of the organization (Berger, 2002).

Taken together, these structural theories attempt to describe how an organization functions (or should function) to accomplish desired outcomes. However, these models are far from perfect as they are largely theoretical, many institutions embody characteristics of multiple models, and they largely fail to adequately describe outcomes from across the landscape of institutional types.

Structure is important for establishing lines of communication, designating authority, and facilitating access, for example; but has perhaps received too much attention in comparison to other important frameworks. [...] Thirty years of scholarship demonstrate that structural variables/conditions explain few

outcomes including effectiveness, implementation of policy, commonality of purpose, and the like (Kezar & Eckels, 2004, p. 381).

Human Relations Theory. A lingering inadequacy of a systems approach to describe higher education organizations is that they fail to account for one of the most critical elements, that is the humans who are running the systems (Kezar & Eckels, 2004; Smart & John, 1996). Since systems and structures are created and maintained by people, their influence on the nature and functioning of the system cannot be understated. Human relations theory focuses on the human elements of leadership, training, personality, interpersonal relationships and motivation (Kezar & Eckels, 2004). Birnbaum (1989), Baldrige et al. (1978), and Berger (2000) have all conceptualized alternative frameworks to the structural model to explain higher education institutional behavior. There appears to be consensus between these authors that *collegial* systems and *political* systems offer greater insight to understand institutional behavior. The *collegial* systems are characterized by a rejection of bureaucracy in favor of genuine interaction and equality (in words and practice) among the participants (particularly faculty) within the system (Baldrige et al., 1978; Berger, 2000; Birnbaum, 1988). In this system, decisions are made only after thorough discussion and deliberation where all participants have the opportunity to be heard; following this process, decisions are made by a consensus among the participants (Birnbaum, 1988; Baldrige et al., 1978). It is worthy of note that this type of system is typically only possible at smaller institutions because of the economies of scale (Birnbaum, 1988).

Far more common, particularly at larger institutions is the *political* system, which is characterized by a complex and diffused system of power among the different groups within the organization (Birnbaum, 1988). Organizations have developed far more decentralized systems for governance meaning that there are many decisions which are made concurrently or within functional silos (Kezar & Eckel, 2004). This diverse power structure creates a series of interplays between competing interests, so that coalitions and other self-interest promoting groups are formed to gain a power advantage (Baldrige, et al., 1978; Birnbaum, 1988). Unlike the *collegial* system, decisions within a *political* institution are made through the exercise of power by different groups, and rarely if ever have consensus among the participants (Birnbaum, 1988). This exercise of power can be mediated by negotiations, influence, and bargaining among the constituents which sometimes facilitates a *quid pro quo* mentality (Baldrige, et al., 1978).

Culture Theory. This theory acknowledges that institutional ways of behaving are shaped by values, symbols, and beliefs (Kezar & Eckel, 2004). Culture plays an important role in shaping the governance within the organization (Birnbaum, 1988; Eckel, 2003; Lee 1991), but beyond just shaping the organization, culture also helps to define the outcomes, efficiency, and effectiveness of the organization (Birnbaum, 1988; Kezar & Eckel, 2004). This means that different organizations will view criteria for success differently, and that culture of the organization will dictate what is viewed as effective or efficient. For example, in a collegial organization (such as a small liberal arts school where faculty are invested in the environment personally and professionally) it may be considered very effective and efficient for the faculty senate to meet monthly

to discuss issues in depth and table issues for multiple meetings to ensure that the issue has been considered fully before making a decision. In such an organization, where there is typically a strong commitment to shared governance, the faculty and administration each recognize that they have the best interests of the institution at the heart of their debate, discussion, arguments, and ultimately the decision made. However, in an organization such as a large research university that is far more politically orientated, effectiveness and efficiency of the process is judged very differently. In this institutional type there can be at times a commitment to shared governance that is more symbolic than practical (especially when compared to the collegial institution) and an emphasis on making decisions relatively quickly. Institutional leaders may point to the fact that there are many more constituents that are affected by the decisions made, plus often an element of public pressure since these institutions are often in the public spotlight, putting an emphasis on moving swiftly to arrive at a decision. So, the effectiveness and efficiency can be judged very differently depending on the culture of the organization.

“No matter how much information we gather, we can often choose from several viable alternatives. *Culture influences the decision*” (Tierney, 1988, p. 5, *emphasis added*). The study of organizational cultures allow a researcher to begin to understand the “...feel, sense, atmosphere, character, or image of an organization. It encompasses ... notions of informal organization, norms, values, ideologies, and emergent systems” (Hoy & Miskel, 2008, p. 177). Culture is more than the structures described above, but also includes the norms, values, and ideologies of the system that are significant.

Further, the organizational culture is a reflection of the type of processes that are done, how those processes are completed, and who completes those process (Tierney, 1988). As such, understanding the role of culture in institutions is important to understanding and improving the functioning of a system “...the most persuasive case for studying organizational culture is quite simply that we no longer need to tolerate the consequences of our ignorance...” (Tierney, 1988, p. 6).

There are three models which appear to be appropriate as they provide a holistic consideration of the role that institutional culture plays in other institutional processes, such as governance (Chaffee & Tierney, 1988). First, Chaffee and Tierney (1988) created a model with three dimensions, which Tierney (1988) then refined to provide greater specificity. Chaffee and Tierney’s model consists of three dimensions: *structure*, *environment*, and *values* (1988). The *structural dimension* refers to the methods employed by an institution in order to accomplish tasks, such as rules, policies, and programs (Chaffee & Tierney, 1988). In this way, the structural dimension includes both formal and informal planning, decision making and institutional operations (Chaffee & Tierney, 1988). The *environmental dimension* is characterized by the context with which people understand the events, work, and problems of an institution, which Chaffee & Tierney referred to as the “enacted environment” (1988). The third dimension is *values*, which refers to the beliefs, standards, and the main concerns of the organization, which can typically be found in the mission or the core values of an institution (Chaffee & Tierney, 1988). Building on each of these dimensions, there is another overlapping framework with three larger themes that provide context: *time*

(history and traditions that influence behavior), *space* (the symbolic and practical area with which to conduct work), and *communication* (how people within the environment receive and understand the environment) (1988). To achieve a proper equilibrium between the dimensions, Chaffee and Tierney have suggested that there must be alignment between the structures, environments, and values, and the themes of time, space and communication must support and further develop the alignment between the dimensions (1988). Considered in this way, an organization will achieve cultural integration which indicates a strong identity for the institutional culture (Chaffee, 1983; Chaffee & Tierney, 1988).

Along with understanding the factors which contribute to the creation of culture, it is important to understand the strength of the culture, which depends on four factors: the *size* of the organization (it is easier to have a strong culture in a smaller organization); the *coupling* of the organization (when systems are more tightly coupled, the strong sense of interdependence creates a stronger culture); the *age* of the organization (older organizations have had a longer period of time to develop a culture); and *historical foundation* on which the institution rests (traumatic events to galvanize a culture, while the history of an institution tends to perpetuate similar values, traditions, and beliefs) (Masland, 1986). However, strong cultures are not always an ideal, since strong cultures tend to promote an inability to see new ideas as valid within the organization (Morgan, 2006). “One of the interesting aspects of [organizational] culture is that it creates a form of “blindness” and ethnocentrism. In providing taken-for-

granted codes of action that we recognize as “normal,” it leads us to see activities that do not conform with these codes as abnormal” (Morgan, 2006, p. 125).

As discussed above, the organizational culture helps people to make sense of their surroundings and understand the structures within which they work. As Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld (2005) discussed, culture helps to create our realities, through a process called “enactment theory,” which simply states that people are proactive in creating their unconscious reality. Morgan elaborated on this point by saying “Although we often see ourselves as living in a reality with objective characteristics, life demands much more of us than this. It requires that we take an active role in bringing our realities into being through various interpretive schemes, even though these realities may then have a habit of imposing themselves on us as ‘the way things are’ (Morgan, 2006, p. 136). In this way, cultures are the boundaries for the created realities that we have designated for specific contexts (such as organizations) (Birnbaum, 1988, p. 191). However, these realities are not permanent, nor fixed. In the face of a crisis the reality is shifted which allows for institutional administrators to embrace new or non-traditional goals (Harten & Boyer, 1985; Birnbaum, 1988).

Enactment theory and the reliance upon the unconscious in order to understand and create a culture is particularly troubling given what we know about the nature of implicit bias and how those in leadership roles (typically white men) create and reinforce exclusive and oppressive environments for women and people of color (DesRoches, Zinner, Rao, Iezzoni & Campbell, 2010; Goldin & Rouse, 2000; Moss-Racusin, Dovidio, Brescoll, Graham & Handelsman, 2012; Trix & Psenka, 2003). Enactment

theory is also consistent with the structural theory of racism (discussed above). Briefly, from an institutional perspective, racist ideologies and actions from those in leadership are able to affect racist spaces at all levels of the organization (Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Carmichael & Hamilton, 1967). In this way, the culture of an organization is not only the product of the white decision makers who create the hegemony, but also serve to guide the racialized actions of those within the system (Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Moore, 2008).

Institutional Decision Making. “Moreover, to implement decisions, leaders must have a full, nuanced understanding of the organization’s culture. Only then can they articulate decisions in a way that will speak to the needs of various constituencies and marshal their support” (Tierney, 1988). A discussion of the culture of higher education organizations is incomplete without briefly also touching on institutional decision-making, since this is the pragmatic intersection of culture, organization type, in interpersonal variables. It has been acknowledged that institutional decisions are influenced by educational mission, institutional history, bureaucratic procedures, values of the institution, demographics of the institution, external pressures, and the culture of the institution (Bauman, Bensimon, Brown & Bartee, 2005; Birnbuam, 1988; Tierney, 1988; Chaffee, 1983; Baldrige et al., 1978). That said, decisions are largely made using intuition rather than data (Dill, 1984), which again points to the important role of culture and unconscious/unacknowledged understandings of the world (as described above in enactment theory). Recognizing that white men are overrepresented in higher education administration, it should not be surprising that VanDeventer Iverson (2007) found that

diversity policies which are designed to foster equity actually construct people of color negatively and reinforce exclusion. The consequences of such failures in decision making has consequences for the policies embraced by the organization and ultimately on the underrepresented people within the organization. As Stein (2004) described “Policy does not create bias. However, it does embody the biases of its crafters and can reinforce the biases of its implementers” (p.107).

Importantly, the models for higher education institutional decision-making do not really acknowledge the difficulty of this reality. Instead Tarter and Hoy (1998) have outlined the circumstances which theoretically guide decision makers. First, the *rational approach* (which is also known as *optimizing*) is a model where problems are identified, possible alternatives are weighed, and the best choice is made. This model has its roots in economic choice models and assumes that the administrators will have access to and be able to interpret data that will illuminate the correct decision all of the time (Chaffe, 1983; Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Eisenhardt & Zbaracki, 1992). Second, is the *administrative model* (also known as *satisficing*), which was developed by Herbert Simon, which suggests that administrators simply seek a satisfactory resolution instead of seeking the best option because there are too many unknowns in a given situation (Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Simon, 1993; Tarter & Hoy, 1998). Inherent in this model is the assumption that rationality in decision-making is impossible and that the institutional and personal values and morals are part of the decision making process (Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Morgan, 2006; Tarter & Hoy, 1998). Third is the *incremental model* (also known as *muddling through*) which operates by decreasing the number of alternatives by only considering options that

are similar to the existing problem (while largely ignoring theory) (Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Tarter & Hoy, 1998). This allows leaders to make smaller scale decisions and closely monitor the outcome so that larger scale negative impacts can be avoided (Tarter & Hoy, 1998). Fourth is the *mixed scanning model* (also known as the *adaptive model*) which allows decision makers to make decisions based on partial (or no) information. The strength of this model is that it uses trial and error and as a result is comprehensive (to the problem) and flexible (with the initiation of a solution) (Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Tarter & Hoy, 1998). The difference between *mixed scanning* and the *incremental models* is that *incremental* is largely “aimless,” while the *mixed scanning* constantly asks the administrator to consider how decisions reflect the mission and goals of the organization (Tarter & Hoy, 1998, p.216). The final decision making model is the *garbage can model* (which was previously discussed) which neither relies on a problem to begin the process nor the solution to end the process (Birnbaum, 1988; Cohen & March, 1974; Cohen, March & Olsen, 1972; Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Tarter & Hoy, 1998). As a result a result the decision making is characterized by “randomness” (Hoy & Miskel, 2008, p. 344).

Tarter and Hoy (1998) also described the criteria for different situations that decision makers could find themselves and which decision making style would be most appropriate for a given context. However, it appears that such a clinical approach to decision making may be somewhat myopic to be pragmatic for decision makers. The concept of *bounded rationality* may help explain some of the gap between the choices that institutional leaders make and the decision making theory. *Bounded rationality* refers to the how institutional decision makers are often not able to make perfectly

rational decisions because of limited time, resources, and processing ability (Morgan, 2006; Simon, 1993). Cyert, Simon, and Trow (1956) found that the decision processes required a tremendous amount of time and resources in order to be consistent with the institutional decision making theory. As a result, some of the “randomness,” that characterized the garbage can model may be closer to how administrative decisions are made in higher education contexts.

Hoy and Miskel observed that “The practice of administrative decision making is a continuing exercise in both rationality and valuation; it is both a rational and ethical activity. To separate the activities is foolhardy and impossible. Values and rationality are symbiotic not antithetical” (Hoy & Miskel, 2008, p. 328). The values of the organization (by logical extension, the individual) are important factors in the decision making process. As Tierney (1988) described, decision makers must have a complete understanding of the culture in order to implement decisions that are supported by the institutional constituents. Kezar (2007) has suggested that in order to make effective decisions regarding inclusiveness on college campuses, an investigation of the “underlying values and beliefs which guide the behavior of staff, faculty, and administrators on campus” (p. 579). Unfortunately, institutional culture tends to resist change, since change may corrupt the values of the institution; therefore, if inclusiveness and respect for diversity are not already part of the institutional fabric they will likely be difficult values to incorporate into the institutional ethos (Aguirre & Martinez, 2006).

The issue of decision-making with regard to diversity serves as an example of mixing values and rationality. As Chang (2000) observed, administrators are forced to

mix “anti-racist endeavors with other institutional interests,” but often do not consider how decisions in one area have an effect on the other area. Some of the areas where these decisions are most visible include: equal access for all students versus institutional academic excellence; constitutionally protected free speech versus rules that protect civility among campus participants (Matsuda, 1993); campus stability versus institutional change; and the interests of the institution versus the interests of the public good (Chang, 2000). Chang acknowledged that the decisions are never this clear cut, nor are they likely a single decision; however, institutional decision makers are required to take action regardless (Chang, 2000; Birnbaum, 1988; Baldrige, 1971). As a result, uncertainty is often quite high, which leads to leaders relying on “social similarity and social relationships” as a means to make decisions (Pfeffer, Salancik & Leblebici, 1976, p.230). Also, in these highly uncertain situations, individual self-interests will also be protected in the decision making process (Pfeffer et al., 1976). Rooted in the context of American higher education (which as discussed above is replete with examples of inherent whiteness), this is particularly concerning because the dominant group will also seek to protect their own self-interests (dominant group in society was defined as white people) (Aguirre & Martinez, 2006; Bobo & Kluegel, 1993). Further, for those decisions which are made on behalf of inclusiveness or diversity, most all tend to be first-order decisions which are only changes on the surface and do not seek to affect the deeper culture of the institution (Aguirre & Martinez, 2006; Anderson, 2008; Bensimon, 2004, 2005; Williams, Berger & McClendon, 2005). As a result, strong transformational leadership is required to change the institutional culture into one, which respects and

values the perspectives and experiences of those who are traditionally marginalized (Aguirre & Martinez, 2006; Tierney, 1989).

Summary

Morgan (2006) stated “organizations are in essence socially constructed realities that are as much in the minds of their members as they are in the concrete structures, rules, and relations” (p. 137). In this way, institutions of higher education sit in a unique position within society. Higher education institutions are part of a public trust, which includes an investment in through tax dollars, tuition, and research dollars. As part of the return on this investment, institutions are expected to serve the public good through the creation and dissemination of knowledge. Administrators are charged with ensuring the institution functions effectively and are charged with the responsibility to make decisions regarding how the institution will best be able to fulfill this trust. The literature reviewed above describes how institutional types, behaviors, and culture effect the accomplishment of this public trust. A substantive gap in this literature is how whiteness is realized and practiced by white administrators in their behaviors, values, decision-making and leadership in the pursuit of the fulfillment of this public trust.

CHAPTER III

DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH METHODS

The choice of methodology and paradigm are, of course, driven by the research questions. In this chapter I will outline my framework and methodology, but I will also discuss my role as the researcher in this study, including briefly discussing my motivation to pursue this study.

Choice of Paradigm

Within this study, I seek to investigate whiteness and white space in a specific higher educational context. For the questions that I've outlined, the constructivist paradigm is the most appropriate to situate this research. Specifically, constructivist inquiry utilizes interpretative epistemologies that will provide the depth of understanding necessary to understand the socially constructed reality described by each of the institutional administrators.

The ontology (what is real) of the naturalistic/constructivist paradigm relies on the fact that there are many different realities which exist, rather than one single objective reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this way reality is socially constructed based on interactions and experiences that create an individual understanding of the world. Berger & Luckmann (1967) have described the social construction of reality as a construct, which is based on how people or groups interact with each other over time. These groups and people form models regarding how *other* people and groups interact in a social space. When these

models become habitualized, groups and people are then treated according to this contrived model (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). These models for a particular group can then be utilized by several people or groups, creating an institutionalized behavior (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). When these contrived models become so institutionalized that they are actually part of the fabric of a society, the reality for that group or person is socially constructed (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). The treatment of groups or individuals is therefore based in part on the socially constructed nature of reality. This argument for the socially constructed nature of reality means that a single, objective reality is impossible, meaning that an investigator must pursue multiple realities and truths. “Truth then emerges not as one objective view but rather as the composite picture of how people think about the institution and each other. Truth comprises the perspectives of administrators, line-level staff, professional workers, outsiders, volunteers, maintenance staff, residents and family,” (as cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 80). The frame of reference for individuals (or institutions) then becomes the basis for their social constructions of reality.

Additionally, there are factors that must be considered in order to truly understand the lived experiences of others in a constructivist inquiry. Lincoln and Guba described the role of values in an inquiry by stating “values cannot be separated from the core of an inquiry by the simple expedient of claiming objectivity, because findings are literally created by the inquiry process” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. xiii). Again, the nature of reality is not only socially constructed by individuals, but it is further created and refined through the inquiry process itself. In the present study, it is important to

recognize that the different social constructions of reality affect the ways that individuals see and describe experience policies, practices, and programs within the institution, which is the foundation for this study. Based on the literature above, race (and specifically whiteness), plays a critical role in the social reality for people of color as well as white people. Importantly, the data will illuminate realities which are emergent in this inquiry, meaning that I as the researcher am uncertain about the breadth, depth, and extent for many of the socially constructed realities exist for the individual institutional administrators. Uncovering the wide range of lived realities and multiple constructions of reality held by leaders will be the thrust of this study, data best understood in the naturalist/constructivist paradigm.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) have described five axioms which undergird this paradigm and demonstrate why this paradigm is most appropriate given the nature of information which is sought. First, the naturalist paradigm recognizes that there is not only one reality, but rather there are multiple, socially constructed realities which must be considered (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Second, within naturalistic inquiry, the relationship between the researcher and the subject (knower and known) is recognized as indistinguishable (Guba, 1990; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). That is, due to the nature of the interaction between the knower and the known, it is impossible for these actors to fail to influence each other and their constructions of reality.

Third, naturalistic inquiry does not seek to create generalized truth statements that describe reality, but rather naturalistic inquiry seeks to detail idiographic truth statements which are time and context specific (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this way, the

naturalistic inquirer recognizes that the nature of knowing is bound with the individual knower (in their reality) and therefore cannot be generalized as a nomothetic truth (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Again, the goal for this type of research is not to uncover universal or generalizable truths; rather the goal is to describe the individual lived realities for people within a social context. Fourth, naturalistic inquiry recognizes that reality is “in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping,” thereby making it impossible for the naturalist to identify linear causes and effects for interactions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 38). In this way, determining causation is not an end (or possibility) for the naturalist. Such a conception of reality recognizes the many social, interpersonal, and intrapersonal variables affect one’s understanding. Fifth, unlike the conventional paradigm which utilizes a values-neutral approach, the naturalist recognizes that the inquiry is “values-bound,” meaning that inquirers cannot separate themselves from the values laden activities necessary for an inquiry such as the choice and framing of a problem, the choice of paradigm with which to investigate the problem, the choice of substantive theory to guide the inquiry, and the choice of context in which to investigate (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Interpretivism is a way of knowing that can be understood within the naturalistic tradition that is germane to this particular investigation of whiteness. Schwandt (2001) has described interpretivism as a way to understand social interaction and further understand the meanings that underlie the social interaction. Schwandt (2001) further described the four ways in which interpretivism can be best understood. First, empathic identification involves understanding the “motives, behaviors, desires, thoughts, etc” of

the actor (p.192). Second, phenomenological sociology seeks to understand how the everyday world (social reality) is comprised in daily life and interaction (Schwandt, 2001). Third, language games refer to the way that words and conversation are used differently in different cultures to convey covert and overt messages (Schwandt, 2001). Fourth, the intersection in philosophy between interpretivism and philosophical hermeneutics: “philosophical hermeneutics argues that understanding is not, in the first instance, a procedure – or rule-governed undertaking; rather, it is a very condition of being human. Understanding is interpretation” (Schwandt, 2001, p. 194). The goal is to “understand what is involved in the process of understanding itself” (p.196). In this way, interpretivism provides a vehicle for gaining new understandings of different realities, while philosophical hermeneutics enhances understanding by integrating the new constructions of reality into extant understandings and theories. As a result, understanding is expanded and enriched. Given the ways in which whiteness is experienced, understood, and expressed by administrators (of color and white), interpretivism will have tremendous utility in seeking individual understanding.

Theoretical Framework

The most appropriate framework to undergird this research is Critical Race Theory. A Critical Race Theory (CRT) approach is defined by Solorzano and Yosso as a “theoretically grounded” construct that recognizes race and racism throughout the research process; confronts traditional research paradigms to explain the experiences of people of color; proposes a liberation of race, gender and class by focusing on these marginalized groups experience of research; and uses of an interdisciplinary approach

(2002, p. 24). Along with this definition of a CRT approach, the tenets that are associated with CRT must also be identified, to create a more complete understanding of what critical research involves. First, CRT assumes that racism is a normal part of society and is present in the everyday lives of people of color in the US (Calmore, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lopez, 2003; Solorzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000). Second, CRT insists that white people have been the primary beneficiaries of much of the legislation that was alleged to help people of color, including Civil Rights Legislation (Calmore, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Solorzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000). Third, CRT recognizes that race is in actuality a social construction, which means that there is no objective reality standard that can be applied to race. In this way, race is neither biologically determined, nor is it fixed or constant (Calmore, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lopez, 2003). Fourth, CRT utilizes the voices of people of color as data: the lived experience of people of color provides powerful testimony and a unique epistemological opportunity (Calmore, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Further, voice allows for understanding of the multiple constructed realities that only a qualitative inquiry can truly fulfill (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lopez, 2003). Fifth, CRT offers a critique of the legal liberalism paradigm, which argues the legal channels are the best opportunity for advancing a progressive racial agenda (Ladson-Billings, 1998). CRT posits that to correct the injustices of racism there will need to be broad changes, and since the legal structures are not only slow moving but inherently racist, the legal liberalism approach offers very little to advance this cause (Ladson-Billings, 1998;

Moore, 2008; Solorzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000). This brief definition and explanation of the tenets of Critical Race Theory provide a foundation and analytical lens through which data can be best understood. Utilizing Critical Race Theory is a commitment not to be taken lightly, as this theoretical position has been established by giving voice to the lived experience of people of color. As the researcher, it is my responsibility to practice this tradition genuinely, so as to honor all of the people of color who have sacrificed everything in order to expose the intensely racist interactions and social structures that characterize the American experience.

Method

In order to capture the best data possible, from the best sources, utilizing the best methods, two sources of data were examined. First, in order to understand how whiteness is practiced on campus, it is necessary to investigate policies, practices, decisions, structures, and rituals at the institution. An analysis of institutional documents, news stories, campus artifacts, and campus narratives provides an understanding of the context within which people at State Research University (SRU) exist was necessary for enabling an thick description of the context. This context is invaluable because it illuminates factors that are otherwise very difficult to measure or document, such as the institutional culture, and how that culture is woven into part of the very fabric of the institution (that is, what makes SRU operate). As Morgan described, “organizational structure, rules, policies, goals, missions, job descriptions, and standardized operating procedures perform a similar interpretive function, for they act as primary points of reference for the way people *think about* and *make sense of* the

contexts in which they work” (2006, p.139, *emphasis added*). Consistent with the interpretivist tradition, these contextual realities inform as much about the environment as the people who exist within the environment.

Second, I utilized a series of semi-structured interviews with institutional decision makers. To best understand the institutional context for race it was necessary to interview both administrators of color and white administrators. In this way, the white space can be more clearly identified and accurately depicted by examining the white space at SRU from different perspectives.

One of the important tasks in this study was establishing a sense of trust with my participants. While this is true of virtually any study, trust may have been even more important in this study. State Research University is an institution where race is not only relevant, but the institution has an enduring legacy of racism that is consistent with many southern institutions (as will be described later). As a white male, I look exactly like many of the people who have created so many hurtful and hostile circumstances for so many people of color. Further, because of the legacy of (justified) mistrust by people of color at SRU, it is quite likely that a person of color would not share their experiences with racism with people that are not deeply trusted confidants. Given these circumstances, the administrators of color that I chose to interview were selected based not only on their position within the organization (seeking different functional areas, different leadership/supervisory roles), but I only interviewed people that I had the opportunity to build trust with, prior to the interview. I believe this strategy allowed for a genuine sharing of experiences that might not otherwise be possible for an unknown

white interviewer asking administrators of color about their experiences with racism, particularly at SRU.

The first group that I interviewed and analyzed was composed of administrators of color, as this helped to inform conversations with white administrators. Due to the nature of these interviews, different interview protocols were utilized depending on the race of the person interviewed. In these interviews, I utilized a semi-structured interview protocol that began with five questions:

Questions for administrators of color:

1. What is your racial classification?
2. What has your experience been like as an administrator of color at this institution?
3. How does whiteness show up in everyday activity?
4. How does whiteness show up in institutional decision making?
5. Are there policies, procedures, programs, or other structures that favor or protect whiteness?

As expected, further refinement of these questions was necessary in order to really get into some of the issues. For example, many of the administrators of color are not necessarily familiar with the language and terms of Sociology and so classifying something as whiteness proved to be a difficult exercise. I found that it was helpful to provide a short definition of what whiteness to help them understand what I am specifically asking about.

Further, after meeting with one of my committee members (Dr. Bonner), I added a short case study for participants to read and react to. This was a useful exercise for some participants, particularly since my question number four (about whiteness in

institutional decision making was so vague and broad). So, my case study sought to ask participants to reflect on the role of their race in making decisions (university or unit decisions). The first case study I utilized documented a case of a student from Sugarland, TX who did not get into the University of Texas and who alleged the reason was because of her race. I asked participants to reflect on the concept of victimization, particularly on the basis of race. I utilized this story at a time before it became simply known as the “Fisher case,” but as the case became larger and more discussed in the media it was clearly complicated by many narratives floating around, so I had to abandon that case. The second one I utilized was a brief write up about Justice Sonia Sotomayor who, during her confirmation hearing, had to field many questions about her identity (her race specifically) and how that impacts her ability to make decisions. Participants were then asked to consider how their race affects their decision making. Again, I realized after having participants respond to this prompt that they were unable to localize this question to themselves, perhaps because I invoked a national-level political story which in the minds of many participants was an opportunity for participants to launch into a discussion that did not answer the question. Finally, I decided to simply add a question that asked participants directly, “Does your race impact the decisions you make, and if so, how?” The direct approach seemed to work much better in terms of getting administrators to focus on the question.

As it turned out my question number five (that deals with programs and policies that protect whiteness) was also a difficult one for many participants to respond. I think for many people it can be difficult to see individual or local decisions as part of a

broader discourse. This is particularly true of the administrators of color who have only sparse exposure to other administrators of color to discuss issues and problems that they must navigate. Since there are few opportunities to discuss their experience, there is little opportunity to recognize the systemic nature of their problem. Instead many saw their individual instances with oppressive structures and programs as individual racist projects. Instead, asking questions about the climate of their unit seemed to better uncover these racist projects because this was now space to discuss their individual experiences. Pushing a little further, I found that asking questions about who is ultimately responsible for the climate of their unit or the university (a question that I borrowed from the white administrator question protocol) helped participants think about the nature of oppression and how there is always, ultimately someone who must account for the experiences of all of the people within the university.

Interviews with white administrators similarly required trust since I was asking about issues that most white people are uncomfortable talking about: their race and possible unearned privileges associated with being white. However, since the white administrators were often times people I did not know, there was much more time necessary building trust before I could begin to ask questions about their race.

Further complicating interviews with white administrators was the fact that for many of them the topic of their race and whiteness is something with which they have little experience, and something that may seem ethereal. As Feagin described (2006) the white racial frame creates a reality through which white people view the world; as a

result many white people struggle to understand their meritocratic understanding of the world is far from reality for many people of color.

Also important is the idea that people typically describe themselves in what they perceive as a positive light. This is particularly true of white people in their discussions of race, where they will likely describe themselves as committed to equality, or at least as someone who holds no discriminatory views. This framing will be nonetheless telling, since as Doane and Bonilla-Silva (2003) observed, white people tend to use language to hide racist or discriminatory views, utilizing the colorblind rhetoric. In this way, white people may expose their lack of understanding of race issues and provide a valuable insight about their framing for race issues. Knowing this, in my interviews with white administrators it was important to create a safe space for white administrators engage and explore their understanding of race and whiteness. To ensure that I was able to create a safe space I field tested my trust building dialogue and the questions with white allies to ensure that I would be perceived in a non-threatening way and enable an authentic discussion of race.

My semi-structured protocol began with the following questions:

Questions for white administrators:

1. What is your racial classification?
2. What does it mean to you to be [white or whatever identity they choose] in American society? At this university?
3. Talk about your perception of the racial climate at this university.
4. How does your race impact your decision-making?
5. Talk about policies/standard operating procedures/norms/practices that may inadvertently privilege some and disadvantage others.

6. Who is ultimately responsible for the ensuring equity in all of the policies, procedures, norms, and practices at this university?

As was the case with the administrators of color, this protocol evolved as well to better inform our interview. Probably one of the most important changes was to ensure that my wording of each question was exactly right. For white administrators, the devil was in the details, so if I did not ask a question exactly right, the response I received was often a little less descriptive and specific than was useful. For example, for question number five (dealing with policies that may privilege “some” and disadvantage “others”), I had ask that question explicitly about race and ask about disadvantaging people of color. This was because many white administrators were very quick to cite other sorts of discrimination that they were much more comfortable talking about (including sexual orientation, gender, socio-economic status, religion, and country of origin, to name just a few), despite the fact that they knew from my introduction and the Informed Consent that my inquiry revolved around race.

Another example of my protocol evolving can be seen in question number four, where it was important to ask first, “does your race affect your decision making?” before asking how their race affected decision making. By giving white administrators an extra moment with a yes/no question, it seemed to better allow them to think of specific examples, instead of jumping right to “how does race affect decision making,” which seemed to put some people on the defensive if that did not apply to them (those who subscribed to a color blind ideology). Interestingly, some of those who utilized a

colorblind ideology were able to acknowledge that race affected their decision making when asked.

Finally, in question number six, similar to the administrators of color, it was useful to ask participants about the climate rather than about equity in policies. When white administrators hear policies and procedures, it seemed to take a different tone than a question about the climate (which also asks about people's interactions with policies and procedures). When I asked about equity, there were frequently responses about compliance and the law including things like the university's federally mandated Affirmative Action Plan (which many administrators could point to, but none could really discuss in any meaningful detail). By asking instead about climate, I more easily got to the important information that related to the lived experiences of people on that campus.

Participants

Each of the potential participants was emailed and scheduled for a 90 minute interview. In my email, I attempted to appeal to a decision maker's sense of obligation to help a doctoral student, which seemed to have worked since every person that I emailed agreed to participate in the study. There were 15 interviews conducted before I reached theoretical saturation, including eight with participants who identified as white and seven with participants who identified as a person of color (five identified as Black or African American; two identified as Hispanic or Latina, one of whom also identified as International). While participants were not explicitly asked about their gender, I can fairly reliably report that eight participants presented as women and seven presented as

men. Further, the intersection of race and gender there were: three Black or African American women; two Hispanic or Latina women (one of whom also identified as International); two Black or African American men; three white women; and five white men.

Below, I will provide a biosketch for each of the participants, but first a note about position types and nomenclature. For the sake of consistency and to help disguise the identity of each of the participants, I relied on a three-tier classification system to describe three different types of administrators: mid-level managers, director-level administrators, and executive-level administrators (based on the analysis of data from SRU). A mid-level manager is someone who has decision making authority over a small group of people within a particular unit (team, department, group, etc.), but they are still supervised by one or more higher-level administrators. The director-level administrators have control over a somewhat larger group of professionals including one or more mid-level managers. Often times these are the folks that can set policies and procedures for the day-to-day work within their unit. These are folks who typically report to an executive-level administrator. The executive-level administrators have purview over a somewhat larger component of campus, including the entire functional area of campus. Indeed their reach is measured through hundreds and perhaps thousands of employees. Their work is not typically the day-to-day functioning of a unit, but is rather concerned with the larger questions and macro-level involvement in issues. Their decisions and mandates are carried out by those they supervise, rather than personally. While they do not typically participate in the day-to-day minutia of a particular unit on campus, they

are in charge of setting the overall direction for multiple units, so they have a heavy influence over what is valued and what important for that unit. Mid-level managers, and director-level administrators have the responsibility of carrying out the charge of the executive-level administrators, but also have the ability to set their own direction and place value into projects that are at times congruous or contradictory to the executive. Since the execs are not involved in the day-to-day work of the unit, they are at times out of the loop and unaware of how employees on the ground are treated/or how they behave.

Angela is a Black woman who was a director-level administrator who also had a faculty appointment at the university. She described herself as an outsider at SRU by virtue of being from a different part of the country and because she studies issues of equality. Despite seeing herself as an outsider, she was highly visible at SRU because of the unit that she led at the university and was involved in a couple of incidents that involved her expertise and role as a faculty member and administrator. What is particularly ironic is that *Angela* is introverted by nature and often shies away from attention: in her own words she would just like to work on her teaching and research, which is why she pursued this line of work, so that she would be able to just do those things that are important to her (research and teaching). However, because of her race and position as a faculty member and administrator she was reluctantly thrust into positions where she had to comment about race and incidents at SRU. At the time of the interview, *Angela* had been at SRU for about five years but is no longer at the university.

Anita is a Black woman who is a director-level administrator with a joint faculty appointment whose position is responsible for a research center at SRU that studies issues of inequality. Anita was responsible for a large grant as well as working with faculty and graduate students who study issues of inequality. Anita was very generous with her time and information, as she provided a tremendous amount of detail and specificity to qualify her experiences. A large part of the interview dealt with a specific episode whereby she was deceived by white university administrators and made to feel threatened and uncomfortable. At the time of the interview, Anita had been at SRU for four years but is no longer at the university.

Gabriella is a Hispanic woman who also identifies as an international person. She is a mid-level manager with a faculty appointment. As the only international person that I interviewed, she had unique international experiences that dealt with xenophobia, as well as her racial identity. Her racial identification was a difficult question for her to answer because she identifies as white in her home country, but in the US she has been told that she is Hispanic, a racial identification that appears to have more to do with her accent than her phenotype. Gabriella has had the opportunity to serve in a tokenized role in committee work because of her assigned race, but has met considerable resistance because she does not conform to the roles assigned to her by virtue of her race. She has been told that she is too loud, too aggressive, and framed as difficult. However by virtue of these committee assignments, she was able to describe a number of very high-level meetings and spaces that would otherwise be inaccessible. At the time of the interview she had been at SRU for eight years and is still at the university.

Jasmin is a Black woman, mid-level manager at SRU who has a long tenure at the university, including time as a student and staff member. *Jasmin* was somewhat difficult to schedule for an interview, I think for a couple of reasons: first, the nature of what she has to say is such that it is probably uncomfortable to have to re-live and think about again. While I know she wanted to help me, she also had to make sure that she is preserving herself and her energy for dealing with the toxic environment in which she works and exists. Second, what she has to say was potentially damning and the potential consequences of her comments would certainly be dire. This was confirmed when we had to meet at a location away from her office so as to eliminate the possibility that someone might walk by and overhear what she had to say. *Jasmin* has been at SRU for more than 10 years and is still at the university.

Maria is a Hispanic/Latina woman who is a mid-level manager, who like *Jasmin* has had a long tenure at the university as a student and a staff member. *Maria* made a career working in units that support the university mission (not in mission driving work), which includes responsibility for leadership, consultation, and presentations on a number of issues, one of which is diversity. Her role has allowed her to interact with many administrators and staff at various levels of the university, including the low-wage, hourly service employees and the high-level executive leaders. To some, *Maria* may appear to be white phenotypically, which has led to uncomfortable situations when white people speak about race with the assumption that they are in the backstage (see Picca & Feagin, 2007). *Maria* has been at the university for more than 10 years and remains at SRU today.

Martin is a Black man who was an executive-level administrator, who again, had a long tenure at SRU and who was well-known and largely well-respected by many at the university and in the community. He has experience at SRU as well as other universities in the region, so he is well-versed in university decision-making and leadership. He has been at very high levels of higher education organizations, as he described, he was “at the right hand of power.” His access to power and the ability to note the institutionalized whiteness is second to none, which made him an ideal interview respondent. At the time of the interview, Martin had been at the university for more than 10 years but is no longer at SRU.

William is a Black man who was a former executive-level administrator, with a faculty appointment who had a relatively short tenure at SRU. While he only spent a handful of years at SRU, his time was notable because it was marked with a number of controversies that were reported on in the national and state media. William’s position was created to help the university practice strategic decision-making, an area in which William is a noted scholar. He was a consultant with SRU prior to being hired as a full-time administrator and is well-published in the literature. In his time at SRU he was largely regarded as an outsider, particularly by those SRU leaders with long-standing tenure at the university. He left the university several years ago to pursue a more senior-level position at another state university.

John is a white male, director-level administrator who at the time of the interview worked at SRU for two years. His primary responsibilities at the university dealt with students, but he had the ability to work on a number of diversity initiatives

within the unit that he led. As a native of the Midwest, his frame for understanding race issues in the south seemed uncomfortable, because of the more explicit ways that race is used to oppress. He appeared to really want to be understood as someone who not only understands issues of race, but also serve as a social justice advocate. John left SRU after having worked there for less than five years, choosing to relocate to a famously conservative institution in the Midwest.

Jack is a white male, executive-level administrator who has had a long tenure at SRU. As an alumni of the institution, he has had close ties with the institution through his political influence. Jack returned to SRU to take a job as an executive, a decision which was publically contested, as he took this position without an interview or public vetting. Jack is an unapologetic in his views regarding his appointment to this position, as well as his whiteness. As a decorated military officer, he commands deference and expects loyalty by all of his subordinates. His lens and understanding of the world appears to be informed by his military experience, meaning that Jack's perspective is the not subject for debate. Of note, Jack supervises both Sally and John, white administrators in this study.

Sally is a white woman, director-level administrator who also has had a long tenure at SRU both as a graduate student, then as an employee for more than a dozen years. She directs a unit that is the hub for many underrepresented students, serving as the education and support needs for the campus community with regard to issues of race, ethnicity, nationality, as well as a number of identity issues. Sally is well known and liked by many on campus. When she was hired as the director of this unit, however,

there was a great deal of consternation since she was also hired without an interview or a process. Many faculty and administrators of color publically voiced concern since this position is so critical to students of color. At the time of our interview for this study, Sally had been in this position for about a year, but clearly the wounds from being the subject of public debate were still fresh. Also noteworthy is that at the time of the interview, Sally was just returning from a national level, week-long diversity training, which appears to have had some impact personally, as she appeared to have engaged in some important thinking about these race issues. However, illustrative of how these experiences are often more problematic than not, she still lacked (by her own admission) a context for understanding race academically.

Olivia is a white woman, executive-level administrator who also enjoyed a long tenure at SRU as a student and ultimately an administrator. Like many of the other white administrators, she was hired into her current executive position without an interview or process. She is a native of the SRU community and had parents who were well known and connected there. Despite not having any training about race or any other identity area, her area of responsibility puts her in a position to affect a great number of employees of color. Her decisions, like many who have similar positions in higher education and in the private sector, are often driven by the bottom line rather than consideration for the actual people effected. More than any other white administrator, Olivia was willing to share her genuine thoughts and narratives about race without consideration for what those perspectives might mean to me as a student studying race. Of note, Olivia is an indirect supervisor of Maria, an administrator of color in this study.

Sean is a white male, director-level, academic leader within the institution with a faculty appointment (full professor). He is unique in this study since his role has both academic and administrative responsibilities, meaning that his success is determined by both faculty and administrators. An area of his research investigates race and as such he is much more thoughtful about his leadership and his race, and in this regard Sean largely stands alone in the circles in which he works. He described being targeted by white faculty and administrators and even accused of discriminating against white people. Sean was also one of only two white administrators to recognize their role in the maintenance of whiteness within the institution.

Rick is a white male, academic leader with a faculty appointment (full professor) whose responsibilities are now exclusively administrative, with purview over a large segment of faculty, students, and staff. Since his executive-level position is in a highly visible academic area, Rick appears to be equal part administrator and politician. Rick grew up in and was educated in the south, so many of his perspectives appear to match closely with what is valued at SRU, where he has been for more than 20 years. Because of Rick's area of responsibility, he is almost never forced to consider issues of race and therefore his discussion of these issues in the interview for this study were punctuated with many pauses, and responses that were somewhat defensive in nature (sought to obscure issues and distance himself from anything controversial). Interestingly, on his biography on his unit's website, "diversity" is prominently featured as an area of his responsibility. Of note, Rick supervises Jasmin, an administrator of color in this study.

Madeline is a white woman, who like Rick, is a academic leader with a faculty appointment (full professor) whose responsibilities are exclusively administrative. As one of the few women in this executive-level position she is highly visible and has a very well-manicured, aristocratic, reputation on campus, where she has been for about ten years. Uniquely, she is also the convener of a campus-wide diversity committee that is also highly visible. Again, like Rick, she is technically an outsider to SRU, but was educated in the south and as such is a good fit for many of the ideologies held at a southern university. Also similar to Rick, the unit for which she has administrative oversight is a highly visible unit meaning that she must balance her role as an academic leader and a politician.

Dan is a white male, who has the same executive-level, academic/administrative position (full professor) as Rick and Madeline, but unlike those two, the unit for which he has responsibility has relatively low visibility, meaning that his work often flies under the radar. Dan is a northerner who has been at SRU for more than a thirty years and become someone who is well respected at the university. The area for which he has responsibility is one where there are a disproportionate number of people of color and women, so his knowledge of race and gender are particularly important. Of note, Dan supervises Sean and Anita, (a white administrator and an administrator of color respectively) so he is certainly exposed to and familiar with these issues within an administrative context.

Lisa was the final person interviewed for this study whose participation was necessary because so many administrators (white and people of color) referred to her by

name. She is a senior, executive level administrator with purview over a great deal of the university, including over many of the administrators in this study. As long standing academic (full professor), and long standing administrator, she is respected by many within the university and appears to uniquely have an understanding of race and gender. In fact, among white administrators, her understanding and articulation of these issues is only matched by Sean who studies these issues (note Lisa is in the hard sciences).

Data Analysis

For the interview data, a constructivist approach was utilized as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Using this approach, I transcribed my interviews (half of them were personally transcribed, while I utilized a transcriptionist for the second half). A great deal of time was spent reading and re-reading the transcript to verify what was said was correctly documented. Following this process, the transcript was shared with the participant to provide the opportunity to ensure reliability (transcripts were emailed and participants were given several weeks to respond with any revisions). Once the transcript was verified, I unitized the data by breaking apart each segment of data from the transcript into the smallest piece that still made sense as a standalone idea (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Once data were unitized, I re-read the unitized data to ensure that each piece of data made sense independently. Next each piece of unitized data was printed onto a notecard that also contained important information about the interview such as: the name of the respondent (pseudonym used), the unitized data, the date of the interview, a number that uniquely identifies the notecard in the sequence. Aside from the data itself, the card number was perhaps the most important tool I utilized, as this

allowed me to find specific quotes in my transcript as well as in my writing (as I wrote chapter four, each quote was marked with the card number) which allowed me to find other places where I used quotes and ideas from respondents.

Once the notecards from an interview were prepared, I sorted the data by reading each card and arranging them into stacks grouping similar ideas together (themes). This process was laborious, since this process seems almost iterative. Data had to be re-read multiple times before themes emerged that made sense, were consistent, and were adequately defined and differentiated (using inclusion and exclusion criteria). On average, data was sorted between four and six times before I was comfortable with the themes and the interaction among themes. Following this thematizing process, I attempted to put themes into categories, or groups of themes that seemed to fit together. Finally, I wrote research memos as a way of analyzing the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This process was perhaps the most time consuming, but also quite possibly the most critical since this allowed me the opportunity to discuss in my own words what the data meant and how it fit together to inform a larger narrative. I liken this process to putting together a puzzle where I don't know what the final picture is supposed to look like. I was able to identify the boundaries, but putting together the pieces so that it illustrated a story was challenging. In particular this was true as I tried to make sense of my research memos together. Since I wrote the memos as almost independent projects, it was very challenging to pull them together in a way that described the big picture. Mercifully, I learned from this process in writing my research memos for my administrators of color and wrote my memos as a cumulative process for my white administrators.

The guidelines as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) were adhered to in order to ensure trustworthiness of the study. Specifically, this included the use of four criteria including: *credibility*, which refers to the ability of the researcher to understand and represent the multiple realities from the known; *transferability* or how similar the context studied is to the context where knowledge application may be attempted; *dependability* or the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that the inquiry process is logical and appropriate; *confirmability* or linking the conclusions of a study to the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Schwandt, 2001). In order to satisfy *credibility*, I triangulated my data (a technique for pinpointing a location whereby three data points confirm an exact position), which included utilizing data from a document analysis along with the interviews from people of color and white people. Further, peer debriefing was utilized where I reviewed the data, themes and findings with people who are knowledgeable of race and whiteness to ensure that I am consistent with my data. Finally, during the interviews, I utilized member checks, where immediately following the interview as I summarize the points that I documented, as well as shared the completed transcripts.

To ensure *transferability*, a thick description was used so that the readers of this study can determine if the context is similar enough for their own context. This included documenting as many components of the racial environment as possible without compromising the anonymity of the institution. To respond to *dependability* and *confirmability*, an audit trail along with research memos were utilized to explain data gathering, analysis, notes, questions, areas for follow-up, and concerns; finally to satisfy all of these areas of trustworthiness, a reflexive journal was kept to document ideas,

explanations of decisions made, trends, thoughts, and to ensure that I am attending to my role and my own framing of the issues (since I am the instrument in a naturalistic inquiry).

Race and the Researcher

Consistent with a naturalistic approach to research, the researcher is in the role of co-constructing reality with the study participants. As a result, my lived experiences, assumptions, stereotypes, and biases are inherently part of the way that my data is understood (Guba & Lincoln, 2001). In particular for this type of study where race and whiteness are the focus, it is important for me as the researcher to interrogate the ways that I have come to understand my own race and privilege. Of note, much of what I describe in this section has been documented in an (as of yet) unpublished journal article.

Growing up in different parts of the Chicago-area, my understanding of race was influenced by a highly segregated environment, as the Chicago metropolitan area is consistently characterized as one of the most segregated in America. This fact is aggravated by the fact that my father maintained a vocabulary with pejorative terms for nearly every identity characteristic, including most prominently, race. This racist attitude permeated many aspects of my daily life. For example, I can clearly recall having a confederate flag in our home and being accused of being a “n*gger” for getting too dark from playing outside in the summer as a child. I remember the confusion of discussing my favorite athletes like Michael Jordan and Walter Payton with my father, only to have him in the same breath declare that if either of them moved in next door to

us that we would move (note, that this is comical on its face since we neither lived in a neighborhood that anyone with means would consider living, nor did we have the means to move if the situation arose).

These lessons remained with me and manifested themselves often. There was the time in high school when my brother and I got our very modest AMC Renault stuck in a snow drift on the way to school. It was cold (as winters are in the upper Midwest) and we were trying to dig it out. A Black classmate of ours who was walking to school offered to help us dig out in return for a ride the rest of the way to school (a very fair deal). Instead of taking this offer I told him “no, we’ll get it.” Since we were going to the exact same place, the only reason that we would have turned down help in that situation is to deny my Black classmate a ride.

In college, I was an RA and I can remember a diversity training whereby we were asked to list all of the slurs and stereotypes we knew for various marginalized identities. Embarrassingly, I knew so many that it felt like I could have gone on all day long citing them all. Even more embarrassing is that fact that this exercise, I believe, was intended to illustrate how those slurs and stereotypes were untrue, but I spent much of the time during this training reflecting on all of the examples in my life that reaffirmed these stereotypes: my Asian neighbors who were in advanced math, the Black students in my high school that excelled in sports, and so many others which were much more offensive. In fact, given the time, I could probably cite many more examples of racist comments and thoughts in which I was a willing participant. I did these things

with no compunction. Recalling these examples now, however, is a painful exercise for a variety of reasons.

My understanding of race was forever changed by a chance interaction with a friend at my tiny, rural, private undergraduate institution, which of course, was not only predominantly white but overwhelmingly white. Our college created an exchange program with a HBCU (Historically Black College/University) and the first group of Black students was coming to our campus to engage in a week-long dialogue about race. This is clearly something in which I would not voluntarily participate. A friend of mine was organizing this dialogue and needed volunteers who would be willing to not only participate in the programs, but also host a student (allowing the student to live with the host for a week). In almost any circumstance, I would have immediately balked at this “opportunity” and claimed to be too busy studying or some other ridiculous excuse. It just so happened that my friend asked me to participate and host a student by asking me in front of all of my friends in the cafeteria. She even started with the racialized and ignorant comment “Dave, you’re from Chicago, we need people to host a Black student and participate in a weeklong dialogue about race.” The implication of her comment is that as someone from a metropolitan area, I must be familiar with people of color and discussing race. After all, whenever WGN news (a nationally syndicated, Chicago-based television station) was on, there were always pictures of Black people who were suspects for a litany of crimes. In that moment that I was asked to participate, I could not think of a single excuse. My mind went blank for two, three, four seconds, until I

finally had to concede and agree to participate. My name went forward as a participant and I had no way out.

In my preparations for hosting my HBCU students (I ended up being asked to host two students because there were so few students who agreed to host a student), I did several things that were based on fear of people of color - things for which I am now ashamed to have assumed about my guests. I hid the things that I thought had value or that exposed me as a white person: my video game system and games, my cd's that featured white artists (as if my guests would never guess that I listened to Pearl Jam and U2), my wallet (which is ridiculous because my credit cards were maxed out and I had no cash), etc. Before even knowing a single thing about my guests I assumed that they would be trying to take from me and that they would be impressed with my extensive collection of gangster rap featuring NWA, Ice Cube, Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, etc. (never mind the fact that this genre of music was heavily marketed to and consumed by suburban white kids, like me). The students that I hosted, Clive and Terrance, were two of the most gracious and helpful people I could have ever asked to be paired with. Once we got to know each other, we spent late nights discussing the reality of race in America. They gave me a lot of space to trip over my words and thoughts and described in gentle ways their racialized experiences. They talked about personally being turned down for a jobs before even completing the job application; being asked to leave a community pool because the pool had allegedly reached capacity, but in reality they (the Black kids) were the only ones being asked to leave; having to consistently prove themselves to teachers who are always surprised to find that they are smart; being treated rudely in stores and

watched closely by security to ensure that they didn't steal anything; having to live in fear of law enforcement, the very people who are supposed to be called to "protect and serve," (a concept that was familiar to them, but new to me and many other white people only really coming to white public attention because of Rodney King), and seemingly endless examples of the ways that racism operates to consistently keep people of color in subjugation.

Following this experience, I was beginning to realize that there was so much to be understood regarding race, so I organized a trip the follow Spring Break where several of my classmates and I went to Fisk to continue the dialogue. The interactions again demonstrated how little I knew about race and the disparate experiences for people of color in America. It was on this visit that I knew I had to come to Fisk for at least a semester and truly emerge myself in this learning. So, the very next semester, which was my Senior year, I spent the first semester at Fisk University where my entire worldview was forever changed.

At Fisk University, I was the only white student, and with the exception of the handful of white faculty members who were only on campus for their classes, I was the only white person for probably a mile in any direction. The men's residence hall, New Livingston Hall, was at the intersection of 17th and Jackson, which is directly across the street from subsidized family housing. There were facets of the neighborhood that I had only seen in movies: the corner store as the hub for activity late at night; the front porch of the residence hall as main meeting spot; places of worship seemingly every block in buildings that did not look anything like what I had come accustomed to recognize as a

church; the prominence of businesses that prey on people (check cashing stores, greasy fast food chains, and a strip club in particular) and businesses that target low-income people (there were four dollar-stores in close proximity to campus), while not having a single grocery store where I could purchase a nutritional staple such as an apple. Many white people would have considered this neighborhood a dangerous place without so much as having driven through because of the concentration people of color and buildings that are not new and do not meet the highly manicured standard found in suburban settings. Admittedly, in my first weeks on campus I was petrified most of the time. It was not until a new friend of mine, Kwofi, explained to me that I was the safest person on campus: if anything happened to me, the nice white kid at an all-Black university, the *Nashville Tennessean*, the *USA Today*, and the *New York Times* would all descend on Fisk to find out what happened to me. If anything happened to him, nobody would even notice. This sad reality was well before the era of social media, but remains an enduring truth, as rarely the day when something bad happening to white people is front-page news meanwhile Black people being unjustly killed is hardly even referenced by the media.

Needless to say, I could fill an equivalent number of pages as this dissertation with stories of my learning and experiences at Fisk. Many of the profound experiences have stayed with me and caused me to pursue race and social justice as not only my area of research, but I've been lucky enough to pursue these issues in my professional life as well. As a passion, race remains a topic that I engage daily, but also an area that continues to be divisive with family members. After describing for my father and his

wife (my parents are divorced, so this person whom he has married is a person who will never bear a moniker that has the word ‘mother’ in it, unless it is followed by the ‘F’ word) my desire to pursue a PhD and study race we had a somewhat curt conversation. In the following weeks his wife forwarded a racially-charged email to me and all of the other people she knows. While I cannot recall the content of the email, it was pejorative and racist. After voicing my objections, the conversation turned quite nasty and paternalistic with her leveling claims of knowing more about race because of her lived experience and no amount of education or experiences to the contrary would change her mind. As a result, we have not spoken a word to each other in 10 years, and conversations with my father typically revolve around benign topics such as the weather and how my children are doing. Similarly, my extended family no longer maintains contact with me (many of them were involved in the infamous email exchange where I replied to everyone with my objections) a silence that has also been about 10 years and was not broken even after my wife and I had children, presumably at-least in part because of my “reverse-racism” attitude.

Consistent with the premise that in qualitative inquiry the researcher is the instrument, it has been important for me to locate myself and my own understanding of race and racism within this study. My experiences, while somewhat unique for a white male, are still problematic in that I still live with unrecognized privilege on a daily basis. My ability to identify and recognize those spaces of privilege are often difficult because of my own reliance upon the white racial frame. I am self-reflexive about my experiences with race, constantly challenging myself to understand places where I have

unearned privilege and where I can use that privilege to make a difference. It is Pollyanna to think that my interactions and efforts can alone dismantle the system of unearned privilege; however, by using myself as an example and seeking to educate other white people (and those with privilege) about the nature of oppression and hegemony, my work seeks to challenge the white racial frame of individuals with the belief that collectively we can acknowledge the realities of race in America and work on fixing our own racist attitudes and predilections (which will hopefully help at least challenge the deeply problematic and racist public discourse that people of color are broken and need remedy through the criminal justice system, the education system, the employment system, the housing system, the health care system, etc.).

Responsibility of Researcher. As a researcher utilizing Critical Race Theory, it is imperative for me to ensure that my study honors the tradition of the paradigm as well as the people who trusted me enough to share their narratives with me. This responsibility is part of a trust or contract between the researcher and the participant where knowledge is not only jointly created and understood, but my role is to ensure that the story of the oppressed and marginalized is represented accurately and shared broadly. To this end, this study illuminates those spaces that are often suppressed by the institutional white space with the explicit intention of liberation and justice. As the researcher, I have emphasized those experiences of administrators of color and put them into a broader social context to understand the systemic nature of the oppression described. Likewise, my role as a white researcher doing this research is to illuminate the ways that white administrators understand themselves and their race (a narrative that

is likely only to be shared with another white person). By placing the narratives of white people in context with people of color at the same university, I will expose the insidious nature of whiteness and illuminate the realities of race and university leadership.

Significance of Study

This study is significant for several reasons. First, there has been a substantive gap identified in the literature in which whiteness of institutional decision makers has not been explored. This study will investigate whiteness among higher education institutional administrators to examine administrative behavior and the environment created. Second, the findings of this study may help the institutional leaders on campus by providing an understanding of a topic that is not typically considered during institutional decision making: that is, understanding the role of race and the nature of each person's reality being a product of their social construction. This may lead to additional training for institutional leaders regarding diversity, factors effecting campus climate, and even recognizing and understanding the role of self in daily work. Third, this study can contribute to growing literature regarding campus climate. Currently, there are several scholars who publish a great deal on how to measure a campus climate, reliable quantitative measures, and sophisticated models for understanding how the learning environment in higher education is affected by diversity and positive or negative interactions therein. The problem with much of this literature is that it allows the white administrators who ultimately control the way that the institution operates, the norms that characterize the daily work of the institution, and even the assumptions about what is acceptable or unacceptable at the institution to remain largely invisible. By

illuminating the role that white administrators play in creating an ethos in which administrators of color must navigate, a bright light will be shed the role that white administrators play in creating the campus climate.

CHAPTER IV

WHITENESS AND WHITE SPACE AT STATE RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

The tremendous amount of data that was gathered for this research provides context, perspectives, and insights on the racialized experience at State Research University from two distinctly contrasted positions: administrators of color and white administrators. This robust dataset allowed me as the researcher to understand the nuance and deep meaning from the descriptions of the environment and the perspectives regarding race as shared by the participants, and understood by me the researcher. This chapter will be separated into two parts: *administrative whiteness* and *white cognitive dissonance*. In the administrative whiteness section, the data provided by administrators of color will describe the environment and circumstances in which people of color are forced to endure marginalization, hostility, and exploitation at the hands of white administrators. In the white cognitive dissonance section, the ways in which white administrators understand their role in the creation of hostility, exploitation, and marginalization will be discussed. In each section a critical analysis of the actions (or lack thereof) and rhetoric of white administrators will be undertaken to ensure the consequences of race and the racialized space at SRU is exposed explicitly.

Since there are several categories, themes, and sub-themes to track, Table 3 (below) can serve as a roadmap for the organization of the data and analysis from the administrators of color.

Table 3: Roadmap for Categories and Themes from Administrators of Color

Category	Theme	Sub-theme 1	Sub-theme 2
Institutional White Space: How the Environment Feels	Political Context		
	Hostile Environment at SRU	Geographic and Physical Space for Hostility	
		Effects of Hostility	Racial Fatigue
			Lack of Trust
			Gender
			Intersectionality
Circling the Wagons: Tactics for Creating and Maintaining White Space	The White Administrator's Mind	Ignorant Leadership	
		Parochial Administrators	Administrators Without a Race
		White Fear	
	White Administrative Tactics	Color Cognizant Decision Making	
		White Control of Bodies of Color	SRU as Property of People of Color
		Commodification of People of Color	Commodification of International People as Hispanic
		Illusion of Progress in Diversity	
		Stereotypes/Expectations of People of Color	People of Color as Troublemakers
		Deceit	
		Intentional, Active Neglect	
		Circle the Wagons	Support Staff as the First Line of Defense
			Administrative Tactics
			Role of Policy
		Human Resources	Professional Development
			Recruitment
			Hiring/Supervision
		Xenophobia	Language and Identity
			Assumptions of Internationals
Confronting Whiteness	Dual Responsibility		

The administrators of color provided a great deal of data regarding their experiences with whiteness and white space at SRU. An overwhelming amount of this data describes the tactics and methods utilized by white administrators to create and maintain institutional white space. In fact, when compared side-by-side, the data in this theme (coded as *creating and maintaining white space*) dwarfs all of the rest of the data from the other themes (from administrators of color) combined. While this should not be surprising given the nature of racism in higher education and American society (particularly in the South), it was nonetheless startling to see the data so plainly contrasted.

By gathering data from administrators of color, white administrators, and utilizing pre-existing data (including the demographics, climate data, and simple data on seemingly benign factors, such as statues and building namesakes on campus), my intention was to reasonably assert that the location and scope of the white institutional space at SRU is not only expansive, but multi-layered, long-standing (longitudinal) and protected through redundancy, making it resilient to opposition and virtually indestructible. As a result, the experience that people of color are forced to endure is fraught with racist interactions, making it exceedingly difficult for people of color to succeed, and equally difficult for white people to be explicitly linked as the cause of the oppressive experiences.

Context for State Research University

Several administrators of color underscored the importance of the context when describing the location of whiteness by citing the institutional context, the state context,

and even the national context. The study of race in prescribed spaces highlights the importance of context, since the context often holds clues about why a space is racially oppressive (Giroux & Grioux, 2004).

Located in a Southern, rural area, State Research University is a comprehensive, research institution that is over 125 years old and has strong ties to southern ways of life. The institution is typically associated with southern thinking (politically conservative), deeply rooted ties (many families able to trace back how many generations of Roughnecks are in the family), military and patriotism (because of the strong ties to the ROTC), and well-known and strongly supported athletics programs. Many of the students who attend the institution are aware of these institutional values and as such the retention rate of students is typically quite high.

The history of the region and the institution are inextricably intertwined and are part of a legacy which can be seen in the institutional culture today. Lynchings of Black men are prominent in the county in which SRU is located and documented in the print media in the years before and after SRU began enrolling students. The role of race was prominent in several aspects of the opening of the institution, including who was able to enroll (white men), who ran the institution (white men), who made it possible for the institution to be created (a Black man), and who is largely credited for this achievement (a white man). The man most strongly associated with opening the institution is honored with a prominent statue and several legacy-enshrining opportunities such as being the namesake for buildings, student organizations, etc. However, the man who actually enabled the institution to open its doors is only known to a small group of historians and

progressives who have for years pushed for greater recognition of this important individual (efforts which have been in vain).

Through much of the first one hundred years of the institution's existence, not very much changed in terms of race. SRU remained a college with strong military ties that was run by white men, with white men as the intended beneficiary. The only people of color associated with the institution were those in service positions (such as custodians and maintenance workers), who toiled at the pleasure of the white faculty, students, and administrators. When women and students of color began enrolling some 100 years after the doors first opened, they endured countless indignities and hostilities, including threats, simply by being on campus. While the campus environment has changed in many ways in the years since SRU began to grow in terms of enrollment (by enrolling women and people of color), the enduring legacies of the history of the institution remain, including that people of color report feeling marginalized and treated with hostility by fellow students, faculty, and staff. The numbers of students and faculty of color at the institution remains quite low, particularly when considered against the demographics of the region of the country in which SRU is located. Sadly, the only place in the institution where people of color are over represented continues to be in service positions such as custodial and maintenance workers. However, in recent years under the premise of saving limited institutional resources, many of these service employees have been sub-contracted to an outside firm. In this arrangement these hard working individuals are no longer employees of the institution and by most accounts are subjected to much worse working conditions at lower wages since they now work for a

private third party, as opposed to having the protection of working for the state. That these employees of color have been historically mistreated, and continue to have their services traded like chattel is illustrative of the prevailing mindset of administrators at SRU.

Similar to many other state-run institutions, there is a connection to the statewide politics among those in leadership positions. This is perhaps more pronounced at SRU where the conservative politics of the state have a direct effect on the management of the institution, which in practice means that the institutional decisions are imbued with conservative rhetoric. In the years in which this study was conducted, the conservative nature of the institution was amplified by state and national politics, which includes events such as the election and re-election of the first Black president, the mobilization of the Tea Party, and the absurdity of framing racial interactions in the US as “post-racial” while people like George Zimmerman, Donald Sterling, Ted Nugent, Michael Richards (aka Kramer), and countless others make headlines with their explicitly racist remarks and actions. The prevalence of explicitly racist interactions appears to actually be on the rise rather than the decline as predicted in the wake of the election of Barack Obama. Therefore it should not be surprising that like many other higher education institutions, SRU has made national headlines with racist incidents on campus. Taken together, SRU embodies many of the qualities of a stereotypical southern university in terms of conservative values, marginalized people of color, and an explicitly white institutional space.

Administrative Whiteness

In my proposal hearing, one of my co-chairs astutely pointed out that simply asking white administrators about their own sense of and understanding of whiteness will not produce deep, substantive results. The analogy that she used was that of the fish as anthropologist: “if fish were anthropologists, what is the last thing they would discover? Water, because it is so all encompassing that they don’t know a world without it,” or so goes the adage.

This is a tremendously important point since as the literature suggests, whiteness for white people is largely invisible because it is so structurally integrated into the lived experience that it can be difficult to see and understand, particularly given the American context for race which values the illusion of a meritocracy and colorblindness. Each of these concepts is laden with conservative rhetoric that attempts that support the fallacy that race is no longer a factor in determining a person’s ability to lead a successful, healthy, happy, financially-secure life, and instead success is predicated on hard work and effort. This rhetorical positioning of race and whiteness seeks to validate the white experience in America as the only experience, so that oppressed voices can remain largely unheard and cast as “extremist,” (for a practical example Fox News can be cited on nearly a daily basis).

When this research was proposed, I assumed that one of preeminent mechanisms by which white space was created was through the policies that white administrators create. By doing a close read of the policies, I assumed that I would be able to uncover ways that whiteness was embedded into the policy and therefore have tenets that create

white space. However, in my second interview, and all of the subsequent interviews with people of color, I found that this was not only an incorrect assumption, but that the opposite is actually true. That is, white space is created and maintained very effectively in practice, but not formally documented as policy. When something rises to the level of policy, it is more difficult (but by no means impossible) to embed protections and privileges for white people. When something is merely a practice, it is free from the confining structure of the written word that can be referenced at a later time to ensure consistency and accuracy. As many of my participants described, the mechanism that many white people relied on most frequently was practice rather than policy (although when convenient for whiteness, policy is given agency as immutable).

In the pages that follow, I will first describe a model for understanding and describing the white institutional space at SRU. I will then turn my attention to detailing the examples through data provided by administrators of color that substantiate the proposed model. Specifically, I will describe how it feels to exist in the environment at SRU; the tactics employed by white administrators to create and maintain white institutional space; and the conflict felt by people of color who are forced to work in this environment (i.e. not having the ability to formally resist the white institutional space). Finally, I conclude this section by reviewing the implications of the white institutional space at SRU.

A Model: White Institutional Space at State Research University

The nature of the white institutional space is difficult to fully appreciate and understand because it is practiced in a wide variety of contexts and is heavily nuanced

due to the highly decentralized nature of the institution (which is common for large, research-intensive universities).

For me as a marathon runner, the analogy that would best illustrate what this space is like to navigate is that of a marathon. While on the surface all marathons appear to be created equal: a 26.2 mile race. There are, however, tremendous differences between these events. For example, factors such as the elevation in which the race is run, the number of hills which must be negotiated, the weather conditions (rain, humidity, hot or cold weather), the course conditions (potholes and uneven surfaces), the frequency of water stops (and the type of electrolyte replacements they have), and the support of spectators, to name just a few of the factors that enhance or inhibit the ability of runner to complete the task. Further, there are personal issues such as how well the individual runner has been able to prepare for the race (balancing training and rest), the number of marathons the runner has completed in the past, the quality of the equipment (shoes, tech fabric shorts and shirts, systems for carrying necessary refueling supplies, MP3 player, etc), and how well rested and how well hydrated the runner is on race day. To the casual observer, it may appear that runners of any marathon have the same ability to succeed in an objective measure such as qualifying for the Boston Marathon, but nothing could be further from the truth.

This is similar to the ways in which all populations are assumed to have the same ability to succeed in an alleged meritocratic space such as a research university which is governed by administrators that in theory seek to create a level playing field for all people, but in reality serve to have a differential impact on different groups depending

on their cultural capital, access to resources, and ability to identify with the white framing that governs the institution.

