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Identity, Awareness, Action: A Study of White Anti-Racist Faculty Praxis at Two Predominantly White Institutions

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A STUDY OF WHITE ANTI-RACIST FACULTY PRAXIS

AT TWO PREDOMINANTLY WHITE INSTITUTIONS

By

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Abstract

Despite decades of research into the racial construct known as *whiteness* (e.g., Roediger, 1991; Frankenberg, 1993; Leonardo, 2002), as well as on white privilege and racism within predominantly white institutions (PWIs) (e.g., Harper & Hurtado, 2007), little research exists exploring the work of white faculty who confront racism in teaching, research, or service. In this study, I applied a Critical White Studies (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997) analytical frame to a Constructivist Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2006) study of white anti-racist faculty in two predominantly white institutions within a state higher education system. The study used interviews with 11 white faculty members to discover how their anti-racist work informed their identity as a white person and their conceptual awareness of whiteness as an ideological framework. Particular attention was given to the historical and present contexts in which the participants have lived and worked. Participants all identified experiences which the literature suggests lead to *anti-racist praxis,* a space wherein critical engagement with race and racism compels individuals to anti-racist action (Perry & Shotwell, 2009). The study also found, however, that the institutional spaces in which they conducted their work were not conducive to ongoing growth and development. Rather, participants far more frequently described barriers in the form of resistance from white colleagues, a cultural disconnect among administrators, and an overall lack of institutional awareness concerning the needs of students, faculty, and staff of color. The majority were not optimistic about the possibilities of large-scale change, but did suggest developmental needs and offered ideas for practice. A critical emergent theory of white faculty anti-racist praxis at predominantly white institutions is presented.

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My wife, Cathy, and my daughter Maddie are my best friends. They walked this path with me step by step. The steeper the mountain got, the stronger they got. I love them and thank them with all my heart. To my mom and dad, whom I know have petitioned the heavens on my behalf more than anyone in my life—congratulations. You have lived to see your first-generation student son finally graduate for good, done at 51. I love you, and I am grateful to you.

My deepest thanks to my friend, mentor, guide, and dean, Dr. Jayne Richmond—you made this possible for me. My colleagues Skye Mendes and Kathryn Crisostomo, too, took the world on their shoulders on my behalf. I can never repay any of you adequately.

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Dedications

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Lorna and Brian Hayes, who never gave up on their dream that their son would grow up to be a doctor, and to my wife, Cathy, and daughter, Maddie, who have stuck with me through everything

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Chapter One: Introduction

In the ten days following the election of Donald Trump in November 2016, The Southern Poverty Law Center tallied nearly 900 reports of harassment and intimidation against people of color, women, and members of the LGBTQ community (Miller & Werner-Winslow, 2016). The newly elected president had been endorsed by the Ku Klux Klan and considered a White Nationalist by National Policy Institute director Richard Spencer, a leader of the White Nationalist movement (Lentz & Guttner, 2017). His election (and the reports of harassment which filled news reports in the days after) struck fear into the hearts of many Americans.

During that week, I sent an email to my student staff, a group of about 70 undergraduates. In the letter, I explained to students that many of us were in fear as many of the stories of harassment and intimidation involved students on campuses across the country. I explained what I understood the fear to be about, explained that I thought it was a time for coming together to support one another, and listed as well what people and offices on campus stood ready to help. I also called the fears understandable and referenced some of the overtly intimidating things candidate Trump has said and promised that felt threatening to so many.

I received two or three notes expressing gratitude from student staff. I also received one letter taking me to task for a letter he believed was an abuse of my authority, an unprofessional act, and divisive. The student, a young white man, explained that my letter was political and made him, and people who shared his beliefs, feel fearful and unwelcome in our learning center. He said he would no longer be attending staff

meetings. He also copied his email to the president of the university.

I replied and asked the young man to come and visit me to talk. I explained that it was not my intention to alienate anyone, and I wanted to hear more about his concerns. He came in, and we had a conversation. I told him that I agreed that our department should be a welcoming place to everyone who works there, and I would be mindful of this going forward. He expressed his gratitude, saying he had not meant to cause a stir but felt he needed to speak up. As we moved slowly into the conversation, I referenced the support the President-elect had received from White Nationalist groups. He said that he had heard about that and become curious, he had also done some research on those groups. His conclusion, he said, was that they did not profess to "hate black people," but rather were interested in preserving their white cultural heritage, which they felt was being lost.

Response after response flittered across my working memory and died on my tongue. I realized that nothing I could say beyond "yes, that is what they say" would help our situation. I had not heard from the president or our chief diversity officer, though they had received my original attached to his response, and my reply back. I was not sure how difficult things could get. My main concern, though, was for the young man at the table with me. How, I wondered, had the concept of racism become so distorted within contemporary America that it was possible for an educated, thoughtful young white man to believe that a white nationalist agenda could not be racist?

Background of this Study

Cabrera (2014) studied a cohort of white male students in a predominantly white institution and found that they, much like my student, tended to define racism in terms of

individuals' enactments based on a belief in the inherent inferiority of people of other races. They also tended to frame white people as being victimized by multiculturalism, to reject the idea that racism informed measurable social inequities between racial groups, and to assert that people of color tend grossly overstate the role of racism in their lives. They embraced a belief in meritocracy, considered hard work the key to success, and suggested that if people of color were not as successful as white people, it was because they did not desire it enough.

Critical scholars of racism regard such beliefs as manifestations of *colorblindness*, a pervasive contemporary racial ideology which has largely supplanted ideologies of white racial superiority as a means of preserving the benefits of whiteness (Omi & Winant, 2014). Critical race scholarship *defines* whiteness as a privileged status, the benefits of which are preserved through an adaptable system of ideologies, discourses and social practices (e.g., Delgado & Stefancic, 1997; Kinchloe, 1999). Colorblindness is a contemporary ideology supportive of whiteness, a product of a post-civil rights era discursive replacing of overt anti-black discourses with race-neutral ones (e.g., Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Omi & Winant, 2014). According to Bonilla-Silva (2006), colorblind discourses have co-opted the rhetoric of the black civil rights movement—most notably Martin Luther King Jr.'s call for an end to judgment against black people based on the color of their skin. People who assert that they are colorblind overtly deny that race has any meaning, while discursively replacing culture for race as an attribution for the perceived deficiencies of people of color. Colorblindness attributes demonstrable racial disparities to causes other than racism, accusing people of color of overstating racism, and reframing anti-racist as anti-white (Bonilla-Silva, 2006).

As a dominant racial ideology within predominantly white institutions of higher education (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; McCoy, Winkle-Wagner & Leudke, 2015), colorblindness supports race-neutral diversification practices (Jones, 2013) and discourages the identification and confrontation of oppressive racial norms (Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). The result is a perpetuation of unaddressed and often unacknowledged racial disparities concerning representation and quality of experience of students (Jones, 2013; Palmer, Wood & Spencer, 2013), faculty, and administrators (Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). Importantly, issues of racism on campus do not seem to be getting better with time. Harper and Hurtado's (2007) longitudinal review of the literature on campus racial climate, coupled with Hurtado's (1992) earlier study combine to trace campus climate issues at predominantly white institutions as far back as far back as the 1980s. Harper and Hurtado's analysis reveals persistent and troubling disconnects in which students and faculty of color experience microaggressions, tokenism, overextension, overt racism, and feelings of isolation which pass largely unnoticed among white students and faculty and unaddressed by institutional diversity structures (Harper & Hurtado, 2007). Reviewing literature on black student's experiences at predominantly white institutions, Karkouti (2016) asserted that black students continue to perceive their institutions as unwelcoming, uncomfortable spaces. However, the analysis also showed that white people who worked or studied in predominantly white institutions were often unaware of this difference in perception of campus life and often felt that their institutions did not do enough to attend to racial diversity beyond numbers. Karkouti (2016) cited studies illustrating the positive impact upon learning of facilitated interactions between students of different racial backgrounds. He concluded that predominantly white institutions must raise their

awareness of the needs of students, faculty, and staff of color and be committed to proactive relationship building. Even small change, such as creating a culture of caring in the classroom, has been shown to mitigate the experience of an uncomfortable racial campus climate (Torregosa, Ynalvez & Morin, 2016).

Statement of the Problem

How might such change as that suggested above be possible when the change agents in question (white faculty and administrators) regard a colorblind disposition about race and racism as being essentially anti-racist? A vast body of evidence has defined a predominantly white institutional paradigm of adherence to race-neutral policies which undermine change, and a lack of awareness or acceptance of students, staff, and faculty of color's experiences (Harper & Hurtado, 2007). White faculty and administrators make up the majority of the predominant White University's policy apparatus. If the research suggests that a colorblind white faculty are an impediment to change, then helping white faculty to critique their racial identities, experiences, and assumptions through professional development may be a strategy for improvement. This study is an analysis of how a cohort of white faculty who do anti-racist work sustain their anti-racist praxis. It describes how their ideas inform their work, how the work contributes in turn to their critical awareness and knowledge, and how the environments in which they work impact their efforts.

The inquiry was grounded in three related research questions:

- What motivates white faculty who do anti-racist work in their professional lives to do such work?

- How do white faculty who do anti-racist work in their professional lives characterize the relationship between their work and their understanding of whiteness?

- How do white faculty who do anti-racist work in their professional lives characterize the relationship between their work and the development of their White racial identity?

Purpose and Significance of this Study

Little research exists which analyses the work of white anti-racist faculty. Studies have examined how white people feel when teaching anti-racist curricula (Charbeneau, 2015; Sue, Torino, Capodilupo, River & Lin, 2009), but the review found none that analyzed the intersections between critical analysis of whiteness, white identity, and anti-racist pedagogy. Teel (2014) attempted to merge research on anti-racism with an analysis of her pedagogical strategies. Loftin's (2010) unpublished dissertation was the only one found which examined the work and motivations of a cohort of white faculty in a predominantly white institution. Loftin's study drew from scholarship on social and racial justice ally development, faculty roles in diversity efforts, and Critical Race Theory. It explored white faculty's race-related work, as well as their work supporting people who struggle against other, often intersecting forms of oppression. Loftin (2010) investigated how participants came to see themselves as *social justice* and *racial justice allies*, how they enact their ally status in their diversity-related work, and how their institutional contexts affected their choices.

The present study contributes to this growing knowledge base by exploring the learning relationship between participants' anti-racist work, their sense of white racial identity, and their understanding and awareness of whiteness as a conceptual framework.

As a critical inquiry, it also accounts for the participants' histories and the contexts for their work and learning, focusing especially on institutional dynamics that may privilege white stakeholders.

This study differs from Loftin's (2010) in that it focuses more closely on specific, relational learning experienced by white faculty. It presents an analysis of how participants' anti-racist practices inform their experience of white identity and their understanding of whiteness as a dominant racial, ideological framework. It focuses on past learning relationships, analyzing how participants developed their thinking to the point of reaching anti-racist *praxis*—a place where one's thoughts and beliefs compel anti-racist action (Perry & Shotwell, 2009). It then looks at participants' current anti-racist work in context, examining work with students, with colleagues, and within institutional norms and structures. While Loftin's study documented work on other areas of social justice (and Critical Race Theory views race as one of many intersecting locations for subjugation), this sought a theory of white faculty anti-racist praxis. It did not inquire into or attempt to analyze data concerning other forms of identity, except as parts of participant's reflection on racial identity. Participants sometimes discussed other personal identities (e.g., gender, social class) in the course of answering questions about developing a social justice orientation. These observations informed the analysis of how participants arrived at a point of anti-racist praxis. The study did not focus closely on analyzing the effects of intersecting identities, however. Rather, the analysis attempted to center whiteness and develop a theoretical description of white anti-racist faculty praxis. By describing how a cohort of white anti-racist faculty's work both informs and is informed by their critical engagement with whiteness and white identity, this study

illuminates issues of interest to people who seek to support and sustain anti-racist praxis for white faculty.

<div align="center">**Definitions**</div>

In reading this study, it is useful to understand the specific definitions used for some key terms. Following is a brief list of key terms that can have multiple or contested definitions, along with the definitions this study uses.

Whiteness

As the literature review in chapter two explains, scholars of whiteness do not subscribe to a single definition of this complex concept. The review will offer a set of meanings, illustrating that a key feature of whiteness is that it changes according to context. Whiteness is associated with white race and is often framed both as an identity (e.g., my whiteness is a benefit to me), and a system of identification (e.g., whiteness functions to maintain racial difference through ideologies and discourses). Crenshaw (1997, p. 255) defined whiteness as a system which "functions ideologically when people employ it, consciously or unconsciously, as a framework to categorize people and understand their social locations." A useful definition is to consider whiteness as a framework or system of multiple, changeable ideologies, discourses, and practices which work to maintain white supremacy.

White Supremacy

Strmic-Pawl (2015) drew from various sources to compose a critical definition of white supremacy as a social system which maintains race-based inequities that favor white people, stating:

I do not use the term *White Supremacy* to reference white power groups. Instead, I use it to describe and explain the systematic and systemic ways that the racial order benefits those deemed white and operates to oppress people of color (Bonilla-Silva 2006; Feagin 2006; Smith 2005; Takai 1993; Yancey, 2008). This study uses the term "white supremacy" in a manner consistent with Strmic-Pawl's definition.

White Habitus

Bonilla-Silva (2006) noted that volumes of literature had analyzed the effects of segregation on the development of black communities' shared values, attitudes and behaviors and on the cultivation of a strong sense of in-group identification. He applied the same sort of analysis to white people, reasoning that they lived in greater isolation from people of color than any other racial group. Drawing from two large surveys of racial and social attitudes, Bonilla-Silva (2006) applied Bourdieu's (1984) concept of *habitus* to his analysis.

Habitus, according to Bourdieu (1984), is a system within which a social group continually shapes its members' cognitive structures, which in turn enable individuals to perceive and interpret themselves and their world. A habitus produces visible markers, such as vocal accents or manner of dress and comportment. It produces internal commonalities as well – shared mental schemas with which people make sense of the world. Within the habitus, embedded knowledge and beliefs can operate at what feels like an automatic or intuitive level. The system of common ideas, conceptual frames, and interpretive structures shared within the habitus allow individual members to create

analytical shortcuts when reasoning together. These shortcuts allow group members to evolve shared beliefs and make shared determinations with less critical effort.

Bonilla-Silva's (2006) *"white habitus"* applied Bourdieu's concept to an analysis of white racial culture. Bonilla-Silva asserted that American white people's lives unfolded almost entirely within racially segregated social spaces. He described this white habitus as "a racialized, uninterrupted socialization process that conditions and creates whites' racial taste, perceptions, feelings and emotions, and their views on racial matters (2006, p. 104)".

As an analytical frame, the white habitus provides a context for grounding individual participants' racial experiences and perceptions to the hegemonic discourses which function to reinforce whiteness. Importantly, as Bonilla-Silva (2006) asserted, the white habitus helps explain how a racial hierarchy can maintain itself without the majority of the dominant white racial group enacting racism in ways they would readily regard as racist. In the case of race-related practices within predominantly white institutions (such as those examined in this study), it may shed light on questions of how diversity policies can be enacted to support white privilege at the expense of students and faculty of color.

Racism

Zamudio and Rios (2006) distinguish two typologies of racism. One, *"traditional racism*," is characterized by overt acts grounded in bigotry and a belief in the inferiorities of raced people. The second, more contemporary typology is called *"liberal racism*," or *"colorblind racism*." This form of racism considers traditional, enacted racism to be wrong, but it does not allow for a critical examination of privately held racist beliefs, or

of institutional practices which continue to maintain inequitable systems. Rather, it denies

that such beliefs are widespread. It argues against racism as an explanatory mechanism

for race-specific social and economic disparities, and it broadly asserts that racism is kept

alive by calling attention to it (Zamudio & Rios, 2006). This study refers both to

traditional and liberal forms of racism, but tends to focus more on the contemporary

forms.

Anti-racism

Because systemic racism often operates unnoticed, especially among white

people, *anti-racism* requires a conscious, active opposition to racism. An *anti-racist,*

therefore, might be best defined as an individual who maintains active opposition to

racism. Perry and Shotwell (2009) asserted that consciousness-raising and teaching

critical thinking are anti-racist activities when done as a strategy for enabling others to

oppose racism. The teaching work examined in this study is regarded as anti-racist for

this reason.

Colorblindness

While people who assert that they are colorblind tend to assert that they view all

people as being inherently equal, and treat everyone the same, according to Bonilla-Silva

(2006). However, his analysis of racial attitudes among people who embrace

colorblindness suggests that the belief system is more complex. Bonilla-Silva (2006) has

characterized *colorblindness* as an ideology which asserts five common beliefs. First,

colorblindness asserts that race is not a valid social concept and white supremacist racism

no longer exists as anything more than an outdated, invalid belief system held by very

few people. Second, colorblindness asserts that as racial discrimination is prohibited, the

many social and economic disparities which continue to exist between white people and other racial groups must be attributable to causes other than racism. Third, while white people's stereotypical perceptions of non-white groups' deficiencies (e.g., black people are lazy) are no longer attributable to race, they can be attributed to other sources, such as cultural values. Fourth, laws provide for equal opportunity regardless of race. The failure to succeed is therefore due to individual weakness. Fifth, because race is not biological, attributing events or circumstances to racism serves only to perpetuate a mythological construct. Indeed, merely calling attention to racism's ongoing impact on people of color is sometimes regarded as being racist toward white people (Omi & Winant, 2014).

Hegemony and Hegemonic

Brookfield (2005) defines *hegemony* as a process by which dominant ideologies become embedded in systems of everyday social behavior and practice, informing people's interactions within relationships, institutions, communities, and work. According to Brookfield (2005), ideology becomes hegemony when the dominant ideas are learned and lived through everyday decision-making and judgments and are no longer seen as part of a system of domination. Hegemonic beliefs and practices, therefore, enable ongoing domination through non-coercive and even unnoticeable means. It results in consent—the view of the people that a dominant ideological assertion works in their interests (Brookfield, 2005). In the context of this study, hegemonic beliefs and practices associated with whiteness and white supremacy are regarded as accepted and operationalized by white people as well as people of color. White people's race-related hegemonic beliefs and practices perpetuate a racialized system which thus maintains control over their lives as well as the lives of people of color.

Counterhegemony and Counterhegemonic

Counterhegemony is a descriptor for teaching perspectives and ways of thinking that provide the means to identify and confront hegemony. For example, a school board's elimination of the letters and documented perspectives of non-white people from US history books might be considered *hegemonic*. A teacher's intentional use of supplemental materials to frame a more inclusive account may be considered *counterhegemonic*.

Chapter Two: Review of Relevant Literature

Introduction

In keeping with a Constructivist Grounded Theory methodology, the literature review for this study was conducted in an ongoing way, as part of the process of data analysis, rather than before beginning research (Charmaz, 2006). As such, it was not conducted to support a pre-existing theoretical proposition. Rather, the purpose of the literature review was to locate established conceptual frames with the potential to illuminate meaningful relationships between data. The literature informed the analysis, rather than providing pre-existent frames for categorization (Charmaz, 2006).

This literature review presents a framework for research and theoretical analysis which helped to illuminate and structure the findings in this study. It begins with a brief description of the Critical White Studies field, then expands on the three areas of relational interest indicated in this study's title: whiteness, white identity, and anti-racist action. It concludes with an overview of relevant points from Loftin's (2010) study, which aligns closely with this study.

Critical White Studies

Critical White Studies (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997), also referred to as *Whiteness Studies* (Colchin, 2002; Leonardo, 2002) is an interdisciplinary body of scholarship which grew out of a Critical Race Theory (CRT) analysis of the institutionalization of ideologies of white supremacy and black inferiority (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997). Critical theoretical approaches identify power dynamics at work in social phenomena, looking in particular at how dominant ideologies support or reinforce oppressive social and economic structures while passing as normal (Brookfield, 2005).

Critical White Studies seeks to question ideological and rhetorical formations of *whiteness.*

Whiteness

Critical race scholars analyze *whiteness* as the conceptual core of a system of dominant racial ideologies, discourses, values and practices which subjugate people of color (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Delgado & Stefancic, 1997; Frankenberg, 2001; Gusa, 2010; Kinchloe, 1999; Leonardo, 1999; Rasmussen, Kleinberg, Nexica, & Wray, 2001). Whiteness has been considered a racial signifier, a system of structuring social groups which "functions ideologically when people employ it, consciously or unconsciously, as a framework to categorize people and understand their social locations" (Crenshaw, 1997, p. 255). Because it functions through ideologies, whiteness has also been called a worldview—one which generates and sustains its privileged position (Gusa, 2010).

Scholars grapple in particular with whiteness's discursive flexibility. Racial statuses are social rather than scientific constructs. They lack fixed, empirical definitions. As a socially constructed conceptual framework, Whiteness is continually open to contestation and redefinition. Scholars emphasize this conceptual flexibility in their analyses of whiteness, variously describing whiteness as "a concept that lies within a history of events" (Painter, 2010, p. ix), an "illusory and elusive" status (Jackson, 1999, p. 52), with "morphing properties" (Duster, 2001, p. 113) and an "inherent definitional slipperiness" (Rasmussen, et.al. 2001, p. 8). This flexibility is manifest even at the level of the individual: a person seen as white in one context may not be considered white in another. A brown-skinned, Iranian-born man who identifies as white on the U.S. census may be identified as non-white by a potential employer, or a police officer, for example.

As Nakayama and Krizek (1995, p. 293) wrote: "Whatever 'whiteness' really means is constituted only through the rhetoric of whiteness. There is no 'true essence' of whiteness; there are only contingent constructions of that social location."

Critical scholars, therefore, try to locate whiteness' effects (e.g., on legal or institutional actions, business practices, political practices) and trace them back to their ideological foundations (Leonardo, 1999). Whiteness may lack a single, empirical definition, but scholars have developed a common conceptual framework for analyzing it. One tenet within this framework asserts that white Americans are socialized from birth (e.g., at home, in school, through media) through hegemonic discourses and practices which protect and privilege their racial status, even across socioeconomic status differences (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Dyson, 2004; Seagrest, 2001). Critical race scholars often describe the hierarchical socio-racial arrangement maintained by these discourses and practices as *white supremacy*, a condition generated from "the systematic and systemic ways that the racial order benefits those deemed white and operates to oppress people of color" (Strmic-Pawl, 2015, p. 193). Because ideologies of white supremacy have historically been reified within the nation's laws and embedded into institutional and social practices, they have over time become the conceptual bedrock for other dominant cultural ideologies (e.g., meritocracy, race neutrality) which can reinforce the hierarchy without appearing racist. In this way, ideologies of white supremacy (or black inferiority) can operate largely undetected, facilitating the ongoing subjugation of people of color without the need for overtly racist policy (Dyson, 2004).

Historical analyses of whiteness have examined how white people have defined racial *self* and *others* over time and used those definitions to help justify arrangements of

oppressive power. Painter (2010) traced European and European American's investments in reifying white-supremacist racial taxonomies to its roots in European slave trades. Roediger (1991) described how British colonial politics, law, and economics drew on ideologies of whiteness (e.g., that white people are fully human, with a God-given right to liberty) to create legal and political frameworks needed to justify exploitative labor and economic arrangements, such as the removal of indigenous people from colonized lands, and the colonial-era transition from European indentured servitude to African chattel slavery and wage labor. Harris (1993) characterized whiteness as a property unto itself, a legally defined and protected personal possession which has functioned throughout its history to determine eligibility for human agency, liberty and opportunity. Haney Lopez (1996) analyzed the historical evolution of court-defined whiteness. His analysis discussed British colonial and United States federal legal cases in which individuals sought to be recognized as white (to obtain citizenship and other opportunities available only to white people). Others have studied whiteness in specific ethnic immigrant contexts, further delineating the processes by which some have historically been admitted into whiteness (e.g., Brodkin, 1998; Gugliemo, 2004; Ignatiev, 1995; Yancy, 2003) or assigned to blackness or otherness (Dyson 2004; Omi & Winant, 2014). Omi and Winant (2014) focused on more recent racial formations, analyzing the evolution of white racial discourses, and tracing the development of new dominant ideologies of race neutrality, colorblindness, and reverse racism in the decades since the black civil rights movement's 1960s peak.

Invisible Whiteness

      In seeking to illuminate what scholars have often called an *enigma* (e.g., Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Jackson, 1999), Critical White Studies scholars have focused extensively on understanding how and why whiteness seems invisible, unremarkable, or simply "normal" to white people. Scholars often describe whiteness as an *unmarked signifier* - a concept defined by the absence of the features which form its binary opposite (in this case, "blackness"). In this system of racialization, whiteness is seen as normal (or featureless) while blackness is marked by phenotypical and conceptual characteristics (Dyer, 1997; Frankenberg, 2001; Twine & Gallagher, 2008; Sheshadri-Crooks, 2000; Sue, 2006; Yancy, 2012). Painter (2010) considered this conceptual arrangement a product of Eurocentric cultural dominance. She explained that the taxonomies of race which form the basis of contemporary western racial ideologies originated in European cultures, and invariably considered European people to be the most advanced of human races. Eurocentric racial taxonomies thus focused on labeling the distinguishing features of non-white groups and aligning those features with inferior human qualities.

      Bonilla-Silva (2006) theorized that by segregating themselves from people of color so effectively for so long, American white people have established an extensive and powerful *white habitus*—a highly segregated, self-perpetuating social and cultural space in which individual and collective worldviews are readily cultivated and transmitted, often tacitly or without critical analysis, and generally with positive in-group status in mind. Within the white habitus, white people tend not to identify very deeply with their whiteness because it is not brought to their attention (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Instead, institutions and social systems reflect dominant white cultural norms back at the white

individual. This overwhelming reinforcement of a white-originating (and supporting) worldview leaves many whites with the false impression that white racial culture is universal and not racial (e.g., Frankenberg, 1993; Gusa, 2010; Yosso, Parker, Solórzano & Lynn, 2004). Dyson (2004) suggested that white racial invisibility shields whites from the painful effects of a having a racial identity. In so doing, it also asserts racelessness as a universal value, pressuring others to conceal or suppress their racial identities to gain acceptance. Dyson wrote:

> The great irony of American race, within the discursive frame of whiteness as an invisible entity, is that the condition for racial survival is racial concealment—a state of affairs that produces a surreal racelessness that stigmatizes all nonwhite entities. (Dyson, 2004, p. 114).

While critical white scholars have theorized the phenomenon of white invisibility, they have also challenged white people to not invoke invisibility as a rationalization for being inattentive to whiteness. Frankenberg (2001) pointed out that whiteness has always been highly visible to those whom it subjugates and called the white experience of invisibility a "delusion." Indeed, Frankenberg and other scholars have argued that the notion of white invisibility may itself be a product of a dominant hegemonic discourse, providing a rationale to support white people's disinclination to analyze their racial status (e.g., Frankenberg, 2001; Kendall, 2012; Roediger, 2002; Yancy, 2012).