To return to the analogy, there are conditions that are intentionally created by the race administrators (number of water stops, types of electrolyte replacements, the roads chosen for the course, the incentives to draw a crowd, etc.) as well as some things that are fall beyond their absolute control (rain, humidity), but can still be planned for utilizing data and historic trends. Most race administrators carefully consider these factors to inform their decisions about how to execute a race to ensure that people can succeed. Similarly, we would expect higher education administrators to utilize data and observations regarding trends to make decisions that enable as many people as possible to succeed at a high level. However, what we see through this data is that white people are able to run races in ideal conditions with minimal obstructions and barriers to success, whereas people of color are forced to run races that are in dangerous conditions with appreciably more difficult circumstances and have many more obstacles to overcome in order to succeed by the same objective measure. To take this analogy one step further, this would be akin to people running a marathon in February, either the Houston Marathon (for white people), or the Denver Marathon (people of color). Both groups are completing the same race at the same time, but the obstacles are different, substantial, and will ultimately enhance or inhibit the chances for success for the participants (Houston being mild at that time of year and relatively flat, as opposed to Denver which is at elevation at a time of year which is inhospitable to a marathon). In this model, white institutional administrators ultimately decide who runs which race and

by extension who is able to have the best chance of running a successful race. The chances for people in Denver to finish are greatly diminished by seemingly objective obstacles, but ones that should be absolutely accounted for, and avoided, by any administrator who has the best interests of the participants in mind.

Institutional White Space: How the Environment Feels

I recently went to Baltimore to give a paper, and I was struck by, you know, the people that I was giving the paper for were by and large white liberals. But, I don't even have an idea of what that means anymore after being here for so long. So, I was struck by the warmth, you know, so basic things like giving hugs.

Who's giving hugs around here these days, right? (Angela)

Each of the participants discussed how they feel in the State Research University environment, which it should be noted, is also a reflection on how participants are *made to feel*. It cannot be assumed to be a coincidence that people of color feel similarly disenfranchised by the institution and the spaces that they are forced to navigate. It should also be pointed out that a person's sense of belonging or feeling safe or welcome in an environment is not perfectly objective, nor is it wholly created by the person. Two people who engage and interact within the same environment will have different feelings and experiences based on a huge variety of factors (such as identity characteristics – race, gender, age, sexual orientation, etc.; background and life experiences; even factors that the individual encounters on a daily basis – “my co-workers are difficult to work with, so now I'm cross in this environment.”). Despite a seemingly endless list of possible factors that could delineate and differentiate the experiences of people of color

at SRU, the administrators of color that I interviewed described the way they were made to feel similarly. In this first category, I will describe the context for whiteness and white space at State Research University and how factors such as the history of the institution, the type of students that attend SRU, the leadership at SRU (as well as leadership within the state) and the geographic location of SRU in the South all contribute to the overwhelming white space seen at SRU.

Political Context

Throughout the interviews and data-gathering process, there was a lingering elephant in the room that was discussed tangentially and must be shared in describing this data. The contentious nature of the political environment for the state where SRU is located is important, as it showed up in the ways that the white space is maintained. Angela discussed how this political context feels as well as citing the importance of the historical location:

Even though I have always been involved in white institutions, this is an institution [SRU] that is very much about maintaining white privilege, and when you make this study it has to be contextualized in historical fashion because I think that a lot of the things that are happening right now show the ideas of Republican party politics under siege, and them circling the wagons to do whatever they wanted to, and that's being played out through SRU on the higher educational forefront. So we have basic stuff now, like I have to post my vitae on the web so people can make sure that I'm not teaching crazy stuff to indoctrinate their white kids into some sort of Black cult of liberalism. [261].

Angela's description of the forced transparency required of faculty members is a reference to the way that the conservative legislative bodies in the state have amplified focused attention on faculty and faculty productivity. In areas such as the ones where Angela teaches, there is a real fear of this exercise, since the work that they do is often held in lesser regard, which is painfully true in this instance since there is little financial support that undergirds her scholarship (institutionally or otherwise). This overly prescriptive attempt at institutional accountability is consistent with the conservative rhetoric that calls metrics of productivity linked to financial measures so that value-added can be compared in dollars. Utilizing such a metric inherently supports hard sciences since those are linked to and funded with corporate dollars as well as huge government funding agencies. This exercise has a deep racialized component, since the "soft sciences" (or non-quantitative sciences) are often the places where race, the experiences of people of color, cultural heritage, systems of oppression, etc. are studied. Nationally, these areas are not funded nearly to the same level (if at all) as topics such as chemical engineering, for example. In this way, when conservative legislators reward only those areas that are deemed profitable for the institution, they are putting those areas which do not yield externally-funded support on trial and painting them as non-substantive and at best tangential to the education of students. As Angela described, actions such as these seek to reinforce white privilege within the institution, by maintaining privileged hard sciences, devaluing those sciences which attempt to decenter whiteness and create spaces for counter-narratives, and challenging students to think critically about the world in which they live.

Martin expanded on the role of the state political environment affecting SRU noting how this context is actually bigger than the state, how the conservative rhetoric is concern at the national-level.

[...]I don't think that this is just a Governing Board agenda that seems focused on privatization. I mean it seems like everything I see comes back to the privatization. But I think there is a bigger agenda out there that is so focused on big business, so focused on self-interest, that racial issues have been forced to take a back seat as an institutional priority. And the concern that I have as to how long we're going to be in this, my perception of a regressive state, is that I think this is bigger than the Governing Board. I think it's statewide. I think it's nation-wide. It's an agenda that people have, and as long as that agenda is being driven on this other side [conservative, big-business], I think the importance of diversity from a racial perspective is going to take a back seat. I think that because of financial difficulties that higher ed. and most every entity is having, when you start distributing limited resources, because we had not come as far as we should have come, racial equality, racial inclusion, is going to take a back seat. [332].

Martin amplified the perspective shared by Angela in discussing the implications of big business and conservative politics (which are so comingled that they are seemingly indistinguishable) in higher education. The focus "on self-interest" is perfectly antithetical to the stated purpose of higher education as described in most any university mission statement. When the purpose of education becomes a private good

(as it has been considered in much of the conservative rhetoric) it is much easier to sustain an agenda which supposes that education is to prepare students as (replaceable) cogs in the corporate wheel and train them to consider only what is good for them personally, rather than as critical thinking individuals capable of considering what is best for all people and society in general. In the competition over limited resources those interests that are linked to exposing hegemony and whiteness will always be marginalized, particularly within the current conservative framework where increased attention has been paid to the outright elimination of these resources, opportunities, and interests, and has been seen in the southwest where ethnic studies program have been eviscerated by legislators.

This frame for understanding the role of conservative politics on higher education and within the curriculum broadly speaking provides insight for understanding how the white space at SRU continues to be promulgated. Leadership at seemingly all levels, but especially at the highest levels of the institution, has been affected by these conservative ideologies, which Angela described (below) as having held leadership “hostage” and Martin will describe later as an “abduction.”

Everybody’s just trying to kind of keep the status quo because I think that we are kind of held hostage to the state legislation in a way that Flagship University [another research university in the same state as SRU] is not. They have the same kind of constraints but their faculty seems to be a little more empowered than we are. [235].

The comparison that Angela makes in this comment is particularly insightful since these institutions should, in theory, have the same national and state-level politics to deal with and navigate. In the course of navigating these politics, there is at least the perception that the faculty members at FU are more empowered and that is significant. Faculty empowerment provides the necessary support to not only ensure that the curriculum delivered to students is sufficient for meeting the mission and goals of the institution (by producing well-educated students prepared for the challenges of being members of society), but also by participating in the governance of the institution so that those who are producing the knowledge and the pedagogy are also able to contribute to the leadership of the institution. The environment at SRU has been created and reinforced with heavy influence from legislators, which has effectively muted many of the faculty concerns and precluded their involvement in critical decision-making through shared governance. In this type of dangerous dictatorial relationship, the faculty (the ones who have institutional memory, research-informed data, and are critical thinkers) are effectively muted so that decision-making authority lies ultimately with the state legislature.

Martin's description of how this actually happens is particularly insightful:

I mean, the buck stops with the head of the institution. The trouble we're having is the presidency has been abducted, and even in that abduction you find there's a violation of policy. If you go in and read the policies and procedures, the policies essentially say that the Board of Visitors sets policy, the chancellor promulgates the policy and regulations throughout the system of universities, the

university creates rules to implement those policies at the institutional level, and the president is responsible for ensuring that those policies are appropriately applied, followed, and for creating the structure, the decision-making processes etcetera at the university. That line under this current regime has been so blurred. [...] But what you've got now is dictation – 'you do it this way, you do it this way.' That's not how the structure is supposed to be, and so they don't want to embrace it but the people who are creating the policies are violating their own policies, which of course, creates a dysfunctional institution. [339].

Martin's access to see and understand the politics at the most senior levels of the organization provides a unique peek behind the curtain of SRU administrative leadership, exposing the nature of the dictatorship which has emerged. The political context in which SRU operates is dynamic and exerts an inordinate amount of pressure on the institutional leaders due to the influence of local, state, and even national-level elected officials with strong ties to SRU. While not exclusively, the overwhelming majority of the political connections to SRU are conservative in ideology. As Angela went on to described: "You know, our streets are named after conservative politicians. You know, like there is a direct kind of correlation between the conservatism of the campus and its connection to the Republican Party politics [260]." The influence of conservative politics is undeniable in that it not only part of the rhetoric of the campus, but it is a permanent feature of the landscape. The prominence of the political environment at SRU has created a climate and culture of fear for many people of color and those who are not conservative, since those values and populations have been under

attack for a number of years at the hand of conservative leaders. When juxtaposed against the national-level political conversation, SRU appears to be an even more potent comingling of conservative politics and white institutional leadership.

Hostile Environment at SRU

The nature of the hostility at SRU will be discussed in a number of ways throughout the reporting of this research. For this section, the data will illuminate the types of hostility experienced by administrators of color, as well as describe how the hostile environment at SRU *feels* for administrators of color.

Geographic and Physical Spaces for Hostility. Not surprisingly hostility took different forms at SRU and became obvious for different reasons. In these first examples, the hostility becomes obvious because of the geographic region where SRU is located. As a result of experiencing higher education in different environments prior to experiencing SRU's environment, Maria and Angela critically identified experiences and spaces that are uniquely oppressive.

I would say it's a hostile environment as well, and I think this has been a really interesting experience for me here. I grew up on the West Coast and I lived most of my life there, and racism certainly exists on the West Coast just like it does everywhere [uncomfortable laugh]. Ummm. But I never experienced it so blatantly as when I came here and I don't know if it's because of the historical roots of the South that makes the experience of racism different [5].

The identification of the racism at SRU as “blatant” when compared with the types of racism that exists in other places establishes the experience of practicing race in the south as overt and explicit in intent and outcome. The experiences of people of color at SRU documented below speak to the experience of being subjugated and marginalized through explicitly racist practice. SRU’s location cannot justify the racist interactions that appear as part of the daily-lived experience of people of color; rather the location appears to amplify the racist ways that white people interact with people of color.

“I think it’s been very difficult for me, because there are regional, racial, and I think gendered differences in expectations, I guess [223].” Angela’s experience points to the ways in which she has been expected to show up in a space as a Black woman in the South, who is not necessarily from the South.

[...] things that could be attributed to regional difference are sometimes racialized, blunt speech for example. You know, people are not always direct, and I think that sometimes a non-Southern way of being, but when you do it, and you are Black, and also woman, I think it gets coded in a different sort of way, so it gets coded as, rather than being assertive, or an authority figure, you get to be seen as probably "uppity" or "a bitch." The first one is racial and the other one is gendered. [225].

By virtue of her race and gender, Angela must navigate the hostile narratives that have been written about her identity, which are exaggerated for Angela because of her location in the South. For people of color who were raised in places other than the South, navigating the cultural code for acting and behaving in ways that are consistent

with the expectations of the comportment of a person of color is a challenge. This often includes a demeanor of deference and accommodation to white people, as well as a sense of gratitude for being allowed in privileged spaces (where decisions are made). When this norm is seemingly violated by Angela, whose egregious violation included speaking bluntly, the result was hostility for behaviors that would be rewarded if she were a white male. Such an explicitly racist coding system for Black women can cause a great deal of anxiety and emotional energy to navigate and serves as a tactic to silence (as will be discussed later).

The physical campus space also provides an opportunity for sharing clues about what is valued, and what is not, by the leadership, alumni, and stakeholders at a university. The physical environment can include things such as paintings, statues, and other visual markers that go into making up the landscape. At SRU, like many other university campuses, there are many examples of artifacts that sew the campus environment together and collectively tell a type of narrative on campus. For example, SRU has over 40 statues and noteworthy landmarks scattered across campus, among them many of famous people who played a prominent role in the history of SRU. While it is well documented that many people of color were directly responsible for SRU being chartered and opened as a college, there is not a single tribute to any of those individuals. The statues and commemorations on campus exclusively honor white people. Further, these are almost all of white men. The education building and the campus daycare facility are the only exceptions, each of which have a monument featuring a woman (but neither are specific women, but rather a general, unnamed

woman, presumably doing work that women would be commonly found doing, i.e. educating and watching after children). Further, among the nearly 50 academic buildings and over 30 other non-academic buildings, such as residence halls and administrative buildings (over 80 building names combined) there is not a single building that is named for a person of color. This fact is made clear to all since many of these buildings have pictures or a plaque with a bust of the namesake in the lobby, all white people, almost exclusively men. Notably, among the many white men honored at SRU as building namesakes, are those who openly advocated killing and lynching Black people, confirmed members of the KKK, and men who defended sexual assault⁴. Interestingly, the campus features many other prominent displays, tributes, and artifacts honoring things including the president's pet, the many mascots of the institution, animals (that are confusing as they are not related to the institution in any way, but are rather just visually appealing), and other symbols of the institution such as class rings. That the administrators choose to selectively honor those contributions of white people exclusively serves as a prominent reminder about who controls the space and who the intended beneficiaries of the space include.

Maria described how she felt hostility in spaces on campus, but not necessarily a physical space. Her first exposure to this as a white space was the experience of working with the SRU student orientation, which has a normative effect on students by

⁴ Sharing the specific details including the names and evidence would compromise the site locations, but these facts have been confirmed with corroborating evidence from the university archivist.

“teaching” students what behaviors and attitudes are valued and which ones are not. In describing her first new student orientation Maria said:

I mean [orientation was], a sea of whiteness. Not only sea of whiteness but like, behaviors from students that were, you know, students getting up there are being very comfortable telling inappropriate jokes. Ummm...you know, with racist overtones, undertones, but I just remember, honestly, it was really shocking to me to just look at that sea of white students, and listening to how they talked and the things that they did, like the games they played (15).

As a space on campus, new student orientation is quite unique since it is an artificial space created by students (sanctioned and funded by administration) for the stated purpose of educating incoming students on the norms and behaviors of the institution (i.e. the ways that students should behave in order to belong). Since this is a peer-to-peer normative experience, new students internalize much of what is presented as an expectation for being a good Roughneck. The new student orientation is an interesting space to study at SRU since not only is it optional, but is a privileged space since there is a cost associated with attending, (in addition to the financial cost to attend there is an opportunity cost for attending as it takes a week of time in the Summer before the freshmen year that low socioeconomic status students oftentimes cannot afford in time away from their jobs), and requires cultural knowledge (since the importance of the event, particularly at SRU, is not immediately obvious). Further, this event fills quickly so it can be difficult to get signed up for, so as a result, legacy students and students with

connections to the university (overwhelmingly white students) are the ones who are often able to participate.

The impact of this student orientation on the environment and how it feels to be on campus is profound. For example, as Maria described: “So, you know, you’re walking around, and you see somebody and they say ‘hi-ya’ and you don’t say ‘hi-ya’ back or anything, you say ‘hi’ and not ‘hi-ya,’ you know, there’s a reaction that you get from people and that’s not pleasant” (13). These are the parochial interactions that students become experts at navigating by participating in the Roughneck orientation. As a result, minor experiences such as greeting a student can become an opportunity to treat those without the expected cultural capital (not knowing the Roughneck greeting) pejoratively.

Based on her experience, Maria had a useful comparison to previous experiences with orientation at a predominantly white, flagship research university where the orientation catered to students of different cultures and attempted to create a climate of inclusion.

Having come from the Southwest Research University where our orientation, which of course speaks to the place that I worked, was a Center De La Raza, but you know our orientation had, we had carne asada, we had piñatas, we had our, it was a family event, it wasn’t an orientation for students it was an orientation for your family because there was a recognition that your family is part of your education, and they are the reason why you are there, and so, you know, you would have your, three generations of people at our welcome orientations, you

know attending these events. So I went from that to SRU's orientation program and so it was [pause] *ick* (16).

By highlighting other similarly situated universities that create spaces which are inclusive and seek to not only understand the needs of incoming underrepresented students, but actually embrace them as valued members of the community, Maria is able to illustrate the depth of the white space at SRU. While reflecting on the comparison between these two experiences, Maria was left without words – just a vile sound (“ick”) to describe how it felt in the SRU environment.

Maria's characterization as the space being “hostile,” “shocking,” and “not pleasant,” all help in understanding how she was made to feel like an outsider as a person of color navigating the SRU campus. As a person of color, even the experience of just walking around campus at SRU is an opportunity to be reminded of the fact that you are an outsider. Maria described the experience encountering a seemingly endless number of white men.

But, I remember feeling like this is a hostile environment when I was walking around campus and saw people walking around with their ROTC uniforms on and the majority of those students I saw were white males, with crew cuts, and I own my stereotypes for what that means, or could mean, but what I saw did not make me feel comfortable (12).

The sight of white men in crew cuts and uniforms alarmed Maria, which she tried to “own” as a stereotype, but in reality is part of a long history of violence perpetrated by students who look and behave similar to these students. A fellow graduate student who

also did research in the SRU community interviewed elderly people of color in the community (in towns in the same county as SRU) and came away with many powerful stories. One which was shared with me was about an elderly Black woman who fears these ROTC students to this day because as a young child she was warned about these students because they would get drunk and go into the community “looking for trouble.” When pressed for more information the elderly woman was able to fight through tears to describe how these ROTC boys would come into communities of color looking for young Black women to sexually assault, or Black men for lynching. Sadly, these types of violent incidents were not unique as described in a book about the community which described the horror that communities of color were subjected to on a regular basis, in particular the lynching of Black men.

Gabriella also noted SRU’s location as a cause for concern. Gabriella’s status as an international person of color has allowed her to view race in a unique way since she has not been socialized through the American white racial systems. She described at length how she has been able to succeed despite difficult xenophobia because of her Hispanic appearance, thick accent and different country of origin. I started to ask her how she thinks her experience might have been had she instead been Black or African American, but before I could even get the question all the way out she emphatically interrupted:

It would be terrible. It would be terrible. It would be terrible! If I were African American in this culture, in this SRU? It is not good. That is my perception. That’s not good. I don’t know how many people can survive here [...]. I don’t

know how you – I think it's difficult to be Black in here. It's very difficult with Blacks in the South. It's very difficult to be Black at SRU. I think it's terrible [643].

However, Gabriella's critique was not only limited to Black people's experience at SRU. She went on to describe the North American Hispanic experience (that is the US and Mexico, which is different from those others from Central and South America, and Spain).

I feel so sorry for the Hispanic. They cannot make it. They come, the first generation of Hispanic students who come, first generation to go to college. They can't make it. I have two or three cases, they cannot make it. The mother is a cleaning lady coming asking me 'Dr. Gabriella, can you help my daughter. She was number one in her class in high school. Now she cannot adapt in here in SRU.' And she [the daughter] doesn't even want to come and talk to me. She just want to leave. She doesn't fit [644].

Gabriella's description of the Hispanic, first generation student experience illustrates how the space at SRU operates to create such a white normative experience, that people of color are not only outsiders, but find themselves in a place of despair and do not even feel as if they can succeed in the space. There are several institutions which have institutional climates which seek to be affirming and comfortable places for all students like Southwest Research University (an institution cited by Maria above) as one such example of how institutional administrators can create a sense of belonging for traditionally underserved populations. Gabriella's example exemplifies how SRU

administrators not only do not create these affirming institutional spaces, but tacitly allows Hispanic (and Black) students to struggle to find fit in a highly white normative space. When I asked Gabriella about this notion, she was explicit in her response.

D: Do you feel like those students would succeed at other universities?

G: I think so.

D: Yeah? It's the environment?

G: It's the environment here.

D: Yeah?

G: It's a very tough environment in here.

D: Yeah?

G: Because you see the majority of people who clean the floor are Black and Hispanic. How many white you see? [...] In the Midwest it wasn't like that. White women there cleaned the floor [645].

Gabriella's description is important because it helps to differentiate the exceptionally difficult experience at SRU from other similarly situated institutions. That nearly all of the adults of color in which a student might run into at SRU are in service positions is symptomatic of a larger ethos which puts people of color into a subservient position. The result is that students struggle to not only fit into the space, but lack the mentorship and resources to cope with the marginalization that they experience.

William also described spaces within the community where he encountered overt racism. William began by taking a sort of hardened stance on his experience indicating that he didn't allow racist taunts to deter him.

W: The most consistent microaggression that my wife and I experienced was being called the n-word.

D: Wow. That's not a micro, that's a macroaggression. I feel like...holy cow.

W: Well, to me it's a microaggression because I don't let it phase me that much.

D: Hmmm.

W: To somebody else it's a macroaggression.

D: Sure.

W: But I expected that to happen in that community [laughing]. [574].

That William expressed expectation about how he would be treated in the SRU community describes a great deal about how this community is perceived to the outside world. The reputation of SRU and the reputation of the South appear to be congruent with the history of overt racism, discrimination, and harassment that appears to be an enduring legacy. Sadly, this hostility was not isolated and appeared as an ongoing theme that plagued him in his time at SRU.

So I would be walking through campus, or I would be walking somewhere else in town. And these white guys would drive by and, 'hey nigger, nigger, nigger, nigger, nigger.' My wife would be somewhere in a store and she'd be followed by all the people that worked in a store. Or she was in a grocery store, she'd be followed by people there thinking she's gonna steal something, etcetera. That was common for us in my years there [575].

The examples cited by the administrators of color are powerful in that they illustrate the all-encompassing nature of the white space present at SRU and in the community broadly speaking. The examples of racist taunts and interactions demonstrate the overwhelming power that these spaces have in preventing administrators of color from having even a brief respite or moment to allow their guard down, making this community a difficult, if not impossible, place to call home.

This data detailing the geographic and physical location where hostility is manifested provides the appropriate context for understanding the SRU experience. As an exclusive space for white people, the environment has been manicured so that these spaces appear normal to the casual white observer, but for people of color these spaces instill a sense of exclusion and fear, serving notice that this is a space created by, and to serve the interests of, white people.

Effects of Hostility. The previous section described the physical location of the white space that exists at SRU. In this section, data will be discussed that describes what effect the hostility has on administrators of color. That is, how does it *feel* to exist within the SRU environment.

Anita's comment fits neatly into this theme as it describes how it feels to be in an environment, but it will be revisited later where deceit is described as part of the practice and a tactic intended to marginalize and oppress administrators of color.

You know, if you are, if you are beat up pretty bad when you come in the door, and what do you say? You know, you expect things to not go well. But it's like who stays when you get, when you're hit like that? I call it being run over by an

18-wheeler and then the wheeler, the 18-wheeler backs up and, and then you have the option of either rolling out of the way or staying under the truck, you know. That's how it's felt like here and I am finally starting to, to identify some people I believe are trustworthy, establish connections external to the university. At best when I am dealing with [white] administrators here, I'm very cautious [77].

Anita's illusion of being beaten up and also run over by an 18-wheeler paints a vivid picture of the combative and violent interactions with white administrators at SRU. Anita's example also indicates an intentionality among those administrators who, to extend her illustration, are driving the 18-wheeler that backs up to hit the administrator of color again. Anita had a difficult transition into SRU which left her in a position of not feeling supported even before her first day of work, a trend that continued to plague her for her time at SRU. While she was able to identify allies, she was always cast as a troublemaker and never really found her way at SRU.

As described above, William and his wife endured the ongoing struggle of dealing with racist taunts and harassment which is illustrative of the community in which SRU is situated. William indicated that these experiences are in fact exhausting and had a chilling marginalizing effect on him.

Actually for those moments, you really don't feel a part. And I mean after I'd been there awhile, I made a conscious effort to identify with what it means to be a Roughneck, the good sides of what it means. Being a Roughneck is a great cultural phenomenon. At the moment that something like those things [racist

incidents] happen, and you don't see the support deal with it in a critical way, then you don't feel like you want to be a Roughneck anymore. And you feel like an outcast.

William's effort to identify with the culture and to be included in the good aspects of the culture indicates a good faith attempt to really embrace the community, despite the deeply problematic nature of the community. Not surprisingly, in the face of both public and personal racist interactions with those in the SRU community, William felt marginal and reduced to an outsider. Patently racist interactions such as there reinforce that the institution and space is intended to benefit white people (who are not subject to this type of racial threats and demoralizing taunts). For William this was coupled with a lack of support (both individually and institutionally) that contributed to feeling marginalized; in failing to support William in even a surface-level way, the white institutional administrators silently endorsed these racist projects. To be sure, there were many other racist interactions that William endured which are described in the next section "Creating and Maintaining White Space," a section that deals with the specific tactics utilized by institutional administrators.

Gabriella described an interaction with a white staff member which paints a powerful picture of the white power structure at SRU and how this affected Gabriella. While describing this scenario, it was obvious that there has been a deep and lasting impact on her. Her face was somewhat flushed red and while she did not cry, there was a sincerity in her voice that let me know that the emotion that she felt was real and painful. This data actually came about after the interview had concluded, so I had to ask

Gabriella if I could start the recorder again, which is where there is a break in the recording and why this data begins mid-sentence.

[break in recording]. [There is a woman who I work with] who is the executive secretary for a year and then she say she owned the place, you know. That's typical. She has a high school education and been there [in the town] forever. Me, aggressive and bossy, and I remember I received a call to an interview on the radio about my research and I went to her, 'hey Sarah, I have an interview,' [in an excited voice].

'If I were you, I wouldn't go with your accent.'

And I didn't go. She told me to my face, she said 'you think you can make people to understand you?' And I say, 'who cares?' *I should have said it*, but at that time, you know, the insecurity that you have. People just focus on that particular aspect of you. And yes, it came from a white woman [658].

The insecurity that Gabriella cites in this example helps to illuminate how if feels to exist within the white space at SRU and the effect that it can have on an otherwise confident and accomplished professional. The assistant in the office is not only empowered enough to boldly claim to "own" the office, which is a particularly bold statement that underscores the privilege of her whiteness that she could after only one year claim to own an institutional space is such a way. But equally noteworthy is that as the authority in this space felt confident enough to hand out judgments to others, including unsolicited advice about issues which are not her expertise. This judgment from the self-appointed powerbroker in the office, despite a lack of qualifications,

carries a stinging consequence for Gabriella who felt disempowered enough that she did not participate in the interview. What might seem an innocent interaction with a staff member is far more complicated when considered further against the implication of the interaction. Whether or not the assistant intended to have this outcome is irrelevant. The fact of the matter is that the interaction had a profound effect on Gabriella and served as an obstacle in her success, and therefore had a racist effect and outcome. Therefore, the motivation is not of consequence; the outcome, which reified whiteness in this institutional context is the important issue at hand.

Similar to William and Gabriella, Angela had experiences where the institutional actors did not support her when support would not only be reaffirming, but for many it would be assumed and expected. Following a highly public incident where Angela was roundly criticized, she had the following interaction with an institutional administrative leader who directly supervises her (and by all accounts in nearly all instances would support administrators like Angela).

But it also deeply hurt me. I approached the [white institutional leader], and he was like ‘well, I just don’t know exactly what to do, but I want to do something.’ I was like ‘damn it, what would you do if it was your daughter? We’re supposed to be this Roughneck family.’ And then he hopped to it. But, on a lot of levels you have to think about it. I’m not that old, I’m out here like in the wilderness by myself [...] I don’t know how to deal with this stuff, and literally let’s go back to the point. I just wanted to have a job like regular people and write about some research. You know, I didn’t come here to live in 1954 here. I thought being

born after segregation and somebody [already] fought the good fight. So, I wasn't, I wasn't anticipating all of this. And that just really soured me on what I think I am doing here [pause]. That said, I've been having wonderful classes [laughing] ever since I decided I don't give a fuck [275].

In addition to describing how she feels in this white space, Angela described a couple of important elements of the environment in this comment. First, Angela identified the tactic utilized by her direct superior who framed himself as being supportive but was clearly distancing himself from her and the situation. Angela was then forced to reframe the administrator's thinking by asking him what he would do if *she* were his daughter. This counter-tactic worked, which I believe is because Angela was able to narrate herself into this white administrator's family, and in that moment he realized that Angela is someone that he *should* defend and that she is vulnerable in this situation and space. This interaction is consistent with another segment of the medical literature that describes how white physicians are unable to properly assess the levels of pain that patients of color experience versus white patients. As a result, patients of color are often times forced to suffer more because their perceived level of pain by white physicians is less (Trawalter, Hoffman, & Waytz, 2012).

Since a great deal of the administrators at all levels of the organization are white, scenarios like this may well be playing out all over the institution with those who are in vulnerable populations unable to defend themselves and potentially unable to rally the support of a white administrator. This creates an additional burden that people of color must bear: that is the burden of somehow making their case to white people in ways that

white people can truly hear what they are experiencing. This is an extraordinary task since the way that the white racial frame operates, it precludes this narrative and further seeks to justify the treatment that people of color receive in most situations.

A second important element of Angela's comment is her description of the SRU white space more broadly. Her desire to have a "regular" job so that she can conduct her research and writing and not have to deal with racist interactions looms ominously, a burden for which she must always be cognizant and prepared to fight. This disillusionment has led to essentially giving up hope for making the environment better, a devastating way of being in the world, particularly for a professor who researches issues related to race and inequality.

As the above example illustrated, white administrators attacked Angela, failed to see her as a person who is combating virtually an entire institution and the white space therein, ultimately leaving her feeling isolated and disillusioned. Ironically enough, the public incident that led to Angela seeking support from her white supervisor was an attempt to help the university by discussing her research in a public forum. In this way, she felt as if she was doing a service for the university but the reward for this service was marginalization, distancing, and further alienation.

Angela went on to describe how she was made to feel inadequate through impossible expectations. There was clearly a dissonance between what she understood her position to entail and what white administrators tried to extricate from Angela.

I see myself as me making a pedagogical intervention into the way in which knowledge is produced on this campus, and throughout the academy in general,

by insisting that we recognize people who are less canonical precisely because they might be Black [286].

This view of her responsibilities differs a great deal from what Angela later learned were the unwritten expectations of her in her position. “I didn’t know that I was being put into the position to be the savior of the white kids from their own ignorance. So, in a lot of ways, people try to use my race to make me do stuff [pause] to guilt me into doing stuff [286].”

As a faculty member with significant administrative responsibilities, Angela should have academic freedom to do the work that she believes is necessary challenge the hegemony of race (her area of scholarship). In this way, Angela is simply a commodity that the white administrators can deploy in order to meet their own ends while failing to recognize her as a scholar with her own scholarly agenda. Angela’s tactic for overcoming these unfair expectations (described above as “I don’t give a fuck”) has not only allowed her to maintain a semblance of liberation from the environment at SRU, but appears to be translating into positive outcomes for her teaching (she indicated that since she decided she doesn’t care, the evaluations of her teaching have surged).

It should not be a surprise that Angela was labeled as difficult, as this is a common stereotype for Black women, particularly those who are confident in their comportment. For Angela, having to carry that label into situations was not only painful in the stinging racism, but effectively minimizes her perspective since she is painted as an oppositional caricature, rather than a scholar with an important perspective.

So you get to be labeled as a difficult sort of person. So your reputation precedes you even when your heart is in it. In the real world my militancy level would be probably like a 2.8, here it's like a 12.9. And it's really because you can't just say whatever [you want]. And now, sometimes maybe I am like a little touchy and crazy about it, so maybe I act crazy right [laughing], we will see, you know [...] I think that part of the militancy developed because there are so many ways that I have to be hyper-vigilant about everything [237-238].

The crushing weight of the racialized environment, unfair expectations, and having to be prepared for battle at every turn, have all cast her mental and emotional preparation (i.e. her “hyper-vigilance”) as militancy. This white framing obviously carries a very different and problematic connotation that portrays Angela as a troublemaker rather than someone who is simply trying to survive the SRU environment. When compared against the objective standards (note, this is impossible, but those qualities that a Human Resources professional might insist are objective) that are often valued within the university environment, being vigilant and persistent are qualities that are associated with positive characteristics of administrators and faculty, but seemingly only for white professionals. In this case, Angela is labeled as militant for the same behaviors, which recalls images of Black Panthers and civil disobedience, illusions that obviously are not fondly remembered in the white space of a southern research university. As a result, Angela described herself as having to “act crazy” which appears to be a reference to how she is internalizing these oppressive frames and recognizing that as a Black woman, when she is forced to take issue with the way that she is treated, she

is acting crazy, whereas if another white administrator or faculty member were to take issue with the ways that they are treated, they would certainly be cast positively (assertive, stand-up, a champion), far from crazy.

Racial Fatigue. The cumulative effect of navigating (battling) the racial hegemony of an institution such as SRU is obviously fatigue. People of color must be on guard in every moment since the space is so hostile and toxic. Angela described the hyper-vigilance (militancy) that she was forced into and the effect of never having a moment to rest.

But that goes back to what I call ‘the racial fatigue syndrome.’ Having to be hyper-vigilant, and today when you heard me swear, it was not just about being hyper-vigilant, it’s just [that I have to] be hyper-vigilant about *everything*. Now, I’ve got to make routers work, and heaters work, and then I’ve got to go to slay dragons tomorrow, and then next week, you know [laughing] I will be photographing the Loch Ness monster [laughing] for posterity [254].

The cumulative effect of having to be on guard against racialized expectations and interactions as well as being prepared emotionally to counter the racist behaviors and microaggressions that people of color come into contact with every day is exhaustion that white scholars and administrators certainly do not have, and often don’t understand, which Angela accurately described as *racial fatigue syndrome*. Within the literature this is often likened to a tax that people of color pay as a result of their race that white people do not have to consider. Such an environment not only illuminates the disparate and exceedingly difficult challenges that people of color must overcome in

order to be successful in the academy, but it also points to a possible strategy (that will be discussed in greater detail in the next section) which is to overwhelm people of color with work so that they are unable to perform to at the same level as white people and therefore are assessed to be performing at a lower level. This assessment can then become the narrative that surrounds people of color at the institution and reinforces the white racial frame with claims of inferiority based on objective measures.

Angela's white supervisor relied upon explicit messages, (possibly meant to be in jest, but in tremendously poor taste if that is the case) in order to ensure that she knew her place in the organization, which had a deep and lasting impact on her self-image.

Then my own supervisor, he said 'man, Angela, you know, it sucks to be you.'

'Man it really sucks to be you.'

'Damn, it sucks to be you.'

I said, 'how many times are you going to say it? It doesn't suck to be me,' you know. Then I had to say crazy stuff, you know, 'I'm tall, I got a husband, it does not suck to be me!' ARRRGH! But he was right, it does suck to be me [271].

The ability to resist internalizing messages that are delivered time and time again proves to be a difficult, if not impossible task, which tragically seems to fail right before my eyes. Rather than coaching, encouraging or strategizing with Angela to overcome the racist environment at SRU, her supervisor cosigns the racism and essentially implores Angela to surrender. This serves as a particularly potent example of how white people can demoralize people of color and force them into environments where failure is predestined through racist narratives and interactions.

Based on the above documented experiences, it should not be surprising that Angela feels tremendous anxiety prior to meeting with white administrators. Seemingly having the weight of the institution on your shoulders, and your shoulders alone, would be a difficult burden for anyone to bear, particularly when it feels like at every turn the people who determine your outcomes appear to be conspiring against your success.

These things end up giving me anxieties. I can't go to sleep the night before [meetings with white administrators] because my stomach is all messed up because I'm thinking about those moments as, as perhaps hostile moments or tense spaces [230].

The task of having to be on guard in meetings with white administrators who will seek to create hostile spaces and make Angela's work environment even more difficult illustrates what it feels like to be in these institutionally white spaces. That these sorts of interactions have a real and physical effect on Angela is not surprising and certainly contributes to this racial fatigue syndrome that Angela referenced. When an administrator of color is forced to dedicate their time and emotional energy to battling white administrators, they have less time and energy to dedicate to their work and research. This means that they will have to spend more time dedicated to creating strategies that seek to overcome racist structures and systems, just to have similar accomplishments to white administrators who have the luxury of structures created to ensure their success. Angela went on to indicate that she is not without power, but that her situation is exhausting. "But I think that I just feel always embattled, which is different. I feel like Sisyphus, do you know that analogy? Roll the boulder up again,

roll again...[sigh], it's just, I feel like there's easier ways to do the same exact thing [281].” As Sisyphus, Angela is being forced to endure these almost insurmountable challenges, again and again, which means that she is always battling the institution, rather than focusing on her job.

Martin also built on this idea of racial fatigue syndrome in describing how he felt overwhelmed by the white space at SRU. However, unlike Angela, Martin's description is a chilling one that draws on an explicit, if not problematic comparison in describing his experience.

Yeah, yeah. I have my down points [...] but then again, I just have to go back historically; I heard a minister say one time ‘your ancestors survived a brutal Middle Passage from Africa to America in the bowels of the ships in their own feces and urine. Your ancestors endured the whip. Your ancestors were treated [miserably] and sold off. How dare you complain about sitting in your [life situation] [...] How dare you complain about sitting in your big office, driving your nice car, and living in a moderate house. You ain't got nothing to complain about.’ Yeah, it's still stressful and I had to psych myself out with that story but it gets to be a bit much. It gets to be a bit much sometimes and especially when you feel like sometimes you're fighting the battle, you know? [325].

Martin's observations and mindset are important to analyze, as they draw on important parts of the white racial frame. In these words of inspiration, Martin seems to downplay the difficulty of his situation and responsibilities as compared to the slaves navigating the Middle Passage. However, virtually any hardship or circumstance would

pale in comparison to one of the greatest atrocities known to mankind. While attempting to empower people of color, this rhetoric is similar to that of the white racial frame in that the sentiment relies upon an unfair/unrealistic comparison that asks the oppressed individual to be thankful for the progress that has been made, instead of an apples to apples comparison of the current situation for people of color versus white people today. When this type of rhetoric is deployed by white administrators, they are effectively absolved of negligent, oppressive and ignorant decisions and attitudes which support white institutional space and given credit for making the situation better than that of slaves traveling the Middle Passage. While this example is intended to be an inspiration to people of color dealing with difficult circumstances (and it certainly is for many people of color) in that it resonates with Martin as he navigates a contemporary oppressive environment is telling of the power of the white institutional space. This framing asks people of color to simply be happy with the progress that has been accomplished; since it could be (and was) much worse in the past. When white administrators were asked about the environment at SRU (later in this chapter), it was common to hear a narrative of how the situation has improved over the years, but that people rarely if ever make comparisons to equity and parity for people of color and whites illuminates the frame in which white administrators want people of color to view the progress of the institution.

Similarly, when asked what it feels like to be a person of color at SRU, Martin described his experience with systemic racism as a young child and how having this administrative position now is “a pleasure and a burden.”

It's a [pause] it's a pleasure and a burden. A pleasure in the sense that as one who grew up in the late '60s and early 70's and was in the deep South and went through a school system where the principal tried to basically put me in a special class and pretty much predicted that I'd never amount to much, to have overcome those kinds of challenges and to rise to an administrator at a large research-extensive university is a humbling privilege and pleasure because I recognize that I'm here for a reason. Sometimes I don't know what that reason is but there's a privilege to it because I recognize that I could have not been here and that so many people are not (292).

Considered on the surface, this comment may appear relatively benign and almost complementary of SRU and his experience. Martin described his experience as a pleasure and it seems that he is honored to have an administrative position and recognizes the importance of his role and contribution to the university. However, even within this pleasure, Martin references the tacit threat that comes along with this rhetoric: "I recognize that I could have not been here and that so many people are not." Since there are so few people of color in administrative positions at SRU (endemic of the disparate opportunities for people of color), he is one of the fortunate few to make it to this level, the important implication of which means that he could be taken out of this position and replaced. As Martin illustrated, he has had the responsibility of navigating highly racist spaces for his entire life and has been largely successful. Tellingly, the skills that he learned as a child growing up in the deep South during the 60s and 70s, where he has endured a segregated environment with many systemic, physical,

emotional, and political obstacles designed to keep people of color from succeeding, have served him at SRU (he is at SRU “for a reason.”).

Lack of Trust. The nature of Anita’s interaction with white administrators included deceit in recruiting her to SRU, then a coordinated deceit that she was asked to participate in. When she declined on the basis of ethical concerns she was roundly marginalized.

The process was exhausting because there was lots of documentation that I had to pull together. What I saw was people, I call it the *circle the wagons*, there were people who were, who were named and they lied about what actually happened and said there was a misunderstanding, and the intent was never to cause me harm [pause]. It was a very painful process and I really spent a lot of time praying about whether or not I was going to file a grievance [76].

The strategy of circling the wagons refers to the ways that white people will close ranks, or rally to support and defend each other on the basis of race. In this example, the white administrator’s circled the wagons to feign misunderstanding of Anita and further to create the narrative that there was no intent to hurt Anita. While the specific strategy will be discussed later along with other similar data, this quote importantly discusses the impact of racist practice. Anita’s description of the emotional exhaustion from having to deal with deceit is not only a personal attack on her morals and ethics, but it is an exhausting process that requires her attention and effort to demonstrate that she was wronged. In this way, the victim is forced to not only endure the slight of racist actions, but then are forced to prove that action happened, and was

intentional. This is an incredible task for a new administrator of color to be subjected to, particularly in light of the fact that this type of interaction could have consequences for her future. The ability of white people to create the narrative and surround themselves with like-minded people to support the narrative by *circling the wagons* appears to engender apprehension, fear, and anxiety that maintains a toxic environment at SRU for people of color.

Gender. Along with data on the racial experience at SRU, data emerged describing the experience for women. Given the oppressive nature and history of the institution it was not surprising to find examples of misogyny at SRU in addition to racism. In this section, I will consider the data where women administrators of color described some of the ways in which their experience was made hostile as a function of their gender. It should be noted that the women administrators at SRU are similarly situated to women administrators across the country in that they are vastly underrepresented in positions with significant decision-making authority and are fewer in number overall as compared to men in administrative positions. Also, similar to national trends, women tend to be overrepresented in support staff positions and doing service-oriented work with little opportunity for advancement.

The largely white, male administration at SRU appears to value a woman who have a certain personality and disposition in administrative roles. That type of women is the opposite of Gabriella, who is a strong and assertive administrator and faculty member; rather what appears to be valued is docile, non-threatening, unassuming women. The consequences for women who are viewed as assertive and strong is often a

refusal to consider them for advancement which results in many of these women having to leave the institution if they are going to advance in their career.

[SRU is] very conservative. And they don't like too much – I know this administration doesn't like women, too strong women or kind of bossy. You need to be kind of mellow type. The one that listens, the servant. That is my perception. That's the comments of – you see, there was a professor in here in the liberal arts who is British, very good, excellent. She was running a program in the department and she applied for department head, they completely [physically crumpled up an imaginary piece of paper, and then pretended to rub her hands as if to be done with the situation] [trashed] her application. She left. She had no chance in this university [608].

Women who work at SRU are expected to be service-oriented regardless of their title or position within the institution. By creating space for women in administration, there is an illusion of an inclusive environment or one that values the role and contribution of women, but the reality is there is an expectation that they are still “the servant” to borrow Gabriella's words. The same behavior that is rewarded for male administrators – assertiveness, persistence, strong will, and decisiveness, does not appear to be the valued for women administrators, and certainly not women administrators of color.

As an extension of only valuing women who epitomize subservient dispositions and docile attitudes, there are certain positions within the administration which have become tacitly earmarked for women as Jasmin and Gabriella noted. In describing one

of the positions within her college, Gabriella said “And then I think that position that [will] always be a female position, but you know that position – it’s just a junior dean, we call them. They don’t have too much power, [it’s] just like a service [596].”

Gabriella’s description of the position as “always” being for women administrators because of the little to no power that is associated with the position reinforces this perspective that women have an expected role to play within the college and this position is one of a service to the college. Jasmin had a similar experience where she was asked by her boss to consider a position that she wasn’t qualified for:

C: I believe, at one time, my boss asked me during the search process – and I was very surprised when he made – he asked the question because I’m thinking ‘really?’ He asked me if I was interested in the position [job that is almost exclusively held by women].

D: Wow. Why do you think he would do that?

C: That’s a very good question. I don’t know what provoked that question to come out. During the time I was talking with him, I was talking in regards to some issues that needed to be handled and I just said – was talking about the candidates and then he said ‘well, are you interested in the position?’ And I said ‘I believe this position has requirements that I can’t meet because I’m not a tenured professor. I don’t have the number of years of experience, so I don’t think I’m qualified for this position,’ which to me, in my mind, he knows that. Why is he asking me this question?

D: You had the number one criteria that they were looking for?

C: Exactly. Yes [369].

This situation could potentially be viewed as a positive since this administrator was willing to consider candidates who might not otherwise be eligible for this type of leadership. However, this really just reinforces how some positions have come to be viewed as appropriate for women. This is dangerous since these positions, as described above, are often without power and authority. While flattering to be considered for a position, the reality is being put into a service position that traditionally has no power and will struggle for relevance in the eyes of the real decision makers (white, men).

Like one of the dean's positions, that women in the office, that typically has been a woman, when they opened the position up, it is a very routinized position, for the most part. It is one that is [sensitive] because it deals with undergraduates. Because of the nature of the position, they feel that a women is better suited in some cases for that...[368].

This entire frame and way of viewing some positions as appropriate for women harkens to a time when working in the home was considered "women's work" and further, roles and jobs such as teacher or nurse were "appropriate for women." This is further dangerous by extension, if there are certain jobs that are only fit for women, then the other jobs are the ones which are fit for men. Those jobs, of course, tend to be those of power and leadership.

For those women with administrative positions, not only are the jobs they assume at a considerable disadvantage because of the perceived and real lack of authority and

power, but women are constantly fed messages by the men in the organization that reaffirm that they are not welcomed in the organization, nor are they valued.

It feels like women here are really just trying to make sure that they are heard [pause]. There is a, I think you feel that there is a general acceptance of your presence here [laugh], general acceptance of your presence. Whether you're *valued* or not, that's not the sense that I get. Actually, it's more 'we tolerate you. We know we have to have you here' [121].

The environment that Anita shared describes the underlying current of disrespect that exists within the organization at SRU. For Anita who was new to the SRU environment after having spent time at a women's university, this was an especially sobering experience, particularly since one of her major administrative tasks revolved around her ability to collaborate with male colleagues on a grant. The time and energy that Anita had to expend in fending off subtle attacks of her qualifications, skills, and ability was a significant obstacle and expenditure of emotional energy. Jasmin also described this dangerous reality in an example of why women have had such a difficult time advancing at SRU.

There are no women department heads [in her college]. We had a women who applied for a department head position, and the climate in her department, once her application came in, got so bad that she decided to not only withdraw her application but she has now since left the institution [366].

By closing ranks, the male administrators clearly communicated to this candidate that she was not suitable for the position and it was not appreciated that she was

attempting to step into a role that was clearly for men. This attitude sounds similar to the old misogynist perspective that “a women needs to know her place.” Clearly in this example, stepping out of that role has consequences.

Intersectionality. The salient intersections between identities provide insight in understanding a more nuanced oppression that can be seen at SRU. Angela described her experiences in working with white women and how a racialized component remains prominent and serves to reify the privileges of whiteness. Like all people, Angela represents an intersection of identities, so it can be difficult to dissect what experiences are racialized, gendered, ageist, or due to other aspects of her identity or appearance. However, as described in the literature there are oppressive experiences for people based on race and gender, so Angela’s experience as a Black women exposes her to experiences with oppression that William as a Black man may not be exposed, and vice versa. Returning to Angela’s comment from above, two things are unmistakable: first, that is her supervisor felt comfortable to make pejorative, oppressive comments to her in an ongoing basis (“it sucks to be you,”). Second, the cumulative effects of these comments, regardless of whether they were gendered, racialized, or both, had a profound impact on her.

More explicitly gendered, Angela described her experience with a white woman as an example of how her gender at times works in concert with her race to actually amplify the oppressive experience at SRU. It is within these gendered spaces where whiteness can be especially pronounced and pejorative as claims of solidarity seek to mask racist actions.

When you're talking about people [white women] who are really insecure about their administrative positions, they can be the most defensive people and then play also the gender card on you. 'I'm on your side, da, da, da.' You know, a lot of the things that I have to deal with sometimes are very paternalistic [258].

Angela's description of having to work against white women and their paternalistic oversight sheds light on the ways that race and gender coalesce to create especially oppressive spaces. The especially difficult situation that women of color encounter in academe and the extraordinary unacknowledged emphasis that white people place on race becomes clear in this example. Rather than seeking a more equitable space based on a shared understanding of oppression by virtue of being marginalized based on gender, the white woman closed ranks and invoked white racial privilege to reinforce a hostile space for Angela. While it is beyond the scope of this study, the gendered racial experience surely provides important examples of the racism comingled with and facilitated by gender.

In summary, this theme has described the ways in which people of color are made to feel at SRU. These data are illustrative as they provide a proper perspective and understanding of the actual lived experience with oppression for people of color. The administrators interviewed described a painful existence within the SRU context marked with self-doubt, indifference, frustration, anger, insecurity, loneliness, and fatigue from dealing with ongoing microaggressions, overt racism, and a legacy of destructive behaviors which reinforce white (and male) space. In this next section, these behaviors

will be discussed in greater detail to illuminate how these white spaces get reinforced in obvious and clandestine ways across the institution.

Circling the Wagons: Tactics for Creating and Maintaining White Space

Well, I think the biggest – it's an asset, but it also is detrimental in some way, is Roughneck culture. Roughneck culture is so big and powerful and white that its presence alone kind of precludes anything else from emerging to any level of significance. So, I'm not – and again I'm, Roughneck culture, I can talk about it in a positive way, but it's one of those things that's so powerful, it's sort of like having a two party system in America. Democrats and Republicans are so powerful, no third party can merge. Roughneck culture is so powerful and it's historically so associated with whites at SRU and white males that it was hard for anything else to emerge (William).

The institutional climate and ethos at an institution of higher education is not an accident. As the organizational development theory goes, *every system is perfectly designed to produce the outcome that is generated*. How is it then that higher educational institutions can espouse commitments to diversity, equality and social justice, while often not generating substantive changes in the climate and opportunities for people of color to succeed? Certainly, some of this rests on systemic level barriers such as Supreme Court decisions which have made it extraordinarily difficult to increase access to higher education for traditionally underrepresented students. Further, the individual institutional histories and legacies create substantive barriers, with narratives, policies, and programs that ensure that traditionally underrepresented populations

understand their role as unwelcome interlopers whose presence is unwanted and not valued. Additionally, the systemic inequities in American society realized through disparities in access to employment, housing, health, policing, and education all contribute to “pipeline” and “educational access” problems. Again, the racist framing of these issues postulates that the small population of “college-eligible” (those students who achieve the requisite scores on standardized test, which shown to have little predictive value) students are the result of a deficiency on the part of people of color, rather than recognizing the racist system that often times precludes people of color from matriculation in colleges and universities.

However, another factor that must be considered is the extent to which institutional administrators create white spaces which are inherently unequal and oppressive spaces for people of color. If it is true that systems are perfectly designed to create the outcomes that they produce, then we must consider the administrator’s role in creating/maintaining the systems which produce institutionally white spaces within higher education.

Documented below are the tactics utilized by white administrators which serve to create the institutional white space. It should be noted that it is not always clear what the intentions of the white administrator are when employing these tactics. The symbolic interactionism literature suggests that people act on those things that they ascribe value to – that is, people will act on behalf of things that are important to them. From within this framework it would likely be argued that these white administrators surely don’t seek to intentionally be racist or create structures and policies that create significant

obstacles for people of color. It would likely be argued that administrators value equity and try to optimize opportunity for all, regardless of their background. However, it is precisely this point where whiteness is allowed to reside unexamined. As Wendy Moore has described, the *intention* to do racist projects is irrelevant; instead what is important is the racist *impact* on the people of color. This framework that Moore has discussed flips the traditional ways of thinking about racism upside-down. Within the law, in order for something to be considered racist an intention of racism has to be established, which creates an unreasonable standard of proof since there so many factors that motivate people to action, and to further prove what a person was *thinking* is extraordinarily difficult. What is far more reasonable and logical is to demonstrate that which can be (on some level) known and measured. Further, it should be again pointed out that racism is far more systemic than individual interactions. The collective system that allows these interactions to occur is racism – so an individual’s discriminatory interaction with a person of color amounts to prejudice, but the system that allows this (and sometimes even sanctions such behavior) is the racism that produces the institutional white space.

The question that a person might ask after considering these points is ‘to what extent do white people know that their actions are having this effect on people of color?’ Based on my data documented in the second part of this chapter, when I ask white people a similar question, the answer is not very much at all. However, this is an inadequate and unreasonable response. As administrators charged with maintaining complex systems that govern the university, it is incumbent upon them to understand the factors which contribute to inequality, racism, sexism, homophobia, etc. within the

systems that they are charged to maintain. For example, when students want to hold a program that puts their safety at risk, such as bare-knuckle boxing, while intoxicated, in an off-campus forest, hundreds of miles from campus, it is incumbent upon the university administration to intervene on behalf of the safety of those students. As another example, when the university notes that several staff members are being hit by cars crossing the street from the parking lot to the building where they work, the administration has a duty to respond to this need by putting into place safety mechanisms which will greatly decrease the likelihood of accidents (such as elevated crosswalks, flashing lights, bright signs warning of pedestrians, etc.). Administrators cannot simply abdicate their responsibility by claiming that it was not their intention to have people injured from boxing or by crossing the street. They must understand the threat and respond on behalf of those who may be hurt to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the campus community. However, this is not the paradigm when it comes to issues of race and racism. There are many, many, many examples of racism and racist interactions which go unchecked and unexamined with absolutely no consequences for white administrators. At SRU, as well as at institutions across the country, there have been serious and substantial racial incidents that are never remedied in a meaningful way. Rather the tack appears to be more of a damage control frame which seeks to minimize the publicity and embarrassment upon the institution and assign some sort of sensitivity training for the aggressor. However, the actual racism (the systems and structures that allow and sanction this activity) remains unchallenged. To revisit the analogy from above, this would be akin to punishing the drivers who hit a pedestrian, but

not working to change the environment which puts pedestrians at risk. Likewise, white administrators are doing virtually nothing to protect people of color as they allow the racism to continue without work to dismantle racist structures.

The White Administrator's Mind

I will never forget sitting in a Sociology class in the week following a racist news story – this time it was a well-known television personality (Michael Richards, better known as Kramer from Seinfeld) who made racist remarks in a comedy show after being taunted by a patron of the club who was Black. On this occasion, Richard's rant was caught on a camera phone which included a diatribe that referred to the patron using the n-word and advocated lynching the patron, each of which draws on a deeply violent and racialized history of Black people in America and seeks to intimidate and threaten the person of color in an unmistakable way. As we discussed the ramifications of the incident in class, it was mentioned that Richards had gone on national television to apologize and claim that he is not racist. Further, Richards called prominent leaders Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson to apologize and make the same claim that he is not racist. A classmate in a moment of disbelief blurted out “what does it take to be racist these days anyway?” The implication being that if you are using racist language and making explicit racialized threats and you are *not* racist, then who exactly is a racist? The frame for such an argument is consistent with the court's definition of racist discrimination, which demands that the intention of racist actions must be established. This frame assures white people can participate in racist actions and still be absolved of any wrongdoing by virtue of not having the intention to be racist.

In this first theme, white administrative leadership will be discussed relative to creating and maintaining white space. Administrators of color are making these observations of white administrators, so these narratives lack the sanitized, self-imagined ways of being that characterize the ways that people see themselves. Instead, these observations describe specific ways of being at SRU and the effects of decisions and interactions with white administrators.

Ignorant Leadership. This first theme describes how white institutional leaders lead when it comes to issues of race, or “diversity” in the nomenclature of higher education administration. Many of the respondents described a sense of apathy and ignorance when it comes to these issues.

It’s more of an apathy or an ‘I don’t know how to participate in this conversation,’ or ‘I don’t have an opinion,’ or ‘this is not one of my top priorities,’ but yet I noticed that there are other things that are not necessarily in their job description that they seem to be able to chime in on [321].

Interestingly, it seems that diversity and race issues not only fail to appear in the job description for these top-level administrators, but are also not deemed a priority for them. This observation really speaks to the low regard in which many white administrators hold issues of race. There are two ways to read this apathy: first, if this was an issue that was truly important to these white administrators then surely they would have thoughts, perspectives, and perhaps an articulated/known stance to share about these issues. The silence that pervades the space when these issues are discussed communicates the low priority of these issues. If there is nobody to bring forward

and/or speak on behalf of these issues, then they cease to exist in these important decision making spaces. In my own experience as a diversity officer I can say unequivocally that when I am not in a decision making space, the likelihood that race or diversity will be discussed decreases exponentially.

A second way to consider the impact of this apathy is that by remaining silent in these decision making spaces, white administrators are deploying a cogent strategy intended to stall the process for addressing any racial issues (typically some sort of inequities). As an ancillary benefit to this strategy, the silence by white administrators also ensures that those few people who contribute to the conversation are the ones who will have to execute a decision and potentially suffer consequences should their decision not produce results that other white administrators find acceptable. Further, by refusing to participate in these conversations that deal with race or diversity, administrators ensure that these spaces won't be used for similar discussions in the future since they are unproductive. Martin described how this administrative silence can impact the university-wide conversation about issues of race and diversity.

I mean, in the administration, the diversity – which of course included racial, ethnic-racial diversity, etcetera, where a true, one of the imperatives that we were strategically moving forward on – I don't even hear it talked about anymore or [it's] talked about in a passive way [...] but from an institutional perspective, I don't hear it as being a part of every State of the University discussion. I don't hear it coming out of the President's mouth when you go out and talk to the SRU alumni etcetera [305].

The old adage “silence speaks volumes” seems especially germane in this situation. Since race and diversity are not discussed broadly, openly, and frequently, these issues are demoted in importance as an institutional priority.

Jasmin also discussed the willful ignorance of white administrators in describing how the person who is charged with ensuring equity in her unit (her boss) is at least uninformed but quite likely incompetent to hold these responsibilities.

D: Who is ultimately responsible for ensuring equity in the policies, the norms of the practices for your college?

J: My boss.

D: Your boss? And does your boss take that role seriously or what does your boss do in that role?

J: [Laughing]. I don't know that he even understands that that's part of his job [pause], and maybe he does and I just don't see it. I mean I'm willing to admit that, but in looking at the way that decisions have been made with our office, issues that have come up in our office, I don't understand how he can do that for the entirety of the college if this is what he's doing with this office, just that office [426].

Jasmin's example describes how the willfully ignorant white administrator can operate in a way that communicates very little regard for issues of race or diversity with decisions that are made. In what other aspect of an administrator's role could they have so little regard for an aspect of their job and still maintain that position in the organization? That an environment has been created and maintained whereby people of

color in the organization are caused to question if the leadership understands their role in the maintenance of the racial climate suggests that this is by design. By maintaining the appearance of ignorance, an administrator can obscure their role in the active management of hostile spaces for people of color (specific tactics described later). Administrative behavior can be influence rewards or consequences for decisions, meaning that if white administrators are willfully ignorant about issues of race, then it is a behavior that is either rewarded, or there would be consequences for behavior that seeks to identify and remedy racial inequalities. The reality is very likely that there are both tacit rewards and real or perceived consequences for white administrators to maintain a façade of ignorance.

Parochial Administrators. This next theme is an extension of the last theme but gives agency to the administrators themselves as (at least somewhat) cognizant of their racist approach as well as the consequences of their approach.

For example, Gabriella described how a parochial mindset operates at SRU, where there are not only similar looking people (white men) sitting in the leadership positions, but that their mentality and framing of issues follows suit. In this way, the hegemony is preserved without consequence or resistance.

...they're all the same way of thinking. It's a – I mean it's a mentality, completely in a – it's always thinking the same way. They all think the same way. Very like obeying and very like submissive. I don't see anybody – once I participated in a departmental leadership meeting, I was shocked. When I looked [around] the table, just men and I was the only one there saying, 'golly,' and they

[are] always quiet. They don't talk. They don't give too much opinion. They are very obedient in such a way that it scares me to hell" [597].

Building on the idea of apathetic leadership (from above), the silence in this meeting also speaks volumes. While it will be impossible in the scope of this study to truly understand all of the possible components of this administrative silence, there are a handful of possible reasons that administrators would remain voiceless in a leadership meeting. Gabriella offered an important possible rationale, in that by observing who was sitting around the table there is good reason to believe that the race and gender of the leaders informs their parochial approach.

One of my peer debriefers and informants for this study offered a perspective that would be otherwise impossible to illuminate: at SRU, and likely in other administrative spaces, this silence technique is used to ensure that there is not an opportunity to voice dissent. Instead, the most prominent and important decision makers meet privately ahead of larger meeting (that Gabriella attended) and discussed the decision that would be desirable, and what should be done to ensure that this decision is the result. This tactic gives the illusion of cooperation, collaboration, and shared governance, but in reality the decision or topic was never truly on the table.

Silence in this space is effective in quelling opposition because of the nature of being the first to break an established norm (for Gabriella, this becomes even more difficult as the only one of someone in a space, and who is a short-term visitor to this space). The obedient nature of most people means that they will not deviate from the social norms which have been established within a milieu. When Gabriella described

how this space “scared her to hell,” it was likely with good reason. The obedient environment which had been created to silence any opposition is a tool of the white, male hegemony and could be employed to keep her opinion marginal, regardless of the merit of her perspective/argument. Being the only woman and only person of color means that there are several ways that she has to be on guard, making it that much more difficult to also be the only one to voice dissent.

In each of the explanations above, the institutional power structure is supported and sustained by white, male administrators who seek to maintain power and control of the institution. The fact that higher education institutions are among the spaces controlled almost exclusively by white men means that the higher education enterprise itself is ingrained with a deep sense of whiteness and that on some level white administrators are taking actions (implicitly or explicitly) which will preserve this white space.

Administrators Without a Race. Angela provided another example of how parochial administrators behave at SRU that illustrates how white administrators view themselves. As the center of all decisions (regarding race and otherwise) their mindset resists being labeled as white and instead is established as normal, so that anything that runs contrary to this perspective is abnormal.

It’s really hard sometimes for white people to see themselves labeled white.

They are so used to seeing themselves as like the universal norm of everything that I think it might put them off to kind of talk about what they’re doing in

relation to white privilege. Particularly since I think that they labor under the assumption that they are doing the good for everybody [262].

This technique as utilized by white administrators is consistent with the framing of race as described by Frankenberg, where race is an unnamed cultural practice in which being white is the norm, therefore structures and decisions that support whiteness are natural. This is a natural extension of the color-blind ideology which asks that people not consider race (specifically whiteness) as this allows the privileges of whiteness to again be unexamined and normal/natural. As a result, it is far more comfortable for a white administrator to be labeled without a race and be trusted to make decisions that are best for *all people*. The tacit assumption is that making the best decision for all people (which is virtually impossible) means making the best decision for white people.

Similarly, Maria described how white executive staff members in a presentation identified themselves. In this scenario, one of the white staff members resisted a racial identification (for the purposes of an activity) and stated that “well, I’m just American like most Southerners: God, country and family come first” [28]. The assumption here is that race is no longer a relevant cultural identifier, particularly for Americans from the South, who are assumed to love God, country and family. The characterization is so deeply flawed and overly presumptuous that it hardly bears explanation. However, it should be noted that this staff member felt comfortable enough in the environment at SRU to not only hold this racist perspective, but also to share it (with little challenge

from other participants) under the assumption that everyone else is also operating from this perspective.

Gabriella went on to describe another way that a parochial administrator can absent their race from a situation. In multiple instances administrators that she dealt with were surprised by Gabriella's description of racism within the SRU environment.

He couldn't believe that [racist experience]. 'How did that happen? I don't see that I'm doing this.' They don't think that they are really doing it. It's like a lack of sensitivity or I don't know, putting yourself in other people's place to have that kind of way of thinking. I don't know. I don't know [634].

The disbelief of racist experiences is particularly damaging, since the white administrator assumes a role as the ultimate arbitrator who is beyond race. The tacit presumption here is that the white administrator's perspective is normal and beyond reproach, and as such more valid/reliable in interpreting a racialized situation. Such an assumption ultimately subjects all people of color to continued racist antagonism and preserving the white space of the institution.

White Fear. One of the enduring legacies of whiteness is the fear by white people of people of color. The fear of people of color has manifested itself in many ways over the course of time, including the racialized stereotypes that frame people of color as dangerous, less intelligent, sexual deviants, and criminals, to name just a few. The white administrators at SRU also displayed a fear of people of color which was manifested in defensiveness and resentment toward people of color.

In this first example, I asked Angela why she thought white people exercise power over her in ways that devalue her contribution and ultimately create a hostile environment for her.

[Sigh]. I think that it's not all of them [white people], I think that if I had to really kind of push it, people who are less kind of secure about their position. So, old, old, white guys, they're just really nice to me, because I don't pose any kind of threat. But if I say something then I might be thought of as...okay, if you have a situation where people are constantly patting themselves on the back for their diversity efforts, and then the one Black person is like 'we're not as good as you think,' then that always puts you on the defensive. So, on some sort of levels I might be perceived as putting them [white people] on the defensive, that might be real or that might be imaginary on their part. [...] maybe it could make them upset that they have to explain themselves to me, if I should render a complaint about something [241].

Angela's comment is tremendously insightful and describes multiple types of white fear that may contribute to her experience. The first type is a positional fear – that is the fear by white people that a person of color may be more successful or have authority over them. Angela acknowledged this white fear based on positional authority in her comments when she referred to the “old, old, white men” who knew that she did not pose any threat to them and their success, but that people who were much less secure in their position did see her as a threat.

The second type of white fear that Angela acknowledged was the fear that they will be recognized as racists, complicit with a system of oppression. The white administrators became defensive when Angela challenged their notions of the progress that was being made, which could be read as Angela exposing their complicit role in an obviously racist system. A second, but related way to interpret the defensiveness is as fear of being wrong. The white administrators are attempting to frame themselves (as well as the institution) as a place that is progressing from their racist roots, and to have a person of color describe the truth that their understanding is incongruent with the lived reality can be disturbing, particularly for white people who are used to creating the narrative around their normalized white framing.

The final type of fear that Angela described is fear of administrative reprisal. In this white administrative space, as in nearly all white administrative spaces, there is a fear of people of color filing a lawsuit on the basis of discrimination. This fear is built on a tacit white assumption that there are far more protections built into the law for people of color to claim discrimination than are experienced in reality. This fear has been built around fallacy since the burden of proof lies with the victim to demonstrate that they were *intentionally* discriminated against, which would be a very difficult, if not impossible, task (to prove another person's intentions). However, this fear remains an enduring part of white administrator's mindset where issues of race are concerned.

Martin described another aspect of white fear that he encountered which is similar to the positional white fear that Angela described. In this instance, Martin described how his role as an institutional leader put him into a difficult position because

there were a number of white administrators who were unaccustomed to working under a powerful Black man.

I think there have been times in the past that they [white administrators] have [been fearful of Martin] and I think that fear came from – back to my leadership role, truly at the right hand of power, and it was a fear that had to turn into respect because they know – and I had a boss who made it clear – that I consult with him on every decision. [...] It's hard to say whether the fear was related to ethnicity but I think that became resentment that, 'okay, he's got this access, he's got this skill set, and damn, he also happens to be a Black guy too.' So I think that happened because a lot of these guys are older, white men who never had to answer to or through an African American, and especially an African American male, so they went through a culture shock and a culture change [319].

Martin's experience allowed him to see white fear and resentment in an ongoing basis. This is likely related to not only his position, but also his proximity to power. In this way, Martin derived power granted him by a white authority, a concept called "borrowed power," meaning that a person of color's power is still at the pleasure of an ultimate white authority. The power that Martin had (real or borrowed) equated to a fear by white administrators of a powerful Black man who could potentially affect their outcomes and ultimately their success as institutional leaders. By virtue of his race, Martin represented a threat to the way that business had been done at SRU for generations. SRU's distinctly white administrative and conservative space could potentially be compromised by having a Black man in a position of authority. In this

way, Martin's presence represented a fear of change, a fear of potentially leveling the playing field, and a fear of failure by white administrators to uphold the legacy of white administrative space at SRU.

The data above has described how the white administrator leads, and in particular how they lead when issues of race or diversity are involved. Through characterizations of willful ignorance, parochial leadership, and defensiveness through white fear, administrators of color have characterized the mindset of white administrators as incapable of truly leading toward an equitable space on campus for all people.

White Administrative Tactics

The white administrative mindset is insufficient to understanding how and why SRU has remained such a pervasive white space. In order to fully appreciate the ways that whiteness has been deployed at SRU, it is necessary to also consider the tactics that white administrators rely upon that reinforce the white space. Documented below is a series of tactics that operate to reinforce the hegemony of race, largely through individual interactions. Importantly, these tactics are able to remain largely invisible by the normalized nature of whiteness combined with the insidious ways in which these tactics operate. On the surface, many of these tactics would appear to simply be part of the administrative milieu, but upon further examination, each of the administrators of color described experiences with administrative tactics that are hostile and oppressive in nature.

Color Cognizant Decision-Making. The administrators of color interviewed provided a powerful juxtaposition for leadership and the consideration of race. The

consideration of race by many white administrators was shown to be largely understood through a colorblind lens. However, when administrators of color were asked to describe their own consideration of race in decision-making, they described how race was an important factor for them. This juxtaposition of the role of race helps to illuminate the important role that race plays in decision-making.

When asked about the role that race plays in their own decision making, many administrators of color had to pause to think, but all described the same recognition of the importance of race in making decisions. I believe that the pause was due to the fact that many of these decision makers consider race, but don't necessarily dwell on race. Further, when asked to comment on their consideration of race, I think that many of them initially felt like this might be the "wrong" answer since this potentially flies in the face of the meritocratic ideology that fills the administrative spaces that these people of color find themselves.

The examples that the administrators of color shared illustrated a dedication to "balance," which was an instructive word choice used by multiple respondents. The recognition of the imperative to counteract or balance the white spaces that permeate the ethos with race cognizant decision-making is an effort to seek a more equitable environment for all people.

One of the things that I've inherited in coming back here and in my ties with SRU is that a lot of people truly just don't think about it [race] at all, and so there's that balancing act, you know. How do you help it get into the conscience, the psyche of people – that you have to think about it [race in decision making],

without turning them into people who resist it because it's always there? So while it's constantly in my mind, I have to balance when the optimal time is to bring it out [309].

Martin's comment not only illustrates this need for balance in the decision making (as also voiced by Jasmin and Anita), but it also describes the importance of Martin's attempting to educate his white administrative colleagues so that they can appreciate the importance of considering the impact of race in decision making. Martin described this as a difficult balancing act because if he pushes too hard, he risks actually turning white people against this perspective. Martin went on to describe his philosophy whereby white people can learn from making color-cognizant decisions in hiring since this added element of racial diversity in the organization will add a great deal in terms of doing business differently in pursuit of excellence [313].

This philosophy for communicating with white people about issues of race is a tangentially interesting point. The idea that you cannot simply rely on a rational, logical, empirical, data-driven argument to demonstrate the need for race cognizance is well-known within communities of color, but not necessarily in white communities. Angela underscored this point in describing how white people cannot understand how oppressive decisions are made when they work with people of color to create more equitable spaces:

But it's really interesting when you're always under siege and then the white folks get under siege right along with you and they don't really know how to respond and they think that you can just talk logically, you can just rationalize

and deal with it. ‘If we just explain to these people how their thinking as wrongheaded.’ Well they [white decision makers] don’t really care [234].

Angela’s comment underscores the important lack of understanding within white communities of the experiences of people of color, even among those who are white people who are likely attempting to be allies. The grip that the racialized white frame holds on the minds of white people and their ability to see the world from a perspective that is not their own, particularly among those who are assumed to be farther along in terms of understanding racism and the complicit nature of white people in this racism, is important to note and will be further illuminated in the next part of this chapter when discussing race with white administrators.

A tremendously insightful comment was shared by Martin that illustrated the personal nature of color-cognizant decision making. While the role that race plays in daily interaction is largely not acknowledged by white people who feel that the white perspective is just the “normal” perspective and that white people can be truly objective in their decision making, while people of color make racialized and illogical decisions (as illustrated in the rhetoric that surrounded the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections, where accusations were made that people of color simply voted for Obama because of his race, refusing to believe that people of color voted for the candidate who better represented the interests of America), demonstrates the depth of white ignorance. White people are so bound to the white racial frame that they either cannot or will not recognize anything that deviates from this frame, and cannot or will not recognize their own perspectives as racialized. In discussing the role that race plays in his decision-

making, Martin shared that it is “embedded in probably every decision that enters my mind [308].” He then went on to describe his experiences growing up as a Black man in the south during the era of Civil Rights, and how those experiences shape his daily interactions and decisions. In a very telling example, Martin shared how this perspective affected his daily work as an administrator at SRU. In this example, he is describing how race affected his fight to prevent outsourcing of university employees, many of whom were Black and Hispanic.

[...] what I feared and what has come to fruition was that these – in particular as I think about African Americans but Hispanics as well – that when this contract is settled, we will have as an institution sold off unrepresented groups as if they’re chattel on the auction block, just like slaves. So if I go back to slavery times, no matter how loyal that Buck or that Mammy, as they referred to them, was to the master, if there was a financial benefit or some other social benefit to the master they were sold off, and so that analogy has been on my mind *so much* through this process that these people who have been loyal and dedicated to this institution, sometimes not in the best of times, often not with the level of respect that they have deserved, that we’re about to return to the 1800’s, the 1700’s where we’re selling them off regardless as to how loyal they have been to this institution [banging the table with his hand]. And what I have tried to say to [white] folks is that it will take multiple generations for that resentment in these communities to subside or be forgotten, but I don’t think it will ever subside or

be forgotten because they will remember the day that this institution turned on them or treated them like slaves [310].

Martin's comment describes the painful situation at SRU created by white administrator's decision to outsource services, the same difficult situation that many institutions of higher education and businesses across America have faced. Martin's consideration of race was clearly germane to the situation as he described not only the racial impact that this decision will have on the communities of color, but the irreparable damage to the institution as a result of making this decision. The consideration of race in this color-cognizant example provides an example of how race plays an important role in decisions, as well as the impact from failing to consider race. Importantly, even as Martin pleaded with white administrators (using an interest convergence framing, so that administrators would see this as in their best interests) to consider race so as to protect and lessen further damage of the image of the institution, the white administrators still failed to recognize or understand the importance of race in this decision.

The colorblind racism that exists at SRU hinges on two philosophical stances. The first of these stances supposes that racism and oppression no longer happen at all, which Maria experienced in a diversity meeting of institutional leaders:

...ummm and there is this one man, I won't say what department they came from, he, but you know as we went around the room and talked about pressing issues, what were pressing issues [examples of racist, sexist, homophobic, or other oppressive decisions, structures, or incidents] that were going on in our area, he was just *floored* and he was a white male and to me he exemplified [...]

He was just floored. He was like ‘wow! You are all talking about all of this stuff, and I just don’t see it. Maybe it’s the department that I’m in athlete...’ Oh, I’m not supposed to say the department [laughing]. But I’ll just say it, he was in athletics and of all the places where *you know* racism exists and where whiteness is, is um, you can come up with so many examples. But, he said ‘maybe it’s because of where I am in athletics, where it just doesn’t, you know, you just don’t see these kinds of things,’ [64].

In this case, the white administrator is making the claim that they cannot see race or the differential impact of race on people’s experiences, even within a department (athletics) which across the nation is infamous for making racialized decisions in the name of profit for the institution (i.e. treating “student-athletes” as property whose utility is only tied to their ability in the game, as opposed to investing in these individuals as students). However, the reality of the denial of race becomes clear when the white administrator attempts to claim that his department just doesn’t have those kinds of problems. Such a claim at any level of an organization within a higher education institution is at least ignorant, and completely falls apart because of the denials/surprise that the administrator expressed earlier: if athletics was truly an organization that operated in a bubble where racism was no longer a concern, there would have had to be a seismic culture shift whereby all members of the organization were well-versed with the problems that their student-athletes of color deal with when interacting with the rest of the SRU institutional culture. Further, the noteworthy and novel solutions would be well known by others in the institution as athletics became lauded as a racial utopia in

the midst of Jim Crow-esque discrimination. All of this would require not only a color-cognizant frame, but an ability to recognize the challenges that exist within the institution. In short, the tactic of this white administrator is a classic color-blind framing which denies any real issues that people of color deal are forced to experience.

The second philosophy that undergirds the color-blind decision-making is blind allegiance to a meritocracy, which is applied when convenient for further minimizing race or denying people of color access to resources. This is happening in two problematic ways at SRU. In the first instance, the blind allegiance to meritocracy prevents white people from acknowledging their own white privileges, an argument articulated by Bonilla-Silva as abstract liberalism. Martin noted this in dealing with the white administrators within his daily work.

There's a sense of 'I'm white. I'm right. I pulled myself up by my bootstraps, why can't the rest of you?' There is a sense of 'I have always been privileged, I've always gotten what I want or I at some point in my life didn't get what I want but I pulled myself up by my bootstraps and now I'm going to show you.' I [Martin personally] don't see that. I haven't seen that a lot with my African American or Hispanic colleagues who have risen in organizations, whether here or other places [340].

In this case, the meritocratic argument for color-blind decision making means that white administrators note that there is a difference between the experiences of white people and people of color, but the difference is justified in the minds of white people as earned through hard work. This rhetoric purports to ignore the past 400 years of

American history in which people of color were categorically denied access to the resources that provided the foundation for bootstrappers of today to have education, inherited wealth, access to healthcare, ability to avoid incarceration, etc. It is likely that those people of color who Martin refers to as having risen through the ranks without subscribing to the meritocratic philosophy recognize that hard work is only one component of their success, but that there are communities which support them and made their success possible. White people, in this example, are unable to acknowledge the shoulders upon which they stand and the privilege that is associated with their success. Without the acknowledgement of privilege, the white administrator reserves the right to judge the people of color who have not succeeded at the same level and make the argument that their lack of success is deserved.

The second way that white administrators participate in color-blind decision making with a blind allegiance to meritocracy is by denying access to resources for people of color. Angela described her experience of asking for additional support to run her program.

I do know that sometimes people play the race card with me. So, if I ask for something, [white administrators respond with] ‘how would this look if everyone asked for it.’

‘I don’t give a damn if everybody asked for it, that’s your problem to figure out, I just asked you for this one thing,’ [285].

In this instance, rather than addressing the noted problem that Angela presented, the white administrator countered her request with an unrealistic scenario as justification

to deny support of Angela. In this way, the white administrator uses another side of the meritocracy-fallacy as a technique to deny Angela access to resources that would contribute to her success. As a savvy administrator, Angela reframed the conversation to call the administrator on this false argument, which simultaneously reminded the administrator that their role is to administer programs, so *they* must deal with problems.

Also noteworthy, the white administrator tried to use egalitarianism as an argument for making a decision. The application of this egalitarianism is confounding as a foundation since the framing of a equitable space seemed to suggest that all resources are applied equally and evenly across the unit. Resources in higher education are almost never applied in such a blind way, since there are different needs in colleges, departments, and programs, based on the enrollment, the necessary equipment, infrastructure, etc. For the administrator to suggest that any support of the person of color will have to be mirrored with support for all other of the other faculty or administrators adds tremendous weight and difficulty to Angela's request, which as she put it was just for "this one thing."

The irony of comparing colorblindness and color-cognizant decision-making by institutional administrators, of course, is that both mindsets are actually color cognizant. That white administrators labor under the illusion that they can withhold consideration of race on any level is disingenuous and problematic. However, as a tactic, the rhetoric of colorblindness in the name of meritocracy carries tremendous appeal for many white people as it makes permanent the systemic, intergenerational, and unearned privileges of whiteness, since they can be justified as earned, rather than considering the historical

oppression and hegemony that produced those privileges. Jasmin articulated this approach when she described how she thought white administrators make decisions that deal with race.

[Pause]. Race playing a role in decision-making? I think they [white administrators] would tell you that race never plays a role in their decision-making, but at the end of the day, when you look at the decisions that you're making, in their mind it's not about race. 'I'm picking somebody who I think is best for blah.' And of course that means selecting criteria that they are comfortable with. It just so happens nobody of color exists to fit those characteristics [413].

Jasmin's observations that the white administrator's subscription to the colorblind ideology actually permanently reifies the racism associated with white decision makers refusing to acknowledge the legacy of race and racism in America, and are further suggesting that they can cognitively suppress their socialized implicit associations. Not only is this a faulty premise impossible, but it is endorsed and encouraged by the leaders of higher education organizations and supported by the law in hiring decisions in many human resources contexts, as well as in admissions decisions in several states.

White Control of Bodies of Color. To be clear, there are numerous examples in this research of how white people exert control over the higher educational space in which people of color work and live. The data in this subtheme documents the ways in

which white power extends to control the physical bodies of people of color, which is a deeply alarming level of control.

The data that are part of this subtheme range from the control over bodies of color broadly speaking (in the headcount or presence of people of color at SRU) to the very specific (control over the deeply personal aspects of a person of color's life). Presence (the number of people of color that are part of the population at SRU) is an indicator for "diversity" since this is often inferred as a watermark for how discriminatory/accepting an environment is, with the implication being that the more people of color that exist within a space, the better the environment must be for people of color. Such a notion is flawed since it supposes that *all* people have the opportunity to do whatever they want, wherever they want, however they want, whenever they want. The reality for many highly trained people of color is that there are few academic or administrative positions for which they are eligible and as a result they likely will have to compromise to go where the jobs are, particularly when they are starting out in their career. This means that for some people of color, SRU may not have been their first choice or they may not have had any choice. Similarly, highly trained people do not necessarily have the luxury of choosing if they will leave a position. However, to gain any momentum in building a true critical mass of people of color, there likely needs to be institution that is truly a welcoming and supportive place for people of color. The Field of Dreams reference ("build it and they will come") may be true for a small number of people for a short period of time, but does not accurately portray the complex

demographic, social, and environmental factors which go into creating and maintaining a campus environment that supports people of color.

In terms of their presence at SRU, the administrators of color described their experience in one of two ways: first, most of them acknowledged that they are one of a very few as people of color in administrative positions; second their experience has not been one that could be characterized as meritocratic, where they are largely acknowledged for having earned their place at SRU. Rather there is a sense that the people of color should be grateful to be at SRU.

Maria described how ubiquitous white people are at the university, in particular in places of leadership. She said quite off-handedly that she was at an awards ceremony and noted “all the people who are giving out the awards were basically the supervisors, the management staff, and they were on stage. Every single person on that stage was white. If you look at the org charts across campus and look who is in the leadership positions [pause] *white*,” [46].

Gabriella also noted the race and gender disparity in positions of leadership in the college where she works: “You don’t see – if you look to department heads of the entire college, there are just white men, American. You don’t see anybody from a different – even an English guy. You don’t see anybody, European or Indian [...]. And then you don’t see females. You just see just men, white men. This is a very, very closed minded kind of college,” [591].

Without belaboring the point, the federally-reported presence data demonstrates that there are very few people of color in leadership positions at SRU. Not surprisingly,

this fact was discussed by respondents as a symptom of the larger ethos at the university that supports white people (men and Americans) in particular. When so many of the decision makers are white people, many of the decisions will be racist, almost by default, since likely nearly all of those administrators are not cognizant of (or refuse to acknowledge) the white racial frame with which they live their lives, make decisions, and understand the world.

The very few numbers of people of color at SRU leads to the second issue regarding presence at SRU: that is that the people of color that are at the institution are made to feel as if they do not belong in the environment or owe a debt of gratitude for being invited into this space. Anita described how this experience permeates the institution and is part of the culture at SRU.

But the idea, the, I call it the attitude of privileged-ness and power, and when you combine those two it's sort of like, it's this, this unspoken culture of a hidden agenda and as a person of color, what, what I often times feel is [this attitude from white administrators] 'you know what? You should just be glad you're here, because this State Research University is a wonderful place.' Now that's whiteness to me. 'SRU is this wonderful place.' Number two [the attitude from white administrators is that] 'you should just be glad that you're here regardless of what we do and how we do it. It's a privilege for you to be here. Play along with the game, we've done well up to this point, don't create any waves. [Pause]. Don't ask too many questions. Don't try to change too much of what exists.'

And I call it the illusion, it's an illusion of diversity, it's an illusion that we are

really trying to, to be this university that provides opportunities for all. It's an illusion. [78 & 79].

Anita described several important aspects of the SRU environment with her comment. First, the idea that the white administrators at SRU operate the institution with willful intent to deliver and operate within a hidden curriculum is a powerful notion that several scholars have discussed and includes explanations of the ways that the institution imparts lessons and training for behavior in society that are largely invisible and most often problematic. As Anita described, the hidden curriculum of SRU is instructive for how people of color are to be treated within in this space, and moreover, expectations for how people of color should comport themselves within this space – with gratitude and deference for being invited into a privileged space.

The second point that Anita made refers to the ways in which the white administrators at SRU resist change and compel conformity. When people with a perspective that challenges the white racial framing of the institution are invited to be part of the SRU environment, they are expected to comply with the dominant narrative and norms for the environment. The white administrators at SRU have been successful at creating agency through the institution to quell any dissent of unequal treatment and a hostile environment. As such, this white space becomes almost impossible to challenge and difficult for people of color to survive within, and contributes to people of color feeling like outsiders where their contribution is unwelcome.

Finally, Anita made a reference to how SRU also operates under the illusion of a meritocracy with opportunities for all people. In no uncertain terms, Anita clarified that

SRU has successfully created this illusion, but this is a departure from reality for the reasons cited above. While not surprising, this illusion is necessary for the institution to purport to serve all people in the state, as dictated by the mission of the institution. That this is an illusion is only recognized by people of color who navigate the systems and culture of SRU on a daily basis and experience the hostility and oppression (as will be demonstrated in the next section which describes how white administrators understand and make sense of the racial space at SRU).

Jasmin is another administrator of color who described her experiences being marginalized in the SRU space, making her presence at SRU tremendously difficult. She began by describing how she is largely hidden from people, which makes her job (which involves assisting students) nearly impossible.

You almost have to do it [work with students] one [student] at a time because that's the struggle I'm having. I am virtually hidden from most of the students, so unless I am out actively trying to find them, they don't know I'm there because I have that box [the physical barriers that prevents her visibility] [418].

In this way, the white administrators exert physical control over Jasmin, which accomplishes a couple of important ends. First, it serves as a notification to Jasmin that she is chattel to be controlled by the administration. The demoralizing effect of such a pejorative action does not go unnoted by Jasmin who further elaborated that her role exists “so my administration can say ‘yes, we have some Black people, see?’ [Mimicking a person pointing to something/someone] and they hold me out when they need to and then they put me back in my office when they don't” [419].

The practice by the white administrators of using Jasmin as a disposable part of their administrative team who can be deployed like a Jack-in-the-Box when needed, and then immediately shoved back into her box once her utility (as window dressing) has been exhausted is likely not uncommon, and has not only a detrimental effect on the person of color who is being treated as chattel, but it also reinforces the racialized notions of people of color since they are not allowed to demonstrate their knowledge and ability, because they are there to be seen and not heard.

The second effect that this physical control over Jasmin has is that it inhibits her ability to do her job, which has consequences for her reaching the goals that she has been hired to accomplish. By being able to control Jasmin's ability to do her job, her employment status is always in a precarious position. Should she push too hard to be visible and reach the student population, she may be dismissed for being insubordinate. Should she not push hard enough, she will be cast as ineffective and possibly terminated for being incompetent. Jasmin's loss of her physical control has a multi-layered consequence for her personally and professionally.

Another, and perhaps even more damaging loss of physical control by Jasmin of her own person is so troubling that on the surface seems at least very unusual, but in the final analysis is far more problematic. The unit in which Jasmin works is one where families are highly valued and employees are often encouraged to pursue a family, while those without a family who are made to feel excluded. In this example, Jasmin was describing the pressure that she was made to feel to begin a family.

D: Wow, so do people without children get made to feel marginalized as well?

J: I have been asked every year I've been working for this college when I am going to give birth.

D: Oh my gosh.

J: I had a woman down the hall from me in one of the departments who had an egg calendar. Yes.

D: In her office?

J: Uh-huh. [spoken as the voice of her colleague]: 'I know that you're going to be pregnant before the end of the year.'

[Jasmin responding to unnamed colleague]: 'Really? That's good to know. Maybe you should tell my husband, kind of think he should be clued in.'

D: She wasn't tracking you on this egg calendar, was she?

J: Uh-huh.

D: She was tracking you on the egg calendar? I thought you mean, broadly speaking, she had her own egg calendar that she tracked herself.

J: No, no, and I don't mean poultry science either [409].

Jasmin's experience describes a complete and total violation of any semblance of personal privacy and safe space. After the initial shock of this horrifying violation subsides, the deeper implications of this interaction become clear. This is not only a loss of privacy and control for Jasmin, but this is an extension of the idea that bodies of color are to be controlled by white people, as they were when people of color were property. For Jasmin, who has been on record repeatedly to say that she does not want children, to be harassed in this way is beyond inexcusable. Even if no further action was taken by

this white staff member, the illusion to slave women being raped by slave masters for procreation and pleasure is overwhelming and at the very least puts Jasmin on notice that she not only has no control over her professional life, but that her deeply personal life is also beyond her control.

SRU as Property of White People. This subtheme describes the ways in which white people exert complete control over the space at SRU, to reinforce the narrative that the university is their property and ensure that decisions that are made support white people and the white narrative. For an example of how this can work, there is a compelling story ongoing nationally about how textbooks are being revised to not include narratives about slavery, and those references to slavery that are included are highly edited to portray slavery as far more humane (even beneficial). This is an example of white people taking textbooks as a tool for the transmission of knowledge and reframing the information so that white people can hide the horror and violence of the acts that slavery enforced on Black and Brown people. This serves as a technique for white people to maintain the classroom/educational space as a white space by framing conversations about race in ways absolve white people of wrongdoing. Similarly, white people at SRU have coopted systems, policies, programs, practices, and other tools for the transmission and control of information to create structures and messages that explicitly and tacitly serve white people.

The sense of entitlement that captures the sense of ownership and privilege associated with whiteness at SRU is described by Maria, who said “But, people come in with that attitude, especially if they’re fourth generation – that this is the best place in the

world. ‘I own it, my ancestors owned it, and now I own it’ [20]. The sense of ownership is an intergenerational transmission of ownership, which is consistent with the highly racialized and patriarchal history of the institution. When Maria describes this space as being “owned” by the white students, she is describing not only the attitude in which the students have when interacting with each other and faculty, staff, and administrators on campus, but it also describes the ways in which the university allows and facilitates the interaction of students in the SRU space.

To provide another example, we are all guaranteed the freedom of speech, of course, which guarantees our right to speak and express opinions which will not be limited by the state. At SRU, students not only have this freedom, but also have the university-sanctioned freedom to create a hostile environment without the university using the institutional voice to condemn (which is different from punishing) poor behavior that is inconsistent with the espoused values of the institution. When William first arrived on the SRU campus, he was made to feel unwelcome immediately.

“Unbeknownst to me, I kind of had a rude welcoming my first day. The conservative student group demonstrated against my coming the first day I arrived, indicating that they didn’t need, meaning SRU did not need, a Black executive administrator” [519].

Rather than the institutional leaders rolling out the red carpet or at the very least countering the negative and highly public negative sentiment with a message of support for this new administrator, the institutional administrators remained silent. This negative start to his tumultuous time at SRU was described as a disappointment “I think my biggest disappointment was there was nobody from SRU, no administrators or anyone

else there to support me that first day” [520]. In this way the white administration is complicit with the students in maintaining the sense of white ownership over the space.

There have been several examples noted by the participants in these interviews of places and spaces in which student behavior sought to reinforce whiteness and the entitlement of students to claim the space for their ideas without consequence. A couple of examples include students dressing as Black people but doing so by accentuating stereotypical and highly racialized fallacies, holding events where well known Black leaders are caricatured and openly mocked (and implore passers-by to participate in defacing images of these well-known Black leaders), holding what are often referred to as “ghetto parties” where participants are again asked to dress in ways that seek to build on highly racialized stereotypes, and by targeting Black professors to hold out for public scrutiny for their scholarship and their presentations (even rallying the support of local media and influential donors to the institution to support their cause and pressure the white administration for a response, which coincidentally elicited a public condemnation of the Black faculty member). These events were all highly public and in several instances garnered local and national attention and embarrassment for the institution, but in only one instance did the administration respond in a way to position the institution as opposed to the racist act that became public, thereby separating the agency of the institution from the oppressive act. In each of the other instances, the institution stood silent and complicit with the students, often citing free speech as a rationale, thereby reinforcing the notion that the white space of the institution should be maintained and is property of white students. In one case the white institutional leaders went so far as to

bring an expert on free speech to campus to absolve the institution from any wrongdoing by failing to respond to racist comments/events from students. In the rush to justify a lack of sanctions for these students, there was never a justification for why the SRU administrators failed to utilize the institutional voice to condemn these comments/actions (therefore reinforcing SRU as property of white people). It also worth pointing out that this strategy of relying on the agency of the law in general (including free speech, equal opportunity, and/or affirmative action laws) guarantees a colorblind approach that will reinscribe and justify the legal racist framing on institutional decisions.

However, behind closed doors, white administrators acted in far more aggressive and egregious ways to intimidate Black administrators. In the first example, Martin described how a highly connected attorney that works at the university sat in his office “and essentially told me that if I didn’t do something [a specific request that Martin made ambiguous for the interview] he knew who could make me do it,” [316]. This sort of power-play may seem to be ubiquitous in higher level organizations such as higher education administration, but Martin dispelled such a notion:

[...] I realized that he [the attorney] would never have sat there and talked to a similarly situated white administrator at SRU in that tone [...] So I understood that from a power perspective, he had come in here as the white guy telling the negro administrator what I needed to do or what I’d better do, and that at that point I needed to very professionally let him know that there’s a power structure here, there’s a hierarchy here, and you will not disrespect not only me, but you won’t disrespect this position that I hold [316].

This example is powerful, since the lower-ranked white administrator sought to bully Martin into making a decision and used his white racial currency as a tactic (the only real power that he had over Martin that would allow him to make demands of Martin). As a result, Martin is forced to defend himself (and his position) from the network of white administrators. As a tactic, this is a form of intimidation which seeks to compel the administrator of color to make decisions that may or (in all likelihood) may not be in the best interests of the administrator of color and ultimately the institution. The use of race and the intermediary is interesting to consider, since for this white attorney to have this power (real or imaginary) there must be at least the potential for him to rely on the power of the ultimate white decision maker. If the white attorney was asked to intimidate Martin, then this tactic works by keeping the ultimate white decision maker clandestine and making it impossible for Martin to fight the decision maker since they remain unknown. If this power is imaginary and the white attorney is simply seeking to serve his own interests and bluffing about his connection to power, he is still ultimately able to intimidate administrators of color and possibly even cajole them into doing what he wants them to do with the threat of a connection to the ultimate white decision maker. In the final analysis, it often does not matter if the power is real or imaginary, since either interaction can have a similar intimidating effect on administrators of color.

Another form of intimidation which was noted by administrators of color at SRU is anonymous intimidation. While many white people might assume that this intimidation is harmless and attribute it to some outliers (as did the white administrators

at SRU), the reality is that these anonymous acts of intimidation can be even worse for a person of color because the source of the intimidation could quite literally be anybody (a disgruntled student, white supremacists, a rabble rouser, a ridiculous attempt at humor, etc.) and because the illusions and intimidation are implicitly or explicitly violent. William described his experiences with anonymous intimidation by describing a couple of spaces where this type of harassment occurred for him at SRU.

Now, there were incidents, for example, almost every weekend, once I'd leave to go home, when I came in Monday morning, there was literature from the Ku Klux Klan that was pushed under the door. [...] There were cases of incidents on campus. I'll never forget the big football game one year, that the night before the game, somebody hung a noose on one of the trees on campus – but again, that person or group was not identified, [524, 525].

William refers to a failure on the part of the administration to properly investigate these instances, where white administrators callously chalked this up to “some yahoo,” who is/are essentially harmless and does not intend to do harm to William or other people of color in the SRU community. There are two important points to recognize from this perspective: first, there is no way for anyone to know what is a harmless threat and what is a real threat to the safety of individuals on campus. Second, and perhaps more importantly, such an abdication of authority serves as a notice to those who are victimized by these behaviors that administration is silently consenting to this type of treatment for people of color, which makes them complicit with the aggression against people of color. In this way, both the anonymous intimidation and the

intimidation from other white administrators are very similar: both acts are intended to bully people of color, it is largely unclear in both situations who is ultimately responsible for this behavior, and neither of these acts of aggression are ever brought forward for investigation or accountability from the community. When intimidation is allowed to exist without recognizing the great consequences for people of color (personally, emotionally, and possibly physically), the environment becomes increasingly hostile and difficult to survive. As tactics deployed by white administrators, these interactions maintain control over the campus environment by reinforcing the university as property of white people.

Commodification of People of Color. This next theme describes how people of color hold value within the organization which is different from the value that a white employee might hold. For example, in an organization employees hold value because they contribute work to the accomplishment of the collective goals and mission of the organization. It seems that such a simple premise would be closer to value-neutral since in this framing, it is truly meritocratic with all people being treated equally. However, this was not the case for people of color at SRU. Examples were shared about how faculty, staff and students were treated like chattel whose value is not tied to the accomplishment of the goals of the organization, but rather tied to them personally because of their identity and what they could be forced to do.

In the first example, Anita describes how undocumented students (who are almost exclusively students of color) were commodified by the university.

So, I guess I question a system that...it's sort of like an indentured servant model, 'so we are going to let you in [admit you to SRU], and we're even going to give you a partial scholarship or something, but you can't work to help yourself and when you graduate you are still in that situation of not being able to work.' To me that's a policy or practice that's rooted in whiteness, power, and privilege. It's sort of like saying 'okay, I'm going to give you just enough, but I'm not going to give you everything you need in order to participate in this society.' And then to not talk about it as an issue, it's like you're here and you ought to just, again 'you just should be glad that you're here. Don't make waves, don't bring attention to the fact that you can't do work-study, don't bring attention to the fact that people graduate with a degree and they still can't work when they have the degree, because, you know this is bigger than SRU, [95].

In this example, Anita drew a comparison to indentured servants who ended up paying for a service with their lives and livelihood. This is the case for many undocumented students where they are admitted into the institution and sometimes even given some provisions such as partial scholarships, but ultimately they are not really allowed to succeed in these spaces as they are denied the ability to earn funding to pay for all of the necessary expenses for attending college. Their daily existence can be fraught with peril as they could be picked up by an INS agent at any time and put into a detention facility until being transported "home" (a country that many of them have never before been). If and when these students are able to graduate, they are faced with the difficult, if not impossible, proposition of finding employment. It is the case for

many of these students that they were educated in the United States and have only lived in the US, but find themselves unable to call themselves Americans.

The benefit for the institution is manifold. First, by having a student occupy a seat in classes they not only have the tuition revenue from the student, but also funding from the state (allocations based on the number of students enrolled). Second, all institutions are required to report on their presence data which tracks the number of students of color at the institution. By admitting these students the diversity of the institution is enhanced (an administrative counting exercise which is celebrated on paper, but means very little in terms of institutional white space). Finally, despite paying for the same education, there are times when these students will be unable to participate in programs and experiences afforded to all students because of their immigration status (such as study abroad), so the institution realizes a savings from these students who pay for services that they will be unable to access.

Anita's example illuminates how undocumented students can help the institution meet their desired goals more because of their identity than what they actually add to the environment at SRU. Likewise, Maria described how people of color are commodified in administrative circles.

I think in the way that we refer to people whenever often times when someone is talking about a person of color... ummm... I hear people say thing like 'oh we have one.' Like in a particular position, you know, if it's a position of authority or management, 'oh yeah we do have one.' Like we're talking about diversity

issues especially being in human resources where numbers come up a lot, you know, ‘who do we have in key positions?’ [25].

In these spaces, white administrators count people of color like rare gems, they are to be chronicled, so that the white administrators can call on these people when it is convenient and advantageous for them. This happens again when the presence data is reported for the Affirmative Action/EEO reports to the government, but also whenever a person of color is needed for window-dressing:

And then when people [Maria mumbles while shaking her head] I hate this thing too. ‘oh we need some diverse individual on our committees.’

‘Diverse individuals’ clearly does not mean the rest of the white people who are already sitting around [the table]. Diverse individual means people of color, umm, because white is the norm, [27].

Again, when it is convenient for the white administrators to call on a person of color to be on a committee, the people of color have been carefully tracked so they can be dispatched for special assignments such as this. In these scenarios, the value is not in the work product of the individual, but rather the identity (race) of the individual. In a juxtaposition from the typical marginalization of people of color, in this instance people of color are only being invited into these decision-making spaces because of their race. The best case scenario is that these gestures represent tokenism that allows traditionally marginalized voices into decision-making spaces, where a single person is considered the representative for the voice and perspective of all marginalized people (which is an impossible task). This tactic ensures that the white voice will still be the dominant voice

because there is typically only one person of color who serves as the token and their voice can be easily overwhelmed with the many voices of the majority that exist in these spaces. If these people of color are allowed to make a contribution, it is at the pleasure of the white decision makers, so any critical voice can be quickly condemned and disregarded. This is all done in the name of “diversity” (so that the white decision-makers can claim that the decisions were made by a diverse group of individuals), but in reality does far more damage than good, particularly for the person of color who will be asked to take on additional responsibilities for little or no credit, and possibly pressured to cosign perspectives and policies that support whiteness, but these individual people of color have little to no support in order to resist. Further, when a person of color does mount a resistance in these spaces, they are often cast as difficult to work with (as was the case with nearly all of my respondents, but Angela and Anita in particular) and they are not invited into spaces where decisions are made in the future.

Commodification of International People as Hispanic. A subtheme for the commodification of people of color is the ways that international people are cast as Hispanic, in particular when it is convenient for white administrators. Since Gabriella is in the best position to witness and understand this type of oppression, all of the data in this category comes from her experiences. The very first question for each of my respondents of color asked them to tell me their racial classification, something that most administrators answered quickly and easily. Gabriella described the difficulty of the answer to what should be an easy question.

This is a very funny question because when I came from Latin America, I never heard about that. Okay? And then when I arrived to this country, [people] say ‘what am I?’ I always thought that I was white. And I’d always fill out [forms, surveys] Caucasian, white. I have my sister right now and she’s just arrived and she lived for two years in another southern state and she refused to put Hispanic, but that’s the feeling that we have because we’re white [585].

Gabriella described a couple of important things about the SRU and American context. First was the emphasis on the ability to classify everyone neatly into a racial category. Many people that Gabriella interacted with would ask her about her racial classification, which seems like an innocent question, but the reality is that many people were likely trying to figure out what framework and set of assumptions they would have about Gabriella. This was a cause for confusion because Gabriella’s phenotype is quite light and she would almost certainly be assumed to be white, that is, until she speaks. Her accent is strong, which clearly denotes her as not being a native English speaker. For many, this means that unless she is from a European country, she cannot possibly be white. Instead, because her accent sounds like it might be Spanish (which it is not) she is often times cast as Hispanic, something that she is clearly uncomfortable with. “That doesn’t represent me because it’s a different growing up situation. I don’t feel like a Hispanic in here. I look like a Hispanic for you, but I don’t – I am not Hispanic in the American context,” [587]. The American context for Hispanic (particularly in the southern states) is one with strong illusions to the traditions, culture, and experience with oppression from Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean islands. These

unique histories and cultures are lumped together and labeled Hispanic, which is problematic as it ignores the distinct differences in these cultures. It is almost never the preference of people to assume this sweeping generalization of identity, but this choice of creating and assigning the label rests with white America.

Within the SRU context, labeling Gabriella as Hispanic is done not only so that white people can frame her and judge her with a set of assumptions, but also for very utilitarian reasons which also serve whiteness, in particular, this can help white administrators meet their goals for racial representation at the university.

I mean, that is a kind of not a good feeling because they feel that they use us to justify – us meaning they hire faculty from Latin America that grew up in Latin America, but we're not really Hispanic. They [white administrators] think we come from the – the lady told me another day, the corn of the crop or whatever. Cream of the crop, yeah, and she mentioned that and they never in my mind [would I] realized that they would feel like that. 'They prefer to hire you guys that came from a different' – she thinks 'social class higher than from where they [Mexican American] come from,' [588].

Gabriella's interaction with a Mexican American faculty member helps shed light on the motive behind seeking to hire people from Latin America into faculty positions. Namely, these faculty members are from a higher social class than Mexican Americans, but these faculty members can meet the need for having diversity (namely Hispanic) faculty members in the department. That the white administration would want faculty members from a higher social status is a different framing for concepts that have

already been discussed. This appears to be a reference to being raised with greater financial resources and therefore to perhaps have more in common with affluent white faculty members, many of whom may have grown up similarly, or now live a life with greater access to financial resources. In this way faculty members from Latin America are the “cream of the crop,” since they can serve whiteness with their perspectives and their race. However, as Gabriella described, this a tactic:

I never felt discriminated against in my culture. When I came out here, I was already an adult. Then I went to Northern State Research University. I went to get my masters and PhD, but I never felt discriminated, never grew up with that feeling that I’m different, that I would be discriminated. They [Mexican Americans] even don’t have it the same. The same feeling. They don’t have the same background that would make me to feel discriminated. Now, if you can tell me as a female, yes. There’s a big difference. There you can tell among international faculty, yes. But as a Hispanic, I don’t have that. I don’t have the same problem that they have and feeling that they have. *I do not!* [589].

As Gabriella described, her experiences with race are very different than that of a Mexican American, or other Hispanic-identified group that has existed in the American context and experienced racism and oppression. This is, perhaps, why the Latin American faculty members are seen as the cream of the crop – they do not come into the institution with the anger and damage from existing and surviving as a person of color in the hostile American context (coded as being from a “higher class” earlier). This is where the necessity for classifying Latin American faculty members as Hispanic is born

– this desire to have Hispanic faculty members without the memory and context for white racism so that they can be commodified and serve in decision making spaces and carry out the agenda for whiteness.

Illusion of Progress in Diversity. This theme is a natural progression from the commodification of people of color from the last theme. This theme describes the ways in which white administrators create narratives of progress in diversity as a way of hiding and/or justifying the white spaces that has been created.

Common to administrators of color at SRU was the experience of having white administrators make the argument that SRU is a supportive, comfortable, great place for all people to live and work. Such an argument not only ignores the actual lived experience of people different from them, but seeks to create a narrative that is a departure from reality for the purpose of making the white space a normative meritocratic space. To deny this narrative is to openly challenge white administrators, which is often met with further hostility rather than a spirit of trying to understand the disparity in their third-person understanding of issues against the actual lived experiences of people of color.

They [white administrators] claim that they are doing a lot of things to address diversity in this college, but it is a word that is very taboo. You talk about diversity, people get quiet. They start getting antsy and start looking at their watch wondering ‘how much time are we gong to spend talking about this because, well, it’s a great climate. Everyone loves to work here.’ And it’s because the accepted norm to be white, male, upper or middle class. [408].

This quote by Jasmin helps to describe the context for the white space at SRU. The perspective of the typical white administrator who feels that the environment is wonderful on one hand, but then becomes uncomfortable if there is any conversation about the environment is a great juxtaposition. For there to truly be a great environment for all people, there would have to be many, many conversations about how the environment will fight and dismantle the white space that is pervasive in the institution and in society. Instead, the space at SRU is dominated by the colorblind ideology which seeks to ignore race and propagate the dominant racial narrative in society.

Angela described her experiences whereby white administrators are actually more aggressive in their framing of the dominant narrative, so much so that it becomes a source of pride.

There have been plenty of times when I have been in meetings where people are patting themselves on the back for their diversity efforts, but they're really comparing themselves to just other people in the university and not really on the national level, and when they're making those comparisons I'm the only person of color, or at least the only Black person, and one of the few people of color around that table when they're having that conversation and the rest of the people of color are serving us food or in the back. So, there is a way in which [pause] "diversity" has become a buzzword but I'm not quite sure all the time that I believe in the diversity efforts that the university puts forth anymore. [232].

Angela's description of the illusion of diversity is powerful because it describes not only the ways in which white administrators are able to frame their alleged success

(by using straw-man comparisons), but it describes the space in which these conversations occur (in places where there are not people to disrupt or contradict the narrative), while illuminating the depth of the real problem (the only other people of color in the space are in service positions), which results in Angela's disillusionment with the concept of diversity, particularly the brand that is propagated at SRU. Further, an important point about "diversity" as a tool was made. That is, diversity is a safe concept for many white people to talk about, whereas inequality (using Jasmin's example from above) become quite difficult. In this amorphous topic of diversity helps to mask the real issues affecting underrepresented and targeted populations with feel-good ideas and straw-man metrics.

Angela went on to describe in greater depth the diversity efforts sustained by the university and how they cannot possibly make a difference in the ways that whiteness is created and maintained in the space.

...and so I feel like on a lot of levels that's what I'm saying, that I'm not really impressed by diversity efforts [at SRU] because well, what are you doing? And, no disrespect, what all is happening that's that damn deep, do you know what I'm saying? So, and a lot of times, I was on one million diversity committees and part of what will happen is we would be very reactionary. Someone would be like 'this is the messed up thing that happened this week. How are we going to respond?' Well, who's got time for that, you know? [284].

Noteworthy in this comment, Angela described very simply how the efforts of the university to create or sustain an environment that is supportive and inclusive are at

best insufficient. However, after considering that she has been at the university for a number of years, she has had the opportunity to not only witness the failure of diversity efforts to make a substantive change in the environment, but how that failure might be part of the strategy of white administrators to ensure that white space is not disrupted. Angela's participation on several diversity committees allowed her to understand the immutable strength of whiteness on campus. These diversity committees were likely charged to do something like creating a better climate for all people or something equally vague and malleable. In that space, rather than actually dismantling white space, they ended up in a defensive position having to respond to critical incidents, which amounts to a tactic of white administrators. Committees rarely if ever have the authority to respond to an incident and reprimand a student, faculty, or staff member. Rather, this is the responsibility of high-ranking university or college-level administrators (who are almost always white) who have the power to make a decision and enforce accountability for oppressive behavior. However, when these administrators abdicate their authority in these situations it places the burden of responding to a committee, which simultaneously distracts them from making true progress since they are always on the defensive, and ensures that the actions of the responsible party meet very weak consequences, if any.

Gabriella similarly described the effort by SRU to sustain a diversity agenda that promotes equality as a failure that is too broad and not focused on the actual problems, and are overly simplistic in their approach to elicit an actual improvement in the environment.

These look like more passive than active. It seems to me you have a department, you send a lot of emails telling you you're going to have this person come.

You're coming to have this workshop. You have this – nobody cares. Faculty don't care. Why? 'Cause they're busy trying to get their own research project going on, trying to get graduate students publications. I don't know how good does it make having the diversity [programs]. For those who are minority, maybe it's a – it's very good? They have a place where they can go and talk or complain or I don't know. [649]

It's not working. Diversity's not, something's not okay. I don't know if we needed to – I don't know what we have to do. I think they are doing right because I think that the diversity chair is telling me she has once a month something or do some workshop or something with the deans, the department heads, awareness. Do you think that they care when they have a budget cut they they're going to care about awareness about – everybody is aware about it. Nobody going to be fighting for anything. I don't know how you're going to change the climate in this university. [651].

Gabriella takes one step beyond what Angela described at SRU (“What all is happening that is that damn deep?”) to describe the efforts to sustain diversity as a failure. Awareness training does little to expose white space – many of these trainings fail to really delve into the real underpinnings of racism and oppression and take a critical look at the system of institutionalized racism and how white people are complicit

with this system. Most anyone in a position of authority in higher education has likely had the feel good, “we are all different” presentation that does not consider the historical context for racism, sexism, homophobia, etc. For those presentations that do begin to delve into issues of racism, the problem is a lack of sustained effort and attention on the issues so that there is very little self-reflection for white people on the nature of their own racist attitudes and tendencies. Gabriella then astutely points out that these trainings are pitted against pressing issues which will always take precedence over issues of climate, namely budget and personnel concerns. As a result, these initiatives, while likely well-intentioned, are almost certainly destined for failure.

Another tactic utilized by white administrators to create the illusion of progress with regard to diversity efforts is creating faux learning opportunities. Angela described how a promise for curricular reform to include lessons on oppression were co-opted.

They developed this Civil Dialogue series of courses, so I’m teaching one now [laughing]. [...] Yeah, I’m teaching this course called ‘race and racism in Hollywood’ and that is part and parcel of this Civil Dialogue course. But, no one in my class know that there is a Civil Dialogue course, right. Do you understand what I’m saying? So, I spent a lot of time thinking about what that might mean. But, they don’t know, which means that the thing is not really [working] [pause] [...]. So they developed this series of courses, well when I looked at them [the other courses in the series] they are like ‘talking civilly about food.’ There’s nothing. They didn’t have any meat to them. [272 & 273].

This tactic employed by white administrators ensures that not only is there a lack of clarity and cohesion in this curriculum, but the effort made is packaged in a disjointed and unorganized way which makes it difficult for anyone at the institution to understand where the university stands with regard to these issues and what the intended outcomes are for this curricular reform. Further, by diluting the content to include lessons that are not consistent with spirit of the learning about racism and oppression, the entire initiative loses credibility from the faculty and the students. This narrative can then be pointed to as an approach that was taken and not to be pursued in the future (namely, that there should not be attempts to reform the curriculum to include critical lessons “because they simply don’t work here.”). This illusion of progress is designed and destined for failure while preserving the dominant white space narrative and conception of the institution.

Finally, Anita points out a very basic tactic to preserve the illusion of progress and diversity at SRU. This tactic is specifically designed to undermine efforts are promoting racial reform explicitly.

The framing of using the term diversity, that keeps us from talking about racial ethnic diversity, because we can talk about gender, we can talk about disabilities, we can talk – and all of those are certainly worthwhile diversities, but if it’s going to cover up one of the issues that’s been longstanding in terms of whiteness – racial/ethnic [diversity] – that’s a problem. [118].

This tactic utilized by white administrators obscures a focus on any individual oppression by introducing competing oppression issues (diversities) that ensure a lack of

focus on any individual issue. This tactic in effect divides those who are committed to social justice into separate and competing camps as they each fight for very limited resources such as funding and the attention of the administration to their issues/causes. As a tactic, this one is tried and true, as it almost guarantees that people will find disagreement and fracture their efforts and momentum. The brilliance of this tactic is that it is almost too inclusive as it creates space for everyone and in the process ensures that no individual issue will receive the attention necessary.

Stereotypes/Expectations of People of Color. “So, in a lot of ways, I feel like I get into trouble sometimes because I don’t conform to stereotypes of how a Black professional should be sometimes,” [224]. This comment from Angela perfectly describes this theme which focuses on how there are expectations of people of color which are not demanded of white people. The implication of having these stereotypes and expectations for how a professional of color should behave is that administrators have to actively resist these stereotypes, and expend emotional energy and time to separate themselves from these damaging and demeaning lies. In the first example of how this works at SRU, Jasmin describes how she is often cast in one of two opposite extremes.

How do you combat – and this is for other Black administrators or faculty – how do you combat the angry Black woman or angry Black man stereotype? If I’m focused on my work, why do my emotions have to gravitate towards being excessively and ridiculously happy, borderline cartoonish, or I’m pissed off at the

world – go to hell. I have more emotions than that, but I can't be anything other than those two. [436].

Jasmin expresses her helplessness in combating these equally demeaning stereotypes that cast her in the role of extreme bi-polar emotions, each of which carries with it connotations and judgments of being less capable and less valuable to the organization. Importantly, each of these extremes is consistent with racialized stereotypes whereby Black women are cast as the “angry Black woman,” or “Uncle Tom's” who are overtly happy and obedient in positions of subjugation. Having to fight these types of stereotypes means that Jasmin constantly has to fight for respect and validation by those with whom she works closely. This also means that she is expending her energy not on her job or activities that add value to the organization, but rather in combating her colleagues and their overwhelmingly white frames.

Martin also described this problem of being cast as less capable by his white colleagues. In order to combat these stereotypes, Martin has had to work much harder and longer in order to get recognition as competent and capable.

But again, that balance is always tricky, you know, because there's some days I'm not on the top of my game and I know that if you're not on the top of your game it'll be like ‘oh the Black senior level administrator didn't do, you know, step up to the plate,’ and so there comes that burden again, you know. Yeah, I'd like to go home at 5 o'clock every day but either I'm here or I'm at home, you know, trying to be better than, you know, there's always [people] that you've got to be better than. Equal doesn't always get it, you've got to be better than

because when you're not equal or as good as there's more of a tendency to label and connect it to, you know, that African Americans are not up to snuff, so to speak. [318].

Martin's experience is one that has been well documented within the literature, however, his description merits further consideration as he aptly described the extent of the undue burden of being Black in a predominantly white space. The inescapability of the stereotype and expectation put upon Martin to be better than burdens him at all times (at work and home), leaving him with little or no respite.

The expectation that Martin be "better than," his white colleagues in order to be respected as an equal means that his work must exceed that of his colleagues in both breadth and depth, so that he is not only an authority in the area for which he is responsible, but he must also be proficient in his college's area of expertise. He described how he learned of, and responded to, this expectation.

I just observed him [another Black colleague] and his one note was diversity, and every time something came up in the university that he felt like the university was not responding well to, that he felt like the university needed to do more, etcetera. He was quiet on almost every issue except for if it had something to do with diversity; and as the young guy sitting in the room, I watched white folks basically shut him down, ignore him, and it wasn't even a verbal thing. I just physically saw them frown, detach, etcetera, whenever he spoke because in my mind I read that is, "that's all he ever talks about." And that said to me, 'Martin, you've got to be diverse in your issues, not just in your being.' And so I made

sure that I spoke up on issues related to admissions. I've spoke up on issues related to faculty development. So I made sure that I went in and studied the broad issues so that I spoke up on a multitude of things that were of interest to them, and engaged with them and had conversations about ethics and all kinds of things so when issues about diversity or racial insensitivity or whatever the issue was, when I spoke on it, they listened because it was like he's more than a one-note participant here. [301].

The expectation of being proficient in several areas is his alone – the white administrators do not appear to have this additional burden to be proficient in all areas, otherwise that would simply be the recognized expectation for all administrators (which it is clearly not).

When considered together, Martin and Jasmin's comments fit together perfectly to describe not only the stereotype, but also the additional and unfair burden that administrators of color are under to earn a modicum of respect from their white colleagues.

People of Color as Troublemakers. This subtheme is the logical progression that describes how people of color are not just held to unfair expectations or cast as incapable, but they are viewed as the actual source of problems within the organization. In this first example, Maria describes how people of color are troublemakers as a result of being impossible to satisfy. “And people really fail to see the micro-inequities that people of color deal with on a daily basis and that's always their excuse to want to blame them [people of color]. ‘They're too sensitive. No matter what you do, you can't please

them [people of color].” [35]. The irony of this comment, of course is that there is very, very little done to help people of color, and much more done to damage, defame, and otherwise obliterate people of color in predominant white spaces in higher education and at SRU. The narrative that is being portrayed, that white people are actively helping people of color, ignores the empirical evidence that people of color continue to be subjugated and exploited systematically and interpersonally. This narrative remains an enduring part of the white racial frame which allows white people to blame people of color for the disparate outcomes in education, income inequality, employment inequality, housing inequality, etc.

Anita described another space in which she is made to feel like an outlier, the only one who is taking exception with the way things are done at SRU. In her example, she cited how she was treated after she raised a concern about the way that a process was operating, namely that this way of conducting a search may disadvantage candidates from outside SRU and candidates of color.

And what they said to me when I confronted them with the Department Head, what they said to me was ‘Anita, we’ve always done it like this. Nobody has ever questioned it before. You’re the only person that’s upset about it. And we have a whole department of people, but you are the only one who’s brought it forth as a concern.’ [...] This is, this is a white male in our department who’s been allowed to operate like this for years and in a meeting with the Department Head, he said ‘no one else has ever questioned me on this, except you Anita.’

[Pause]. That's how I experience this whiteness thing. This is what I've experienced, Dave. [83].

Not only was Anita cast as a troublemaker in this example, but she was portrayed as a rogue, vigilante (not only currently, but also historically – “we've always done it like this”) in her objection to the way that these processes were working. By singling Anita out in this way, the white administrator is clearly framing her as the sole, difficult troublemaker whose concerns are invalid. This is a powerful technique as it relies upon the prevalence and permanence of whiteness as an administrative structure at SRU to validate the processes and the decisions made. No doubt similar arguments were made in support of slavery and many other longstanding racist institutions and traditions.

Angela's experience at SRU is perhaps the most blatant example of how people of color can be construed as troublemakers who detract rather than add value to the administrative processes at SRU.

The idea of being labeled...so you get to be labeled a difficult sort of person. So your reputation precedes you even when you're heart is in it. In the real world my militancy level would be probably like a 2.8, here it's like a 12.9. And it's really because I just don't – you can't just say whatever, and now, sometimes maybe I am like a little touchy and crazy about it. [237].

Building on Anita's example from above that described how people of color can get framed in such a way that their dissent makes them a troublemaker, Angela's describes the next step in the tactic for framing people of color as troublemakers. Specifically, by developing and broadcasting a standard message that defines an

administrator of color at the institution, white administrators are able to dismiss them and their perspective without cause or consideration. In the case of Angela, that message was that she is “militant,” (which draws on Angela’s research in Black Studies as evidence that she is “militant,”) and is therefore dangerous and seeks to create conflict with white people. By spreading this false narrative about Angela, she quickly develops a reputation among the white administrators as difficult, dangerous, and contentious.

In the final step for casting a person of color as a troublemaker, the university administration can then make decisions based on the narrative which further marginalizes the person of color and reinforces the narrative about how the person of color is dangerous. In this example, Jasmin described how she is “picked on” because she refused to sell SRU to families of color as a great place.

I think so because I will not lie to a family about what they were coming to, so my approach to recruiting and the things in terms of getting perspective students here, I’m not going to tell them that SRU is the place for them to be because that’s not for me to say. That’s for them to decide themselves. [...] So, I’m not going to say those things, and I don’t say those things. Well, I get picked on because – and I’m not pulled out in front of VIP people frequently because I don’t do that, so they consequently will go to my colleague and talk with him. I don’t get asked or am not put into spotlights for – I call them spotlights of greatness, because they have these events where the attention is the focus of my colleague. ‘He is the greatest and he knows all these people, blah, blah, blah,’ and it’s all because he focuses on those things and tows the party line. I am

never put in that position, for the most part because apparently I'm unpredictable because they don't know if I'm going to tow the party line or if I'm going to say something else. [421].

Jasmin's ethical compass prevents her from lying to students about the environment and fit, particularly for students of color. Honesty, particularly in the face of a difficult and potentially life-changing decision (where to attend college) is not valued by the white administrators in Jasmin's office and as a result she is cast as "unpredictable." The irony is that Jasmin is actually very predictable and does as much for the organization as she can without being unethical. The white administrators seize the opportunity to frame the narrative about her, then take negative action against her based on that narrative.

Deceit. This theme documents the ways in which white administrators used deception as another tactic to control the white space at the institution. The participants in this study documented the ways in which deceit is a powerful tool and applied frequently, since it is not only convenient but difficult to prove or refute. Further, deception has the added benefit that since nearly all of the most powerful administrators at SRU are white, they are often in the best and most powerful position to deploy this tactic, as well as have their story believed by other white administrators, leaving people of color without recourse.

In the first example, Anita described the circumstances in which she was recruited to SRU, whereby upon arrival many of the details changed including having the responsibilities that were to be part of her position taken away. As a new person at

the institution, she did not only did not have a clear idea of how to resolve this and no advocates or confidantes to rely upon for advice or guidance. “I was trying to figure out who do you trust and because of that coming in incident [the deceit] it became I was like ‘okay if all of these people participated in this, then who do I trust?’” [75]. Anita’s sense of bewilderment leaves her incredibly vulnerable in a hostile environment, but with a clear understanding of what was going on in the situation. “Now my reaction to that was, if I had been a white male, first off, I don’t think they would have done that, but because I was an African-American women, somebody made a decision that I would be okay or that I could be managed or whatever.” [67].

This ability to manipulate and deceive Anita was a consistent theme for her time at SRU. In another example, she was asked to chair a search committee to hire a new faculty member, which she had plenty of experience doing. Anita indicated that she was selected for this role because of her reputation of being a by-the-book administrator. “I now know why he asked me to chair it, because he really wanted this to be a fair and objective process and he knew as an outside person [new to the institution] I would adhere to the guidelines established by the university” [91]. In this search, she had a senior and influential faculty member who was advocating for a former student to get the position. At the conclusion of the interviews when hiring decisions were being made, the candidates were ranked and the influential faculty member’s candidate came in third out of the four candidates interviewed. The offer was made to, and accepted by, the top candidate right before the end of the semester.

“[...] the next thing I knew when I came back after the summer, last summer, was the third person was also hired. And, as chair of the search committee, you see, they never contacted me over the summer. I found out later that this [influential faculty member] had said she was going to handle it because she wanted to make sure that this other candidate was hired, and they did it. These are some of the back door kinds of things, and I guess my department has a history of doing this. But again, the, the whiteness, the power, the privilege. [pause]. ‘Well, since you didn’t do it the way we wanted it done, Anita, we’ll just show you and we won’t even involve you in the process, even though you chaired the search committee. We’ll take it from here.’ That was my experience. [92].

The white administrators not only deceived Anita in the end, but they used and abused her time and energy with the entitlement borne of whiteness, so that search process would have both credibility and yield the desired result. This deceit is particularly damaging since Anita was used and further not shown any modicum of respect for her time and dedication. This example is also similar to the previous theme which documented how the university belongs to white people. Clearly in the present example, Anita is a disposable component of a white-owned university environment. It is relevant at this point to reference the fact Anita was no longer useful for SRU and therefore no longer works there.

Angela also had important examples of how she was deceived by white administrators who sought to gain an advantage over her. In the first example, Angela

was asked to provide a public presentation to a large group of students, parents, and alumni, which was an important honor since Angela was the first Black person to ever do this presentation at SRU. In this address she was asked to discuss diversity and her research, areas in which she is of course an expert. She did the presentation, after which she was not thanked or recognized for her effort, but instead reprimanded and publically humiliated by the white administration. In her presentation, she referenced several themes from pop-culture and well researched and documented inequities in society. When a handful of audience members (SRU alumni, and presumably donors to the institution) took exception to the content, they emailed a number of white administrators, including ultimately the chief executive officer (CEO). The CEO responded to this criticism by distancing the university and the white administration from Angela's content stating that they also categorically disagreed with the content but since Angela was a faculty member with tenure, they could not stop her. In the course of dealing with this situation, the white administration abandoned any support of Angela which allowed a vocal, powerful, and deeply conservative alumni base and student body to lambast Angela and her research publicly. In this instance, Angela was deceived by a white administration that was responsible for selecting Angela and asking her to discuss her research, then in the face of resistance publically abandoned her [269]. This experience deeply affected Angela as she was left on her own to deal with the fallout which occupied much of her time defending herself from blatantly racist criticism.

At SRU there are a multiple public examples of racism that define the pervasiveness of the white institutional culture. Angela's experience with this

presentation is one such example, as it draws a proverbial line in the sand that demarcates the white institutional space as exclusively for the benefit of white people. If people of color violate the sanctity of the white institutional space, the administration will not only abandon them, but they will face consequences from the administration. For Angela the consequences included summons to the CEO's office on several occasions where she was asked to issue apologies, among other humiliating public responses. The public nature of this dispute and subsequent battle ensured that the conservative, white alumni and students felt reaffirmed that SRU remains an exclusively white space and that despite the fact that people of color are *allowed* to exist in this space, it is only to the extent that they are useful that they are *allowed* to exist at SRU. It is important to again highlight the nature of whiteness which empowers white norms and values, including the power to decide who is allowed to exist in a space, and who is not. It is also worth noting that as is the case with Anita, Angela has lost her utility to SRU and no longer works there.

Angela also described the importance of institutional memory in combating deceit and ultimately the overwhelming institutional whiteness. In this example, Angela is referencing a job that was posted and available that worked with underserved populations at SRU. The person who was ultimately chosen for the job was someone who did not apply for the job, did not interview for the job, and was largely unknown by many of the underrepresented people at SRU. However, this person was white and ultimately despite the absence of substantive credentials, they were chosen, reaffirming that whiteness is the most important credential for jobs in white spaces such as SRU.

There was an incident that I heard about in Intercultural Programs, where the person who got hired to be in charge of whatever [former director's name] position used to be, the way they did that was supposedly crazy. I know about that, and I think that you do too. Those kind of things, I think, are kind of common, and what you end up having to do is really kind of understand, if I didn't have institutional memory, I would just be screwed in a lot of instances, so I can be like "I know that this happened, and that happened, da, da, da." [253].

This example illustrates how people of color cannot rely on fair processes and procedures to ensure equity. The "crazy" decisions that are made at SRU have included the appointment of several high profile administrators who are not part of a hiring search process. An informant with whom I spoke about hiring at SRU was able to jot down the names of more than 20 white administrators who were hired in the past several years without a process. However, the same informant was able to share several examples of when a person of color was the obvious hire for a position, but still subjected to the search and interview process. This double standard highlights the fact that whiteness can serve as a powerful credential necessary to ensure that white people will not encounter obstacles in securing a well-compensated position at SRU.

The role of institutional memory is important for those people of color who are at SRU long enough to document the ways in which institutional administrators exercise deception in order to advance an agenda that supports white interests. Institutional memory allows administrators of color to exercise a modest tool to resist whiteness by citing past white administrative actions. Angela went on to describe how she was able to

successfully combat deception from white administrators through a combination of institutional memory and luck.

So, our direct competition, for example, not our direct competition, our direct comparison is Gender Programs. I was told that we had to run a particular part of our budget this way, you know. No sort of rationale for it, but this is the way it has to go. I find out by accident that Gender Programs has decided to do it this other way, but then nobody, of course, is going to tell me that they changed the rules for Gender Programs. So, I have to be like ‘you know, on such and such date, I have that email where you said X, Y and Z.’

I am a hoarder of electronic documents. I’ll be like ‘hmm, I see what you’re saying but at this last meeting I just had with the Dean’s office, another department head, the guy was trying to switch the order of things.’

‘No, I did not give them a mandate to do X, Y and Z. That happened afterwards.’

I was like ‘hmm, but I have this email and you said the vote was this date and so this is over here...’ You know, but I have to be very nice and calm, I wasn’t upset. So, just being able to use it [electronic evidence] to confront, or contradict people when they try to revise history. [255/256].

Unlike the first example in which the deception was very public, the ways that white administrators manipulate the truth is many times much more covert. It is in these spaces where there is much less chance of resistance and almost nobody who can refute the deception since there are fewer people involved. Angela’s use of electronic

documents to preserve institutional memory provides an avenue for her to expose any inequities that she encounters. It is also worth pointing out that the evidence of institutional memory that Angela is forced to catalogue is a defense mechanism that others within the institution are not likely to have to “hoard.” The current example documents how another (often marginalized) group was given explicit benefits that were not being extended to the department that serves the interests of Black and African Americans. In attempting to force Angela into a situation which would cost her more money and time, the white administration created (knowingly or not) unjust barriers to success for Angela and her department, which puts her into a considerable disadvantage. It is precisely this type of inequality that puts undue pressure on people of color that white people do not have to navigate.

For another example, recall Anita’s example from the beginning of this section, where she was being deceived by white administrators in her recruitment and hiring. When she brought this deception to light to university leadership (white), she was not met with a defensive argument (such as ‘that didn’t happen in that way’) or even the all too ubiquitous intentionality argument (‘we didn’t intend for that to happen to you’), but rather white administrators shifted the responsibility. “Now I won’t call all of the names of the people who were, who I met with over the course of that first year, but the response was always ‘what do you want us to do?’ Like I created the situation.” [75].

Such a response shifts the burden of a response to the actual victim. In this situation, not only is Anita the victim of a hostile action, but she has to do all of the work in combating this aggression, follow policies to report the aggression, and then provide

an avenue for the institutional leaders to correct the injustice. In this way, every aspect of combating the racist administration, including the remedy, falls on the shoulders of the victim. It goes without saying that this strategy serves two important ends: first, it forces the labor onto an already beaten-down victim, decreasing the likelihood that they will actually pursue a remedy because of the physical and emotional cost of doing so. Second, it keeps the white administration in a position of power and authority. By dictating all of the terms, *including approving or denying suggested remedies to the racist interactions that they themselves perpetrated*, they are in the ultimate position of authority and are able to protect the white institutional space. It is no wonder that there are not more battles waged against an institutional actors for racist actions – the path to some sense of accountability is dictated solely by the very white actors who create and maintain the racist white space within the institution.

Intentional, Active Neglect. This theme documents a very powerful tactic that is relied upon heavily by white administrators at SRU – that is the power to do nothing. In terms of actively maintaining a hegemonic environment, it seems counter-intuitive that doing nothing might be a tactic to reify the white space. However, this is not only a demonstration of power (i.e., white administrators are reserving the right to choose what is addressed), but also a demonstration of values (i.e., white administrators are communicating what is important to the campus community). The decision to do nothing is in fact an active and intentional course of action and must be recognized as such, since it can be easily characterized or assumed to be a benign blind-spot in administrative thinking instead of what it is: a blatantly racist action. In the examples

provided by administrators from SRU, the intentional, active neglect was part of a larger institutional culture which is not only inert, but also iterative, so certain issues are rarely resolved and business is always done the same way.

Our institution, as a whole, is just not receptive or open, I feel, to other people's – I don't know if culture is the right word, I guess it is – ways of doing things, just however you want to phrase it. They're just – this is just not a very open and receptive place we've got. 'We've done it this way for 50 or a hundred years, 3,000 years, and so we just need to keep it that way because it's been working for us.' Well, that doesn't mean that it's right, and that doesn't mean it's appropriate for now. [437].

The main comments I hear in meetings are 'we've always done it this way, why change it if this is working?' [Laughing]. To me that's whiteness, David. 'Well Anita, how would you, how would you change it?' And then we make some suggestions that come back at you 'well, that might be a little bit difficult.' [80].

These two comments (by Jasmin and Anita respectively) describe the administrative inertia that characterizes SRU, where very little changes absent a compelling and coercive force (and sometimes even despite that). This resistance to change at SRU has been part of the institutional ethos almost since the doors to the institution were first opened. This means that white administrators have been able to (and continue to) hide behind the agency of the institutional culture to defend decisions that are made. In so doing, the (in)action that characterizes the administrative leadership

across the institution is normalized and white administrators are actually expected to not respond to racist acts because “that’s the way it’s always been done.” This allows white administrators to not only explicitly maintain the white space, but to be invisible in so doing.

William’s experience with intentional active neglect began on his very first day of work there. As was discussed previously, on his first day of work the conservative student group held an affirmative action bake sale as a form of protest against William’s employment with the implication being that he was only hired as an executive because of his race. William expressed his disappointment in the lack of support on that first day, which was a failure on the part of the institution to utilize the collective voice of the Roughneck community and demonstrate support for this new executive.

I think my biggest disappointment was there was nobody from SRU, no administrators or anyone else there to support me that first day. And I did bring that up later in various meetings, that I thought true welcoming, even though the conservative student group have a right – and I wanted to stress that – they have a right to express their opinion about anything, I thought it would have also been appropriate for the university that hired me to have supported openly and publicly my coming to counter that demonstration. But, so be it. So that was my welcoming there. [520].

Two important things can be understood about SRU administrators from this example: first, when individual administrators, who are collectively “the institution,” chose not to support William on his first day, it was clear that nobody would be willing

to stand with William. This intentional, active neglect taught William a powerful lesson about who is valued in this environment, and in William's case, who is not.

It is also worth noting, William accounted for the ability of the SRU students to express their opinion, which at SRU has become an immutable explanation for why students are allowed to create hostile environments on campus. This tactic allows the institutional leaders to give agency to the first amendment, which obscures the reality that William pointed out: that while institutional leaders do not have the ability to silence students, the institutional leaders have every right to counter the student's message utilizing the institutional voice. However, the institutional leaders chose not to use this voice and as a result the hostility expressed by students was silently endorsed by the white administration.

Second, in this example, William gives agency to the institution for failing to support him: "appropriate for the university that hired me to support me." The reality is that the failure to support William was a decision by white university administrators. Since William discussed the use of agency in this very example, he clearly knows this tactic and how it works. What is remarkable is the ease with which institutional administrators fall into this trap of giving agency to a structure or policy rather than considering that the structures and policies are controlled by people, in the case of SRU, white people. In another part of the interview William discusses a public racist incident and refers to how the "university policies" allowed it to happen. The use of agency by institutional administrators is so pervasive that even critical thinkers get caught up in this tactic. As an intentional act of neglect, giving agency to structures and policies not only

enables racist practice (with the justification for the action is built into the tactic), but works in a way that hides the aggressors (white administrators).

The intentional, active neglect is a tool not just utilized by executive university leadership, but also by college and department level leadership. In fact, the use of tactics on a local level or smaller segment of the organization may in fact be more effective as a tool of oppression particularly at SRU where each college and administrative department is loosely coupled and largely decentralized. This means that are fewer people involved in each incident, the scale of the racist practice is much smaller, and there is virtually no oversight in day-to-day practice, meaning that it is very difficult (and in some cases impossible) to shed light on injustice and racist practice at a level that would draw the attention and consequences of the university leadership or someone powerful enough to redress the grievance.

Jasmin described an example of how intentional, active neglect operated at the college level. In this example, she explained how numerous underrepresented people were being discriminated against, but the white leader of the college did nothing to address these grievances.

The climate data stated that basically, ‘diversity is not really in issue in the college, that in our department, it’s fine, but there’s a problem at the college level,’ which I find interesting considering all departments responded and said that. And I’m thinking ‘isn’t the college made up of the departments?’ [...]