Omi and Winant (2014) agreed that when Critical White Studies came to prominence in the 1990s, whiteness was undergoing an ideological transformation which has functioned to obscure its workings. The civil rights movement had peaked in the 1960s, but by the 1990s deep inequities remained in most measures of prosperity, health,

education, economic and geographic mobility in America (e.g., Alexander, 2010; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; DiTomaso, 2013; Gusa, 2010; Orfield & Lee, 2005). A hegemonic racial ideology of *colorblindness* evolved within the white habitus (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Omi & Winant, 2014). According to Omi and Winant (2014), the colorblind ideology has co-opted concepts used in civil rights arguments for equal status under the law. Colorblindness asserts that if indeed all people are equally human and race is merely a social construct, then race cannot be used as a rationale for social inequities. The legal prohibition of racial segregation was conflated to mean that people of color now had opportunities equal to those of white people. Therefore, any failure to overcome economic and social disparities was not a product of racism but rather a function of individual or communal character (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). This ideological turn toward colorblindness included a shift among white people from stereotyping European ethnic identities to evolving a white racial homogeneity (Perry, 2002). Anderson (2003) referred to this phenomenon as ideological whitewashing—a dissolving of European ethnic distinctions into a single white culture. Painter (2010) considered it one of several historical "expansions" of whiteness. These expansions, described by Painter (2010) as times in which people who were previously not considered white (e.g., Irish immigrants in the 18th century) became admitted into whiteness, enabling white people to maintain a dominant status in the face of changing demographics.

White Privilege

Few topics in CWS have attracted more attention than the concept of white privilege (e.g., Frankenberg, 1993; Kendall, 2012; McIntosh, 1989; Wildman, 2005; Wildman & Davis, 1997). Conceptually, white privilege asserts that the degradation and

exploitation of non-white people produce durable benefits and privileges for white

people. As these benefits are handed down through generations, their connection to racial

exploitation sometimes becomes less noticeable to those who receive them. The more

whiteness is equated with normalcy, the more difficult it may be for white people to see

their advantages. White privilege is often defined in terms of security from the effects of

being racially marked as non-white. McIntosh's (1989) famous essay on white privilege

centered on white people's everyday experience of not having their race be brought to

their attention or used against them. In McIntosh's view, white privilege often comes in a

empty form; it is freedom from the burdens of race.

Kendall (2013) considered that white privilege might be difficult for white people

to notice because people tend to pay more attention to things that are sources of struggle

for them than things which are not. It may be difficult for white people who struggle with

other aspects of identity (e.g., gender, religion, socioeconomic class) to recognize that

their white status still affords them certain benefits and privileges regardless of other

statuses (again, such as freedom from racial profiling). Kendall (2013) also considered

that simply unpacking white privilege can reveal how being white is beneficial to white

people, without addressing what being white costs them. For Kendall (2013), this raises

questions as to why people who learn about white privilege would be expected to oppose

it.

Andersen (2003) considered whether or not focusing on white privilege might

exempt white people from having to address racism. If whiteness means not having one's

shortcomings attributed to one's race, then the greatest of white privileges may be the

experience of not feeling racialized. Thus, it is insufficient to simply focus upon white

privilege as "a repertoire of taken-for-granted advantages" (Anderson, 2003, p.26). White privilege education must trace the existence of white privilege to the system which creates it, and the costs of participating in such a system must also be reckoned with. Wildman (2005) similarly argued that anti-racism cannot rely on a large-scale renunciation of individually experienced white privilege by white people because privilege is by definition systemic. While white privilege may yield benefits to individual white people, it is better defined as the systemic process that affords the recognizable benefits that constitute the privilege (Wildman, 2005). This process, traceable to some extent from marking arrays of visible privileges, is in fact reinforced by pre-existent wealth distribution, the adaptability of reinforcing rhetorics and evolving ideologies (e.g., color blindness), and difficulties in understanding the relative weight of individual and group actions. Thus, white privilege may be synonymous with white supremacy. Minimally, it must be analyzed in the larger context of a white supremacist racial hierarchy (Wildman, 2005).

White Identity

The hegemonic normalization of whiteness is not the only barrier to white identification and critical analysis faced by white people. Critically examining one's white identity often requires emotional resolve. Opening one's self to the psychological experience of being white can be problematic for white people in general, and for white people seeking to oppose racism in particular. Thandeka (1999) conducted interviews and workshops with hundreds of white people over years of work as a Unitarian Universalist minister. While not conducted as formal research, her analysis of the stories shared by white people revealed a consistent connection between earliest childhood memories of

race and the experience of shame. Nearly all participants she spoke with recalled that their earliest experiences of race involved being shamed by adult caretakers (often parents) into what they as children processed as morally transgressive behavior toward people of color. In one case, a man who had been taught in childhood to treat everyone equally recalled his confusion and upset at angering his parents by inviting his young black neighbors into the yard during his birthday party. Another recalled the humiliation of being driven around predominantly black neighborhoods by his parents. The family was going to take a trip to a racially diverse city, and his parents wanted to condition his response to seeing black people so that he would not react inappropriately during their trip. Thandeka concluded that white people are "inducted" (1999, p.127) into whiteness through a socialization process which prioritizes maintaining group belonging over processing conflicting feelings about the integrity of their identities. Even as they experience a positive in-group status, white people whose racial self-concept is connected to shameful episodes may experience "an impaired sense of core self" and an "inability to relate to others with self-integrity" which can generate a powerful resistance to undertaking a self-conscious examination of racial identity (Thandeka, 1999, p. 127).

Thandeka (1999) provided insight into the nature of resistance and discomfort that white people frequently exhibit when asked to talk about race. Irving's (2014) racial autobiography, *Waking up White,* described the painful and confusing process of being slowly critically awakened to what her beliefs, actions, and privileged white status meant to others. She also described the challenges she experienced in persisting, overhauling her worldview, making mistakes, and resisting going back into a world in which her whiteness would again be uncritically accepted. King (1991) coined the term

dysconscious racism to describe how a lack of criticality led her white students to accept distorted understandings of racism and inequity. According to King (1991), students equated efforts to analyze whiteness with accusations that white people should feel guilty about the legacy of white supremacy or the privileges that whiteness grants them. Their adherence to a colorblind ideology caused them to regard efforts to engage in a critical analysis of whiteness as inherently racist. Kendall (2013) discussed the difficulties she faced in working with well-intentioned white people who wished to be seen not as white but rather as non-racial individuals. Kendall (2013) argued that the assertion of a contemporary "post-racial" attitude (equating the scientific invalidation of race with an end to race and racism) was itself an indication of the privileged position white people occupy.

Measuring White Identity Development

Counseling psychologists have generated a substantial body of research aligning white people's stated racial attitudes and behaviors with developmental identity statuses (e.g., Bennett & Atkinson, 1994; Hardiman & Keehn, 2012; Helms, 1984, 1995, 2014; Rowe, Sabnani, Ponterroto & Bordovsky, 1991). Helms' (1984, 1995) groundbreaking work in identity development suggests that white people may operate from multiple, dynamic racial identity schema, or statuses, each with related strategies for interpreting and enacting race-related experiences (Carter, Helms & Juby, 2004). These statuses are to some degree contextually activated and context-dependent, so white individuals may be categorized differently at different times and with more than one schema orientation at a time. Still, the statuses can be arranged to suggest an orientation toward an anti-racist identity, thus offering insight for counselors.

Research on the utility of Helms' (1995) White Racial Identity Attitudes Scale (WRAIS) indicates that it supports Helms' original proposition that white racial identity statuses differentially relate to attitudes about racism. It does less well, however, at charting the complex nature of the interactions between attitudes in and across statuses (Carter, Helms & Juby, 2004). Critics of Helms' work have argued that the inventory measures only white attitudes about nonwhite others, while inadequately measuring white people's identifications with being white. Such an approach could inadvertently uphold myths of positive whiteness rather than undercutting them, by enabling whiteness to go unexamined (Croll, 2008; Hardiman & Keehn, 2012; Rowe, Bennett & Atkinson, 1994).

White Anti-Racist Identity and Anti-Racist Praxis

Other studies have tried to find a formula for cultivating a white anti-racist identity by focusing on white identity formation among white people who aspire to do anti-racist work (Broido, 2000; Frankenberg, 1993; Kishimoto, 2016; Perry & Shotwell, 2009; Reason, Millar & Scales, 2005). In these studies, the development of counterhegemonic frames is linked to specific learning dynamics: positive parental modeling and mentoring, the cultivation of critical thinking ability, and the development of an ability to empathetically connect with the experiences of racially subordinated others. These are regarded as important factors in a white person's reaching anti-racist praxis– the intersection between analyzing racism and committing to act in opposition to it (e.g., Dei, 2001; Perry & Shotwell, 2009).

Reason, Millar, and Scales (2005) studied pre-college characteristics of white anti-racist college students. Their participants' pre-college experiences with race and social justice varied widely. All spoke, however, about parents who helped shape their

sense of racial justice orientation, either by demonstrating progressive or anti-racist

values or by cultivating an appreciation for open-mindedness and critical thinking. Those

who had more advanced levels of interest also had past experiences of being in spaces

with people of color on a day-to-day basis, either in racially diverse high schools or

through travel or experiences wherein they were a racial minority. All students in the

study had also taken a course on race relations during their first year of college (in

fulfillment of a multicultural course requirement). Participants spoke positively about the

courses, which they felt were instrumental in their learning to think more deeply about

whiteness.

Other studies emphasized the importance of critical self-reflection. Broido (2000)

found that among white college students, beliefs alone were not sufficient to motivate

them to anti-racist action. Rather, students identified three learning needs: a need for

more information, a need for opportunities to make meaning with that information, and a

greater confidence in themselves and their agency. Tatum (1994) suggested that students

needed mentors to help process complex concepts that they would encounter in an anti-

racist course. Dei (2001) added that support for anti-racist development should emphasize

critical self-reflection, awareness of intersectionality, and cultivation of empathy.

Kishimoto (2016) echoed the need for critical self-reflection, as a means for moving from

an abstract understanding of oppression as force in the world, to a concrete awareness of

the everyday manifestations of oppression. Goodman (2001) added that such self-analysis

should specifically focus on one's interpersonal relational statuses and interests. A

conceptual analysis of racism may engender empathy, according to Goodman. However,

a commitment to confronting racism requires an evolution in perspective--from self-

interest (I do this to be a good white person), through mutual interest (I do this to help you), to collective interest (I do this because we will all benefit) (Goodman, 2001). Perry and Shotwell (2009) analyzed data from two studies done ten years apart on the same cohort. They found that those white people who did anti-racist work had been moved to action by a specific, common constellation of occurrences. Perry and Shotwell (2009) theorized that for anti-racist praxis to occur, white people needed opportunities to challenge hegemonic knowledge in three domains – affective (or empathetic) knowledge, tacit (or common sense) knowledge, and propositional (or historical; academic) knowledge. Similar to Goodman (2001), Perry and Shotwell (2009) found that moving to action required a counterhegemonic reframing wherein individuals can develop a greater awareness how all people are interrelated and actively co-participate in defining themselves and one another socially (Perry & Shotwell, 2009).

Finding an Anti-Racist White Identity

Malott, Paone, Shaefle, Cates, and Haizlip (2015) sought to investigate some of the criticisms of Helms' alignment of white identity with attitudes about racial others. They questioned the model's assertion that whites who operate in what Helms called the *autonomy* status (the highest form of anti-racist identity in the scale) have a characteristically positive white identity. This perspective can be counter-productive to white anti-racism in that it supports whiteness rather than opposing it (e.g., Roediger, 1991; Ignatiev, 1995). Malott et al. also challenged Helms' assertion that white anti-racists could "avoid life options that required participation in oppression" (Helms, 1995, p. 185), asserting instead that completely avoiding such life options was impossible.

Malott et al. (2015) documented how anti-racist activists experience their white identities. Their participants acknowledged a deep awareness of the roles that ideologies of whiteness played in shaping their white identities. Participants also tended to think that preoccupations with their own white identity might distract from their work of confronting racism. Still, they expressed a need to cultivate a positive racial self-identity, considering it both necessary for, and contingent upon, working against whiteness. Eichstedt's (2001) study of white anti-racist activists revealed a similar willingness to grapple with such tensions. The white activists in Eichstedt's study believed the problematic nature of whiteness required them to hold their unfairly privileged status in the light at all times or risk reformulating their white racial identities into something more comfortable. Eichstedt's (2001) and Malott et al.'s (2015) findings echo other studies (Dei, 2001; Perry & Shotwell, 2009; Kishimoto, 2016; Sue, 2011) in asserting that white people develop an anti-racist white identity when they are: (a.) focused on anti-racist action; (b.) aware that they benefit from whiteness even as they oppose it; and (c.) engaged with the dialectic tensions thus generated.

The Need for Critical White Anti-Racist Faculty Identity Work

Scholarship on white anti-racist development (e.g., Eichstedt, 2001; Malott et al., 2015) reveals an essential tension for white anti-racist faculty. If whiteness is hegemonically rendered invisible to white people, then white people must be open to counterhegemonic experiences to see it. This requires a commitment to not resting comfortably with one's knowledge or efforts. The European-American Collaborative Challenging Whiteness (ECCW) (2005) described such anti-racist efforts as acts of *critical humility*, a disposition toward anti-racist praxis which balances a commitment to

action with the understanding that one's knowledge and sense of agency are always incomplete. As such, the group believes, white anti-racists are constantly evolving, always partially moved by hegemonic ideologies, and always subject to self-deceptions. Brookfield (2014), applying the critical humility construct to his own anti-racist faculty experience, discovered how frequently he committed microaggressions toward people of color or experienced feelings of disdain toward other white anti-racists who appeared less critically conscious. Brookfield asserted that for white people, declaring oneself anti-racist and enacting anti-racism can be two different things. He believed that the desire to shape a positive white identity might unintentionally serve to reinforce whiteness (Brookfield, 2014). Schick (2000) similarly warned against acting on the desire to fulfill a vision of oneself as a virtuous white person. One must remain motivated to do good work, Schick advised, but recognize that the desire to form a more positive white identity acts to reinforce the thing that needs deconstruction. Like Brookfield (2014), Schick (2000) focused on this tension in the context of anti-racist college teaching, where the white anti-racist professor must recognize patterns of resistance or evasion in both their students and themselves.

Heinze (2008) argued that white anti-racist teachers must be committed to keeping questions about their qualifications for teaching about whiteness and white privilege open to interrogation. In addition to developing greater personal self-awareness, Heinze (2008) believed that the self-reflective process could be modeled for students. If students seemed reluctant to share their individual self-reflections, depersonalized examples could be presented for group discussion. Hassouneh (2005), a woman of color using an anti-racist pedagogy in college nursing courses, suggested however that the

notion of creating entirely neutral or safe spaces for all students is a fallacy. Anti-racist pedagogy, she asserted, must acknowledge that at various points in conversations about race and racism, different people will be made to feel less or more safe by what is said. Just as faculty can anticipate resistance from their institutions and colleagues, they must expect it and be ready to work with it in their classrooms.

Trainor (2002) cut to the core of the white anti-racist critical pedagogical challenge by naming a paradox of the critical method. According to Trainor (2002), a critically engaged white anti-racist Self seeks to identify and exclude a morally unacceptable racist Other. Identifying the unacceptable Other as being fit for exclusion is the essence of racial formation and power, however. One relies on the other to order its own existence (Trainor, 2002). Thus, the anti-racist instructor must approach the students in the classroom similarly to how it is suggested that they approach their own identities – in full awareness of both the necessity and the risk of identifying oneself with whiteness and racism. To not do so invites white students to feel racially essentialized, and students of color to feel a lack of trust in the classroom's integrity (Trainor, 2002). Charbeneau (2015) emphasized that this will happen in efforts to promote inclusive practices and promote anti-racist learning in predominantly white institutions unless the institution makes a full commitment to supporting alliances, staff development processes, and other initiatives aimed at helping white faculty navigate these difficult issues.

White Institutional Climate Reinforcing Whiteness

Institutional racial climate appears to be a serious impediment to efforts to strengthen the anti- racist knowledge and agency of white faculty. Gusa (2010) conducted a large scale, iterative discourse analysis of the literature on institutional racial climate

and found four characteristics of she called White Institutional Presence. This concept named a phenomenon of institutional deference to whiteness grounded in a tendency to remove discussions of racism from policy-making discourse. Gusa (2010) found and labeled four institutional discourses. First, *white ascendancy* reflects the sense of belonging, entitlement, and superiority displayed by white students and faculty. Second, *monoculturalism* maintains a racial status quo by framing white culture as academic culture. Third, *white blindness* is the avoidance of racialized thinking, such as in a color-blind ideology. Finally, *white estrangement* is the institutional reinforcement of the separation of white students from students of color, such that a numeric diversity does not necessarily translate into more engagement among students with different racial identities. Harper and Hurtado's (2007) longitudinal analysis of fifteen years' worth of campus climate research found similar views shared by students across large, predominantly white institutions. Students, faculty, and staff of all racial identities felt their institutions did not do enough to encourage social integration or dialogue needed to learn about racism. Many considered race a taboo topic within their institutions. Students and staff also felt a similar sense of white monoculture. Finally, Harper and Hurtado's analysis found a consistent, substantial disconnect in perceived levels of social satisfaction in which white students tended to overestimate the satisfaction levels of students of color (Harper & Hurtado, 2007).

Loftin's Study of White Faculty Racial Justice Allies

Similarly to this study, Loftin (2010) interviewed white faculty who worked in support of people of color in a predominantly white institution. Loftin's study analyzed

key experiences in the development of participants' knowledge and beliefs about racism in general, within their campus community, and in their own work.

Participants in Loftin's (2010) study described the influence of mentors and role models as vital to the development of a racial justice orientation. They credited family members with laying a foundation for counter-hegemonic ideological development, both directly through their own interactions with people of color and indirectly through the beliefs that they shared with one another about race and racism. Colleagues and students (including both people of color and more experienced white allies) were described as having provided critical counter-narratives—personal insights into racism which functioned to counter dominant, hegemonic narratives (e.g., Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Yosso, Parker, Solórzano & Lynn, 2004). Loftin's participants also acknowledged the value of learning to recognize everyday examples of white privilege (e.g., Allen, 1994; McIntosh, 1989; Kendall, 2012), the often unacknowledged social and psychological advantages which are available to white people because of their racial status.

Loftin's (2010) participants reflected upon their work in teaching, service, and research as providing opportunities for racial justice activism. Her participants discussed strategies that they had developed and used working with white students and students of color. These included strategies for increasing racial diversity in their courses and generating inclusive, safe, and beneficial dialogue around contentious racial issues. Loftin (2010) noted that their collective narratives countered a type of deficit-oriented discourse which often informs diversity-related policy development at predominantly white institutions (Berrey 2011; Milner, 2007). Rather than characterizing students of color in terms of educational deficits (e.g., under-preparedness, or need for remediation

or special support), Loftin's participants tended to focus on the value added by the presence and involvement of students of color. Her participants also named institutional and larger systemic inequities as important locations for analysis and change.

Finally, Loftin (2010) noted how participants frequently highlighted the benefits of ally work to their own personal and professional growth. This finding aligned with the CRT tenet of interest convergence (Bell, 1980; Harper, Patton & Wooden, 2009; Pierce, 2016) – the idea that advancements beneficial to a subjugated group will occur only when the dominant group also stands to benefit. Loftin (2010) noted that while participants' feeling rewarded was a source of ongoing motivation for them. It was also an example of how whiteness can easily function to center the needs of white people.

Summary

Reviewing the literature as part of the data analysis process was instrumental in allowing the participants' ideas to speak for themselves, and for the analytical methods discussed in the next chapter to work. Using the literature as data itself allowed for a constant comparison not only between participant observations, but between participants and scholars. As my understanding of the scholarship deepened, I continually revisited codes and passages and saw them with a deeper sense of conceptual awareness. The learning curve was steep, but by using literature to understand data rather than constrain it I was able to evolve a theory that was refined rather than prescribed.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

This qualitative study used Constructivist Grounded Theory methodology to analyze experiences shared by eleven white professors who do anti-racist work within a public higher education system in a northeastern state in the United States. Through semi-structured one-to-one interviews conducted using a *conversational interview* approach (van Enck, 2009), each participant reflected on personal and professional experiences with race and racism, beginning with their earliest memories and carrying through to their current work and lives. They were asked to consider whether and how their experiences with race, racism, and their anti-racist work contributed to (a.) their understanding of whiteness as a socially constructed, ideologically grounded system which favors white people, and (b.) the development and salience of their white identities. They were also asked to reflect upon whether, and how, their identification with whiteness and their understanding of whiteness as a social construct informed their commitment to anti-racist work.

This chapter will explain the research design and execution, discussing the choice of methodology, development of the research instrument, and procedures used for identifying participants, collecting and analyzing data, and interpreting findings. It will then focus on strategies used for strengthening credibility and trustworthiness, and conclude by discussing limitations which frame the utility of the findings.

Development of Research Questions

As described in chapter one, this study was proposed as an effort to understand the processes which inform the development of white anti-racist faculty members who

confront racism as part of their professional work. It originated from questions I developed after having done a Critical Race Theory-based analysis of diversity policy making and implementation in predominantly white institutions. That coursework raised concerns about the ability of predominantly white faculties and administrations to transform institutional cultures.

After the course, I began to wonder what a process of white anti-racist faculty development might look like. I considered the possibility that the majority of white faculty may not consider race and racism as pressing issues in their practice, or they may believe that diversity strategies framed by colorblind ideologies are sufficient. I knew, however, that there were anti-racist faculty doing work in predominantly white institutions. I was interested in learning about whether and how confronting of racism through teaching, scholarship, and service informed their understanding of whiteness and their critical awareness of whiteness as a personal identity. Similarly, I wondered whether and how their anti-racist work informed their critical learning and personal growth. I considered that obtaining a better understanding of this phenomenon could inform both white anti-racist faculty development, anti-racist pedagogy and policy development, and student learning outcomes. I began with the following research questions:

- What motivates white faculty who do anti-racist work in their professional practice to do such work?

- How do white faculty who do anti-racist work in their professional practice characterize the relationship between their work and their understanding of whiteness?

- How do white faculty who do anti-racist work in their professional lives characterize the relationship between their work and the development of their white racial identity?

Methodology and Conceptual Framework

Grounded Theory

This study used a Constructivist Grounded Theory-based methodology (Charmaz, 2006). Grounded Theory methodology (e.g., Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), is a qualitative approach which aims to allow theory to emerge from data collected. The focus is on previously untheorized phenomena and requires as little interference as possible from pre-existent researcher knowledge or bias. Grounded Theory methodology originated in the mid-1960s as a positivist approach to qualitative research. It asserted that a researcher could apply a rigorous, scientific approach to qualitative analysis by approaching phenomena with strict objectivity. Grounded theorists treat all information as data (including the thoughts and reflections of the researchers themselves). Researchers follow a rigorous, ongoing, multi-tiered constant comparative process (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) of coding data, comparing all codes to one another so that meaningful patterns could be seen. This grounded process eventually coalesces into a theoretical explanation of a phenomenon.

Constructivist Grounded Theory

This study did not use Grounded Theory as originally formulated by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Glaser and Strauss sought a positivist approach to qualitative research. The goal was to allow qualitative data to speak for itself. This way, an emergent theoretical explanation of a phenomenon could be regarded as entirely objective and

unbiased. A later constructivist turn in Grounded Theory scholarship, however, asserted that such objectivity was unrealistic (Charmaz, 2006; Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006). Constructivists asserted that all qualitative data is socially constructed through interactions between researchers and participants and is therefore shaped in part by the researcher's knowledge and beliefs. Strauss eventually parted from Glaser, acknowledging both the unavoidability and the utility of pre-existent researcher knowledge and opinion (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). With Corbin, Strauss contended that while an analysis of relevant literature should be avoided before entering the field, researchers will inevitably have to account for what they already know and believe about the phenomenon being studied (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Within a Constructivist Grounded Theory approach (e.g., Charmaz, 2004), a researchers' ability to account for their positionality, beliefs, and conceptual influences gains importance. In this study, Constructivist Grounded Theory methods enabled me to isolate and examine my beliefs and conceptual predispositions, lending greater credibility to the findings.

Using Constructivist Grounded Theory with a Critical Whiteness Analytical Frame

For this study, I conducted a critical inquiry using conceptual frameworks common to Critical White Studies scholarship. I chose to use a Constructivist Grounded Theory methodology because it provided the analytical tools to conduct a critical inquiry which acknowledged researcher and participant positionality. The Critical White Studies framework allowed for the fullest possible account of temporal, spatial and cultural contexts, including power dynamics.

While traditional Grounded Theory seeks researcher objectivity (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), constructivists believe that what often gets asserted as objective truth

about social reality is, in fact, a matter of perspective (Schwandt, 1998). A goal in a constructivist study, therefore, is to understand (as well as possible) how participants perceive their own experiences. Constructivist grounded theorists reflect that understanding in their interpretations of what participants say or do. This is true of critical inquiry as well (Charmaz, 2017; Malagon, Huber & Valez, 2009). Charmaz (2017) advocates the use of Constructivist Grounded Theory for critical inquiry because it offers researchers a process for analyzing relationships between individual thought and action and the social, temporal and spatial dynamics which produce them. If participants' and researchers' beliefs and motivations are socially constructed, it follows that the data they produce will be constructed not only by their knowledge and beliefs, but also by multiple social forces (Charmaz, 2017). Use of a constant-comparative method and memoing allows constructivist grounded theorists to raise ongoing, critical questions about how social structures, systems, ideologies, and power relationships influence the phenomenon under observation. Critical inquiry focuses on those relationships and how they impact researcher and participant positionality. This type of analysis, Charmaz (2017) explained, breaks with the traditional grounded theory pursuit of "neutral" explanations of what is happening. This happens in part by acknowledging that neutrality itself is a value having a socially constructed epistemological ground. Charmaz (2017) wrote:

> Constructivist Grounded Theory developed from pragmatist values promoting social justice. By providing analytic tools to probe how events, processes, and outcomes are constructed, the method provides a means of studying power, inequality, and marginality.This method aids in explicating research participants'

implicit meanings and actions along with those buried in policies and

organizational texts. Through moving back and forth between theorizing and

collecting data while using comparative methods, the level of abstraction and

complexity of the analysis increases (Charmaz, 2017, p. 39).

As Charmaz (2017) indicated, my choice to combine Constructivist Grounded Theory

with a Critical White Studies analytical frame both compelled and enabled an accounting

of the broader contexts which framed the research questions. Importantly, it compelled a

close examination of the researcher's thoughts and biases.

Malagon, Perez Huber, and Velez (2009) contended that in Critical Race Theory

research, prior knowledge could be vital to effectively interpreting data which emerges

from diverse racial and cultural contexts. They argued for an adaptation of Grounded

Theory methodology to Critical Race Theory scholarship. The reason, they explained,

was that the tenets of Grounded Theory methodology compel researchers to diligently

avoid biasing data through the intellectual abstraction or essentialization of subjects' lived

experiences (especially when seeking to connect those experiences to systemic or

institutionalized forms of discrimination) (Malagon et al., 2009). Milner IV (2007)

argued as well that Critical Race Theory should itself function not so much as a

methodological framework, but as a reminder that the researcher must undertake a critical

self-evaluation. This process will serve to minimize the impact of the researcher's biases,

preconceived notions, and racially grounded ideas upon data analysis.

Using Grounded Theory with a Small Sample

In choosing a Constructivist Grounded Theory methodology for a study involving

a small sample, it was necessary to consider whether or not the number of cases would be

sufficient to reach saturation (i.e., a point where researchers determine that new data does not contribute to new insight). Exactly how many cases are typically required to achieve saturation, however, has been difficult to assess. Creswell (1998) suggests 20-40 (a large gap), and in fact argues for oversampling to ensure that nothing new would likely emerge from additional study. In contrast, Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006) found that the majority of codes arrived at in a meta-analysis of 60 cases were nearly fully formed by the 12th case. Becker (2012) argued that the minimal sample size question lacks a reasonable answer. Instead, he asserted that the researcher should be mindful of the relationship between the amount of data and the claims that can be made from it. Researchers should have "enough interviews to say what you think is true, and not to say things that you don't have the number for" (Becker, 2012, p.15).