There were issues of people who were in underrepresented groups that had clear evidence of discrimination against them. They felt marginalized in the

environments that they were in. I mean decisions were being made about things that affect them and their perspective was not taken into consideration. I mean there were all kinds of things that surfaced that have not been addressed [407].

Jasmin's white colleagues utilize intentional, active neglect in two important ways in this example. First, by gathering climate data which demonstrates that there are not issues within the college, administrators have created powerful empirical evidence that deeply obscures problems with race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and any other identity or group affiliation. However, these climate surveys serve as another powerful tool of white hegemony. While having the premise of an objective tool that will accurately describe the environment, there are several ways that these types of surveys are flawed and cannot possibly meet these expectations. For example, these instruments are in most cases quantitative assessments constructed by people with excellent knowledge of quantitative measures, but limited knowledge of oppression, racism, sexism, homophobia, oppression, etc. As such, there are rarely questions that will illuminate oppressive spaces, practices, or interactions, particularly in this quantitative format. The problem with methodology also contributes to the way that the narrative about a space is analyzed and described. For example, for many administrative leaders there is only a desire to understand and discuss those issues which rise to be problematic for a majority of people in the unit (which serves as the criteria for identifying serious concerns in need of redress). Such an analysis strategy ensures that issues of the traditionally underserved and underrepresented are never fully considered, if at all. In fact, SRU has an example from a world-renowned researcher in campus

climate who came to campus to deploy a climate assessment and provide recommendations. Not only was the overall narrative about the space at SRU characterized positively, but one of the most pressing concerns identified dealt with parking on campus. Not to diminish the role of parking – as this is a concern on nearly every campus – but for this to be a major finding of the study illustrates how problematic these instruments are in their conception, data gathering methodology, and analysis. As a result, this methodology and analysis ensures that racism, sexism, and homophobia will rarely if ever be identified as an issue necessitating an immediate response. Further aggravating these marginalized populations, there are a very small number of people of color who are willing to participate in this type of climate assessment for a variety of reasons: the lack of trust in the college to take issues reported seriously (meaning that the people of color would be wasting their time by taking the instrument); the failure of the administration to take action on issues that have been highlighted in previous surveys (or even those issues that are known to all within the organization that have gone unaddressed); the very small number of people of color who are in the college means that people/situations may be personally identifiable, and as Jasmin described “Well, you know, in the climate survey, we didn’t have as many people who responded to it as we should have because there’s a huge trust issue, which I can understand,” [406]. All of these factors combine to produce the ultimately problematic (but empirically supported) declaration by white administrators that “diversity is not really an issue,” as Jasmin described.

Jasmin's next example describes what is ultimately a call for action whereby the college had to provide a report regarding the climate of the organization. It was this report that served as a compelling interest to even consider the climate.

J: He [white administrator in charge of the college] didn't pay much attention to the climate survey at all until someone else, outside the college, university administration, brought it to his attention that he was going to be held accountable for it. Then all of a sudden he could do something about it.

D: Wow, so he's in charge of these things, equity and diversity. You did the climate survey. He had the results, and the only cause for action was when he was going to be held accountable by an external [interrupted]

J: We had to give a report. Then he wanted to do something with it.

D: Absent that report, do you think anything would have been done?

J: Heck no! I mean we are a very reactive unit, so we're not going to do anything until we're forced to or we see that it's in our best interests to do something.

Now, we could be proactive and do something if somebody wanted to do it, but in this instance with these particular issues, there's going to be a lot of resistance to it, and so who wants to take that on in addition to all of the other stuff that they have to do? That's a big, big headache. And that can make your life very uncomfortable. I mean, after all, we just had a woman that left and that's part of why. Because other people in her department made it unlivable for her to just want to be considered for department head. *Wanted to be considered, not be* department head. *Wanted to be considered* for department head. [...] This is the

department I know, he [the white administrator in charge of the college] knew that that [this woman left as a result of wanting to be considered for department head] was an issue. Where was the conversation? Where was the dialogue? Where was the intervention? There was nothing. [428, 429].

This example is compelling, as it both describes what will motivate white administrators to action, and what will not. By being held accountable for some component of equity, the white leader of the college became engaged in the discussion of diversity and equity. Notably, the only action that was taken was creating a report detailing the climate, not actually addressing the climate and issues of inequality and oppression. As Jasmin described, the white leader of the college would only be forced to action if “forced to or [if] we see that it’s in our best interests,” but again, that is code for being in the best interests of white people.

In this example, the ability of white, male administrators keep a college or administrative department a white and patriarchal space is preserved by intentional, active neglect. It highlights the importance of racial and patriarchal superiority. The end of Jasmin’s example details a woman faculty member who was run out of the department for simply wanting to be considered for department head. Certainly, it would be in the best interests of the white, male administrator to intervene and address such a hostile environment that the faculty member left SRU, but no such action was taken. However, utilizing intentional, active neglect is the path of least resistance since the administrator will likely never be challenged for making decisions that support the white patriarchy in the organization.

William built on this idea of the white administration at SRU silently co-signing racist events with intentional, active neglect. In fact, just as white administrators are rewarded for reinforcing white space, the obvious implication is that there are consequences for people of color since they are targeted and victimized by the racist space that is created/maintained:

W: In fact, there was one very specific allegation of harassment that I'm familiar with that we brought to the attention of whoever headed up the campus police at that time, and they just refused to deal with it.

D: Wow, that's frightening.

W: Yeah. Yeah, it is. And it's kind of at that point that I began to think this isn't the best place for me. [539].

When an incident can rise to the level of being reported to law enforcement, but still get covered up by white administrators who are able to simply refuse to work to solve the problem, there is a far larger problem than simply insubordination. This hegemonic tool risks the very lives of the people of color who have been victimized, by endorsing the crime that has been committed against them. When crimes against people of color are sanctioned and endorsed in this way by law enforcement, there is virtually no recourse for a person of color. The logical end in such an environment is too horrifying to even consider. William, again, described:

I think that it's delusional. I think that they don't want to know the truth. If given the truth...what I used to tell people how openly I was called the n-word or that on weekends the Klan would come into the building and put stuff under my

door. When I would say that to them [white administrators], they were just incredulous like they couldn't believe it was happening. And I would say, 'well, do you think I'm making this up? Why would I have the Klan information with me?' [581].

In the spite of overwhelming evidence, which included physical proof of ongoing racist antagonism, the white administrators refused to support people of color by even conducting an investigation, let alone attempt to prosecute the culprits, or move to increase the safety and security for their executive leader. The tacit endorsement of these racist incidents by white institutional leaders ensures that people of color broadly speaking, and William explicitly, are revictimized at the hands of the institution. In this instance, white institutional leaders repudiate William's credibility as well as minimize the magnitude of the incidents as a justification of their neglect in this situation.

Less obvious about the incidents described above are the justifications that come imbedded within the intentional, active neglect. By minimizing the importance and/or the prevalence of a racist event, university administration can resist the responsibility for investigating insular events: "Because they'll say it's [a racist event] like some fringe group doing these things. They won't admit it's pervasive." [582]. Explicitly or tacitly white administrators also justify inaction by: feigning ignorance of the issue, reporting lack of evidence to investigate the incident, giving agency to policy that prevents action, simply refuse to respond because they [the white administrator] can, or (perhaps most insulting in an institution of higher education), white administrators can claim that rather than an institutional response, a racist event will be used to educate students. "[...] I

can't tell you by whom, but I was told – that it [an incident involving a noose being found on campus] was going to be used as a teachable moment for the university. Ultimately nothing ever happened.” [559].

Another particularly insidious facet of the intentional, active neglect is that this tactic by its very nature is difficult to observe because there can be small examples of progress used to keep the real racist agenda of the white administrators clandestine.

I can't explain it, but it's a very subtle [pause] 'let's create the illusion.' I look at the diversity initiatives and I know [SRU] has made a lot of progress from when I was, came out of school [...] I know they've made a lot, a lot of strides, but what I see is a lot of people holding on, onto traditions and [pause] you know [pause] the whiteness, the privilege, and the power plays itself out in the attitudes of administrators, the inconsistencies in practices across the university, inconsistencies in how, you know, some departments do a very good job, David, of [pause] fairness, equity and then others do a terrible job. But nobody hears about it. It's almost like there's a deaf ear and if you try to bring attention to it, what, what you get told is '[Anita], you know, well, we're making progress, and you just have to bear with this.' [98].

The rhetoric that people of color and those who have suffered injustice must simply be patient in pursuing justice is a prominent theme throughout history as those who have struggled for justice have been promised that the day for equality will be soon. The reality is that this is simply a distraction technique used by oppressors to continue to unjustly subjugate those with less power. This technique has been used at SRU for

generations as well, but the technique has been reframed to include the ‘progress that has been made.’ In this way, there is an illusion created that SRU is an institution that is adaptive and keeping up with the needs of the changing demographics of the state and nation. However, this illusion is simply a distraction intended to take the focus from the actual demonstrable change which is paltry when considered in context of the rapidly changing society.

It is also important to specifically reference the primary beneficiaries of the intentional, active negligence: the white administrators who are allowed to keep the space explicitly white and comfortable for white people including the overwhelmingly white alumni: “I think that behavior has been rewarded. I think we get a lot of outside influence from alumni and people who like this place exactly the way it is and [believe] it should stay that way because it’s my last nostalgic bastion of my youth, so it should be that way every time I come back here.” [431]. The other beneficiaries are the white stakeholders within the institution, including the students, faculty, and staff who participate (actively or tacitly) in racist projects: “If you let people off for doing these kind of things [racist actions], or the general university community sees that nothing really happens, then you’re going to encourage it to exist.” [560]. The reward system is well-entrenched within SRU with incentives for maintaining and protecting whiteness, and resistance (real or imaginary) for attempting to challenge the status-quo: “[...] with these particular issues, there’s going to be a lot of resistance to it, and so who wants to take that on in addition to all of the other stuff that they have to do? That’s a big, big headache. And that can make your life very uncomfortable.” [429]. In this way, the

structures that support and reinforce whiteness and white space at SRU are well developed and entrenched within the administrative milieu and the systems that are controlled by the white administrators. The enduring legacy of whiteness at SRU is an immutable permanent feature of the administrative ethos.

Circling the Wagons. This name for this next theme came as a result of an open-source code that was utilized by two different administrators of color in describing their interactions with white administrators whose work reinforced the white space at SRU. Specifically, these are the tactics which are exercised as part of the daily work of white administrators, for which the white administrator is directly responsible, and which seek to protect whiteness and white space. This theme is broken into two subthemes, each of which describe different types of administrative strategies to create and reinforce the white space.

Support Staff as the First Line of Defense. This subtheme specifically describes the ways in which institutional administrators deploy support staff as obstacles that administrators of color must overcome. Importantly, these support staff members are empowered to create hostile environments by white administrators who reward their problematic behavior. What is particularly convenient about deploying and rewarding behavior by white assistants in creating hostile spaces is that white people never need training in how to create a hostile space for a person of color: a white administrator never has to direct a white assistant to create problems or treat people of color pejoratively since the socialization of white people in America has already well-prepared white people for these interactions. However, white people always require training in

“diversity” or “cultural sensitivity” or whatever framework is utilized to help white people understand the nature and impact of their racism on marginalized groups.

These interactions appear innocent or benign oversights at first blush. However, the cumulative effect of these incidents on administrators of color leaves little doubt about the nature and intent of these aggressions. Further, it is worthy of note that Jasmin reported nearly all of the data in this subtheme. For her to have a sustained record of mistreatment from several different white support staff indicates that these interactions are not likely coincidental. Jasmin’s position in the organization means that she has relatively little power and as a result she is particularly vulnerable to this type of abuse.

To properly understand this data it must be recalled that the environment at SRU is tremendously hierarchical, where titles and positions are important – it is uncommon for a student to address a professor as anything other than the “Dr.” when that has been earned, or “professor” in those situations when the teacher is someone without a doctorate. This is also the situation in administration where those with a doctorate are addressed as doctor, and those without are still referred to by title or with a “Mr.” or “Ms.”. In Jasmin’s case, she has earned a PhD and also has a titled position within the organization which everyone would call her some sort of honorary title aside from just her name.

J: the receptionist just this year started addressing me as doctor.

D: How long have you had your doctorate?

J: Six years.

D: Unreal!

J: Uh-huh, I started this position with my doctorate, and she's never addressed me by my title, not until this year when someone told her that she needed to do that.

D: Wow, someone other than you, obviously.

J: Right. Someone she felt was in charge, because clearly I'm not in charge.

[392].

While seemingly a minor oversight on the part of the receptionist, at SRU this is significant since any situation involving a white administrator would have been resolved immediately, not six years. Additionally, that the administrator of color had to rely on another administrator to correct the receptionist in this slight is telling, since as Jasmin acknowledged, she is not seen as a leader in the organization. In this situation, Jasmin's authority is undermined two-fold, one by not being acknowledged with her title, second, that she could not correct the situation on her own.

While this treatment by the receptionist would likely fall into the category of a microaggression, since it is a small act of disrespect, the assistant charged with directly providing support for Jasmin is far more active in her resistance and hostility. As one example, the assistant mounted resistance by doing small things to ensure that her professional life would be difficult.

I mean I wasn't getting phone messages. People would stop by my office to see me. I wouldn't know they were there. When people would call, if I had a student in my office or someone in my office, I would get a buzz and then she would immediately tell me that somebody was on the phone, and she'd hang up

[so Jasmin had to take the call regardless of the fact that she was already engaged with someone in her office]. [380].

This sort of passive resistance served to not only disrespect Jasmin and make her work environment difficult, but the assistant was able to create situations so that the person affected by this bad service would be unsure if Jasmin or the assistant was responsible for this poor treatment. As will be described below, the power dynamics in this situation are such that Jasmin had no recourse or ability to hold the white assistant accountable and as such the assistant was free from consequence for her deliberate passive aggressive actions.

In the next example, a white support staff is an obstructionist who slowed down work flow as a form of passive resistance that had an effect on Jasmin and her staff.

J: So my staff does a lot of traveling around the state and she [the white assistant] was tasked with doing my travel for my staff – for me and my staff [processing paperwork]. I asked her to come to a training meeting for us. “Help us help you. How would you like information to get to you? What kinds of things do we need to do so that you get the information you’re looking for to file these reports?” [We were trying to be] very accommodating. She didn’t make the reports. The reports weren’t sent in on time. She’d hold the expense reports until she had gotten everything and then she would send it off.

D: So in the meantime, people are out?

J: Exactly and my staff doesn’t make a whole lot of money, so if it was me, I mean I would make it work. It’s not a big deal, but for them, that’s a problem,

and I had issues with that. I talked to her direct supervisor [who oversees business affairs] who then tells me, ‘well, she’s only – she’s new at this. You have to give her time to get adjusted.’

I said “She’s had a year. How much time does she need?” And the woman [assistant] is still telling me she doesn’t work for me.

[The assistant’s supervisor said] “Well, you two have just been at odds, and you don’t – you two just don’t get along, and you just need to find a way to work this out.” [372].

On the surface, this example appears to be simply miscommunication and perhaps a clash in personality. However, a close read describes how Jasmin is being targeted. That this issue continues to be a problem a full year after the staff member has been trained on these procedures indicates that the problem needs further action. Rather than investigating further, the supervisor correctly guessed the likely source of the problem – that there is a personal issue between the two of them. What the supervisor did not bother to understand is the source of the personal issue, which is the racist way in which Jasmin is being treated. By refusing to take action, the white administrator not only cosigned the assistant’s intransigent behavior, but also equalized the power structure by mandating that Jasmin and the assistant (whose job in this situation is to process paperwork) “to find a way to work this out.” The person who is clearly obstructing the process is being validated and elevated for this problematic behavior, which leaves Jasmin with no opportunity to actually take corrective action with the assistant since the assistant doesn’t report directly to Jasmin. Without options for

recourse, Jasmin has had to resort to doing this work herself: “So, I just – at that point, I just figured out I was just going to have to do it myself because if I don’t there’s no way that we’re going to get the support that we need.” [373]. As a result, Jasmin has to expend her time and energy on tasks that should be handled by an assistant, meaning that Jasmin has less time and energy to do the job for which she is responsible and credentialed. The white assistant was not only rewarded in the moment by the supervisor, but also in the written documentation of her performance: “And they rewarded her [the assistant] behavior. Her performance evaluations have never said that she has done a terrible job, not once.” [377]. Jasmin, who began the interaction by reaching out to offer assistance and allow the white staff member to be in the role of knower and teach Jasmin how to be of service, was rewarded with passive resistance, devaluation of her role in the organization, and eventually burdened to do the work of the hostile staff member.

The level of egregious action by white staff members was at times elevated to controlling the outcomes of the administrators of color – where the white assistant took on a role that resembled that of a supervisor. In this example, Jasmin was not the targeted person of color, but was in a position to note the exchange between her colleague (a Black administrator) and another white administrative assistant.

He [Black administrator responsible for fundraising] had a signing ceremony with his donors for a scholarship that they endowed, and they [white administrative assistant] were going to make these people [the donors] park in a parking lot two lots down instead of letting them park next to the building. I

mean, even on top of that, they had a luncheon for them. The receptionist in his [the Black administrator's] office didn't want to pay for or get the china because she didn't feel like it was an appropriate expense, so she was going to have these people [donors] eating off, you know the little fake, plastic china? She was going to have them eating off that. 'Oh well, they have some that look just like china, you could get that.' And he was like 'I don't think so. These people are giving at least \$100,000 plus, and you want them to eat off Chinette? I don't think so. What is your problem? But he can't get – cannot get the support from this woman [the white administrative assistant] to do that and she went to his boss to tell her, 'oh, he is just making life difficult. He won't take my suggestions.' He doesn't need to take your suggestions. You work for him. Why do we have this issue? [...] Oh yeah, and his boss decided to take her [the white administrative assistant's] side and said 'oh well, you just need to kind of listen to what she has to say.' [399].

This is another example of how white administrative assistants can be empowered by white leaders as a part of a strategy to marginalize and demoralize administrators of color. As with the other examples, there is always an ultimate white authority that the white front line workers are able to appeal to in order to validate and reward their racist behavior. An aspect of the white frame is noteworthy in the interaction between the white administrative assistant and the white boss – the fact that the Black administrator is described as “making life difficult” for the white administrative assistant, and that perspective is validated by the white authority who then

insists that the Black administrator must listen to the unsolicited suggestions from the assistant. However, the difficulty that the Black administrator is subjected to as a result of having to work in a racist environment, being supported by a racist assistant, who is empowered by a racist authority is never considered. After all, a quick read of job descriptions and the organizational chart should settle any question of who makes the decisions and who is responsible for carrying out the decisions and supporting those decisions. The notion that in any other situation an administrative assistant would be empowered by an authority to overrule the decision-making of the person they are supporting, is ridiculous, particularly at SRU (again, which is a very hierarchical organization where all decisions and processes always follow the chain of command).

The unacknowledged, but painfully obvious fact is that in this hierarchical organization, the job descriptions and organizational charts don't mean the same thing for people of color and white people. There is an unrecognized power bestowed on individuals as a function not of their education or experience, but rather their whiteness. In those situations where a white person is being supervised by a person of color, the lower-ranking white person always has the ability to appeal to an ultimate white authority, which is ultimately a trump card that usurps the authority of the administrator of color.

In each of the previous examples, the white administration has been a somewhat clandestine, silent supporter of whiteness whose work was largely behind the scenes in supporting white administrative assistants, similar to that of the US supplying arms to small insurgents to sustain resistance against countries with whom the US was not

friendly – a silent but powerfully support for the opposition. In this last example, Jasmin described her experience soon after she arrived in her unit and learned about how the powerful forces in her office would be mobilized (or fail to mobilize) in support of whiteness.

When I first started in this position, I did have some administrative support, but she was someone who felt like she could talk to me however she decided, and so she did, until I started moving to have disciplinary actions taken against her because she came into my office and yelled at me. And no one stepped in the office to see if I was okay. No one stepped into my office to make sure that things were taken care of, if I needed help, any of that kind of stuff. They just let her wail on me for whatever reason. [370].

In this situation the ultimate white authority had the ability (perhaps a responsibility) to interrupt, or at least follow-up after, a hostile interaction. By refusing to do so, the white authority reinforced the power of whiteness and reified the space as explicitly white.

The messages communicated to Jasmin through her interactions with white support staff members include: this unit belongs to white people and your presence is tolerated in this space, but not supported; that you will be allowed to work here at the pleasure of an ultimate white authority; and white people will determine your outcomes and ability to survive in this unit.

While all of my examples in this theme come from a single respondent at SRU, I also have first-hand experience witnessing this tactic employed. In the situation that I

am familiar with, there was a Black administrator who worked for a more senior executive. The senior executive employed a white assistant who absolutely terrorized the Black administrator by employing many of these same techniques without recourse. Finally, because there had been so many incidents between the two, the senior-level executive asked the Black administrator and the assistant to mediation, rather than investigate the situation and work to resolve any issues, which would be expected in most work place situations. In so doing, two important outcomes were achieved: it allowed the senior executive to continue to create a hostile space for the Black executive for much longer than would otherwise be appropriate in a work place, and it continued to keep clandestine the role of the senior executive in creating and maintaining spaces of oppression.

Administrative Tactics. This second subtheme under the theme *Circling the Wagons* describes the administrative work that serves to protect whiteness and white space at SRU. Administrative tactics can take a variety of forms including passive aggressive behavior, moving employees of color down in the organizational hierarchy, pigeon-holing them in “diversity” work, taking responsibilities from their portfolio, ignoring their contribution to the organization, and casting them as an outsider in the organization, to name just a few. The reality is that white administrators have the power to create incredibly hostile environments and make it very difficult for people of color to succeed.

A wide variety of these techniques can be classified as passive aggressive techniques which are often insidious in the execution as they can often seem benign, but

have deeply detrimental impacts for the person of color who is targeted. Again, similar to previous themes, by their nature, passive aggressive techniques are most obvious to those who are being targeted by the practice; those who are not targeted with the practice do not typically note them since the impact is not fully felt or understood by those individuals. For example, in a room full of people a seemingly benign tactic can be utilized to silence a person of color, where only the targeted individual realizes what is happening. Documented below are several examples from a ubiquitous space that exists at any college or university campus – meetings. Since meetings are often designated spaces for thought and opinion leaders to come together to share information and make decisions on behalf of a unit or organization, they serve as spaces where there are often many more white people than people of color (particularly at SRU). In the meetings that Angela described, she is frequently the only person of color and almost always the only Black woman in the meeting.

I think that sometimes it compels it by really making me sometimes act out the stereotypes [laughing] that they sometimes probably see in me. For example there's a lot of silencing, so I've been in meetings where white guys can ramble on and on and say whatever they want to say. Sometimes, if I want to talk people try to silence me before I've even gotten going. They try to tell me, you know, 'we've got to be cognizant of time.' People can be very dismissive and then I have to push back against that, which makes me kind of seem like a pushy person. [226].

The technique in this example relies on the ability of white people to control the administrative space. To be sure, the space is controlled by white people who monopolize the time in the meeting without consequence. However, an arbitrary argument of time is leveraged by the white leader in order to limit Angela's contribution. This technique can easily be invisible to anyone who is not immediately reminded that they must be cognizant of time when they speak, particularly when this happens frequently. The consequence is also problematic in that Angela is compelled to fight for her opportunity to speak in this space. This predictably casts her as an aggressive Black woman, which has a variety of implications for how she is treated by her colleagues. In this way, the passive aggressive technique not only has an impact on the person of color who is the intended target, but it sharpens the white racial frame of the other people in the meeting by reifying a longstanding racist stereotype.

Once Angela is able to find the space in a meeting to contribute her thoughts and ideas, her contribution can be devalued and marginalized using nonsensical explanations or circular logic to disguise the racist interaction. The cumulative effect of these sorts of interactions includes angst and exhaustion from using energy to prepare emotionally and mentally for all of the hurdles that she may have to face in a meeting.

Sometimes I feel that I can be very plain, so, on one hand when I'm chastised or indirectly punished for being direct, when I am direct, I still feel that people can be deliberately obtuse and try to pretend like they don't understand the implications of what I'm saying or even what the hell I'm saying directly in the

first place. So, it's not until I go away that I see a sort of contrast, because I guess how it has affected me is that I tend to be kind of on-guard in administrative meetings and things like that [229].

Angela's experience in meetings describes how a person of color could begin to feel schizophrenic in these white spaces. The irony of white administrators who simultaneously deploy a strategy whereby they feign ignorance in not understanding the implications of what a Black administrator is saying but also criticize the same Black administrator for being too directed is a thinly veiled attempt to hide what is obvious: that these interactions are nothing more than racist attempts to silence and devalue Angela and her contribution to the meeting. Angela actually described this technique in greater detail later when she said:

Then he [white administrator] is also one of the people that I can say something and everybody will be like 'well, I don't know what you mean,' and then there will be a white person there that he respects more that apparently serves as my interpreter, and he's like 'well, you know, I think what Angela is trying to say, you have to look at it from her point of view.' Then all of a sudden he's like 'oh yeah.' So that person gets to legitimize me as a thinking person [245].

Taken to its logical conclusion, this example illustrates how deeply the white racial frame can exert control over white people's lives and ability to interact with people of color. It appears that since the words coming from Angela's mouth are coming from the mouth of a person of color, they are unable to be processed and understood by the white administrator, until they are explained by another white person.

Whether or not this is a conscious decision on the part of the white administrator is irrelevant since the outcome is the same: the person of color's perspective is always illegitimate. However, Angela has refused to let these types of racist interactions define and silence her perspective. Instead, Angela has had to develop strategies to be heard in these toxic meeting spaces.

Now I talk in bullet points, you know. 'Well, I really object for the following reasons: one: da, da, da; two: da, da, da.' I've become repetitive, so I go back to the original point just to make sure that [laughing] we don't have to keep on [distracting from Angela's point]. 'Yes, but as I was saying, you know, da, da, da. Yes, but I just finished saying, da, da, da.' [256].

The reaction and counter measures employed by Angela help to really illuminate what these spaces are like to navigate. Her necessary reliance upon parochial techniques so as to be understood as well as reemphasizing her points means that she is spending extra time and energy formatting her points for white administrators' consumption. Meetings are perfect spaces for whiteness to be reified because of the control of the space by white administrators, as well as the important role in the everyday business and decision making in higher education.

Aside from meetings, white administrators also utilize surveillance and power plays to silence administrators of color. Surveillance and power plays work similar to meetings in that they create oppressive spaces in which the administrator of color is forced to expend energy to navigate, which results in the administrator of color being silenced and unable to contribute to the work of the organization.

So, it works in terms of like silencing. It works in terms of, you know, there have been times when I have asserted my rights and somebody wants to you know talk to you about it but they call you in at like eight o'clock in the morning. You gotta meet with five people instead of just talk to them about the situation, you know, it's like all these kind of like weird sort of like power plays that they don't even kind of know. Like they might have their own sort of reason for doing it, but after a while it makes you feel like you're a person who is under constant surveillance. Um, then I kind of realized that even it that was so, there is no real kind of consequences. No one's taking anything away, nobody's doing anything, but before I can get to that point I have to go through all of these sort of mental gymnastics to understand whatever. So, you know the idea of being silenced, the idea of being of being under constant surveillance I see as perhaps punitive measures, you know. [236-237].

Angela aptly described these tactics as power plays, since white administrators create the spaces and define the rules of engagement, they are in a position to ensure that the administrator of color must conform to an unfamiliar environment where they are decidedly on the defensive. The justification for surveillance is fabricated through the narrative that Angela is dangerous because of her persistent pushing against these explicitly white tactics: "You know, your reputation precedes you even when your heart is in it. So, in the real world my militancy level would be probably like a 2.8, here it's like a 12.9." [237]. As a result, she is subjected to anxiety producing interactions with high-ranking SRU officials who collectively impose an another artificial barrier to

Angela's success. Taken together, these toxic experiences serve to remind Angela that not only is she under constant surveillance, but she is *always* going to be criticized by the white authority (despite the fact that she has not done anything wrong, she is called upon to justify any actions which draw any attention). Not only does this unmerited level of scrutiny contribute to the sense of paranoia experienced by administrators of color, but it contributes to the deeply held white racist framing of Black people that they are dangerous and require surveillance.

Another administrative tactic that white administrators rely upon to marginalize administrators of color is to commodify and pigeon hole people of color in the organization, so that their role is narrowly constructed to contribute in sometimes superfluous and problematic ways to the organizational goals. For example, Jasmin described how she is used as a person of color to recruit students of color to the college. While this is within the confines of her job, she is expected to compromise her identity in order to accomplish organizational goals.

Why would I want to bring a student [of color] into the college and this is what's going to happen to them [dealing with the difficult climate on campus]? So you want me to lie. Because when the parent comes back and says, 'why is my kid not...' what would you want me to say? Because they're not going to come back to you [the white administrator]. They're going to come back to me, and then I have to lie again. [364].

Jasmin's utility as framed by the white administration is to interface with people of color on behalf of the white administration and use her credibility to exploit students

and families of color. Jasmin clearly does not feel comfortable with this, but given the power she holds in the organization, she has few options to resist.

Jasmin's role in the organization is continually communicated to her through the decisions that undermine her authority and devalue her contribution. Perhaps since Jasmin's role only has value because she is a commodity due to her race, it should not be surprising that staff members would confuse her role in the organization and as a result not seek her out for issues that should be her responsibility. This amounts to another tactic utilized by white staff members: *going around an administrator of color* [352], to consult with a white colleague with questions and issues (that are relevant to the administrator of color), despite the fact that these questions do not pertain to the white administrator. This puts the white administrator in a position to control the administrator of color's outcomes, since they are not able to answer questions and contribute to the conversations that affect the ability to do the job. The tactic of going around can also remain relatively unacknowledged since it can be chalked up to an unintentional oversight on the part of the white staff members. Regardless of the intent, the end product of these behind the scenes interactions is that a person of color is not involved in the white spaces where decisions are made about them.

By going around Jasmin and making decisions without her knowledge or input, she is effectively being demoted in terms of voice and authority in the organization. This also happens explicitly, when the white leaders move her position on the organizational chart to lower ranking roles and being supervised by white men who are less qualified.

I was reporting to the executive associate and had been reporting to the executive associate, and when I negotiated my job description, I negotiated so that it would continue to report to this person as the other [people similarly situated] do in the office because I think that's the only fair thing to do. They decided to change that reporting structure, so that I was reporting to him [a new, white, male], someone who does not have a PhD, someone who does not have any higher ed experience other than working at this community college doing advertising, which, to me is not higher ed experience. Not for a [more experienced administrative] position that you're supposed to be supervising. I don't think so. But they [white leadership] did it. [395].

By lowering Jasmin on the organizational chart and having a less competent supervisor, several important outcomes are achieved: Jasmin's voice is effectively muted since she will have to go through more layers of the organizational chain of command to reach an administrator with authority; Jasmin's role within the organization is clearly communicated so that it is clear that she does not have any power; Jasmin will now have to overcome significant obstacles since the person who will allegedly be providing guidance and evaluation of her and her job has no knowledge of how her job works, therefore Jasmin will have to expend time to teach her boss not only about her job, but about higher education leadership and administration; finally, it communicates a level of disrespect of Jasmin that would be difficult to otherwise express. This final point notwithstanding, the white leaders of the organization demonstrate blatant disrespect of Jasmin and her role in the organization.

We went to the alumni council meeting which are a majority white people. Old white people, middle age white people. They're just all white and he [the white leader of the organization] introduced the leadership staff, all their accolades and awards. [Jasmin imitates a person pointing] 'That's Jasmin.' [391].

By publically disrespecting Jasmin, the leadership makes it very clear to all within the college, but also the external stakeholders in the organization that Jasmin's role and contribution is neither respected nor valued.

Perhaps not surprisingly, for all that they have to endure in the organization, Angela and Jasmin described examples of how people of color are not recognized for any of their efforts, especially not their role or contribution to the success of the college of unit. In those places and spaces when accomplishments are being recognized, people of color are actively ignored and devalued so that the white narrative about people of color at SRU can be preserved.

Always in these moments when I think that I am providing a service for the University in terms of its diversity, you know, and I never get stuff for that. One time I was up for some diversity award and then what happened, they didn't have another person to run against me, so they wouldn't give it to me because there was nobody else [laughing] [252].

By refusing to acknowledge Angela's work, she is reminded that white institutional administrators do not value her work, a demoralizing blow for someone who believes they are assisting the institution. This seems counterintuitive since diversity is always hailed as a goal of an organization, particularly in higher education. While this is

a stated goal, it is rarely if ever realized with actual support for those underrepresented people who do the work.

This is the first time, in my college, that we have had the highest number of freshmen ever, ever. Highest number of applications to the college, highest number of admitted students in the college, highest number of freshmen enrolled in the college. Do you think we can recognize that? No. That's due to all the recruitment efforts *in our departments* [spoken with sarcasm]. You know the people who are not at the college fairs, the people we can barely get to show up for events on campus? Yeah, those people. So, if we recognized Jasmin, then we'd have to say, 'well, you remember that time we said...' [423].

Similarly, the white administrators refused to acknowledge Jasmin and her role in the success of reaching the goals of the college. When the white administrators in the college have already undermined the person of color in so many circles, it becomes very difficult to recognize achievement, since this would contradict the narrative of the person of color. Another read of the situation may suggest that she is not being recognized because the white administrators in the college have conditioned themselves in such a deeply racist way that they are truly unable to see the contribution that Jasmin makes and any successful outcomes are automatically attributed to closely situated white people. In this way, Jasmin becomes expendable to the organization because she cannot claim credit for the successful attainment of organizational outcomes.

Finally, Angela described how these tactics foster deep and justifiable distrust of the white leadership. Since Angela has to stand guard against a barrage of white tactics

constantly, she is forced into a position whereby she must question all of her interactions with white administrators and ask if she is being treated fairly and equitably.

So, for example, in one instance very recently I was asked [by college leadership] to chalk up \$500 for computer support. I never see these people, so I need to just trust that they are behind the scenes doing everything. But, when I confronted [the college leadership] they were like ‘well, the department people have to give up like \$1000.’ I was like ‘yeah, I don’t have even near their budget, so you cut [my contribution] in half of what the departments give up, but I don’t even have half the budget that they have.’ So, what was problematic about that is that [the college leadership] was telling me all of the things that I don’t even know about that go into running like the IT stuff, blah, blah, blah. Well, if I don’t know [IT], and you just want me to pay money from my account, don’t you think that’s fucked up? You know, so, if I was a department head wouldn’t you tell me all of the things that go into the IT stuff, so at least I know? Why do I just have to take your word for it? [250].

Angela’s justified level of skepticism of the white leadership is reflected in her refusal to take this significant charge to her budget for granted. Many leaders might assume that these types of charges are just standard operating procedure and accept them since they are required to do business, however, what Angela has uncovered by resisting what appears to be an immutable decision is that she is in fact being treated unfairly again, since she is having to pay a larger relative portion of her budget for these services than other departments. While this may seem minor, this is a symptom of the larger

ongoing problem at SRU. Since Angela has been at SRU for a number of years, she is much better prepared to deal with the ongoing white tactics and attempt to resist them. Also noteworthy from this example and nearly all of the other examples is that there are so few people of color at SRU, resistance often relies on one person of color or a very small group resisting the larger white power structure. The white power structure not only has the advantage of being dramatically overrepresented in the number of people at the institution, but also the power to control all of the spaces at the institution, as well as the ability to rely on the day-to-day practices and the unwritten ways to manipulate situations each of which oppress people of color.

The administrative tactics described above have in common the suppression of administrators of color. The tools utilized by white administrators are so ubiquitous in higher education milieu that they are either easily concealed to all but the intended target, or executed in such a dominantly white space that any resistance will be immediately dismantled with consequences for the dissenters.

Role of Policy. In this sub-theme, the agency of policy as a tool for reinforcing white space is described. Policy at SRU vacillates between being an immutable standard which must be adhered to at all costs, to being largely unwritten and practiced in a contextual way so that the white leadership can create the situations and circumstances that most easily promote and support the institutionalized white space. The common element in each of these scenarios is that the role of policy is ultimately determined by white decision makers and always serves to reinforce whiteness as the norm.

When it is convenient, policy is given a great deal of agency, meaning that white administrators can cite institutional artifacts like the standard operating procedures as the cause for a decision to be made or not made. For example, Maria, in her work, identified an opportunity for many of the Black and Hispanic service workers to receive professional development that would assist them as they seek promotion from frontline workers to supervisory positions. The policy regarding professional development at SRU was written without consideration for how service workers also have professional development needs, which are strikingly similar to those of administrative support staff. The main difference is that administrative support staff are almost exclusively white women and front line service workers are almost exclusively people of color. The policy for professional development is arranged in such a way administrative support staff have access to professional developments sessions while service workers are systematically excluded. As a result, there is a state-supported educational and developmental opportunity for the white support staff to gain skills necessary to ascend in the organization [50]. When Maria brought this concern forward to those who might be able to create the space for service workers to also receive this training and development, she was met with resistance immediately.

Let's [pause] because the reality is that if they [service workers] have the support of their supervisor, and if there is a way that we could figure out institutionally how we can support this group of staff, we should be able to do it. You know, but they have to have support from their supervisors, and it could mean, okay, maybe, maybe we work together, maybe we do offer classes in the evenings that

they might come to, and in lieu of their not being able to take it off during their workday, because, they are already understaffed. In lieu of that, maybe if they'd accumulated eight hours of class time, they get that back in the day, you know in annual leave or something like that. Umm, but no, that's like when I brought that up they [white decision makers] were like 'Oh no [we won't do that]. You're messing with leave.' [58].

In this example, white decision makers have given agency to two different policies, the professional development policy and the leave policy, which serves as a justification for the administrative paralysis on this issue. The reality is that the deep inequity created through these policies necessitates a new approach that would at least temporarily deviate from the policy, but likely force a change to the policies all together to ensure equity and fairness. However, none of this is considered by the white decision makers, which creates the illusion that this problem is beyond the reach of a potential remedy. What is missing from this narrative is recognition of the fact that university policy is created and maintained by administrators, so it is always subject to reconsideration if it is not working correctly. For example, if a university's policy is found to be problematic, it would be immediately reconsidered, as it was when a different aspect of the professional development policy was changed. Maria went on to describe how a fee was introduced to penalize people who did not show up for their professional development class, which was to serve as a disincentive so that people would not simply skip the classes. This was a particular problem because often times there was a wait list in order to enroll in these classes, so people who did not show up for

classes were taking a spot for a professional development opportunity from employees who also wanted to attend the class. Ironically enough, as an unintended consequence (presumably), the disincentive policy created another barrier for service workers because their departments were less able or willing to expose themselves to the potential of a fee in the event that the employee had to cancel their attendance late (which is far more likely for those in service positions since they are often called to deal with emergencies as they arise), as opposed to support staff members who often are in units that have far more resources to absorb such costs [53]. Importantly, the professional development policy was changed in this case explicitly because (white support) staff members were unable to attend professional development classes. This change in policy was possible because the administrators deemed that such a decision was in the best interests of all the staff members. This illustrates how administrators are clearly able to act on a pressing need despite the policy.

While giving agency to policy is a powerful technique, it is pales in comparison to the *lack of policy* tactic. As Anita described “[...] it’s [racism] not in the policies and procedures, in fact the policies and procedures in many instances give the illusion that you know [what is happening]. It’s kind of like right under the radar screen.” [94]. Lack of policy operates as an undocumented, unstructured, and unnamed way in which decisions are made (often referred to as a practice). When relying upon a lack of policy as a technique, white administrators are able to make decisions that reinforce whiteness without consequence, since there is not a mechanism of accountability (while there are local, state, and federal laws, ordinances, and policies that on the surface may seem to

ensure that racism is not explicitly practiced, these are so loosely constructed with an emphasis on proving intent rather than impact such that racism is easily practiced under a thin veil of equal opportunity).

Anita further described the important distinction between policy and practice and how practices are used to reinforce white racist decision-making when describing an interaction with a white administrative colleague:

They kept saying these are practices that we've used. And what I said in the meeting, Dave was 'you know, when I hear the word practices coming from white males it reminds me of [pause] closed door meetings. Practices, practices typically aren't put on paper which means you can change the rules whenever you so please. That's what concerns me. Policies and procedures have to be approved by the faculty, but practices? That's from a power base.'

And he hated me saying that. I said that's power and privilege. 'This is a practice that we have. [Pause]. Oh, so what's the practice next week? Okay, because I'm just checking.'

I'm sort of like, by the time I figure out one practice then you come up with something new and then you say 'oh, well, you know, I just decided to do that.' I said 'that's why I have a problem with practices.'

If we are going to have practices, we need to put them down on paper and let's have them approved and I can live with the word practice. But in my experience, [laugh] I didn't say whiteness [laugh], my experience in white institutions with

practices is that they change and evolve. [Pause]. And then you're left there saying 'but I thought the practice was [this]?'

And then they [white administrators] say 'oh yeah, we've changed.' [87-88].

The strategy of utilizing unwritten practices ensures that white administrators have complete control over the space at SRU since they are able to manipulate the rules which govern the decision-making process and ultimately orchestrate the desired outcome. Further by operating in ways which obscure: who are the people involved in making decisions, how the decisions are to be made, and when the decisions will be made, there is not an opportunity to challenge the process or the outcome. When Anita pointed this out, she was cast as junior and a trouble-maker by more senior white administrators [86].

The decisions that are made which utilize practices rather than documented policies are not insignificant either – the issues that are being decided include issues such as admissions [84], fellowships [82], and even elections to some student positions [572]. Again, Anita described a separate interaction to confront a white administrator about the nature of the admissions of students into a program:

I said, you know there is something wrong with a department that doesn't have policies or procedures regarding admissions. He says to me '[SRU] doesn't require that we have policies and procedures.'

I said 'you know, I find that a little hard to believe.'

He said 'well, it gives you this framework, but then we've been doing it like this for years, Anita, and it's worked for us.'

[...] You can't just say 'I just decided to pull three other faulty together and we met, by the way.' That's what he did. That's what he's always had a history of doing. But, see, you know why? That gives him the power [Pause] if there's nothing on paper that says here is how we do it. [84].

This clear example of utilizing a practice seeks to exclude voices of possible dissent, in this case Anita. Again, this ensures that the dominant white racial perspective is the only perspective considered in decision-making and since there is no written policy, there is no opportunity for recourse. As a result, there will never be an opportunity for people of color to participate in the decision making process and interrogate the ways in which whiteness permeates the organization and the decision-making. This is not dissimilar to the way that some southern states gerrymander electoral districts in order to maintain power for a political party.

Jasmin described another space where practices are heavily relied upon largely without consequence. In the process of promotion and tenure of faculty members there are numerous examples of unwritten expectations of what a faculty member must do, how many publications they must have, the types of journals that publications must appear, amount of research funding, number of committees served on, etc. "You think you would get tenured if you met the criteria or exceeded it, and in some cases, there's been a lot of problems getting people promoted and tenured because they didn't meet whatever other criteria was there, the departments said had mysteriously just appeared." [434]. While vague criteria for tenure is well known throughout the academy, it is something that all faculty members regardless of race must navigate. However, the

impact of these practices appear to be one of the factors contributing to the dramatic underrepresentation of Black scholars in faculty positions at many research universities such as SRU.

I think mentorship is part of it because they [faculty members of color] would know what those unspoken rules are, but more importantly, you would have somebody to go to, to have conversations with about how to deal with regular, daily issues that surface like somebody undermining your decision-making.

Whether you're faculty or staff, it matters not. If you still have somebody that's undermining your decision-making, that's not helping. [435].

A lack of strong mentorship ensures that outsiders to SRU and the promotion and tenure processes are navigating these difficult terrains in isolation without resources critical for success. Furthermore, as any faculty member in a department can testify, there are plenty of unstructured, serendipitous conversations that happen at the metaphorical water-cooler that may seal a junior faculty member's fate. In order to have a voice in these clandestine spaces, junior faculty must have senior faculty members who believe in them and are willing to be their advocate behind closed doors. However, these are exceedingly difficult tasks given the nature and demographics of most university departments, particularly at SRU. Jasmin's comment alludes to an intergenerational transmission of institutional knowledge that many times precludes faculty of color.

The juxtaposition of the role that policy plays to create and maintain white space is significant. When there are policies and procedures documented, they are given

agency as a way to thwart racial progress and reify white space, but are easily restructured when it is deemed in the best interests of all (i.e. white people). However, in the absence of written policies and procedures, unwritten practices work in even more insidious ways since racist decisions can be made without the pro forma necessary to change policy. While written policies are safer for ensuring some semblance of equality and justice for people of color since they are concrete and transparent, the reality is that racism and whiteness will trump any administrative obstacle, since policies and practices are all ultimately controlled by white administrators.

Human Resources. The programmatic and structural elements of the human resources functions at SRU offer another space to cement the role of race and racism within the SRU administrative processes. Every institution has some human resources functions which serve to recruit, hire, and train employees, as well as document and report on workforce diversity. SRU is no different with a robust program designed to recruit a workforce commensurate with a world-class research university. Three components of the human resources functions appear to work as tactics which support the institutionalized white space at SRU: professional development, recruitment, and hiring/supervision.

Professional Development. The racist operation of the professional development program at SRU was covered in the last section as an illustration of the agency that administrators give policy. However, this important tactic bears revisiting because professional development serves as a means of social mobility for many staff members at SRU, since classes are offered to employees at no cost and provide valuable training

and skills that can subsequently position staff members for promotions (or at the very least increasing the level of responsibility that the staff member can undertake). While significant, the policies are not the only obstacle that people of color (in particular those people who serve in service staff positions in maintenance, custodial, etc., where people of color are disproportionately represented) face in pursuing professional development opportunities at SRU. As Maria described, the priorities of the leadership in Human Resources is to further develop courses that are narrowly tailored to only serve a select population at SRU.

Have they [HR leadership] expressed what the priorities are? Oh yeah. The priorities right now are the business and career track. So, those are all of the, the...here again I'm talking about the support staff, but a different group of support staff, okay. So those are the folks who are like the business coordinators, administrative assistants, things like that. [57].

By prioritizing professional development sessions that are only applicable to those support staff members that are administrative assistants, business coordinators, and other desk positions (predominantly white), the opportunities for free development and ultimately advancement are preserved for white employees. The service workers who would potentially stand to have the greatest benefit from these types of sessions are systematically eliminated by policy (documented in the previous section) and though the course offerings. The message that is communicated to the service workers is that they are not valued and that SRU is only interested in them to the extent that they are willing to do the demanding physical labor and undesirable work that allows the university to

operate. The white frame of viewing people of color as chattel is obvious in this example, since service workers are treated as cheap, disposable labor, a point that was made crystal clear in the months following my interview with Maria.

SRU joined the many higher education institutions in signing an exclusive outsourcing deal whereby the university contracts with a private company to provide custodial and maintenance services. Ostensibly, this means that the university will save money by relying on professionals who are able to leverage economies of scale advantages to provide service at a lower cost. The sad reality, which has been well documented at several universities nationwide, is that there is often times a great deal lost in these ventures, including support staff positions, lower hourly wages for those that remain, loss of state pensions, loss of seniority, fewer resources with which to do the work, longer hours, and exceedingly difficult working conditions. There are few actions that the white leadership at SRU could utilize to more powerfully communicate the disregard that they hold for service workers than outsourcing their services. As Martin described in reference to this outsourcing initiative, “we will have as an institution sold off unrepresented groups as if they’re chattel on the auction block, just like slaves.” [310].

Recruitment. The second human resources tactic considers the role of recruitment in creating a racist institutional space. At SRU, a world-class research university located in a suburban/rural environment, recruitment is an important part of the institutional lifeblood. The community where SRU is located will in many cases not automatically have the caliber of professional that is necessary for the type of teaching,

research, and service commensurate with the institutional goals and mission. As such, recruitment becomes a tremendously important institutional priority and part of the administrator portfolio. In many cases this is an important opportunity to convey to a potential candidate what the institutional leadership values and to see first-hand what characterizes the institutional ethos. This was particularly true at SRU, where leadership explicitly or implicitly conveyed a sense of what the institution values.

So norms that I think might disparately impact people of color are, you know, our recruiting processes. We traditionally advertise in the same common deals but there's a responsibility on us too to not limit ourselves to African American or diversity-type publications. You know, it's like if we know that the game is to advertise only in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, then we need to be out there learning the game and applying through the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and not just *diversityjobs.com*. But at the same time as an institution, you know, *diversityjobs.com* is a free online service so if we're true to it, why don't we make that a standard that every job that we post gets advertised over there in *diversityjobs.com*, right? So, you know that's one of those simple things. [336].

In this example, Martin described how an institution that is committed to diversity can find ways to communicate this message to candidates early in the search process by intentionally choosing places to post positions, and by "learning the game," so that SRU is at the very least competitive with other institutions also searching for high caliber candidates. Martin went on to describe another opportunity for administrative leadership to convey a commitment to underrepresented populations, which is to ensure

that the search committee represents a diverse group of decision makers, since this adds a great deal to the decision making process, as well as communicating to potential candidates that people of color and underrepresented people are empowered as key decision makers at the institution [336]. Small steps such as these can provide an avenue for reaching underrepresented populations and ensuring that the candidates chosen are in the best interests of all at the institution, not just the white men. Utilized wisely, recruitment represents the opportunity to bring new thoughts and ideas to the institution that will make the institution innovative and forward thinking. However, this requires forward-thinking leadership that values the inclusion of all voices in the decision-making processes.

While the recruitment process could be a great boon for an institution, the opposite is also true: a lack of recruitment can be a huge obstacle whereby the white administration undertakes a parochial attitude that seeks to reward and promote only the people who have been part of the institution and demonstrated a commitment to the existing white administrative ethos. At SRU, the environment has an alarming commitment to maintaining the status quo (which at SRU is a deep commitment to the white space) as evidenced by the candidates chosen in the searches, but also those high level administrative positions that hire white people *without a process at all*.

But look at the last two years and who has been elevated simply because of who they are. How many people of color do you know, or have you seen that happen to be at SRU over the last several years? Where they are simply elevated into a top position making over 100 grand simply because of who they are? I mean,

why, you cannot tell me that that is not a prime example of how whiteness is umm...promoted, literally promoted on this campus. And, it's not just the administrative positions, when you look at people who are mid-management. Why is it that white people can just move into a new position or a new category, when people of color have to apply to make the process fair and make it open to everyone? [44-45].

In recent years, the number of white administrators to assume a post for which there was no opportunity for candidates to apply or interview is striking. While it would be very difficult to comprehensively audit these hires because of the size of the institution and the frequency with which this has happened, one administrator cited 40 examples (by name) of white administrators (Director-level and above) who were hired without a process, including some of the most senior posts at the institution. This is a conservative number that is likely much, much larger in reality. Interestingly, this lack of recruitment has become so commonplace that there is never resistance to these decisions and has virtually become part of the standard operating procedure at the institution. The cumulative impact of having so many administrators hired to maintain status quo means that any change to the culture of the SRU will come only when it is an obvious benefit to white people.

The final example of recruitment as a tactic is the administrative reliance upon narrow-minded perspectives in community members that engage with candidates. Again, Martin cited an example of how for many years, newly-hired administrators were paired with one of two realtors in town to assist them in finding a place to live and

manage the logistics of a move, job start date, enrolling in school for any children, etc. At least one of these realtors was known to make racially problematic comments and assumptions about people, including communicating stereotypes about where people of color in the community lived, and explicitly guiding candidates away from those areas (337). When the administration of the institution puts their faith into a community member (realtor in this case) to interact and care for a candidate, there is surely an assumption by the candidate that this person has been vetted and endorsed by the institution. As an extension of the institution and a representation of the community, when that realtor makes racist comments, it is communicating a strong message to a potential candidate. As Martin said “hey, you showed them who you are or you showed them a perception of what they would find in the community,” [337].

Hiring/Supervision. The final human resources tactic is utilize the hiring process and the interactions in a supervision relationship. The tactics utilized for hiring and supervision are remarkably similar in that both rely upon intimidation, protecting white people, intransigence, and disregard for policy. What is noteworthy about each of these tactics is that they can be deployed even within the context of highly visible laws and institutional policies that are intended to protect those who may be vulnerable positions.

The ability of white administrators to control important aspects of the hiring process ensures that people of color who both serve on hiring committees and are being considered as candidates are having to fight for legitimacy. Martin described the process

he was forced to endure in the process of negotiating his starting salary at SRU, which he described as an important marker of an individual's power within the institution.

There was a white chief financial officer at the time, and again, it was the perception of 'how powerful do we want this Black man to be?' And what I knew is that because our salaries are public records, one would want your salary at a level such that the level of power is reflected in how much money you make around here. At the time that the job was being offered, there was another African American male at the institution who had been a special advisor to the president and he was making an even \$100,000, and so when the new chief executive officer asked the CFO what salary would you recommend for Martin's position, they basically went in and matched my salary to the other African American person whose title was not as high as the title that I was being offered the job for. So, when the chief executive officer offered me the \$100,000 salary, I'd already done the research to know how a special executive salary should be calculated in relation to other executives – that was the first sign [315].

As a result of Martin being hired into a position with considerable power and access to the chief executive officer, the white administration attempted to close ranks on Martin by giving him a salary that would reduce his authority and reinforce their (the white administration's) power over him. A power play such as this has the intended impact of lessening Martin's real and perceived power as well as put Martin on notice: while he is being invited into this traditionally white space, it is only at the pleasure of the white institutional leaders that this opportunity exists. By extension this means that

Martin's position is ultimately controlled by the white administrators and Martin's position exists to support those white administrators.

Navigating the hiring process as a candidate is perhaps even more difficult for foreign nationals who present as people of color, since these people often have to rely heavily on white administrators who are often unfamiliar with the process and have little or no incentive to learn what is required. In the meantime, these people of color are subject to possible consequences that can include being incarcerated and possibly deported. Gabriella described her experience as an international faculty member caught in this predicament.

And once you get the position, then it's the paperwork until somebody will be willing to help you to get the paperwork. I have my department head and he didn't want to do it. And I have to come to his office every day. Every day. He didn't know what to do. He was very afraid. Then you have to go and talk to the international office to help me to do that, but they needed for him to say yes. I mean it took forever. Then he was stepping down. He stepped down and then somebody helped me, but stayed three years in limbo. Nobody wanted to do my paper. He was afraid to do the paper. Then you go through a lot of that. There/s a lot of that. It's very difficult for internationals. Nobody understands that.

[602].

Perhaps more so than domestic employees who do not have nearly as much paperwork, international employees are subject to whim of white administrators who can not only control their hiring and about their status as an employee, but also control their

ability to remain in the country. While many international employees are not as familiar with the racialized history in America, they are often forced to interact with the racist systems and structures that empower whiteness, which can come as confounding for many who are not accustomed to this hostility. The everyday power that white administrators are able to lord over people of color put people of color in potentially life-changing circumstances: for example, if an international faculty member is hired for a job, how is it that they should live in this community? Sign a lease that they may end up having to pay despite being potentially deported? Worse even, purchase a home which, again, may lead to very difficult financial circumstances should the white administrator simply choose not to assist the person of color by completing (or allowing the proper people to, per Gabriella's example) the necessary paperwork? It is understandable how an administrator may be hesitant to sign what can at times surely be confusing paperwork, however, that is the job and responsibility of the administrator. They are empowered with the resources (such as an international office) and need to be responsible enough to educate themselves on the processes and laws that affect the lives of these international employees who do not have nearly the same power in America as do citizens. The agency given to "paperwork" in these scenarios is a clear example of the racist ways in which white administrators can legally keep international employees in absolute subjugation that extends well beyond the context of work to threaten their personal lives as well.

The hiring process also has ramifications for those people of color who end up serving on hiring committees, typically a service to the institution. While people of

color are well-versed on the impact of whiteness, their opportunity to see “behind the curtain” to understand the decision making process for white people is in many cases novel. Angela shared her experience which included an interaction with a white administrator that illustrates how the concept of diversity can be co-opted by white administrators in the pursuit of white candidates.

I’ve been on search committees before where people wanted me to rethink the idea of diversity, that’s not even what the school was recommending. So they told me, the one person told me that my idea of diversity was very limited and I said well this is what the diversity people would be looking at. They wanted to hire this white guy from Yale who didn’t really even do that kind of stuff, [I mean he was from] Harvard. And then I was like ‘so what kind of diversity am I missing?’

And he was like ‘the diversity of rural-ness.’

I was like ‘rural-ness?’ [laughing]. You know, so [pause] rural-ness? [laughing]. But what I ended up screaming was ‘rural-ness? Are you serious? I just saw someone on a goddamn tractor running down the street!’ You know, that didn’t go over well. [251].

Given that there are so amazingly few spaces where people of color are given special consideration in the course of alleged meritocratic decision-making, it is stunning that this white administrator was able to even let the words cross his lips that special consideration should be given in the name of diversity to a candidate for studying ‘rural-ness.’ At SRU, there is an entire college that studies many of the issues related to rural

and farming issues, so to suggest that this area is underserved or merits special consideration is almost comical. The repurposing of the diversity argument to support white candidates who are dramatically over-represented means that the word and concept of diversity can be used to defend virtually any position, area, or group. When it comes to issues of race, the Supreme Court in recent years has very clearly come down on the side of protecting whiteness and white space with a justification that suggests that we have a meritocratic society and asks people to collectively forget the American racial history that has predestined people of color to positions of subjugation. Within this context, diversity becomes a tool of whiteness so that an unmerited decision can be justified.

Angela's response clearly illustrates the shock of having to navigate the nonsensical argument of the potential contribution of a white scholar studying rural-ness. In this space where the participants are almost always required to sign a confidentiality agreement, white administrators can advance arguments and make decisions that likely would not be made in public forums because they are so ridiculous. However, since white people are in control of the space there is little to no risk for them to make these arguments in these closed hiring committee spaces. As a result, the (often tokenized) person of color on the search committee is put squarely in the position of having to spend their energy and time fighting ridiculous arguments rather than focusing on the business of the committee.

Gabriella went on to describe behavior on the part of white administrators in a high profile search in which she was involved. In this example, the hiring committee

was charged to identify finalists for a high post at SRU, with the final decision being made by chief executive officer.

G: I just found that the process was completely absurd with the chief executive officer. He selected who he wanted. The comment that he made, that one of the candidates were female, [I mean] two candidates were female. One, he found that she looked like a grandma. I found that absurd as I heard it. He said that she [the other woman candidate] doesn't have both of her hands, so she would not be able to play golf. I mean the excuse he found with the other one was a physical impairment. He would say that *openly*!

D: So, when the chief executive officer said things like that, were those candidates then immediately tossed out?

G: Oh, yes! That was the end at the end, yes at the end when he already had – the chief executive officer had made up his mind and the board of directors too. [623].

Again this example illustrates how the white administrator is able to justify decisions utilizing a deeply problematic rationale because the space is protected through confidentiality. It is illegal to consider age and disability of a candidate as criteria for eliminating their candidacy, particularly when those variables do not impact the ability of the person to fulfill the posted requirements. This illustrates how white decision makers are able to exercise *carte blanche* in these white executive spaces to do whatever they please. Gabriella went on to share that the two women who were publicly demeaned for their age and disability were actually sitting executive-level institutional

leaders, so they were very well qualified for the position for which they were being considered at SRU. But, as Gabriella described “yeah, the decision [was] made. They hire somebody who never, never apply, who didn’t even apply for the position.” [624]. This absolute power held by white administrators ensures that the white interests will always be attended to in hiring decisions and that there is no opportunity for challenge or recourse from people of color or anyone advocating on behalf of anything that counters white interests.

More than just completely controlling institutional systems and policies, white administrators create a chilling effect for all who are traditionally underrepresented by brandishing power and authority with reckless abandon. These interactions serve as a reminder (much like what Martin encountered) that all people of color ultimately work at the pleasure of the white administrators and that their outcomes must be consistent with vision of the white administrator. At SRU, like many other institutions, there are very few protections for employees, but perhaps somewhat unique to SRU is the practice of sending staff a reminder of the policy which specifically outlines how staff members of SRU are “at-will” employees and as such can be terminated at any time, “with or without cause.” This is one of the only policies for which each employee receives an annual reminder. The tacit message is reaffirmed annually – “you work for us; if you step out of line, you will be fired.” This frames the background for understanding the hegemony that operates in terms of supervision at SRU.

Consistent with the other aspects of the environment at SRU, the supervision of employees demonstrates a commitment to inequality for people of color. Maria

described examples of practice and policy that each operate in ways that make SRU a hostile space for people of color to live and work in. Maria first described her work situation where she was expected to take on new responsibilities while another white colleague was allowed to coast.

I think umm [pause] with the same colleague [person of color], we often times get into conversations about this too, how we feel like, you know, we have to work harder to make sure that everything we do is perfect because it it's not, we are not going to be protected like the other white people are. There is another white colleague and we work with, who quite frankly has, like really skated by over the last several years. And you even hear from the management, admitting that this person has not performed up to par, but this person continues to get protected. He gets protected by giving him assignments that are easy or allowing him not to take assignments when we are expected to, with the excuse that "that's not my job expertise."

"Well, you know what? It's not our job expertise either, but we'll find a way to do it because that's what we were hired for." So, whiteness is protected. Other people are not. [31].

The white administrators that provide supervision within this unit at SRU operates in ways that systematically protect white employees. That the employees of color feel the pressure for perfection while white employees are rewarded (with continued employment) despite inferior production illustrates how difficult it is to exist in this racist environment. Also noteworthy are the words that Maria chose, which

illustrates the type of adversarial relationship that the employees of color are forced to endure while dealing with the white administrators. The necessity of “protection” from the white administrators illustrates how besieged employees of color feel in the workplace.

In another example, Maria describes how she was told a story after teaching a diversity session by another staff member who dared to question her white supervisor about disparate outcomes for people of color.

In the last session [that I taught] a woman talked about how when she went to talk to her supervisor about why she and the only other person of color did not get a promotion when everybody else did [all white employees]. She just thought that was odd and brought it to his attention and said ‘why us, and why, you know, why everybody else and not us?’ And the person [white supervisor] basically told her that she needed to not ever say that again, she needed to keep quiet. [37].

This interaction with a white supervisor is characterized by explicitly racist practice, which serves two ends. Not only does it reinforce the normative white space, but by promoting all of the employees in a unit with the exception of the two people of color, there is a tacit message delivered about the relative value of their contribution to the organization. This devaluing message is not only delivered to the people of color themselves, but also to all of the employees in the unit who are clearly all privy to this information since changes are made to titles, organizational charts, salaries (which are matter of public record), etc. If these promotions had truly been made due to merit, it

would be much easier for the supervisor to explain the rationale for how these decisions were made. Further, consistent with good supervision and mentoring, an employee should know where they stand in terms of evaluation of their work product. If the employee of color was deficit in some way or in need of coaching, this would have been an ideal time to discuss these issues with the staff member so that they might be eligible for a promotion in the future. However, since the white supervisor took the opportunity to deliver a veiled threat in response to an innocent question, the staff member has confirmed that this was a decision about race, and challenging this racist decision will be met with further hostility.

These two examples beg the question, why would staff members not report these racist interactions? Consistent with every state employer, SRU has a grievance policy in place to ensure that people are treated equitably and fairly. However, as Maria described that process is also controlled by white people and is unlikely to find any relief or reconciliation from racist interactions.

[...] but when you look at our grievance process, people who experience or have a grievance about [pause] feeling like they are being targeted because of their race or ethnicity, who do they go to? Typically it's a white male. And the person who's over that area is a white male, and so on. Typically, nine times out of ten their supervisor is going to be a white male, or maybe a white female. And so, yeah those are the people who they have to go and talk to. You think those people are open to hearing about their experiences with racism? No. Usually they feel doubly targeted and even in fear of losing their jobs, so there is not safe

place, I don't think, within our policy or procedures for people to really address an issue that they feel that they dealing with, if they were targeted because of their race. [38].

The ability of white supervisors to also control the process by which a grievance or complaint is filed ensures that people of color will have at the very least a difficult time having their concerns heard, but in all likelihood are met with resistance and potential consequences for giving voice to their experiences with racist interactions. As a consequence, white administrators are never held accountable because there is always an ultimate white authority. The further up the organizational chart that a situation rises, the greater the likelihood is of encountering a white authority. The argument could be made that these white authorities are not always racist and do have the best interests of all people in mind. However, the evidence based on the experiences of the administrators of color at SRU suggest otherwise. Given this, it is easy to see why administrators of color may not feel comfortable describing racist interactions to racist administrators who are in complete control of their outcomes.

The ability of white administrators to control the hiring and supervision of employees ensures the enduring legacy of white supremacy at SRU, through both policy and practice. This is a powerful tactic since the white administration can control who is brought into the space and who is allowed to remain in the space. This level of control over the outcomes of people of color is reminiscent of the plantation, where people of color were treated as less than human chattel forced to endure torture and abuse. While comparisons to slavery will always fail to do justice to the conditions that the slaves

were forced to endure, it is noteworthy that while the context has changed, parts of the model appears to remain intact within the academic plantation where white people still control all aspects of the lives of people of color who are treated like chattel and forced to endure emotional tolls so that white people can enjoy prosperity.

Xenophobia. As the final theme in this section of the chapter, xenophobia describes the distinct ways international people experience the white space of SRU. In particular, international faculty and staff members experience hostility based on language and a pressure to assimilate aspects of themselves to the American values and norms. These examples are most all provided by Gabriella, who experiences the space at SRU as both a person of color (Latina) and as someone who is only clearly international once she speaks, as she has a thick accent from a South American country. Her experiences have allowed her to know that she is both unusual and unwelcome at SRU.

Language and Identity. For international people, hostility comes from many directions and at times from surprising sources. For example, Gabriella described how she was harassed by a secretary in the department who asked her to “clean up” her accent [621]. Gabriella’s speech and diction are discernable so asking her to change the way she speaks is an attempt to further make the environment more comfortable for the (mostly white) native English speakers that inhabit the space. Further, because of the place where SRU is located in the south, there are plenty of people who speak with a southern accent which is always tolerated, and at times is emphasized (one of the former executive level leaders at SRU would at times speak certain words with a faux-southern

accent so as to be seen as more of an insider). The reality is that there is no such thing as unaccented English. There are many regional dialects and ways of speaking that are all correct and acceptable. By asking Gabriella to alter this part of her identity, the white space of the institution is reinforced by creating a hostile space for people who do not conform to the white standards and norms. In this scenario, personal identity is not recognized while the convenience and comfort of white people is elevated in importance. Also important and related to previous themes, is the fact that the support staff person was empowered to make a comment like this to a faculty member of color. In this way, whiteness is again the most important factor as it allows white people, who are in a position to *support* people of color, to withhold support and create hostile spaces without consequence.

While the support staff person has demonstrated the ability to marginalize Gabriella as a tactic for ensuring that the space is comfortable for white people, the ability of white people in leadership and administrative positions are more overt and detrimental as a consequence.

He [white administrator responsible for supervising Gabriella] was mocking me all the time and my accent, mocking me. And that was like unbearable with him mocking me. And – sometimes I even blame myself that I allowed that to happen because the way I am, I'm easygoing, I'm funny, things like that. I allow that to happen. [661].

The power dynamic in this situation is undeniable, since the person who is responsible for judging Gabriella's outcomes and work is the perpetrator of this hostile

mocking. Gabriella's description of this mocking of her language as "unbearable" sheds light on how difficult it must have been to be at work. Gabriella's situation is exacerbated by the fact that she sees herself as an easygoing person and so having to be armed for emotional battle from her supervisor is something that she is ill prepared to undertake. That she has internalized this hostility speaks of the power of whiteness to monopolize the space and shift the blame from the actual oppressors to the victims.

Gabriella also described an interaction that she had at a previous institution whereby she experienced similar discrimination based on her international status and inability to assimilate to standard white, American norms. Interestingly, this interaction happened at a northern research university which dispels the notion that these problems are only in the south.

I remember asking him [Gabriella's major professor] for a recommendation letter. He said "as long as you still have this accent or you don't speak English better, I will not give you a recommendation letter," like that [pounding her hand on the desk]. I was his best student – his best student, his only faculty who got a position in a university. You have to go through a lot of that. [615].

Again, this is a powerful white professor who is not only attempting to force Gabriella to conform to the white, American standard, but he is threatening her future unless she is willing to conform to standard for white, American English. This also serves as another example of how the meritocratic society is nothing more than a white tactic used to attempt to justify white success and difficulty for people of color. This

example is the antithesis of a meritocratic exchange and in Gabriella's words something that "you have to go through a lot."

Gabriella's major professor also provided another example of how the space in academe is explicitly white and how meritocracy is a fallacy. Before she left graduate school, he pulled her aside to tell her that: "Your last name is not good. If you have a last name like a German last name, you know, it would be easier for you to get a job. You'd better go home. With this last name that you have, it's not very attractive to get a job." [617]. By encouraging Gabriella to leave the country, the major professor can be seen as serving two agendas simultaneously. On one hand, he could be seen as a supportive professor who is simply warning Gabriella of the discrimination that she is likely to encounter in the job market (which is the interpretation that Gabriella expressed). However, it is also possible that the professor is again attempting to create a hostile space for Gabriella to navigate by forcing her to reconsider her life plans and doubt her own abilities and self-worth. Her inability or unwillingness to assimilate to white American standards is evident, so insisting that she consider moving abroad could be another step to reinforce the white space among American higher education institutions. If this major professor was truly committed to Gabriella, wouldn't he work with her to try to find ways of dealing with and overcoming the discrimination that she will likely face in the job market? This candid conversation illustrates why academic positions continue to be occupied by white, American, men.

Assumptions of Internationals. Grouping large numbers of people as "internationals" is deeply problematic as it seeks to put people who have nothing more

in common than their difference from the white, American standard. However, the experience of many of these international people is very likely different based on factors such as phenotypes, their native language, and ability to pass as American. For example, two people I interacted with at SRU (one, a white Canadian woman, and the second a white, Australian man) had virtually no interactions in which they felt like they were targeted based on their international status. Their ability to make minor modifications to assimilate to white, American culture and norms was easy enough to allow them to benefit from the white normative institutional spaces. The same could not be said of many international people with darker phenotypes.

Gabriella described her experiences of being an international person by stating, “you have to prove yourself twice, more than anybody because it’s always the concept that you are a foreigner, you are – that you don’t deserve to be here...” [600]. The description of navigating the white space for many international people sounds eerily familiar, as many of the administrators of color have expressed similar sentiments in describing their experience navigating SRU. Also similar between the experiences of international people and people of color is the assumptions that are made regarding their background, experiences, skills, and abilities. For people of color these stereotypes are well-known and documented, and are grown from largely backstage racist interactions between white people sharing racist narratives (which are intergenerational and iterative). For international people many of these stereotypes are not as commonplace, but can have equally disparaging effects on the targeted individual.

One common assumption of faculty and students who are international is that they are financially privileged. Like any stereotype, there are some people who fall into that category, but there are many more whose experience is very different.

My friend has to really clean houses and clean houses like dirty bathrooms and things like that because her major professor, they don't want to give money to her because it's like 'oh, you're rich. You come from a different country. You must have money. Ask your father to give money to you.' There's a lot of that perception too. [667].

In dealing with international students, American professors have the ultimate authority: they are able to decide and dictate not only the pedagogy for learning the content of the discipline, but are empowered to decide who is in need of financial support (with no evidence). When American professors determine that the international graduate student should already have sufficient financial support, they are sentencing these students to overcome an additional burden: Not only will they have to work to assimilate to the white, American standard, they will have to find financial resources in a country where they may not be able to work at all. The work that Gabriella's friend was able to find was not commensurate with her skills, education, and training, and had the additional burden of being physically demanding. Many graduate students are able to secure assistantships that create additional learning that supports the curriculum and expands the learning beyond the walls of the classroom. However, this experience illustrates how an international person is not only denied this pedagogical opportunity,

but they are being forced to navigate another space where the student will be treated poorly.

Gabriella also had her own experience being denied funding but in this case the professor was blatant in his discrimination.

I used to have a scholarship and then, as I told you, I have to stay so I can get a position. Then my scholarship ran out and I started doing my PhD and I asked him – I wanted to be a TA or research assistant, and RA. ‘No you’re not married. You’re not married, you’re female, I’m going to give it to my male students.’ Like he bluntly said to me. And I didn’t have any power. Why I didn’t have any power? I was a foreigner. I don’t have any power at that time. As a foreign faculty, a foreign student, what kind of power do I have? I don’t have any power. I’m not living here. I’m from South America. What kind of power have I? How can I go and sue the guy that tells me this kind of thing? How many years I have to endure that he will not give me money? If he had, he would give it, but since I’m a female and not married, he would not give it to me not matter how much you work. And then [to make ends meet] I remember putting tiles in the lab, in his lab in the summer. That’s the only money he gave me and I did it. [612].

It appears that Gabriella was denied funding not because of her perceived affluence, but rather because of gender and marital status discrimination. However, Gabriella goes through great pains to illustrate how that was possible: as an international person, she has no power. Whether this is real or not, the perception is powerful and

leaves many international people paralyzed and unable to challenge the authority of their major professor (because of reliance upon professors to guide and fund research, co-author papers, provide letters of recommendation, etc.). As a result, Gabriella felt she had no opportunity for recourse and accepted the manual labor job of installing tiles in the professor's lab.

These examples and experiences hint at another line of research considering the unfair and unjust expectations of international students (and faculty/staff). In support of this current research project, Gabriella described the conditions that these international students were forced to undergo because of their inability to assimilate fully into the culture of the white, American, higher education institutional space. By leveraging power against international students who have few rights, white professors were able to extort labor as well as marginalize and threaten students explicitly. While many graduate students describe unfair treatment, the conditions that Gabriella described were not only unfair but point to a larger institutional culture that allows predatory behavior, which is in need of greater examination to fully understand their experiences and understand what can be done to mitigate these circumstances.

Confronting Whiteness

I don't feel totally powerless. But I think that I just feel like always embattled, which is different. I feel like Sisyphus, do you know that analogy? Roll the boulder up again, roll...[sigh]. (Angela) [281].

The administrators of color have aptly described the white racial space that exists at SRU and how this spaces is created within different contexts at the university. The

nature of the white space is insurmountable as it seeks to exhaust and defeat attempts to dismantle the structured and unearned privileges for white people. The success of administrators of color at SRU can be used as an example of successful resistance to the white space, but this is a sad commentary on the state of affairs at SRU, for at least two reasons: first, that an individual's success is linked to overcoming tremendous obstacles is problematic, since as a nation, we are led to believe that all people have the same opportunity to succeed in life (there are allegedly laws that seek to prevent discrimination in the workplace and ensure equal opportunity for all people, regardless of many identity factors, including race and ethnicity). Clearly, some people have more of the "same opportunity" than others.

Second, since there are so few successful administrators of color in leadership roles at SRU, those who are successful should not have the additional burden of again being put into a position whereby they are tokenized as the representation for diversity – in publications with pictures, on committees, etc.

Given all of these challenges, it should not be surprising that it is difficult for people of color to confront white administrators. Angela described the difficulty of confronting whiteness in the moment, in the midst of discussions where decisions are being made. "It's hard to understand sometimes when you're in the moment, you're not really always equipped to analyze and deconstruct what it is that's actually taking place," [242].

Angela's experience speaks to the pressure that administrators of color are under in those moments when they are the only people of color in a meeting and not only

having to follow and participate in the conversation like everyone else, but also need to be analyzing carefully to respond to racist decisions and implications, plus being on guard to defend themselves from a personal attack or micro-aggression. All of these forces combine to ensure that the meeting experience is an exhausting battle where administrators of color must run the gauntlet on a daily basis.

While the prospects of resisting white administrators is a difficult one, Anita described how administrators of color do have the ability to challenge in some spaces, but the prospect is lonely, difficult, and not likely to bring about the desired change.

When you have power, you always have the opportunity, or the option, of challenging the process. You can always do that. That's one of the benefits of having power is you can challenge the process. You can challenge the process if you don't have power, it's just that you, you might make yourself sick, you know, if you don't have any real allies who are willing to challenge the power and structure, and what I feel is [pause] you can get sympathetic supporters, but what's necessary to really challenge the underlying mechanisms, people don't want to go up against that. [100].

Anita's observation that those with power always have the ability to challenge the process is important. The relative lack of power ensures that administrators of color will always occupy a subjugated place within the institution, unable to improve their environment and experience. For this pain and suffering, people of color are only able to garner the sympathy of some white people, but as Anita described, this is unhelpful since these folks typically are unwilling to stand up to challenge power, likely for two reasons.

First, in order to truly challenge the white space at SRU, a tremendous battle will have to be undertaken which will cost people political capital, sleepless nights, and sacrificed relationships. This constitutes a huge commitment for white people who are already comfortable in the white space of the institution. Second, white people benefit from the white space, explicitly and tacitly, and therefore are likely unwilling to sacrifice their own unearned white privileges (which includes not just space, but material resources and benefits). As a result, people of color are often in this battle alone and have no recourse and scarce allies.

Dual Responsibility

The ability to confront the white space is also mediated by the fact that by virtue of working at SRU, they have two distinct and often-opposed responsibilities. As employees of SRU, they have a responsibility to make decisions and take actions that are in the best interests of the university. In the course of fulfilling their responsibilities as an employee, there are times when decisions can be made so that they (the administrator of color) are creating a space of equality for all people. However, there are also times when there is pressure to make decisions and actions that serve to reinforce the institutional white space. These opposing positions can put administrators of color into precarious situations, since they are put into positions to make or execute decisions that can undermine their own identity and values, as well as disempower the groups to which they belong. This unique dual responsibility serves as another burden that administrators of color must manage and overcome in order to be successful, that a white administrator does not have to navigate, and likely does not have any knowledge even exists.

Martin discussed this dual responsibility in depth, likely because his senior-level administrative experiences put him into many uncomfortable situations where he was forced to reconcile these opposing interests. “Privilege [of working in administration] comes conjoined with responsibility, and when you have a responsibility, that responsibility gets to be heavy because one, when people recognize that you care about those who may have been previously disenfranchised, there are a lot of expectations on you.” [293]. Martin described several experiences that help illustrate this difficult dilemma, the first in which Martin described how his white colleagues responded when there was a decision that was made by the chief executive officer that had a deep impact on workers of color.

Race enters my decision-making [pause] and so when the announcement on this [decision to lay-off thousands of service workers] needed to be made, my white colleague suggested that I tell the first-level supervisors and then let them go out and tell the employees [pause] because it was over 1,000 employees, and so race entered my mind on that and I said, “okay. I have spent a year telling these African American, Hispanic, and mostly poor white people how important they are and how much they are a part of the family and how much I care about them. I have a responsibility to go out there and tell them that even though I didn’t create this, I have a responsibility to put my Black face in front of your face so that at least you can see that somebody is trying to be honest to you, to be direct with you, to not sugar-coat it for you, but to tell you what’s going on and what the impact could be.” Hardest thing I’ve ever had to do but my African-

American parents and grandparents would have expected no less, and I just don't know that a white administrator, one, would have been able to connect the importance of my face being the one out there breaking this news, recognizing that from a personal basis, I might take a reputational hit, that people wouldn't see me as just the messenger but see me as part of it, and I've been told that some people did. It hurts, you know, to know that there are some people that didn't recognize what I tried to do as far as looking out for them. [311].

There is a lot to say about this comment. First, Martin's experience paints a vivid picture of not only the difficulty of balancing the interests and responsibilities of his job with his identity and responsibility as a person of color to work on behalf of those without voice. Martin's personal responsibility and sense of accountability represents a powerful perspective which clearly weighs heavily in his thoughts and makes him a thoughtful and reflective leader who considers and understands the implications of race and the dynamics of the institution being a white space, run by (almost exclusively) white administrators, and whose unearned privileges are protected at all costs.

Second, the expectations of those who have gone before him (parents and grandparents) serve as an important moral compass which, again, is another level of accountability that many white administrators likely would not have to consider. As a demonstration of respect and understanding, Martin chose to personally deliver bad news so that people would see him as someone (perhaps the only person) in the university administration who was willing to fight on their behalf, even if he wasn't ultimately successful.

In addition to having to reconcile these opposing responsibilities, Martin also had the burden of explaining this difficult position to his white colleagues and supervisor.

I even had to tell the chief executive officer here, as they were sort of just talking about ‘well, we got a decent deal for the employees that were affected,’ etcetera. I said ‘no, let’s not overlook the employees who have been impacted,’ I said, ‘and not one of you will ever understand what it’s like to,’ even though I didn’t have anything to do with it [the decision that affected so many employees of color] ‘in history, when the history books are written, to be the African American executive-level leader on whose watch these people were sold off.’ And so in summary, what I’m saying is I think that there is such a lack of understanding of what it’s like to not just be a executive-level administrator but to be the African American leader with certain responsibilities [banging the table with his hand] that you find yourself having to educate people, understanding that you also may isolate them, but you have a responsibility to do so. [317].

Again, Martin paints a powerful portrait of what these very white, very exclusive spaces feel like as a person of color. When white administrators attempt to assuage their guilt over their treatment of predominantly Black and Hispanic populations, Martin had to remind these white administrators that this is not a “decent deal” from the perspective of those who now will earn less, have worse working conditions, and/or lose their job all together. That such a conversation is even necessary speaks volumes of the detached reality that white administrators live within. For Martin, the education of his colleagues

in the racial dynamics of the decisions that are made amounts to an unwritten and unacknowledged responsibility that you will never see as part of his job description.

Taken together, the dual responsibilities of serving the institution that seeks to reinforce and reify white space, while attempting to create spaces dedicated to equity, all while trying to educate white colleagues is an almost impossible balancing act. The impossibility of these tasks was noted by Anita, who argued that not only are these incompatible tasks nearly impossible, but that white administrators attempt to silence any opposition to the white space by hiring and promoting critical administrators of color, so that they will then have a compelling and competing interests as part of their official university responsibilities.

So I always ask this question can you really [challenge] if you're a beneficiary of...institutional practices that perhaps need to be changed, can you, or are you willing to challenge that process? And, sometimes I think what the institutions do are identify those people who might challenge and you move them up into power positions, particularly if they're women. [Pause] [...] So, you can go so far and then...you're going to run into a roadblock. (Anita) [123].

The ability of a tenured, faculty member of color at the institution to speak truth to power is effectively silenced through this strategy of creating dual and competing responsibilities for people of color. There is not a similar comparison that can be made for white people, since their interests are explicitly and implicitly served within the seemingly normal day-to-day operation of the university. The idea that administrators of color may have a different experience than white administrators remains largely

unknown and unacknowledged (as will be demonstrated in the second half of this chapter).

Summary

Documented above is a system of loosely coupled strategies and tactics deployed by white administrators through a number of sophisticated proxies with the intent of marginalizing and oppressing people of color. The wide variety of ways in which whiteness has been expressed and imposed is consistent with the myriad ways in which whiteness has evolved and morphed in order to include and exclude people considered white and not considered white throughout history. Since whiteness is practiced both at the individual level (with specific decisions made and interactions with individuals) and at the institutional level (when considered in context with similar interactions and decisions that reinforce white space), it can be difficult to understand the contours of the terrain, truly since the terrain is constantly changing. The ability of whiteness to always rely on the legal structure, law enforcement, the collective policies and practices of an organization, and the constellation of fellow white executives ensures that whiteness in practice will rarely if ever get challenged in a meaningful way. Similar to the executives from the banking industry, the law makers, and politicians, who were never held accountable for the global economic collapse in 2008, the white administrators at SRU hide behind a wall of protections that make remedy for their transgressions inaccessible.

To return to the metaphor at the beginning of this chapter of people running a marathon in February in either Houston or Denver, the participants in Denver (people of color) are not only forced to endure the objective factors of weather and elevation, but

are forced to endure decisions made specifically to introduce obstacles, such as running roads that are icy and poorly maintained, in areas where wind is a known factor, where people will be unlikely to go and cheer for participants. By disguising all of these factors as part of a meritocratic decision, the ultimate white decision maker can claim ignorance and simply attribute success to the Houston marathoners (white people) for hard work and excellent preparation. While a simple metaphor to help paint a picture of disparate experiences of people of color in the academy, it should be noted that the experience of running a marathon is often a lonely exercise and one that relies on the support of others. Without the support of fans and friends, the task becomes exponentially more difficult and leads to feelings of despair, regardless of how well the participant is trained. Similarly, when administrators of color are not only not supported, but have factors actively working against them, the task of leading and surviving becomes that much more difficult.

White Cognitive Dissonance

The first part of this research project sought to locate whiteness and white space at SRU from the perspective of administrators of color. As described above, there were deep and substantive data regarding the ways that whiteness operates to create hostile and marginalizing situations for people of color. For administrators of color, the location of whiteness appears to be all encompassing, as water in a fishbowl is for a fish. It defines the understanding of the boundaries for the known world (drawing on the example from the beginning of this dissertation). The boundaries appear to be reinforced through structural and individual interactions with white institutional administrators, manifested through the decisions and practices of white administrators, impacting administrators of color explicitly and implicitly.

The second part of this chapter continues to utilize a phenomenological approach to examine the multiple pragmatic ways in which whiteness and white space are created and maintained from the perspective of the white administrator. By asking questions about being white, I sought to understand if these white administrators have considered the role that race has played in shaping their reality. In particular, I explored their understanding of and experience with: the climate for underrepresented people, the factors that influence decisions they make, how they conceive of an equitable environment, and any privileges associated with their race (questions and dilemmas that people of color are forced to navigate seemingly daily). As an example, many of the white administrators acknowledged that the racial environment should be more equitable at SRU, so I asked questions to understand what they actually do to facilitate that change

(both administratively and personally). The title for this second part of chapter four illustrates the difficulty for white administrators to articulate their views and understanding of race particularly as it relates to their leadership at SRU.

The data documented below represents a unique cross-section of administrators from SRU. The white administrators were chosen for interviews in consultation with several SRU informants who nominated people based on their power within the institution and their ability to affect and influence multiple processes and decisions. Further, several of the white administrators interviewed have in the past articulated a commitment to social justice or have some element of diversity as part of their job. It would have been quite easy to identify and interview solely white administrators that have articulated problematic racial stances (a list of those names was generated by my informants, which is telling about the environment at SRU), but ultimately to remain genuine to the goals for this research, I chose to interview a range of white administrators that would help further the understanding of the ways that whiteness and white space are understood and operate broadly speaking. Note that a brief biosketch for each of the white administrators, as well as the schema for classifying position types, can be located at the start of chapter four.

Similar to the last section, I will again provide a roadmap (see Table 4 below), so that the categories, themes, and sub-themes can be easily seen and tracked.

Table 4: Roadmap for Categories and Themes from White Administrators

Category	Theme	Sub-theme 1	Sub-theme 2	
Locating and Narrating Self	Narrating Self	Racial Identification		
		Being White		
			Shifting Context	
	Locating White Space at SRU		The Unique SRU Experience	
			Travel as a Credential	
			Faith Tradition	
			Advocacy	
			A Critical Perspective	
Protecting and Maintaining White Space	Claims of Racial Equity	Minimization		
		Intentionally Dismantling Safe Space		
			Discrimination is Accidental: Racism? These are Good People!	
			“Misunderstanding” the Experiences of People of Color	
		“Diversity” as Racial Discourse	Appreciating Difference	Other Marginalized Identities
		White Heroes	Wishy-Washy Kumbaya	
		Blissful Ignorance: “I don’t know, but…”		
		Laissez-Faire Leadership		
		People of Color as Chattel		
		The Epistemology of Race		
		White Victimhood		
White Decision Making	Peeking Backstage: White Executive Decisions	Comfort in Exclusively White Meeting Spaces		
		Strategy		
	Agency			
Working Toward Equality	Acknowledging White Racism			
	Personal Responsibility			
	Challenges to Racial Progress			
	Consequences for Pursuing Racial Justice			

Locating and Narrating Self

The data in this category documents white administrator narratives about the experience of being white, both at SRU and in society generally speaking, and what their race means to these administrators personally. The data below are comprised of comments made relatively early in each interview when I asked them about the experience of being white (at SRU and generally). In nearly every instance there was an almost tangible moment as the air left the room and I could see them uncomfortably shift their weight in their chair, or nervously touch of their hair or face. These data are striking because of the *way* that their experience was narrated as well as their actual description. With the exception of Olivia, none of my respondents admitted (verbally) that they were uncomfortable talking about their race, however their body language and stories told me a great deal about how we were entering uncomfortable and likely uncharted territories in this line of inquiry. The best illustration I can think of to describe their reaction would be that of a student who just realized that there is a pop-quiz on the homework reading and the student did not complete the reading. To build on this analogy, the student (the white administrator) tried their best to weave together uninformed responses and hope that this didn't expose them as someone who doesn't really know what's going on. On this pop-quiz, the student failed.

Narrating Self

This theme documents the ways in which the white administrators talked about themselves and their racial identification. The ways that these white people discussed their race was unique from descriptions provided by administrators of color. While

administrators of color could easily identify aspects of their lived experiences that are explicitly racialized, the same could not be said for white administrators. White administrators often said things like “I don’t know” or characterized their experiences as “normal,” which almost certainly means that their experience has been such that they have not been forced to consider their race. Dan’s response to the question about his racial identification appears equal parts uninformed and carefree, as he seemed to look to me as the researcher to tell him what his race is: “um, I would be white, I guess, I don't know, whatever it would be, you know, [865].” Many of the perspectives shared by white administrators illustrate a similar lack of attention regarding their race, which importantly notes a distinct privilege not afforded to people of color who are not only aware of their race, but they are always aware of their race.

Racial Identification. In doing this research, I began each interview by asking respondents about their racial identification. *How do you identify racially* is actually a question that not many people of color get to answer for themselves – as described by Gabriella (above), many people of color are assigned their racial identification and that assignment is communicated to them through their interactions with white people. For white people, however, sometimes the paradigm is flipped, where sometimes a person who appears by almost every standard to be white, but might claim a marginalized race (typically Native American) when it is convenient or offers some modicum of safety, despite the fact that the only link to that identity or heritage may be the moment they were told as a child that they were some fractional percentage Native American. In

practical terms, this often means next to nothing since frequently the only time this information is salient is when they are discussing race.

After asking Sally about her racial classification, she indicated that she was white, but then after asking her about what that means for her, she went on to say:

Um, [pause] I would say up until the last few years I don't think I really thought about it [...]. I did think about it in terms of, like I kind of knew my family background, um, ultimately European, but it's been so long ago that I don't identify with any, I mean I know I could trace our roots back to Scotland and a little bit of Germany, but I wouldn't consider myself Scottish [laughing].

Actually, if anything I would think more about being Native American, because we can trace that back to great-grandparents and great-great-grandparents on the other side, um, so when I've thought about anything that I was tied to [pause] but I wouldn't consider myself Native American [440].

This is a great example of what Bonilla Silva referred to as *rhetorical incoherence*, whereby a white person will offer a narrative that is contradictory or nonsensical, which prevents the person from committing to an idea or position. When Sally started talking about being Native American she is offering proof and even comparing that identity to her German or Scottish heritage. However, in the very next sentence she dismisses that identity as well. It appears that since she went through the trouble of not only citing it but also comparing it with her other identities, and then cited evidence for the claim, she wants this Native American identity to be recognized.

Later in the interview Sally again referred to being a Native American. In this comment, she is describing the racial demographics at SRU as compared with another university in the state (State Flagship University): “And if you look at, you know, State Flagship, obviously a much larger population there, um, I will mention our Native American students, it’s even less, a very small group but that’s probably because of my family background, you know,” [477]. It appears that she is trying to say that she is only mentioning that very small number of students because of her family ancestry, but is a bit of a non sequitur. In the course of the interview we spent a great deal of time discussing being white, but Sally’s two references to also being Native American are unmistakable. While I’m unsure of the intent behind mentioning and subsequently dismissing her Native American ancestry, it is at least interesting and perhaps problematic.

Being White. In asking respondents about the experience of being white, it was not surprising based on the people that were interviewed in this study that there were examples of people who were able to articulate an understanding of white privilege, as well as people who subscribe to the idea of a meritocratic society.

Sally and John both have had some training and experience in areas of race and diversity (Sally worked in diversity education for several years prior to being promoted to an administrative leader and John was a facilitator of training that sought to address these issues: “I was trained to be a trainer in prejudice reduction groups over 20 years ago,” [130].). Sean and Lisa are academic leaders who have faculty credentials whose articulation of these issues was quite a bit more scholarly, where they were able to name

actual rewards they accrue as a result of their race. As a result of their training, each of these administrators had the ability to articulate what it means to be white through an understanding informed by some training or scholarship.

So, within American society, and being white, and the last few years, um, and I think I have some awareness from graduate school, but obviously a lot [now] since working in the area that I do now [diversity education], um, I've had a lot more awareness of white privilege, and um, and being aware of a lot of the privilege that I receive that sometimes I'm aware of and sometimes I'm not aware of within society [441].

Um, the first thing that comes to mind is power and privilege. Having access to things that many others in our society do not have access to without even being aware of conscious [...]. So it means, I guess to summarize it's a lot about [pause], well I think what it also means for me is [pause] what it has for a number of years probably for most of my life is to also take responsibility because I have power and privilege that many don't. I think it, on my part there is a sense of responsibility to use that wisely for the benefit of others. It think it also means that a lot of reflection on my part just to think about choices and making or have made and [pause] as to, just to make good decisions because of all that I just said [129].

[...] Overall, I get better treatment. White-skin privilege pays, man. It works. It gets you stuff. It gets you attention. It gets you positive treatment [770].

I think to be white is to be privileged at this university. I think most whites don't see it that way or they would not want to, you know, for me it's like, okay, I have these things that may not privilege me all of the time or any of the time [referring to her other disclosed identities], but I have this thing [whiteness] that always privileges me, [895].

Sally, John, Sean, and Lisa, respectively, each articulated an understanding of racial issues, in particular each cited the idea of white privilege, or having access to unearned, unjustified rewards or resources. This understanding and articulation is important as a first step in understanding the racialized experience at SRU and in America broadly speaking. However, their understanding does not appear to be the dominant narrative, since more often than not, white administrators at SRU did not have any sort of advanced training or experiences in understanding race and oppression. In the articulation of other white administrators, there appears to be sentiment that they want to be *perceived* as an advocate for justice and equality, but it is obvious that there has not been much time spent considering or investigating these issues because their sentiment lacks a sophistication and authenticity. When asked what it was like to be white, Jack and Olivia responded with the following description:

How does it feel to be white? I think I've been blessed. I mean, I'll tell you I think being born when I was being born white was probably pretty good. You know, I'm not ashamed of it, but I think that what I learned from my parents and

my bringing up is that, you know, just because you're white, you're not any better than anyone else, and you better be standing by ready to protect those who don't have what you do, be it the color of your skin or whatever, but make sure they are treated equally and somehow figure it out. Figure out how [pause] because it's [pause] it's wrong! It's wrong. It's basically wrong to, you know separate people by the color of their skin and they think that one race is inferior, superior to the other because of the color of the skin. Oh, that's so wrong [192].

Very comfortable. You look around that's really what you see is a lot of Caucasians. I think that's not only SRU but in the community. We're real bland I would say [...]. You just feel safe. What you see is others that look like you that probably have very similar upbringings, that probably don't challenge you or make you think outside of the box very much about your thoughts and actions [676-677].

These comments by Jack and Olivia respectively illustrate the problematic nature of their conceptions of their whiteness. Jack's genuine reflection about how good it feels to be white, followed by an unapologetic stance for his unearned privilege feels troubling as he tried to describe how his upbringing taught him to use his privilege on behalf of those who are oppressed. This faulty logic presupposes that white people will use privilege to create equality, a concept that to date has virtually no supporting evidence. Rather than advocating racial equality, this position suggests that like Reganomics, those who are oppressed can simply wait for resources and privileges to

trickle down to them. Not only is this position deeply disparaging (a framework that is inherently inequitable since those without will only receive resources that trickle to them from the privileged group) but it simply doesn't work (Feagin, 2012). Those with power and privileges (racial or otherwise) are often working in opposition to those who are oppressed, so as to protect their social position, access to resources, and financial wealth. This is where the argument for a meritocracy is so powerful, since the racial narrative seeks to disguise white privilege in the name of hard work enabling success in life, while the white racial frame labels people of color as lazy (Feagin 2008).

Further, Jack's treatise that white people need to "figure it out," fails to acknowledge the role that white people have played in creating and maintaining systems of oppression, as if the racist society we have was an accident and that some effort on identifying the problem will yield a solution. By every account, white people have created the framework for American society (including the laws and governance structure), so in practical terms, white people not only figured it out, but they created it (Moore, 2007). From a systems-thinking approach, the inequities that are seen in society are a result of the faulty system which has enabled these inequities to exist and flourish.

Finally, Jack's oversimplification of the problem as "separating people by the color of their skin," describes the most basic, elementary, surface-level understanding of race issues. Operating within this conception of the problem, it might be argued race issues were resolved following efforts to desegregate in the 1960s. Importantly, none of the administrators of color in this study claimed to be separated by the color of their

skin. Rather, the racism is part of a formal and informal structure that many times absents race on the surface to create tacit hostile encounters for people of color.

Olivia's brutally honest comment classifies the white space at SRU as normal, bland, safe, and unchallenged. In so doing, Olivia reinforces some of the central tenets of white space, including normalizing the way that many of the people in the SRU community were raised in a very similar environment, and most importantly how this white space is a safe space. This commentary helps describe the ways that residential segregation operates by normalizing a white space and classifying those elements that do not conform to the white standards as unsafe. When the environment is sustained in this way, the standards of normalcy are woven into the ways that people think, making it very difficult for anything new or different to penetrate this environment. Importantly, as Olivia described, the environment at SRU is an extension of the community meaning that these white norms penetrate both the personal and professional context in the greater SRU region.

The coexistence of the recognition of white privilege and the problematic racial perspective among white administrators at SRU should create a dissonance that enables those with advanced training and understanding to teach those without and form a collective understanding of what it means to be white. However, as will be discussed throughout the rest of this chapter, this has not been the case at SRU, and further, the ability to articulate privileges of whiteness does not always translate into actions that support racial justice.

Shifting Context. Interestingly, when I queried white respondents about their experience of being white in society and at SRU, many respondents also took the time to share with me experiences from their childhood that helped shape their understanding of self and race. The implication of reaching back for these stories from their childhood (when the question was about their experience of being white broadly speaking and at SRU) is nonetheless telling. This technique allows for the respondent to not answer a question that might be uncomfortable in favor of a story that feels far more comfortable and safe. In many of these moments participants again described themselves in ways that would frame them as open-minded and focused on equality for all people. I believe in their minds, the logical extension then means that they are good people doing good work at SRU. This technique was utilized in important ways by several respondents, each illustrating some seminal experience from their childhood. For example, Sally described how when she was four years old she told her parents that she had a boyfriend who was Black, but that she could not marry him because he was Black.

“And so we did have conversations early on about that’s not how we feel, that’s not, those are not things that we believe in.” So, because of my upbringing, because you know my parents were really liberal, fourth or fifth generation Democrat, that I’ve always thought, I’ve always tried to be an advocate, ally.” [444].

In this story, Sally framed her experience in a way that clearly communicates that she is a person who stands for equality and how her upbringing facilitated this commitment to serving as an ally for the underrepresented, even invoking her great-

great-grandparents (while the implication of being a democrat in the contemporary south is very different than it was four generations ago, the point that Sally attempted to make is that her family has a longstanding commitment to equity). Similarly, John described his childhood and how his experience growing up facilitated opportunities for the development of an equity frame.

I reflect on an experience, I was maybe four or five and living in [the Midwest] and I think I said something, I can't remember exactly my words but I remember my Dad, um, really instilling in us from a very early age that we were no better than anybody else. And, um, I lived in [the Midwest] at a time and on the corner of the neighborhood where I could look across the street and see [pause] houses that looked like mine but they were filled with Black people, and, I looked back all of our houses were full of white people. I remember our neighbors, and I was six, seven, and eight in this neighborhood. I remember all of my friends in the white neighborhood who I would go to school [with], were not allowed to go to that [neighborhood]. I mean we're just talking about a street, [they] were not allowed across the street and go to the grocery store, or go to that area. And, I would go there all the time and, and play there all the time. And, our babysitters came out of that area, and so, um, it was, it was a lot of modeling that I think of my own parents [pause]. I went to Unitarian Churches where from an early age, where issues of social justice were also very prominent in those places [pause]. So, this is you know why I'm in student affairs, I'm also, I feel like I'm making some, um, influencing some things that I feel strongly about." [165/166].

John's narrative appears to be in the same vein as Sally's in describing how his childhood helped to foster a sense of social justice and equality which has permeated both his personal and work life. Interestingly, John's narrative illustrates the contradictory nature of being white and an alleged social justice advocate. On one hand John described how his family lived in a segregated environment, noting the houses "full of Black people" and illustrated the prevailing social norms of his neighborhood that forbade his friends from going into the Black environments (it is unclear if John as also forbidden, but based on the fact that he is illustrating his parent's commitment to social justice, I will assume that he was not), which are inconsistent with social justice. On the other hand, John also recalled being told that he was no better than anyone else and noted the people of color who served as his caretaker. Importantly, while John certainly is citing his caretaker of color as an example of how his parents were open-minded, particularly in the face of this segregated environment, it is unclear how this person of color was actually treated. There are plenty of examples of people of color assuming childcare responsibilities in white households in this era (1950s – 1960s, presumably) where their presence did not represent a statement of a commitment to equity, but in fact recall images of slaves and Black people in the antebellum south assuming the only work they could find serving at the feet of the bourgeois white family in a childcare capacity. These competing interests frame race in a way that is difficult to understand, likely even more so for a child. John who appeared to break the social norms by going into these neighborhoods "all the time" is narrating himself as a progressive child. While the nature of the interactions in these Black neighborhoods is unclear, what is

clear is that John is illustrating how his very early formative years provided him with experiences that helped him understand the nature of racial privilege.

Jack was also able to clearly recall the segregated environments that characterized his experiences throughout his youth and early adult life.

Well, I think you gotta start back as a youth, you know in my youth to be white you know. I grew up in the south in a small, little town not far from here. But, I remember as a youth, what I remember about being white was when I was white and we went into a restaurant, we had a section that we sat in, okay, and it was different than the Black people. And we went to the movie, we sat down at the bottom and the Black people sat up in the balcony, in the back. I even remember drinking fountains, white drinking fountains [motions separate with hands], Black drinking fountains, and things. As a young kid who grew up and then moved on to a little bit bigger town and then that kind of started to go away. But as a white kid in high school, I remember we played the Black school because the Blacks and whites didn't go to school together, you know, they had a Black high school and a white high school. [181].

And, so then I go into the military, okay. So, I've been pretty segregated, but I haven't, but I have, I think my faith and my church, you know as I grew up I was a Catholic, Catholic schools most of the time. We were taught to respect, you know and be inclusive of other people. There wasn't this hard prejudice thing, I mean I was buffered with the nuns and the priests and stuff. So, I think my

background, my family, my mother was a nurse, my father was an engineer and so I wasn't, I didn't grow up in the redneck South, you know, where I had this burned prejudice that was passed down. But still, I had very little, you know, interface with people of color until I went into the military [183].

Jack's memories of the segregated south, including the well-documented spaces of intensely maintained segregation: restaurants, theatres, schools, and even water fountains are powerful revelations. While Jack admits that he had very little exposure to people of color until he was an adult, he still believed that his upbringing fostered a sense of equity (particularly because of his religion and family). This is striking because almost by definition, living in a highly segregated environment means that there is not a commitment to equity, otherwise there would be people of color with equal access to facilities and spaces. Jack framed his experiences as separate from the "redneck South," and those with a "burned prejudice," which again shows how white people, regardless of their experiences often seek to separate themselves from the perception of racism, despite strong evidence to the contrary. For example, in his book *Decision Points*, George Bush described an all-time low for him was being called a racist (a reaction to his response to hurricane Katrina), which seeks to obscure his absolutely abject response to people of color in need from that crisis. In this clever tactic, Bush is claiming a marginal space (being called a racist) while failing to acknowledge his role in killing many people of color (deploying a racist project). In the present case, Jack utilized an unsavory caricature of a "redneck" with "burned prejudice" as the embodiment of racism

from which he could separate himself, drawing on the influence of his highly educated parents and priests and nuns.

In each of these descriptions, white administrators attempted to frame themselves as egalitarians whose experiences helped frame their understanding of race, however, what might be equally important was what was *not said*. There was not a reflection on how it felt to be to be white, how it felt to have better facilities, better access, and to always be served. In the following two comments, Jack is still describing events from the past, but also conveys some acknowledgement of how the events he was witnessing may be racist. For this first comment, it is important to remember that Jack attended SRU as an undergraduate many years ago.

[At SRU] very few students were Black either, so it was almost a segregated environment then. But it was a shock to me, because one [pause] my senior year I was [pause] I don't think it was my senior year, or somewhere in there, I was down on the field for a football game. But we stood there and it was the first Black guy who had ever played football at SRU, and his name was [name withheld] and he was from [a conference school]. And you could just hear up in the stands, you know, the comments: what the heck, [respondent simulated the noise that would be audible from a crowd of people yelling obscenities, but many words were incomprehensible until the end] "nigger running around on the field, what this world coming to?" You know, that we were just going "holy smokes," you know. I mean, and that was, an awakening to me. Gosh. You know that

was the first time a Black guy was playing at SRU, you know [said in a deeply hushed tone] [182].

Then in 1978, I get a set of orders to Jackson, Mississippi. *Absolutely*, the most prejudiced place I had ever seen in my life. I show up there and I am the advisor to a Marine Corps reserve unit, of which 95% were Black. Great Marines. I mean, willing to learn, willing to train. But to go out and try to recruit, and then go around. We used to go bury people, burial details for young Marines who were killed or died. I would take my eight active-duty Marines, and we would go out and get the body, go out to the church to do the burial details. And I would have people who would come up to me and say “Now General, you’re not going to let that Nigger come into this church, are you? The only Black people that come into this church are the ones that clean it.” And I would come home, that this was 1979 and 1980. I would come home to my wife and say “now where is this?” I would drive from my office in Jackson, Mississippi and have Ku Klux Klan guys in sheets handing out information. Now this was 1980, so I’m going “Oh my gosh, man, we haven’t made that much progress here. You know, this is *weird*.” But that was pretty much only in Mississippi, you know, back then.” [187].

These comments describe the white space of the past, but with the benefit of hindsight to reflect on the problematic nature of these blatantly racist spaces and interactions. Importantly, Jack described these experiences as if he was a reporter

simply reporting on what happened, not really reading feelings, judgment, or emotions in these experiences. In so doing, there was neither an acknowledgement of the problematic nature of what he experienced, nor a description of how his experiences are of a product of his whiteness. The places where Jack provided some commentary on the racist spaces and interactions are so minor that they are easily missed: the *surprise* at the fact that he was witnessing the first Black person play football at SRU; classifying the space in which he lives as *weird*, after witnessing KKK members, and interacting with a racist person who overtly disrespected his Black peers that Jack himself characterized as “great Marines.” What is perhaps most disturbing is that Jack failed to express disapproval, anger, disappointment, or even the slightest bit of discontent in these spaces. The tacit acceptance of these blatantly racist white spaces as the norm is unmistakable. This acceptance is further illustrated by the comfort with which Jack used the word “nigger.” In most situations, white people shy away from using this word, even when they are quoting someone else from the past. Many times something like “n-word” is used as an acknowledgement of the pain associated with that word. That Jack used the word not once but twice, again, with seemingly no regard of the power that this singular word has, is instructive.

Also noteworthy, Jack relied on a framework of exceptionalism in describing this story, when in this last statement he said “But that was pretty much only in Mississippi, you know, back then.” In this way, Jack tries to separate himself and his experiences (both prior to, and after his time in Mississippi) from the abject racism that he experienced in that time and space. This strategy of isolation and separation

contextually binds the racism he witnessed, rather than acknowledging the pervasive way in which racism and disparate outcomes for people of color continue as the norm in all of American society.

Madeline, who is also from the south and a similar age to Jack, also described her experience as a child but much more abruptly and seemingly a little more taken aback by the question.

Well, you know what? How does it feel? I mean it feels fine. It feels comfortable. It's who I am, so I've never really thought about 'am I comfortable being who I am' in that regard, but I do know that even from the time I was a very small child, and I witnessed a lot of discrimination, I never felt comfortable with it – ever. I could never make sense out of how people were treated differently just because of how they were born. It never made sense to me then. It doesn't make sense to me now [818].

Madeline's comportment and words spoke a great deal. Her defensiveness was obvious in person, with the look on her face that appeared a little surprised, then a verbal response which felt to me like an adult disciplining a child for stepping out of line. In her response Madeline alluded to never having considered her race when she referred to being white as "It's who I am, so I've never really thought about 'am I comfortable being who I am' in that regard." Ironically, her comfort-level becomes the source of discomfort since she appears unapologetic about never having considered her race. That her very next sentence went on to describe how she witnessed a lot of discrimination but was never comfortable is important. In this comment she is acknowledging that she has

seen the oppression of people of color but never stopped to consider that she is comfortable and not being oppressed. In this very short statement, Madeline described some of the difficulties of maintaining the white racial frame in American society where there is an emphasis from an early age on not recognizing disparate treatment and rather just justifying the inequalities as normal.

Sally, John, Jack, and Madeline's comments were highlighted here, but there are other similar stories from other respondents. Each of these is important in that they describe what it is like to be white by describing experiences from their youth. As a reminder, the question that they were responding to was: tell me about how it feels to be white at SRU and in society in general. By not actually answering that question that was asked, these white administrators are employing a tactic to answer the question they would like to answer, which based on the responses seems to be: tell me how you became aware of race and how you developed a egalitarian mindset. There is a lot to consider when thinking about the power and privileges that these administrators have at SRU and society. These white administrators dodged the question with no compunction and took the time to frame a narrative in the way that they want to portray themselves.

Locating White Space at SRU

In most interviews, it took multiple attempts with questions about the experience of being white at SRU before respondents either understood the question or felt comfortable in answering the question. White administrators often struggled to point to any example. For example, John struggled mightily to describe any examples of spaces where white people have advantages and privileges within the institution. We ended up

tabling those questions so he could think about them, but when we returned to that line of questions he still did not have any answers and instead had to rely on examples of religious, gender, socio-economic, and sexual orientation as spaces where one group has privilege over another. Finally, seemingly a little embarrassed that he could not think of a single example, John took an unusual and difficult to interpret stance.

I think a lack of appreciation for our [white] race. I think that as a group we have not really, there is very little study, there is very little support, there's very little emergence of what it means to be white, unlike other groups in our society, racial groups. There seems to be a, because of their journey, there was a need to congregate, solidify, get power in numbers, and what came with that, I think, was a lot of pride, so there is not a whole lot of that nor is there a lot of conversation among other members of my racial group: what it means to be white [128].

John's comment is difficult to understand and effectively interpret because at first it sounds like a manifesto that might be found in white supremacist literature, but as he continues to talk he at least acknowledges that the collective need to congregate and form strong racial identities was born of the social realities (although white people were the unacknowledged propagator of those social realities for people of color). However, what John has failed to recognize is that there is a robust literature that describes what it means to be white, it's just that this literature is not framed similarly to those groups that have been oppressed by whiteness. Instead, the literature about whiteness is critical. It appears that John seeks literature that empowers him as a white male. It is worth pointing out that at the start of the interview with John he self-described himself as a

social justice advocate who is trained in “prejudice reduction,” which is cringe-worthy because as the name indicates, it may not be intended to truly liberate or overturn racist structures; rather, the goal appears to be to *reduce* the prejudice that is expressed and presumably received by people of color.

In John’s example, he has inadvertently named a white space in his failure to name any white spaces. The invisibility of whiteness and inability to see how race impacts the environment is a location that is distinguished from the experience of whiteness as described by the administrators of color. This theme offers data that white administrators discussed as potentially white spaces at SRU, when they could put their finger on these experiences, but when they were able to point to an example, they were often inconspicuous by comparison to those examples provided by administrators of color.

The Unique SRU Experience. As described in the introduction, SRU has rituals that remain part of the culture at SRU and also exist as an enduring legacy of what it means to be a Roughneck. Because of that long history, there have been many generations at SRU where things were always done the same way for no other reason than ‘it’s always been done that way.’ This sort of mindset ensures as part of the legacy of racism and other types of oppression are part of the culture by default, since “it’s always been done that way.” Change typically only occurs in the face of a crisis in this type of institution. Since Jack is an alumnus of SRU, he was able to share a peek into the foundation for race established a generation ago: “I told you, when I was here, diversity was [pause] a lot of guys with short hair running around this campus screaming

at each other, cowboys with a big bulge of Copenhagen cans in their back pocket, and two or three girls [laughing]. That was our diversity,” [205]. Since SRU started out as an all-male institution, in a rural, southern environment, it is not surprising to hear this description, and while progress has been made, there are still many remnants of the mindset that persist from the ‘good old days’ of the institution, which Sally referenced.

Um, I think, and not just here, but I think at other institutions there is this ‘oh, in the glory days,’ people really play up what their experience was like here, you know. ‘Oh, but it was so great when we did this, or so great when we did that.’ Well really? Was it? Or are you just, over the years you are living on this memory that didn’t even happen now, you know [490].

As a result, the over-romanticized version of the institution (which may or may not have ever existed) becomes an ideal to which alumni and long-serving faculty and staff strive to achieve. This mentality can amount to an organizational learning disability, since decision makers are not focused on the present and future and instead are beholden to ‘the ways we’ve always done things.’ The implications for race from within this organizational paradigm are clear: we are not progressive and not willing now to change to meet the needs of people of color. Frozen in this idea-time capsule are the views of race from a generation gone, which almost by definition, are problematic. For example, at SRU, Black students were not allowed to attend until the 1960’s, well within the lifetime of many of the current administrators, faculty, and staff, meaning that the “good ‘ol days,” were only really only good for white people.

Interestingly, nearly all of the white administrators described how SRU has made significant progress from the early days of the institution, often referencing the history as a single gender, single race⁵ institution. Sally was one such administrator, who after describing the history of SRU, quipped “I wish that there was a, you know, do-over, [laughing], [489].” The implication of this comment is a sentiment that was reiterated by many: it’s much better now than it was. While it is absolutely true that SRU and the nation have advanced beyond slavery relative to race relations, it is also undeniable that people of color continue to suffer in Jim Crow-like hostilities, discrimination, and disparities that inhibit the ability of people of color to achieve parity in income, housing, health, education, employment, etc. To suggest that a ‘do-over’ given the nature of whiteness and white space would do anything short of produce the same conditions that currently exist is somewhat Pollyanna. There would need a fundamental restructuring of the entire American society, one built on true equality, before any sort of ‘do-over’ would amount to a substantive change in education, particularly at SRU where issues of race are so deeply engrained.

Sally went on to describe the location of white space from within the context of the student experience (note, her work is primarily with students) and focused attention on the rituals and sporting events (which in many instances are intertwined) that are deeply embedded into the student experience.

⁵ Hispanic students were documented at SRU from the earliest days of the institution; however at that time Hispanic people were often classified as white, including on official state documentation such as birth certificates.

Um, thinking about the pep rally, okay, if you want to go cheer on for the football team, I think that's kind of cool, you know, everybody comes together, but what are the stories that the cheerleaders are saying? [...] You could get everyone excited, but do they have to degrade another group, another, you know, or play on stereotypes? I don't think you have to do that [493].

I'm thinking about [pause] I think a lot of the sporting events, and [pause] particularly game day. I had a conversation with another director, white female, and we were talking about game day [at SRU]. She said 'that's a very white experience.' Then we started really talking about it, and it is, and I think before I hadn't really thought about it, but if you look, mostly white people, because there are a lot of alumni coming back and if you think about who alumni were [pause] now, not in the last [pause], I might even say 40 years. I was going to say 25 years, but before that, all white. Um, so I think that's a place of, you know, of white privilege that happens [462].

So, to try to alter rituals or change rituals, it's like blasphemy here sometimes. Um, and then you have some people that went with the approach of 'all rituals are bad, you need to get rid of everything.' Well, then that just pisses this side [alumni] off, you know. So, I am a, personally of the mindset of 'okay, there are some really great things about a lot of the rituals.' [...]. Now, I think that's probably more of a white experience, but I just think how special it is that you

take time to honor the students [ritual redacted]. I don't know of many institutions that do that, if any. So, a time honored ritual, absolutely, I don't know what you do to change that particularly [pause] [491].

Each of these examples that Sally provided refers to aspects of the student experience relative to race at SRU. What each of these descriptions has in common is that they describe a white space that exists at SRU, which is helpful. However, they also have in common that they lack any sort of critical understanding which describes their problematic nature or connection to a larger racialized system or discourse: why students, faculty, staff, or alumni of color might be marginalized by these experiences, or how they serve to create hostile spaces for people of color. Are these seemingly minor events connected to a larger narrative of a racist environment that persists historically at SRU? If so, Sally fails to acknowledge how that actually happens (is that through administrators like Jack who have a long history at SRU or through some other tactic?). Sally's ability to at least name white spaces that exist on campus actually is better than many of the other respondents who failed to even do that, but knowing that they exist and actually doing something about it are two very different things.

For example, if Sally were to become aware of a huge sink hole on campus that people were falling into and getting hurt, surely she would do something about it: call the authorities, rope off the area, put up warning signs, call the radio station to make sure that the entire community know about the danger, maybe try to understand where the safe areas are and create opportunities for people to get to those safe areas - any or all of which would be appropriate. To extend the analogy to Sally's understanding of

whiteness, it would be as if she was aware of the sinkhole and the location, but only talked about the issue with a very few other people (who also know about the sinkhole), in the meantime she knows people are and will be getting hurt. Her rationale could well be: I mean after all, how could one person fight the forces of nature? This attitude amounts to willful neglect and endangers the safety of many. Similarly, Sally's lack of investigation of the issues, lack of understanding of how environments are created and maintained to subjugate people, and disregard for the people she knows are being hurt is a dereliction of her responsibility as a person charged with doing diversity education work.

Sally also discussed issues related to the experiences for people as they enter the SRU off-campus community. It should be noted that there were examples from several of the administrators of color that described their experiences in the community as an extension of the treatment that they received on campus (many times even worse off campus with explicit racial epithets). However, Sally's descriptions illustrated a lack of understanding of the realities that people of color live with in the SRU community.

Ummm [pause]. I'm going outside of the university a little bit and kind of into the community, but I think about places to eat, the kind of music that's around, the, those are very basic things that you kind of notice right off. There's lots of country bands, that's not to say [laughing], I know that there are African Americans and Hispanic, and Asian Americans that listen to country music, but it's also pretty white music [461].

The music, food, and nightlife that are available in nearly any community in the country in the information age that we exist within are not a surprise to anyone who is curious about understanding that context. Again, at least naming these sorts of white experiences is helpful, but does not rise to the level of significance documented by the administrators of color. Presumably, people of color can get on the internet to gain an understanding of the restaurants in town and the types of bands that come through; what they can't simply investigate on the internet is how it feels to be a person of color in that community. Sally's superficial understanding of the race issues cripples her ability to *do* anything to remediate the situations and circumstances that people of color experience at SRU and in the community.

While Sally was able to share a handful of examples regarding where whiteness is located at SRU, a couple of other respondents were able to offer an interesting insight regarding the context for white space at SRU.

Well, I just wonder if it's at the root of all of us or if it's [discomfort in engaging race] something we grew up with? You come to this very white place and most of us, a lot of times aren't challenged. I think it depends on how you were raised. So therefore, it's at all levels of the organization because you come here and you work your way up. We're very inbred here, as you might imagine. Although I think we're getting better. Yeah, I think we're very inbred here. Well, and certainly the faculty help us. At least the faculty, especially as they become deans, and I think of upper level administrators. That sort of helps, but my boss grew up here, I grew up here, the [other executive] is from [close metropolitan

area]. So when you look, I think on the non-faculty administrator side, I just think it's how we were raised. We are what we were raised to be [716].

Olivia's reflection is ominous and insightful. Her observation that many of the white people at SRU are not "challenged," seems to suggest that she acknowledges that white people live with a great deal more privilege than people of color, who presumably are challenged by the environment. In her musing on the topic she wondered aloud if white administrator's discomfort in engaging race issues was at the core of who people are or if it's how people are raised. She quickly concluded that it must be how people are raised, which means that Olivia understands on some simple level the socially constructed nature of the racist environments that have been created. The idea that "we are what we are raised to be," seems to suggest that the racism that is seen and practiced has been taught by parents, teachers, clergy, etc. This is an important revelation for a person who does not deal with the social sciences and appears to be relatively unsophisticated in several other areas of the interview.

Two other important points to consider based on her comment: first, the reiteration that SRU is an inbred institution suggests that it is exceedingly difficult to change things at SRU, since many of the same ideas and ways of doing things are reinforced providing few, if any, alternative perspectives or ways to improve, particularly when it comes to race issues. This helps explain, in a small way, the racial animosity at SRU: the white administrators who have been inbred appear to be operating from a frame that was born of Jim Crow, segregation, and southern racism. Certainly,

this is only a piece of the picture, but a unique perspective to SRU which perhaps explains some of the vitriol.

Second, the burden of shifting/changing the institution to a more egalitarian space is not on the actual decision maker's agenda. In Olivia's conception, the decision makers in Olivia's words "we are what we are raised to be," and therefore appear above remediation. Instead, the tremendously difficult task of transforming the institution falls to those who are new to the institution and have the least amount of power to facilitate and effect change. To place your faith in this structure where the people with the greatest ability to effect change through decisions, policy, practices, programmatic interventions, etc. are allowed to continue to reinforce racist norms, meanwhile those with the least amount of power (and perhaps the heaviest workload when you consider the rigors of the tenure track at a research university) will have to change the institution is simply a fairy tale. It appears that change must occur at all levels of the organization, including the top-level administrators, the tenured faculty, the new tenure-track faculty, staff, and students.

Travel as a Credential. Unexpectedly, a couple of the white administrators discussed their travel abroad as an opportunity to frame their understanding of race and demonstrate an egalitarian mindset.

I would say [pause] obviously, I don't know that I feel bad about it [being white] because obviously I strive to travel and experience other things. I'm not sure I feel good about it. So, I don't know what the word is that I feel. It's not good and it's not bad. It's just maybe not very [pause] challenged or enlightened. I

look at my sister who grew up here [in the SRU community] and has lived here almost all of her life and for her going on vacation is going to the lake. To me that is just so depressing because it's the same thing. She gets no other exposure. So, I don't know. I guess I crave that exposure, that difference. [678].

Interestingly, Olivia expressed ambivalence in describing how she feels about her racial experience. Since she did seem to acknowledge in some rudimentary way the benefits of being white, this seems to be another unapologetic form of resisting equity (similar to what Jack expressed earlier) and invoking the privilege and opportunity that white people have *to not care*. If this were an issue that was important to her or impacted people that she cared about, then she almost certainly would have a perceptive observation about whiteness and the unearned rewards which she capitalizes upon.

However, like Jack, a justification must accompany this ambivalence toward race, otherwise it would be difficult to maintain an egalitarian narrative. In her comment about not feeling bad, she immediately cited travel and attempts to “experience other things,” as a mitigating circumstance. The implicit assumption is that an attempt to experience a new culture (or “things”) somehow absolves one of the responsibilities of understanding and remediating racial inequality. This idea of traveling appears as a non sequitur and when combined with the undercurrent of judgment of those who do not take the opportunity to travel (a socio-economically privileged judgment), appears problematic.

While, travel does provide the opportunity for exposure to new cultures and ways of life, only a very intentional effort would allow for a genuine learning experience

whereby the realities of inequality are exposed (in which case Olivia likely wouldn't express such ambivalence). As Olivia went on to discuss, the understanding that her travel provided did not illuminate lessons and understanding that furthered her understanding of race or any other underrepresented identity.

It [travel] can be stressful. Because we've traveled enough we're aware that some gestures or maybe words mean different things to different people. So in a way, you kind of have to be cautious and in-tune to others' reactions to what you're doing. So, it really causes you to be [pause] alert to everyone around you. But, I will tell you, I was gonna say at times you feel unsafe. I think I feel unsafe not because of the culture, but maybe because more of what we do is in the big cities, like for instance, we're looking at going to Kenya and I'm fearful about Nairobi but not because I'm gonna go to Africa and see Africans, but because of the big city. So I think there's a difference there [680].

Olivia's description of traveling abroad to Nairobi, a city that Time magazine referred to as the "cosmopolitan hub of East Africa" that is a "malaria-free city of cool evenings and quiet tropical gardens, best enjoyed with a cool Tusker beer," (Perry, 2010) feels a little unfair and racialized. It should be noted that Nairobi is a tourist destination that has petty crime issues that would likely be found in any international city such as London, Paris, or Melbourne, but these latter cities are often assumed safe and are, perhaps not coincidentally, also largely white. Olivia's characterization of her upcoming trip as "stressful" and feeling "unsafe" are interesting since this is a vacation and typically done to relax. Why then would Olivia willingly subject herself (and her

husband) to such an environment (likely at great expense) when it elicits such negative feelings? “[...] I’m fearful about Nairobi but not because I’m gonna go to Africa and see Africans, but because of the big city.” In this comment, she sums up her fear about visiting Nairobi as a fear of the big city, which is as she alluded to, full of Africans. To further problematize this comment, Olivia described one of her purposes of taking this trip as going “to Africa to see Africans.” This is deeply problematic comment casts Africans as exotic, and the idea of *going to see them* portrays them as less than human, as one might describe going to the zoo to see the giraffes and the elephants. Taken together, Olivia’s comments, while meant to illustrate how open-minded she is by traveling abroad to destinations with many people of color further illustrate how deeply she is ensconced in the white racial frame.

Unexpectedly, while describing the white administrative spaces, Olivia was not the only white administrator to cite their travel as a credential for understanding their race. Rick also used his international travel as a way to talk about being white.

I probably didn’t understand [issues of race] that completely until I became internationally active. I came from a suburban background. I’m not from a traditional discipline background, and I grew up in the ’60 and ’70s and so I was at the tail end of all of the overt racial tension, not that there’s not still racial tension, but the overt stuff. So, I was aware of all that, but I grew up as that was part of my environment, but the breadth of the diversity from the international travel really was what has opened my world to the value of that in teaching, research, and service. And, so it’s less about being a white male as it is seeing

how we could be so much better if we were a little bit more diverse and there were fewer white males around [uncomfortable laugh]. And so that's – and my boss, he's traveled abroad an awful lot as well. But that's kind of – it's more about how we're different than where we want us to be [stumbling over words] [807].

In this example, Rick ties his international travel as a catalyst for understanding how having “fewer white males around,” would enable new ways of accomplishing teaching, research, and service. Further, Rick implicates his boss who is a senior-level executive presumably with a great deal of authority. If travel truly did illuminate some deeper level understanding of race, perhaps there would be evidence of this as a stated goal for the unit and perhaps at SRU broadly speaking. Tellingly, this sentiment appears to be only in words, since Rick not only works in a unit at SRU that is notoriously white and male (“pale, male, and stale” as one informant described it), but works in the same unit as Jasmin, whose experiences cited above describe some of the most egregious environments at SRU. Rick's shallow sentiment was not backed with any understanding of the reality of the racial environment, a justification for why “fewer white males” may be appropriate and how travel informed that perspective, or what can/should be done to facilitate a change in the racial demographics of his unit or SRU broadly speaking. The distance between Rick's words and the reality of race at SRU (and in his unit) illustrate a chasm of understanding, a chasm so wide and deep that many people of color are allowed to drown.

Importantly, the use of travel as a credential appears to simply obscure the fact that these administrators are ignorant of the experiences of people of color at SRU and/or are not willing to consider how their own experiences represent a grand departure from the meritocratic ideals that so many value.

Faith Tradition. In an another unexpected sub-theme, religion also surfaced as a space where administrators were willing to discuss the white space at SRU. The role of religion, particularly in the conservative, rural south cannot be overstated (so perhaps this should not be surprising), but that white administrators were willing to invoke religious spaces is still an important revelation.

O: My husband and I go to a funeral or a wedding or whatever. Two things that I can remember from that last time is [pause] I'm not sure which was more uncomfortable: being in a sea of Black or just that it was not my safe, little, Methodist church because it's definitely a different environment. So, I'm really not sure which was more uncomfortable, but I really honestly think it was just the liveliness of the church that was more uncomfortable.

D: That's different.

O: But yeah, we do that kinda stuff.

D: Great.

O: I'm just guessing, but I would bet most of us do because we have Black friends or Hispanic friends. We go to quinceañeras [mispronounced] because my husband works with Hispanic individuals and we and we really have learned to appreciate those. They're quite fun parties [725].

Olivia was quite candid in exploring these issues genuinely with me as the researcher, but in this glimpse into the reality of white thinking there is much to consider. First, there is a context in which Olivia experiences these interactions around race. These situations appear to occur only when they are connected to a religious ceremony (“a funeral or a wedding or whatever” or a quinceañera, which are often connected to a Catholic Mass) so the space is incredibly prescribed including start and finish times, and often a program of events. Even in these religiously based ceremonies that are very predictable, Olivia referred to being uncomfortable and possibly unsafe, which illustrates how whiteness operates to classify all things that are non-white as a dangerous. In her description, Olivia describes the false dichotomy where she considers whether she is more uncomfortable because these ceremonies are non-white or because these are not the “safe” church ceremonies that she has grown accustomed. The likely reality is that these issues are deeply related and inseparable as the element of safety is part and parcel of the white space that characterizes her Methodist church. Building on this, the “liveliness” of the churches of color that Olivia describes feels like both a cliché and a pejorative characterization of a space that is non-white.

As Olivia continued talking, her comments became even more difficult to hear since she fell into the most clichéd statement that a white person can utter in order to demonstrate that they understand race issues: the proclamation that they have friends of color. In this instance, Olivia comes across worse than most who rely on this by stating that like others, she has “Black friends or Hispanic friends.” While I certainly hope that she has a mixed race circle of friends, I hope that these are genuine relationships built

not for the purpose of pointing to people of color as a credential demonstrating her open-minded mentality. The nature of Olivia's interactions with people of color became clear when she described how her husband works with Hispanic people, which was presented almost as a justification for why she would be in these spaces. This does not, however, instill a sense that these are genuine relationships that she has with people of color based on the fact that she said that she attends these ceremonies *because* her husband works with "Hispanic individuals," not because these are her friends or even just part of her social circle. This point is amplified when she mispronounced the name of the celebration (quinceañera), and then went on to claim to have "learned to" appreciate these ceremonies because they are "quite fun parties." At every step of this description, Olivia utilizes language to separate herself from the people of color, with whom she is allegedly socially bonded. Further, these comments feel patronizing and that the people of color in these examples are lucky to have her and her husband in attendance.

Sally also references religious spaces as a way of describing her understanding of whiteness and white spaces.

But if you look at churches, and I'm saying churches, I'm not [laughing] I'm not saying other places of worship, it is specifically Christian churches. Um, so I attend pretty much all white church, you know. Um, and I think that there is networking, you know, there's people that are in different positions across the university and they go to church together and they're in Sunday school or whatever. And I know that the same happens, you know, for some of the African

American churches in the community, um, but obviously, you know if you are white there's a lot more opportunity for some of that networking [482].

By acknowledging that churches are spaces that accrue privileges of whiteness, specifically how networking can be promulgated, Sally demonstrates some knowledge about the way that race operates in ordinary social structures. Further, by naming the problematic behavior, Sally is permitted to feel good about understanding the nature of whiteness. However, by then implicating herself in this problematic behavior (over which she presumably has control), Sally become complicit in this system. Perhaps just as problematically, she goes on draw a comparison to Black churches, which is, as any true social justice advocate would describe, often one of the few spaces that people of color can be supported and affirmed (which is particularly true in the SRU community where people of color have very few non-white spaces). This perspective perfectly describes the difference between an understanding of the issues and actually taking action to disrupt and challenges systems of white supremacy. Sally's refusal to share her race privileges in even a small way like attending a different place of worship (she indicated shortly after this comment that her family had recently changed churches) demonstrates how a white person can be a part-time advocate/ally, when it is convenient and when they do not have to personally sacrifice privileges (since presumably Sally would also miss out of networking with powerful white administrators if she attended a church with people of color).

Advocacy. In explaining her understanding of her whiteness, Sally described a handful of experiences which illustrated both an understanding of the white space at

SRU as well as a lack of understanding of how these factors interact with her personal life.

Hmmm, oh, what I've thought about is beyond just the white privilege, I have always considered myself to be an ally, to be, I'll use the word "advocate." I am a quieter advocate, I'm not a, like, march in the streets, you know, I'm not real loud. But, in the way that I was raised, um, my parents we talked about race kind of early on but more in the sense of like [pause] people that were different than me and that it didn't matter if they had darker skin. We didn't really talk about what it meant to be white or white privilege [443].

In this comment, Sally is acknowledging that she is a “quieter advocate,” which can mean many things but given her position within the university appears to be deeply problematic. By virtue of her job, her role is to advocate on behalf of, and work with those, who do not have a voice. In being a “quieter advocate,” this is a dereliction of her responsibility to work on behalf of those who need an administrator who not only understands the struggle, but can make the experience of the otherwise marginalized, better. Having an administrator like Sally in this leadership role helps describe how whiteness is created and maintained at SRU: by rewarding people who will not raise too many concerns, who will not make trouble, and who are easily controlled.

Further problematizing Sally’s comment, the idea that she has “always” been an advocate and ally, despite never having discussed race issues growing up is interesting. To be an advocate or an ally, there must be a cognizance of a disparity upon which the privileged population is working to ally and advocate. Sally’s comments almost don’t

even fit together because in one breath she indicated that her parents instilled a sense that she was not different than people with darker skin, but then in the very next breath indicated that they did not discuss the nature of white privilege, which means that the conversation was likely hinged on the idea of meritocracy rather than racial justice. In fact drawing on an earlier comment from Sally, she indicated that she has only considered issues of race and being white in recent years (presumably since taking a job that requires that knowledge). Her comment illustrates the convenient, feel-good notion that white people can be an advocate or an ally, despite a lack of substantive knowledge or understanding.

Sally's description of her personal life provides a similar lack of depth in terms of understanding the systemic nature of racism and oppression, problematically, in trying to describe herself as an advocate, she draws on aspects of the white racial frame.

Um, but I do think for me personally and this is just my own kind of personal motto and there is my little quote over here [pointing to a bulletin board next to her computer screen] from Dr. K., he gave us a long time ago. But, you know, I tried to live, I would kind of try to live my life [pause, while she reads the quote] um, "do all the good that you can for all the people you can." And I think about, you know what, what do I know about social environments, about being at the grocery store, about whatever? Is the African American woman who is walking down pushing her cart in the grocery store who may not be dressed [pause] you know, like me, may have sweatpants on, you know, may have a couple of kids, or you know. Are people acknowledging her? I don't know but I'm going to,

like I acknowledge everybody else, but I don't want to be fake "hey Black person, I am a white person," you know because that can happen. So I don't want that to happen, but if I have acknowledged in some way, a smile, a nod, or whatever to the other people that are encountered. But that is very small, but I know that those little things add up to, so that's important for me personally [503].

Again, there is a lot to consider from this story about Sally's personal commitment. By starting her comment with a feel-good quote about doing the most good for the most people, the expectation was set high for her example of doing good. However, the reality of her perception of doing the most good leaves much to be desired. Sally not only relies once again on the same tired grocery store cliché, but also employs a painfully stereotypical caricature of a Black woman, complete with sweatpants and multiple kids in her example. Further, the "most good" that she chose as an illustration was acknowledging people of color in a grocery store. In her words, things like a nod or smile add up and these little gestures are important to *her*, Sally. In addition to likely overestimating the impact of such a trivial interaction (none of the respondents of color reported feeling marginalized because people didn't smile or nod at them), the notion that she engages this work on her terms adds to the problematic nature of this service. Her personal commitment to action is not driven by an important or demonstrated need from people of color, but rather these interactions that are driven by convenience for Sally. Further, the chances that these interactions lead to anything resembling feelings of inclusion or support by people of color are likely virtually nil. Rather than an act of

social justice, these interactions are what any person in the South would expect from another person. As Sally described “I don’t know, but I’m going to, like I acknowledge everybody else, but I don’t want to be fake,” so her service is to treat people of color like she would treat anyone else – in the grocery store. That this even rose to the level of being mentioned in this interview illustrates the pathological ignorance that sadly appears to be shared among white administrators at SRU.

A Critical Perspective. Importantly, locating the white space from the perspective of the only self-described, anti-racist offered a powerful counter-narrative to much of what has been shared by other white administrators. Sean’s interview was unique in that it felt much more like the interviews with administrators of color. In Sean’s interview there was never an uncomfortable shift or nervous twitch as we began discussing race, and there were no pregnant pauses while he tiptoed through his ideas to make sure he wasn’t saying anything that might be considered racist. His words and ideas flowed and felt like he could have talked to me all day about his experiences and knowledge of the subject.

Well, I think there’s a substantial white-skin privilege that happens in our society without people’s conscious attention to it. I think it’s literally built into the nature of reality itself. I see reality as a social construction; it’s not like I see you in a neutral way. I see you through lots of lenses. Right? I think that in that social construction that we all live inside, that white-skin privilege is implicit – and whiteness – white cultural dominance is built into that so that it’s in the

building blocks. It doesn't have to so much be something we see; it's in the building blocks [729].

We've had some experiences in the department that, particularly for undergraduate classes, that they've resisted faculty of color, or been more critical or more difficult with them. So, is there – are there major problems of racism at SRU way beyond what gets talked about or dealt with? Yes [736].

In terms of locating the white space at the institution, Sean's perspective was a scholarly perspective informed through a critical lens. To further illustrate the critical nature of Sean's data, I am going to juxtapose a comment from Sally where she also discusses white space at SRU, but the way in which she does illustrates the white framing that plagued many of the white administrators.

And then within this University, um, again I see there's a lot of white privilege that happens within this university, I think that's where you know [there is] a microcosm of the larger society. So, I don't think there is [pause] it may happen more because [nervous giggle] there are more people that would identify as white here, or could pass as white, um, what was I going to say? [442].

When comparing Sean and Sally's comments, there are a couple of important differences that emerge. First, Sally's acknowledgement of white privilege is qualified with a comparison to the broader society, which serves as a justification for why it happens more at SRU – because of the huge population of white people at SRU. A critically-minded person likely would have pointed to the huge number of white people

at SRU as *evidence* of white privilege, rather than a *justification* for why white privilege on campus may feel the way it does.