In this study, very little scholarship was found on white professors doing anti-racist work, and none was found exploring the interrelationships between their understanding of whiteness, their anti-racist work, and their white identities. Thus, this study of 11 participants aimed less to explain already identified phenomena than to identify categories from which a relational theory of identity, awareness, and action might be developed. This study keeps with the Grounded Theory practice of drawing an emergent theory from a granular analysis of the data. The emergent theory stands as a proposed explanation of the phenomena that have been observed. The theory was developed through a rigorous process of constant comparison of deconstructed data points, with one point being continually examined for relationships to any other point, until categories and an ultimate explanation were solidified.

Setting and Participants

The eleven participants in this study were full-time faculty members at one of two public institutions in a northeastern U.S. state higher education system. They were selected for participation through a purposive sampling process. The two institutions—Flagship University and State College—were selected for several reasons. Both had predominantly white faculty and student populations. Their geographic proximity to one another (the institutions are separated by less than a ninety-minute drive) was convenient for conducting multiple face-to-face interviews. The proximity of the faculty communities also aided the purposive sampling process. As researcher, I benefitted from knowing specific members of Flagship University's faculty and staff who were known for their work on diversity, equity and inclusion (including their Chief Diversity Officer and other members of university-wide diversity committees). I introduced these associates to the proposed study and asked for assistance in identifying participants. Additionally, I emailed other members of the institutions' major diversity-related committees, and ask them to submit nominations via email (Appendix A). Those who were recommended were invited to participate by letter (Appendix B), and a follow-up phone call when necessary.

Anticipating difficulty in finding faculty who fit the selection criteria, the sampling process at first cast a wide net, ultimately reaching out to dozens of individuals. This approach yielded many responses from informants who praised the project idea. However, very few responses included nominations. In fact, several privately asserted that the pool of possible participants who fit those criteria was likely too small to yield a large enough sample. In the end, participants were identified not through the initial

casting of the wide net, but rather by purposeful conversations with several associates.

These included an assistant dean, a faculty member, and an education director for a pre-matriculation program at Flagship. It also included two professors at state. When a potential participant was suggested, I contacted that person by email and telephone with an invitation, then followed up with a consent form (Appendix C). Eleven of fourteen potential participants agreed to participate. Three declined because of schedule conflicts. Altogether, the process of finding eleven participants took several months. Interviews with the first few identified participants were underway while others were still being identified. Of eleven full-time faculty who identified as white and as doing anti-racist work, six worked at Flagship University and five at State College.

Table 1. Participants and their institutions

Last name	Institution
Bunning	State College
Carter	Flagship University
Cash	Flagship University
Dyer	State College
Downs	Flagship University
Duque	Flagship University
Fowler	State College
Grey	Flagship University
Lappin	State College
May	State College
Spooner	State College

Procedures for Data Collection and Analysis

In keeping with the Constructivist Grounded Theory methodology (Charmaz, 2006), data were collected and analyzed concurrently and recursively, with ongoing coding informing the development of subsequent interview questions. Interviews were conducted in various locations convenient to the participant (e.g., campus offices, cafes, participants' homes). Each interview was recorded on a digital voice recorder and

transcribed by a professional transcriptionist. Questions were framed by an open-ended, semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix D). The goal of the protocol was to ensure that while each participant would be asked to reflect on similar concepts and issues, they would be free to develop their responses in the direction that made most sense to them. The interviews adhered to the protocol's basic outline to ensure that participants' reflections remained within the frame of the research questions. Most probing questions were generated responsively, to allow for purposeful elaboration.

Early interview participants commented that they enjoyed the dialogic nature of the interviews. It created an opportunity for thoughtful discussion about their work and lives. Most explained that they did not often get a chance to reflect upon these topics with other white people. I occasionally shared my own experiences to clarify concepts and questions. This discursive process functioned as a kind of "live" member-checking activity. It allowed me to restate participants' observations or ask clarifying questions while the thoughts remained fresh.

First interviews averaged between 90 minutes and two hours. Follow-up interviews were usually shorter—between 30 and 60 minutes. Follow-up interviews generally asked for clarification and elaboration of earlier statements, in keeping with the constructs emerging through the constant comparative method. For scheduling reasons, one participant did not do a follow-up interview. Her interview came late in the process, however, and several questions were asked of her that were second interview questions for many other participants.

Literature Review

As stated earlier, Grounded Theory methodology calls for a literature review to be done during the coding process and not before. In this way, the literature acted both as new data and as a reference for data analysis (Charmaz, 2004; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). As researcher, I was familiar with the broader strokes of whiteness theorization. I also had some experience using Critical Theoretical and Critical Race Theoretical frames. I had not, however, done any extensive reading into Critical White Studies. This means that I began this project with certain pre-developed ideas, but with little understanding of white anti- racist development or activity. This level of acquaintance would be regarded as acceptable for a pragmatic Grounded Theory analyses (e.g., Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and the constructivist approach (Charmaz, 2004). I consulted the literature with increased frequency and specificity as my coding moved through levels of refinement. Scholarship consulted during the coding process focused on theorizations of whiteness, white identity development, and white anti-racist activism. This literature provided context for the analysis of participant's thoughts and experiences.

Initial Coding

As completed transcriptions were received, I reviewed each line by line. The first round of *initial coding* (Charmaz, 2006) involved isolating small transcript passages (generally no more than a few sentences in length) and labeling them with brief descriptors. I used NVivo coding software for this stage. This process allowed for ideas to be isolated and continually compared to other ideas (Charmaz, 2006) at a pre-conceptual level. As interviewing progressed, the list of initial codes grew, and I began to

dissolve some line-by-line codes into tentative clusters, recoding them accordingly. In all, over 400 initial codes were generated.

Focused Coding

As initial codes began to suggest conceptual relationships, they were traced back into the transcripts. I applied them to re-examining larger passages of text, a process Charmaz (2006) calls *focused coding*. Relevant extended passages were excerpted, coded and organized into categories of related thought and experience. At this stage, I switched from the NVivo software to the more familiar internal search engine/filing systems in my Microsoft Windows and Word software. Without the frustration of learning the complex NVivo interface, I was free to cross-analyze and code more substantial chunks of data far more readily. This was useful during the axial coding stage.

Axial Coding

Axial coding is required, according to Strauss and Corbin (1998), but presented as an option in Charmaz (2006). To gain a greater sense of conceptual coherence, I chose to use axial coding. During this process, focused codes and their corresponding longer passages were organized into conceptually related groups, which in turn were assigned a new code. Drilling down into the excerpts, and even tracing those back when necessary into the interview transcripts, allowed for conceptual relationships to be tested and retested. This also allowed for better contextualization. Contextual differences (e.g., when events happened, and where, and in what communities) needed to be analyzed to understand similar experiences. In all, 39 axial codes emerged. Here, the constant comparative process became more complex, and the analysis narrowed and deepened. Any category which appeared to emerge from across categories needed to be analyzed

carefully against potential unifying concepts from across the literature. Careful cross-comparison of emerging concepts with literature and focused codes avoided the problem of having preconceived ideas and expectations rush the emergence of conceptually weak groupings. As I moved toward theoretical coding, I began to weave codes together by writing up test constructs. These preliminary write-ups were attempts to weave codes into conceptual constructs that could hold together, be supported by the literature, and be faithful to the complex variations in the participants' narratives.

Theoretical Coding, the Core Category, and the Emergent Theory

Theoretical coding (Charmaz, 2006) involved the above-stated process of integrating data into meaningful categories and comparing the categories to produce a core category which unified them. It is important to note that this study did not explore a previously identified phenomenon. Rather, it inquired first into whether a phenomenon existed. The research questions sought to determine whether a relational dynamic functioned between participants' racial identities, their understanding of whiteness, and their anti-racist work. If such a set of relationships could be identified, the inquiry also wanted to know what the phenomenon looked like. In addition to not having a hypothesis, the study also did not have an identified phenomenon to theorize. Thus, the theoretical coding stage had first to consider whether or not a phenomenon existed. Then it had to consider whether the phenomenon could be theorized using the data. Finally, the inquiry directly examined white people's perceptions and experiences of a socially constructed racial identity—one which, according to the literature, functions in part by disappearing from their consciousness and discursively reframing itself. Appendix E provides an example of the coding process.

Category Mapping

As part of the effort to move from axial to theoretical coding, I constructed a

preliminary concept map (Appendix F). Composing and analyzing this map helped with

the recursive coding process and the initial production of the five theoretical categories

which are presented in the findings. Later, as the drafting process helped refine the codes,

a second concept map was created to help bring forth the emergent theory. This graphic

representation of the theory is introduced in chapter four and presented as Appendix G.

Credibility and Trustworthiness

Researcher Credibility

A common assertion in theorizing whiteness is that whiteness is discursively

framed and preserved in ways that often pass undetected among white people (e.g.,

Delgado and Stefancic, 1997; Frankenberg, 1993). In analyzing the work of white people

who self-identify as anti-racist, therefore, it is important that white researchers hone their

ability to effectively analyze the ideological and discursive contexts in which their data

are historically situated. White scholars must also account for positionality in terms of

researcher/participant power dynamics, and account for their own ideological

predispositions in analyzing the data and guiding the research toward action (Milner IV,

2007; Morrow, 2005). While conducting this research, I engaged in several outside

activities aimed at enhancing the credibility of my work (Jones, Torres and Arminio,

2013).

To strengthen researcher credibility, I created four separate dialogic initiatives

with white colleagues and peers as well as colleagues of color. Through them I engaged

in conversations about issues of ideology formation, hidden racial biases, and tacit

racism. I arranged and participated in a workshop series with fellow staff, led by an expert in understanding hidden bias. I also developed and facilitated a study circle project for faculty and staff, analyzing the book *Blind Spot: Hidden Biases of Good People* (Banaji & Greenwald, 2013)*,* and its applications for ourselves and our work*.* I also developed and led several workshops and discussions (at anti-racist conferences, and in classroom settings) on the topic of whiteness and white people's socialization. These allowed me to engage with a variety of people of various racial and ethnic identities, including faculty, staff and students (some with relevant expertise, others without) on issues that emerged from or informed this study. Finally, because this work was done against a historical backdrop of resurgent racism across the US, I began regularly posting news and feature articles online (on cases of police brutality, for example) and engaged in social media dialogues on whiteness and racism with a wide community of people.

Credibility and Trustworthiness of Findings

Constructivism holds that what ultimately would be considered correct or true is a matter of individual perspective (Schwandt, 1998). McConnell-Henry, Chapman and Francis (2011), assert that the purpose of phenomenological research, therefore, is not to arrive at a *true* interpretation (i.e., there is no mandate to prove findings). Rather, researchers develop and express an understanding of what it is like to live certain experiences. What the researcher finds and explains are to be regarded as interpretations which, by definition, are context-specific and alterable. This leads, in Lincoln and Guba's (1986) view, to a regard for trustworthiness less as a qualitative parallel to empirical validity and more as a means of assuring that the conclusions arrived at are the product of a rigorous, fair analysis. Rather than aiming for the *reliability* of findings and

interpretations, the researcher aims for *authenticity*—a demonstration that the analysis has been conducted fairly (i.e., with an open awareness of differences in values, beliefs, and positionality and an appreciation for how these inform the research product) (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). McConnell-Henry, Chapman and Francis (2011) urge caution in using dialogic methods of authentication (including member-checking and the use of expert evaluators, both of which Lincoln & Guba [1989] strongly endorse) for the purpose of verifying conclusions. They assert that such methods are incongruent with interpretivist values in general, and therefore unnecessarily risk conflicts between participant and researcher or participant and outside expert (McConnell-Henry, Chapman & Francis, 2011). They suggest reaching for clarity and understanding during the interview itself as a means of ensuring findings are co-constructed and authentic.

This study sought a middle ground, incorporating member-checking principles within a conversational interview structure. As previously indicated, interviews were semi-structured, with several open-ended questions developed around the research questions. These questions were often reframed according to what was being discussed in the interview. Probing questions asked for examples, additional information, or other forms of explication and clarification. As interviewer, I also occasionally used examples from my own experiences and reflections. The purposes of this approach were to (a.) spur additional reflection and focus participants' ideas; and (b.) ensure that I was understanding their perspectives. This was often done by reframing what I had just been told or offering an initial interpretation (McConnell-Henry, Chapman & Francis, 2011). In the coding process, this allowed me a greater degree of confidence in my emerging understanding.

The conversational approach was also intended to increase participants' comfort level and trust in me, by allowing for the shaping and reshaping of our relative roles in the conversation (van Eck, 2009). Trust is considered an element of trustworthiness (Jones, et. al., 2013). I was both a novice researcher interviewing professional scholars and a professional anti-racist educator among peers. Participants were themselves experts being asked to probe areas of their expertise. Some felt less confident and others had extensive experience with such reflection. They were also white people being asked to discuss what can be an uncomfortable topic. They offered complex, highly personal, sometimes professionally risky thoughts and experiences. By stepping in and out of roles (as in pausing an interview for a snack and some tea) or enacting shared roles (two customers in a café having dinner) we could shape and reshape the nature of the conversation (van Eck, 2009). Indeed, nearly all participants remarked that they enjoyed the discussions and found them highly engaging.

In an effort to help participants to feel comfortable addressing potentially uncomfortable topics, conversations often began well off topic, with the participant and I agreeing when it was time to turn the recorder on and begin the formal interview. I also turned it to off to allow for private observations which would not be included in the data but which encouraged deeper reflection. For similar reasons, interview sessions were conducted wherever the participant felt most comfortable. Several were held in homes, several over meals in cafes, others in libraries or participants' offices.

Follow up interviews were conducted, providing another opportunity for member checking of raw data. I arrived at those interviews having identified things in the initial conversations that I felt needed expansion or clarification. These gave us additional

opportunity to ensure that I understood what participants were describing. The gap in time between interviews gave participants opportunity to reflect on their original ideas as well.

A final member check was not done at the end of the coding process. To additionally strengthen the trustworthiness of my interpretations, therefore, I kept the analysis grounded as closely as possible to participants' stated ideas and recollections. I was also especially mindful of negative or discrepant cases (e.g. Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1986). While participants did not present individual cases which stood in opposition to others, there was a good deal of variety in their experiences and reflections. Both the finding and my interpretations of findings attempt to present this variability. Similarly, the emergent theory itemizes specific codes derived from interviews in order to illustrate how the categories mapped to data.

Limitations

In Grounded Theory methodology, findings are analyzed to produce an emergent theory of a phenomenon. In this case, a theoretical explanation emerged about reciprocity between white faculty members' racial identities, their understanding and conceptual awareness of whiteness, and their anti-racist work as teachers, scholars, and community members. The data analysis and emergent theory are framed by Critical White Studies and White Identity Development Theory, two traditions which assume social construction of individual knowledge and interpretation of experience. The study therefore looks closely at the human relationships and larger social contexts described through participants reflections. The limitations presented in this section are further accounted for

in the discussion of findings and implications sections of chapter five.

Small Sample Size

As described in the methodology section of this chapter, Grounded Theory methodologists have a range of opinions on sample size. The consensus, however, is that the sample size should be large enough to move the analysis toward a point of theoretical saturation, where the researcher concludes that additional sampling is no longer needed to refine the theory. Traditionally, this tends to be a larger number. A sample size of 11 was large enough to make theoretical assertions. However, the emergent theory might have been richer with more participants.

Lack of Theoretical Sampling and Saturation

Grounded theory methodologists also advocate for *theoretical sampling*. The researcher is encouraged to refine their analysis by using the tentative categories they are generating to identify other participants or cases to sample. This is a form of purposeful sampling in which the researcher seeks cases which allow for further refinement. In a study such as this one, for example, theoretical sampling might begin to define common influences on participants' anti-racist development, and then seek additional participants who have benefitted from similar influences.

Due to a number of practical constraints, this study could not conduct theoretical sampling. Initial rounds of coding informed the focus of follow up interviews, but did not lead to the identification of additional participants. It is unknown, therefore, whether theoretical saturation had truly been reached. Interpretations of findings, including the emergent theory and core code, must be viewed in this light. Theorization is limited only

to the experiences of this cohort, and conclusions have been drawn for the purpose of making recommendations for subsequent studies.

Regional Limitations

While participants' collective experiences spanned multiple generations, all participants were raised in the eastern United States. The racial experiences they spoke of, and the thoughts about race they shared, tended to focus predominantly on black Americans. Latinos were also frequently discussed. Apart from one participant who directly discussed his Puerto Rican family, Latinos' ethnicities or nationalities were generally not specified. Indigenous Americans and Asians were rarely mentioned directly, except in reference to the disruption of a black/white binary. This study cannot account for how the formation of white identity and racial awareness might occur among white academics in regions such at the southwestern United States—where indigenous populations, Non-white Mexican and Central American Latinos, and people of East Asian background form larger parts of regional non-white populations.

Lack of Available Prior Research on Topic

The literature review turned up only one other study with a similar focus on the experiences of white faculty who were identified as racial allies (Loftin, 2010). No studies were found which examined the dynamics between participants' white identity, awareness and understanding of whiteness as a socially constructed system, and anti-racist work. A goal in using a Grounded Theory methodology, therefore, was to first and foremost determine if indeed a phenomenon existed which could be studied more closely. For this reason as well as those previously described, the findings of this study and the

emergent theory which describes how the findings relate are best regarded as preliminary. It was an attempt to discover directions for future research.

Lack of an Observable or Comparable Phenomenon

Because this study sought to determine how participants interpreted their lifelong learning experiences (including those they derive from practice) the research proceeded under the assumption that the phenomenon could not be verified through triangulation. Some consideration was given to the possibility of observing participant teaching. However, there was no way to ensure that anti-racist lessons would be presented in a timely way. There was also no means of observing participants internal reactions or the effect of whiteness related ideologies upon students. As such, a triangulation strategy was not adopted.

Lack of Analytical Focus on Intersectionality

A major tenet of critical race theory is the recognition that race functions as both a singular location for oppression and as one of numerous, intersecting locations. (Harris, 1993). This study's inquiry did not extend into an exploration of gender, sexual orientation, religion, class or other historical locations for oppressive behavior. Several participants touched upon intersecting areas of identity in the course of their discussions of white identity, and many of their thoughts were analyzed and incorporated into findings. Most prominently, several participants' critical analyses of other locations of oppression were considered to have informed their arrival at anti-racist praxis. Overall, however, the study focused closely on whiteness, and did not inquire into issues of intersectionality.

Chapter Four: Findings

Introduction

Three related research questions formed the basis of this grounded theory study:

- What motivates white faculty who do anti-racist work in their professional lives to do such work?

- How do white faculty who do anti-racist work in their professional lives characterize the relationship between their work and their understanding of whiteness?

- How do white faculty who do anti-racist work in their professional lives characterize the relationship between their work and the development of their white racial identity?

In considering these questions, participants all reflected on a lifetime of personal development. Their narratives focused on people, events, and ideas which shaped their understanding of, and personal relationship to, whiteness as an identity and as an ideologically driven system of racialization. They also focused on the anti-racist work that they do. They described how they confront racism, and how they are challenged by resistance and lack of criticality among colleagues and students.

In all, five categories emerged, most with several sub-categories. The first, *Seeing Black Without Feeling White,* consolidated participants' thoughts on their own personal understandings of whiteness and identification with whiteness. This category explicated how each participant defined whiteness, how they viewed whiteness in the context of their own experiences, and how they identified with whiteness as a white person. The second, *Cultivating Praxis,* derived common features and experiences from participants'

stories of how their understandings of whiteness and anti-racism evolved over time. This category focused especially on the critical roles played by parents and mentors in framing their evolving awareness. The third, *Teaching to Whiteness,* presented participants' reflections on the common challenges of teaching white students about racism, white privilege, and identity. It focuses on how participants' own understanding of whiteness informed their pedagogical choices. The fourth category, *Encountering Collegial and Institutional Resistance,* outlined participants' mostly negative responses to questions about whether or not they felt supported in their anti-racist work within predominantly white departments, colleges, and institutions. This category looked closely at the way ideologies of whiteness manifested themselves through institutional and interpersonal resistance. Finally, *Barriers to Transformation* focused on participants' feelings about the need for faculty and institutional development around issues related to whiteness and racism. It also looked at perceived barriers to individual and institutional growth.

The chapter summary concludes this section by pulling the categories together in the form of a *core category* (e.g., Charmaz, 2006). The core category represents a conceptual unification and abstraction of the categories established in the findings. The core category section describes how the five categories were synthesized into a single essential category, entitled *Gardening in a Chilly Climate*. A concept map of an emergent theory, titled *A Critical Emergent Theory of White Faculty Anti-Racist Praxis at Two Predominantly White Institutions,* concludes the chapter by illustrating relationships among the findings. The discussion chapter offers a closer analysis of what the findings indicated, and proposes implications for research and practice.

Seeing Black without Feeling White

The question of negotiating whiteness as a racial identifier or dimension of personal identity is a particularly meaningful topic for white anti-racists who generally feel they must critically analyze their racial identities and their actions without seeking to create a *positive* white identity, which arguably functions to reinforce whiteness rather than break it down (Mayo, 2004). Participants in this study were asked to reflect on their experiences with racism and anti-racist work as historical contexts for analyzing whiteness as both the signifier and driver of a system of racism, and as an identity–a personal location within that system. They discussed the conditions in which they conducted their anti-racist work as teachers, scholars, mentors, or activists. They also considered how their anti-racist efforts and their relationships to whiteness may inform one another.

There were great variances in lived experiences with race and racism, identification with whiteness, and levels of anti-racist activity. There were also meaningful commonalities concerning how the cohort characterized whiteness, how they framed the challenges inherent in identifying with whiteness and how they felt about the need to create conditions for increased critical and active anti-racist engagement. Five subcategories follow, each labeled with an adjective reflecting a characteristic of whiteness that binds participants' observations. The categories are sequenced in a conceptual progression, illustrating how whiteness functions to resist first illumination, then critical interrogation, and finally conscious opposition.

The first category, *Obscure Whiteness,* focuses on the experiences of participants whose immersion in anti-racist activism predated the literary call for a critique of white

positionality and power, and the extended theorization of whiteness. The second,

Unmarked Whiteness, explains how nearly all participants in the study defined whiteness

in terms of an absence of blackness, suggesting that whiteness may be an empty racial

location requiring the ongoing practice of *othering* to define itself. The third, *Systemic*

Whiteness, draws from participants' observations of whiteness as ideologically embedded

into social systems, institutions, and practices, wherein it can operate largely undetected

to prevent white people from connecting with racism more viscerally. The fourth, *Painful*

Whiteness, describes the experiences of guilt, shame, doubt, and confusion which emerge

for some participants when they *try* to become more actively conscious of their privileged

status. The fifth, *Performative Whiteness,* focuses on the experiences of three participants

who engaged in extensively critical racial self-interrogation and came to see their white

identities as co-constructed, situationally contingent, and changeable.

Obscure Whiteness

Professors Lappin, Fowler, and Downs each began their anti-racist

activism in the civil rights era, before critical explorations of whiteness had

reached a large white audience. Their conceptual focus was not on understanding

the workings of whiteness, but on working to help ameliorate the racist

conditions impacting the lives of black people in America and colonized natives

in Africa. With civil rights era activism focused more on attaining equal legal

rights for black people, white activists were not yet being challenged to

interrogate and disrupt their connections to the sources of their own privileged

racial identification. Each had been drawn to the pursuit of justice, fairness, and

equality, but they were learning to understand and articulate what it meant to be *black* in America.

Professor Lappin grew up in Maryland in the 1940s, seeing the stark differences between the loving, personal childhood relationships he had with his nanny (a black woman named Flora) and her family, and the rigidly segregated world of the Jim Crow south which existed all around him. His parents involved themselves in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and supported Flora's activism with the organization as well. Still, the strictly segregated, white dominated habitus he occupied ensured that he would not notice whiteness in the same way as blackness. Professor Lappin reflected: "I couldn't remember thinking especially about being white, because white was normative and I was in a white majority community. But I definitely knew that being black was very problematic in America."

Growing up, Professor Lappin created and sustained friendships with black people through high school and college, developing an experiential awareness of racism. As he grew older, he became involved in anti-racist (and anti-colonial) efforts at home and abroad. Confronting racism made sense to do, and he focused his career on African cultural anthropology and politics. Still, he did recall a critical awareness of his own racial identity being a product of his work. He reflected:

> I could see how white people lived and how black people lived, and there
> was this grotesque dysfunction….Black people knew full well how they
> were living because it was crummy, and could see full well how white

people were living because it was more splendid. And white people were just in denial….I can't say I was especially aware of being white except that I wasn't being black.

Professor Downs, who grew up in a nearly all-white suburb in upstate New York, developed an early investment in class and gender struggles, and incorporated race struggles into a larger paradigm of class-based political struggle. While in college, she developed close relationships with many black student activists and joined them in political activism. However, like Professor Lappin, her involvement did not engender a deeper identification with her own white identity. She recalled:

I didn't think in terms of myself as a white person. I'd think of myself as a person involved in these political things....I mean, it's not like I didn't understand race. I knew that race existed, but the model I saw of the Civil Rights Movement was the students from the north that went down to help with registration. And I did not at that time think of that as potentially problematic in terms of attitude, because to me it was just part of what we were doing.

As a teen, Professor Fowler joined with black activists in Atlanta department store lunch counter sit-ins. She similarly explained that while she saw how a white person could play a powerful role in the struggle for racial justice for people of color, she did not come to see whiteness as a central part of an anti-racist project until decades later. She acknowledged that while her earlier anti-racist work may have been subverting white privilege, it lacked a focus on

"bringing [whiteness] to the table, acknowledging it, and saying here it is, this is who I am and what I represent, and how can we work together?" When Critical White Studies emerged decades later, putting whiteness at the center of anti-racist analysis, she came to see it as vital to white people's involvement in anti-racism. She explained:

> For thirty-five years, thirty-eight years I taught Race and Racism and [for most of that time] I did not deal with whiteness, partly because it was not out there....the literature itself was building. But I began to realize that it's not just a sideshow, that it is *the* show. That took a long time to understand, because the focus of the civil rights movement and all the activism and the academic work was on understanding what it is to be black. You know, *Black like Me*, not *White like Me*….Again, it's white responsibility. It's white engagement with the issue of race….If you choose to think about race, it's because you choose to engage with what being white in this society means.

Unmarked Whiteness

Nearly all participants defined whiteness as the antithesis to blackness or racial otherness and suffering. Whiteness requires the systemic identification, degradation, and exploitation of non-white people in order to define itself. Professor Fowler observed, "Whiteness is not being those despised others. Whiteness and all of those who elided into whiteness were distinguishing themselves as not being black."

Professor Downs similarly described whiteness as a sort of empty identity, largely invisible to those who benefit from it except by way of critical and emotional contrast with the harassment, negative judgement, and systemic abuse that accompanies being racialized as non-white. She explained:

To be white is to not be not white. When it's the privilege I get from whiteness, which is understood in context of the privilege one does not get if one is not white. And I think like everybody else, that's what I do. I think of it mostly in terms of comparison as opposed to a separate this is what it is to be white.

Professor Spooner took the concept of whiteness being defined through the dehumanization of black people a step further. He argued that for all of its usefulness, discourses on whiteness tend to "subsume anti-black sentiments, feelings—and not just feelings and sentiments, but actions, ontology." He noted that this society once bought and sold black people similarly to farm animals, and suggested that the racial animus which had to be generated among white people to support such a system has not entirely disappeared from white people's subconscious. Race discourses that center the political economics and personal experiences of being *white,* but does not address the persistence of anti-black animus which may ultimately serve to sustain white supremacy rather that dissolve it, Professor Spooner reasoned.