Second, Sally seems to implicate people of color who can pass as white as complicit with white privilege. While it has been documented that people of color who are able to pass as white are able to, at times, benefit from some privileges of whiteness, this is not the same as white privilege. In my interview with Maria (an administrator of color who described her race as somewhat ambiguous), she discussed the difficulty of having to navigate conversations with white people. In several situations she surprised white people when she disclosed her race in the wake of racist language and comments.

But whiteness is much more than color, and I think until they [white people] get to know me, I surprise them. I think having [pause] having them see me that way [as white] presents some interesting dilemmas, because I think for some people it makes them see me as an ally of sorts and once they start talking to me they say things that, to me, that are highly offensive or inappropriate and they get checked on those things. Then, all of a sudden I'm somebody totally different and am treated differently. So, I think on some level there is absolutely a [pause] a kind of privilege and door opening that occurs for me, but, but it quickly shifts when people know a little bit about who I am [3].

Maria's experience describes an important way in which whiteness operates. Since Maria's phenotype allows her to enter some white spaces she is able to witness firsthand how white people exchange information about race in race exclusive environments (which Picca and Feagin described as *backstage racism*). The concept of

the backstage helps to illustrate the fluidity of race and the implications for privilege. In Maria's example, there was a privilege for being assumed white, but this privilege in some ways comes with a heavy toll as well, since she will have to undergo the intellectual and emotional rollercoaster of hearing racist comments, then have to decide if she has the emotional capital to engage a conversation. Again, Sally's understanding of these issues appears to be somewhat stronger than many of the other white administrators, but is still terribly insufficient for effecting equitable spaces.

Taken together, the data in this category describes much misguided and unfounded understandings of race broadly speaking, which has led to problematic conceptions of what it means to be white. As part of the broader narrative in America, there is a disturbing trend whereby all knowledge about race is presumed to be subjective and not truly have an empirical foundation upon which realities of race can be exposed and understood. It would be as if I declared myself an auto mechanic since I have driven a car for many years and opened a business repairing cars without any other training or credentials. The misguided ways in which race is understood is propagated by white people who lack an understanding of the literature and social networks that could inform an understanding of the realities of race. However, unlike the valuable automobiles that are largely protected by the law (since as a mechanic, I would need several training certificates and licenses), there is not any compulsion to understand race. Instead, when it comes to issues of race we continue to operate with an understanding that was informed through by colonial slave masters. In a short video called *Girl Like Me*, there is a dramatic recreation of the doll study which (originally conducted by

Kenneth Clark) where the researcher asks young Black children questions about race through the use of dolls. This video and study demonstrate clearly that four and five year old children have already internalized deeply racist and problematic understandings of what it means to be Black, informed through the white racial frame. This white racial frame is literally killing people. If the stress, hypertension, diabetes, breast cancer, infant mortality, thrombosis, or other documented health disparities doesn't get people of color, it may very well be the law enforcement officer who has license as judge, jury, and executioner, and who shares these problematic, preconceived notions of race and what it means to be a person of color.

Protecting and Maintaining the White Space

The perspectives shared by many of the white respondents reflected ideas and values that often reinforce (explicitly or implicitly) the racist environment that people of color are forced to endure on campus. In all likelihood, none of the white administrators would describe their actions as tactics which create a hostile racial environment; however, the implications of their documented perspectives undergirds and confirms an administrative racial hegemony. In one of my Sociology classes, someone contributed the idea that white people have to engage in mental gymnastics to make the logical leaps that allow them to believe that we live in a meritocratic society or that explicitly racist actions are not racist because they were not *intended* to be racist. Building on this analogy, this category documents cognitive maneuvers and tactics utilized by white administrators with the impact of reinforcing white space at SRU.

Claims of Racial Equality

This theme is relatively large and has been broken into many sub-themes because of the volume and type of data that emerged. Claims of racial equality are not new, in fact they have been a permanent fixture in conversations about race for many years, as Bonilla Silva discussed in *Racism without Racists*. The data in this theme extends some of these arguments and demonstrates how white administrators at SRU apply this frame pragmatically.

Minimization. As a common white tactic, minimization operates by demoting the importance of race and racism typically supported by the belief that all people are treated equally, which almost always without the corroborating evidence to substantiate such a claim (Bonilla Siva, 2003). Critical race scholar Joe Feagin describes this as a privilege of whiteness, having the ability to assign the experience for another group. Relative to whiteness, this occurs when white people describe the experience as equitable, or claim that everyone is treated the same.

Madeline's comments provided many examples of minimization, and one of those comments will be discussed in this section, while another will be discussed in a later theme (*Blissful Ignorance: "I don't know, but..."*). In this example, Madeline was describing how in her discipline there are very few leaders of color nationally and how that is not a function of how they are treated, since they are treated very well.

M: We have a lot of examples of successes [in her discipline]. One of my dear friends, who was on the faculty [at another southern institution] with me is a Black professor and he's now an executive leader [at a western institution] and

doing a wonderful job. So, actually, of the many schools there are three Black [executive administrators equivalent to Madeline]. One just stepped down and went on to something else, but there were three male Black leaders. Three of several dozen. They're highly regarded. They're very well-respected and we're just so happy about that. They're just wonderful people and they ought to be so, why do we even have to say they are? But they did an excellent job. They still are. Two of them are still in place and they're doing a wonderful job, and I detect *no* [emphasis from respondent] problem in that environment. *None* [emphasis from respondent].

D: In the executive [interrupted]

M: As the executive leaders they are treated like everyone else. I mean I detect absolutely no difference in treatment, none, or in regard or opinion or anything because it's great [844].

The confidence and approach taken by Madeline underscores her ability to not only name the experience and reality of people of color, but appears to be patriarchal in nature since she is not only judging these individuals (despite only knowing one of them) as people ("they're just wonderful people") and in their job performance, for which it would likely be impossible for Madeline to really judge ("they're doing a wonderful job"). Further underscoring the patriarchy is her comment: "they're very well-respected and we're just so happy about that. They're just wonderful people and they ought to be so, why do we even have to say they are?"

Who is “just so happy?” This comment feels as though the rest of the white administrators in the field are judging these Black administrators, and judged based on meeting a white standard (“they’re just wonderful people,”). Importantly, Madeline questions out loud, why does she even have to indicate that they are wonderful people? The reason that perhaps Madeline is not ready to acknowledge is that the white space in higher education dictates such – a person of color in an executive leadership position at a university would have to be exceptional and wonderful because this is a departure from the master narrative of people of color being a threat, lazy, and angry.

Equally important was Madeline’s assessment of the experience of each of these Black administrators. Again, this was emphatically reiterated, multiple times, underscored by the comment that “they are treated like everyone else.” While this very well may be true, it does seem difficult to believe on two grounds: first, Madeline went through the trouble to describe how she knew only one of these executives previously. It would stand to reason that if she knew the others, she would also share those stories. Madeline’s suggestion that she does not detect any problems as a data-point seems difficult to reliably make any rational claims of equality. What are her interactions with these individuals and how can she say for certain? What I know from my interviews with administrators of color is that many of them are uncomfortable sharing the realities of their racialized experiences with white colleagues since so few of them are able to understand. For example, as Madeline pointed out, one of the three Black executives left his position and “went on to something else.” Given the amount of time and energy that it takes to rise to one of these positions it feels difficult to believe that an accomplished

scholar would just one day walk away without cause. So as an external observer, for Madeline to so aggressively assert a narrative of equality appears to be an example of a white administrator invoking their whiteness to describe the experience for a person of color. It would have been interesting to ask Madeline what the experience has been for the dozens of presumably white executives. Is she conversant with the experiences of all of the executives in her field or just that of the people of color? If it is just the executives of color, this again feels patriarchal, like the white executives are checking in on the executives of color.

Second, also problematic is the idea that these Black executives are “treated like everyone else.” This comment represents a deeply normative statement. Who constitutes “everyone else?” All other people of color? Based on the existing data, this is not a noteworthy achievement. All other people in the unit where they work? If this is the case, it is also problematic because as an executive there is often a heightened level of decorum required. Certainly the data described by Jasmin from the first part of this chapter describes how white people can demean people of color by not treating them with the same level of respect/authority as white people in the similar positions. Finally, I would make the argument that nobody is treated like everybody else. There is always a context that is important to recognize that dictates the ways in which environments are experienced. For example, military people are often applauded (perhaps rightfully so) in public spaces. Likewise those who are responsible for saving lives including paramedics and firefighters are also valorized and often receive discounts or fringe benefits not

available to others. The idea that everyone is treated the same is a white narrative that illustrates a lack of recognition that racialized experiences are inherently inequitable.

Jack also shared a textbook example of naming the experience for Black people in the military.

But after that, it seemed to really change in the mid-80s, you know, the integration within the military got better, you saw more commanders of color, you saw more, you know people rising up. And it really didn't become too much of an issue. But it's something you've got to watch all the time! Because I go up, I make general officer, things are pretty good, no racial tension. Being white is like being Black now [188].

While many would likely argue that the military has led in issues of integration and has had strong policies and programs to promote racial harmony, it may also be said that there is an inherent danger in a white person attempting to describe the experience of being Black without evidence aside from the lack of perceived racial tension. As long as there are white Americans who have been socialized in the context of the white racial frame that characterizes the American experience, there will likely be racialized encounters. For example, there was a story from a couple of years ago that the military was being infiltrated by white supremacists, skin-heads, and neo-nazis and utilized as a training opportunity to prepare their ranks for armed combat (Trotta, 2012). To respond to these issues, officers and soldiers are now trained about racism and responding to hate speech, which is certainly a positive step to combat a pressing danger. However, to

return to Jack's comment, there is evidence that a striking difference between being Black and being white remains in the military.

In describing the climate at SRU, Jack continued to minimize the role of race and claim that people's experiences, regardless of their race, are good and comfortable.

I think that the students feel pretty good about it [the climate]. I think for the most part. Black students, white students, Hispanic students. I think they feel pretty good about it [210].

The racial climate at SRU is umm, [pause]. I would say that everybody is in their comfort zone here, okay. Even the Blacks. Not just the whites, the Blacks, okay. We're going to get our thing, you do [your] thing, we all go to the football games on Saturday and cheer and everything else, and everything is great [193].

Similar to Jack's assessment of race relations in the military, his description of the climate for students of color is one that claims parity but again does not rely on any substantive data other than the perception of students attending and cheering at sporting events together. That he took multiple opportunities to claim racial equality for different groups may be hinged to the fact that as a white, senior-level executive and former military officer, the privilege of naming another person's reality has become almost a habit in which he does so without entertaining the possibility that he may not know. Regardless of the cause, the implication is the same: a white person declaring *Mission Accomplished*, when it comes to racial equality.

Intentionally Dismantling Safe Havens. The idea that students are in a “comfort zone” at SRU is an important idea, since as a lifetime of student development literature indicates, students need to find community and a safe space in order to learn and foster cognitive development (including scholars Pascarella & Terenzini, Perry, Chickering, Baxter-Magolda, Kuh, etc.), which is even more critical for students of color at predominantly white institutions (Pascarella & Terenzini, Feagin, Moore, Hurtado, Allen, Milem, Reason, etc.). This subset of the *minimization* sub-theme documents Jack’s strategy based on his assessment that students of color and white students have the same experience at SRU.

In discussing the racial climate Jack began by offering a passing reference to the idea that students need to emerge from their small groups to be more unified.

And that’s what, here at SRU that’s what I think about the racial situation – it’s good. There’s no problems, it’s steady and I think a lot of the rituals and spirit, and values, the way Roughnecks are, helps us with that. But I think we need to be more conscientious of trying to have programs and education and stuff that integrate us, that truly bring us together, out of our comfort zones and safe havens. I may be [pause] that’s just my two cents on that [196].

Certainly, nobody could argue with an attempt to work at further integration, since genuine interactions will provide the most appropriate avenue for learning. However, his actual conceptualization of this type of initiative was far more problematic.

I don’t think my frustration or kind of what I get frustrated with at SRU, and you probably know this, you’ve heard me say, is we have a tendency to bring our

Black students in here, I think to put them in a safe-haven, which maybe they need. They're coming into SRU, a large school with a reputation of rednecks, white kids, [population redacted], and we are many miles from a inner-city, the inner-city schools, that doesn't sound like a long way but that's a long way for some of these kids to come and put them in this environment. It's a friendly environment but they don't know that. So, I understand the reason for a safe-haven to get them all together. But what frustrates me is if we do that for four years for the Black students, we haven't done them a favor. We've done them an injustice, because that's not the way the world is either. So what I think we need to be more aggressive at, and this is not just the Black students, this is the white students, is figuring out how to pull these minority students out of their safe havens and include them in other activities and organizations. Not just as token members, but as the opportunity to be leaders and I think we've made some progress in that, I mean. I just think that [pause] but it's something you gotta work at, David [...]. It will happen to where everybody has a tendency to want to segregate, they get in their comfort zone and if we let that happen were going to be right back where we were before [194-195].

Jack's comment illustrates many embedded assumptions, which lead to a deeply flawed conception of the problem and likely a disastrous possible solution. First, Jack's idea that Black students are all from the "inner-city," is a common caricature that invokes images of poverty, violence, and a lack of education. To paint all of the Black students with this background is irresponsible and factually incorrect. However, this

assumption regarding the Black students at SRU informs his strategy of “pulling them out of their safe havens.” When the assumption that students of color are culturally deficient in coming into a collegiate environment, the justified response appears then that the white administrators better knows best what students of color need, including forcibly removing (being “aggressive”) the safety of groups that help support and acculturate people of color to a hostile white space.

Further underlying this problem is the fact that Jack has focused on the “minority students” in order to better integrate the leadership organizations. If there are aggressive actions to dismantle organizations, why are the ones that serve students of color the ones that are chosen for destruction? If history is any indication, the reason that segregated environments exist is due to deliberate interventions that prevented people of color from being allowed into or participating in exclusive spaces. It is well documented that the nature of residential segregation is a function of what social scientists have called “white flight,” whereby white people leave communities when there is even most modest change in the racial demographics. Similarly, on many college and university campuses, groups for underrepresented students have often been born because of a lack of acceptance and a refusal to consider the issues most salient to these underrepresented populations. A strategy which seeks to dismantle these organizations and force students of color into what will certainly be hostile white spaces will very likely be futile.

As has been the case with nearly all the other white administrators, undergirding this entire narrative is a lack of understanding regarding the experiences for people of color. Jack’s conception that “it’s a friendly environment, but they [students of color]

don't know that," rests on the assumption that the white, male experience is the same experience for all people. Further, problematizing this comment is his assertion that the need to congregate in identity groups is due to an inferior understanding of the climate. This comment epitomizes white superiority in administrative spaces where the white man (Jack) not only asserts to know the experiences for people of color, but any dissension in that commentary is due to cognitive deficiency on the part of people of color.

Jack later continued to discuss his strategy and invoked increasingly harsh ideas in describing his initiative as well as the imperative of the potential educational opportunity that will otherwise be missed.

So, my thing is that SRU isn't the real world. And they may feel very comfortable with diversity here, okay, and being in a comfort zone and things are okay, but is that the best way to feel about it in preparing them to go out in the real world? You see what I'm saying? And I'm not saying 'make them uncomfortable,' but I'm saying we've got to keep it at the forefront and we've gotta keep the dialogue and discussion going to keep them out of a comfort level. And that's what, again, I'm a little concerned about is that they are, I think for the most part [imitating the voice of a student] 'things are okay there is not a problem, we're trucking along.' Okay, now talk to me about that. You know, because when they get out in the real world, there will be problems that they're going to have to deal with, and if we didn't allow them to [long pause] [211].

You know, I get on these rolls, it's a difficult situation, but it takes work, you know. It takes, I go back to the term 'forcing mechanism.' If you are just getting in your little comfort zone, life goes on, that, that's not the way to solve these problems. You gotta work, you gotta confront, you gotta engage [220].

These two comments are noteworthy because of the aggressive image of a "forcing mechanism," that it appears to be the desired consequence students of color who attempt to congregate in spaces where they are supported. If this was actually pursued as a strategy, the message that is sent to students of color is unmistakable: you're not welcome in any space here. The white students have control over many of the powerful organizations on campus and will not consider issues that are important to communities of color. Further, the administration is forcibly dismantling the spaces that students of color have created as a response to the lack of inclusion, therefore, there is no place on the SRU campus where is safe to be Black or a person of color.

In the former comment, Jack provided an important justification for why these "forcing mechanisms" would be necessary, which is that SRU is not like the real world. As such, Jack's initiative will help prepare students for the real world by taking away safe spaces from students of color and forcing them into predominantly white organizations. There are two implications for this strategy: first, students of color are chattel to be used for the education of white students. The interactions with students of color will provide an important experience to prepare white students for the real world. Second, this will prepare students of color for dealing with marginalizing, hostile, racist, white spaces, since that is what waits for them after their time at SRU. The reality of the

second point is that students of color have already lived 18 years within a white world and very likely had the realities of race thrust upon them, and if not, certainly discussed with family, friends, and social circles; so the lessons that the “forcing mechanisms” intend to teach are lessons that students of color are already likely understood and students of color need not pay several tens of thousands of dollars to allegedly learn at SRU.

Ironically, Jack characterization of the environment as “friendly” is one of his comments above. In light of this analysis, I’m not sure that any student would classify an environment where students were framed in a pejorative caricature, forcibly removed from groups that instill a sense of security, and utilized like chattel for the education of white students, while being forced to endure an experience that is, by design, racist, as “friendly.”

Discrimination is Accidental: Racism? These are Good People! This sub-theme is an extension of the last theme, where white people leverage their racial authority to describe the experiences of people of color. In this theme, white people again excuse and justify the actions of other white people, which also has the collective impact of minimizing the impact of racist interactions and practices.

Madeline provided the perfect comment to introduce this sub-theme because it embodies the sentiment that the other comments to be discussed also rely upon: “Now I never found this [SRU] administrative team to be discriminatory. They’re just good people. They can’t be good people and still feel that way [racist]. But I never really felt that they were not,” [846]. The ability/privilege that Madeline demonstrates here is the

ability to read past any existing evidence to understand who are the “good” people. By virtue of being good, you cannot be someone who creates systems of white supremacy and oppression. This belief represents a generous assumption of the ability of white administrators to even understand experiences of oppression and disparate outcomes for different racial groups (something that this research is demonstrating is a faulty assumption), but then to absolve people who are “good” is a real obstacle in correcting and teaching white leaders about the different impacts on communities of color. While it is unclear what criteria was utilized to establish all of the administrators at SRU as good, it is likely connected to the implicit assumptions held by people who meet others with similar backgrounds, understandings, values, etc., that is this person must be just like me – a good person.

Sally went on to also describe how SRU has many good people, but the people that give SRU a bad name are just a small, vocal, minority.

Okay, I need to get better statistics, but I don't think we've really asked this question as much yet. I'll give the example of alcohol use on campus. So, you have 5 to 10% that's where the heavy binge, full out binge drinkers, okay? You had 20-plus percent that did not drink at all, everybody else was in the middle. I see that in this work as well. Do we have some full out, do we have some full out racists, sexist, homophobic, absolutely? But, who are very vocal about it, and all of that, how to quantify that? But I think it's a similar kind of model to the alcohol model that I just gave you. It's 10 – 5% who are just outwardly, then I think you have a group down at the bottom, who, I'll give an example, Zach [a

staff member in Sally's office] or some of the students in the past: white students of color, who are, you now, who are out advocates, who are allies, who are, you know making changes, who are talking to people. I don't know if it's 20% [pause] but I think we've got this huge group in the middle of 75 – 80% on campus who, if you would ask them 'are you racist?'

'No!'

'Are you sexist?'

'No!'

And really and truly believe that and because of how they have grown up, because of the privilege they have, that they have never been confronted with the fact that, no, maybe you don't, maybe you don't use racial epithets but there are things that systematically, that are done, but that they are not even aware that's happening. And I think they would say 'but I'm a good person, I am [pause] nice to everybody,' [467-468].

In Sally's example, the student population is akin to a bell-curve where on the ends there are extremes with one extreme being those who overtly discriminate, while on the other end there are the social justice advocates. In the middle there are all of the good students who do not intend to create hostile situations but who inadvertently create hostility. She later describes that these are the students that she hopes to focus attention on, since this is the largest group and have the greatest ability to understand and embrace these lessons.

Importantly, as Sally cited at the very start, she does not have statistics to validate these numbers, rather these are guesses at generalizing a huge study body. By her estimation, 75 – 80% of the students (complete guess) at SRU are good and don't intend to create hostile situations and interactions, rather it is just their lack of education. This type of sweeping normative statement where only the most extreme examples are recognized for their role in creating hostility is a dangerous assumption. There are so many ways (see examples from part I) that white people have the best of intentions but ultimately, inadvertently or intentionally create hostile spaces for people of color. The presumption of goodness does not assuage the exceedingly difficult task of overcoming marginalizing experiences for people of color. The assumptions that undergird whiteness demonstrates that the socialization that whites undergo means that their assumptions are often highly racialized and regardless of whether or not this group of 75 – 80% of the student body believes they are sexist, or homophobic, or racist matters not if they are going to remain complicit with systems of oppression. Further, relying upon a self-report regarding race, white people will rarely admit participating in a racist system, which is part of the findings in this research project. Sally's example, frames a strong majority of the campus as "good" white people who just need a little more education, which minimizes the experiences of people of color and fails to recognize that good intentions are often complicit with racist, marginalizing behavior, and further fails to recognize the impact on the equally good people who are victimized.

Jack also shared his insights regarding the nature of the good students on campus and how marginalizing experiences were insular events.

J: Well, you know I think you have your [pause] kind of crazies that pop up once in a while and [description of well known racist event]. [Laugh]. You know they say their intent wasn't to make a racial issue out of it, but they're smart enough to know that that's the way it will be taken.

D: Right.

J: Okay, you know, alright, but let me tell you something [laugh]. So, those are kind of isolated events I think. For the most part we handle them pretty good [199].

Jack's treatment of a group of students who participated in a highly racist and inflammatory event as outsiders who rarely surface is another part of this strategy of painting a picture of the campus population as good people. Without delving too much into the semantics of what Jack said, the word choice is certainly noteworthy. While he classified the students involved in this racist event as "crazies" he also quickly also acknowledged that these students are also "smart." For the intended targets of this hostility, it was not objectively acknowledged to be a racist event, rather Jack described it by saying "the way it will be taken," seeming to indicate that this is a matter of interpretation, rather than objectively acknowledging the racist nature of the event. Further problematic is Jack's laughter in describing this event. Jack, a high-ranking military officer is not prone to giggling like a 12-year-old at their first sleepover party. His brief laughs in this example feels much more like a judgment that these issues are unimportant or that he is amused by the actual event, which included the defacing the image of a well-known person of color. In this example, Jack's tactic only

acknowledges the most problematic behaviors as contributing to a racist climate, then by further claiming these events are insular, there is a lack of recognition of the frequency with which people of color endure indignities and systematic marginalization. Jack's framing and interpretation of the event appears to shed a great deal of insight regarding his understanding of racial issues.

“Misunderstanding” the Experiences of People of Color. An overwhelming narrative appears to be emerging from the data gathered in this research that describes a fundamental disconnect between the experiences of people of color and the ability of white people to not only acknowledge that those experiences exist, but also the role that white people play in enabling those experiences. This theme highlights that disconnect, including how white people at times attempt to explain the treatment or experiences that people of color have as simply a misunderstanding, another example of what has been called minimization in the literature (Bonilla Silva, 2003).

When Rick was asked about specific interactions or events that may have been racist or racially problematic, he described how “I don't think there's been people that have been problematic, based on race anyway [laughing],” [802]. The implication of his joke is that there are plenty of people in his unit that are problematic, but that these people are not racist. Rick then went on to describe how there was a situation with a faculty member of color who did lodge a race-based complaint and how that was handled.

There was a faculty member that was, it was a non-tenure track faculty member that was not reappointed and claimed that it was because of race, but there wasn't

any evidence of that and the investigation really didn't go anywhere [...]. There is, from time to time somebody will say, I've had a couple of incidences or really one where they overtly came out and said it. The other one kind of implied it, that they didn't get paid as much as their peers did because they were of minority race. And when that happens we do an investigation and look at the cohort of peers in their unit, and their salary, and the history, and the percentage of the raises, and the whole thing, and when the analysis was done they actually were getting more, the raises they had received, their average raise, was actually more than their peers. So my point is that there's not been any incident of that, but there have been a lot of small situations but they didn't rise to the occasion of a clash kind of thing or something [803].

In Rick's example, the cause for concern is that these instances of inequitable treatment were found to be unfounded after an investigation. The use of an investigation seems like a space where there was a great deal of latitude for a white administrator. For example, as this research has detailed, there is an inability of white people to understand or acknowledge racial discrimination, so to rely on the ability of white administrators in the context of an investigation to comprehend/acknowledge the experience of discrimination is likely very difficult, if not impossible. From a critical perspective, if there is a person of color who is going through the complaint process claiming discrimination, and if this is happening in the course of "a lot of small situations" there is probably a cause for concern within Rick's shop.

Further complicating the investigation process is the unacknowledged danger involved for non-tenured faculty members to undergo the complaint process. For example, I was able to meet with a group of women faculty members from outside the context of this research. In this meeting, there was a woman who described her experience as a Black faculty member at SRU. She described horrors that would make anyone's skin crawl, but she was terribly fearful that anything she said to illuminate her treatment would threaten her position and since her field is not well supported, she felt that she could easily be terminated. In the course of our conversation, she described how she felt that she was actually being targeted for this poor treatment and ultimately said off-handedly that she shouldn't even be telling us these stories because the white, male administrators in her unit might become aware of her dissent and eliminate her. Almost like a scene from a movie, a white male administrator came into the meeting very shortly thereafter (uninvited) just to "observe." The woman of color became physically uncomfortable and could be seen shaking. The white male administrator was eventually asked to leave since the meeting didn't concern him, but the message was clearly sent – people of color are under surveillance. The Black faculty member groused that she needed to begin to get her CV together since his appearance was evidence that the administration was targeting her. Sadly, her premonition was correct and she was no longer at SRU when I visited the campus the following year in pursuit of this research project.

When I pressed Rick for how information regarding discrimination was shared to protect victims, as well as reprimand oppressors, Rick described the opportunity for each faculty member to submit comments to be factored into the annual review.

After the evaluation [period] I sit down with each of them [unit leaders] and go over – I don't show them all the comments because it's all given in confidence, but I do summarize them. And if it looks like they maybe are showing some preference one way or the other, regardless of what it is, just kind of raise their awareness of it. If it comes up as a complaint that somebody brings forward, that's a different ballgame because that involves – we have to do the formal investigation and all that kind of stuff [804].

Again, the risk for a faculty member of color to participate in this feedback process is significant, even if the data aren't shared verbatim, since there are so few faculty members of color, these narratives can easily be tracked to an individual. But even for those faculty members who do participate in this risky process, there appears to be very little that is done to effect any modicum of improvement, as Rick described, this is just to raise awareness in the event that people are documenting instances of inequity. Importantly, Rick went on to describe how there was not any documented attempt to remediate concerns related to inequity, nor attempts to follow up with any targeted faculty member(s). The processes of filing a complaint or sharing experiences of discrimination appear to be understood by white administrators as simply misunderstandings. That these issues continue to surface appears to be just part of the

daily practice, demonstrated by the fact that “a lot of small situations” was not remarkable to Rick.

In describing the opportunity to improve the campus climate at SRU, Olivia’s conception of the problem again illustrates cause for concern, as did her potential solution. In describing the racial demographics and the problem that this represented, Olivia commented:

Well, I would probably try to make not only faculty and staff, but the students represent more of our I would say [pause] our community, but even our community’s probably not, I would say more of the state make-up because, again, I think if you get more of those races, the different races in here and have maybe open and honest dialogues when things [racist incidents] happen and they do happen, but if you can talk about it. You know, we deal with this sexual harassment. Sometimes it’s just a misunderstanding. What you have to do is you have to talk about it. Some of these are misunderstandings. Some are not misunderstandings. So, I understand that, but I think to get a more representative population and then to maybe have open and honest dialogues, which the diversity office is doing a lot of that. That’s the reason why I attend all of them that I can because I think that’s very important [687].

There is much to consider from Olivia’s comment. While she was able to put her finger on one part of the problem, that is the demographics of faculty, staff, and students need to improve, her solution left a great deal to be desired. The simplistic approach that the racial climate on campus could simply be improved with more open and honest

dialogues is a slap in the face of every person of color who has tried to describe their experience only to be told: you're too sensitive/you're too angry; you're misinterpreting what's really happening; that's not really your experience; you don't understand (each of these narratives has appeared in this paper). Further, such dialogues have almost no chance at success since white administrators appear to have no interest in the issues that people of color deal with (evidenced by their commitment to ignorance). The suggestion of open and honest dialogues amounts to a strategy, since dialogues are not connected to a commitment to action; rather this is a just an opportunity to feign interest and support of these issues. Finally, dialogues as a solution are deeply problematic, because it puts people of color into the difficult position of not only having to share their personal experiences (and likely be on the defensive), but also have to educate white people about the history of race.

The reality is on every college campus, every day, there are opportunities for open and honest dialogue to discuss racism and the social construction of race; however, these conversations have failed to occur, likely because these conversations would have to be organized and moderated by people just like those in this study. The Sallys, Dans, Jacks, Ricks, Madelines, and Olivias out there are likely to have the same lack of understanding when it comes to race issues to really create a learning experience. Further, why does there have to be a horrible atrocity suffered by a person of color before this conversation can be had? If the administration was really concerned about these issues, there would be a concerted effort to educate students around these issues so

that perhaps an open and honest dialogue could occur, rather than a deeply emotional conversation in the wake of something terribly hurtful.

Particularly interesting about Olivia's comments about the need for open and honest dialogue is that later in this same interview she discussed her inability to discuss race issues with anyone except her husband [692], expressed an unwillingness to bring up these issues in meetings [688, 689], and offered a critique of the SRU diversity officer who is too aggressive in educating the white administrators at SRU (each of which will be discussed in the next category: White Decision Making). The very solution that Olivia is proposing appears to be impossible because of her own "misunderstandings," (to use her word).

As Olivia went on to share "when things happen, and they do happen," in referring to racist incidents, the underlying implication is that ongoing racist incidents are tolerated at some level, since there is an expectation that these will continue. Interestingly, in the same breath where she described the expectation for ongoing racism, she also suggested these are instances of misunderstanding. The misunderstandings in this example then become the responsibility of people of color to correct through the use of dialogue (her proposed solution).

Building on this idea that misunderstandings really amount to a lack of education, Sally described the opportunity to be misunderstood as simply an acknowledgement that she does not have the requisite skills one would expect in her position. Further her lack of understanding amounts to extra burden for her staff: "I think I'm self-conscious sometimes, because of my title I should know. I mean good

Lord, I don't. I screw up. You know, my staff, I will tell them 'listen I have probably said something offensive today, so just let me know what it is,' [509].

This appears to be more than the idea that everybody makes mistakes, because certainly we all do. This comment hinges on the fact that she acknowledges that Sally knows that she has said, or will say, something offensive, everyday, therefore the daily responsibility to educating the administrator relative to their job requirements falls to her staff. For an administrator whose responsibility revolves around diversity education and support to have so little knowledge and require so much assistance means that rather focusing on the issues for the students of color (or otherwise marginalized students), there must be a focus on attending to the white administrator of the unit. Where then, is the professional development for the many staff members of color in this unit to grow and develop themselves? It is not a fair assumption that the administrator of a unit will know more than the employees and help them develop as professionals?

Finally, Olivia relied again on her ability to travel as a credential to somehow increase sensitivity to racial issues, which represents more than simply misunderstanding these issues.

Well I think they [international trips] make me more tolerable [tolerant]. I think they allow me to empathize with people and try to realize how they might feel when they're in this sea of whites [laughing] because I do know what it's like to be white in a sea of [pause], you know [pause] Blacks or with different religions or whatever. So I have an appreciation for that and empathize with them. I'm sorry, so what was your question? [681].

For Olivia, this comment sums up a colossal misunderstanding regarding the nature of the racialized experiences at SRU. To suggest that she appreciates the experiences of people of color at SRU because she has spent some vacations as one of a few white people, is to illuminate the depth of the chasm of abject ignorance. The racialized experience at SRU is so much more than feeling a little discomfort from being the only one of your race in a space – as illustrated above, there exists a series of tactics deployed to take a physical, emotional, and psychological toll on people of color – an experience which is very different from being on vacation in a foreign country.

“Diversity” as Racial Discourse

The concept of “diversity,” was discussed by many white administrators despite not being asked about it specifically. I think there are two possible explanations for this: first, it is possible that for many white people the concepts of race and diversity are synonymous, so they may not have even realized that they began talking about diversity instead of race; second, this could be a defense mechanism, since talking about diversity broadly speaking appears to be more comfortable than talking about race for many white administrators. In conversations about diversity many other identities can be highlighted, meaning that gender, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status became salient and allowed the white administrator to find a space that feels perhaps less guilty, or an area where there is a personal experience with marginalization. This rhetorical tactic has the added element of allowing whiteness and white space to remain clandestine.

Appreciating Difference. The first sub-theme describes a narrative about appreciating diversity that was utilized by white administrators. In this instance, differences among individuals or groups are essentialized as a utilitarian strategy from which white people are the beneficiaries of an interaction. As a particularly troubling strategy, people of color are simply a tool for further advancing knowledge and understanding among white people.

In this first example, Olivia (who described her understanding of race as being informed through her experiences of traveling abroad on vacations) was asked how lessons from her international travel could be applied and how she shares the appreciation of what she has learned with others.

Well, I would tell you the food, but I'm not very adventurous, but my husband does and I live vicariously through him. I'm not an experimental eater. You know [pause] I appreciate the languages. Usually before we travel I try to pick up at least a little bit of the language so that I can at least say 'thank you' and 'please.' [Asked for the question to be repeated]. Oh the dress! I appreciate the colors [pause] and the differences in religion. I look at my family, not only my sister, but my mom and dad and how I think how limited their view of Christianity is and that is 'and we're the only right ones.' Yet I look at my husband and I who realize that [pause] maybe you call your God one thing and I'll call mine another, but if at the root of it is where we strive to be good people and to do good to others, then you may believe a little something different, but it's okay. We can still get along. So I think the religious has really been, as I get

older, a more awakening to me. So, I'm just trying to think when we [pause]. I don't know. I'm trying to think of the other things [pause]. Beliefs. I think of governments and how, yeah, they're different and some are [pause] very different and you can learn to appreciate it because [pause] that is their life. I think the Middle East in this case. My husband and I talk about the Emir and my husband says everybody kisses their butt, but that's what they know. They're not hurting anybody and they're doing good in the Middle East so more power to them. All governments are different as well. Isn't that a statement? [683-684].

This type of description and rational serves to exoticize different cultures, with an implicit undercurrent that non-Western cultures are inferior (Said, 1978). Olivia's description is painful at times to read as she appears to be struggling to find anything to validate this idea to which she had hitched her entire perspective, that is, international travel has informed her understanding of race. In describing what she appreciates and learns from these experiences, she responds seemingly without considering the context of this conversation (race). By citing the food, dress and colors of the clothes traditional to people in the Middle East and Kenya (the two examples she cited in the interview), these trips appear to be much more about vacation and witnessing other cultures (similar, again, to people viewing animals at the zoo), rather than engaging other cultures and seeking to understand and learn. This is emphasized by Olivia's patriarchal description of how she tries to pick up a word or two of the language of the people where she will be a guest. There appears to be an expectation of conformity to serve the Americans who grace these countries with their presence. This perspective was reinforced when Olivia

described the deeply embedded colonial frame through which she embraced these travel experiences: “My husband and I talk about the Emir and my husband says everybody kisses their butt, but that’s what they know.” The framing of a hierarchy as obsequious in the Middle East should not feel terribly foreign, since seemingly every hierarchical organization in the US has the often-parodied middle management and ‘yes-men.’ As disturbing part of the answer where Olivia described what she (and her husband) learned from their foreign travel, it appears that a sharpened sense of xenophobia and cultural critique should be among the lessons.

The other part of Olivia’s comment refers to how she has learned about religion and a hardline Christian perspective that they can be the only right ones. Olivia’s observation and the impact of the learning she has done is clear, and helps to illustrate how travel can indeed illuminate issues and misconceptions of others if the traveler is willing to critically examine their own beliefs. The religion example in this story further illustrates the problematic nature of the rest of her comment. Further, this serves as another example of conflating the concepts of diversity and race. The communicated purpose of the study and all of the preceding questions have framed the conversation about race, but Olivia took the opportunity to discuss the understanding of difference, presumably as evidence of her ability to interact with people of another race? It is unclear how the lessons of food, colorful clothing, religion, and obsequious political hierarchy relate to race.

Madeline also shared an experience at the very end of our interview. I asked if there was anything else that she would like to share and she backed up the interview to

the case study (the one that describes Sonia Sotomayor being questioned about her background influencing the decisions that she has made and how it will affect her in the future – the case study was used with white participants who were similarly asked to describe how their background has influenced the decisions that they’ve made and decisions to be made in the future).

No, but back to this. I keep thinking about this, but this Latino woman [in the case study]. I think it’s okay for her [Sonia Sotomayor] to bring that perspective. I think what I would say is that ‘look, we all bring different perspectives. You’re a suburbanite. You’re an urbanite. You’re 50. You’re 40.’ Everybody brings a different view and they should. And I think the beauty of the Supreme Court – I mean she should bring the perspective of a Latino woman to the decision. I mean, again, that’s what makes good decisions. If we are all exactly the same and all have the exact experience we will make awful decisions. And it’s the diversity which allows us to make really great decisions. She could bring – it depends on what the decision is, but she could bring a perspective that might turn everyone to broaden their understanding and make a decision that they might have made a poor decision on, through her background. So she should represent the Latino, woman view. She should [857].

Madeline’s perspective operates in some similar ways to Olivia’s comment. Madeline was quick to point out that “diversity which allows us to make really great decisions,” and cited factors including age and the type of community that one grew up within. This conflation of diversity to respond to issues related to race is easily woven

into a narrative to provide safe cover so as to not engage in the more difficult conversation about race. Further, as Madeline spoke, it was as if she was having an epiphany about the epistemology of identity and the role that identity plays in understanding the world. Tellingly, the role of identity, as Madeline framed it, served to help educate the other Justices. In this way, Justice Sotomayor's utility is as an educational tool, rather than an equal contributor to the process of adjudicating cases. A closer read of the data reveals the normative way in which whiteness was centered in this response. Madeline was attentive to the fact that "it depends on what the decision is," but that a Latina woman's perspective would help in the event that a bad decision was going to be made "through her background," [presumably this meant from her perspective as a Latina]. These qualifications on the decisions and spaces in which this identity would be useful serves to buffer the white space that the Supreme Court and the law in general exist, and again diminishes the role of the utility of Justice Sotomayor.

Other Marginalized Identities. In this sub-theme white administrators discussed issues related to sexual orientation and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community, gender, socioeconomic status, etc. rather than addressing questions related to the race (the stated purpose of the interview). Since these example do little to illuminate the nature of race at SRU and for the white administrators personally, I will not delve deeply into the examples, and rather simply cite the strategy.

A lot of it comes down to personal experiences, okay. So, I think about [pause] and I know we are focusing on race, but I'm going to give a sexual orientation

example [example provided from childhood about a gay couple that interacted with Sally], [470].

[...] the things that have affected me more personally obviously have been being a woman. I think back to how they influence me back to my style. It's much more a style of enhancing understanding [examples provided regarding the role of gender in Madeline's life] [849].

I also feel like, I know that it's not part of [your study], I feel like what I see almost even as much as racism is homophobia. It is very much here and umm [pause] again I feel like because of [pause] heavy religious influence on this campus [pause], I think where we have our work to do is um [pause] is in forms of, I just feel like it's so quiet, you know, it's, it's not an, it's not a priority of many, so it's really not discussed or brought to the surface [141].

These comments from Sally, Madeline, and John, respectively, illustrate the tactic of diverting the conversation to identities that are more comfortable for them to discuss. Importantly, Sally and John both acknowledge that they are deviating from race in favor of sexual orientation, while Madeline simply dodges the race element of the question like a politician in favor of the identity in which she is more comfortable (gender). It will be discussed later, but when asked for examples of whiteness or white privilege at SRU, John was unable to come up with any concrete examples. Interestingly, in his other examples (related to sexual orientation and religious

hegemony) John was able to not only cite the issue, but also describe how he worked to create change that supported marginalized people.

White Heroes

The data in this theme documents a deeply problematic mindset seen by a handful of white administrators, that their efforts constitute some sort of Herculean effort. Like a superhero, their work focuses on those who are in greatest need of help - people who don't have a voice or power. These fantasies lack corroborating evidence and are indicative of not only a lack of understanding for the issues that people of color face at SRU, but are seemingly a dramatic overestimation of their contribution to remediating these issues, and perhaps an underestimation of their role in reinforcing the social inequality described by administrators of color.

For this first example, it is important to note that John was unable to cite examples of situations or spaces where white people had unearned privilege at SRU.

[Pause]. Oh, I'm sure, um, I'm just not thinking of any right now David [pregnant pause]. You know, I think sometimes if we really looked at things and examined a lot of our policies, I think that there are class issues embedded in many of them. Um, and assuming that people all have the same kind of access or abilities [pause], but I'm not thinking of one [related to race] [151].

However, in the course of the interview, John described how he has shaped his work to intersect with diversity and social justice because of a personal commitment [142, 153-158, 172]. When I asked about whether his efforts overlap or interface with other diversity or social justice initiatives at SRU, his response was surprising. "No,

that's a great question. I would say no, I don't, I don't [pregnant pause]. I don't, I feel like I'm pretty much working alone," [177].

The idea that John, self-identified straight, white, male, is "working alone," and not working in alliance with those who are oppressed by the systems and structures that characterize the university and its functioning feels patriarchal and deeply problematic for a number of reasons. First, by not working with those who are oppressed there is a devaluing of them as contributors to the solution and harkens back to this idea that the white man knows best. This contributes to a superiority complex whereby the white superhero can "save" the people of color and oppressed from the systems and structures of oppression, which they (white people) created. This sort of pathological thinking is characteristic of a newly trained white ally who thinks that they know best how to undo centuries of racism, without truly understanding the nature of the problem, the impact of the oppression, and the forces that keep the hegemony in place. By not even acknowledging his own white frame and the socialized nature of whiteness, John's work can be dangerous for social justice efforts for the future.

Second, by not working with those who are oppressed, there will never be an understanding of the issues facing folks of color, from where those issues are born, and what the white ally can do to be part of the solution. Again, this framing is built on the belief that the white person knows what the oppression is, what it looks like, how it is reified, and how to combat it. Third and finally, the idea of a white person working in a silo provides the opportunity for that white person to be operating with outdated models and understandings, which also appears to be the case with this administrator. That this

administrator completed his “prejudice reduction” training some 20 years ago is obvious by his language and tactics. If the literature had truly been consulted they would at least be familiar with the language of anti-racism and the tenets of Critical Race Theory, and how the best opportunity for a white ally is likely working with other white people to understand their own role in the racial structure and the ways that race is socially constructed.

Similarly, at the end of our interview, I asked Jack given all of his experience, what was it like for him as a white man to occupy his leadership position at SRU. His response read like a narrative out of superhero comic book.

I wake up everyday feeling challenged. ‘Am I doing enough to help [pause] minority students? To give them the opportunity that I had and all these white students had to come to SRU? And what more can I do? Is it in a meeting, opening my mouth? Is it trying to get something changed?’ Because I think that SRU now has the status, and prestige, and the reputation, that we ought to be really be, in a tactful and non-forceful way, how can, and that now we have programs, we have scholarships, we have all sorts of things going on [213].

This narrative is cause for suspicion. First and foremost, the idea that Jack wakes up everyday trying to figure out how to solve problems that face Black students at SRU is difficult to believe when considered against some of the other comments Jack made about how the environment is *too comfortable* for students of color or how they need to be *pulled* from their comfort zone. Further, the notion that Jack spends his time wondering about how he can be of service to people of color is interesting, given that

SRU (like many institutions) spends a great deal of time and resources to measure the climate for all groups (faculty, staff, and students) across a variety of identities (race being one of those identities, of course). If Jack was truly curious about what he could do to be of service to students of color, he likely would have been framing this as a question relative to the existing evidence (such as, I wonder how I can help students of color feel like they belong in spaces where Roughnecker rituals are taking place?).

Next, Jack's narrative portrays how he is working to devise a strategy to serve students of color, but in so doing, his questions all appear to be highly individualized to his understanding and context. For example, each of the examples Jack provided appeared to be part of an administrative space (working in a meeting to somehow foster more equality). Similar to John, this strategy of working in a silo is problematic and will almost certainly end without a deepened understanding of the real issues and without progress realized. Finally, it is important to note that Jack did not describe what he actually does with these questions or how they inform a strategy. Rather, he asks himself questions about what he should be doing (everyday, allegedly) and yet has nothing to show for this effort. This fantasy of Jack's superhero actions on behalf of people of color works to further expose his deeply embedded white framing and his role in maintaining the administrative racial hegemony.

Sally's description and assessment of her skills and abilities demonstrates a great deal of confidence as she described how she doesn't want to be seen as a heroine.

I also think, I want to make sure that I continued to challenge myself. It's one of the reasons that I chose to go to the national diversity training. I kind of thought

“I got it.” I was like “I’m good. I got it.” And then you go and have this really powerful experience and you go “I still have a lot to learn.” So, in being a white advocate and ally, because I do not have those daily experiences where people [pause] nobody is following me around because I’m white, nobody, you know, things like that, outside of my title I can leave this university I can go to any store, I can do whatever, people aren’t making decisions, so I can get a little compliant [complacent] sometimes, so when I make sure that I don’t become that way and that I’m not, then I continue to work because it is critical and important to me. I don’t want to be seen as the “white savior,” I don’t want to do this work on the backs of people of color. Does that make sense? [460].

Sally’s confidence and self-described complacency (or compliance) are enabled as a function of her whiteness. Despite admitting that she still has a lot to learn (which is obvious when the example that she could cited again and again was the clichéd person of color being followed in a store), she found herself being complacent and already saw a potential danger of being a “white savior.” This blind confidence fuels a view of her success that might be divorced from reality. Further, that she is fearful of doing this work on the backs of people of color seems to indicate that she understands that there is a cost for doing this type work, but since she is unwilling to pay this cost herself (again, being a quiet advocate protects her from being implicated in difficult conversations and conflicts, and by her own admission when she leaves campus she occupies almost exclusively white spaces), this only leaves the people of color to pay this cost.

The final example comes from Madeline who also described a heroine's commitment and advocacy of race and social justice. Many of her examples are of interpersonal interactions which are often oversimplified and involve one person condemning someone else who said something obvious and blatant. One such example describes how her reaction was beyond her control, almost like her reaction was channeling a cosmic power.

I could cite specific instances, which I don't know that they're really relevant, but I'll never forget a really good friend of mine who had an underrepresented minority come into a predominantly white school. This person stood up in front of this new young person when someone else tried to treat them unkindly. I always found myself doing similar things. I mean if it wasn't right, it wasn't right. So I ended up being a person who would say 'that's not right. Don't be that way. Don't say those things. Don't treat this person that way. It's not right.' I don't know. I didn't choose to do it. I just felt it. So I just did it [820].

This example sounds like a public service announcement or a line from an after-school special. On one hand this reaction that she described as almost a reflex is admirable that she could react so quickly and so succinctly in a moment when it appeared that there was a student being treated disparagingly. However, shouldn't we expect that of any adult? That race was involved amplifies the event (perhaps she wouldn't even remember the event if it wasn't a student of color being bullied), but adults should be expected to stand up for students who are being treated poorly. However, since it appears because race was also involved, Madeline valorized her

efforts to stand up on behalf of a student. However, while this moment appears to possibly be a positive one for the student who had an administrator advocate on their behalf, there is no evidence of Madeline's understanding the broader implications of a system that empowered the white student to participate in this type of behavior in the first place, or the broader experiences of students of color in learning spaces, to name just a couple of opportunities.

Further, in spaces such as these, Madeline has many privileges upon which she can rely including her race, and her elevated position of power as a professor and a university executive. Interestingly, this example is very similar to another situation that Madeline highlights which has to do with a person in a position of considerable power and privilege condemning someone with less power.

I was talking to a faculty member the other day and there was a comment made, a racially insensitive comment made. And that faculty member stopped them right there and said, "That's not okay." And this student continued to talk and made another comment. And he shut him right down again. [...] You know what? Everybody in that room is now changed in some way [having witnessed the interaction] [833/834].

In addition to capitalizing on power in these situations, the examples are very simple and do not demonstrate a deeper level of understanding for how racial issues are entrenched in the experiences of white people, as evidenced by the fact that her examples are basically the same with a slightly different context. Further, it is not clear that anything beyond just that singular educational opportunity took place. What has

this unit done to communicate broadly that this type of behavior is not tolerated? To address a single situation is better than nothing, but it is likely that if it happened once it will happen again. What is being done to prevent this from happening in the first place? This strategy of simply addressing blatant situations as they arise means that people of color are effectively being subjugated across a variety of spaces, but white people are only reprimanded in these select spaces (rather than learning lessons about how words have power or about the racialized experience in America). While the white students were verbally reprimanded, the students of color have endured another hostile exchange, for which no reprimand from a professor can repair.

After one of her examples, I asked her what it felt like to be at SRU as someone who pursues diversity and social justice. Based on the data from other interviews, I expected Madeline to describe challenges to her ideas and advocacy, particularly in light of her experience confronting people who make problematic remarks. Madeline's response however was a bit surprising:

Well, no different on this campus than in this world. It feels great [laughing].

You know what I mean? It's what I believe in and I think what you believe in is who you are. If I had not felt that this was okay, I don't know that I would be here. But I've never really gotten a feeling that it was not okay to feel that way [advocate for diversity] [840].

Interestingly, this response is in direct opposition with the final category in this part of the chapter (which describes the difficulty of advocating racial equity) and is incongruous with all with the experiences of people of color. If SRU were truly a place

where one could feel good about standing up against oppression and hegemony, there would likely be many more people doing this and a very different mindset at the institution. Perhaps part of the reason that this feels so good is that these interactions are virtuous moments whereby the professor utilizes their power in an overtly didactic exchange that is both righteous and fleeting, but is almost certainly inconsequential for the victim. In this way, these moments are much more about the white person feeling like a hero, rather than truly addressing racial inequity. Madeline's comments serve as a useful bridge to a sub-theme that embodies an even deeper level of the diversity discourse.

Wishy-Washy Kumbaya. This sub-theme describes a handful of comments that extol the virtues of diversity as an oversimplified situation where merely having many different people together brings about some magical outcome. The comments in this category would be well placed on an inspirational poster with a group of multi-racial hands in a circle.

O: There's a multicultural golden rule that I just love. I came across this and I've never forgotten it. I will never forget it and I think it says it all: 'Don't do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Do unto others as they would have you do unto them.'

D: Yeah.

O: I think that is so powerful in all of these comments because we look at the world through our own lens and even if we're very caring and very sincere, we think we know what other people want. So we try to provide them what we

would want, and that's often exactly the wrong thing. A lot of this is how do we really understand what other people need and what and how can we help fulfill that? Not just what we want or what we think they want [841].

While well intentioned, this is not really the content that inspires faith that an administrator understands the important issues of racism and oppression. This sentiment emphasizes the individual interaction as the key to understanding "multicultural" issues. Rather than reciting feel-good, pithy, golden rules, time might be better spent reciting an understanding of white supremacy, and the complicit role that things like golden rules have in absencing race or other systems of oppression. Unfortunately, there was more of this sentiment that characterizes Madeline's conception of these issues.

You know I have a very strong commitment to a diverse world at all levels. That includes racial. I know you're focusing just on that. I think it includes everything and everybody. But I have a very strong commitment to racial diversity, all diversity and I think that, I'll tell you, I think, here's what I think. I love the metaphor of a symphony. You cannot have a symphony with all middle C's. You've got to have all the notes there to make beautiful music. And the trick is how do you get them where they play the music beautifully rather than in disharmony? I think my vision of diversity is a symphony. We need all the notes and we need them playing in harmony and not in discourse. And then our world will be better and our music will be better [...]. It'd be a very boring world if we were all the same [855].

Again, for someone who claims to have a “very strong commitment to racial diversity,” this metaphor does not serve as a serious dialogue on race and racism, rather this sentiment is the type that might be found in a Sunday school classroom. As long as this type of sentiment prevails as a discourse among institutional leaders, there will not be a serious conversation about the realities of race. This tactic of absenting race (Madeline even acknowledged that she knew I was studying race) is another tool intended to prevent progress by shifting the conversations toward what Bell and Hartman (2007) referred to as *diversity happy talk*, and represents a powerful opportunity for white administrators as well as the manufacturers of executive inspirational posters.

These data illustrate how wishy-washy Kumbaya serves a couple of important purposes: first, it works to obscure the genuine issues of oppression and white supremacy, by instead focusing on trite metaphors and fodder for Hallmark greeting cards. Second, and by extension, this strategy is functionally a conflict avoidance strategy, since the conversation has been framed in an unrealistic white fantasy of what society should be, without ever acknowledging a modicum of racial reality. In this way, there is not space for a critical conversation about inequality since the conversation has been oversimplified as positive for seemingly all people. Third, these data illustrate how white administrators who want to frame themselves as concerned with racial justice or diversity, but have nothing to contribute to the conversation, can have something to say. Madeline, who articulated more of the wishy-washy Kumbaya than anyone else also asserted: “I have a very strong commitment to racial diversity, all diversity.” From this

perspective, it matters not that these words are not ground in any empirical truth, it only matters that the white administrator has a bullet point or something to say about an issue.

Blissful Ignorance: “I don’t know, but...”

This theme describes another rhetorical tactic utilized by white administrators that has an element of rhetorical incoherence (Bonilla Silva, 2003). When asked directly about their understanding of the circumstances and environments for people of color, many white administrators were not afraid to admit that they did not know, but perhaps even more troubling is the fact that many of them then went on to offer their best guess, which is probably very instructive for understanding the implicit association that informs their decision making. The lack of substantive data coupled with a racist white lens is a potent combination.

When asked about the climate explicitly, Olivia responded from a place of ignorance, but also acknowledged that there may well be cause for alarm.

I really don’t know. The climate here, at least from where I am at this university [pause], I don’t see I think a lot of the ugly stuff that I’m sure goes on. I will say that. I think probably in the diversity office and maybe some in the executive level, they probably see it. We don’t see a lot of it. We don’t see or hear a lot of it in my little neck of the woods, but I know it’s there. Well, you can see the stats about how few Blacks and Asians, and Hispanics are here when you look at the community. It’s got to be unwelcoming. But I can say from my standpoint, I don’t see it, but I certainly know it’s out there and wanna strive to make it a better place for students to learn and for staff to work and faculty to work [686].

Olivia started with the response that she doesn't know what the climate is like, but then quickly acknowledges "a lot of ugly stuff that I'm sure goes on," while claiming not to see it explicitly. Importantly, Olivia had frequent interactions with both William and Martin, while having some supervision responsibility for Maria. If she doesn't hear about instances of incivility in her "little neck of the woods," (as a side note, Olivia was responsible for a huge portfolio at SRU, larger than almost anyone else in this study) it may well be because of an active avoidance on her part. Further, as has been cited, SRU like many universities participates in ongoing climate assessment to ensure that the environment is welcoming and supportive for all people. SRU is a data-rich environment, so her claims to know that "know it's there" is correct, she does know that ongoing issues exist. But then also true is the fact that her lack of knowledge of these issues is an active and intentional choice on her part, that collectively reinforces a white supremacist space.

When I asked Madeline about the racial climate at SRU, she shared the following where she also admitted not knowing, but offering her best guess.

D: What's the racial climate like at this university?

M: The racial climate?

D: Yeah.

M: [Pause]. You know I think that [pause] I don't know. I don't have as good a feel for that. I guess I read the climate surveys and I know that again underrepresented minorities of some sort or some group might be better to answer that. But maybe I'd be better to answer that. I don't know. I think

[pause] in my college from what I've seen and what I feel, I think that it's pretty good. I actually read a climate survey done a number of years ago and it was awful. It was awful. Now it's just so much better and why did it get better? I just got here three years ago so I walked into this. I read this past one and it was awful. And you just hope that those feelings don't still exist. Now I'm sure they do in an individual here and there but at least I don't hear any of those comments and I don't hear of any of those comments right now. Does that mean they don't exist or don't occur? I guess I'd be naïve to think that there aren't any, but they're [hostile comments] certainly not prevalent. They're not tolerated. They're not okay. So I think that it's, from my vantage point it's pretty good [821].

Madeline's comment has much to consider. She began by acknowledging that she doesn't know what the racial climate is like (despite reading the climate surveys), and then for a moment appeared to shift the responsibility for knowing and reporting climate information to people of color. Fortunately, I think she realized that as a university leader it is incumbent upon her to understand the experiences of different groups, since her decisions will certainly affect a wide range of different people and identities.

Madeline's assessment of the racial climate then turned very positive, not only is it good now (evidence by the fact that she doesn't hear any comments), but it is getting better, which is an indictment of the time before she arrive, as she mentioned. Perhaps more problematically, she went on to suggest that there may be a "comment" that

underrepresented people have to deal with but that those comments are “not prevalent,” because from *her perspective*, “they’re not tolerated.” This narrow assessment of the racial climate is centered on her individual experiences, which in her conception of the problem focuses on instances of hostility as “comments,” which is a part of the picture. In reality the nature of the white space is reinforced with much more than “comments.” Her inability to identify and discuss the climate is highlighted by the fact that assessment went from ignorance to quite positive in the matter of a couple of sentences. Not only has Madeline taken the opportunity to feign ignorance only to then make unsubstantiated proclamations, but she has also assigned people of color their experience (refers to the previous *Claims of Racial Equity* theme), and serves to devalue the actual experiences which people of color endure daily.

Following up on Madeline’s stories about how her unit does not tolerate instances of incivility and how faculty “shut it down,” I asked if all of the faculty felt pretty much the same way.

You know, I don’t know. I think the climate survey will tell us that but the department heads might be better equipped to answer that. I’m pretty sure there are exceptions and everybody doesn’t. I would say that the majority of people do and are getting better [836].

The evolution of Madeline’s response is almost comical, as it starts out with an admission that she doesn’t know and by the end not only do most people agree with her, but it’s getting better. This type of ignorance is potentially the scariest as this is indicative of a pathology where the white administrator thinks that they can simply make

a statement and have that manifested as truth. In considering the nature of epistemology and what counts as knowledge and truth, can an administrator simply create their own reality? When one considers the epistemology of climate surveys and the ability of those quantitative instruments to mislead the casual consumer of the data/reports, it is easy to see how one can make a statement like “At SRU most everyone feels good about the climate and welcomed in the community.” Since a majority of the people who are part of SRU and by extension the majority of the respondents to the survey are white, this may be true but incredibly deceptive because in the aggregate the voices of color are drowned out by the narrative of the privileged.

For example, one of the climate reports from an SRU unit began by citing the fact that overall people were satisfied with their jobs and felt empowered in their work. Several pages later it was noted that among people of color, about 25% of respondents reported harassment and/or discrimination on the basis of race/ethnicity, but the author of the study was quick to point out that there was insufficient data to identify the causes of these problems. Therefore, these data were relegated to being simply interesting, since no action could be taken without first understanding the cause. Perhaps this should have sent off alarms at SRU and been the cause of deeper study and perhaps a response, but no evidence of further action exists.

When asked what it was like to be white at SRU, Dan shared what felt like very awkward and perhaps a little defensive reflection. It was clear as he stumbled through his response that this was an issue that he has never really considered, nor was equipped to consider critically.

Well, you know, part of this is, is, um [pause] it is viewed, I mean, I do view this as, um, um [pause]. I guess I am being treated like any other individual, I have, um, um, that any other rights or responsibilities or that would be considered to be viewed as “appropriate” and “legally” expected and things of that nature [866].

While being treated appropriately and legally hardly describes the experience of being non-white, it is a nice contrasting starting point from which to consider the rest of his comments. This comment relies upon a meritocratic white framing where white people assume that everyone is treated the same. After stumbling through his thoughts, he described his imperative to learn more about the experiences of underrepresented people. Almost like a list of chores that he intends to someday address, his description of the necessity for ongoing learning felt somewhat disingenuous and utilitarian.

Well part of this is that I reflect on the fact that I need to be a learner and what that means for me is that I need to be open to alternate experiences, um, that people can bring to me, and alternate perspective, a different voice, so to speak that can inform me in ways I hadn't thought about [...]. And in all instances I need to be open to the input and in fact I would argue we need to be more sensitive to the fact that there is a different history, different view, different set of experiences, that I need to learn about, that I haven't thought about [873].

This comments amounts to a complicated way of saying “I don't know, but *maybe* one day I'll *think about* finding out.” Dan described the importance of understanding the experiences of others, even referencing the history of marginalized populations, but then in the same breath described his own understanding of the

experiences of people of color as deficient. As a longstanding, high-level administrator at SRU, he has a responsibility to already know about the experiences of the underrepresented, since his decisions affect these populations. Perhaps only in areas related to race or diversity could a professional admit to being deficient in their job performance without fear of judgment or reprisal. Dan unapologetically described his deficiency along with a half-hearted commitment to learn about these experiences. As a faculty member and a scholar in a discipline with a rich literature describing these experiences, there really isn't any excuse for remaining ignorant to these issues.

Toward the end of the interview, Dan changed his stance a little and shifted to describe the impossibility of knowing the experiences of others, a theme which will be developed more fully in a later, but also bears citing here as well.

But because I'm a white male, people will make a set of judgments that I don't understand, and again at some level, they're probably right. I don't understand. Of course, I don't understand what it's like to be another white male either at some point, but I probably really don't understand what it's like to be a women, and I don't understand what it's like to be a faculty of color and the experiences they have had, but it doesn't mean that I can't be committed to try to address issues that are of common interest [889].

In this statement Dan has digressed from "I don't know," to "nobody knows anything." Dan's sentiment seeks to possibly obscure the issue of his discomfort with his level of ignorance regarding the experiences of people of color. It should be pointed out that Dan is an academic leader in a unit where Critical Race Theory and Critical

Feminist Theory are commonly practiced by the faculty. His claims of being unable to know the experiences of others appear to be a tactic. By obscuring the question, he was able to respond to the notion that he cannot know what it is like to be another individual, which is obvious. But his claim goes on to devalue the paradigms that inform and give voice to the unheard, something to which I imagine many scholars might take exception. He concludes by stating that despite his ignorance it doesn't mean that he can't work on issues that are of "common interest." Again, this reeks of whiteness, since his issues as the leader, his interests will always take precedence and he has clearly demonstrated that issues of race and equality are not a common issue to be addressed (lest it would loom on his to-do list).

Finally, Sally described how she was ignorant not of the climate but something far more insidious and almost unbelievable.

I like to please people, I'm a kind of a people pleaser, I want people to like me, so it does, it does hurt my feelings for the lack of a better word, um, and if you know, why would you question that [her presence as a white women in her job as an administrator in diversity education]? I really am here for the right reasons, and I know I don't know everything and I'm gonna screw up sometimes, but I've always said that from the beginning. When I got hired into this department I made it very clear 'if you are looking for somebody that is a diversity expert, do not hire me, but I know students, I know how to work with a department, I know how to supervise staff, but I've always been an advocate and an ally, that's you know, that's my same sort of spiel, um, so if that's what you're looking for then

I'm the right person. But if you are wanting somebody who's an expert, don't hire me," [447].

Ignorance is not only bliss, but a privilege of whiteness. In what other area of a professional, administrative leadership would it be acceptable to simply claim ignorance for a major area of responsibility and get hired into a well-paid administrative position? Sally's claim of ignorance was also supported by her lack of understanding why she would fall under scrutiny as a white person doing diversity work. Her self-acknowledged lack of understanding for these issues makes her a liability in this important position and can only be understood when considering that she is white and working at SRU (characterized by heavy white space). It is clear that the white leadership at SRU actually sought out and rewarded Sally's ignorance. It should also be pointed out that Sally was appointed to her administrative position without an interview (surely a privilege of whiteness), so these pleas of "don't hire me," and confessions of ignorance fell not on deaf ears, but no ears at all.

Laissez-Faire Leadership

This theme describes the sort of laissez-faire attitude demonstrated when it comes to creating a culture of racial equality and the tacit acceptance of overt resistance at SRU. The first two examples are very similar in that they simply excuse the attitude of some people who are going to resist efforts at promoting equality, which has the consequence reinforcing the white space in the organization.

O: I just think there are some people you can try all you want and you're not gonna give it to them. You're not gonna be able to raise their awareness about

anything. It's almost like there's gonna have to be something that happens to them to make them realize why it's important to them or why it should be important to them.

D: Do those types of people sit at all levels of the organization?

O: Yeah, I think so. Yeah, because how many of my colleagues have you seen that are at diversity programs? Not that, I'm just saying, but yeah. I do think they sit at all levels, yeah [712].

We've tried to change it to recognizing the value of this. There are some faculty that you're never gonna be able to reach in terms of being able to help them understand [795].

These two comments by Olivia and Rick, respectively, illustrate how there is simply an acceptance of the fact that some people just won't change. Interestingly, from a strategic perspective it is interesting that administrators would be quick to surrender this point, knowing full well that to create change a critical mass needs to be convinced, not every single person. It would probably be difficult to get all of the faculty to agree that gravity exists, let alone that time and attention should be dedicated to racial equality. By claiming that some people will refuse to accept this priority, the subtle message is communicated to the organization that dissent is welcomed and will derail any further action. Another documented strategy for compelling people to change is to use social pressure from those who do embrace change to compel resisters to conform. Certainly, these seasoned administrators know this, but it is much easier to allow that an

amorphous group of “some” can be held out as a reason for lack of change. In this way the resisters are welcomed and encouraged.

Additionally, what is missing from the laissez-faire attitude is an acknowledgement that if these issues were important to the leadership, there would not be space for this explicit resistance. For example, despite being a non-denominational university, SRU still closes for a couple of weeks over Christmas. Certainly those who identify as Jewish, Atheist, Agnostic, Muslim, Buddhist, or any number of other faith traditions would resist this timing in favor of celebrations that their faith tradition embraces. However, at SRU (and nearly every other public university) this is part of the university practice, despite the resistance. Similarly, the leadership at SRU does not tolerate employees bringing pets to work. You can't simply decide that you love your cat so much that you can't bear the thought of being without it. However, when it comes to issues of race, attitudes that create marginalizing experiences aren't just accepted, they're tacitly encouraged since there are no consequences for pejorative, unconstructive resistance and certainly no rewards for working to create equitable spaces. Sean described how his work to create spaces of racial justice are received:

I get no recognition for all of this. Nothing. I mean there was a few people [who] noticed it, but I got no recognition or unusual support or anything like that. Nobody in administration came to me and said ‘you’re doing an incredible job,’ but I didn’t expect it. I mean you’d like it. I think if somebody came and looked at the record they’d go ‘wow,’ but nobody does and it’s largely forgotten, except for some individuals. That’s our world [755].

Sean's example illustrates the flip side of the paradigm that accepts and valorizes resistance is to simply ignore those who create the desired change. Working in tandem, these strategies ensure that the status quo will remain intact, which means that people of color will continue to be victimized by this acceptance of white supremacy. In a related example, Sean described what happens in the administrative spaces when issues related to race are brought forward explicitly.

Often being the lone voice, you raise an issue about race, everybody goes quiet, real quiet [pause]. So people in leadership tend to protect the status quo. They don't want things to get too radical because then there'll be ramifications. If you get too loud, the Curators will hear about it or the donors will hear about it [758].

Sean's illustration further describes the passive techniques utilized by administrators to reinforce the status quo, as well as the potential consequences for pushing too hard. Real or imagined, the potential for large-scale consequences (such as Curators or donors) is unclear since the status quo is seemingly so entrenched at every level of the organization that change is rarely, if ever, pursued by administration. Whether real or imagined, the threat is immobilizing.

People of Color as Chattel

This next theme is similar to the data described in an earlier sub-theme *appreciating difference*, with the difference being that these data are much more explicit in the description of how people of color are utilized as a tool for meeting SRU's goals.

In pursuit of “diversity,” students of color, in particular, have become a prize for many institutions that seek to demonstrate how their commitment to diversity, globalization and learning from difference has been realized.

You know, if you want to travel abroad, go develop a relationship and become a friend with some student from China, or Western Africa, or South America, or something. I guarantee you’ll travel abroad, they will take you home with them. They’ll introduce you to their families [215].

I know everyone thinks for diversity you need to, and it’s true, you need to have color up at the top levels but for students if you can get some of these advisors that they’re working with on a daily basis a different color, that they have to work with, and develop relationships with, I think that that’s one of the things we’re trying to do here is trying to bring in some of the [pause] and that’s good for students of color, because it could get them in [involved] where they can start working themselves up and SRU is a great place to start that [221].