Systemic Whiteness

Even when whiteness has been at least conditionally illuminated by personal experience and the availability of counterhegemonic analytical frames, some participants described experiencing additional challenges to identifying and disrupting whiteness' powerful, status-preserving hegemonic constructs. These included challenges in being

able to see the workings of whiteness within a multi-leveled array of social systems and structures, where policies and practices functioned to maintain racial division and reinforce white privilege even in the absence of signposted, legally reinforced segregation.

Professor May's memories of childhood and teen years demonstrate how ideologies of whiteness *can* be analytically mapped to their structural, systemic, and psychological effects. However, they also illustrate how whiteness can avoid detection by people whose sense of white supremacy as a natural state of affairs is reinforced at multiple points by an array of interpersonal and socio-structural customs and practices. Growing up in an all-white community in a large, highly segregated northeastern industrial city in the 1960's, Professor May recalled learning at a very young age to regard black people as a source of danger. She could not recall specific examples, but believed her parents (who lived in an all-white neighborhood and moved in all-white circles) instilled this fear over time. As a teen, she attended one of the city's large, newly desegregated public high schools, where *internal* systems of segregation insured that she would not interact with her many new black schoolmates in any meaningful way apart from homeroom. She described the way these systems functioned to ensure that separation was maintained, even as the circumstances grew dangerous in the wake of Martin Luther King's assassination.

> It's really interesting, [the high school] sits kind of up, and there's broad wide stairs that enter the school, the entrance and exit. And so if you were to stand across the street from [the school] at 3 o'clock when school let out, the kids would come out and all the black kids would go to the right

and all the white kids would go to the left with no exception. It was that segregated in terms of neighborhoods….I didn't have a strong political consciousness as a teenager, I had a sense of fairness that I knew somehow that there was something wrong with the fact that we were all in the same school together and yet we were segregated via the learning opportunities….I found a group of people that I felt very comfortable with. And I saw myself as an academic already, so I kind of had found my place and school was my safe place. But it was a volatile place. As a matter of fact, I was in the hallway once when a riot erupted, and there were, you know, people running all over the place, and I remember my biology teacher seeing me. There was a glass window in his door, and he saw me stuck out in the hallway, and he just reached his arm out and pulled me into the room. He said, "What the heck are you doing out there?" You know? And all the teachers were white, there were two teachers I know, that I remember, who were not white, one was the typing teacher and one was the home ec. teacher. So it was the quintessential, you know, segregated, classed, raced experience. It couldn't be any more quintessential than that….I just had that backpack of white privilege. I used those tools...in a pretty dysconscious way. I wasn't this cocooned person. I was right in the thick of it. And yet, you know, I hadn't politicized or really analyzed it.

Professor May further observed that her dysconscious (i.e., uncritical) racial mindset was framed (e.g., by parents and other individuals, by institutions, by larger social structures) so that she could not have analyzed her circumstances differently at the time.

Asked to consider why even critically conscious white people might still struggle to see the workings of whiteness, Professor Dyer considered another mechanism through which whiteness can hide itself from white people's view: white people have chosen what to teach and not to teach about American history. He discussed how white people lack authentic information about the histories of race in America, noting in particular how so many of the dehumanizing tactics which were strategically employed against people of color were all but erased from the dominant historical narrative. He offered an example:

> The institution of fatherhood was intentionally destroyed by slave masters. That wasn't an accident. First of all, we're going to rape the women, but we cannot let fathers be the pillars or the focus. You know, we've got to get them away because this weakens the morale of everybody if we can do this….White privilege is not only never having to have to *experience* that, it's not even having to *know* about it. You know, it's like I can go on in life and not even think about that and just take this institution of pretty solid fatherhood role models, you know, for all the problems, but just taking it for granted.

Professor Grey described a contemporary turn in white ideology and behavior which has a similar effect of obscuring racism from white people's consciousness. She considered how, in contemporary society, many of the overt indicators of segregation and white supremacy have been put out of sight. Left without visible indications of systemic

oppression, she reasoned, white people may have a harder time seeing racism as they have learned to define it. She explained:

> Being able to go to the front of a bus or to sit in the back of the bus, those are really day-to-day, in your face recognition of privilege and I just think people don't see it. That's why they don't recognize it. I don't think they're being obtuse, I just think it's, you know, one less thing to fight against, I guess. You know, so your parents had no education and worked in factories, but at least if you're white, right, you didn't have to also fight the race card. Your parents could get access to that job and the other person didn't and they could move into that neighborhood which had a better school which that person couldn't. Snowball, snowball, snowball….I can't say that anything I can point to gave me access that I recognize as access because I was white, because it was already there.

Several other participants indicated that living, socializing, and working in predominantly white communities, departments, and institutions made their own whiteness harder to access. Professor Bunning referred to this phenomenon as "the classic case of does the fish know it's in water?" Their colleagues were white, their neighbors were white, and their families and friends were white. Without a conscious effort to restructure these parts of their lives, the phenomena of white normativity and invisibility made it hard to sustain critical engagement. Professor May described how a lifelong path shaped by white privilege had in a sense left her trapped in a white space.

> I didn't come from wealth but still my whiteness gave me a different path through school....I've got a mortgage, you know, and credit, and all of those things that I think come along and are easier to acquire with my whiteness….Almost all my

friends are white, and I need to change that somehow. I've got, like, the friends

that I have who are not white are students that have kept in touch with me….And

so I would like to expand, because I feel that I'm being diminished in some way.

So it's a selfish thing for me that I wish that I had more experiences with people

of color, socially. And I'm thinking that that would impact my teaching, too.

Painful Whiteness

In a sense, each of the first three subcategories illustrates ways in which whiteness

has remained somehow hidden to participants. *Obscure Whiteness* indicated how justice-

minded white people who framed their work as focusing on blackness but lacked a

critical white referent could perform anti-racist work without racial self-critique.

Unmarked Whiteness illustrated how a white supremacist racialization system assigns

race outside of whiteness, such that whiteness is regarded as freedom and blackness

associated with subjugation. *Systemic Whiteness* offered examples of how policies and

practices can maintain white privileging social structures without overt acts of racism.

Still, all participants had evolved anti-racist worldviews, had experience analyzing

whiteness, and worked to confront racism. This illustrates that whiteness can be brought

forth from its hiding places with commitment and effort. Such an effort, however, can be

difficult to sustain. This is not only because it is easy to disconnect from whiteness within

a predominantly white space, but also because focusing on whiteness can be an

uncomfortable, emotionally challenging experience.

Professor Dyer considered the painful emotions which can accompany an analysis

of what his white identity truly meant or felt like. He acknowledged that this reality might

be another barrier to engaging with a white racial identity.

There's a lot of things I put ahead of it—social class, gender, sexual orientation, religious upbringing, current religious affiliation….But I can't deny that being white hasn't shaped me less than those things….There always is an element of guilt, you know. I would like to say if I, to outgrow it, but I don't know. There's an element of shame. It's very gut level. I have things that…other people deserve, people of color deserve, they don't have, that I have through no [effort], that's the guilt. That I have something that in a way, in a sense, I don't deserve relative to them.

Professor Carter also acknowledged experiencing feelings of guilt and embarrassment when cognizant of her privileged white identity. Similarly to Professor Dyer, she suggested that while she knows her whiteness is not her *fault,* it is something she must account for as a simple question of fairness. She explained, "I find it embarrassing sometimes. I find it a benefit to me sometimes. I watch the experiences of black acquaintances and friends and I'm a little grateful that I'm not dealing with all that shit." She also admitted, "Being white is not something I typically apologize about, but it is something associated with some level of guilt."

Professor Carter explained that she had learned to maintain an active awareness of her and others' whiteness. She regarded this awareness as an outcome of "many, many hours of conversations about racism" with faculty and students of color. Guilt was a regular and prominent emotional aspect of her identification with whiteness. However, she explained that she has learned to accept her feelings as necessary to the process of being aware of, and vigilant toward, what many white people do not notice.

There are numerous times throughout the day you're well aware. You know, whether you're watching T.V. or watching students interact or walking down Main St in homogenous white [University Town]. You're always aware that okay, I'm surrounded by white people, there's an affluence here and probably a discomfort for anyone who's not white if they were in this location….For me it's a protective mechanism. I have students of color, I have friends on and off campus who are black and get sick of the way they're treated. And I think that's all it is. It's a response to that. And you listen to it for hours during conversations about what they have to go through.

Professor Bunning considered the power of media to frame racial discourse in ways that diminish black suffering and prevent more white people from forming emotional connections to it. He wondered how people of color people feel when their questions and assertions are resisted, reformulated, or handed back dismissively by uncomprehending white people in the media. For him, the discomfort of his own whiteness is experienced through an empathic investment in walking in other people's shoes. He explained:

If I thought people in my [predominantly white] community were getting shot just because of the color of their skin, how outraged I'd be. But we don't understand that somebody else might be outraged by what happens to them? You know, we think that they're overreacting, or why don't they calm down, this is an isolated incident, whatever it is that we convince ourselves is really, so that we don't have to have any kind of visceral connection to it….But the big thing would be, "How could they do this to me?" I think it's really hard to walk in those shoes even for

an instant and really feel what that would feel like. At some intellectual level I can

go there, but emotionally? I don't know how I'd come back from any of that, or

move forward from that, or whatever else I'd have to do. I mean, you've got to

live in this world and it's a white world so you've got to.

Professor Bunning's reflection illustrated a multi-layered problem. As institutional racism

functions to simultaneously enforce subjugation while categorically downplaying any

problem, white people lose the opportunity to make empathetic connections to people of

color. He also suggested he was not sure how well he would be able to connect with such

powerful emotions, or if such a connection were even possible.

Performative Whiteness

Many participants' reflections on whiteness and white identity indicated that they

either had not over the years conducted a sustained critical analysis of their white

identity, or had faced challenges in doing so. Three of the eleven, however, discussed

making conscious efforts not only to come to terms with their whiteness, but to

consciously manipulate their identities.

For Professor Duque, navigating multiple racial identities has been a lifelong

project of encountering and disrupting social expectations. Coming to terms with his own

changeable statuses as insider and outsider has helped him to develop a sensitivity toward

what goes into the construction and deconstruction of a white racial identity at the most

intimate psychological levels. Professors Spooner and Cash, while not embracing non-

white racial statuses, concluded that if whiteness is socially constructed, historically

contingent, and normalized, then individual white actors should be able to purposefully

perform non-normative interpretations of being white. By enacting a whiteness that is

disruptive to themselves and to others, they attempted to represent non-normative racial thought more broadly and black perspectives more authentically.

Professor Duque, who was raised by a dark-skinned father from Puerto Rico and a white mother from Massachusetts, possessed multiple racialized identities. At home, he was a light-skinned member of a family with a rich variety of skin tones. His family expressed a culturally grounded frankness about racial difference. He recalled receiving early lessons in race and culture at home:

> I can remember learning about ethnic differences at the same time as learning about skin color differences, so my grandmother would say things like, "What's the problem, blanquito, te quiero hamburguesa? [little white one, you want a hamburger?]". So, if you don't want, if you don't feel like having rice and beans, it's because you're white.

In school and friends' houses, he was a white kid. Being white in those spaces offered a unique lens into white adults' racial thinking, at least until the truth of his more complex racial identity became known. Then, he would find himself having to explain things to white adults like how it was possible for a black man to be his father. Their reactions to this disclosure were of a type he still experiences today—an evident discomfort at discovering he had been passing as white. He recalled:

> I think it's troubling to them, to the white mind, that there may be people of color among us and I just can't see them. You know? You could almost, I mean, when it happens to me now as a grown-up you can see, like, the "oh, shit" look on somebody's face as they run this mental inventory of all the racist things they've

said in front of me. Like, "Oh, I thought you were just another white guy. Oh my God, what have I been saying?"

When he left for college, Professor Duque initially planned to make his "raced" identity disappear. He would no longer need to explain himself to others. Recalling an earlier point he had made about white people's relationship to race, he explained:

[As a white person] if you just stop engaging in anti-racist work, it just dissipates. It's gone for you. And that was never a possibility for me until I moved out of the house. And I'm like, "I can just go and be a white person now." Like, I could actually stop checking the box. I could stop going home. I could, like, I can just dissolve myself into the white community entirely and that will be it for race and racism for me….But then when I was outside of the family home and, like, living with a bunch of white guys, I realized, "This doesn't feel right to me. I actually don't have a lot of experience with white men." Because my actual father was a man of color….I didn't think too much of this fact, but even through graduate school, most of the professors I worked with were men of color and, for whatever reason, I sought them out as authority figures. I think if one thing is very different about my whiteness being mixed, it's that I am not afraid of men of color….You know, they weren't anything to be denigrated or overlooked or feared and so in an institutional structure when I found men of color, I found that homey.

Professor Duque realized that in attempting to become more fully white, he was denying something within his sense of his racial and ethnic self which he felt comfortable with and grounded by. His Latino status and his father's raced black status may have been problematic enough that he sought to escape from identifying with them. In the end,

however, he determined that it was not comfortable to perform a white persona that was not authentic to his experience.

For Professor Cash, by contrast, experimenting with ways to represent thoughts and actions that are disruptive to other people's white—normed expectations has become a kind of anti-racist project. He tried to continually reassess what he identified with, and how he should present himself as a white person—in committee meetings, in front of his students, or in his neighborhood. He expressed a desire to disrupt white normativity in particular, by learning to perform a different kind of whiteness from that which his colleagues or students might expect from someone who looks like him. In other words, he attempted to place his white identity in question. He reflected:

My life has changed. The people that I develop connections with are completely different now because of this work and it's kind of research focused and so, like now I don't know if I completely identify with being white necessarily. I do have white skin. I know I'm white, but, I mean, I have white skin and I'm perceived as white, but I try not to enact that necessarily just straight normative, and I don't mean straight like sexual, you know, like, typical normative way of being white. I feel like I'm always now trying to find ways to distance myself from that in a way so that when I walk into my department, the reason people get angry at me is because I might have white skin, but I don't speak like they expect me to speak as a white person, right, so in that way I don't think I'm enacting.…I think I've been successful in kind of creating a somewhat different white performance at least, if not identity.

Professor Cash considered that cultivating an anti-racist white identity could easily become self-serving—a way to define another space in which to be regarded as a good white person. Avoiding this, he believed, required a constant self-critique:

 I think I'm still trying to figure out, like, how is it that I got to where I'm at? Like, how is it that I care about these things? And is it actually, what's the word for it, like, for the right reasons—because I'm trying to help out others, or is it a way to kind of manage my own identity? I mean, I'm sure it's a mixture of both, but it's a question of, like, whether or not I'm kind of a fraud in a way.

Professor Cash expressed at several intervals a concern that his investment in anti-racism might be hemmed in by his desire to be comfortable, and to feel positive about himself and his work. This tension was an important part of his critical self-reflective process.

Professor Spooner similarly considered that enacting an anti-racist white identity might ultimately be missing the mark, because positioning white identity at the center of the racial analysis does not adequately address the ontological disposition that results in an ongoing dehumanization of black people. He contended that the "libidinal economy" that he believes forms race's "ontological bottom line" has always held black as antagonistic to white and positioned those marked by blackness outside of the realm of what is regarded as human or civilized. Probing one's white identity or spotlighting whiteness in order to confront racism can be done without addressing this issue, he explained.

Years of critical race analysis have been invaluable to addressing white supremacy, according to Professor Spooner. But the focus on dismantling legal,

institutional, political, or economic constructs and establishing definitions of racial identity have failed to tackle the underlying issue of a fundamental anti-blackness that is much more deeply rooted in our consciousness. Critical White Studies, he believed, can become a kind of "cleansing process" for white people, and possibly be exploitative of blackness. "A lot of whiteness studies does that," he explained. "They use the suffering of black body, be it historically, or you know, recent killings of young black men, in order to kind of extricate something within themselves rather than really caring about anti-blackness as a paradigm, as *the* paradigm." Without probing more deeply into what they learn to believe about race, Professor Spooner explained, white people may come to act upon the consciously accepted *idea* that a black person is fully human, while subconsciously operating from an epistemology which equates blackness with being inherently subhuman. He said:

> It's so rooted. We haven't attended to the particular early problematics when this has come up. We've always used historical events to say these actions have been abolished. We've worked on them, et cetera, and never really attended to the core problem. So that's why it continues on. Because we can say we've gotten rid of x, y, and z, but x, y and z were the result of something earlier….And I think because again we haven't attended to the earlier philosophical, ontological, epistemological arguments in problems it continues. And I think there's this aphasia that goes on in dealing with this idea of anti-blackness. Some people just can't locate it, because it's just about prejudice, discrimination, racism, it's not about something bigger. But if, if they do sense something else, feel something

else, they don't know the name but they also see the magnitude of it. So they

don't feel it's possible to really do anything about it.

Professor Spooner explained that he's thought about his own whiteness his entire life,

saying, "I've become white multiple times, in that it's carried different meanings." His

beginning in distinguishing racial identity from difference evolved through a childhood

investment in performing black culture. He looked back on his earliest connections as

acts of cultural appropriation, but he invested himself in black urban communities more

fully by forming friendships through basketball. His intellectual route through Critical

Race Theory and Critical White Studies was very important to his personal growth, he

said. But working with anti-blackness as a framework has compelled him to focus less on

cultivating an anti-racist white identity and more on trying to be an effective

representative of black thought. He added:

> I think the best disruption of whiteness is to work within the letters and
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> archives of blackness. To let the demands of black interests, freedom, and
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> liberation more genuinely speak for themselves. And try to be a conduit
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> of those things rather than someone who takes what has been done, said,
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> demanded, and paraphrases it through whiteness. So I mean I hate the
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> idea of authenticity, but to use the vessel of my white identity to be a kind
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> of conduit for authentic black demands and interests, rather than the kind
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> of cleansing process that I think tends to go on through other forms of
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> discourse like whiteness studies.

Professor Spooner's thoughts close this category in a way that suggests a

progression: in seeing black without feeling white, some participants focused on

not seeing whiteness clearly because it has been rendered transparent to white people. Others focused on the discomfort that comes with beginning to critically engage, and observed that this empathetic exposure might contribute to white people's disinclination to do such work. Professor Cash indicated that the discomfort can remain a constant tension, generating a necessary questioning of one's own motives. Professor Spooner indicated that such a critical journey was extremely important. He also believed, however, that at some point it not only risks being self-serving, but also risks keeping the focus away from the underlying problem of unexamined anti-black animosity.

Cultivating Praxis

Anti-racist praxis is defined as a point in a person's development where their critical analysis of, and emotional connectedness to, racism compels them to anti-racist activity (Perry & Shotwell, 2009). Each of the eleven participants reflected on a lifetime of interpersonal and academic experiences that helped them to cultivate their propositional, tacit, and affective knowledge about racism. Each also expressed feeling compelled to act on their anti-racist awareness. The learning experiences vary from participant to participant, as did their depth of engagement in anti-racist work. However, all participants described key lived events and interpersonal relationships which they believed helped shape their feelings and beliefs about racism over the course of their lives. The following subcategories explicate the various influences on the cultivation of anti-racist praxis.

Parents' roles were foundational to almost all narratives, featuring prominently in all but two sets of interviews (only one participant did not mention parents). Reflections

on parents are explicated in the next three subcategories: *Parents Cultivating Childhood Relationships with Black People*, *Parents Teaching Critical Justice Orientation without Focus on Race,* and *Parents Reinforcing Racist Status Quo.* The fourth subcategory, *Beyond Appropriation: New Racial Performances,* describes the common aspects of two professors who said little or nothing about parents, but focused commonly on developing their own relationships to both black and white racial identity. A final category, *Counterhegemonic Academic Learning*, identifies the opportunities each participant had to learn about racism and social justice issues in academic settings.

Parents Cultivating Childhood Relationships with Black People

Professors Lappin, Fowler, Dyer and Duque all discussed their parents' investment in developing positive childhood relationships with black people, setting sharp ideological contrasts with the larger predominantly white communities they lived in.

Professor Lappin's family moved from Connecticut to Maryland around the time of his birth in 1940, and hired a black woman named Flora Lane to be his nanny. While this was normal among upper-middle class families in the Jim Crow south, the relationship they formed was not. Flora and his parents were both supportive of anti-racist work, and their families formed a lasting bond. He recalled:

> She was active in the anti-lynching campaign and an active member of NAACP. My parents were as well. So we were liberals transplanted to the South and with all this kind of, the deficiencies of liberalism but also the tolerance of liberalism. Somehow or other I knew about N double A and race relations even at the dawn of my life in Maryland which was a completely segregated society. I was aware of

social space differences and colored drinking fountains and colored this and

colored that, so it's really from the beginning of time.

For Professor Lappin, Flora Lane was his "second mother," a "warm, snuggly" person whom he remained connected to "from my birth, when she was looking out for me, to her death, when I buried her." Along the way, Professor Lappin's parents funded Flora's son's education at Tuskegee. When his parents died, Professor Lappin used the funds he inherited to buy her a home. Their relationship, along with other intimate interactions with her family members and other black people during those years, provided a robust ideological and empathetic contrast to a world of legally reinforced anti-black racism. Professor Lappin also credits these experiences and school friendships he formed with black students with helping him to develop an interest in anti-racist and anti-colonialist movements, which became the driver of his career work.

Professor Dyer's mother was the social justice committee chair in her Methodist church. She helped found an annual live-in exchange program between children and families in his predominantly white suburban Long Island parish and those in a predominantly black parish in Brooklyn. For nearly ten summers, Professor Dyer and children from his church spent a week with black children and families in Flatbush. In another week, the Flatbush children came to stay on Long Island. While he recalled the project being conducted "in the integrationist spirit of Martin Luther King," Professor Dyer did not remember any formal focus on racism, but rather on children learning about one another's differences. He recalled, "It was the personal comfort level in a supportive community…and the role model of these people obviously working for something good with a lot of warmth." Professor Dyer did not regard himself as having an anti-racist

consciousness until later. It developed after periods of living in a black neighborhood in a highly segregated northeastern city in the 1970's. A desire to do anti-racist work was also prompted by studying anti-racist curricula side by side with students and faculty of color in his graduate program. However, he credits the aforementioned childhood experience with fostering a level of comfort and empathy with people of color, which formed a foundation for his later development.

Professor Fowler's father was a union organizer in Philadelphia. As such, black workers and their families were a regular presence in her life. She grew up believing black and white workers could advance in solidarity. When she was a teen in the late 1950's, her family moved to Atlanta, a center for civil rights activism. Her father continued to organize, and ran a store in the city. Lunch counter protests were happening in neighboring department stores. Professor Fowler's mother, who had a journalism background, decided to go have a closer look. She explained:

> Here are these students sitting at counters not being served, and the white antagonists, you know, were hurling every racist epithet at them, were taking the sugar and salt shakers and pouring them on people's heads, you know, humiliating them in every way possible and that just like [whoosh noise]. She just became sickened by it, started to write, I mean, I don't think these were published, but she chronicled that….Obviously, we talked about it at home and, you know, all this is going around in my head and it's like, "Ahh!" you know? So, you know, by the time I was a junior or senior in high school and then into my early college years there, I started to get involved.

While Professors Lappin, Dyer, and Fowler credited their parents for enabling childhood relationships with people of color, Professor Duque's experience was even more intimate. The black person he learned from *was* his father, along with some other darker-skinned latino members of his family. He also recalled his parents' bond with their Methodist church community as being instrumental in his forming an empathetic identification with marginalized people more broadly.

> Being one of the only mixed race couples in town, *the* only one as far as I could tell, at least people with kids, the people they'd wind up surrounding themselves with were, like, first generation Polish immigrants, a gay couple, a lesbian couple, nudists, polyamorists, just plain, like, people visiting from England, you know, anyone who, like, didn't kind of fit in, like basically had to just all clump together. Like, are you a little bit too diverse for this town? Well, there's going to be all of us here together. So, I learned a lot about different kinds of people….I can't even call it being ostracized. We were never ostracized, but we were marginalized, I suppose. But the margin is full of all sorts of people.

These participants' parents directly modeled ways of thinking about and experiencing whiteness. Parents provided the participants with a counter-hegemonic frame in which they developed more intimate, personal relationships with black people. This happened during an era wherein such relationships were systematically discouraged.

Parents Teaching Critical Justice Orientation without Focus on Race

Several participants recalled parents who helped cultivate the ability to think critically and humbly about fairness, equality, and social justice, but without speaking

frequently or directly about race. They believed that while their parents did not teach them directly to examine racial injustice, they instilled values and ways of thinking that made such work possible later on.

Professors Grey, Bunning, and Downs described growing up in suburban and rural communities that were almost entirely white, and learning from parents who did not speak often about race. Nonetheless, their parents instilled a love for reading and critical thought, and an empathetic connection with people who were marginalized. All three believed that their parents helped instill a set of values in them which, in alignment with their interest in exploring the world through books and dialogue, created both the critical disposition needed to interrogate racism and the affective disposition to be able to connect in an emotional way with those who struggled.

Professor Bunning recalled that his first personal experience with a black person was early in high school. There was only one black student in the school. Professor Bunning had dense, curly hair, and one day he loaned the student his hair pick. He recalled experiencing "a sudden flash of, wow, I'm white." During the interview, I asked why he did not react as white people tend to, with a focus on the other person's blackness. He explained that while he heard that way of relating all around him, he was always thinking about himself in the context of what his classmates thought about him. He said, "It wasn't unnatural of me to imagine myself in the context of where he may be coming from."

Professor Bunning reflected that he developed a commitment to multi-perspectivalism from his voracious reading habits, and from parents who encouraged him to open his mind. His father was a teacher, and the dinner table was always a center for

debating issues of the day. His parents both instilled a sense of humility along with a passion for reading and thinking. He felt this was vital to his deep-seated interest in understanding who his diverse students are. He reflected:

> They both came from very poor backgrounds, and so there was always a sense of "don't think you're better" than somebody. So that really permeated a lot of my identity and still does. I think it has helped make me a much better teacher, and strictly professor, because you know how professors start to get a sense of their own power and be conscious of that sometimes. I think I'm less prone to that than a lot of my colleagues.

Like Professor Bunning, Professor Downs recalled growing up in a rural, working class, predominantly white community. It was a socially conservative Irish Catholic family and community in which her mother (who was denied an opportunity to go to college by a father who argued that women were supposed to stay home and marry) somehow stood out as "ridiculously liberal." Professor Downs' mother welcomed all sorts of people into their home. In the 1960s and 70s, her mother was a supporter of gay rights, women's reproductive rights, and worker rights. She also had, according to Professor Downs, "friends who were not of the same race as her, which where we lived was a very odd thing." She added:

> So I don't know how she got to be like that, but those are the ways in which she was doing what she could. We learned all that from our mother. So for me class, gender, and race were all so implicated in identity that I can't really separate them out.

Professor Grey, whose parents were both academics, recalled that they both exhibited "broadminded" values concerning issues of gender, class, and racial equality. Like Professors Bunning and Downs, she could not recall much specific dialogue about race, but knows that her parents' teachings enabled her to see the illogic in white people's racial beliefs from an early age. Of particular importance, she recalled, was her parents' consistent encouragement of her to have confidence in her perspective and her voice. She also learned to call others out—especially when challenging conventional wisdom.

> I'm a bit of a contrarian on a natural basis. Anytime I saw when I was a kid anything that I thought was illogical or discriminatory or something, I usually would say something. So, I mean, my poor parents, if I was around my parents and their friends would say something like, you know, I didn't think was profound, I'd be like, "Well, that's stupid," you know….I don't know, there was something I would associate with the age of eight that I was just like, "This is dumb and illogical and I'm not putting up with it." My mother would be like, "Really?" And my father would just love it. My father was a hippie and an academic and very contrarian….I never remember a conversation when I was told to monitor what I say, or that's not how other people think so I shouldn't say it. I was never told that.

The parents described by these participants may not have discussed race and racism as openly or often as those described in the previous subcategory. However, they did seem to cultivate within their children an interest in social justice, reading, and critical thinking. In so doing, they may have helped prepare their children to regard racism as both unjust and unreasonable.

Parents Reinforcing Racist Status Quo

While the majority of participants described parents who either directly or indirectly guided them toward an anti-racist mindset, Professors Carter and May described growing up in households and communities where parents and others seemingly sought to maintain a segregated, white supremacist racial status quo. They reflected on this, and on how they were able, later in life, to develop counterhegemonic awareness.

Like Professor Lappin, Professor Carter recalled her family having a black woman named Hanna working in her home during the late 1950s. Her relationship with Hannah, however, was very different from the relationship Professor Lappin enjoyed. Professor Carter remembered:

> [Hannah] wasn't that close [to the children] and I think she just was overwhelmed….My mother had four girls and my mother wasn't happy at that stage of her life. So it probably wasn't the best place for somebody to work. She was not that warm, but you got a sense that she was sympathetic towards you. I think for my mother, it was trying to reach back to the kind of relationship that her mother had with servants, and I don't think Hanna thought of us that way.

Professor Carter recalled that her mother took pride in the family's antebellum southern roots. She believed that her mother's choice to retain a black woman as a domestic servant reflected her desire to maintain a connection to a southern white culture which was disappearing. Professor Carter described the arrangement as "a throwback to the relationships that people had, families and slaves and then families and servants decades later, and then wasn't quite the same thing in the fifties." She remembered other explicit

examples of her mother's efforts to maintain separation, including prohibiting a black child from coming over to play. Her mother also forced her to distribute anti-bussing literature to nearby black families' houses.

She also remembered feeling troubled whenever she saw black people being treated poorly. She was mystified at why no white people ever seemed to help. But when she asked adults in her family why things were as they were, she got "a little hostility and answers that didn't make sense and no discussion allowed." She explained that such a reaction was not unusual for the time: "That's not just in my family, that's, you know, society in general in the sixties didn't discuss these things. Certainly not in the South." Professor May grew up in an all-white part of a highly segregated Northern factory city, with parents who "weren't overtly racist but...certainly maintained that difference." She recalled an event however, in which her mother's hostility toward black people may have played a role in increasing her fear. It started with her playing unsupervised in a city playground. At some point, she was pushed or struck by a young black girl. She remembered:

> When my mother came to pick me up I was crying, and my mother was furious of course. And she made me, she walked me over to this child, and made me hit her back. She held me by the hand and she said, "I'm going to teach you to stick up for yourself." And so she marched me over and wanted me to hit her back. I couldn't. You know, I just was crying. That was not going to come from this person, you know. And so she was really angry at this little girl. And the little girl hadn't hurt me, you know, she had hit me, she had pushed me or something. I

can't remember what it was, but she had done something to me that made me cry.

That wasn't hard to do.

Professor May, like Professor Carter, explained that as a young girl she knew something was wrong with the dichotomous racial world she grew up in, where black people were treated in a way that seemed inherently unfair. At that time in their lives, however, they lacked access to what Perry and Shotwell called "counter-ideological frames" (2009, p.41)—ways of analyzing their experiences that could lead to reframing them. For both professors, those kinds of experiences would come later, after they had left home.

For Professor Carter, the connection with counterhegemonic ways of thinking happened during her academic career. A self-described "colorblind" liberal when she arrived at Flagship, she began to notice a different kind of racism from her southern experience in the predominantly white world around her. In her new community, white people tended not to acknowledge racism, even when racism seemed obvious to the people of color who were negatively affected by it. But, as when she was a small child, Professor Carter wanted to understand. She knew that there was something more complex beyond what she could see. She began to talk and listen closely to students and faculty of color. This time, when she had questions, there were people willing to answer. She soon realized that the conversations they were having were helpful to her and her black friends. She explained:

> I think many of the black friends I've had get frustrated by that white wall, where, you know, people aren't going to listen. People are always going to say you're

playing the race card. I think just even a slight experience of being able to talk to someone through that wall has to feel so good.

Like Professor Carter, Professor May's transformative experiences with thinking about racism and other systems of oppression began to occur after she'd left home, and attended a nearly all-white Christian liberal arts college in New England. There she studied the Prophets, where issues of justice and humanity were central to her work. She began to apply the spiritual and philosophical categories to her own changing worldview. As a result, she found herself thinking about issues of social justice expanding. She remembered:

> I started to look at the world through that lens as an academic and a person of faith. And then I was able to make sense of it in a much deeper way, because I let myself actually see rather than just autopilot my way through life.

Professor May also explained that coming to terms with her own lesbian sexual orientation and struggling against heterosexism helped her to develop a more personal, empathetic connection to the nature of discrimination. She acknowledged that she became more knowledgeable and critically aware of the intersectional nature of oppression. After coming out, social justice became a central value in her professional life. She also recognized that interactions with other people who were involved in anti-racist work were imperative to her personal growth.

Beyond Appropriation: New Racial Performances

While nearly everyone spoke at length to the roles played by parents in their pre-college experiences with race and racism, two participants made less mention of family influence. They focused more on the influences of peers and other adults in shaping their

racial attitudes and efforts. In discussing their earliest recollections of racial identity awareness, both Professors Cash and Spooner spoke little about their parents' roles. Both grew up in predominantly white suburbs on the edge of racially diverse cities during the 1980s and 90s. Their attraction to black culture came largely through their enthusiasm for basketball and hip hop. As teens, both emulated the black basketball stars of the day and found themselves drawn to movies and music produced by black artists.

Professor Spooner, who had the benefit of living near a large, racially diverse city, would take the bus to the city YMCA to play basketball with black peers. There, he was welcomed into a community of friends which offered him a first-hand lens on the racially differentiated treatment black kids received in white spaces. He remembered "doing things in certain establishments like stores and finding my friends, who in high school were all black, would be you know, shadowed. I never would be." His older black friends began to talk with him about his whiteness, to explain to him how there was "a difference in my being and in what I could do in the world." At the same time, his suburban high school's white administration was pushing back against his interest in black history. This was an awakening to a different understanding of whiteness. He recalled:

> In 11th grade history, we had to write a paper on what America is to us, and I wrote a paper on lynching and slavery, some stuff I was reading outside of school. And I failed. And the reason why I failed was due to the content. It went all the way to the principal. And I remember clearly sitting in the principal's office and we were arguing about the whole paper, the subject matter. Basically they were saying that it was inflammatory. And I asked a question. I said, "What is America to you?" And this was the teacher at the time, and she said, "Baseball and apple

pie." And I laughed. And I got what I think was a month and a half

detention….So those distinctions that again, where whiteness begins, a property,

or I don't even want to say privilege because I think it's too truncated and

superficial, you know? It was through those types of experiences that these things

started to stand out.

Similarly to Professor Spooner, Professor Cash's childhood love of basketball and

sports led him to read autobiographies of black stars and emulate black athletes in the

playground. He recalled participating in what he now regards as racial performances. In

high school, white kids on the playground would do what he called "a racial performance

that differed depending upon who was there, you know? They would hike their shorts up

and stop talking slang if the number of, like, black to white ratio shifted enough." Later,

while he was college, he and his white roommate would watch football together. He

recalled how they would take announcers to task for describing black athletes in what

they felt were racist terms.

 I don't know if it was a parody or whatever, but kind of going through this whole

act about how crazy it was for them to say some sort of stereotypical thing, which

meant we were really rehearsing those stereotypes in kind of I would say a

Chappelle sort of way. And, you know, we literally called it "Racist Sunday." But

it was a way that at the time we would say, "See, we're not racist. They're the

guys who are racist, we're rehearsing."

As a student studying sociology and later cultural studies, Professor Cash's interest in

black culture, and eventually critical white studies, deepened. He recalled several key

courses, influential professors, and papers he wrote critiquing racism in sports. He noted

attending predominantly black social events occasionally. However, he remembers being more of a passive observer in those environments. It was a gradual process of growing awareness and knowledge, learning from critical race scholars, pursuing his interest in sports and culture, and analyzing what it meant to be white. He regarded the need for self-critique as ongoing. As a white person, he reasoned, he must continually be checking himself. He explained:

> I don't think I'm beyond a lot of these things. So, like, I'm always kind of trying to be vigilant about how I can have those racist moments. Like, we used to watch W. Kamau Bell [host of the television program *Totally Biased]* tell great kind of jokes about, you know, white power dynamics worked out in Congress or whatever. I would find myself, like, laughing at certain things and thinking, "Is this one of the moments where I'm kind of imagining, well, see, I'm in the know so I get humor from this and I get to be in the safety of my living room, right? White privilege or not?" So, I feel like I'm always kind of trying to do that. Yeah, I don't know, just staying humble.

Over the course of his interviews, Professor Cash reflected on different experiences along his anti-racist praxis journey. Unlike other participants, however, he did not mention specific people or groups as being particularly important mentors in his process. From his interviews alone, his anti-racist development seemed to have been more personal, as well as more academically oriented.

Counterhegemonic Academic Learning

Throughout their interviews, participants offered examples of how both racist and anti-racist ideologies can be formed and reformed over time. They spoke to the vital role

of interpersonal relationships. Such relationships enable young white people to develop counterhegemonic ways of seeing and thinking about everyday beliefs and situations (tacit knowledge), and to foster empathetic connections with the struggles of people of color (affective knowledge) (Perry & Shotwell, 2009). A final important ingredient to the cultivation of anti-racist praxis involves undertaking critical challenges to propositional knowledge—the world of fact, histories, and academic discourses (Perry & Shotwell, 2009). All participants studied race and racism closely, or studied socio-politically similar constructs. Several spoke directly to this kind of critical cross-pollination as being helpful to the cultivation of their anti-racist thinking. Each participant reflected on the importance of academic work to their development and commitment to anti-racist praxis. They explained how coursework helped them develop critical understandings of the social, political, historical, and institutional structures through which power is exercised and people are oppressed. Professor Duque described his encounter with Critical Race Theory and Critical White Studies as being transformative. His academic learning offered a different way of understanding his own experiences and thoughts. Academe fostered a way of seeing what was common to the experience of marginalization and a sense of what was possible with others.

> I started taking courses on critical race studies for real. And you know, it's amazing when somebody sits you down and starts explaining the stuff to you that you knew. It's like you had a suspicion that that's how the world was. You sort of knew it directly but you didn't systematize it. You couldn't connect it all. You didn't understand that it was political. You didn't understand that there was a philosophy of it. You didn't understand that this triumphed a lot of science that

you were maybe learning in another class even, you know. So there was some more direct consciousness raising by the time I had made it to college than there had ever been at any other time in my life, and so through that direct consciousness raising….That's when I started really recognizing that there's other people who feel marginalized out there, too. If we don't form a coalition, how are we going to get through this? I didn't care if it was someone who was transitioning their gender. Super, I'll be your ally. Like, I'm in a category that other people find difficult. I'm all about your difficult category….So even still today when, you know, I look at my students, I can sort of tell some students that just aren't fitting into college culture and I think that, you know, as a white faculty of color, that that's something to have an eye on because it was a big deal for me to have that consciousness raised and then start and then live that new consciousness and you can really see that start happening, you know, when you're the professor.

Professor Duque was one of several professors who named their experience with Critical Race Theory (CRT) as being eye opening and validating. Not all participants spoke of studying CRT, but all describe courses of study, as well as research projects, which helped expand their knowledge and awareness of racial and cultural systems and dynamics. These experiences provided opportunities to enhance their propositional knowledge. This type of learning, together with the experiential learning, further enabled participants to challenge the tacit knowledge constructs that form such a big part of racial hegemony. Such counterhegemonic learning was identified by Perry and Shotwell (2009) as vital to anti-racist praxis.

Teaching to Whiteness

Every participant shared observations from their experiences teaching about racism in predominantly white classrooms. Teaching white students to think about race, racism, and their own status in a racial hierarchy of power and privilege was the common anti-racist activity shared by all participants. This was the "action" part of their anti-racist praxis. Collectively, they described approaching teaching from various directions, but with a common appreciation for the complexity of the work. They discussed the challenges of raising the awareness of white students who had grown up in a society dominated by colorblind ideology and had little experience critically reflecting on race. All participants sought to engage their students in a critical analysis of race, culture, and power. Their main goal was for students to leave having experienced some growth in their ability to think about power relations in more complex ways.

Participants took pedagogically different approaches, but their approaches had common features. Some suggested that at times it might be necessary to take a strong, direct approach in dialogue with white students. Others advocated a less direct approach. All agreed, however, that the work needed to be entered into very carefully. They recognized that the issues they were working on were often very personal, and touched upon people's most deeply held beliefs about who they were and what they valued. To engage in critiquing their own deeply held assumptions—ideas rooted in the ideologies they grew up with—it was necessary to create buy-in first. There was a shared hope among participants that engaging in critical learning activities would enable students to identify and overturn tacit assumptions about race and racism that did not stand up to critical analysis.

Professor Carter reasoned that most white students opposed injustice. Still, they often arrived at college not knowing how to see racism clearly or consider their privileged racial identities closely. She said: "White students coming into this campus are not aware of racism, really. They tend to think it's a problem of the past." Their reactions to hearing about white privilege could be a challenge. Professor Carter explained: "If you are telling them about white privilege—and they're right—you're almost attacking them or attacking their family or saying they haven't merited all the benefits they've reaped."

Professor Grey also believed that many of her white students had not learned to see racism clearly. They did not recognize its historical and present role in shaping society or their own personal and cultural identities. Moreover, Professor Grey believed, they lacked the language, conceptual awareness, and cognitive complexity required to analyze multi-layered issues of power, status, and identity construction. This, in turn, made them less likely to feel confident in open dialogue. She observed:

> The kids will not ask questions. So I've learned that I have to—I give them pieces of paper before the film. As soon as the film is over, I say, "Write down your questions." I get a hundred questions in three seconds. But they will not say questions out loud. And then I can go through the questions.

The technique yielded great opportunities for discussion, according to Professor Grey. She offered an example which opened the door to a complex discussion of racial perceptions, misperceptions, and symbolism. She continued:

> One of the questions that came up, [the student] said, "In the film, when the woman, you know, who's giving the lecture is showing Mary. How come it is

when Mary, mother of Christ, is covered, she's pious, but when [a Muslim woman] is covered, she's oppressed?" And she shows a picture, right, of Mary and this film is based in Dubai, and the girl asked me, "Well, maybe it's because Mary's white and Muslims aren't."

Professors Grey, Carter, and Downs all expressed the idea that for students to feel safe in trying to engage, they needed to be assured that they could disagree with the professor. They also wanted students to know that their grade was not determined by their conclusions, but rather by how effective their analysis was. Professor Downs explained: "I often say to my students the one thing I want them to leave my classroom with is cognitive complexity. I appreciate that it's almost more to ask than understanding white privilege." Professor Grey tells her students to consider her "an equal opportunity offender," someone who will confront any student on their thinking, regardless of their or her own position, just to get them to stretch it:

> I do try to push their buttons. And we talk about all that kind of stuff, you
> know? Because one of the things I tell them is my job is to teach them to
> be less ethnocentric, but not to necessarily….I say, "If I can shift your
> moral compass, fine, but I'm not here to tell you to put it away. Just make
> you think."

Professor Carter conducted a small intervention with her regular class activity on Peggy McIntosh's essay, *Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack* (1989). In addition to the usual direction asking students to rate their levels of identification/agreement with each of McIntosh's privileges, she added a disclaimer on the cover of half of the documents, indicating that students should not consider the essay as a personal attack. The

intervention showed promising results. She said: "We're talking down here in a scale in terms of, you know, how racist their views are, but it made a difference. You had more attitude change just by that one little statement."

Professors Bunning and Duque described opening dialogue with white students by engaging them in exploring their own racial and cultural identities in relatively safe, positive ways before challenging them to consider those identities in a critical way. Professor Bunning taught a practicum course as part of a teacher preparation program, where he worked with students to critically break down their experiences while they are happening. He considers it a powerful opportunity because of its immediacy. The practicum class meetings offer students a chance to reshape perspectives through analyzing transformative events. Professor Bunning described the process:

> We go into a practical situation in the city where I've been taking them to the same school for a long time. A lot of the time they're going to a school where the kids are different color skin than they are. And they've read and heard a lot about disadvantaged children and they're anticipating that these kids are going to be somehow intellectually, you know, deficient. And it's not their fault, I think it's they've learned what they've been told. And they get in there and they realize that's not true and they tell me about that. That's the great part that I don't have to make some big professor speech, right. That they're coming up to me and saying, "These kids are very capable, very capable, you should know they're capable!"

Professor Duque recalled a class discussion in which he had shared a Puerto Rican cultural perspective on white people's food choices. He said: "I ask if any of the white people are aware of the stereotypes that some Puerto Ricans have about them. They

become morbidly interested. What *do* you say about us when we're not around?" He explained the perception he had heard from Puerto Ricans: "White people's food is terrible. They only eat two things— sandwiches and cold cereal. And what's weird about it is they love it. And so we love joking that white people get really excited about sandwiches." His humorous example opened a candid conversation about school lunches. They discussed what it meant to school children to have different lunch experiences based on race and class. Poor kids and black kids bought (or received free) school lunch. Some white kids brought sandwiches. Some students of color brought Tupperware with kimchi and sesame tofu, which they felt was embarrassing. In approaching race conversations with his own stories and humor, Professor Duque felt his students were allowed to share something of themselves in a safe way before theorizing a touchy topic together. Professor Duque agreed that professors need to appreciate the fact that white students had not considered racism deeply. He also felt teachers had to recognize that white students have their entire sense of themselves as a good person being brought to the fore whenever they are asked to consider how their whiteness benefits them at the expense of others. He explained:

> We've got to be sympathetic toward where somebody's coming from. If someone is racist, let's just back up for a second on race. We all know the overt racists—the Klan, the skinheads, that's very rare. That's not the sort of people I'm trying to educate, right? I'm trying to educate people who are *tacitly* racist, right? Who are racist precisely because they *don't* think of racism. So you've got to be sympathetic to somebody who, you're about to tell someone some very bad news about themselves, right? And you don't need to be like, "So, three months to live.

See you later." Right? I mean, you wouldn't do that if you were a medical doctor—you don't just blurt out, like, "You've benefitted from centuries of racial privilege. Your whole family has. If you don't think it's true, you're racist!"

This kind of work, Professor Duque explained, cannot be done simply by presenting students with alternative information and asking them to critically analyze how social structures and systems are constructed. The roots of an individual's sense of self run far deeper. Identifying racially is fundamentally a psychological process, not just a political or economic one. If one seeks to challenge a white person's identity, he reasoned, it must be done with sensitivity to how they *feel* and what they desire to be, do, and be seen as. He felt it could not be done through direct confrontation. He explained:

This isn't a matter of knowledge. This is a matter of ideology. This is a matter of when someone's own identity is wrapped up in certain ideologies about race and now you want to get into—what's really hard about racism for white people is that it is not only a conscious thought in their head usually, but when I say ideology, it's bound up in issues of, like, desire, eroticism, fantasy, I mean, so this is something that cuts all the way down to the core of who they are as, you know, psychosexual participants. Psychosexual in the most, like, general sense, not actual procreation, but there is a libidinal investment. There is a whole fantasy structure that goes around everybody's identity. So, when you start addressing somebody's identity in any regard, perhaps racism especially because it's so loaded in the United States, you are intervening as, like, an amateur Freud, you know what I'm saying? And you've got to be really slow and careful about

how you approach that and it is not to grab them and to scream "racist" in their

face or to say that they didn't earn it or...even if you believe it, right?

Professor Duque's sentiment was reflected in most other professor's observations. On

the whole, they seemed cognizant of the idea that teachers need to create opportunities

for students to buy into what is being discussed before they can commit to fully

engaging in race dialogues.

In addition to discussing the thinking behind their pedagogical approaches to

working with students, most participants offered opinions on whether or not their being

white offered them an advantage in teaching white people. Of the eight who raised this,

six felt it was an advantage. Those six believed that other white people tended to listen

and respond differently to what they were saying than they would to people of color

saying the same things. Two openly considered that this might itself be a racist

perspective, but they nonetheless felt it was true.

Professor Spooner described a somewhat different strategy of drawing upon his

identity. He made use of the confusion that occasionally arises among his students over

what his racial background is. He goes by an Arabic name and shaves his head clean. He

is often asked by students, "What are you?" This dissonance was useful. He explained:

 A white person can't have a name like that. You can't, you know, be interested in

those types of things. A lot of times there is a, you know, walk into a room, my

whiteness as currency is there in the room. But then once I speak from a different

paradigm, all reason goes out the window.

He would generally put off answering them directly. He would explain to them, "We'll

come back to that because you won't be satisfied with my answer right now." Sometimes,

he told them he was black. In either case, his objective was to create the sense that racial identity is not fixed. Race is not always as it seems. Professor Spooner believed that reifying race as a form of identity functions to keep the discourse away from examining the "force and thrust of anti-blackness," the manifestation of which does not limit itself to people with specific racial identities.

Professor Spooner believed that taking white students down that path needs to be done very carefully. He reasoned that the tendency toward anti-blackness is so powerful that white people can find themselves co-opting even the empathy they may feel as they begin to understand the persistent, de-humanizing nature of racism. In his classes, he presented students with historical examples of white activists who sought to generate empathy by drawing on the powerful emotional connection to things like images of lynchings and dead victims of police shootings. He then discussed how doing this can also be interpreted as a way of exploiting black suffering to feel good about being a white person who is against such violence. He explained handling the gradual shifts in thinking that occur: "Black students are like, I'm really on board with this. And then also a lot of white students. But then that's when I'm like, be careful here. Why do you like this so much?" He explained that the goal is for white people to avoid attaching themselves too quickly to anti-racist positions.

For Professor May, being a white woman teaching anti-racism could be daunting, particularly when there are students of color in the class. She felt concerned over how well she represented non-majoritarian perspectives as a white woman when issues of white privilege and racism were being discussed in a predominantly white classroom. She offered as an example the fact that at some point in almost every class a white student

would use the word "colored." In response, she would find herself explaining the term's historical relationship to Jim Crow segregation. Speaking to racial issues in the presence of people of color, without knowing how they might feel about her response, left her feeling uncertain. She explained:

> I still have a dilemma about being the white woman who is teaching about white privilege. When I've got students of color in my class I still struggle with what, what would be most helpful, to me and to them or to all of us as a community? So part of me thinks okay, should I talk to them separately and say if I get it wrong please feel free to speak up? On the other hand I think, would I want that as a student? On the other hand, I want them to feel very aware that I'm aware that I am speaking from the outside on something that affects them in a personal way that it would never affect me….And so, but no, I haven't come to grips with how best to invite students of color to talk with me. Because I don't want to do exactly what happens to them all the time, or could be happening to them all the time, which is being singled out as a representative of your race to talk about race with me or with anybody else. With the class, I mean it's a class to explore how issues of race, and gender, and sexual orientation, and class impact what goes on in the classroom. That's what we're here to do. But I can't ask them to speak.

Professor May did in fact go on to describe some strategies she uses in teaching about forms of privilege. Her observation about uncertainty stood out from the other participants. Other professors seemed to speak more confidently about their methods for teaching about racism.

Encountering White Collegial and Institutional Resistance

The fourth major category was vital to framing participants' practice and their growth in an institutional context. Participants were asked to describe how supportive the people in their work environments were of their anti-racist efforts. While some felt supported within their department or by specific colleagues, most talked about colleagues enacting passive or active forms of resistance. This resistance ranged from expressed disinterest, to active objections, to a decades-long shunning.

Limited Support

A few participants described having a few supportive colleagues. Professor Carter in particular discussed the importance of having several faculty of color mentor her over the years. They helped her navigate through her own transformation from what she described as a color blind white liberal to being an anti-racist teacher and scholar. Professor Cash, Duque and Downs discussed one another, having worked together to organize a major colloquium on race. Professors May and Dyer described working in departments which were generally supportive of their teaching interests. However, Professor Dyer felt that white faculty at his institution in general were not actively committed to understanding and addressing the needs of students of color, or learning about institutional racism. Professor Bunning, who worked in the same department, agreed that he had support for teaching the way he wanted to. Yet, the support was more a function of overall program design and less of an active institutional commitment to meeting the needs of students of color. In general, he believed that neither of the public institutions he'd worked at did very well in terms of understanding how their institutional

norms might negatively impact students of color.

Being Marked

Professor Cash described challenges in going beyond anti-racism as an academic exercise. He encountered resistance as soon as he became a more vocal advocate for students of color, particularly around what he called "incidents where these diversity proposals that people are putting on the table often are serving the interests of majority folks or even these administrators or faculty more than it is, you know, communities in need." He described an occasion in which he tried to convince his colleagues of how a race-neutral, GPA strategy for admitting wait listed students into the major would potentially hurt students of color. His comments only seemed to make matters worse for himself. He recalled:

> The faculty were, "Well, we'll just take the people with the highest GPA." And I was like, "Well, wait a second. That's going to disproportionately affect students of color, kids from lower SES, because they probably didn't have those crazy sciences classes, all that stuff." "Well, I mean, that's not really our problem. That's all we can do to be fair, just, like, take the highest GPA." And so I tried to engage them and I'm not really great at talking, like, right off the cuff about things, and so I tried to talk to them a little bit about white privilege and all that stuff, which was upsetting. After that conversation, I had a call to go to a meeting with my chair and the dean about what I was doing.

The dean's meeting was actually called because after the staff meeting, Professor Cash went outside of the department to seek guidance on the issue. He had hoped to bring examples of alternative strategies back to the department. Somehow, word spread that his

department was having problems admitting students of color, and his dean accused him of spreading the rumors. He again found himself on the defensive. He struggled again to find a convincing way to articulate his opposition in the face of a seemingly uncomprehending audience. He remembered:

> I'm just trying to seek out wisdom on campus on how to deal with stuff, and I literally found myself in a meeting where I was trying to talk to my dean about how the suit that he wears every day might intimidate students from, I don't know, lower SES backgrounds or urban backgrounds. They just looked at me with blank stares.

Shaken by his experience, he found himself connecting with the experiences articulated by women faculty of color in the book *Presumed Incompetent* (Gutierrez y Muhs & Florez-Neimann, 2012). The book helped him to understand that what seemed straightforward to him about race would not necessarily be readily accepted as such by others. He explained:

> They were telling stories in these chapters, like, "I really was perceiving myself as crazy. Was I living in a different universe than these other people?" And it's like, in some ways you are. You're seeing things and recognizing things they don't recognize. But I think when you're in those moments, it makes you, like, what I felt like. You know, they're looking at me like I'm crazy; people are ducking me in the hallway. I think my being a white male and having things be relatively easy for me through most of my life, I think I naively thought, "Well, look, I'm on the right side of these issues. People appreciate the perspective of—appreciate the

knowledge and they'll be willing to change." But, you know, power

doesn't work that way, right? You know, but I didn't realize that in the

moment. I, you know, was really thin-skinned about, you know, you're

going to be criticized. They are going to say you're the problem. They are

going to, like, roll their eyes when you speak and kind of not want to listen

to you and all those things to keep this perspective out.