Jack’s comments described two important points. First, his rhetoric hinges on the benefit to white students or to the university as a result, and perhaps a motivation for pursuing relationships with people of color. In the first example, Jack discusses why students at SRU should befriend international students (from three places noted to have populations that are largely, if not entirely, people of color) since this serves as a potential means for SRU students to access an inexpensive international experience. The framing of this statement is such that international students are a means to an end – their

ability to help educate the SRU students (who are largely white) and to potentially fund a trip abroad (“you’ll travel abroad, they will take you home with them.”).

In the second example, Jack discusses his strategy of seeking to hire professionals of color as a means by which to educate (largely white) students. As a tactic, professionals of color are valuable to the extent that they educate and serve white students. Only at the end, does he acknowledge that this is also of benefit to students of color, but only to the extent that it can allow students of color to “work themselves up,” which again implies a racist framing, whereby students of color are deficient in some way (structurally, intellectually, financially, etc.).

Each of these examples demonstrates how people of color are objectified in order to better the experience of the overwhelmingly white population at SRU. These examples build naturally into the second important point to be taken from these comments. As chattel, people of color serve to reinforce what Derrick Bell described as interest convergence whereby the only cause for racial progress is when there is a benefit to white people (Bell, 2004). In each of the cases above there is a benefit to people of color, but more importantly the primary beneficiaries are white people.

Showcase Diversity. As a natural extension of the idea that people of color are a tool to help SRU advance their goals, this sub-theme describes how people of color should be utilized to highlight SRU as a place embraces racial diversity.

We shoot ourselves in the foot with diversity a lot around here. We are much more diverse than [pause]. We just, and again I’ll use the term we don’t showcase it. You can’t take the athletic director and take these 20 white girls

with blonde hair and put them in front of ESPN and say these are the SRU Roughnecks and expect people to look out there and say “ha, ha, there’s not a Black girl out there, I’m not going there.” Instead of taking an opportunity to go recruit, there are some nice Black girls out there that can dance, would love to be [pause]. They’re out there somewhere. Do we, can we get them? Do we make it? So, I think in a lot of ways we shoot ourselves in the foot by not showcasing our diversity [pause] [204].

You walk around this campus, go walk around this campus today, when the students get back [from Holiday Break] you'll see diversity. Color, different countries, it's out here, but we've, [pause] for some reason we can't get this monkey off our back as being a [pause] and that's because I don't think we showcase it. I don't think we do enough to [pause] [206].

These comments about “showcasing” diversity speak to the highly problematic way that people of color serve as an opportunity to promote an image of SRU as an inclusive place. In particular, Jack’s description of finding “nice Black girls” evokes an image that relies on the white framing of people of color as potentially dangerous, and draws on the image of the highly stereotypical image of Black women being an “angry Black woman.” Further this comment invokes a patriarchal relationship by calling these college age students “girls,” a tactic utilized by slave masters that clearly remains an important part of American nomenclature. Finally, the value of these Black women is connected to a public relations strategy so that the public will see a person of color at

SRU, which will somehow demonstrate a commitment to diversity. Again, the white framing here is built on the idea that Black women don't belong at SRU, because the athletic director needs to "get them," since "they're out there somewhere," building on an illusion of these students as a scarce, rare gem.

These comments are telling because Jack has linked problems of inclusion and diversity at SRU to a problem of public perception, rather than actually examining why a negative public perception may exist. By Jack's assessment, if SRU is able to recruit and "showcase" more students of color, this issue of public perception could be solved. This conception of the problem demonstrates a deep lack of knowledge of the actual racial climate at SRU, and broadly the context for race in America.

A final observation about Jack's statements are the pauses and breaks in his speech. When Jack is speaking, he appears to be filtering his comments as he is speaking. The places where the pauses occur or where he fails to complete a sentence are in places where a highly problematic statement might be made. It appears that Jack only realizes that his thoughts might be racist a split second before the words fall out of his mouth, which results in him stopping himself. While there is no data to demonstrate what he was actually thinking in those moments, the thoughts that Jack did complete spoke volumes regarding his views of race.

The Epistemology of Race

This theme is derived from data from my interview with Dan. Importantly, this interview was unlike most other interviews because of Dan's defensiveness from the very start. Despite arranging the interview weeks in advance and having initially

scheduled 90 minutes, Dan hurriedly walked into the interview and announced that we only had 30 minutes. When I asked if it would be better to reschedule, even offering to return to the SRU campus at a later date when he might have more time, he asked if we could just do it now. This of course sent me, a junior researcher, into a panic because now an important conversation for my research was cut by two-thirds. Not really having the time to build rapport with this respondent, I had to launch right into race questions which was clunky to say the least, so in responding to the question about what it feels like to be white at SRU, Dan had not had time to really find his thoughts and get warmed up.

Well, you know, part of this is, is, um [pause] it is viewed, I mean, I do view this as, um, um, [pause], I guess I am being treated like any other individual. I have, um, um, that any other rights or responsibilities or that would be considered to be viewed as ‘appropriate’ and ‘legally’ expected and things of that nature. So I would say that it is, um, I don’t walk around thinking about privilege or things of that nature. The realization of privilege comes across often times in a forum that would say, which I have become aware of over the years, that if I didn’t have certain kinds of background experiences, including, you know, *potentially* [emphasized by respondent], my racial background, you know, then I would have a very different kind of experience [866-867].

Dan’s perspective that he is treated “like any individual” including being treated appropriately and legally, seems to suggest a subscription to the colorblind ideology, that there are not differences in experiences based on race. This is further underscored by the

acknowledgement of having learned about the possibility of privilege based on race, but Dan's emphasis of "potentially" communicated that this idea is still very much up for debate.

Dan then went on to suggest that there is a great deal of privilege associated with his title and position at the university, which is undoubtedly true.

[...] umm, now, I would also tell you that there is privilege tied to position here. So you know, sometimes I would argue that, that people's ideas are sometimes attended to more because of, in this case the administrative position that I hold. So, the question is, I didn't change racial ethnicities, when I went from being an Assistant, to an Associate, to a full professor, and [listed academic administrative positions, culminating in his current title]. But I can assure you my ideas are listened to a lot more as an [current title redacted] than I was as an Assistant Professor. [...] So you are framing it along the lines of race, but I am framing it along the lines of that there is an interaction obviously of race and position that's going on. And it would be difficult for me to say what it's like to be of a different race, and be in my administrative position because I've not been in that other administrator position. But I think that, I would say that again, I'm not going to hypothesize how other people experience this. It seems to me that [pause] um, I have an opportunity to have voice, but my opportunity to have voice is based on the quality of my ideas and an openness to this. The question that I have that I'm not aware of is 'what are the implications if I did not have,

um, [pause] or had a different racial makeup,' let's put it that way, if I was not white [869-870].

It bears mentioning again that this was the beginning of the interview. Dan's tactics are quite plain (perhaps since there is so little time for the interview), by utilizing administrative positional authority, Dan cast doubt upon and minimalized the role of race as a factor in being heard at the university. While this concept of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991) has been well documented in the literature as an opportunity to expose the realities of marginalized identities related to race, gender, and class, Dan utilized it in order to suggest that there are too many variables and he can't know the experiences of others. Since the question to which Dan was responding asked him to describe what is like to have white privileges in society and at SRU (responding to the idea that he *potentially* has these), this is a very defensive tactic to ensure that he will not have to name or describe the seats of privilege on which he sits.

Perhaps even more problematically, Dan went on to continue to suggest the impossibility of him knowing or understanding the experiences of others. As cited earlier, several faculty members within Dan's administrative purview work with Critical Race Theory, Critical Feminist Theory, Critical Queer Theory, etc. After asking Dan to describe any ways in which people of color might be marginalized at SRU, he responded with this comment where he appeared to be trying to educate me.

D: [...] But are there things that happen that are part of the structure of the university that might marginalize further [interrupted]

Dan: Well, I think, you know, again part of the challenge, I think that it's really, [sigh], I don't think that, well, I can't speak for everybody, but my notion here is the fact that we are, um, we are bound by our lived experience and our set of expertise, right? So, by definition [pause] if you are a faculty member of color, you are going to have, you're gonna, there's going to be less people who share some of the, by the presumption is that people of color are all experienced the same things, or that African Americans experience the same, which is just as ludicrous as saying all whites experience the same thing, so you have to be very careful in making these generalizations [881].

Dan's clarification that we are "bound by our lived experiences" is a unsophisticated observation that only bears mentioning to illustrate the myopic conceptualization of the role of epistemology. Obviously, there are realities that can only be known individually, but part of the research enterprise is dedicated to investigating an understanding of the lived experiences of others. It is incumbent on the disciplines that are traditionally associated with race (Sociology, Education, Anthropology, most notably, but many others to be sure), to seek to give voice to traditionally marginalized populations and empower their narrative to serve as a catalyst for change and empowerment. Dan's central tenet in his discourse appears to be that it is impossible to know anything about anyone, which would be problematic but expected from a freshmen in college, but completely unacceptable from a scholar in an administrative position. Finally, it should be noted that each of the questions that Dan (refused to) answer queried him on *his* experiences and *his* understanding of race issues;

his responses that sought to generalize to his knowledge of every experience is thus exposed as a tactic.

Given Dan's notion of the impossibility of knowing or understanding another's experience, I was surprised that at how he responded to my final question.

D: Let me jump to the last question. As a white administrator are you ever stereotyped?

Dan: Oh yeah!

D: Talk about that. What does that feel like, how are you stereotyped?

Dan: I think I am stereotyped in a fashion of, of, um, [pause], I would probably say [pregnant pause], you know, it's along the lines, if you are an administrator, and probably maybe even translated, if you're a white administrator, again, I can only reflect on what I am, then first of all [pause] um, um, you may not be sensitive to, you may not understand on some level you don't, but understand what it's like to be a woman, understand what it's like to be, um, a faculty member of color, um, and I think I'm on some level, um, that is, um, there is some level of truth to the fact that I don't understand, that the stereotype is more than just the obvious reality, is the notion that I cannot appreciate, or it's not really important to me, or it's only a set of words that are operating, and I will tell you, you know, in my, again this is a set of 'I' statements here [887].

This seemingly never-ending string of pauses, partial thoughts, and non sequiturs was a moment for Dan to reflect on his treatise that nobody can know anything about anyone else. My point in asking that question was to allow the white administrators the

space to describe a situation where perhaps they have felt marginalized because of their race. For Dan, this question and his response illustrated a fundamental flaw in his entire argument, which is that there are plenty of things we know about different groups, and while stereotypes remain pejorative, it is an example of how there might be common experiences shared by groups (for example the stereotype experienced by many Black students that they must be an athlete is a shared experience of oppression by many Black students). His adamant proclamation that he has been stereotyped illustrates how he understands this idea of a group identity and shared experiences, and now his entire argument has come unraveled.

White Victimhood

As a white researcher investigating issues of whiteness, I thought I was aware of what I might encounter as I interviewed white administrators about their race. However, I was completely taken off-guard by the data that Sally shared with me where she framed herself as a victim in the situational context that surrounded her promotion to an administrative position. While she did not classify herself as a victim of racism, *per se*, it appears based on the stories she told that she has felt marginal by virtue of her race in a university context that appears by many measures to be a very traditional, conservative, white space.

For Sally, there was a great deal of controversy that surrounded her promotion, and as previously discussed, she was promoted despite an acknowledged lack of understanding of a major component of the position, without an interview process or the opportunity to be vetted, and without a terminal degree (which many in this position-

level have). As a result, there was a great deal of understandable consternation among many people of color at SRU. In the fallout that surrounded this situation, Sally described some of the situations where she felt marginal.

Um, what I have found then and now being in the position that I'm in, being in the department and doing some of the work is that sometimes people will question my authenticity in this. And so that's where being a white person in doing diversity work, that I see, that I see my race play out more than any other, um, job, or any other you know any other thing I've been involved before. I was white, it didn't matter, we didn't talk about it. But now I'm doing diversity work that I find sometimes, and it may be overtly questioned or it may be just a suspicion [445].

Sally's lack of understanding that doing work at a university and doing diversity work have different implications based on identity is important as it illustrates a disregard for the role race plays in the daily lives of all people. Unfortunately, in her many conversations with people to help make sense of what she was experiencing, there was an epiphany where Sally came to believe that this was not a critique of her personally, but instead about the symbolic nature of having a white person in this administrative position.

And I didn't understand, I took it very personal 'why would they question me? I'm just Sally.' I am, this is, I've always tried to be an advocate, I've always tried to be an ally and maybe I don't understand everything, but you know, my dad worked at a mental health facility, and so I have a lot of knowledge of

working with mentally retarded people, um, and I'm not comparing them to people of color, I'm just saying that for people that I am not a part of that group, I've always tried, you know, to be an advocate, an ally, and so why would someone question that? And that, that really cleared a lot of things up for me. It wasn't necessarily about me as a person, but what I represented. So, that's what I've seen and that's why I [pause] and knowing that now, that helps me in how I talk to people and how I talk to groups and all of that [446].

Sally's failure here is multifaceted. Claiming a marginalized space because of the suspicious circumstances surrounding her hire obscures what should have been obvious to anyone who has studied or understands race issues: there are times when a person of color is the person necessary in a position. If your job is to support underrepresented students and educate a campus community on the realities of oppression and hegemony, and there is already an acknowledged lack of expertise in the scholarship of supporting and educating around these issues, then identity becomes *even more* salient. Lacking not only a scholarly understanding of the issues, but also the lived experience with these issues is a crippling deficiency that means that this this is very much about her *and* her race. As a social construct, race has a great deal of power to not only frame assumptions about individuals and groups, but it affects the ability of underrepresented groups to succeed academically, socio-economically, and with regard to health. The idea that "I'm just Sally" is the personification of whiteness and clearly illustrates the problem: to assume that as a white person is not (at least) complicit with systems of oppression and hegemony has never been a wise choice, since it so rarely

occurs. Sally's failure to recognize this is probably cause for even greater concern among communities of color since it illustrates a colossal blind spot in understanding whiteness. When juxtaposed with a quote from Sean (someone who is deeply immersed in the scholarship), the difference is startling: "I always assume I'm in a racist climate context. I assume all of this bias. I assume most of the leadership [at SRU] and most of the white people around me have very little clue about it," [753].

Ironically, the literature provides many examples where white people openly question the qualifications of people of color on the basis of race, with the assumption that a person of color was not well-qualified for their position, despite a list of achievements and accolades that demonstrates otherwise (Stanley, 2007). In Sally's case there were not accolades or scholarship to demonstrate qualifications, however she failed to acknowledge that her difficulty would have been justified by comparison. Unlike the *constant* struggle described by well-credentialed scholars of color (replete with examples of micro aggressions and overt racism spanning their entire educational and professional lives), there is not the cushion of an administrative position earning administrator salaries for them to fall back upon.

This category has documented a great deal of data describing the ways in which white administrators act, or fail to act, in order to protect and maintain white space at SRU. In addition to documenting strategies and tactics utilized by white administrators, a great deal can be understood about the mindset and recognition of race and racism from the tactics employed. After talking to these administrators, it is clear that these are not issues that they consciously think about often, and certainly very rarely discuss,

evidenced by their unsophisticated ways of framing their ideas and problematic conceptions that would hardly be appropriate for a college student, let alone a university administrator. Taken together, these data suggest that the deep lack of understanding informs problematic decisions that have the cumulative effect of creating and maintaining hostile white spaces for people of color at SRU.

White Decision Making

In the era of reality television and technology that enables a video to be shot at any time, there is a premium placed on documenting events and situations that have been previously only accessible to very few. To be sure, the increased scrutiny of law enforcement can be seen as an outcome of the ability to objectively document a situation. Tellingly, the reality that the Black community has endured when it comes to issues of mistreatment by law enforcement has been well documented for generations in in first-hand accounts, and more recently through media including notably music (see Public Enemy, NWA, Ice Cube, Ice T, Rage Against the Machine, Stevie Wonder, and Lauryn Hill, to name just a few). However, it is only now that the videos of these violent atrocities can be widely viewed and shared in such a way that whites are becoming aware and involved in these issues (albeit limited, but surely much more so than previously).

Sadly, as an example of how whiteness and white space operate, there is a bill before the legislatures in Illinois and Texas that will attempt to limit or ban the ability of people to record interactions with police. It seems that having an objective documentation of instances is too big a risk? This represents an abdication of truth and

justice on the part of the legislature whose actions will certainly harm the general public (disproportionally people of color), but will prevent documentation for the protection of those law enforcement officers who are acting responsibly. Apparently, there is more of an interest in protecting bad cops than the good cops and the general public (who, it should be pointed out, the police are charged to protect and serve).

While I was unable to record and document the decision making spaces for administrators of color, I was able to ask white administrators about those spaces. Similar to interactions with the police, it appears that white administrative decision making spaces could also benefit from the use of cameras, as there were problematic situations and contexts documented by the white administrators I interviewed. This not only corroborates the evidence cited by the administrators of color, but speaks again to a deep and endemic problem regarding white administrators' understanding of race and whiteness.

Peeking Backstage: White Executive Decisions

While it may be impossible to peek into some of the white executive decision making spaces, I feel that I had the opportunity to document some unscripted backstage thoughts in the course of my interviews. This point was highlighted in my interview with Olivia. About three-quarters of the way through the interview Olivia caught a glimpse of the recorder and was reminded that I was recording our conversation (something that we discussed before the interview and was disclosed in the Informed Consent).

O: I had forgotten we were being taped, by the way, but okay.

D: Oh, I'm sorry.

O: No, I wouldn't have said -- it's fine. [714]

It appears clear that Olivia was cognizant of the problematic nature of her narratives on race, and further this type of information can be dangerous since administrators are tacitly and overtly rewarded for maintaining the white space and at times punished for disrupting the white space. The evidence that my audio recording provides is similar to the video recording in that it documents exactly what happened. Not unlike the police officers clandestinely inflicting violence upon unarmed people of color, it appears that Olivia would have liked to share her problematic understanding of race surreptitiously.

This theme describes some of the tactics utilized by white administrators as they consider and execute their decisions. Interestingly, a peek into the head of white administrators in this unique space (when they are making decisions) helps tell a great deal about what is implicitly valued and how they have been socialized regarding race. Rick's perspective is probably not unique and almost always surfaces as a potential solution when people are navigating a conflict.

Certainly there have been robust discussions about how to do something and just like other robust discussions that happen where people disagree about the right way to do something, I guess what I'm trying to say is that it's not unique to the fact that it was a clash of diverse from a cultural background. It comes down to mediating that, being a diplomat in a situation to help people find common ground and that kind of thing. You just focus on the positive, on the

commonality of it rather than on trying to decide who's right and who's wrong because there frequently isn't anybody that's right or wrong in that kind of situation [787].

Rick's comment illustrates the way that issues of race or diversity are considered entirely subjective, and almost meaningless, since there is no right or wrong. In this type of framing of race and diversity, it is completely appropriate and validated to have wildly problematic views that are informed by nothing more than opinion and anecdotal experience. To compare the history of racism and the entire body of race literature against any individual person's unsubstantiated speculation and opinions is not only counter-scholarly, but it places people of color at a distinct disadvantage, since these scholars are arguing a point that Rick described being neither right or wrong. If nothing else comes out of this research project, I hope that the point will be underscored that the history and legacy of oppression is not up for debate, particularly with people who have unexamined privilege coupled with a counter-scholarly perspective which ignores the entire history of race scholarship and the critical paradigm. Before engaging in some sort of debate regarding race or oppression, it is incumbent upon our scholars to examine the literature and come to these discussions as informed scholars, rather than petulant obstructionists relying upon a rationale that they would never allow in their own discipline (opinion as equal to empirically demonstrated fact).

It is further instructive that these robust discussions (that Rick described) do not culminate in some sort of learning experience or informed dialogue, but rather ends with the white administrator choosing to focus on the positive and the commonality. This

strategy sets the organization up to ignore the issues of race and oppression in favor of maintaining the status quo, which is not only already in place, but likely reinforced by generations of white leadership that have similarly forgone the opportunity to really engage race issues and have that open and honest dialogue that Madeline and Olivia described as a solution. Further the ideas of “positive” and “commonality” are racialized in this context. It would be likely tremendously positive and affirming for many people of color to have discussions and find solutions that seek to improve their experience at SRU; however, that would likely not be understood as positive for many white people, so therefore focusing on the positive refers to ignoring race issues all together.

Rick went on to describe a type of administrative intervention that had the intended purpose of increasing the racial diversity of his unit. The idea is to increase the financial incentive so that they could compete for the top-level scholars and graduate students. On the surface this appears to be an idea that is really designed to move the unit forward, but when critically examined, it can be seen for what it actually serves.

The majority of them [current faculty] are getting the message [that diversity is important] and they also want to see that it’s important to the administration. If this is something that’s important is it in the evaluations process? It is in the financial incentive and some of those kinds of things? And so we’ve tried to insert it into those areas. It’s in our department annual evaluations when we have annual reviews of all our departments. There is a gender and ethnic diversity metrics in there that are measured and they’re evaluated against [...]. We have special funding set aside to help departments have better financial packages to be

more aggressive in recruiting graduate students because, like I said, graduate students are looking for the best place to get your grad degree and the best financial package and so we have to make that as attractive as possible, top-up kinds of things, and what we call signing bonuses, but really it's an upfront payment to entice them to come [796].

On the surface this appears to be a series of very strong and bold moves in Rick's unit, and frankly, it's among the best initiatives that was noted in the course of these interviews. While the success of these initiatives is still being determined through traditional evaluation rubrics, there are a couple of issues that surface as potentially problematic. First, in conversations with SRU informants, I asked about formal evaluations of race and diversity to better understand how this functionally and practically operates on campus. My informant (with excellent access to information) described how this was actually part of a broader initiative, but has a huge and predictable obstacle to success. That problem is that the evaluation on any individual's diversity metric is still a very subjective measure that is judged by, in an overwhelming number of situations, a white administrator who does not have any special training or understanding of race or diversity issues. As a result, these evaluations were rarely, if ever, used to engage a critical conversation and more times than not was simply marked with a positive assessment. In theory something like holding all levels of the organization responsible through the evaluation process would be a huge boon, but in reality requires the commitment to build the capacity for this type of assessment into all

levels of the organization, including opportunities to assess, educate, and remediate around these issues, something that SRU appears to be unprepared to pursue.

Second, the idea of simply throwing money at a problem comes to mind, since there is such an emphasis on creating financially lucrative packages and even utilizing signing bonuses. This appeal will certainly work to recruit many folks from a variety of races and socio-economic backgrounds, but the application of these incentives will be interesting to understand. Many of the policies at SRU (and most all state, public universities) are color-blind by design, so it will be important to understand if these packages are utilized in a color-conscious way. Further, from a critical perspective, there is an element of this that feels disingenuous and deceitful, since these packages appear to be functioning within a racial context that may be problematic (based on Jasmin's assessment). In this way, these payments entice students to join an environment that may be very difficult and possibly end with students being hurt or emotionally damaged from the unchecked white space that is allowed to exist. This policy feels a little like the purchase of indulgences in the middle ages, where Rick knows that students are joining a difficult situation, but in order to feel better about this, he is authorizing pain and suffering payments, which is again better than nothing, although failing to recognize how the white space operates and fixing that problem, this solution is likely destined to fail in solving the actual problem.

Madeline also shared a deeply paternalistic perspective of decision-making in her description of how she has been able to infuse lessons of race pragmatically into her unit's functions.

Well, I think it's mainly educating a group because every hiring decision has more than, it's never one person's choice. It's always engaging a group and even if one person has the power and overrides and makes it, is that the best decision for this individual? Because you've always got to think about what's right for the place. What's right and what's right for the place and what's right for the individual. And is it right for an individual to bring them into an environment that, I wouldn't really classify it as hostile, but, is perhaps disadvantaged from the front end because it wasn't a group decision? I think the most important thing that I try to do is do group decisions and a lot of discussion on the front end to make sure that there's buy-in [pause]. Dictatorial responses will not change a climate in a positive way [823].

Madeline's rhetoric describes how on one hand she relies greatly on buy-in and group decision making as a source of leverage to ensure that the processes are not "dictatorial." This appears to be a best practice by most accounts, particularly when dealing with faculty members. However, in perhaps an even more dictatorial approach, these committees are empowered with an infallible privilege to decide what is the best fit for a potential candidate. When the qualified candidate does not get the opportunity to decide for themselves, this is an abdication of justice. Importantly, this appears to only be the case for candidates of color, since the acknowledged environment may be racially hostile or "disadvantaged." The fit appears to pertain to the faculty members of color and their ability to thrive in these white spaces. Perhaps, instead of bringing in new faculty members who will thrive in these racist environments, it should be incumbent

upon the administrator to correct the environment so that it is safe and equitable for all people. To acknowledge that it is racially problematic is a big and important step. However, to acknowledge this problem as an excuse to not bring in qualified candidates of color is to reinforce the racist administrative hegemony.

Olivia also discussed the idea of a dictator and being averse to this type of approach, but in this case she took that time to name a fellow administrator that she views as a dictator.

Well, I know that under Martin's leadership they are making a concerted effort to dictate, which is not always good, so much diversity training or classes. The only reason we know that is because my direct report hears it in some of her conversations with individuals in those areas saying, 'when is the next class?' and 'here's what we're doing.' I don't really know that dictating is doing it [spoken in a whisper] but sometimes you have to dictate it to get them to begin to appreciate it. You can't win for losing [711].

Olivia's critique of Martin, one of the very few administrators of color, classifies his work as inconsistent with strategies that will work by virtue of being overly prescriptive. Only at the very end in a whisper does she acknowledge that this might be a strategy that needs to be employed in order to raise the level of education around these issues (by providing a space whereby employees can gain a scholarly perspective without the rigors of taking coursework). Importantly, Olivia acknowledged that she has only come by this information through informal surveillance of direct reports and conversations that they have overheard. Based on these comments, her opinions are not

informed by conversations with Martin about staffing or climate challenges, but are coming as second-hand information. Further, it should be noted that Martin and Olivia are peers – there is not a supervisory relationship, so that Olivia’s opinion that she is freely sharing of Martin’s work is inappropriate particularly since it appears to be uninformed. While it could be argued that her opinion is inconsequential, it should be clear that there are consequences since this is how narratives get written about individuals and their work/contribution to an organization.

Martin was not the only administrator of color that Olivia singled out for critique. The main university diversity officer was also described as too aggressive.

O: And yet, I can appreciate her (diversity officer) role at this university and what she’s got to do and understand why she’s like that, but I do think, I’ll be honest, I think more than anything it’s not helping as much as I think it could. I think if there was this not quite so on the far side of things I think it would push us further ahead quicker.

D: Yeah?

O: I think that’s what I would say.

D: Let me make sure I understand. So if sometimes there’s a presence in the room that’s pushing perhaps to far, too fast. So you feel like if you say anything that’s not lock and step with that position [interrupted].

O: Yes.

D: You might be pounced on or made to feel marginalized?

O: Right, which is bad because I think a lot of good dialogue could come out of just voicing your opinion and having it discussed and resolved or at least allowing opinions to be heard [690-691].

A couple of important revelations help illustrate Olivia's perspective and provide insight on the white administrative decision-making. First, Olivia's description of the diversity officer as being too aggressive relies upon a common, long-held, racist stereotype, since the diversity officer at SRU happens to be a Black woman. In the white, racial frame, Black women are often classified as angry and overly aggressive, which was reiterated in comments provided by Angela and Jasmin whereby they felt they had to be overly-happy and almost cartoonish in order to truly be heard and not perceived as angry or a threat.

The stereotype of the diversity officer as an angry, Black woman provides a framework to understand why Olivia might describe the environment as too hostile for her, and presumably other white administrators, to share their perspective. In the types of white spaces that have been described thus far, it would seem difficult to believe that a woman of color could yield so much power as to shut down conversations among white people in a white space. The fear that Olivia described is that fear of saying something wrong and being pounced on, which is perhaps more an acknowledgement of the discomfort she has with her understanding of race and the inability to articulate herself without inadvertently utilizing a racist narrative. If this is truly the case, this is not an issue of the diversity officer being too aggressive, but a deep insecurity that is manifested as blame of the person who would, ironically enough, be victimized by such

comments. This appears to be classic displacement, but ultimately, it is the white person who has the privilege to frame the narrative of the Black woman being too aggressive, and preventing the conversations that would allow her to grow and learn.

Building on this strategy of framing administrators of color in stereotypical ways, Olivia went on to impugn the hiring practices that result in people of color being hired into administrative positions.

D: [...] Is there any innovative practice or anything like that that somebody's done somewhere where they were able to improve their diversity by doing this [practice]?

O: No. I think sometimes you see people who are in a decision-making role [pause] make that bold leap to say 'I'm gonna try this female or person of diversity.' Where maybe that's not the best candidate, but to me you don't always have to get the best candidate at the time. You should be looking for the future and say what can that individual bring to this organization that makes it a richer organization. So, I think you see some bold decisions-makers that do that [pause]. I can't think of what we at this university have done like that because certainly [hiring] Martin, I don't think was a bold decision. I think he was the most qualified person. So I wouldn't call him the bold decision that I'm talking about, but I'm just trying to think if there's anybody here that would [pause] no, I don't think we've made that bold decision [uncomfortable laugh] [705-706].

Olivia's comment again draws on a stereotypical narrative that people of color (or in her words 'person of diversity') are hired as part of a bold decision that takes a

chance on someone who is not the best candidate. The implication is that a person of color would likely never be the most qualified person for a given position. It should further be noted that the only way this narrative makes sense is if the organization is entirely or overwhelming white to begin with, otherwise this would not be a “bold leap” but rather just another hiring process that sought and hired the best candidate. The narrative that frames people of color as inferior is coupled in this narrative of white supremacy, since presumably the best candidates in this scenario were white.

Another important point to take from this is the fact that Olivia was unaware of any innovative programs that seek to infuse diversity into organizations. Given her role in personnel and working with policies and procedures, this is a huge liability for SRU, an organization that should be trying innovative practices wherever possible. Such practice is actually mandated by SRU Affirmative Action plan that is reported to the federal government whereby the university reports on efforts and efficacy to improve diversity.

Olivia’s descriptions of these white administrative decision making spaces provided a unique understanding of how she views and understands race in the context of her work. Olivia went even further in sharing candid observations of race in administrative spaces, described below.

Comfort in Exclusively White Meeting Spaces. In the months and years that preceding my interview with Olivia, SRU, like many universities, had to face very difficult decisions regarding lay-offs in the era of housing market crash, the recession/depression, shrinking allocations from state agencies, and reduced research

funding in the era of sequestration. Regarding the lay-offs, there were many low-wage earners at SRU who ended up losing their job despite many, many years of loyal service, while nary was a white administrator affected by these budget shortfalls. In discussing the role of race in decision making, Olivia referred to this important context at SRU.

O: Well, I think it does [race impact decision making], especially in my role right now with personnel. I think I always have to be mindful of any kind of adverse effect that some of our actions may have with race. The lay-offs are a perfect example. We, sitting around the table understand exactly who's gonna be affected by this decision or possible decision. So, I think more of us have it in the back of our mind, I'm not sure we voice them sometimes. I don't know that I would have voiced it when I was necessarily over in more of a finance role instead of a personnel role. But I think they do. I think we have it in the back of our mind, but I think that usually, typically, at some meeting somebody brings up some aspect of whether it's race or gender or whatever, they bring up some aspect of how is this gonna impact these groups. How is our decision gonna impact these groups

D: Why do you think it's [race] not brought up more explicitly in those meetings?

O: I think it can be uncomfortable for people. I think [pregnant pause] and this is you [trust in the researcher], I don't know that I could have an open and honest conversation with the diversity officer because I'm not [pregnant pause], I think because of her role and I will say [pause], I'm just gonna say because of her role

I think she has to be way over on one side of issues. I think sometimes that polarizes the discussion. So, I don't think I could have an open and honest conversation with her [688-689].

This comment preceded the comment that she made above regarding her discomfort in talking to the diversity officer. There are two important points to be taken from this comment: first, the way that race is considered in decision-making spaces. Olivia makes it clear that the implications of race are understood in decision-making spaces, but the administrators fail to verbalize and bring attention to those issues. In this way, the decision that is made fails to actually consider race explicitly, meaning that it is very easy to dismiss race concerns when negotiating the final decision. By failing to consider race along with the important cited factors which certainly include cost, timeline, and externalities (to name just a few), race is easily forgotten, since there is not an administrator who is holding the group accountable for those outcomes.

Second, Olivia also introduces the idea that race issues are not genuinely discussed in front of the Black, woman diversity officer. This illustrates how white administrators fear/distrust of people of color can be manifested in a pragmatic way. Since the white administrators do not feel comfortable discussing race issues in the presence of the person of color, the issues are not brought forward, and likely fail to be incorporated into final decisions. In this way, whiteness and white space intersect to have a detrimental impact on people of color at SRU. It is important to note that the university did go through with lay-offs and dismissed a large segment of their service workers, an overwhelming majority of whom were people of color. In the final analysis,

it did not matter that white administrators claimed to be cognizant of race issues, because ultimately a highly racialized decision was still made.

Building on this candid opportunity, I asked questions about the nature of these white administrative spaces.

D: When you're in one of these decision-making spaces and it's these senior level administrators, I'm speculating here. I don't know. Is it mostly white people in the room with perhaps a couple people of color?

O: Yeah, I would say you're right.

D: Are there ever times when it's just white people?

O: Yeah, I'm thinking about our exec meeting because we make decisions there are we're all white.

D: Does it feel safe to talk about race or some of those issues in those spaces?

O: It probably feels a little bit safe.

D: Yeah? Why do you think that is?

O: [Pause]. Good question [pause]. I think because we all feel guarded about everything [694].

The implication of this idea is that these white administrators are guarded about race and are unwilling to discuss race issues with people of color, but interestingly do not appear to have a problem with discussing race issues (on a limited basis, based on a previous comment) with exclusively white people. This unwritten, exclusive practice ensures that racial issues will only be considered in the backstage, preventing any modicum of honesty or authenticity with regard to race (ironically, contrary to the

solution that Olivia suggested earlier regarding open and honest dialogue). The only acknowledgement of the people of color appears to be an acknowledgement of their absence from the space. It is no wonder that people of color appear to be framed with pejorative stereotypes, and have an experience that is almost completely foreign to white administrators: they are systematically marginalized from important decision making spaces. Olivia went on to describe a mindset that would suggest intentionality to this segregation.

D: [...] So when you're making a decision and there is a racialized component, do you feel more comfortable [stumbling over words] [interrupted]

O: Yeah. You mean are you more comfortable with whites only? *Oh yeah, yeah [emphasis from respondent].*

D: [...] [stumbling over words]. Had you noted it before I asked about it?

O: No. Now you're gonna make me aware of it [696].

The idea that this was just coming to Olivia's consciousness appears to be a bit of creative misremembering, as she mused further about the comfort level in exclusively white environments:

D: [...] How does it feel to be in those rooms knowing that it's mostly white people sitting around the table? Is it more comfortable to talk about race in those situations when there's something like that where it's like 'oh my gosh.'

O: It's definitely more comfortable when they all look like you [720].

In these two comments we learn a great deal about the functioning of white space, since Olivia earlier nominated dialogue as a form of rectifying racial

misunderstanding, only to then hypocritically and insincerely describe how she not only does not engage in race conversations, but actively participates in decision making spaces where the lack of people of color is preferred, as a safe and comfortable environment.

Importantly, Olivia acknowledges that a person of color being in the room could have changed the conversation: “[...] I’m trying to think how would some of our conversations, how they would have gone if he [former Black administrator who was in executive meetings] was in the room. And would they have gone differently because of his race or his business experiences [pause]. Probably a little of both,” [697].

The intentional segregation that white administrators participate in appears to be done out of a sense of comfort and safety, to the peril of people of color who then not only do not have access to decision making spaces, but their lived experiences are intentionally unknown and ignored.

Strategy. Building on the idea of intentionality, this sub-theme describes how white administrators deploy strategies that purport to advance the general idea of diversity or social justice, but in effect appear to have at best no effect, or at worst a result to reinforce the institutional white space.

Prevalent in this theme is the sentiment of moving slowly. In effect, these white administrators are advocating a strategy that seeks to progress and change slowly. Truly, this sentiment has always been one that accompanied attempts at racial progress, including through reconstruction following slavery, and through the integration of schools following the *Brown* decision to name just a couple. Importantly, by slowing

the progress to a crawl, actual progress can be effectively halted utilizing such a strategy. Evidence of how slowing progress can thwart racial progress is clearly visible in the Jim Crow racism that is an enduring legacy of former generations, but clearly still has penetrating effects when considering the prison industrial complex (Alexander, 2010), the ways that laws are created and enforced with explicit racial implications (Moore, forthcoming), inadequate health care leading to health disparities, inequitable access to quality primary and secondary education, disparities in housing, employment, (Feagin, 2006) and the list goes on.

In John's example, the use of a slow strategy is framed as a value-added approach whereby change is assumed to penetrate deeper levels of an organization by going slowly. When asked about being concerned that his strategy of going slow might be hurtful, John described his mindset.

Yeah, and that's a good question. That's something that I ask myself a lot because I think that I do feel like I am very strategic in the way that I'm doing things around these issues in the ways that I'm moving forward and that's why I put myself, you know, I chose intentionally to advise the diversity task force, again, I thought that that was a way that I could make subtle change, or I can work with students to make subtle change in this department. So, I often work on the sidelines, I find gaps, you know, I find allies, but I often wonder sometimes and I moving too slow? You know, are there, am I missing opportunities to be more aggressive? And, not that I'm afraid of doing that but I've also, and looking back at my 27 years in higher education, I think about

times that maybe I was too aggressive, I was too self-righteous, I was [pause] self-righteous is a big one, or too determined that I think I could have gone about this in a more, in a slower, in a more deliberate manner and gotten maybe the same results, if not better results, because also, I think what I'm really trying to create is systemic change. Not just superficial, in the moment change, but change that can be here after I leave and that's why I think, I've really been thinking about people here and allowing the organization to shift more organically, because I think over time [the changes] will stay [157-158].

In this example, John uses several justifications for his slow pace. To delve into his comments, John begins by framing himself as the person who knows best, so at the end of the day, even if the liberation project is moving slowly it is because he as the expert in charge has deemed it appropriate. John went on to even share his credentials (27 years of experience) to ensure that the point was made that he is in the position to know best how to create social change.

John also shared how he viewed himself as self-righteous, which could have been corrected with a slower pace. While he did not share any specific examples of how his complacency could have been remediated or better served with a strategy of moving slower, it appears that he feels that he has faced resistance in his past work. As a result, he may have faced less resistance when moving slower or not at all, which is consistent with the way that whiteness works to serve and reinforce the white institutional space. By simply moving more slowly, he claims that he has the same or even better outcomes, which allows him to make what he called "systemic change." However, in a previous

comment he described what he has actually been able to accomplish, which appears to reinforce the white space:

Sometimes I know, I guess that I'm, I am comfortable in knowing that the change didn't happen, but I feel at peace with what I said, and who I said it to, and how I said it, knowing that maybe what I did was plant a seed. So, I feel like I plant a lot of seeds [pause] um, there are sometimes where I feel like I've also gone back to areas where I feel like change hasn't happened, and I've jiggled the chains, and a little bit more to say 'you know what, it's time we have to make some change here.' So, when I confront, I guess I'm also very sensitive to who I'm confronting and their base of knowledge, their ability to make the change [156].

John's description of being comfortable and at peace with not enabling change and rather just "planting seeds" or "jiggling chains" is a far cry from the systemic change that John claims to facilitate through his work. This type of unimaginative strategy allows the complacent white administrator to feel good about his effort, but in terms of accomplishments, does nothing to change the normative space. Instead the space has shaped John and his strategy by dictating to him what behaviors are acceptable and which are not, a lesson that John appears to have learned and incorporated into his philosophy and practice.

The desirability of the slow pace of change was one described by several administrators. Among all of those who shared this type of narrative, Olivia's demonstrated how this is not only a strategy, but appears to be her sincere desire.

[Long pause]. Well, I don't think it's gonna come in the short period of time.

Umm...I think it's just a slow and steady [pause] walk where there are programs that are presented, where there are [pause] incidents that occur and discussions about the learning that we can all [pause] any kind of learning that we can have from those. I don't think it's gonna come very quickly, but I do think we've all made great progress. I shouldn't minimize that, but I think, for instance, I think stuff like all the study abroad and when our faculty and some of our staff have experiences and maybe with the travel and how readily it is, how easy it is for us to travel, maybe we're getting more and more individuals that are then having those experiences and bringing them back. So maybe that will move us along the continuum quicker, but I do think it's gonna be slow and steady [718].

Olivia's comment returns to the desire to slow change multiple times and reinforces the status quo as inevitable. The rationale for this limited progress hinges the desire for executive level leaders to embrace this type of change, which clearly, Olivia and many of the other white administrators at SRU will not pursue. In terms of strategy, it is very different to identify changes in the climate and environment as a priority as opposed to something that might happen in the distant future. Olivia also relies on a ridiculous metric that will enable changes in the climate – that faculty and staff who travel abroad will bring a more enlightened perspective and will inform the necessary change. This is not only untenable because as Olivia has demonstrated through her own narrative, her extensive travel has not informed a lens focused on social justice, but also because if this was true, research universities would already have moved beyond white

space since there is an abundance of international people, coupled with students and faculty with study abroad experiences – yet the white space remains.

Finally, Madeline also articulated a desire for slow change, but also described a strategy for how the climate could collectively be improved. Not only is this strategy slow, but it has largely been employed and already had few demonstrable successes.

Well, I'll tell you that at one institution where I was, you had to do them [diversity training] but they were low quality. They were more of an annoyance than a benefit. I won't say whether we should or shouldn't but I would say that if they're done it needs to be something that people, even if they dread going, which it's not the subject, it's the time. You know, 'gosh, I just need to get my work done and I have so many things that you make me do so I can't get my work done.' But even if you get past that and you get people there you want them going away saying 'I'm better. I learned something I didn't know. I feel better. I understand.' It's got to be a fantastic program. It can't just be reading rules and this sort of thing [830].

Again, Madeline's comments appear divorced from any sort of reality. Madeline attempted to speak on behalf of all people who resist programs that discuss diversity as not resisting the content, rather than resisting to the loss of time. Speaking as someone who has done diversity and social justice programs for majority populations for several years, my experience would contend otherwise. Consistent with her previous comments, Madeline frames privileged populations in the best possible light, often in the absence of any knowledge (anecdotal or otherwise). Given that nature of the white space at SRU, it

would be possible, if not likely, to suggest that many are resistant to social justice content (as well as possibly the time commitment).

Madeline's desired outcomes for these sessions are also deeply flawed and represent another reinforcement of the white institutional space. When the desired outcome is for the largely white campus to walk away from a social justice or diversity session with thoughts of "I feel better," or "I understand now," it not only disrespectful of the experiences of people of color but demonstrates the depth of the problem. First, the goals for sessions like these should never be focused on making white people "feel better." This type of strategy ensures that lessons on white supremacy and liberation are never part of the curriculum and rather are the sort of "diversity happy talk" discussed earlier.

Second, to suggest that a privileged person could simply sit down for a session and truly understand the nature of white supremacy, white space, and racism, subjects which could not be covered in the course of several volumes, demeans the lived experiences of people of color as inconsequential and the inequalities as stemming from misunderstandings.

Finally, Madeline's final comment that these programs must be "fantastic" make her sound like Chris Farley in a Saturday Night Live sketch. Just making an *awesome* program is not really a strategy that leads to liberation; of course the work that social justice educators do should be recognized and validated as making a substantive difference, but the criteria and understanding that Madeline has shared is inconsistent

with anything that might enlighten the perspective of a white person and as a result, and as a result will not make a difference in dismantling institutional white spaces.

Each of the strategies described above was a seemingly well-intentioned attempt (or idea) by white administrators to make SRU into a space that is better for all people. However, these problematic strategies in most situations actually do the opposite and instead reinforce the white space at the university, while devastatingly serving as evidence of progress which allows white people to feel good while chanting the mantra that things are slowly getting better.

Agency

No discussion of white decision-making can be complete without giving attention to the idea of giving agency to other structures, rather than acknowledging the role of white people in the climate and the white space.

In the course of analyzing data, I was surprised that there were examples of agency whereby white administrators felt empowered to heap praise upon structures that they had created. Madeline was probably the biggest offender in this activity, particularly as she described the wonderful successes at SRU, including the enlightened leadership.

Well, I get a really good sense. I think it starts at the top. There's no doubt about that. And I get a really good sense from the executive leaders [cites several names]. At that level I think we have very good support. I think the executive has demonstrated his support through the placement of a team and through the endorsement of a strategic plan [828].

Madeline's aggrandizing of the white administrative leaders at SRU is peculiar given that virtually none of the administrators, regardless of race, described the environment as good for people of color (with the exception of Jack). Madeline tempered her response by focusing not only on the lived experience, but how the environment is getting better – again an argument that was not substantiated with anything beyond a feeling. Further, when asked about the experiences of people of color and if she had heard any complaints from people of color, Madeline shared more praise for administrative structures.

D: Do you hear of many complaints from people of color or marginalized groups about instances that have happened on this campus?

O: You know I don't. But, I have a few, and some of them were in the community about some of our students. I think it was the reason that on the Diversity Committee we wanted community members as well, but where students will leave this campus, as comfortable or uncomfortable as it may be, and then to go out into a community that has no rules or regulations regarding this and may not be treated kindly in every business out there. So I've heard of some examples like that [...]. So I know there are circumstances. For whatever reason, I don't come into contact with them personally very much today [842].

Madeline's response was almost a non sequitur that dodged the actual response to this question. Rather than simply pleading ignorance, which she eventually did at the end (notably absenting herself from blame in not understanding or hearing experiences of marginalization from people of color – “for whatever reason I don't come into contact

with them personally,”), she described a diversity committee that she serves on where the contribution of community members helps them to attend to the experiences of people of color in the community. Interestingly, in these two examples, Madeline is taking credit for progress due to administrative solutions, where there does not appear to be credit due since there is a demonstrable lack of progress. However, as a seasoned administrator, it appears that Madeline has learned the value of framing a narrative and rather than worrying about details such as understanding, knowledge, or facts, she marches forward to accept unearned accolades. Such a bold maneuver relies heavily upon the white racial frame and the requisite pathology.

Briefly, as side note, a little later in the interview, I asked Madeline about how she judges the success of her work as a self-described social justice advocate. Her response underscored her lack of understanding in a deeply problematic way: “Still being alive? I don’t know [laughing],” [845]. By even making passing reference to the fact that she might be the victim of violence as a result of her pseudo-advocacy is unnerving. A joke made in poor taste, it acknowledges the actual racial reality that people of color live with daily, while she rests on the knowledge that she has her whiteness to save her. Several of the administrators of color interviewed described the reality of how race could be a threat to their personal safety. By minimalizing the impact of real violence, the legacy of so many people of color who have been actually suffered violence was sullied and disrespected with this petty joke.

Beyond Madeline’s praise of administrative structures, many of the other white administrators took the opportunity to lay blame for the racial climate on various aspects

of the SRU community. Interestingly, very few of the white administrators named white administrators as a possible cause of a problematic racial experience. Importantly, this feels like a bit of a defense mechanism, since I never asked white administrators about the cause or source of racial discord.

When considered together, these responses from white administrators feels like a slap-stick comedy where somebody has asked a group of people for directions and everyone points in a different direction. An unexpected cause was cited by both Rick and Madeline, who both come from different disciplines, but each cited the history and culture of their discipline as problematic.

We have a long 'heritage,' I'll call it of, the disciplines that our college has come out of tend to be some of the more rural, conservative kinds of disciplines [...]. We're much more than that now, but because of that background, that conservative rural kind of background, there's not, the culture that comes from that is not as open, aggressive, diverse in terms of the diversity of perspective on things and because of that [it] isn't diverse in it's ethnic makeup, it's culture makeup [781].

The other thing is my college is not very diverse with respect to the Black population and we're trying to do something about that. There are a lot of reasons. We can explain that. One is that the Black population has been trying to get off the farm, not onto the farm. So there's a perception of my discipline as being sort of rural related [...] [843].

Rick and Madeline's comments, respectively, serve as examples of how white administrators can utilize justifications for the environment that have been created within their purview, but still separate themselves from those causes. In these examples, the histories of the disciplines are cited as a compelling cause for the lack of people of color. First, it should be noted that people create cultures – there is not a discipline, not a scholarship, not an environment without the faculty and staff within the college or unit. So, if there is a culture that does not embrace people of color, that culture has been created and nurtured by white administrators.

Second, it should also be noted that because of the history of higher education in America, this exact argument could have been made for *every* discipline, since education was largely withheld from people of color for the first 300 years that colleges operated in the United States. Based on Madeline's comment about getting off the farm, she is certainly aware of this fact, but her justification provides great insight for why people of color may not have pursued this discipline. With pejorative and hurtful comments that recall the legacy of slavery, it is no wonder that students of color may not want to join this type of environment.

Students were also given agency, as Rick shared an example of how students are the problem preventing a more progressive campus at SRU

I'm referring to a large portion of our students [who] come from rural southwest. Undergrads, I'm talking about now, and have led a very sheltered life in terms of – not sheltered in terms of having a lot of money and never having to want for anything. I mean sheltered in terms of not being exposed to people of different

racess, different backgrounds. They frequently haven't been out of the state and I'll even say frequently haven't been out of the county next to theirs, [783].

Rick's comment gives agency to the students by using a stereotype of students and attributing that to a "large portion" of the student body. Not only is this very likely inaccurate (the largest feeder schools into SRU are all in suburban environments), but it presupposes the lived experience of many students, including the ability to travel, as if that is a credential for understanding race (which was described above as a problematic assumption).

In this example, undergraduates at SRU serve as an easy target. However, what is unacknowledged is that the administrators at SRU have a role in creating the environment through educational opportunities, responses to campus incidents, and decisions that seek to promote understanding and social justice. Laying blame on students, whose responsibility it is to learn, instead of considering what administrators and faculty could or should do to facilitate learning in these areas is inconsistent with the means and manner of critical thinking that every college and university espouses in their missions, strategic plans, learning outcomes, or other guiding documents.

Jack also took the opportunity to deflect responsibility for the environment by shaming the faculty.

I'll be honest with you. I am frustrated, I get beat up all the time for [pause] you know, you know diversity in the students, but I say, I don't see it in our faculty [...]. I mean the faculty senate, diversity is so big with them, go up there and

look who's the head of the faculty senate [laughing]. Same old people over and over, all white, all of them [203].

Again, Jack's strategy appears to be one of deflection of blame rather than engaging the noted issues (lack of diversity) and his responsibility for this issue in the area where he has power, authority, and influence. Jack went so far as to acknowledge that he is criticized for the lack of racial diversity with the students, but rather than acknowledging and addressing this problem, Jack simply pointed the finger at another easy target in the faculty. Ironically, Jack also acknowledged that the faculty senate also presses diversity issues, but attempts to shame this group for their commitment to racial diversity.

Olivia is perhaps the only person who pointed the finger at a group for which she has some responsibility and authority.

I think supervisors across campus don't understand how they can set the tone of the environment in their area. I know when I'm in a bad mood I have been known to send myself home because that is the tone for the department and that's not right. So I think a tolerance tone by supervisors just makes all the difference in the world. [...] but I think our supervisors across campus are the ones that really set the tone across campus [709].

By citing supervisors (essentially mid-level managers), as the leaders in this in setting the climate, Olivia has identified an important area where hostility may well be allowed to flourish. Certainly, mid-level managers set the tone and day-to-day experience for many staff members and are often empowered to manage their own staff.

Given the cited climate at SRU and the documented experiences of administrators of color such as Jasmin and Angela, each of whom cited examples of how staff at this level (supervisors) were empowered to make hostile decisions, it would appear that Olivia's comments are somewhat accurate. The disconnect in Olivia's comment is the recognition that supervisors don't realize their ability to set the tone and climate. It appears that at least some do and use this power to marginalize people of color. Further, if these supervisors are reporting to an administrator who does not have a recognition of the racial dynamics on campus and are unable/unwilling to recognize the institutional white space on campus, then there will not be any accountability for creating equitable spaces. Based on the data from this study, it would appear that many white administrators at SRU may not be willing or able to facilitate this type of learning for their direct reports, which contributes to the environment for people of color.

A side note based on the comment above: only a white administrator would be allowed to essentially take the day off if they are in a bad mood. This is a real privilege of power, to not have to stay at work when they don't feel like it. Per SRU policy, employees who fail to report to work at the assigned time are subject to reprimand and possible termination. Further, among the possible excuses to utilize sick time, there is not a provision for a poor disposition.

Another group that was given a great deal of agency is the alumni. Several respondents (both administrators of color and white administrators) cited the potential for the alumni to drive decisions because of their desire to keep SRU the way that it's always been. John articulated this particularly well: "So, I think, that is, you know when

you think about the alumni and the role alumni play on this campus, I mean it's pretty powerful, you know, what we, what would bump into, and I would say that our alumni is just one other layer of power and influence, [145].”

By giving agency to the alumni and their ability to resist decisions made, John is citing a amorphous groups of many thousands of people. The idea that this entire group would be united against promoting equality is suspect since as the alumni association has identity groups for African American, Hispanic, International, and women SRU graduates. While several white administrators cited the idea of alumni resistance, not one of them could actually describe a type of resistance that they encountered. There appears to be an enduring fear of donors to the institution withdrawing financial support, but no administrator could cite a time when this had actually happened. Instead of a real threat, this feels more like an urban legend, where misinformation becomes woven into the fabric of the institution so completely that it is never questioned. Whether the threat of the loss of resources is real or not, it appears more times than not that the threat of alumni is a convenient excuse for maintaining status quo, which white administrators acknowledge as cause for not pursuing racial justice.

Rick provided another type of example of agency in describing the structure of his unit as a challenge for him to pursue racial justice.

Another challenge that we've got is that we're a very broad college. We've got many departments. We've got about one-third of all the majors on campus are offered through our college, and we recognize that that's a bit of a liability in itself, maybe we're a little bit too broad in the range or the number of majors.

[...] We range everywhere from some pretty conservative, some of that old-school kinds of disciplines, which are some of the more production, rural-oriented kinds of things in terms of their history, to some rather progressive disciplines in terms of – I could give you some examples but I don't want to do that because there are some exceptions in each of those disciplines where there's some progressive and some conservative people. But we have some really progressive and some really conservative disciplines and everything in between. So some of those disciplines, some of those departments and programs need a little bit more focus, more attention than others do. And that just comes up as you do the annual reviews and things. Those are two things that I think that are some of the bigger more global challenges that we face as you get back to the root of how we try to improve the culture here [782].

Rick's assessment of the structural issues that prevent progress describes how the epistemological differences between conservative and progressive disciplines cause a dissonance that prevents progress. However, Rick clearly also communicates that there is a tacit acceptance of the dissenters to racial progress by allowing allegedly conservative factions of departments to create hostile climates. When Rick declines to share the actual departments because of the fact that there are progressive and conservative factions in each of these disciplines he is protecting those conservative factions through anonymity. Further, Rick is endorsing this behavior from an administrative perspective, since these issues surface during annual reviews, presumably without consequence or recourse, since these issues persist and are presumed to be

epistemological, rather than grounded in white supremacy. It is not surprising to see why this hostile environment exists when the white administration endorses this behavior.

Taken together, the use of agency by all of these administrators demonstrates how this powerful strategy is utilized to deflect blame for the white space and cite an area outside of the administrator's responsibility. The deeply unfortunate reality is that each of these cited areas appears to have a role in maintaining the environment at SRU and as the leaders, these administrators should acknowledge some responsibility. The ability to craft the narrative so that the buck can be passed is a classic technique by those in power to demonstrate themselves as simply victims of circumstance, meaning that their outcomes would be better if not for *that* problem. Interestingly, as administrators, their peer groups are other administrators, so if there truly was an issue with another segment of the campus population, it would be most appropriate for these leaders to confront and inform their administrative peers. If the problem was truly one that administrators cared to deal with, there would appear to be appropriate opportunities for recourse. However, these administrators have chosen to simply grouse behind closed doors to a graduate student (me) demonstrating a lack of genuine concern for remediating these issues.

As a juxtaposition to the previous comments where agency is utilized as a defense for racist decision making, Sean, (the self-described antiracist in this study) described how the issues of whiteness are actually part of the organization and perpetuated individually and collectively. This describes a process that Wendy Moore

coined as “agentic inertia,” which illustrates how an institution (such as SRU) is often described as making decisions or creating hostile spaces, when the reality is that the institution does not make decisions. Rather, the individuals within the institution make the decisions that are interwoven so completely that they are enveloped as institutional praxis. The ability to absent the white administrators from this process ensures that no one person or group has the burden of responsibility for the documented white supremacy.

Sure, and people say “oh, the department head is so powerful,” but that’s not true. The department head is in a network with the dean, the other department heads. The same thing about the dean. Yes, the dean has some power, but also, I can run to an executive administrator and complain about him. Whether the executive administrator will believe me, he doesn’t want to see people coming over complaining about one is the deans, right? So, even all the way up to chief executive officer, they have to keep the board of visitors satisfied; he has to keep these donors that give millions of dollars happy. He’s not free to do anything he wants. I would say even those donors aren’t free. They’re in networks too. If they get, in any social group there’s kind of an enforcement of parameters and if you start getting outside the parameters, the social environment starts kind of punishing you or pushing you back inside, or if you keep doing it – pushing you outside. So nobody’s free of all of this [766].

In this example, Sean succinctly described how the system that reinforces white space is inextricably intertwined, which accomplishes multiple ends. First, this prevents

any one agent from being fully culpable for the sin of creating and reinforcing hostile spaces, since there is always another direction that the finger can be pointed. As a result, the role that each individual in the process plays is obscured, since rather than examining the individual actions that creates/reinforces white supremacy, the conversation is shifted to why decisions are made. Second, since there is a scaffolding system for the lack of white accountability, the ability to resist whiteness is eliminated, since the whiteness becomes part of the daily business of the institution. Building again on Moore's concept of *agentic inertia*, the white institutional space becomes part of the normed experience of the institution, unnamed and unable to be challenged since it exists at so many levels of the organization. The collective momentum of agency spread across the institution ensures that whiteness as an institutional construct can never be effectively exposed or challenged.

As Sean described there is no one person who is beyond the institutional white space, meaning that resistance is only possible at the individual level. The next section of this chapter documents how individuals are able to resist the white space in pursuit of racial equality. Not surprising, however, there are consequences for this work, which can be understood by the fact that Sean no longer works at SRU.

Working Toward Equality

This category documents data where white administrators articulate a commitment to remediating the racial climate (in general or at SRU). This is by far the smallest category in terms of the number of notecards (data), which is an important point to undergird this data and the lack of commitment to equality. As might be expected,

much of this data represents the antithesis of the perspective shared by white administrators (above) regarding race, but also serves to add depth to the white administrator perspective by illuminating how whiteness operates from the perspective of white administrators.

In conducting interviews, I initially interviewed people who were nominated by my informants at SRU. However, following the analysis of the data from administrators of color, it was necessary to go back and interview one more person (Lisa) whose name came up time and again as *the only one who understands*. While Lisa was described as the only executive-level administrator who understands racial issues, she was also described as someone who has the difficult, if not impossible job of working to dismantle practices and interactions that facilitate and enable the white space on campus. This work is made so difficult in part because there are very few anti-racists that work at SRU (Sean was the only white administrator who was nominated who described work and experiences that are consistent with anti-racism work), coupled with the fact that there appear to be many more people with conceptions and sentiments that reinforce the racist environment.

Acknowledging White Racism

Remarkably few white administrators interviewed were willing to engage the idea of white supremacy, and none willing to implicate themselves in that conversation. Sean's articulation of race and racism stood apart from the descriptions of "diversity" and the surface level understanding of race issues utilized by many of the other white administrators in this study.

Well, I think there's a substantial white-skin privilege that happens in our society without people's conscious attention to it. I think it's literally built into the nature of reality itself. I see reality as a social construction; it's not like I see you in a neutral way. I see you through lots of lenses, right? I think that in that social construction that we all live inside, that white-skin privilege is implicit, and whiteness, white cultural dominance is built into that so that it's in the building blocks. It doesn't have to so much be something we see. It's in the building blocks. I think you can see the effects of it, like if you look at who's in prisons, who lives in low-income housing, who gets the worst healthcare, who has the lowest paid jobs. People say we're post-racial or whatever, but if you look at those areas, the numbers and the percentages are overwhelmingly [people of color]. We have a huge racial problem and it's true in education too [729-730].

This critical perspective is very different from the perspective that was articulated by any of the other white administrators in this study. This perspective illuminates an understanding of the social construction of reality (that is, a person's lived experience is predicated upon prescribed values, norms, and stereotypes and are further reinforced through arguments of natural or even empirical differences, including genetics, despite substantive evidence to the contrary), and how interactions around race reinforce these social constructions in nearly every structure of American society. Sean's perspective acknowledges the important impact of race on a person's ability to have access to the resources that will ensure success in life and further implicates white people in creating the structures of white racial domination.

Sean also extended this critical view of race and had examples of how that lens affects his work and professional interactions.

I always assume I'm in a racist climate or context. I assume all of this [racial] bias. I assume most of the leadership and most of the white people around me have very little clue about it. I consider it central to who I am and what I do, and so I see myself as an activist within my work context [...]. So, a lot of it has to do with the way I think. I just assume kind of ignorance and prejudice around me, and then I'm working on: how can I change the environment? And of course, the main thing I worked on was the department. Now, every week I was in a college-level leadership meeting and I was constantly raising these issues and constantly talking about these issues. And so, in that context did I have an impact on what happened? I think I did. I think I did [753].

This fresh perspective counters the perspectives articulated by each of the other white administrators described above. Sean's assumption of deeply racist contexts and structures enables his work as an administrator, since these assumptions prepare him to make arguments which can counter racist narratives, and further push his tenacity in approaching race issues. This type of assumption is consistent with the Critical Race Theory literature, which appears to have informed his tactics. It is important to note that Dan, the white administrator described above, is Sean's supervisor. In juxtaposing their narratives, Dan's unwillingness to really engage the experiences of people of color, even when he is presented with these experiences and issues "constantly," by Sean become apparent.

Sean's perspective is profoundly more sophisticated than the perspective illustrated by every other white administrators, not only because of a deep understanding of the systemic functioning of racism and white supremacy, but his ability to articulate this understanding reveals how he has spent a great deal of time considering these issues. In a moment of profound honesty and insight, Sean went on to share "So, I would say that inevitably, no matter how hard I work at it, I'm still guilty of white racism. You know? And that corrupts me and my relationships with other white people, and certainly people of color [731]." Again, Sean's perspective is not only critical, but he implicates his own whiteness and despite a great deal of work and personal responsibility acknowledges his role in the creation/maintenance of white institutional space. This perspective is grounded in the literature and a profound understanding that if was present in every white administrator, would likely lead to a very different campus climate and certainly inform decisions in a far more equitable way.

Personal Responsibility

This theme refers to a handful of examples where the work to understand race is part of a deeply held commitment that permeates both work and personal life. In essence these data confirm a commitment that extends beyond the confines of the work that is rewarded and paid for, to the genuine personal commitment to racial justice.

In addition to his tenacity described above, Sean's narrative is unique because his commitment to these issues is personal. These are not just ideas and concepts that he talks about, but appear to be part of his core being.

I won't live in the white part of town. I call that side 'Whiteland,' which always makes people uncomfortable – I point out to white people they're white, because most white people forget they're white. I live in a low-income, diverse neighborhood by choice. I do almost all of my shopping in places that are full of people of color. I prefer being around diversity. I don't like being around homogeneous white. I don't like it. I think it feels weird [771].

In this way, work toward racial justice is not the oversimplified work that was described by Madeline and Olivia, among others. This is an example of how work toward racial justice requires a commitment that goes beyond the office and is actually part of who a person is: it is how they spend their free time; where they choose to live; what businesses they patronize; and a mindset that values interactions with people from a range of races. Since this commitment to race work extends to affect many aspects of a person's life, there is not a dramatic separation of work and personal life. Sally's comments provide an opportunity to illustrate the difference in perspective:

It's funny because this is one of the things that I talked about a lot at [diversity training conference] because I do think [pause] and I don't know if you feel this way, but from 8 to 5 you're in it. Then at five o'clock, I do walk out the door, I can go to the grocery store, I can go anywhere, and nobody knows. Unless I run into somebody I know but they don't know who I am, they don't know what I do, there's no expectations. If I'm here on campus and I'm in a meeting and something [gets] said, and, it hasn't happened too often but a few times you could feel people like "is she gonna say anything?" You know, when it's appropriate I

would say something, but there is the expectation, well "you're the administrator in diversity education, you should say something." When I walk out, nobody has those expectations. So, it could be easy to not think about it and that is one of the things that I have really challenged myself to not let happen [pregnant pause] and I won't say that, you know, I think I've been aware, and you know, especially having kids now, there's so much that you see with kids and you think about who are their friends and what experiences are they having, and where they're going to school, and all of that. Um, but, you could turn it off, I can turn it off. There is one part of my privilege, I can absolutely turn off, but I don't have to be an advocate or an ally if I don't want to be. "You know what, I'm tired today. I don't think I'm gonna do it today." But, how frickin' privileged is that [laughing]? You know, I have tried to be, to be aware and, you know, I haven't had to like have like the scene in a retail store yet [laughing] [502].

Sean's commitment means that he stands up for the voices of the underserved unconditionally. Sally's commitment appears to be between 8am and 5pm, weekdays, when it is convenient or "appropriate," to use her word. While she was able to articulate the need to be cognizant, there was nothing in her words that indicated a commitment or an example of an action whereby she has stood for racial justice. Her inability to articulate how these issues compelled action within her personal life means that it appears she is doing exactly what she feared "I don't want to do this work on the backs of people of color," [460]. Sean's commitment illuminates a different understanding and commitment: "so, I'm more interested in the activist perspective of: what am I gonna do

now? Given that, how am I gonna act? What am I gonna do? If you go too fast and yell too loud, you're out. If you don't yell enough and don't act enough, you're ineffectual," [754]. By articulating an understanding of the realities of race at SRU, and further matching that understanding with action, Sean uniquely stands out at SRU.

Challenges to Racial Progress

Consistent with the barriers to racial progress that were noted by the administrators of color in this study, Sean and Lisa nominated a handful of examples as well, largely focusing on collective ignorance around racial issues:

The thing that I should have understood at the beginning, but it took me awhile to understand was: there's really a difference in the understanding of what racism, or what sexism, or what homophobia is. The general understanding among whites is it's an explicit prejudice. [...] But is there understanding of this other level of white-skin privilege and cultural dominance, and how that's really built into the very nature of reality? I just don't think people [understand]. But when you bring it up, when people understand it as an explicit prejudice, that's how they think about it [743].

I would just say what I say what I said earlier: there's a ton of ignorance here. I think among the general faculty and certainly among the student body, there's a lot of explicit racism [763].

I could, you know tell you about, you know, oh man, our diversity officer [a Black woman], I mean how she was treated by our past executive who never meant to do anything but he didn't even know how to script himself. But then I will also tell you how he treated other white women was very different. I mean just silly examples but they're examples where you know talking about whether she was wearing white shoes, you know, at a meeting in August or not and you're like 'why is that a relevant conversation here in this decision-making, executive space?' Or implying all the time that everybody is afraid of her [Black, diversity officer]. I mean I could tell you about a tenure case where a Black woman who happens to be a strong introvert, one of the criticisms about her service was she wasn't coming to departmental parties and events. And you're kind of like, you know, so is this really a requirement in this program? So, instead of having the kind words of 'we know she's a real introvert,' and all this, but it was like critiquing her because she did that. Well not only was she an introvert, but she would be the only Black person bringing her kids into a [departmental party] and they couldn't see that that would be uncomfortable for some people [924-925].

In these comments Sean (first two) and Lisa (third) described the ignorance regarding race issues that exists at SRU. In particular, the same ignorance that pervades American society in general appears to be a strong source of misunderstanding at SRU. In particular, the understanding of racism as only an individual, explicit interaction, rather than as a part of a system of white supremacy that affects every part of society.

Further, there are implications regarding what Sue coined as microaggressions (Sue, 2007). These interactions create a powerful marginalizing effect by belittling administrators of color (who are already under a microscope), which serves to reinforce racial stereotypes (scary, angry, Black woman) and are particularly damaging, especially at SRU, as the narrative appears to have penetrated the leadership with Olivia citing this exact narrative regarding the SRU diversity officer.

As Sean went on to describe, there appears to be a hostility and defensiveness that accompanies this white ignorance, which combines to create a toxic environment for discussing racial issues.

We ran into trouble among – the faculty of color got very upset about the racism they felt, they were seeing or hearing, and some [white] faculty got very upset that they felt like they were being accused of being racist and they didn't think they were. So, in some ways, those frank discussions made it more difficult and actually made some faculty of color feel more negative about it [742].

As a result of a lack of understanding (which can be read also as a lack of willingness to understand) among white faculty members, there was an inability for faculty members of color to have their concerns and experiences validated, let alone addressed. Further, as an example of how white space operates, the white faculty members were able to then re-victimize faculty members of color and further protect the white space from any conversations that impart even a modicum of racial justice.