Describing Professor Cash as "marked" refers specifically to the way his

experiences deepened his empathetic awareness to the narratives of women of

color by seeing something of his own experience in them. He learned that by

extending oneself as an ally speaking on behalf of people of color, a white person

can run the risk of similar forms of treatment.

Being Devalued

Other participants described resistance from colleagues in the form of devaluing

or discouraging work that had an anti-racist focus. They got the message that anti-racist

praxis did not align with departmental norms and expectations. Professor Grey, an

anthropologist with expertise in art and cultural appropriation, used her general education

course on Culture, Dress and Appearance to challenge students' thinking about the ways

that race, gender, culture, and power are transmitted through appearance and dress. She

received steady pushback from colleagues asking to change her course so that it focused

more on fashion theory and less on cultural theory. She reasoned:

I think it's more that they want to talk more like, what is the fashion in China?

What is the fashion in Vietnam? What is the fashion in France? You know what I

mean? There's a focus on the elite aspect that I guess I try to, in my opinion, our

curriculum, they get it everywhere else, and I'm, like, trying to be that…to

counteract.

Professor Grey felt as though her position in the department was questioned by some

colleagues from the start. She recalled, "In my meeting, one of them asked me, 'Well, if

there was a position open in anthropology would you take it?' I'm like, 'I don't know, is

there one open?" During the interview, Professor Grey also expressed concern about her

tenure process. She felt that her anti-racist research and teaching interests were not

welcome in her department. After data collection for this study ended, the researcher

learned that Professor Grey had been denied tenure.

Professor Bunning recalled both active and passive resistance to his efforts, both

at Flagship University and at State College. At Flagship, he proposed programming to

bring his college students into urban public schools, and to bring urban school children to

the university. These efforts were intended to encourage more students of color to

consider teaching as a profession. He felt the strategies would help bridge racial and

ethnic divides in education. Each time, the department responded by telling him he could

develop the projects, but on his own time. Even though they were not regarded as part of

his job, he did them anyway. Overall, he viewed his department as hostile toward

students of color. He recalled feeling over time that "the most I could hope for was that

the people would let me alone."

Eventually, Professor Bunning took a position at State College, where the urban

location and practicum-oriented program of study better suited his approach. Again,

however, he felt little collegial or institutional support for his anti-racist ideas. He saw

this as emblematic of a larger lack of institutional sensitivity to the needs of the students,

so many of whom commuted to school, worked one or more jobs, dealt with poverty and racism, cared for children and elders, or struggled to overcome gaps in academic preparedness. He worried that the institution's lack of cultural awareness created an environment characterized by cultural disrespect. He believed the institutional culture directly compromised efforts to teach inclusiveness, foster cultural sensitivity and prepare students to teach in a culturally diverse world. He said:

> They (students) are a pretty sustaining community among themselves, but it's like never the twain shall meet between the institution and their community. So if you are operating in an environment like that and it makes it harder for them to understand other cultures, too, right, because they're not understood for who they are, right? It makes the challenge that much more of a difficult one, to have them think about culture in terms of opening themselves up to other people's culture because theirs isn't appreciated.

Professor Spooner spoke in similar terms about his work as director of State's Africana Studies program. He said that while he scheduled more events than any department, advised more student groups than any other faculty member, published well, got excellent teaching ratings, and recently was tenured, he felt as though his work was unsupported by his institutional superiors. He believed (as Professor Bunning did) that the institution's ideas and actions around race tended to reinforce dominant interests at the expense of people of color. He also believed that critical perspectives were not welcome.

My type of racial politics and looking at things doesn't square with a lot of people. And you know, I'm the antagonism in the room half the time, simply because of the perspective. You know? The black perspective, the black fault. It's frustrating, because I'm processing the world in a particular way through a certain type of paradigm, it frustrates me to see that people consider meetings, create policy and programs etcetera, and think they're really enacting change in people's lives. So, I mean, that frustrates me. At first, it was kind of on a personal level. Now, it's like nothing is going to change that way. It's just good old multi-cultural, liberal, bourgeois politics. Nothing more. So, it's more frustrating on a political level than a personal level nowadays.

Nearly all professors described feeling some degree of resistance from colleagues and students. Most described at least one conflict which left them feeling unwelcome, isolated, and occasionally at risk. Among these, Professors Lappin and Fowler's experiences at State College stood far apart from the rest. They worked in the same department for four decades and could not recall ever feeling supported by departmental colleagues.

Departmental Shunning

Both Professor Fowler and Professor Lappin worked in the same anthropology department at State College for nearly 40 years. Both experienced nearly forty years of ongoing disrespect and shunning from their departmental colleagues. Professor Fowler first proposed a course on the anthropology of race and racism in 1975. She was told by colleagues, "That's a cause, not a course. That's not anthropology." Her work was met

within her department by what she called, "Total silence. Complete silence...one hundred

per cent." Professor Lappin was treated similarly.

    The treatment went on for decades. Naturally, Professor Fowler wondered why.

She and Professor Lappin both researched and published books regularly. They ran

programs and events that drew favorable attention to the department. But within the

department offices, Professor Fowler said, her work was totally ignored. She recalled:

> I've been in departments where somebody publishes a book and they've
>
> got it out on display! You know, here I am publishing book after book
>
> after book on participants that, you know, okay, that may not be your cup
>
> of tea, but I'm doing it, you know, and it's making the department and
>
> the college look good, but somehow that was so fundamentally
>
> threatening or so fundamentally off-putting. It's like, you know, it's a
>
> version of what that, what is it called? Not silencing. When you don't talk
>
> to people in the Amish community—shunning.

Professor Fowler explained that she was not sure why they were treated as they were. She

did not know if it was their high productivity, or the subject matter they were working

with. She continued:

> It wasn't so much like, "Oh, you're doing this anti-racist stuff," because
>
> nobody can really disagree with that, you know, in a public way. Or try to,
>
> you know, put you down for that. But it was the lack of any kind of
>
> acknowledgement that you're doing anything at all. Academic isolation.
>
> Isolation from the colleagues who you spend every day with, you know,
>
> just ignoring you to death, ignoring the participant matter that you're

dealing with. You know? I would put posters up, pictures of the Unity

Players (an anti-racist student theatre/teaching project she established), all

over the department. And it's like somebody's got to notice. I could have

the NAACP meetings in our little common room there, you know, it was

not a secret. You know, somebody could say, "I don't like what you're

doing." I would have preferred that to, I'm not looking for praise, but just,

"Aw, I'm glad you're doing that. I'm glad somebody from the

anthropology department is doing that." It was just complete, 100 percent

silence.

Professor Lappin suggested that the work he was doing as a white person

establishing African Studies and teaching on racism put him at the academic margins.

Regardless of how successful he might be by standard academic measures, he felt like a

persona non grata within the department. He was also a target for anonymous racial

threats and hostility. He said:

Being a white person working in Black Studies, African Studies, didn't privilege

me. I would get death threats and hate mail and things like that. Defaced graffiti

on my [office] door even. So that definitely marginalized me. And then, being in

African Studies even within mainstream, I'd say, anthropology, social science,

academics, it was never so much celebrated...it's not mainstream. But the fact that

I published extensively, lectured, and got recognition—which was conventional;

that's what you should do, write books and do research. They couldn't dismiss me

while not wanting to accept me. So that was like the schizophrenic aspect.

In discussing collegial support and resistance, participants spoke most frequently about experiences of conflict, resistance, risk, and marginalization at department, collegiate, and institutional levels.

Barriers to Faculty and Institutional Transformation

In reflecting on their needs—for self-development, for supportive community, and for greater collegial involvement in anti-racism, participants discussed faculty development. They asserted that white faculty development work needed to focus on raising awareness of how racism functions and what kind of institutional change was needed. Their thoughts on who might benefit from professional development, and the systemic barriers they saw, are described in this section.

Throughout their interviews, participants frequently questioned their own limitations. They questioned their knowledge about whiteness, their critical white self-awareness, their ability to work effectively with students (white and non-white alike) on issues involving whiteness, and their ability to do anti-racist work outside of the classroom. Most identified the need for white faculty in general to engage in critical interrogation of their own practices and their institutions' practices. There was universal agreement about the need for change in how white faculty, and predominantly white institutions, work. There were also specific concerns, however, raised about how much could be expected in communities where faculty professional development is not mandatory. Also, racism may not be the first priority among those presenting or attending optional professional development. Participants also expressed concern over creating buy-in for cultivating anti-racist praxis when so much emotional work was required.

Professor Grey pointed out that it is difficult work to teach about racism and social

justice. She further questioned the difficulty and appropriateness of expecting faculty in

other disciplines to include multiculturalism into their curriculum and instruction. She

explained:

> I think a lot is asked of faculty. You know? We deal with an age group that has
>
> been… molded by their parents, right, you know, and they've been put in a
>
> specific school system and they've been taught a particular religion and they've
>
> hung out with people who are probably just like them, gone to the same church,
>
> and then we get them and we put them in rooms and we ask and we kind of
>
> challenge that….Not all faculty's job is to do that. In a mathematics class, are
>
> they dealing with these issues of race? Should they be dealing with it in their
>
> classrooms, and how can they along with everything else they're expected to do
>
> and all the diversity of the students that in reality they have in their class? I don't
>
> know what the answer is. I don't know how they would build it in. It's easier for
>
> me to build it in, I guess, but I have to fight to build it in in some ways.

Professor May expressed concern that the things that most needed to be changed

were the things that were hardest to recognize. She notes this was especially true because

of the ease with which white faculty can follow well-established lines of institutional

thought on diversity. As such, she noted how professional development must allow

faculty to delve deeply into their assumptions and potentially exclusionary practices. She

said:

> I think it's impossible without examination of deep rooted assumptions and ways
>
> that our lives are shaped by things that certainly we didn't put in place, but we

take advantage of. [Critical Race Theory] argues that the legislation for example that has been put in place to address issues of discrimination has really served as a prop up, you know, white privilege. So as we do this work we have to really examine very deeply, what are we doing? Are we doing things that are going to serve just to prop up what we already have? Because after all, look what we're doing. Patting ourselves on the back and saying, "Okay, diversity done," kind of thing.

Similarly to Professor May, several participants acknowledged how difficult the work of raising one's awareness and remaining steadfastly committed to change can be. Professor Dyer observed that the interviews for this study reminded him he had more work to do himself. He also wondered what this suggested about his colleagues who were less intentional about anti-racist praxis. He observed:

My inability to give what for me was a satisfying answer to your last question proves even I need to raise my awareness. What I see in my colleagues who don't teach this material or with this perspective, I don't know why they're not more moved to help the underdog than they are. I don't understand it; why they're not more upset about the injustice. You know?…I don't want to be mean to my colleagues because I don't think they are mean. But "it's not my problem," and they don't think of it that way. But I think that it isn't their problem and it should be. It's all of our problem. Can we be a democratic nation or not? You know, and I just think they're not seeing the big picture.

Professor Dyer speculated on what it might take to move more people, to open their eyes to the need to challenge their well-worn thought patterns and see the problem of racism

more deeply. He arrived at the conclusion that people may need to have some sort of truly transformative experience. This might include an event or events that compel them to reframe their ideas and beliefs. He considered the other participants who were interviewing for this study—people who, like he, had identified themselves as doing anti-racist work:

> Every one of these people, I imagine, is going to have one thing in their growth, some kind of exposure that opened their eyes as, I think, I don't know, kind of like a hypothesis. My white colleagues who don't show an interest in understanding white identity and working against racism, they're not against it. I think for some reason, there hasn't been some pivotal or transformative experience.

Professor Bunning pointed to the need for white faculty to be more open to examining their own practice in a more critical way. In particular, he thought they needed to be more reflective about how they interact with their students. He lamented on how predictably any conversation about student issues becomes a conversation about what is "wrong" with students of color.

> It degenerates into what is wrong with the students really quickly. And it's never about any, well, "Why is it that we're always having this conversation? Is there something we can reflect upon?" Never. And it's maddening to sit in meetings like that and just watch it go down that road again and again and again and again. And then to say something like, 'Well, maybe we don't understand their culture." And it's quiet for a minute and we go back to talking about what's wrong with the students.

 It is very rare, he remarked, to hear faculty having open discussions on what is wrong

with themselves. His peers did not seem interested in considering what is "inefficient"

with their teaching, their ways of interacting, their expectations, and so on. He said, "We

can't even approach that conversation. That's not something we have." Professor

Bunning worried especially about how easily white professors can address their students

in ways that are genuinely well intended, but are experienced by students of color as

demeaning or exclusionary. He suggested that white faculty sometimes negate

opportunities for discovery or dialogue, often without noticing. This was because there

was no platform for critical examination of their practice, and possibly no motivation for

it. He speculated on how the system of racialized beliefs framed conversations in ways

that prohibited the capacity to put one's white self in a non-white other's shoes. Professor

Bunning noted:

> Why aren't we conscious of that—that the way we're interacting with them may
>
> even, while it's well-intended, be demeaning or self-serving in some ways. I
>
> would think that the only way around that would be to constantly be interrogating
>
> your own stance about that. Maybe there's no way around that. Maybe you're
>
> going to do that by virtue of who you are.

Professor Bunning's reflection captured the issue very effectively—There may seem like

little motivation, but the lack of a platform for engaging ensured that there would not be

any anti-racist praxis reached by peers. The platform itself was needed to generate the

motivation.

Professor Carter considered that being critically attuned to whiteness does not

eliminate errors altogether. Nor does it feel like it is solving the bigger problems of

racism on campus. But, she believed, it is urgent work nonetheless. As such, she was

open to trying even the smallest strategies to improve faculty practices. She explained:

> If you're black, if you're one of the fewer than fifteen black faculty members on
> our campus, you talk to white colleagues, and I'm not quoting anybody in
> particular. But you talk to your white colleagues and they don't realize when
> they're insulting by stereotyping. They don't realize how that affects your career
> negatively. I get frustrated because there is often a lack of awareness that racism
> still exists at all. And that these people, white, are being racist right in front of me.
> And it's frustrating and the only solution that I see is to make them more aware of
> racism when it occurs….So to me, I think they need, I went through it, it's not a
> comfortable experience to admit that okay, you know, I worked hard, I went
> through all these terrible experiences. But I got where I am partly because I'm
> white. My life every single day is easier because I'm white, and you do have to
> struggle with that to be able to step outside of yourself and on a daily basis be
> aware of it when it occurs.

Professor Carter's observation echoed much of what others had also considered. The

work of raising awareness and cultivating anti-racist praxis was hard. The amount of

learning that appeared necessary across the faculty landscape was great. Opportunities

were needed, and these would require institutional commitment.

Core Category: Gardening in a Chilly Climate

In Grounded Theory studies, sometimes the final construct presented is the core category.

The core category is the centerpiece of the research. It can be an abstraction of findings

that represents what all other data seem to commonly indicate (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this study, the core category is labeled *Gardening in a Chilly Climate*.

The title borrows a concept from scholarship on the experience of women in the academy. Sandler and Hall (1986) used the term chilly climate to describe the cumulative effects of overt and subtle dominant group behaviors upon a subordinated group's work and growth. At first it may seem an inappropriate co-optation of the term, as white faculty are a dominant racial group within predominantly white institutions. But the application of the term here is not intended to reference the intersectionality with sex or gender-based discrimination. Rather, it suggests that white faculty can become "marked" by colleagues and others, and treated in ways that indicate that their anti-racist views and efforts are not welcomed or supported. They were shunned, or experienced chilly or hostile departmental climates when they ventured outside of the norms of whiteness.

The *gardening* indicated here refers to two levels of cultivation and growth. First, for faculty, the chilly climate creates the likelihood that they will struggle to find opportunities to engage with one another around issues of anti-racist pedagogy. This sort of ongoing critical engagement is considered vital to maintaining an awareness of how whiteness impacts teacher and student interactions. Participants expressed an awareness of who their students were and what they might need. They are gardeners attempting to cultivate anti-racist praxis both for their students, and at times, for colleagues. However, what they can produce in their gardens was limited, by colleagues and by institutional context.

Second, participants were learners, too, as the research questions and emergent theory emphasizes. They too were in need of cultivation. Their dynamic learning

relationship between self-awareness, knowledge of whiteness, and anti-racist work constituted their own anti-racist praxis. Findings suggest that the climate for their growth was hostile, and little growth can happen without a change in the climate. The Catch-22, of course, is that other white faculty and administrators were both plants in the garden and the controllers of the climate. Their resistance was an issue. Change required their investment, but their investment required change.

All but one participant spoke about feeling isolated. They experienced resistance to their anti-racist efforts. They expressed disappointment that colleagues were not interested in being more helpful. They worked hard to cultivate anti-racist praxis, with little support or acknowledgement for their contributions. None spoke openly about backing down in the face of such experiences. However, nearly everyone expressed concern over the environmental realities of gardening.

Several participants held low expectations for how little white students might ultimately derive from their anti-racist teaching. In essence, they expected little growth for a lot of gardening. Professors Grey and Downs talked of enabling their students to think critically about race, or disrupting their sense of comfortability with what they knew about themselves. Professors Dyer, Bunning, Carter and Duque specifically mentioned needing to approach the task of challenging white students carefully, in ways that did not move them too far from their comfort zones. Professor Spooner lamented that such efforts at "planting seeds" about whiteness are insufficient. This was because a white supremacist critical frame does not address the root issue of anti-blackness. He explained:

Frank Wildeson says as well in his book, *Red, White, and Black*, that we're too often interested in planting seeds— which I think happens in critical race discourse between professor and students—when what we need to be interested in is being pyro-technicians, burning this stuff up and destroying it. Because a lot of times this planting seeds goes back to the very original problem of using blackness as an object for our own meaning—the teacher or student's own existence—to feel better in the world in which they occupy rather than create a new world where they might be unstable ontologically….You can go beyond white privilege and start talking about white power. I think those conversations are productive if you're just interested in that aspect or that sphere of modernity, but it's not the entire thing. Because it's, you know, once you do abolish whiteness, you commit treason to it, and you do get rid of it, again this core anti-blackness can exist without whiteness. It can exist without white supremacy.

Professor Spooner contended that many white professors, himself included, have gone "from that hesitation to talk about racism with a big R or little r. You don't really name it; you just call it racism. Then all of a sudden you make a transition to start talking about white supremacy and whiteness." But raising awareness of white supremacy, he explained, should not be considered an endpoint to anti-racist learning. Like a garden, anti-racist praxis requires constant cultivation.

The core category represents the central category of the emergent relational theory. All participants had critical, counterhegemonic experiences with race and whiteness which guided them toward anti-racist praxis. All revealed ways in which their thinking, feeling, and work interact. Yet, many perceived limitations in their own critical

awareness or engagement. They also noted challenges to student learning. As with

gardening, growth takes time and constant attention. Yet students' learning was often

limited to singular classroom experiences. All spoke at length about the multiple

institutional and collegial forces that worked against their cultivation of anti-racist praxis.

Resistance from colleagues and ideological disconnect from their institutions framed a

lack of support (e.g., chilly climate) which constrained their efforts.

A critical emergent theory appears in the form of a conditional matrix in

Appendix G. A guide to reading the matrix follows below. Discussion of the core

category and the theory follows in the discussion chapter, chapter five.

A Critical Emergent Theory of White Anti-Racist Faculty Praxis at

Two Predominantly White Institutions

This section offers an overview of the critical emergent theory of white anti-racist

faculty praxis at two predominantly white institutions, which is illustrated in Appendix G.

The emergent theory locates the phenomenon of white anti-racist faculty cultivating anti-

racist praxis (Dei, 2001; Perry & Shotwell, 2009) for themselves and for others within an

institutional context of hegemonic resistance. The institutional and interpersonal

dynamics are situated within the white habitus—the larger ideological environment in

which white people perceive racial self and other (Bonilla-Silva, 2006).

In the literature, anti-racist praxis is regarded as an ongoing dynamic interchange

between critical reflection, counterhegemonic knowledge and anti-racist action (Perry &

Shotwell, 2009). The interchange is necessary for the health and viability of the action.

As Brookfield (2014) indicated, critical reflection must be ongoing for a white

practitioner to be alert to the influence of hegemony. In the case of white anti-racist

faculty, anti-racist praxis is a concern not only for themselves, but for the people they influence. The concern of anti-racist education is counterhegemonic knowledge building. They are cultivators, or gardeners, of anti-racist praxis.

In Appendix G, the relational dynamic is represented as an interaction between identity (one's evolving sense of racial self), awareness (the ways in which whiteness is enacted hegemonically within the white habitus), and action (the teaching, scholarship, and advocacy that forms the anti-racist work of cultivating praxis in others). The three boxes, labeled Identity/Action, Awareness/Action, and Awareness/Identity, provide examples from the findings of how participants related knowledge and action in ways that address the research questions. Awareness/Identity, for example, related the several definitions of whiteness presented within the *Seeing White* category, along with the perceived effects on white identity. The three boxes are connected by arrows indicating a two-way exchange: action provides new information with which to build knowledge of self and circumstances, and the process of critical reflection informs new action. Thus, anti-racist praxis is presented as an ongoing dynamic exchange of thought and activity.

The praxis dynamic is visually represented within the White Habitus oval as a grey, sun-shaped symbol. Like a sun, it radiates outward, indicating that anti-racist action is intended to build knowledge, thereby radiating its influence. Of course, just as one may see the points of the sun jutting into the surrounding whiteness, the white habitus may also be seen as pointed inward, constantly pushing back, containing the growth.

The ring surrounding most of the sun shape represents the constraining effect of the chilly climate. This includes a constellation of large and small forces which limit the cultivation of praxis and ensure that gardening efforts will not produce a flourishing

garden. The boxes labeled Institutional Norms and Collegial Resistance contain examples from findings of the ways in which participants experienced resistance to their efforts.

Finally, the oval labeled Prior Counterhegemonic Critical Learning Experiences illustrates the kinds of mentoring and learning which occurred in the lives of participants. An arrow connecting this oval to praxis suggests that these events enabled participants to arrive at and maintain praxis. The oval is contained within the white habitus, showing how counterhegemonic learning also happens within the white habitus' sphere of influence.

As a whole, the matrix presents the theory as follows: Within the white habitus, participants practice the cultivation of anti-racist learning for others as well as for themselves. Their objective is to raise consciousness among white people as to how racism and whiteness function in order to counter a racial system which maintains white supremacy. They arrived at this position by virtue of counterhegemonic learning experiences which enabled them to see the hegemonic influence of white ideologies from a critical perspective. This awareness motivated them to act. Their anti-racist praxis processes share two commonalities. First, they were sustained and strengthened by critical reflection. Second, the shared beliefs and actions of an ideologically colorblind white community and institutional practices constrained both critical reflection and action. These constraints were not necessarily regarded as constraints by the community. In fact, they were often seen as fair and equitable by white people. However, they limited each participant's ability to reflect, act, and sustain anti-racist praxis. Thus, they pose risks to the cultivation of anti-racist praxis, constraining its growth.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Implications

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the findings presented in chapter four. It will begin with the

original research questions and discuss how the inquiry broadened to account for the

context of participants' activity and learning. It will discuss the five major categories

presented, and how they inform the core category and the emergent theory. Finally, it will

suggest implications for campus anti-racism education, white anti-racist faculty

development, and future research toward a more fully developed relational theory of

white anti-racist faculty engagement.

The inquiry was grounded in three interrelated research questions:

- What motivates white faculty who do anti-racist work in their professional lives to
  do such work?

- How do white faculty who do anti-racist work in their professional lives
  characterize the relationship between their work and their understanding of
  whiteness?

- How do white faculty who do anti-racist work in their professional lives
  characterize the relationship between their work and the development of their
  white racial identity?

The research questions framed an inquiry into an ongoing relational learning

process (between identity, awareness, and action). The use of a Critical White Studies

framework helped with situating the participants' development in historical and

institutional contexts, and provided conceptual constructs (e.g. white habitus, anti-racist

praxis) which helped frame the analysis. As coding allowed participants' stories and

reflections to interact with one another (and with the literature), new, productive directions for analysis emerged. By analyzing where participants' motivation came from, or how their understanding of whiteness had evolved, or what people or conditions worked to sustain or weaken their motivation, the study developed a picture of participants as engaged, reflective, evolving practitioners.

In the end, the emergent theory was most certainly a critical one. It situated the original three-way learning dynamic within historical, personal, social and institutional contexts which are ideologically and discursively framed by whiteness and racism. By locating both past and present confrontations with racism in this way, the theory frames future needs for white anti-racist faculty development in a critical light, asserting the need for institutions to create opportunities for supporting and building upon anti-racist white faculty's work.

Seeing Black without Feeling White

This category presented participants' observations on how they understood whiteness as an ideological system, and how they identified with being a white person. These findings offer answers to research questions two and three. Collectively, the findings suggest that a sustained engagement with whiteness scholarship may influence the depth of critical engagement with one's white racial identity. Those who indicated they experienced a sustained, critical awareness tended to also immerse themselves in whiteness scholarship. Among people who did not do this, most were able to speak knowledgeably about basic whiteness concepts, such as white privilege. However, none indicated they made a critical investment in raising awareness of their white identity.

Many Critical White Studies scholars have asserted that whiteness has been constructed as an invisible or unmarked signifier of racial difference (e.g., Yancy, 2012; Frankenberg, 2001; Lipsitz, 1998). White people, in other words, tend to associate race with blackness and experience whiteness as racially empty. Indeed, nearly all participants framed initial definitions of whiteness in terms of what it was not. White was not black, or not "other". Some defined whiteness in terms of an absence of suffering—the privilege of not having to endure the painful, oppressive effects that accompany being racially marked.

Professor Grey, for example, framed her response about her white identity in terms of a childhood recollection. Being white meant not having neighbors throwing garbage on your lawn, as was the case with the black family that moved into her neighborhood when she was a child. Professor Bunning's description of his white identity was not having to worry every time he passes a police officer on the road. He had no fear of being pulled over because of his whiteness. Professor Dyer recalled the slave owners' strategy of removing African men from their families and realized that white people's ignorance of this history (the result of an unspoken hegemonic strategy) was its own form of privilege. On the whole, participants considered that white privilege may be less visible to white people when it is understood as an absence of pain, hostility, isolation, or suspicion. As Kendall (2013) suggested, people generally tend to notice what they are struggling with or hurting from more frequently than what is working well. McIntosh (1989) asserted that white privilege could be measured in terms of benefits *and* the lack of critical awareness of those benefits. This was the ignorance of privilege that Professor Dyer suggested might be its own form of privilege, when he discussed white people not

knowing about the viciousness of separating families in the slave trade.

Whiteness Unseen: *Obscure, Unmarked* and *Systemic* Whiteness

Three of the subcategories of whiteness named in this section—*Obscure, Unmarked* and *Systemic*—presented variations on the category of whiteness as hidden from white people's awareness. *Obscure* whiteness suggests that while white supremacist ideologies can be traced throughout the history of Eurocentric racism (Painter, 2010), the critical, counterhegemonic frameworks required to analyze whiteness were not widely available to white anti-racists prior to the emergence of Critical Race Theory (e.g., Bell, 1980; Crenshaw, 1988) and Critical White Studies (e.g., Allen, 1994; Frankenberg, 1993; Roediger, 1991). Professors Lappin, Fowler and Downs, engaged in civil rights activism during the 1960s. They indicated that while they felt a need to involve themselves in civil rights protests, the idea of critiquing whiteness as an anti-racist activity was not suggested to them. Rather, their focus was where whiteness directed itself: toward blackness, in opposition to anti-black laws and practices.