Consequences for Pursuing Racial Justice

Sean described three ways in which he met with negative consequences for pursuing racial justice at SRU. The first example is similar to the description from the previous theme that documents how the white space operates in order to create hostile spaces for people of color. When asked explicitly about consequences for his work, he replied:

Yeah, I was dealing with a lot of negativity all along. There were some people who were worse. Some people resented – they thought that the people of color were getting the best opportunities, and they resented they weren't. So they caused me a lot of trouble. They were always stirring up trouble. [...] They would just undermine. Whether it had anything to do with race or not, they would undermine stuff and create a negative climate – run from office to office convincing people “Sean is horrible,” [761].

In this type of environment, it can be exceedingly difficult for any administrator to get anything accomplished since those who are allegedly working with him are working against him. As a strategy to prevent Sean from pursuing racial justice, this can be particularly effective, since Sean is forced to address rumors and do damage control, rather than pursuing his agenda of racial justice.

The next example builds on the first, as Sean describes how the narrative about him was framed and the spaces in which this narrative was deployed.

Even in my review as [an administrator], some people literally, specifically said I loved Black people more than anybody else. They said that, which to me is

kinda racist, I think. But, somebody actually wrote that. So, and then statements like, “so they get favored.” I don’t think they [Black people] were being favored. I think they were being given an equal chance and people are not used to them getting an equal chance [748].

This narrative builds on a previous point, in particular the ignorance among white administrators and their inability to see and understand what racial equity could/should look like in an administrative space. However, this ignorance not only precludes white administrators from recognizing white supremacy in administrative spaces, but attempts to remediate this (unrecognized) inequality, by classifying just treatment for people of color as unfair to white people. Such behavior exemplifies how white administrative space is built upon the actions of white administrators, and further regulated and protected through agentic inertia.

The other point that Sean’s comment underscores is that the boundaries of administrative white space will be protected through any number of tactics and when people violate the norms of the white space, there are tactics and strategies for ensuring that those individuals face consequences. Sean’s last comment is related and illustrates how white administrators can fail to reward efforts to promote racial justice.

I get no recognition for all of this. Nothing. I mean, there was a few people who noticed it, but I got no recognition or unusual support or anything like that. Nobody in the administration came to me and said “you’re doing an incredible job,” but I didn’t expect it. I mean you’d like it. I think if somebody came and

looked at that record they'd go "wow," but nobody does and it's largely forgotten except for some individuals. That's our world [755].

Sean's comment again underscores the nature of the white space and how there are mechanisms in place to ensure that the white space remains intact. By reinforcing the boundaries of white space with the passive tactic of failing to acknowledge the work, Sean experienced a similar outcome as that of Angela, who also described a failure to recognize her efforts:

You know, always in these moments when I think that I am providing a service for the University in terms of its diversity, I never get stuff for that. One time I was up for some diversity award and then what happened, they didn't have another person to run against me, so they wouldn't give it to me because there was nobody else [laughing] [252].

Again, the institutional white space is reinforced so that efforts to promote racial justice fail to be encouraged or recognized, but in fact, as the data from the administrators of color and Sean have illustrated, many times are met with negative consequences.

While the data in this category appears sparse (and it is), it is nonetheless important as it helps to round out an understanding of the nature of institutional white space by describing the experiences of Sean and Lisa, white administrators who are working on behalf of racial justice.

Summary

There is a great deal to consider from this chapter and as such it may be useful to connect the larger themes to the extant literature and summarize the important findings. As discussed at the outset, this study was undertaken in order to understand the nature and consequences of institutional white space – both how it is understood and enacted by white administrators and the ways that it operates in the daily lives of administrators of color. At its core, the framework for this study is built upon the concept of institutional white space as described by Moore (2008) who first described the ways that white administrators create hostile spaces, explicitly and implicitly, through interpersonal interactions, policies, standard operating procedures, the pedagogy of law school and tactics for training future lawyers, and a mindset that becomes pervasive throughout the organization. This seminal work provided a foundation upon which I shifted the context from two elite law schools to a single research university. In my research, the contribution is further clarifying and expanding on the tactics utilized by white administrators in this different institutional context.

Related to the framework is a new idea that was initially discussed in the proposal defense, but now has strong data documented in this research to support and develop further. The idea is agentic inertia and refers to agency that is given to institutions. For example, in talking to people about SRU (both those who are part of the university and those who are separate from the university) many people will refer to the noted lack of diversity, or how the institution is racist, or sexist, or homophobic. This perspective gives agency to the institution (meaning that it is the institution that has created

these circumstances) while failing to acknowledge the role of the individuals at the institution responsible for creating the racist, sexist, homophobic policies, practices, standard operating procedures, and the mindset that is pervasive at the institution. The idea of agentic inertia acknowledges this reality, but also notes the fact that institutions are not living beings and cannot execute decisions, cannot create space, cannot create policies or standard operating procedures. The environment that is created allows institutional leaders (agents) to act in ways that reproduce and reify the institutional white space with little or no resistance. In this way, the white space becomes so interwoven into the fabric of the institution that it becomes “the way things are done around here,” making it very difficult to challenge, since the narrative is so large that it is physically and emotionally part of the environment.

The concept of agentic inertia names the tension that exists which is akin to the *chicken and egg* dilemma (that is, the rhetorical question about which came first, the chicken or the egg). Within this context, the question becomes: which came first, the white administrators to create the institutional white space or the institution that has such strong normative features that it only enables and empowers white administrators that reinforce and reify the institutional white space. At the heart of the idea of agentic inertia is the reality that the institution does not make decisions – people within the institution make decisions and create the space. In this way, agentic inertia names the formerly clandestine institutional actors and their role in white supremacy.

Also important for this idea of agentic inertia is that white administrators have the power to give agency, (a tactic documented above which serves to obscure the role

of whiteness and in particular the individual white administrators). This power dynamic is critical since this is clearly a collective effort beyond the scope of a single administrator. The collective power of white institutional administrators means that the agentic inertia compels the individual actions and decisions of administrators acting in the name of the institution. Agentic inertia is a powerful technique utilized expertly by white administrators at SRU, and will be the focus of an upcoming article by Moore and McIntosh.

Another important theme that emerged from this data is the willful ignorance on the part of white administrators regarding the lived experiences of people of color. There are several themes that are subsumed in this idea. From the administrators of color, the data was coded as *ignorant leadership; intentional, active neglect; and parochial administrators*, while the data from white administrators was coded as: *claims of racial equity; “misunderstanding” the experiences of people of color; wishy-washy Kumbaya; and blissful ignorance: “I don’t know but...”* Taken together, these data document the ways in which white administrators are not only completely ignorant of the lived experiences of people of color, but are ignorant of the role of race in society broadly speaking. Since these same white administrators also happen to occupy many of the highest level decision making spaces at SRU it is easy to understand why the colorblind framework (Bonilla-Silva, 2003) is so pervasive at the institution.

The undergirding framework for understanding these data is Feagin’s white racial frame, which describes how white people are socialized in American society, so that whiteness is more than a race, but a framework or a way of seeing and being in the

world (Feagin, 2006). In this framework, white people are overwhelmed with explicit and tacit lessons that seek to dehumanize people of color and promote a narrative of white supremacy (Feagin, 2006). Further, based on the data and experiences of white administrators, when juxtaposed with the data and experiences of administrators of color, the role of whiteness in the decision making processes is powerfully demonstrated. These data and examples also illustrate a subscription to a colorblind ideology (Bonilla-Silva 2003), ignorance which is rewarded since it reinforces the white institutional space (Moore, 2008).

Building on this idea is a specific part of the colorblind ideology called rhetorical incoherence (2003), where Bonilla-Silva described how white people, when talking about issues of race, speak in ways that are nonsensical. This underscores the dissonance in the experience of white people relative to race and being unable to reconcile the fact that people of color experience oppressive racial realities. Several white respondents spoke in ways that exemplified this concept, in particular, Dan's comments demonstrated his discomfort in discussing these issues as he devolved into a rambling mess, as documented in the theme *the epistemology of race*.

Importantly, the themes above should not be misinterpreted to imply that white people do not have any thoughts and feelings about race or people of color, rather white people are just unsophisticated in discussing race and uninformed about the experiences of people of color. As was well documented in this research, white people have many problematic ideas about race that are ground in the white racial frame and the disparate experience of being white in American society (Feagin, 2006; Frankenberg, 1993). For

example, administrators of color described these racist perspectives of white administrators at SRU in the themes *white fear*; *SRU as property of white people*; and *lack of trust*. The perspective of the white administrators was coded as: *discrimination is accidental: racism? These are good people!*; *appreciating difference*; *“Diversity” as racial discourse*; *people of color as chattel*; *wishy-washy Kumbaya*; and *comfort in exclusively white meeting spaces*. Documented in these themes are the white perspectives of people of color that have been informed through a deeply racist framing of the world, which are so pervasive that they are considered “normal.” These perspectives, again, track with the tenets of whiteness as described by Frankenberg (1993) and Owen (2007) and further underscore the experience of being white in American society, as described as part of the white racial frame (Feagin, 2006).

Building on this last idea, the administrators of color described how it felt to be at SRU – the impact of being and existing in this white institutional space. These data were coded as: *effects of hostility*; *racial fatigue*; *lack of trust*; and *hostile environment at SRU*. The literature has many examples of how it feels for students and faculty in predominantly white institutions (Feagin, Vera & Imani, 1996; Hurtado, et al., 1998; Hytten & Warren, 2003; Lincoln & Stanley, 2007; Moore, 2008; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Stanley, 2007), but there is a noted absence detailing the experiences of being a person of color in administration in higher education. This research adds to the literature by documenting the personal and professional effects of being a person of color and the racial toll that people of color are forced to pay to participate in predominantly white institutions. These data connect with the concept of racial battle fatigue, a framework

developed by Smith, Allen & Danley (2007), which was used to describe the experiences of Black males in college at predominantly white institutions.

Finally, the administrative tactics employed by white administrators in order to create and reify these institutional white spaces is a very important product of this research. These normative tactics are both intentionally and unintentionally deployed and are so bound in the white racial frame (Feagin, 2006), institutional white space (Moore, 2008), and colorblind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2003) that they are difficult for white people to recognize. In fact, for this research, it would have been impossible to identify these tactics by just interviewing white administrators or administrators of color. In order to see and understand the tactics and the impact of the tactics, both the oppressors and the oppressed had to be interviewed. Importantly, before describing the associated themes, it should be noted that it is immaterial to this study and to the nature of understanding racism whether or not white administrators *intentionally* deployed these tactics. The impact and the perspective of the oppressed are most critical to document, understand and account for, since these are the victims of the injustice. This is similar to a automobile accident, where it matters not that the person who caused the accident did not intend to do so – the victim's perspective is most important and is due remedy. However, in issues of race and discrimination, it is a common white fallacy that if there was not an intention to discriminate that somehow the impact of the discrimination should be discounted or ignored all together. In undertaking this research using a critical race perspective, such a worldview is exposed as part of the white supremacy project.

The themes that describe these white administrative tactics are: *color cognizant decision making; commodification of people of color; illusion of progress in diversity; stereotypes/expectations of people of color; people of color as trouble makers; deceit; intentional, active neglect; support staff as the first line of defense; role of policy; professional development; recruitment; hiring/supervision; minimization; “misunderstanding” the experiences of people of color; and laissez-faire leadership.*

Taken together these tactics and strategies build on the Moore’s (2008) framework for understanding the institutional white space by further documenting and analyzing the seemingly innocuous strategies, which are both part of the policy of the institution, as well as the non-documented practices that constitute “how things get done” at SRU.

There are a number of empirical truths that have been uncovered and described in this research study. Importantly, these data demonstrate the deep chasm of understanding between white administrator’s conceptions of race, and the lived and academic reality of race in America. The ignorance of white administrators in this study can be seen not only in the ways that race is considered and practiced at SRU, but can be seen in the investigation of the lived experiences of people of color. In the course of this study, it was noted that role of administrators in higher education is to create and execute policies to ensure that the institution is fulfilling the mission of the institution by serving the public good through teaching, research and service. Tragically, in the case of SRU, there has been a dereliction of duty, as white administrators do not have the requisite skills or knowledge to enact the leadership required to create an equitable, socially-just space, a deeply important and pressing issue in today’s society. Further, the cost is that

an unjust, inequitable space has been created which has real consequences for the people of color and their professional career, personal lives, and ability to be healthy. In nearly any other area of an organization, such inability would certainly be reprimanded and remediated, since there is such a deep ineptitude in an important job function. Tellingly, however, for issues of race and whiteness not only are these issues accepted, they are tacitly rewarded. In this way, the white space of the institution is similar to Darwin's finches, whereby the space has evolved through interaction with the white space so completely that the organization is perfectly adapted to produce the realities that are experienced by people of color at SRU and documented in this research. Those who are outliers and dissent against the white institutional space end up being a causality of the constantly evolving, oppressive, institutional environment.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

This research project has sought to investigate the ways that whiteness works and is understood in the context of a higher education institution. By investigating these issues from both the perspective of administrators of color and white administrators, a rich understanding of the ways race operates in a higher educational institution was uncovered, which have the cumulative effect of creating and reinforcing institutional white space, a concept coined by Moore (2007) in a similar study conducted at two law schools.

In this study, data were collected through semi-structured interviews at a predominantly white, public, state research university in the south and analyzed utilizing a phenomenological approach, informed from a Critical Race Theory lens. Over the course of 16 interviews with nine white administrators (five white men and four white women), and seven administrators of color (including three Black women, two Black men, and two Hispanic/Latino women - one who also identified as an International woman), theoretical saturation was reached for each group, meaning that data that were gathered began to become redundant in terms of the themes that were being illuminated through the stories, experiences, ideas, and perspectives. The data from these interviews was unitized into 931 discrete data units, sorted multiple times, analyzed, and utilized to write research memos, which ultimately became chapter four.

This chapter will address a handful of remaining issues. First, I will return to the research questions posed at the start of this study and summarize the relevant findings. Second, I will discuss the other salient findings that were not part of the research questions that emerged from this study. While these were largely unexpected outcomes, they still merit consideration. Third, I will discuss the limitations of the study. Fourth, I will address future directions for research in this area. As is the nature with any study, there are often more questions than concrete answers that flow from the work. I will briefly describe some of the questions that I see from my perspective. Finally, I will conclude by addressing the implications of this study, broadly speaking, for race and racial climate at this university and at other research universities.

Summary of Findings

This study was a large undertaking by design with four research objectives broken into seven research questions. The volume of data and analysis presented in this paper is both an asset and a liability. As an asset, the volume helps provide a level of depth in understanding the experiences for the administrators of color and white administrators (who participated in this study). It is a liability in that the volume of data can make it difficult to accurately identify and summarize the findings, since there is a great deal to consider. However, given my experience and knowledge of the data, this is a responsibility that falls firmly on my shoulders.

Findings for Research Objective #1

The first research objective was to depict the experience of administrators (white and people of color) at the institution. In response to question number one: What has

been the experience for administrators of color at the institution, consider the following data.

I recently went to Baltimore to give a paper, and I was struck by the people that I was giving the paper for were by and large white liberals. But, in, I don't even have an idea of what that means anymore after being here [SRU] for so long. So, I was struck by the warmth, so basic things like giving hugs. Who's giving hugs around here these days, right? [227].

Each of the participants discussed how they feel in the SRU environment, which is also a reflection on *how participants are made to feel in the space*. It is surely not a coincidence that people of color all felt similarly disenfranchised at the institution. Their experiences would most accurately be described as exceedingly difficult and fraught with racialized interactions that have the cumulative effect of creating a hostile and marginalizing experience, as Angela's quote (above) indicated.

William further provided descriptions that helped in part describe the experience of being a person of color at SRU and in the community. Specifically, he described the experience of being called the N-word on and off campus, as well as regularly being confronted with overtly racist images including KKK literature and a noose found on campus:

So I would be walking through campus, or I would be walking somewhere else in town. And these white guys would drive by and, 'hey nigger, nigger, nigger, nigger, nigger.' My wife would be somewhere in a store and she'd be followed by all the people that worked in a store. Or she was in a grocery store, she'd be

followed by people there thinking she's gonna steal something, etcetera. That was common for us in my years there [575].

Now, there were incidents, for example, almost every weekend, once I'd leave to go home, when I came in Monday morning, there was literature from the Ku Klux Klan that was pushed under the door. [...] There were cases of incidents on campus. I'll never forget the big football game one year, that the night before the game, somebody hung a noose on one of the trees on campus – but again, that person or group was not identified, [524, 525].

William and Angela's comments help describe the range of difficult feelings encountered by people of color at SRU. Specifically, these comments range from the microaggressions (Angela) to overtly racist interactions (William). Considered together, the themes that emerged from the data provided by administrators of color described the racialized impacts including: feelings of anxiety, loneliness/isolation, anger, depression, invisibility, being overwhelmed, misunderstood, and (justifiably) defensive. As a result, many administrators of color described feeling under siege at SRU and have further described having to participate in unacknowledged work for their own protection and safety, including being extra diligent in every aspect of their job (knowing that any mistake that is made will be generalized to an entire race), constantly having to prove themselves and that they belong at SRU, and having to carefully analyze every comment and situation to understand if there are new tactics being deployed that will further

marginalize them at SRU. For example, Angela described how she has been framed as a militant and how the effort required from constantly being under siege is exhausting:

But that goes back to what I call ‘the racial fatigue syndrome.’ Having to be hyper-vigilant, and today when you heard me swear, it was not just about being hyper-vigilant, it’s just [that I have to] be hyper-vigilant about *everything*. Now, I’ve got to make routers work, and heaters work, and then I’ve got to go to slay dragons tomorrow, and then next week, you know [laughing] I will be photographing the Loch Ness monster [laughing] for posterity [254].

But I think that I just feel always embattled, which is different. I feel like Sisyphus, do you know that analogy? Roll the boulder up again, roll...[sigh] [281].

Importantly, these are not just pejorative, interpersonal comments (that also have the effect of injury), but the work that is required from administrators of color is to ensure that they are not losing power within their administrative positions, being framed as incompetent, or are having their words twisted so that they are misunderstood. Again, Angela described the need to have a white translator:

Then he [white administrator] is also one of the people that I can say something and everybody will be like ‘well, I don’t know what you mean,’ and then there will be a white person there that he respects more that apparently serves as my interpreter, and he’s like ‘well, you know, I think what Angela is trying to say,

you have to look at it from her point of view.’ Then all of a sudden he’s like ‘oh yeah.’ So that person gets to legitimize me as a thinking person [245].

These interactions delegitimize and undermine administrators of color. As part of a larger system, these interactions affect the administrator of color’s ability to succeed at the institution, since there is a whole different set of rules and expectations for people of color to navigate to exist within the white space.

Importantly, in order for administrators of color to be successful, they must simultaneously learn and play by unwritten rules to meet undocumented expectations, as well as constantly scan and analyze the space to understand if/how they are being racialized, none of which falls within the confines of their job description, for which they are obviously also responsible.

Next, the second research question was: what has been the experience for white administrators at the institution? To respond to this, consider that many of the white administrators had a difficult time answering this question within the context of their race. Had I asked, *what has your experience been like at SRU*, I likely would have been met with much richer descriptions of their experiences. Instead, I asked about their experiences at SRU as a white person, which not only appeared to make white administrators uncomfortable, but paralyzed their response since they seemingly do not often (if ever) consider how their race impacts their experiences.

Well, you know what? How does it feel? I mean it feels fine. It feels comfortable. It’s who I am, so I’ve never really thought about ‘am I comfortable being who I am’ in that regard, but I do know that even from the time I was a

very small child, and I witnessed a lot of discrimination, I never felt comfortable with it – ever. I could never make sense out of how people were treated differently just because of how they were born. It never made sense to me then. It doesn't make sense to me now [818].

How does it feel to be white? I think I've been blessed. I mean, I'll tell you I think being born when I was being born white was probably pretty good. You know, I'm not ashamed of it, but I think that what I learned from my parents and my bringing up is that, you know, just because you're white, you're not any better than anyone else, and you better be standing by ready to protect those who don't have what you do, be it the color of your skin or whatever, but make sure they are treated equally and somehow figure it out. Figure out how [pause] because it's [pause] it's wrong! It's wrong. It's basically wrong to, you know separate people by the color of their skin and they think that one race is inferior, superior to the other because of the color of the skin. Oh, that's so wrong [192].

These responses from Madeline and Jack, respectively, described not only how good it feels to white, but also acknowledged that the experience for people of color was worse. Interestingly, both utilized a tactic of shifting the context to their childhood rather than talking about how it actually feels to be white at SRU. This tactic allowed them to talk about spaces where they had no control over the racial climate/context/outcomes (by virtue of being a child), rather than talking about the spaces where they clearly do have some modicum of control and responsibility for the

racial climate/context/outcomes (current role as an administrator). Further, both Madeline and Jack framed themselves as exceptional white people because of their noted discomfort with their acknowledged white privilege. Importantly, both Madeline and Jack's discomfort with their white privilege compelled absolutely no attempt to investigate or further understand these issues, since both also confessed (and demonstrated) a lack of understanding of racial issues. These comments are useful in describing the common theme that characterized the experiences of the white administrators interviewed in this study – one of willful ignorance.

Olivia also provided a useful context for understanding the white experience at SRU. In her description, she relied upon facets of the white racial frame to describe the experience.

Very comfortable. You look around that's really what you see is a lot of Caucasians. I think that's not only SRU but the community. We're real bland I would say [...]. You just feel safe. What you see is others that look like you that probably have very similar upbringings, that probably don't challenge you or make you think outside of the box very much about your thoughts and actions [676-677].

Building on the narrative that Olivia shared, the space at SRU is characterized as not only safe, but parochial. Whiteness in this comment was normalized with descriptions of the environment that included racialized adjectives: bland, unchallenged, and similar to others, which are far from the descriptions that people of color used to describe their experience at SRU. Olivia's quote is representative of the comments and

sentiment shared by most of the other white SRU administrators. Considered together, these descriptions of the white space at SRU paint a portrait of an environment where white people are put into positions to succeed and are afforded the luxury of never really being challenged to think beyond their own experiences, which has not gone unnoticed by administrators of color. Gabriella and Angela (respectively) noted the following about white administrators:

...they're all the same way of thinking. It's a – I mean it's a mentality, completely in a – it's always thinking the same way. They all think the same way. Very like obeying and very like submissive. I don't see anybody – once I participate in a departmental leadership meeting, I was shocked. When I looked [around] the table, just men and I was the only one there saying, 'golly,' and they [are] always quiet. They don't talk. They don't give too much opinion. They are very obedient in such a way that it scares me to hell" [597].

It's really hard sometimes for white people to see themselves labeled white. They are so used to seeing themselves as like the universal norm of everything that I think it might put them off to kind of talk about what they're doing in relation to white privilege. Particularly since I think that they labor under the assumption that they are doing the good for everybody [262].

Findings for Research Objective #2

Under the second research objective there are two more questions. Question number three is: what are the structures, decisions, and practices which explicitly or

tacitly effect race? In considering this question it is important to recall that a great deal of time was spent describing the structures, decisions, and practices that create and maintain the white institutional space, referred to as tactics in this study. Importantly, this analysis required more than 100 pages to describe in part one of chapter four. Anita's description of having to battle deceitful white administrators became the code utilized in my analysis to describe the many tactics utilized to reinforce the white space: *circling the wagons: tactics for creating and maintaining institutional white space.*

The process was exhausting because there was lots of documentation that I had to pull together. What I saw was people, I call it the *circle the wagons*, there were people who were, who were named and they lied about what actually happened and said there was a misunderstanding, and the intent was never to cause me harm [pause]. It was a very painful process and I really spent a lot of time praying about whether or not I was going to file a grievance [76].

The *circling the wagons* category documented several themes that described the tactics utilized by white decision makers to create hostile environments (explicitly and tacitly) for people of color, including: *circling the wagons; support staff as the first line of defense; administrative tactics; SRU as the property of white people; white control of people of color; illusion of progress in diversity; role of policy (agency); Human Resources; recruitment; hiring and supervision; commodification of people of color; intentional active neglect; deceit; people of color as troublemakers; stereotypes of people of color; xenophobia; and colorblindness and color cognizance.* Since this tremendous amount of data is beyond the scope of a concise summary, I will share a

couple of compelling experiences to help as the standard-bearers for this research question, including Angela who described being labeled as a troublemaker:

The idea of being labeled...so you get to be labeled a difficult sort of person. So your reputation precedes you even when you're heart is in it. In the real world my militancy level would be probably like a 2.8, here it's like a 12.9. And it's really because I just don't – you can't just say whatever, and now, sometimes maybe I am like a little touchy and crazy about it. [237].

By framing Angela as “militant,” she was effectively marginalized by white decision makers, which not only precluded her perspective and participation in decisions that could make SRU a more hospitable place, but appeared to also serve to further heighten Angela's anxiety and make her work life exceedingly difficult.

Another useful example is the juxtaposition of the agency that white administrators ascribe to policy, as compared with claims of equality, when it is convenient for keeping people of color in subjugation. This first quote describes a mindset where everyone is not equal and that some have earned the privilege of distinct treatment by institutional decision makers.

I think they [white administrators] would tell you that race never plays a role in their decision-making, but at the end of the day, when you are looking at the decisions that you're making, in their mind it's not about race. ‘I'm picking somebody who I think is best for blah,’ and of course that means selecting criteria that they are comfortable with. It just so happens that nobody of color exists to fit those characteristics [413].

Among other things, this example illuminates the role of implicit bias in decision making, and how these decisions often become racialized because they hinge on factors that allow the administrator to be comfortable, and appears that nothing feels more comfortable or safe than more white people (see Olivia's comments above). However, when it is more convenient, white administrators will turn and pledge blind allegiance to equality and making sure that everyone is treated the same (note, not equitably, but the same).

I do know that sometimes people play the race card with me. You know, like, so if I ask for something, you know, 'how would this look if everyone asked for it.'

'I don't give a damn if everybody asked for it, that's your problem to figure out, I just asked you for one thing,' [285].

So in these spaces, when it is convenient, white administrators can acknowledge or absent race from their decision making, depending on the desired outcome. Tellingly, there were only a few formal structures which could be cited as examples of white spaces (Human Resources department which controls the professional development policy, as well as guides recruitment, hiring and supervision is a space where the policies are colorblind on paper, but in practice have a dramatic racist affect with disparate outcomes on people of color). Practices, however, were revealed as a very powerful tool for creating hostile spaces, since practices are not documented, are subject to change at any time (with or without notice), and can be difficult to identify since they simply become part of the institutional culture (the way that things have always been done). Anita described the utility of practices for white administrators:

They kept saying these are practices that we've used. And what I said in the meeting, Dave was 'you know, when I hear the word practices coming from white males it reminds me of [pause] closed door meetings. Practices, practices typically aren't put on paper which means you can change the rules whenever you so please. That's what concerns me. Policies and procedures have to be approved by the faculty, but practices? That's from a power base.'

And he hated me saying that. I said that's power and privilege. 'This is a practice that we have. [Pause]. Oh, so what's the practice next week? Okay, because I'm just checking.'

I'm sort of like, by the time I figure out one practice then you come up with something new and then you say 'oh, well, you know, I just decided to do that.' I said 'that's why I have a problem with practices.'

If we are going to have practices, we need to put them down on paper and let's have them approved and I can live with the word practice. But in my experience, [laugh] I didn't say whiteness [laugh], my experience in white institutions with practices is that they change and evolve. [Pause]. And then you're left there saying 'but I thought the practice was [this]?'

And then they [white administrators] say 'oh yeah, be we changed.' [87-88].

In short, there were many, many examples documented of structures, policies, and practices which create and maintain the white spaces at SRU. Based on the literature, however, it is quite likely that many, many more still exist and merit consideration for future studies.

The fourth research question (second for this objective) is: do the structures, decisions, and practices that have an effect on race serve to mask whiteness and, overtly or covertly, oppress people of color?

In a word, the response is absolutely. The structures, decisions, and practices that impact race are largely thought to be colorblind, while having the impact of oppressing people of color. This was illustrated not only through the narratives from the administrators of color who clearly described how these decisions and practices impacted them, but also through the interviews with white administrators who were unable to describe any policies, structures, or practices that had a disproportionate impact on race. In essence, the structures, decisions, and practices mask whiteness through the presumption of colorblindness which helps obscure the creation and maintenance of the white space, but also disguises the role of white administrators in explicitly and tacitly endorsing these structures, policies, and practices.

Another useful juxtaposition was provided in the comments by Maria who expressed frustration at the fact that white people are able to assume roles without an interview and without qualifications:

But look at the last two years and who has been elevated simply because of who they are. How many people of color do you know, or have you seen that happen to be at SRU over the last several years? Where they are simply elevated into a top position making over 100 grand simply because of who they are? I mean, why, you cannot tell me that that is not a prime example of how whiteness is umm...promoted, literally promoted on this campus. And, it's not just the

administrative positions, when you look at people who are mid-management.

Why is it that white people can just move into a new position or a new category, when people of color have to apply to make the process fair and make it open to everyone? [44-45].

As it turns out, I was also able to interview a white administrator who was newly hired to a job at SRU without any interview or proper vetting from the community (a diversity education administrative position, ironically enough) who was expressing her own frustration that communities of color had questions about her hiring, particularly since it is such an important position for students of color:

And I didn't understand, I took it very personal 'why would they question me? I'm just Sally.' I am, this is, I've always tried to be an advocate, I've always tried to be an ally and maybe I don't understand everything, but you know, my dad worked at a mental health facility, and so I have a lot of knowledge of working with mentally retarded people, um, and I'm not comparing them to people of color, I'm just saying that for people that I am not a part of that group, I've always tried, you know, to be an advocate, an ally, and so why would someone question that? [446]. [...] When I got hired into this department I made it very clear 'if you are looking for somebody that is a diversity expert, do not hire me, but I know students, I know how to work with a department, I know how to supervise staff, but I've always been an advocate and an ally, that's you know, that's my same sort of spiel, um, so if that's what you're looking for then

I'm the right person. But if you are wanting somebody who's an expert, don't hire me," [447].

Sally's expressed frustration is a perfect example of how white practices operate, but are so woven into the experience at SRU that they are an entitlement. The idea that "I'm just Sally" is the personification of whiteness and clearly illustrates the problem: to assume that a white person is not (at least) complicit with systems of oppression and hegemony has never been a wise choice, since it so rarely occurs. Sally's failure to recognize this is probably cause for even greater concern among communities of color since it illustrates a colossal blind spot in understanding whiteness, and further justifies their suspicion of this administrative hire. Not only does this action prevent communities of color from having a competent and capable scholar representing their interests in this administrative capacity, it appears to further suppress voices of color since there is no reason to believe that Sally has the capacity to challenge the white space at SRU, particularly since she appears to lack an understanding of her role in reinforcing whiteness, and the way that white space is maintained on campus. However, since this hire was made and there was no recourse for communities of color, it demonstrates how powerful the white space is and how white administrative tactics will always reinforce the white space, tacitly and explicitly.

Findings for Research Objective #3

The third research objective is to investigate how institutional administrators (white and people of color) understand the institutional white space. In pursuit of this objective, there is one research question (number five overall), which is: are structures,

decisions, and practices created/enacted with a recognition of whiteness and white space?

For many of the administrators in this study, this is a difficult question to answer. The core of this question engages the idea of intentionality: are white administrators intentionally creating these white spaces? Is it ever really possible to engage someone's intentions, particularly when it comes to issues of race and white supremacy? To extrapolate from the data, it would certainly be difficult for a white administrator to acknowledge that they have white (positive) experiences and benefit from unearned privileges, and at the same time acknowledge that people of color have difficult and marginalizing experiences, only to then fail to recognize their role as the primary decision makers at SRU in creating the situations and circumstances which enable this privilege and simultaneously create the difficult climate. Such a failure on the part of white people is part of what Feagin has called the white racial frame (2006) and one of the important concepts addressed by Bonilla Silva (2003) in his aptly named book *Racism Without Racists*. Since none of the white administrators could describe the experiences of people of color in any depth, there appears to be a deep chasm of understanding where white people are ignorant of the lived reality for people of color. While it is unclear if there is any intentionality or cognizance of race in creating and executing decisions and practices by white people, this does not suffice as a justification for the environment that people of color are forced to endure. In fact, that dissonance represents a dereliction of responsibility on the part of institutional leaders.

The one notable exception to the commentary above was Sean, who described being cognizant of his race and made decisions that sought to combat the institutional white space.

So I would say that inevitably, no matter how hard I work at it, I'm still guilty of white racism. You know? And that corrupts me and my relationships with other white people, and certainly people of color [731].

This cognizance is the antithesis of the perspective shared by the other white administrators and it enabled Sean to understand racial realities that would not be obvious to those who do not see the racial climate as an issue in need of remedy. His actions resulted in very impressive gains in terms of the racial demographics for his unit: "We were over 45 percent faculty of color in a research university, and that's just unheard of – but it also threatened people," [745]. As Sean went on to describe, there were consequences for his acknowledgement of race including that white administrators and faculty accused him of favoritism, which Sean described as a logical response for people who have never seen people of color being treated equally.

I'm talking about when I was in the position, and I've done this kind of work. So, that was a big focus for me. So, I don't think we were having disparate – in fact, some white people felt it was disparate. Even in my review as chair, some people literally, specifically said I loved Black people more than anybody else. They said that. [...] I don't think they were being favored. I think they were being given an equal chance, and people are not used to them getting an equal chance. [748].

Findings for Research Objective #4

The fourth research objective is to: Illustrate how white administrators' understanding of whiteness and white institutional space may contribute to racist structures, decisions, and practices, and contribute to potential consequences for administrators of color. In order to respond to this objective, there are again two research questions. The first one (the sixth overall research question) is: do the structures, decisions, and practices foster democracy and equality?

Based on the data from this study, there is no evidence to suggest that the structures, decisions, and practices foster democracy or equality. From a systems-thinking perspective, every system is perfectly designed to yield the outcomes that are produced. With that in mind, white institutional administrators must be held fully accountable and culpable for the environment that has been created at SRU, particularly if there is any hope of democracy or equality in the future for SRU.

Instead at SRU, there was strong evidence from these interviews to demonstrate that white administrators claim success for "diversity" efforts, while in reality people of color are victimized by the white administrative actions. Recall Angela's comment about the efficacy of these initiatives that allege to improve the environment at SRU.

There have been plenty of times when I have been in meetings where people are patting themselves on the back for their diversity efforts, but they're really comparing themselves to just other people in the university and not really on the national level, and when they're making those comparisons I'm the only person of color, or at least the only Black person, and one of the few people of color

around that table when they're having that conversation and the rest of the people of color are serving us food or in the back. So, there is a way in which [pause] "diversity" has become a buzzword but I'm not quite sure all the time that I believe in the diversity efforts that the university puts forth anymore. [232].

Angela's description of the "diversity" efforts paints a powerful picture of how these efforts actually reinforce the white space that they claim to be remedying. In effect, these efforts are more about white people feeling good than about any sort of social justice. The narrative shared by white administrators describes a theme that was coded as *Wishy-Washy Kumbaya*, which is where Madeline's comment (below) was sorted.

You know I have a very strong commitment to a diverse world at all levels. That includes racial. I know you're focusing just on that. I think it includes everything and everybody. But I have a very strong commitment to racial diversity, all diversity and I think that, I'll tell you, I think, here's what I think. I love the metaphor of a symphony. You cannot have a symphony with all middle C's. You've got to have all the notes there to make beautiful music. And the trick is how do you get them where they play the music beautifully rather than in discourse? I think my vision of diversity is a symphony. We need all the notes and we need them playing in harmony and not in discourse. And then our world will be better and our music will be better [...]. It'd be a very boring world if we were all the same [855].

Importantly, not only do perspectives such as this appear straight out of the pages of a feel-good, self-help book, but this understanding allows white administrators to claim that their efforts are making a difference. Madeline's comments do not indicate an understanding of any of the lived experiences of people of color, but rather extolled the virtues of the actions that SRU has undertaken in support of diversity. In fact, Madeline has clearly framed these issues through the lens of her white experience, in spite of her claim that she has read the data.

I think [pause] in my unit from what I've seen and what I feel I think it's pretty good. I actually read a climate survey done a number of years ago and it was awful. It was awful. Now it's just so much better and why did it get better? I just got here three years ago so I walked into this. I read this past one and it was awful. And you just hope that those feelings don't still exist. Now I'm sure they do in an individual here and there but at least I don't hear any of those comments and I don't hear of any of those comments right now. Does that mean they don't exist or don't occur? I guess I'd be naïve to think that there aren't any. But they're certainly not prevalent. They're not tolerated. They're not okay. So I think that it's, from my vantage point it's pretty good [821].

Not only does Madeline's assessment of the climate paint the picture as a "good" experience where hostility is "not tolerated," but this narrative relies on a conception of growth fueled by administrative action. Again, this perspective that Madeline has shared is divorced from the reality that was shared by administrators of color at SRU who shared several examples of how hostility is not only tolerated, but reinforced in several

ways. Maria's example describes how people of color are commodified for the purposes of the appearance of an equitable space at SRU:

I think in the way that we refer to people whenever often times when someone is talking about a person of color... ummm... I hear people say thing like 'oh we have one.' Like in a particular position, you know, if it's a position of authority or management, 'oh yeah we do have one.' Like we're talking about diversity issues especially being in human resources where numbers come up a lot, you know, 'who do we have in key positions?' [25].

While a seemingly a minor example, it is worth noting that the administration often has to ask the question about whether they "have one," and it is sufficient in the eyes of the administration to have just one person of color. This attitude exemplifies the administrative perspective regarding people of color and their contribution to the work process – their utility is as a token representative, and by limiting the number of people of color to one, there is very little chance that the white administrative space will be upset.

William described how as a person of color he was forced to endure experiences that are deeply racist and threatening, but the administrative response was so woefully inadequate that it is not surprising to learn that William left SRU after a short tenure:

Now, there were incidents, for example, almost every weekend, once I'd leave to go home, when I came in Monday morning, there was literature from the Ku Klux Klan that was pushed under the door. [...] There were cases of incidents on campus. I'll never forget the big football game one year, that the night before the

game, somebody hung a noose on one of the trees on campus – but again, that person or group was not identified, [524, 525].

William described the subsequent investigation as white administrators callously speculating that this was “some yahoo,” who is/are essentially harmless and does not intend to do harm to William or other people of color in the SRU community.

In light of the data in this study, it is very difficult to then realize that white administrators are, at best, dangerously negligent and functionally impotent in the treatment of race issues, but also have the audacity to assert that SRU is an equitable space. When asked about the administrative commitment to “diversity” in words and spirit, Madeline was quick to claim victory and credit for the improved institutional environment:

Well, I get a really good sense. I think it starts at the top. There’s no doubt about that. And I get a really good sense from the executive leaders [cites several names]. At that level I think we have very good support [for diversity work]. I think the executive has demonstrated his support through the placement of a team and through the endorsement of a diversity strategic plan [828].

The second research question (the seventh overall for this study) is: what are the consequences of structures, decisions, and practices on the racial climate at the institution?

The consequences of the structures, decisions, and practices include a deeply racialized experience at SRU, one that allows people of color to be victimized at the hands of white administrator decisions, while white administrators are unable (or

possibly unwilling) to recognize the victimization, let alone their personal role in creating and maintaining this victimization. Further, the white narrative about the environment that has been promulgated is one that claims the climate is *getting better*, [see Madeline's comment above] which has the simultaneous effect of assuaging white people's guilt and also allows white people to feel good about their work at SRU [see Angela's comment above regarding white administrators patting themselves on the back for their diversity efforts]. Only white administrators who have an abject ignorance of the lived experience of people of color could claim that the environment is getting better and feel good about their efforts. Importantly, such ignorance appears to be cultivated and rewarded through administrative actions at SRU [see Sally's comment/experience above].

Anita painted a powerful picture of the experience at SRU and the consequences of the structures, policies, and practices reinforcing the white institutional space.

I call it being run over by an 18 wheeler and then the wheeler, the 18 wheeler backs up and, and then you have the option of either rolling out of the way staying under the truck, you know. That's how it's felt like here and I am finally starting to, to identify some people I believe are trustworthy, establish connections external to the University, and at best when I am dealing with administrators here, I'm very cautious [77].

Additional Findings

From the start of this study, I assumed that a potential lack of knowledge from white administrators would be somewhat easier to analyze, because it's not hard to

analyze “duh, I dunno,” as I jokingly shared with a committee member. However, what I found is that a great deal of effort was required to understand the implications of cognitive dissonance. Further, since each of these white administrators was likely putting their best foot forward (certainly no white person wants to be accused of being racist), extra effort was required to deeply and faithfully analyze this data from a critical race perspective.

Another finding was that having administrators from the same university was helpful. In several instances the administrator narratives overlapped and intertwined in ways that allowed for a more nuanced understanding of an issue from multiple perspectives. Further, interviewing administrators from the same departments or units also proved helpful, particularly when there were different racial dynamics, since this shed light on how the same environment could be experienced very differently.

Finally, all administrators in higher education are professionals at saying a lot without saying very much. For many white administrators, there were times when their understandings of the experiences of others did not reflect an understanding of the reality. Many of these white administrators appeared to be trying to share what I can only surmise as what they think are the “right answers” but in so doing, these white administrators implicated themselves in their ignorance. That said, the responses from all administrators, regardless of the level of cognizance of race issues, offered a great deal in terms of understanding the racial realities at SRU.

Limitations

I am fond of telling people who have relatively little understanding about the nature of qualitative inquiry that it helps to answer the ‘why’ questions. Quantitative data typically helps provide an understanding of the ‘what’ questions, but in order to truly understand why something is the way that it is, one has to ask ‘why’ which is a question that does not lend itself to a quantitative instrument and conception of the world (i.e. that a universal truth is out there; that truth can be known; that the researcher can be objective; or that data can be generalized to entire populations). However, even qualitative inquiries have important limitations that must be considered, as were described by Lincoln and Guba (1985). First, as an acknowledged limitation, qualitative inquiries are not generalizable. It is for the readers and consumers of this information to decide if their context is similar and understand if the results of the present study are applicable to their situation. A second, related, limitation is that the demographics of the participants in this study were limited, particularly as it relates to people of color. Since issues of race have multifaceted histories which must be considered, perhaps it would have been more helpful to focus on a single underrepresented race (i.e. Black administrators). However, participants of color were only chosen based on their power (and access to power) and the potential for them to share their experiences (data) with a white graduate student.

Third, the single institutional site must also be cited as a potential limitation of the study. Since each of these administrators works within a single site, it is impossible

to know if the themes that emerged may emerge in additional contexts. However, this is a potential area for future study.

Finally, it must be acknowledged that the data in this study were analyzed by a white male, who does not have a lived experience with oppression. As a result, there were many times when I would have to work with multiple peer debriefers to help understand the implications of what was being shared. However, ultimately, the experiences that were shared in this research can never be truly objective, since they are being filtered through the lens of my (and my peer debriefers') myriad life experiences. It should be noted that this is certainly true of quantitative investigations as well, since as Dr. Lincoln often asserts in her classes, "objective reality does not exist," but it is worth citing as a limitation, if only to illustrate the actual strength of such a self-reflective approach.

Areas for Future Research

Obviously, there are several areas for further developing this research. First, one of my goals is to develop this research into strands, whereby I can consider themes from opposing positions and analyze responses across the study (for example the couple of spaces where I juxtaposed comments above). The strength of keeping comments separated by race is that the data flowed together a little more naturally to create a cohesive picture of the racial experience. By utilizing juxtaposed themes, I think the data can be separated into several research studies that investigate particular aspects of white space in higher education. Further by illustrating points in this way, it might be easier for readers to see the tactic and the impact of the tactic on the lived experience of

people of color. It is tempting to refer to this as a cause and effect relationship, but the reality is that this is not as linear, nor as positivist, to be a true cause/effect. Since a goal of this research is to illuminate the lived experiences of people of color, it is critical that the writing illuminates not only the experiences of people of color, but describes the context and complicit role that white people play in creating institutional white space. A writing strategy such as this will enable these voices and lessons to perhaps be a little easier to understand critically.

Next, since this was a single site study, conducting similar studies in different environments and contexts is absolutely critical. The results found at SRU may well be confirmed and will in all likelihood be extended to include additional themes documenting additional white tactics that reinforce white space. Only by working to aggressively name and document white administrative tactics, can a genuine conversation occur that helps to educate white people and allow them to be more critical and conscious of their actions and the impact of their actions.

Another important issue that comes to mind is the nature of the ignorance of issues that people of color described in great depth, of which white administrators were largely ignorant. The question of why comes to mind. Why do white administrators not know more about the experiences of people of color? It seems that some were willing to acknowledge that they don't know what the experience is like for people of color, but there was not an imperative to investigate these issues, despite the fact that the white people in this study are responsible for making many decisions that directly and indirectly affect people of color. This ignorance appears to lead to many assumptions

about people of color and their lived reality, which was almost always a huge departure from what was described by administrators of color. If we understand *why* white people do not engage, we could perhaps begin to understand ways in which white people could take an active role in creating democratic and egalitarian spaces on campus.

In another possible direction, while the racial experience for students and faculty is well documented, the group that appears to have a huge population but very little focused attention are the rank and file staff members. These individuals are often overlooked in terms of impact on a campus culture, but are often front line workers who work directly with students, faculty, and administrators. Coupled with their access to many spaces is the fact that often there is a lower expectation for advanced education as well as the fewest opportunities for professional development, particularly where race is concerned. Further, as was noted in this study, many staff members operate with supervision that allows for a great deal of latitude, as long as the core business is being completed. In this way, staff members appear to be in a position to really impact how people of color are treated, particularly longitudinally, since most front line staff members are bound to the community and have long standing service to universities, many times even inter-generational.

An interesting idea for future research that I considered as I documented these data was perhaps working with one of the respondents of this study for a more in-depth longitudinal study, trying to understand to an even greater degree, the way that the backstage operates in administrative spaces. Olivia's data was a small peek into those spaces, but perhaps developing that trust even further so that I could document that space

more fully over time might be provide even greater insight. How do current events or personal interactions affect a white administrator's understanding of racial issues (if at all)? Further, such a study may also provide an opportunity to understand effective strategies for engaging white administrators with critical race content to foster learning around race issues.

A final pressing need that this study illuminated is the necessity of doing similar studies for gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, religion, and any number of other marginalized identities on university campuses. While it appeared as a possible defense mechanism for white administrators in this study, several issues other than race surfaced and were described as areas of potential hostility.

Broader Implications for this Work

At the risk of belaboring the point, the broader implications for this work are profound. In the time since I have finished my data analysis, I have had a couple of opportunities to share my findings with many people, including a presentation at the Southern Sociological Society (SSS), briefly at a session at the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), and with several critically-minded race scholars that I know personally. The consistent message that I have received from administrators and faculty of color is “you described my experience exactly! You need to publish your findings as soon as possible and please come to our campus to speak.” While flattering, this message has served as affirmation and validation of my analysis and findings (and by extension those of Dr. Moore, whose seminal study of white space was the inspiration for this study and served as my guide in understanding these issues), but more

importantly, illustrated that the white space documented at SRU likely exists at many institutions across the country. Among other lessons, this study has illustrated the imperative for white administrators to engage in the scholarship of whiteness and seek an understanding of how their decisions have the ability to reinforce or dismantle institutional white space.

To return to the analogy that Dr. Lincoln utilized in the proposal hearing, asking white administrators to understand issues of whiteness might be like asking a fish what the world outside of a fishbowl is like (since whiteness is not only the lens through which white people see and understand the world, but serves as the boundary of the known universe), a reality which was spot-on accurate. This study has illustrated that white administrators have great deal of power and decision making authority to impact the climate and experiences for people of color, therefore it is incumbent upon white administrators to become engaged in these conversations. Returning to a point I made earlier, I hope that white people will recognize their ignorance of race issues is their issue to deal with - there are many ways to become involved with and educated about these issues. The lack of knowledge and understanding is not the responsibility of people of color to educate white people. The responsibility falls squarely upon the shoulders of white people to engage this body of knowledge and seek to understand racial issues from a scholarly perspective. That begins in our institutions of higher education, with the leadership, many of whom are academicians by training. Ignorance of race issues is no more an excuse for a white higher education administrator than it is for a fourth grader who failed a pop-quiz because they didn't complete their homework;

than the civil engineer who builds a structurally unsound bridge that collapses; or than the basketball coach who loses all of their games.

Higher education administrators are well-compensated professionals who should be expected to not only be conversant with the scholarship of their professional field of practice, but should know how their decisions impact those on their campuses. Climate studies which are done on nearly every college or university campus to understand the experiences of different populations should have the collective consequences of a report card for the fourth grader; the safety report for the civil engineer; and the final record for the basketball coach. Nearly every profession has consequences for failing to meet the expectations of a job. Higher education administrators must be accountable for the climates that have been created on campus and take responsibility for ensuring that they are more equitable for all people. This begins with academic leaders who often compel ‘diversity’ training for employees and students. I assert that these leaders are perhaps in the greatest need of training, but not “diversity,” rather taking studies in Critical Race Theory, which will hopefully lead to accountable leadership that seeks to meaningfully pursue the institutional missions and charters that eloquently assert that these university educations are intended for all, to benefit the entire society.

REFERENCES

- Adams, M., Bell, L. A., & Griffin, P. (2007). *Teaching for diversity and social justice*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Aguirre, A., & Martinez, R. O. (2006). Diversity leadership in higher education. *ASHE Higher Education Report*, 32(3), 1-89.
- Alcoff, L., & Mendieta, E. (2003). *Identities : Race, class, gender, and nationality*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Allan, E. J. (2003). Constructing women's status: Policy discourses of university women's commission reports. *Harvard Educational Review*, 73(1), 44-72.
- Anderson, J. A. (2008). *Driving change through diversity and globalization*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing Inc.
- Astin, A. W. (1993). *What matters in college: Four critical years revisited*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Baldrige, J. V. (1971). *Power and conflict in the university: Research in the sociology of complex organizations*. New York, NY: John Wiley Publishing.
- Baldrige, J. V., Curtis, D. V., Ecker, G., & Riley, G. L. (1978). *Policy making and effective leadership: A national study of academic management*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Bauman, G. L., Bustillos, L. T., Bensimon, E. M., Brown, M. C., & Bartee, R. D. (2005). *Achieving equitable educational outcomes with all students: The institution's roles and responsibilities*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.
- Bell, D. (2004). *Silent covenants : Brown v. board of education and the unfulfilled hopes for racial reform*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Bell, J. M., & Hartmann, D. (2007). Diversity in everyday discourse: The cultural ambiguities and consequences of "happy talk". *American Sociological Review* 72(6), 895-914.
- Bensimon, E. M. (2004). The diversity scorecard: A learning approach to institutional change. *Change*, 36(1), 44-52.

- Bensimon, E. M. (2005). Closing the achievement gap in higher education: An organizational learning perspective. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 131(Fall), 99-111.
- Berger, J. B. (2000). Organizational behavior at colleges and student outcomes: A new perspective on college impact. *The Review of Higher Education*, 77(2), 177-198.
- Berger, J. B. (2002). The influence of the organizational structures of colleges and universities on college student learning. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 77(3), 40-59.
- Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1967). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge* New York, NY: Doubleday.
- Birnbaum, R. (1984). *ASHE reader in organization and governance in higher education* Lexington, MA: Ginn Custom Publisher.
- Birnbaum, R. (1988). *How colleges work : The cybernetics of academic organization and leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Birnbaum, R. (1989). The Cybernetic Institution: Toward an Integration of Governance Theories. *Higher Education*, 18(2), 239-253.
- Birnbaum, R. (2002). Uses of the university redux. *Review of Higher Education*, 25(4), 451-457.
- Bobo, L., & Kluegel, J. R. (1993). Opposition to race targeting: Self-interest, stratification ideology, or racial attitudes? *American Sociological Review*, 58(August), 443-464.
- Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (1991). Leadership and management effectiveness: A multi-frame, multi-sector analysis. *Human Resource Management*, 30(4), 509-534.
- Bonilla-Silva, E. (1997). Rethinking racism: Toward a structural interpretation. *American Sociological Review*, 62(3), 465-480.
- Bonilla-Silva, E. (2002). The linguistics of color blind racism: How to talk nasty about blacks without sounding "racist". *Critical Sociology*, 28(1), 41-64.
- Bonilla-Silva, E. (2003). *Racism without racist : Color-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in the united states*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

- Bonner, F. A. (2006). The temple of my unfamiliar. In C. A. Stanley (Ed.), *Faculty of color: teaching in predominately white colleges and universities* (pp. 80-99). Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company, Inc.
- Bracey, G. (2015). Toward a critical race theory of state. *Critical Sociology*, 41(3), 553-572.
- Brodkin, K. (1998). *How Jews became white folks and what that says about race in America*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Cabrera, A. F., Nora, A., Terenzini, P. T., Pascarella, E., & Hagedorn, L. S. (1999). Campus racial climate and the adjustment of students to college: A comparison between white students and African-American students. *Journal of Higher Education*, 70(2), 134.
- Calmore, J. O. (1995). Critical race theory, Archie Shepp, and fire music: Securing an authentic intellectual life in a multicultural world. *Southern California Law Review*, 65(5), 2129–2231.
- Carmichael, S., & Hamilton, C. V. (1967). *Black power: The politics of liberation in America*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Chaffee, E. E. (1983). *Rational decision making in higher education*. Boulder, CO: National Center for Higher Education Management Systems.
- Chaffee, E. E., & Tierney, W. G. (1988). *Collegiate culture and leadership strategies*. New York, NY: American Council on Education and MacMillan Publishing Company.
- Chang, M. J. (2000). Improving campus racial dynamics: A balancing act among competing interests. *The Review of Higher Education*, 23(2), 153-175.
- Chun, E., & Evans, A. (2009). Bridging the diversity divide: Globalization and reciprocal empowerment in higher education. *ASHE Higher Education Report*, 35(1), 1-142.
- Clark, D. L., Guskin, S. L., & Guba, E. G. (1977). *Worksheet D*. Unpublished paper.
- Cohen, M. D., & March, J. G. (1986). The processes of choice. In M. Peterson (Ed.), *organization and governance in higher education* (pp. 61-69). Lexington, MA: Ginn Press.
- Cohen, M. D., March, J. G., & Olsen, J. P. (1972). A garbage can model of organizational choice. *Administration Science Quarterly*, 17(1), 1-18.

- Cole, A. L. (2001). Telling inside stories. The paradox of researcher privilege. In A. L. Cole & J. G. Knowles (Eds.), *Lives in context: The art of life history research* (pp. 164-169). Lanham, MD: Rowman Altamira Publishers.
- Crenshaw, K. W. (1988). Race, reform and retrenchment: Transformation and legitimation in antidiscrimination law. *Harvard Law Review* 101(7), 1331-1387.
- Crenshaw, K. W. (2007). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. In L. M. Alcoff & E. Mendieta (Eds.), *Identities: Race, class, gender, and nationalities* (pp. 175-200). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Crenshaw, K. W. (2011). Twenty years of critical race theory: Looking back to move forward. *Connecticut Law Review*, 43(5), 1253-1352.
- Cyert, R. M., Simon, H. A., & Trow, D. B. (1956). Observation of a business decision. *The Journal of Business*, 29(4), 237-248.
- Davis, L. R. (2002). Racial diversity in higher education: Ingredients for success and failure. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 38(137), 131-157.
- Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2001). *Critical race theory: An introduction*. New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. L. (2005). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. L. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 1-32). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Dervarics, C. (2008). More than half of campus crimes involve race. *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*, 11/28/2008. Retrieved from: <http://diverseeducation.com/article/11996/>
- DesRoches, C. M., Zinner, D. E., Rao, S. R., Iezzoni, I., & Campbell, E. G. (2010). Activities, productivity, and compensation of men and women in the life sciences. *Academic Medicine*, 85(4), 631-639.
- Dill, D. D. (1984). The nature of administrative behavior in higher education. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 20(3), 69-99.
- Doane, A. W., & Bonilla-Silva, E. (2003). *White out: The continuing significance of racism*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. (1903). *The souls of black folk: Essays and sketches*. Chicago, IL: A. C. McClurg & Co.

- Eisenhardt, K. M., & Zbaracki, M. J. (1992). Strategic decision making. *Strategic Management Journal*, 13(Winter), 17-37.
- Feagin, J. R. (2001). *Racist America*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Feagin, J. R. (2002). *The continuing significance of racism: U.S. colleges and universities*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education.
- Feagin, J. R. (2006). *Systemic racism: A theory of oppression*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Feagin, J. R., Vera, H., & Imani, N. (1996). *The agony of education: Black students at white colleges and universities*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Frankenberg, R. (1993). *The social construction of whiteness: White women, race matters*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Giroux, H. A. & Giroux, S. S. (2004). *Take back higher education: Race, youth, and the crisis of democracy in the post-civil rights era*. New York, NY: Palgrave.
- Gold, H. K. (2014, March 3). *Six of the most disturbing and racist and sexist college frat events from the past year*. Retrieved from: <http://www.alternet.org/news-amp-politics/6-most-disturbing-acts-sexism-and-racism-emerge-frat-house-ragers-past-year>
- Goldin, C., & Rouse, C. (2000). Orchestrating impartiality: the impact of 'blind' auditions on female musicians. *American Economic Review*, 90(4), 715-741.
- Guba, E. (1990). *The paradigm dialogue*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Guba, E., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N. K. Denzin & Y. L. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 191-216). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Gumport, P. J. (2002). *Academic pathfinders: Knowledge creation and feminist scholarship*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Gusa, D. L. (2010). White institutional presence: The impact of whiteness on campus climate. *Harvard Educational Review*, 80(4), 464-489.
- Guinier, L., Fine, M. & Balin, J. (1997). *Becoming gentlemen: Women, law school, and institutional change*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

- Gurin, P., Dey, E. L., Hurtado, S., & Gurin, G. (2002). Diversity and higher education: Theory and impact on educational outcomes. *Harvard Educational Review*, 72(3), 330–366.
- Hale, F. W. (2004). *What makes racial diversity work in higher education: Academic leaders present successful policies and strategies*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.
- Harris, C. I. (1993). Whiteness as property. *Harvard Law Review*, 106(8), 1707-1791.
- Harris, J. J., Figgures, C., & Carter, D. G. (1975). A historical perspective of the emergence of higher education in Black colleges. *Journal of Black Studies*, 6(1), 55-68.
- Harten, C. J., & Boyer, R. K. (1985). Administrators' receptivity to nontraditional goals. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 56(2), 206-219.
- Hoy, W. K., & Miskel, C. G. (2008). *Educational administration: theory, research, and practice*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Hurtado, S. (1992). The campus racial climate: Contexts of conflict. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 63(5), 539-569.
- Hurtado, S. (2007). Linking diversity with the educational and civic missions of higher education. *The Review of Higher Education*. 30(2), 185-196.
- Hurtado, S., Carter, D. F., & Kardia, D. (1998). The climate for diversity: Key issues for institutional self-study. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, 25(2), 53-63.
- Hurtado, S., Clayton-Pedersen, A. R., Allen, W.R., & Milem, J. F., (1998). Enhancing campus climates for racial/ethnic diversity: educational policy and practice. *The Review of Higher Education*, 21(3), 279-302.
- Hytten, K., & Warren, J. (2003). Engaging whiteness: How racial power gets reified in education. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 16(1), 65-89.
- Ignatiev, N. (1995). *How the Irish became white*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Iverson, S. V. (2007). Camouflaging power and privilege: A critical race analysis of university diversity policies. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 43(5), 586-611.
- Jacobson, M. F. (1998). *Whiteness of a different color*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Kempner, K. (2003). The search for cultural leaders. *The Review of Higher Education*, 26(3), 363-385.
- Kerr, C. (1995). *The uses of the university* (4th ed.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Kezar, A. (2004). What is more important to effective governance: Relationships, trust, and leadership, or structures and formal processes. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 127(1), 35-46.
- Kezar, A. (2007). Tools for a time and place: Phased leadership strategies for advancing campus diversity. *Review of Higher Education*, 30(4), 413-439.
- Kezar, A., & Eckel, P. D. (2004). Meeting today's governance challenges: A synthesis of the literature and examination of a future agenda for scholarship. *The Journal of Higher Education* 75(4), 371-399.
- Kim, J. Y. (2012). Resistance and transformation: Re-reading Mari Matsuda in the postracial era. *UCLA Asian Pacific American Law Journal* 35(18), 101-115.
- Kirkland, S. E., & Regan, A. M. (1997). Organizational racial diversity training. In C. E. Thompson & R. T. Carter (Eds.). *Racial identity theory: Applications to individual, group, and organizational interventions* (pp. 159-175). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Kivel, P. (2004). The culture of power. *Conflict Management in Higher Education Report*, 5(1), 1-7.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 11(1), 7-24.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Stanley, C. A. (2007). The faces of institutional racism. Unpublished manuscript.
- Logan, N. (2011). The white leader prototype: A critical analysis of race in public relations. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 23(4), 442-457.
- Lopez, G. R. (2003). The (racially neutral) politics of education: A critical race theory perspective. *Education Administration Quarterly*, 39(1), 68-94.

- Lopez, I. F. H. (1994). The social construction of race: Some observations on illusion, fabrication, and choice. *Harvard Civil Rights - Civil Liberties Law Review*, 29(1), 1-62.
- Lopez, I. F. H. (1996). *White by law*. New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Lucas, C. J. (1994). *American higher education. A history*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Griffin.
- March, J. G., & Simon, H. A. (1986). *Organizations* (2nd ed.). London, England: Blackwell Business.
- Masland, A. T. (1986). Organizational culture in the study of higher education. In M. Peterson (Ed.), *Organization and governance in higher education* (pp. 70-78). Lexington, MA: Ginn Press.
- Matsuda, M. J. (1993). Public response to racist speech: Considering the victim's story. In M. J. Matsuda, C. R. Lawrence, R. Delgado, K. Crenshaw (Eds.), *Words that wound: Critical race theory, assaultive speech, and the first amendment* (pp. 17-52). Boulder, CO: Westview Press Inc.
- Milem, J. F., Chang, M. J., & Antonio, A. L. (2005). *Making diversity work on campus: A research-based perspective*. Washington DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.
- Milem, J. F., Dey, E. L., & White, C. B. (2004). Diversity considerations in health professions education. In B. D. Smedley, A. S. Butler, and L. R. Bristow (Eds.), *In the nation's compelling interest: Ensuring diversity in the health care workforce* (pp. 345-390). Washington, DC: National Academies Press.
- Milem, J. F., Umbach, P. D., & Liang, C. T. (2004). Exploring the perpetuation hypothesis: The role of colleges and universities in desegregating society. *Journal of College Student Development*, 45(6), 688-700.
- Milner, H. R. (2008). Critical race theory and interest convergence as analytic tools in teacher education policies and practices. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 59(4), 332-346.
- Mintzberg, H. (1979). *The structuring of organizations: A synthesis of the research*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Mintzberg, H. (2000). The professional bureaucracy. In M. C. Brown, (Ed.), *Organization and governance in higher education* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Custom Publishing.

- Moore, W. L. (2008). *Reproducing racism*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Moore, W. L., & Bell, J. M. (2011). Maneuvers of whiteness: 'Diversity' as a mechanism of retrenchment in the affirmative action discourse. *Critical Sociology*, 37(5), 597-613.
- Morgan, G. (2006). *Images of organization*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Moss-Racusin, C. A., Dovidio, J. F., Brescoll, V. L., Graham M. J., & Handelsman, J. (2012). Science faculty's subtle gender biases favor male students. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 109(41), 16474-16479.
- Mueller, J., Dirks, D., & Picca, L. (2007). Unmasking racism: Halloween costuming and engagement of the racial other. *Qualitative Sociology*, 30(3), 315-335.
- Peterson, E. (1986). *Organization and governance in higher education*. Needham Heights MA: Ginn Press.
- Peterson, M. W., Chaffee, E. E., & White, T. H. (1991). *ASHE reader on organization and governance in higher education*. Lexington, MA: Ginn.
- Perry, A. (2010, March 24). *Nairobi: 10 things to do*. Retrieved from: http://www.time.com/time/travel/cityguide/article/0,31489,1974866_1974860_1974811,00.html
- Pfeffer, J., Salancik, G. R., & Leblebici, H. (1976). The effect of uncertainty on the use of social influence in organizational decision making. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 21(3), 227-245.
- Pierce, J. L. (2003). "Racing for innocence": Whiteness, corporate culture, and the backlash against affirmative action. *Qualitative Sociology*, 26(1), 53-70.
- Powell, J. A. (1997). Our private obsession, our public sin: The "racing" of American society. *Law and Inequality*, 15(99), 99-125.
- Powell, J. A. (2000). Whites will be whites: The failure to interrogate racial privilege. *University of San Francisco Law Review*, 34, 419-464.
- Purwar, N. (2004). Fish in or out of water: a theoretical framework for race and the space of academia. In I. Law, D. Phillips, & L Turney (Eds.), *Institutional racism in higher education* (pp. 49-58). Sterling VA: Trentham.

- Pusser, B. (2003). Beyond Baldrige: Extending the political model of higher education organization governance. *Educational Policy*, 17(1), 121-140.
- Rankin, S. R., & Reason, R. D. (2005). Differing perceptions: How students of color and white students perceive campus climate for underrepresented groups. *Journal of College Student Development*, 46(1), 43.
- Roediger, D. R. (1991). *The wages of whiteness*. New York, NY: Verso.
- Roediger, D. R. (1994). *Towards the abolition of whiteness*. New York, NY: Verso.
- Scarano, R. (2011, October 12). *A recent history of racist college parties*. Retrieved from: <http://www.complex.com/pop-culture/2011/10/gallery-a-look-at-racist-college-parties/21>
- Scheurich, J. J. (1993). Toward a white discourse on white racism. *Educational Researcher*, 22(8), 5-10.
- Scheurich, J. J. (1994). Policy archeology: a new policy studies methodology. *Journal of Education Policy*, 9(4), 4-17.
- Schuster, J. H. (1994). *Strategic governance: How to make big decisions better*. Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press.
- Schwandt, T. A. (2001). *Dictionary of qualitative inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Silverglate, H. A., French, D. A., & Lukianoff, G. (2005). *FIRE's guide to free speech on campus*. Philadelphia, PA: Foundation for Individual Rights in Education.
- Simon, H. A. (1993). Decision-making: rational, nonrational, and irrational. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 29(3), 392-411.
- Smart, J. C., & John, E. P. S. (1996). Organizational culture and effectiveness in higher education: A test of the "culture type" and "strong culture" hypotheses. *Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 16(3), 219-241.
- Smith, D. G. (1995). Organizational implications of diversity in higher education. In M. M. Chemers, S. Oskamp & M. A. Costanzo (Eds.), *Diversity in organizations* (pp. 220-244). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Smith, W. A., Allen, W. R., & Danley, L. L. (2007). "Assume the position...you fit the description." Psychosocial experiences and racial battle fatigue among African American male college students. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 51(4), 551-578.

- Solorzano, D. G., Ceja, M., & Yosso, T. J. (2000). Critical race theory, racial microaggressions, and campus racial climate: The experiences of African American college students. *Journal of Negro Education*, 69(1-2), 60-73.
- Solorzano, D. G. & Yosso, T. J. (2002). Critical race methodology: Counter-storytelling as an analytical framework for educational research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(1), 23-44.
- Stanley, C. A. (2007). *Faculty of color: Teaching in predominately white colleges and universities*. Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company Inc.
- Stein, S. J. (2004). *The culture of education policy*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Tarter, C. J., & Hoy, W. K. (1998). Toward a contingency theory of decision making. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 36(3-4), 212-228.
- Tatum, B. D. (1997). "Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?": And other conversations about race. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Thelin, J. R. (2004). *A history of American higher education*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Thompson, C. E., & Carter, R. T. (1997). An overview and elaboration of Helms' racial identity development theory. In C. E. Thompson, & R. T. Carter (Eds.), *Racial identity theory: Applications to individual, group, and organizational interventions* (pp. 15-32). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc.
- Tierney, W. G. (1988). Organizational culture in higher education: Defining the essentials. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 59(1), 2-21.
- Trotta, D. (2012, August 21). *US military battling racists in its own ranks*. Retrieved from: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/08/21/usa-wisconsin-shooting-army-idUSL2E8JHO6K20120821>
- Trix F., & Psenka, C. (2003). Exploring the color of glass: Letters of recommendation for females and male medical faculty. *Discourse & Society*, 14(2), 190-220.
- United States Archives. (n.d.). United States Constitution. Retrieved from: http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_transcript.html
- United States Census Bureau. (2014). Population projections. Retrieved from: <http://www.census.gov/population/projections/>

University of Michigan. (n.d.). First minority graduates and attendees. Retrieved from: <http://bentley.umich.edu/legacy-support/umtimeline/minfirsts.php>

Weick, K. E. (1979). *The social psychology of organizing*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

Weick, K. E., Sutcliffe, K. M., & Obstfeld, D. (2005). Organizing and the process of sensemaking. *Organization Science*, 16(4), 409-421.

Williams, D. A., Berger, J. B., & McClendon, S. A. (2005). *Toward a model of inclusive excellence and change in postsecondary institutions*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Wingfield, A. H., & Alston, R. S. (2014). Maintaining hierarchies in predominantly white organizations: A theory of racial tasks. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 58(2), 274-287.

Zuberi, T. (2011). Critical race theory of society. *Connecticut Law Review* 43(5), 1573–1591.