Unmarked whiteness refers to the discursive rendering of white as non-racial in the eyes of white people. Indeed, the unmarked nature of whiteness in white consciousness may have been what prevented civil rights era white anti-racists from situating themselves in the critical context of racism. After the civil rights movement's peak successes in the 1960's, critical race scholars (e.g., Haney Lopez, 1996; Harris, 1993), feminist scholars (Frankenberg, 1993), and leftist labor historians (e.g., Allen, 1994; Ignatiev, 1995; Roediger, 1991) moved whiteness into the spotlight. Still, while Critical White Studies has flourished in some academic circles, its influence on mainstream white thought is harder to assess. Indeed, today the dominant racial ideology

associated with white people might be colorblindness, a disposition premised on the idea that the problems of white supremacist racism have been solved (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Operating on that premise, colorblindness asserts that the sources of ongoing social and economic inequities between racial groups are the results of deficits in people of color. With racism largely in the past, colorblind ideology contends, people who identify racism as a source of struggle are overstating and misattributing the role of interpersonal and structural racism in contemporary society (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Colorblindness expands on white invisibility by asserting that race should not be discussed.

Examples of *systemic* whiteness highlighted how whiteness functions through institutional policies and practices, structuring social systems so that they produce racist outcomes without requiring acts of overt racism (Omi & Winant, 2014; Strmic-Prawl, 2015). Professor May's rich example illustrated this. Looking back on her high school years, she remembered how black children and white children would depart the recently desegregated school by coming down the front stairs and turning in opposite directions on the sidewalk. They were heading toward different neighborhoods. Within the building, students remained segregated by programs of study. The school system may have been desegregated, but the school community was not. When trouble flared, the fact that the faculty were almost entirely white lent an extra degree of protection, enabling Professor May to be pulled away from possible physical harm in the nick of time. Her presence in the hallway was questioned, as well—a mark of concern, of course, but also a question of belonging.

Professor May's story indicates that several systemic arrangements were at work to maintain separation. Residential segregation discouraged the formation of after school

friendships. Internalized segregation by plans of study insured that black and white

students would spend little class time together. Yet, for students like Professor May, these

arrangements functioned as if they were the natural way of things.

These first three subcategories help situate the difficulties many participants

experience in sustaining a critical engagement with whiteness. In a colorblind society,

white supremacy's functionality increasingly relies upon white people's experience of

white culture as universal or normal. In essence, whiteness is racially empty (e.g.,

Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Yancy, 2012). The participants in this study appeared to be at

various levels of critical connectedness to the experientially elusive concept of whiteness.

There was some indication that the degree of critical intellectual immersion in whiteness

aligned with the extent to which a participant engaged critically with being a white

person. Indeed, for the most part, those who evidenced deeper critical engagements with

whiteness specifically (e.g., Professors Cash, Spooner, Duque, and Fowler) also seemed

to speak at greatest length about the properties of their personal white identity. Those

who spoke least about engagement with critical white studies (e.g., Professors Bunning

and Downs) described not having a sustained engagement with their own white identity.

It may also be noteworthy that while some (e.g., Professors Downs and Grey) did not

express a personal desire for greater engagement with whiteness, others (Professors May,

Bunning, and Dyer) described feeling less engaged than they would like to or felt they

should be. All three in this group believed that living and working surrounded by white

people reinforced their sense of whiteness as normal and not racial. They considered both

the lack of conscious awareness and opportunities for transformative critical engagement

as barriers to a growth process which they felt could benefit them.

Working with White Identity: *Painful* and *Performable* Whiteness

The first three subcategories illustrated how difficult it is to be critically conscious of whiteness. A fourth, *Painful Whiteness,* suggested another kind of barrier. Professor Dyer reflected on the fact that white people can have their awareness of a white racial identity activated, but still be hesitant to analyze it closely. Taken together, his and Professor Carter's experiences illustrate the way guilt can operate across multiple phases of white racial identity development (Helms, 1995; Tatum, 1994). Their contrasting stories emphasized an important factor in the struggle to be critically aware of oneself— managing painful emotions. Professor Dyer wondered if his lack of critical connectedness to his white identity was in part informed by an emotional reluctance to examine it. He described whiteness as an undesirable identity. He explained that whiteness benefits him in ways he has not earned, granting him access to opportunity while constraining others. Acknowledging that this was unfair, he explained that there was an amount of guilt and shame connected to his being white. Analyzing his unearned membership in a dominant group involves processing painful feelings, and he wondered if somehow this held him (and other white people) back from deeper engagement.

Professor Carter acknowledged that she is conscious of her and other people's whiteness on a daily basis. She also noted that her awareness regularly caused her to feel guilt. She explained, however, that she had been taught by colleagues of color that she could not allow herself to remain uncritical in the face of racism. Her learning journey was one of moving from the racial unconsciousness of colorblindness to the racial

consciousness of being aware of her whiteness. She was willing to experience the guilt, she explained, because it was necessary to remaining aware and committed.

Professor Dyer also shared stories about the benefits of whiteness being thrust before him by people of color. Some insisted that he needed to commit more deeply. Why, then, did he wonder if guilt was holding him back? The interviews did not probe participants' emotional terrain very deeply. So it is unknown if Professors Dyer and Carter possessed different degrees of emotional sensitivity. However, their stories reveal at least one important circumstantial difference which may have some explanatory power: the presence or absence of supportive colleagues.

Professor Carter characterized herself as having arrived at Flagship University as a colorblind liberal. Her experiences at Flagship brought her into proximity with colleagues and students of color who told her, in essence, that such a disposition was unacceptable. From that moment, she remained connected to those colleagues. They became friends and mentors. The lessons they imparted were food for her critical thought. Their presence and friendship provided a strong bond of empathy which motivated her on a personal level to work as an ally and to confront the racism within herself as well as in her environment. By contrast, Professor Dyer described transformative encounters earlier in his life with people of color whom helped raise his awareness. At State, however, he was surrounded by colleagues who somewhat passively endorsed his anti-racist teaching but did not critically engage with him on race.

Had Professor Dyer's work circumstances been more similar to Professor Carter's, (wherein intimate colleagues of color acted as supportive mentors), it is possible that a different critical and empathetic connection may have affected his work. Many of

the participants in this study indicated that they currently lacked mentors and peers with whom to conduct the challenging work of sustained critical self-reflection that the literature suggests are hallmarks of white anti-racist academics and activists (e.g., Brookfield, 2014; Heinze, 2008; Schick, 2000).

The fifth subcategory, *Performable Whiteness*, described efforts to not only sit in critical awareness of one's white identity, but to confront and strategically disrupt it. Professor Duque, one of the three professors whose reflections fell into this category, had his white racial identity marked for him within his multiracial family. During his childhood, he came to see whiteness as not simply a difference but an *identity*, filled with meaning by others as well as by oneself. Outside of the home, he learned how his racial identity could be socially deconstructed and reconstructed, with or without his permission. He became, in effect, a different person depending on the social situation and racial context. Professor Spooner similarly described moving in his youth from one racial context to another. He tried, with different levels of criticality at different stages of understanding, to consciously represent himself racially in different ways. He regarded his youthful efforts as a form of racial performance that amounted to little more than a co-optation. However, he described his later identity work as a more complex effort to direct his and others awareness toward more authentic representations of black thought and black needs. Professor Cash spoke similarly of efforts to consciously represent whiteness in non-normative ways, again, not as a cultural co-optation, but rather an attempt to more effectively represent the experiences, needs, and ideas of people of color. Like a majority of participants, he felt that as a white person, his perspective might be more closely attended by other white people because of his insider status.

Of course, his stories and Professor Spooner's stories both indicated that one's white racial capital sometimes only went so far. Their visible whiteness granted them access to white dominated spaces. However, once it was understood that they were representing non-white thought, they became suspect. Professor Duque's experience was similar, but moved in the opposite direction. He explained that he felt least white in situations when his family name preceded him or represented him. His non-raced white appearance granted him greater access than his raced name.

Conclusions about Awareness of Whiteness and White Identity

In light of white normativity, the fact that only a few within a cohort of white anti-racist faculty felt connected to a white racial identity (while several others felt almost entirely disconnected) is not particularly surprising. Dyson (2004) proposed that as whiteness has been discursively rendered racially empty, the history of becoming white amounted to a history of attempting to *conceal* one's racial markers, rather than reveal them. This, he explained, sets up a quality of racelessness as a racial ideal, thereby reinforcing the stigma attached to non-white people. Frankenberg (2001) argued that whiteness was, of course, visible; it was an identity laden with meaning to people of color. Frankenberg asserted that the failure of white people to experience this identity was itself a mark of the hegemonic power of whiteness.

As previously stated, participants' narratives indicated a connection may exist between depth of engagement with whiteness as a critical concept and the degree to which they related to their white identity. This would seem to underscore the value of engaging effectively with counterhegemonic racial conceptual frames in cultivating a white anti-racist identity. It also, however, suggests the difficulty in starting and

sustaining such an engagement, especially without support. This is of tremendous importance to a project of supporting white anti-racist faculty in both attaining and sustaining praxis. Indeed, praxis is by definition a starting point for action. It is not the action by itself. Sustained activity requires a commitment to *remaining* at a point of praxis, which by definition requires critical engagement. As Professor Duque observed about white anti-racists: "If you just stop engaging in anti-racist work, it just dissipates. It's gone for you."

Given the evidence that whiteness functions through discourses and systems which discourage white people from consciously experiencing it, it is reasonable to assume one's critical disposition might fade without support. As Perry and Shotwell (2009) indicated, counterhegemonic education requires both the availability of conceptual frames, and the guidance to use them effectively. The next category considered times in which these conditions were made available to participants and how they benefitted.

Cultivating Praxis: Relationships, Scholarship, and Mentors

The first category illustrated the power of whiteness to resist critical engagement, even among those whom confront racism in their work and possess strong critical inquiry skills. This second category explored the relationships and experiences which, over the course of a lifetime, helped the eleven participants overcome the effect of white hegemony and arrive at a commitment to anti-racist activity. Data from the second category helps to answer research questions one and two. The framework applied to this analysis drew from scholarship on cultivating white anti-racist praxis through counterhegemonic education (e.g., Dei, 2001; Perry & Shotwell, 2009; Utt & Tochluk, 2016). Through an analysis of participants' learning journeys, the study gained insight

into what kinds of prior learning might appear to support the development of critical racial perspectives and the cultivation of white anti-racist praxis among white faculty. Each participant's interviews were analyzed in light of Perry and Shotwell's (2009) ideas for identifying what kinds of critical learning and counterhegemonic experiences inform commitment to action. The analysis looked specifically at what kinds of knowledge were being cultivated (affective, propositional, or tacit) and whether the learning opportunities involved engagement with counterhegemonic conceptual frames. For instance, did they appear to offer engagement and learning that sought to counter what might be considered whiteness-supportive ideologies, discourses, and practices? While each story had different features, each could be aligned with Perry and Shotwell's work.

For example, all participants except Professors May and Bunning recalled having personal relationships (either in childhood or adulthood) with people of color. These relationships provided them with opportunities to develop a firsthand awareness of the full, complex humanity of people whom white racial discourses portrayed as inherently inferior. These relationships stood in powerful contrast to the depictions of racial otherness which were pervasive throughout their social environments. Relationships with people of color also allowed participants to develop empathic awareness, a process which encourages a perspective that one's suffering is another's suffering and one's success is another's success. Perry and Shotwell (2009) regarded empathetic relationship as a form of counterhegemonic knowledge needed to supplant the dominant belief in a white/non-white binary that links white fulfilment to non-white degradation. While Professors May and Bunning did not speak about meaningful personal relationships with people of color, they did describe other experiences through which they developed the capacity for

empathetically relating to the experience of being racially oppressed. This variation was also noted in Perry and Shotwell's (2009) work.

Opportunities to challenge propositional knowledge, the second of Perry and Shotwell (2009)'s three knowledge domains, came at various levels and stages of practitioner's lives. Several took critical race theory related courses, for example. Most became involved in race or cultural studies doctoral work. Several made racism and whiteness the focus of their research. In addition to presenting participants with factual knowledge (e.g., non-majoritarian histories, legal analyses, institutional critiques), these learning experiences were instrumental in developing critical analytical skills vital to anti-racist praxis. As Perry and Shotwell (2009) noted, it is not sufficient to merely be presented with counterhegemonic conceptual frames and new information. The information and tools need to be used effectively for counterhegemonic learning to occur. The counterhegemonic learning supported by personal relationships and formal learning opportunities can strengthen the critical ability to challenge *tacit* knowledge (i.e., "commonsense" beliefs which form the basis for unsupported propositions and ideological formulations) (Perry & Shotwell, 2009). This counterhegemonic awareness was evident in the ways participants talked about privilege, colorblindness, and other common concepts. One example was when a young Professor Grey called her uncle's thinking "stupid" upon learning her relatives were moving out of a neighborhood where people of color were moving in. Another was when Professor Spooner laughed at his teacher's equation of America with baseball and apple pie. In these instances, they were showing evidence of the capacity to discern the illogic of unexamined, everyday frames of reference about race.

Professor Grey credited her "contrarian" parents with encouraging her to develop her critical perspectives. Many participants similarly credited their parents' examples and teaching as instrumental in the development of their critical thinking skills. Professors Lappin, Fowler, Bunning, Downs, Duque, Dyer, and Grey all discussed examples set by their parents. Through familial socialization, they developed anti-racist thoughts or a more general interest in learning about critical thought and equity. For Professors Carter and May, however, their family learning environment was one in which the tacit knowledge shared with them functioned to reinforce binary racial notions of superiority/inferiority. Professor Carter credited faculty and graduate students of color as being instrumental in helping her learn to reframe her tacit beliefs later in her life. Professor May's journey was less direct. She believed her counterhegemonic education began in college, where the study of the prophets enabled her to develop a more complex understanding of humanity and justice by way of critical reflection. This learning served to awaken what she regarded as a racial "dysconsciousness"—an inability to frame race critically to elevate her awareness. Her later efforts to come to terms with her sexuality and her academic focus on students with learning disabilities deepened both her familiarity with critical social justice frames and her personal connection to experiences of marginalized people. Perry and Shotwell (2009) also talk about experiences in which empathy, or the ability to overturn assumptions and tacit beliefs, is constructed in a manner that is transferable across intersecting lines of oppression.

In addition to challenging dominant racial beliefs and discourses, each participant also discussed having a sense of personal responsibility and accountability for the well-being of others. This can in part be attributed to empathy, but as Professor Spooner

indicated, empathy can also be manipulated to serve whiteness. What Perry and Shotwell (2009) noted that was also required for anti-racist praxis was a sense of mutual interdependence. Professor Carter, for example, demonstrated her connectedness to this concept when she described a lifelong desire to aid people who were suffering, and her childhood confusion over why no one addressed the struggles faced by black people. Professor Grey expressed empathy with her students' lack of counterhegemonic experiences. Professor Bunning spoke of a longstanding ability to put himself in other people's shoes. Professor Duque recalled a consciousness which led to a desire to build coalitions. He stated, "I'm in a category that people find difficult…I'm all about your difficult category." Professor Lappin reflected that throughout his life, he had always been drawn toward friendships with people of color. Professor Fowler described the key ally question for herself as a white person: "Here I am, what can we do together?" This sense of interdependence is necessary to ensuring that an evolving critical awareness leads to anti-racist praxis, rather than functioning as an end unto itself (Dei, 2001; Perry & Shotwell, 2009; Tatum, 1994).

While each participant's experiences of anti-racist critical education varied, there were some common features. These features in combination, according to Perry and Shotwell (2009), are likely what drove participants at different stages of their lives to confront racism. Within the context of their work at Flagship and State, the common ground for their work was teaching. In the relational representation of identity, awareness, and action framed by the original questions, this was where the wheels hit the road.

Teaching to Whiteness

The relationships between identity, awareness, and action which formed the basis of this study's original questions was most evident when professors described their experience as teachers in predominantly white classrooms. Participants spoke most often about their strategies for teaching white students, focusing specifically on how their tactics drew from their awareness and feeling about their own whiteness.

Most of the classroom settings they described were general education courses or degree requirements. These were often courses that were not specifically about racism. They were typically populated by white students who had not previously done much analysis of their own racial identities. The teaching strategies used by participants demonstrated an awareness of the effects of colorblind ideology on white students' prior knowledge. As Professors Grey and Duque both observed, the act of identifying and overturning tacit assumptions requires both the development of critical thinking and the presence of supportive mentors to facilitate engagement with new conceptual frames. Students were asked to examine something so fundamental to their self-image and to apply critical analysis to unpacking faulty beliefs. As such, professors had a responsibility to guide them in ways that did not threaten their psychological well-being. Here, participants' academic knowledge about whiteness, racism, power, and critical pedagogical techniques combined with a personal sensitivity toward how white students might feel when asked to critically interrogate their whiteness. The consensus seemed to be that white students needed to be approached gently, and racism presented carefully. This was not primarily for fear of resistance or hurt feelings. Rather, participants understood that in order for learners to engage, they needed to feel secure. Most

participants expressed awareness that whiteness, however unexamined it may be, was a real, deeply ingrained part of a white person's identity. They also recognized that confronting whiteness as a mechanism of power and privilege can evoke powerful negative emotions which are not conducive to engagement and learning.

Participants described a number of teaching strategies which they used to try to gradually cultivate interest and engagement while trying to avoid triggering the kind of defensive response that could lead to students shutting down. Professor Duque commonly started on "safe" cultural terrain. He used his own childhood examples of humorous biracial, bicultural experiences and unpacking concepts of difference and perspective slowly and carefully. Professor Bunning often used stories from his own experience (sometimes embellishing or stretching them) as an example of how well intentioned people can easily act from misguided understandings. Professor Dyer highlighted stories of white leadership in the anti-racist struggle, offering positive examples of white anti-racists. Professor Carter learned that even a small act of simply pointing out to students that the things they are discussing about white people or whiteness are not meant as a personal attack made a difference in how students responded. Both Professors Downs and Grey regularly reminded students that they were not looking for conformity with their beliefs. Instead, they wanted students to critically engage with the concepts. It was ok, in other words, to reach different conclusions. What was being evaluated was how well the students formed their arguments and demonstrated understanding of the topics.

In talking about classroom work as well as committee work and other engagement with colleagues, participants often drew on their understanding of whiteness supported ideologies and tacit beliefs (e.g., of colorblindness, of meritocracy, of normalcy) to

analyze the thoughts and actions of colleagues and themselves. This part of their work was generally characterized as problematic. It seemed that participants had fewer insights and strategies for dealing with collegial resistance versus student resistance. Participants' reflections on the overall effect of collegial and institutional resistance suggested that the evolution of their anti-racist learning and practice was constrained by the social and institutional environment. These chilly climates did not see the need for anti-racist faculty development. Indeed, it is this dimension of participant experience that is regarded in the emergent theory as the limiting force which diminished prospects for cultivating deeper awareness and engaging white faculty in anti-racist praxis.

Connecting Identity, Awareness and Action

Thus far, three categories have been discussed which tie directly into the original research questions. The first indicated that while participants had studied racism, taught about racism, and understood critical white studies concepts, only a few described having a deep or meaningful personal connection to a white identity. This finding contrasts with literature that suggests ongoing commitment to examining one's white identity is part of a process of growth toward anti-racism over time (Broido 2000; Edwards, 2006; Helms, 1995; Tatum, 1994). Participants who expressed not feeling white identity salience offered reasons *why* they did not. Their rationales reflected their awareness of white normativity and privilege as mitigating forces. Several recognized, for example, that by living in nearly all-white communities, their whiteness was never brought to their attention or put them at risk. As such, their white identity did not feel salient. While several suggested they would *like* to engage more in reflective dialogue about their white identity, none said anything suggesting that they might commit to doing so. The literature

raises questions about how challenging these conversations are. For some participants, the totalizing effect of being surrounded by white people at home and work, and being without mentors and other committed people with whom they could engage, would suggest that conversations about white identity might not be easy to foster.

The second indicated that the participants' own learning experiences corresponded with what the field of anti-racist scholarship has identified as being necessary to the cultivation of anti-racist praxis. In particular, Perry and Shotwell's (2009) findings (again, that anti-racist praxis requires overturning hegemonic propositional, tacit, and affective knowledge, resulting in an awareness of our interdependence) were applicable. Each participant brought to their work a well-developed understanding of race as a powerful, durable social construct, and of white privilege as a force which worked to maintain majoritarian support for a white supremacist hierarchy (propositional knowledge). Each, too, had developed a sensitivity through their own learning processes of some of the ideological and discursive frames which informed the dispositions and everyday beliefs held by themselves and their students (tacit knowledge). Each had experienced relationships with people which enabled them to cultivate a counterhegemonic view of people of color as human beings (affective knowledge). This knowledge was useful. It informed how they approached their work with students and their sense of what could be expected from colleagues. Still, ongoing engagement in critical, counterhegemonic learning varied from individual to individual. Some undertook a personal commitment to critical identification with whiteness while others expressed less interest and less ongoing engagement with the same.

Third, participants spoke about their white students with a sensitivity toward their students' hegemonic socialization into whiteness. While not everyone said they reflected on their white identity often, all described feelings about their work and strategies for doing it that were informed by their own personal experiences of being white people. Overall, their desire to confront racism in the classroom was rooted in a genuine interest in the well-being of young people. In addressing questions of personal motivation, individual participants described the commitment to doing such work in terms of moral obligation, fairness, compassion, justice, responsibility, and empathy. Several indicated that they did not take personal pleasure from doing anti-racist work. However, a good number mentioned specific instances where they took pleasure in seeing the ideas their students were able to produce in class.

Collectively, these three categories describe varying degrees of white anti-racist faculty praxis engagement. Some participants had undertaken an extensive critical engagement with their own white identities. Others expressed a desire for more opportunities for critical engagement, explaining that their own white identities did not often feel salient to them. Finally, some others did not indicate an interest in exploring their white identities. It is not possible from the available evidence to draw accurate conclusions about whether, or how, degrees of critical self-reflection impact the quality of the participants' anti-racist work. It can be inferred from both the literature (e.g., Brookfield, 2014) and practitioners observations, however, that ongoing critical engagement would lead to better awareness and better practice.

Two other categories which emerged from the study further illustrate the ways in which whiteness functioned to resist opposition. Together, they suggest that while anti-

racist teaching and advocacy may be permitted within the institutions, it may still be unsupported, ignored, or openly resisted. Collectively, these forces of resistance impede the development of the participants, and the growth and advancement of white anti-racist teaching.

Encountering Collegial and Institution Resistance and Barriers to Transformation

Participants frequently offered examples of what they felt were misplaced institutional priorities and a cultural disconnect from the needs of students or faculty of color. This was the case despite contexts of diversity related policy and practice. This disconnect was most frequently manifested at the interpersonal level, where participants described encountering indifference, resistance, and outright hostility from white faculty colleagues and administrators in their department and colleges.

There were a few mentions of collegial support. However, they nearly all came with qualifiers. Three participants described deep, meaningful discussions with colleagues who had collaborated on a symposia on race. Three others, all of whom worked in the same department, separately indicated that their white departmental colleagues were supportive. They all qualified this, however, by indicating that support was passive. There was no effort to increase involvement or engage in discourse with one another. Only Professor Carter's relationships with black colleagues could be described as a form of an ongoing mentorship.

In general, participants tended to describe their race-focused interactions with colleagues as discouraging, confusing, hurtful, frustrating, and isolating. They expressed disappointment at the collective disinterest and disconnect exhibited by white faculty.

They were concerned by colleagues' tendencies toward victim blaming and often unsubtle expressions of disdain for students of color.

Professor Cash and Professor Carter both told stories of tearful meetings with white colleagues who felt that things like processing the experiences of students of color, or watching an anti-racist documentary, were tantamount to calling them racists. Over time, Professor Cash began to feel his colleagues were ignoring or isolating him, something which caused him to find kinship in the narratives of black women in academia. Professor Bunning described a history of having his race-related work marginalized by his department. Colleagues made it clear that his anti-racist praxis would not count toward his departmental obligations. He also recalled enduring the frequent and open racial hostility directed toward students of color by faculty colleagues. Professor Bunning concluded that he ultimately came to desire nothing more from his colleagues than to "be left alone."

Professors Lappin and Fowler reflected on an entire career of feeling "shunned" within their department. This created what Professor Lappin described as a sort of institutional schizophrenia, where he could be rewarded for his research and publishing but at the same time, be marginalized and ignored (presumably out of disrespect for the focus of his work). This shunning, they calculated, ran throughout their entire careers. Professor Duque recalled worrying if he was putting tenure at risk by organizing a colloquium on race. Professor Spooner described the experience of being marginalized in meetings where he felt he was perceived as a troublemaker for the anti-racist ideas he represented.

While most faculty described negative and often hurtful treatment, they believed

that their white faculty colleagues were not generally hostile or resistant racists. Rather,

participants considered most white colleagues to be largely unaware of how racism

operated within their institutions. They were also unaware of the role that their lack of

critical engagement with whiteness and racism might play in perpetuating inequity.

Several participants struck a similar note, expressing an understanding of how so many

white faculty seemed to operate within a colorblind perspective. They regarded

themselves and their institutions as neutral spaces. The consensus among participants

who addressed the issue of faculty development seemed to suggest a Catch-22. Without

opportunities for critical engagement with counterhegemonic perspectives, white faculty

would not see racism and would therefore not invest in challenging it. Without a call

from white faculty, the institution would not be moved to support such opportunities.

This category is of primary importance to the overall critical emergent theory of

anti-racist praxis. Faculty who reflected on what kind of institutional change would be

helpful described a larger effort in which more white faculty became engaged in anti-

racist work. They felt colleagues needed a greater awareness of the negative experiences

of students and faculty of color. All indicated, however, that offering effective

professional development and changing the chilly climate felt large, complex, and not

easy to do. Scholarship on predominantly white institutions indicates that they have

reason for concern. Predominantly white institutions are often described as non-neutral

cultural spaces whose practices and dominant beliefs place disproportionate burdens on

students and faculty of color. Institutions also tend to define racism narrowly, and

frequently focus attention and resources toward response to those acts rather than

prevention of institutionalized oppression. (Gusa, 2010; Harper, 2012; Raphael, 2011; Reason & Evans, 2007; Shuerich, 1993).

It should be noted that of the eleven participants, only one described having her perspective on racism shift from colorblindness to active critical awareness *after* having been hired to a tenure track position. This is not to say that other participants had not learned or grown in their faculty roles. It *does* suggest, however, that the critical disposition displayed by participants had almost always been cultivated to a point of praxis prior to the start of their academic careers. Within their communities, however, they received little support for ongoing critical engagement. Given how they collectively felt about the prospects for engaging faculty within the institutions, it seems difficult to imagine white anti-racist faculty engaging in critical discourse at a truly transformative level.

Some participants pointed to the way that faculty practices are framed by tenure requirements and heavy workloads such that faculty often had to be very careful in choosing how they use their time for professional development. Others suggested that many white faculty think that diversity initiatives are adequately addressing the needs of students of color, or that it is not their area of expertise. Professor Bunning pointed out that white faculty often seem to resist *any* kind of training or development. He was critical of what he perceived as notions of power and privilege among colleagues which he felt were counter-productive to critical reflection and professional development. These, he felt, were also byproducts of institutional cultures which reinforced such beliefs. The institutional environment is further analyzed in the next section.

Core Category and Critical Emergent Theory

The emergent theory addresses the original research questions by critically framing participants' experiences in the context of anti-racist praxis (e.g., Dei, 2001; Perry & Shotwell, 2009), and the white habitus (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). The theory suggests that, yes, participants' identity and awareness of how whiteness is operationalized inform their anti-racist work, and their work provides a rich context for ongoing critical reflection. The theory also illustrated the conditions that constrained their efforts, placing their counterhegemonic learning and teaching processes within the white habitus, where ideologies and discourses of whiteness are formed and operationalized through dominant institutional and cultural norms, values, and practices. Finally, the theory suggests that while the white habitus may be a space in which hegemonic knowledge is often *uncritically* developed and operationalized (Bonilla-Silva, 2006), it is not impervious to the effects of critical counterhegemonic learning. While participants' levels of critical engagement and the scope of their anti-racist work varied a good deal, they were all still gardening. In the end, the question for anti-racists in the academy is less about whether or not anything grows in the gardens, and more about what can be done to overcome the effects of the chilly environmental conditions which limit growth.

The core category, *Gardening in a Chilly Climate,* speaks metaphorically to two interrelated problems. The first is environmental. A majority of white anti-racist faculty participants experienced consequences for their anti-racist engagement. Faculty growth seemed to be discouraged. There seemed little opportunity for participants to even *find* one another, let alone form groups which could deepen their mutual awareness, sharpen their skills, and attract other white faculty into anti-racist praxis. The second problem is

pedagogical. Participants did not seem able to go far beyond what Professor Spooner called "seed planting" in terms of their learning outcomes expectations. They understood the challenge that their students faced as learners. They also recognized that realistically they needed to aim for small changes. They sought to engage their students in a kind of thinking that would require ongoing cultivation to bear fruit.

Predominantly white institutional cultures often pride themselves on tradition. Most were established during a time in which they functioned to maintain racial division by offering an elite level of education only to white men. Today, while college going demographics are more diverse, the institutions still operate within Bonilla-Silva's (2006) white habitus. The people who develop and implement policy, shape curricula, teach, and assess learning are almost entirely white. Moreover, faculty, staff, and administrators have developed their own beliefs about race and racism within this same self-reinforcing habitus. Resistance to anti-racist efforts align with colorblind ideologies (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Omi & Winant, 2014). Participants described colleagues reacting to anti-racist discourse as if they are being personally attacked. Departmental colleagues, chairs and deans were remembered as unsupportive and defensive. Institutional leaders were criticized for being disconnected from the needs of students and faculty of color. Institutional diversity initiatives were criticized for the ways in which they seemed disproportionately interested in making white people feel comfortable. In some instances, participants recalled feeling insecure about the effect of their anti-racist praxis on tenure and promotion. The effects of this resistance on individual participants are described as alienating, intimidating, confusing, and discouraging.

These findings illustrate a problem that needs to be explored further. If

predominantly white institutions are to change the ways in which they function with regard to race, the drive to change will need to involve the participation of the white majority. Faculty of color and students of color cannot be expected to create this change. They may lead, teach, guide, mentor and support—but white faculty and white administrators will need to commit to learning, reflecting, and acting to create the transformation. Yet, participants' experiences seem to indicate that this is not happening. Rather, white faculty who already are actively seeking to change these dynamics are being resisted. They are being forced to garden in a chilly climate.

Implications for Future Research

There are several clear ways in which the work done in this study could be expanded and strengthened. First, the study is small by grounded theory standards. A next step for building on the research and strengthening the trustworthiness of the findings would be to conduct similar, larger studies which would allow the researchers to feel confident that they had reached theoretical saturation. It would be especially important to better account for the varying degrees of anti-racist investment which may distinguish some participants' perspectives from others. In this study, participants' degrees of investment in anti-racist practice varied from person to person. In fact, one participant questioned whether it was appropriate to call his work *anti-racist* as opposed to *non-racist*. Where one practitioner taught a course for many years which was expressly focused on racism, others taught courses in subject areas where racism was aspect but not the central focus of the curriculum. Several conducted research about race, racism, or whiteness, while others did not include racism directly in their scholarship. Two directions in which the inquiry might be expanded would be to conduct a larger scale

study using the same mixed population or to screen potential participants in order to study subpopulations, possibly by discipline or degree of anti-racist involvement.

Another step in building upon this study would be to expand the scope of participants' racial focus. This study, like Loftin's (2010), spoke with participants who commonly (though not always) framed their discussion of race in terms of black Americans. This made sense in that much of the conversation focused on childhood experiences in which black Americans were the predominant racial "other" in most participants' experiences. Also, much of the framework for white supremacist racism is constructed around racing others by relationship to blackness. This is invariably cast as the opposite end of a white supremacist hierarchy–the racial designation at greatest distance from whiteness. Indeed, blackness is the phenotypical basis for the racialization of Latino populations in the United States. Future studies should be expanded to other regions of the United States as well. In the Southwest, for example, many of the racial tensions and racist dynamics focus upon people of Mexican descent. Across the west, indigenous populations may feature more prominently in white ideologies and discourses.

It is stated earlier in this report that the concept of intersectionality was not introduced in the analysis. The participants did, however, frequently refer to other identities which they felt were more salient to them (e.g., gender, socioeconomic class, sexual orientation). Also, the core category (chilly climate) borrows its name from research on the experiences of women in the academy and cross-applies the concept to white anti-racists. It would be useful for future research to expand on this unexamined but important area, with a focus on gender.

Finally, it would also be useful to study negative cases. All of the participants in

this study identified as doing anti-racist work. While the amount and depth of the work appeared to vary, all did indeed demonstrate a counterhegemonic understanding of race and whiteness. Since few white faculty have ever been studied in this way, the scholarship would also benefit by comparisons to parallel studies—possibly within similar disciplines—of practitioners who do not apply anti-racist perspectives, but teach about or do race work.

Implications for Practice

The implications in the emergent theory from this study may appear to paint a bleak picture. Practitioners' learning, growth, and anti-racist praxis seems hopelessly constrained. There seems to be little opportunity either for professional development which would lead to better teaching outcomes, or institutional change which could lead to the identification and development of white anti-racist faculty. Another way to view this, however, is to consider the historical context in a different light. Two dynamics are important to consider.

The first is that predominantly white institutions are continuing to implement hierarchical, multipurpose diversity structures—led by senior level administrators, organized across programming levels (Williams, Berger, & McClendon, 2005). Diversity programming is designed to address equity issues and community building. While critical analyses of these projects often reveal the ways in which they remain limited by dominant group interests, it is also true that their existence means there are institutional mechanisms for change. Such institutional efforts may help warm the chilly climate.

The second is that there seems to be an emerging acknowledgement among white Americans (as seen in mainstream media) that the racial climate in America is worsening

rather than improving. A closer analysis may suggest that white people are noticing overtly racist acts which fit a very limited definition of racism and a colorblind ideology. Nonetheless, the fact remains that a racism that many white people view as undesirable is reasserting itself in very visible ways.

Taken together, these two dynamics can be leveraged within predominantly white institutions to create a sense of urgency around the need for universities and colleges to do more. Indeed, scholars have begun to do so (Williams, Berger, & McClendon, 2005). Two avenues for change could include proactive anti-racist programming and support of anti-racist scholarship. An encouraging trend across higher education involves more institutions making available and even mandating multicultural education for their students, both in the form of dedicated diversity courses and required multicultural general education. As these programs progress and learning outcomes are measured, the call among white faculty for training could increase. This in turn could create opportunities for faculty development that would not have existed previously. Moreover, as these and other diversity efforts unfold under the guidance of senior administrators and experts in diversity (including, importantly, expanded efforts to recruit and maintain a racially diverse faculty) the capacity for institutions to both identify and mentor anti-racist white faculty may also expand.

It remains, however, for predominantly white institutions to recognize the benefit and need for supporting the development of white anti-racist faculty. A tendency to associate "diverse" with "of color" is likely to keep much of the focus of white faculty and administrators away from white people. This, according to the very foundational precepts of whiteness, would be a mistake. Instead, predominantly white institutions

would do well to acknowledge the root "dominant" within the title "predominantly," and

consider that the designation represents much more than a comment on the racial makeup

of the population.

Appendix A: Text of Letter Requesting Nomination of Subjects

Dear _____,

I am writing to ask for your assistance in identifying faculty members for participation in my dissertational research project. My research will study White ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ faculty members who incorporate anti-racist activity into their professional work, in an effort to understand relationships between White identity, understanding of Whiteness as a racial construct, and anti-racist engagement in higher education. Findings may have meaningful applications for White faculty development and anti-racist diversity policy making.

It is my hope that you might willing to refer people whom you believe:

● Are full time faculty at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

● Identify as White

● Engage in professional work (in the areas of teaching, service or research) that

  confronts racism or seeks the creation of more equitable conditions for people

  of color, on campus or in society at large.

You may nominate as many faculty as you feel appropriate. You may also nominate yourself. Your nominations will be combined with others, and the most frequently nominated people will be contacted to request participation as subjects.

Nominations may be submitted to me at davidhayes@mail.uri.edu, or by paper to David Hayes at 405 Roosevelt Hall, 90 Lower College Rd. Kingston, RI. 02886. Please include any information you may feel is relevant. Questions may be directed to me at the same address, or by phone at (401) 874-2953.

Appendix B: Text of Letter Contacting Nominees

Dear _____,

I am writing because one or more of our colleagues have recommended that I speak with you about the possibility of participating in my dissertational study, which aims to explore how *Whiteness* as a racial discourse and as a personal identity is experienced and enacted by White faculty who engage with issues of race and racism in their professional communities.

At ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ as at many public institutions, White people remain a large majority among faculty and therefore continue to play a majoritarian role in the development and implementation of diversity and equity oriented policy, curricula, teaching practice, and research. Yet little is understood about White faculty as racialized people and as agents of change. By exploring the experiences of White faculty who are committed to racial justice, I hope to begin to gather data that might shine some light on questions concerning how faculty come to engage in such work, and how anti-racist work effects their understanding of themselves as White people.

I am hoping that you might be willing to consider sharing your own stories and experiences as part of this effort. The project will ask you to participate in up to two and a half hours of individual interview time as well as informal correspondences, at time that are convenient to you during the 2013-2014 academic year.

You may contact me at your convenience to discuss the project more closely. I look forward to hearing from you.

Appendix C: Text of Informed Consent Form

The University of Rhode Island School of Education and the Rhode Island College Feinstein School of Education and Human Development Joint PhD Program, 106 Quinn Hall, Kingston, RI, 20881

Title of Project: ***Identity, awareness, action: White faculty, Whiteness, and the pursuit of racial justice at a predominantly white institution***

CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH

You have been invited to take part in a research project described below. The research will form the basis of a PhD dissertation by David Hayes, the student researcher. The Principle Investigator on this project is Dr. Annemarie Vaccaro, PhD, URI College of Human Sciences and Services. The researcher will explain the project to you in detail. You should feel free to ask questions. If you have more questions later, David Hayes (401-874-2953), will discuss them with you. You must be at least 18 years old to be in this research project.

Description of the project: The purpose of this study is to gain insight into what motivates White college faculty who confront racism in their professional work, and to explore possible relationships between anti-racist work and the development of a White faculty member's White identity and/or understanding of Whiteness.

What will be done: If you decide to take part in this study here is what will happen: You will be interviewed by the researcher at time(s) and location(s) convenient to you. You may be interviewed more than once; total interview time may be up to two hours. The interview(s) will be audio recorded so that the researcher may pay full attention and insure that your thoughts are accurately captured. The researcher may occasionally ask for clarification of answers or pose other follow up questions by phone, in person, or by email. You will be invited to share documents you deem relevant to the study, such as research articles, syllabi, or personal writing.

I agree to allow the researcher to make audio recordings of interviews

_____ _____
Signature of participant   Date

Risks or discomfort: During interviews, questions of a sensitive nature may be asked concerning your thoughts and experiences with racism and your racial identity. You may therefore experience occasional emotional discomfort. You may at any time chose not to answer a question or to discontinue being interviewed.

Benefits of this study: Although there will be no direct benefit to you for taking part in this study, the researcher may learn more about possible connections between racial identity, racial awareness, and anti-racist activity among White faculty members. This information may ultimately benefit efforts in achieving diversity and equity on college campuses.

Confidentiality: Your part in this study is confidential. None of the information will identify you by name. All collected data and other records, including audio recordings. will be maintained in encrypted files in a locked hard drive in the researcher's office on the URI Kingston campus. Data will be kept for 3 years following completion of the research.

Decision to quit at any time: The decision to take part in this study is up to you. You do not have to participate. If you decide to take part in the study, you may quit at any time. Whatever you decide will in no way affect your status as a faculty member. If you wish to quit, simply inform David Hayes of your decision.

Rights and Complaints: If you are not satisfied with the way this study is performed, you may discuss your complaints with David Hayes or with his major professor, Annemarie Vaccaro, (401-874- 2270) anonymously, if you choose. In addition, if you have questions about your rights as a research participant,

you may contact the office of the Vice President for Research, 70 Lower College Road, Suite 2, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, Rhode Island, telephone: (401) 874-4328.

You have read the Consent Form. Your questions have been answered. Your signature on this form means that you understand the information, you agree to participate in this study.

_____   _____
Signature of Participant   Signature of Researcher

_____   _____
Typed/printed Name   Typed/printed name

_____   _____
Date   Date

Please sign both consent forms, keeping one for yourself

Appendix D: Sample Interview Questions and Prompts

These questions guided the inquiry during all interviews. Within the interviews, questions were posed in different forms at different intervals, depending on the direction of the conversation.

On developing a White identity

1. When did you first know that you were White?

   a. What specific events that you can recall that you regard as having been significant in the early development of your own White racial identity?

2. As a child, how did you feel about being White? Discuss what race meant to you in general, and what you're Whiteness meant specifically.

   a. What role did racial identity play in your family? Was Whiteness a particularly salient characteristic?

3. When did you first begin to understand racism as a problem?

   a. Are there specific events you can recall which were instrumental in developing your earliest awareness of racism?

   b. When did you first begin to openly confront racism? What motivated you to do this? What did you do?

   c. Did your early experiences with racism inform how you felt about yourself as a White person? Explain.

4. How do the events of your childhood continue to inform your understanding of yourself as a white person now?

5. Theorists of White identity development often propose models in which White identity evolves in ways which benefit anti-racist work. How do you characterize your understanding of yourself as a White person now? If possible, speak to ways in which your White identity may have changed over time.

On Whiteness and white privilege

1. How do you define Whiteness?

    a. Has your understanding of Whiteness changed over time or remained essentially the same? If it has changed, describe the changes.

    b. Can you talk about times and events in your life which have impacted your understanding of Whiteness in particularly meaningful ways?

    c. How does your understanding of Whiteness inform how you approach the work that you do?

2. How do you define *White privilege*?

3. Is White privilege something you have experienced on a personal level? Can you talk about specific times and events when you feel you have benefitted from your whiteness?

    a. What role, if any, do your experiences of and awareness of white privilege play in your anti-racist work?

On confronting racism in work

1. Talk about the work you have done in your life that addresses racism.

2. What initially motivated you to confront racism in your work?

3. Do you find it easy or difficult to continue to be motivated by this work?

4. Are there aspects of this work that you find particularly powerful sources of motivation?

    a. Can you talk about a time or times in which you felt especially motivated to carry your work forward?

5. Are their aspects of this work that are particularly powerful de-motivators?

    a. Can you talk about a time or times in which you felt especially

       demotivated? How did you deal with this?

6. In your experience as an actively anti-racist White faculty member, what people,

   events and conditions have been supportive of your work?

7. What people, events, and conditions have been barriers in your work?

<div align="center">On work, awareness and White identity</div>

1. Why is anti-racist work important to you personally? How do you as an individual

   who is White benefit?

2. Discuss the importance, or lack of importance, of developing awareness of

   Whiteness among White faculty as a function of implementing effective diversity

   policy and practice.

3. What do you regard as challenges to raising awareness of Whiteness among

   faculty? How do you address these?

Appendix E: Examples of Coding Processes

Initial Coding	Focused Coding	Axial coding	Theoretical Coding	Core Category
● Feels his race activated in context of who he's with, what he's doing ● Being marked as a minority made her more aware ● Harder now for people to see their whiteness ● Feels white when discussing non-white experiences in class ● Felt white when made to feel defensive ● Feels white in some spaces, marked nonwhite in others	**Example of Focused Coding Process: Next Page (162)**	● White identities felt when marked by others	● Seeing black, not feeling white	● Gardening in a chilly white climate limits growth
● Was aware he was not black; was not aware he was white ● Focus was on black culture and identity, not white ● Defined others, not herself "They are not white" ● Big part of being white is not being black ● White means not experiencing consequences of blackness		● Whiteness defined as not black		
● Students have not learned about racism or how to think critically about it ● Need to know it's safe to disagree with prof ● Must approach whiteness topic carefully; its wrapped in self-identification ● Stated objective is to *think*, not to change according to profs wishes ● Starts with benign examples of cultural perspectives ● Encourages class to slow down their thinking ● Knows white students in racism course are seeking personal answers		● White Students must feel safe to buy in and learn	● Teaching white privilege to white people	
● "Might be racist", but believes white people hear him differently ● Realized he not only has an obligation, but an advantage being white ● Understands some people are more comfortable talking about diversity issues w/him ● Explains black perspectives in terms white people will understand ● Privileged to argue against colorblindness& be heard ● What good is white priv if you don't use it?		● White anti-racists advantage: other whites listen better		
● Colleagues feel accused of being racist, crying ● Feels others in meetings marking him for trouble ● Department says work on your own time ● Chair thinks he's stirring up trouble for department ● Colleagues push for her to change curriculum ● Whole department shuns her, disses her work		● White colleagues actively resist anti-racist efforts	● Encountering resistance from white colleagues; predominantly white institution culture	
● Department supportive, but disinterested in anti-racist focus ● White faculty don't want to be involved in anti- racism staff development ● STEM faculty may not see connection to "neutral" disciplines ● Colleagues view racism as "cause" not social science ● Administration not in touch with needs of students of color; poor assumptions ● Colleagues insist on merit based admit measures ● Concerns about offending wrong people as a new tenure track professor ● Institution limits resources for race-related studies/programs (values based choice)		● Institutional culture reinforcing colorblind white faculty perspectives		

Appendix E, continued

Initial code	Reconnected to excerpt	Focused code	Related Axial Code	Related Theoretical Code
Feels white discussing race in diverse class	And I, I think I know my whiteness and feel my whiteness when I teach in diverse settings. So for example, I recognize my whiteness when I'm teaching about white privilege and there are black students in my classroom. In a different way from when I teach about white privilege when there aren't any people who are at least apparently black, you know who knows, but um I feel my whiteness differently in a much more keenly aware of it as a catalyst carrier, a something that, through which things have happened in my life differently than they would have if I added to my skin color.	Keenly aware of white ID teaching WP with black students in class	White identities felt when marked by others	Seeing Black, not Feeling White

Appendix F: Preliminary Concept Map

IDENTITY, AWARENESS, ACTION:
WHITE FACULTY, WHITENESS, AND THE PURSUIT OF RACIAL JUSTICE AT A PREDOMINANTLY WHITE INSTITUTION

This study of 11 White faculty who do anti-racist work in a predominantly White state university system in the Northeast connects subjects' sense of White self, their understanding of Whiteness as ideological construct, and their work.

How to read this map:
1. Read first what the soft colored shapes symbolize (below).
2. The content in each shape represent subjects' key observations.
3. The "Toward Anti Racist Praxis" section categorizes subjects' learning events and maps their anti racist praxis

White Self Identity: Beige oval.
The ovals lack clear borders; racial identity is both fluid and co-constructed with what marks it. The beige oval is both cocooned and permeated by the gray oval of whiteness, an ideology shaping the bounds of identity. A smaller oval represents overlapping identities, which for some subjects are stronger, informing (or obscuring) racial identity.

Whiteness: Gray oval
Like a fog, Whiteness surrounds and permeates everything, making it hard for white people to see self and other clearly. Self awareness, intellectual growth and the power of anti-racist work are all clouded by Whiteness' fog of invisibility, neutrality and normalcy.

Blackness/Otherness: Brown oval
Here, black is also represented as borderless. It can be seen as being simultaneously permeated by Whiteness, cast off from it, eclipsed by it, or consumed by it – The racist "marking" of black. Subjects often use blackness to define an otherwise empty Whiteness.

Action: Green oval
Green represents growth, and the Action oval represents what the faculty Collectively do to enact anti-racism, in teaching and other work. Surrounding the green cloud, the gray fog of whiteness thickens somewhat. representing challenges presented by white colleagues, students, and the institution as a whole.

Dialectic/Praxis: Gold arrows and rectangles
The gold arrows represent the ongoing dynamic of critical engagement, which happens moment to moment but it stimulated by what subjects relate as transformative learning events. The rectangles in center name Common categories of educative experiences in three knowledge areas that must collectively be challenged to achieve an anti racist praxis (Shotwell and Perry, 200)ᵤ. Here, too, the path is fogged - – by lack of time, space, and community, as well as encounters with resistance that stir fear or frustration

"Marked" Blackness/Otherness

White Identity (Self)
Emergent Themes
- Earliest memories of "being White" always involve encounters with black
- Racial consciousness focused on black, not white
- Don't usually "feel" White. (hard to identify with when unmarked).
- Tend not to think of self as White very often
- White identities becomes *visible* when:
  - In a minority, or feeling "visible" to people of color
  - Teaching to racially diverse groups
  - Among white people (for some)

Gender
Class
Other Salient Identities
Latino
European ethnic
Religious

Defining Whiteness
- "Not Black", or "Not *not* white"
- Privilege of invisibility, normativity.
- A "performance tool" for whites.
- Power to disengage from race.
- Shifts thinking from "What it means to be black" to "what it means to be white."

- Obscured by class, gender, etc.
- Privilege of not suffering racist treatment
- Academic construct, not common way of seeing.
- Hard to notice: "obtuse", abstract - *hard to confront*
- "A pathology"

"Unmarked" Whiteness

Toward anti-racist praxis: critical experiences shaping three knowledge domains[1]

Affective Knowledge:
- Close relationships with people of color
- Witnessing racism and its painful effects
- Empathetic experiences
- Families encouraged critical thinking
- Cultivation of ethics of justice and equity

Propositional knowledge:
- Scholarship of race, ethnicity and culture
- Scholarship of power, privilege, hegemony,
- Personal research into culture, racism, ethnicity, oppression, critical pedagogy.
- Interpersonal and other work experiences

Tacit knowledge
- Critical engagement with self and society
- Confronting self/other's hegemonic beliefs, practices, privileges
- Strategizing against resistance, denial
- Cultivating empathetic awareness

Collegial and institutional barriers/pushback
- Lack of diversity in dept. limits critical dialogue reflection.
- Resistance and hostility among colleagues when discussing racism.
- Institution lacks awareness of cultures, needs of students.
- Institutional diversity efforts supportive of dominant interests.
- Calls from dept. to take cultural analysis from curriculum.
- Dean won't focus on "diversity" in college action plan; says "We have diversity in everything we do"
  - Opinions not taken seriously in meetings; marginalized as "radical", the antagonism"

- Constant faculty resistance when discussing racial climate and diversity initiatives
- Negative mpacts from anti racist teaching: bad student evals, tenure threats
  - Trouble publishing anti racism research in mainstream journals.
- Years of "brutal" bullying, including racist graffiti on office door, silence within department, harassment by white supremacists.
- Pushback from other dept. claiming only they can teach race.
- Lots of "victim blaming" of students of color by faculty.
  - Colleagues accusing subjects of calling them racist when discussing whiteness .

Anti-racist action

In Teaching
- Teach social construction of race, privilege, power, hegemony.
- Encourage critical engagement over agreement with professor.
- Challenge tacit beliefs; emphasize propositional knowledge.
- Strategically anticipate/mitigate resistance from white students.
- Understand white difficulty seeing racism and exploring identity.

In other areas of work
- Publish on historical & contemporary racial/ethnic/cultural dynamics (in US, C. America, Africa); critical & anti-racist pedagogy.
- Develop anti-racist curricula.
- Organize/ direct academic and extra-curricular programming.
- Serve on institutional diversity committees; shape policy.
- Participate in direct action.

FINDINGS   From widely varied experiences, five common themes.

1. **Work may make them visible, but it doesn't always leave a "mark"** Despite engaging in anti-racist work, subjects don't often consciously "feel" white or think about being white. Other identities may obscure it, or feel more salient. Whiteness feels invisible. In fact, subjects often defined "White" as "*not* Black" and discussed white privilege in terms of *not* being targeted, as Black people are. White normalcy complicates *teaching* white students ,who struggle to see contemporary racism.

2. **All appear to meet Shotwell & Perry's criteria for reaching anti-racist praxis** The center of the map aligns common types of experiences that have enabled subjects to confront racism within three different knowledge domains identified by Shotwell & Perry (2012) as collectively necessary to reaching anti-racist praxis.

3. **All leverage whiteness to teach Whites, and learn from the work** Most subjects said being white is an advantage in teaching whites about racism, as Whites may think that a person of color would have an "agenda" for doing so. All discussed strategies for and experiences with teaching Whites that both drew on and informed their understanding of Whiteness. For some, teaching racially mixed groups marks them as white.

4. **They seek to learn, and think all white faculty should learn** Those less grounded in Whiteness Studies expressed a need to to reflect more on their Whiteness.. Better grounded ones named more specific learning needs, such as guarding against a sort of "Good White" performance, or against lapsing into old thought constructs. Subjects agreed that institutions needed white faculty to raise awareness.

5. **The climate is not healthy for White anti-racist faculty** All named institutional barriers to work and growth, including lack of faculty diversity, lack of faculty engagement, and lack of institutional cultural awareness. While many citied specific colleagues who've served as mentors and allies. Subjects often reported experiences of feeling threatened by students, angry department chairs, or deans. Some have felt silenced within departments, or asked to teach different course content, or otherwise made to feel marginalized.

Appendix G: Matrix of Critical Emergent Theory

INSTITUTIONAL NORMS
- Critical racial study not welcomed
- PWI diversity practices reinforce white privilege
- PWI not attuned to needs of students of color
- Opportunities for white faculty development lacking

COLLEGIAL VALUES
- White faculty victim blaming w/students of color
- White faculty see merit-based policies as equitable
- White faculty oppose anti-racist teaching, scholarship
- White faculty feel defensive, hostile when discussing racism

CHILLY CLIMATE

ACTION

GARDENING:

Cultivating anti-racist

PRAXIS

in Selves and Others

IDENTITY ⟷ ACTION
- Uses self to illustrate how whites enact whiteness
- Creates ambiguity about own racial ID
- Enacts non-normative white identity.
- Leverages white identity to teach white people
- Knows what drives white students to racism course
- Sees self as White Ally for black students, faculty

AWARENESS ⟷ ACTION
- Knows whiteness informs collegial, student resistance
- Asks for thoughtful engagement, not agreement
- Engaged students with "safe" examples
- Knows sharing factual knowledge is insufficient
- Viewed white students and colleagues as fair, unaware
- Saw diversity policy as white-privileging

IDENTITY

AWARENESS

AWARENESS ⟷ INDENTITY
Inaccessible Before CWS, White anti-racists lacked counterhegemonic frames for white identity critique.
Dependent Blackness is "signified"; whiteness is empty identity
Painful White privilege is wrong, identity elicits guilt, shame.
Obscured Whiteness ideologies embedded into "race neutral" discourses; identity harder to see.
Disruptable White identity is negotiable. Presenting non-normative identity can be anti-racist.

PRIOR COUNTERHEGEMONIC CRITICAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES
- Parents/adults counterhegemonic teaching
- Close personal relationships with people of color
- Extended immersive experiences in non-white cultures
- Experience with CRT, CWS analytical frames
- Learning with supportive people of color
- Experience w/intersecting forms of dominance/ subordination, creating empathy, understanding

WHITE HABITUS

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