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White College Women, Race, and Place Matters:

White Undergraduate Women's Experiences and Perceptions of whiteness

at UCLA

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Education

by

Tonia Floramaria Guida

2020

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2020

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

White College Women, Race, and Place Matters:

White Undergraduate Women's Perceptions and Experiences of whiteness

at UCLA

by

Tonia Floramaria Guida

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2020

Professor Daniel Solórzano, Chair

Research in the field of critical whiteness studies in higher education has often been normed around white college men and white college students at large. Thus, white supremacy has been examined through a masculinist or gender-neutral lens. The lack of a gendered lens in the critical whiteness studies higher education literature and the ways in which we associate white supremacy with masculinity has contributed to allowing white cisgendered women who use whiteness to their own gains less visible. If we do not begin to connect white undergraduate women's experiences and perception of whiteness to the systemic forms of whiteness in higher education contexts, we will continue to allow interrogations of white womanhood to remain insidious and in turn harder to disrupt and challenge. Thus, the purpose of this research is to

examine and theorize about whiteness, gender, and the lived environment for white undergraduate women at UCLA. Drawing on critical whiteness and critical race studies concepts, I explore how 11 UCLA white undergraduate women understand their whiteness and perceive their campus environment through 31 60-minute interviews featuring photo elicitation and walking interviews. This study uses UCLA as one illustrative case to theorize more broadly about transferable trends and patterns related to how whiteness manifests across the higher education landscape. In this study, I found that white undergraduate women interpret whiteness in their own lives through three themes: a) understanding whiteness through one-up one-down social identities, including socioeconomic status and gender, b) utilizing white ignorance and white complicity, and c) upholding racism through color-evasiveness and racial victimization. Additionally, the three findings which pertain to how white undergraduate women perceive their campus environment include: a) race was visible for participants in subenvironments where predominantly People of Color frequented, b) participants were able to feel like white women everywhere on campus, and c) participants were both aware and unaware of how they were taking up space at UCLA. This study provides new theoretical contributions to understanding the complexity of whiteness and womanhood for college students and provides groundbreaking methods by operationalizing critical whiteness concepts in data collection to theorize around race, gender, and the lived environment in higher education. Additionally, this study provides implications for policy and practice in the field of higher education to ensure we are challenging whiteness and womanhood.

The dissertation of Tonia Floramaria Guida is approved.

Jessica Harris

Tyrone Howard

Teresa McCarty

Daniel Solórzano, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2020

DEDICATION

To all those before and after me who continue to fight and struggle for racial justice.

To my elders, specifically my Nonna Flora, Nonna Maria, and Nonno Antonio.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Growing up as a first-generation college student, obtaining my bachelor's degree always felt like a dream to me. So, sitting here writing this acknowledgements section as a first-generation college student, knowing I will soon obtain a doctorate degree, feels truly surreal. While I will be awarded this degree, I truly share this degree with all my femtors and mentors, friends, family, and community who helped me get to where I am today. In these acknowledgements, I would like to recognize the many individuals who encouraged and guided me and contributed to who I have become.

I would first like to thank my elders. To my maternal grandparents, Flora and Antonio Neiviller, and my paternal grandmother, Maria Caruso, I would not exist if it were not for you, and I am named after all of you. Flora and Antonio, you courageously brought my mother, Tiziana Neiviller, to the United States, who was one year old at the time. To my Nonna Flora, you helped raise me into the woman I have become. You also fed me countless times during this challenging time in graduate school. When I had 4 days to write my qualifying exams, you cooked me meals, so I could focus on my writing. For both, Nonno and your endless support, I thank you. To my Nonna Maria, I only saw you during my visits to Italy and the few times you were able to come to the United States, but I hold those memories of you so preciously in my heart. Thank you for having my father, Giovanni Caruso, one of 10 children, and may you continue to rest in peace. I also thank all my respective family members in Italy who have taken this journey with me. I am proud to share this first PhD degree with you all.

To my parents, Tiziana Neiviller and Giovanni Guida, words cannot explain how grateful I am for your generosity, love, and support through my graduate school journey. You constantly

encouraged me and showed up for me. You never fail to remind me how much you believe in me. This degree would not be possible without your endless love and care.

To my brother, aunts, uncles, and cousins—Gianluca, Zia Kiki, Zio Gianni, Zio Ermanno, Tiana, Kalea, and Scarlett—I also thank you. Each and every one of you have always encouraged and supported me. Zio Ermanno, I want to especially thank you for your financial support these last 3 years as a graduate student. Living with you relieved some of the financial pressure that being in graduate school invites.

To my dissertation chair and committee—Daniel Solórzano, Jessica Harris, Tyrone Howard, and Teresa McCarty—thank you for your endless time, support, and mentorship as I navigated my doctoral program. Danny, since I became your undergraduate mentee, you have constantly uplifted me and believed in me as a person and scholar. You humanized and transformed the academy in so many ways, and, at times when I doubted myself, you reminded me how important my work is and how excited you were about the scholarship I am creating. To my dissertation committee members, Jessica Harris, Tyrone Howard, and Teresa McCarty, thank you for your guidance on this dissertation project, for believing in me, and supporting me through this doctoral program.

I also want to thank various others in the GSE&IS community. Thank you, Marcelo Suarez-Orozco and Rob Teranishi, for your financial support. Mike Rose, Ananda Marin, Sylvia Hurtado, Amy Gershon, and Harmeet Singh, thank you all for your mentorship and guidance during my time in GSE&IS.

To my friends and community at UCLA, thank you for your love and support throughout this PhD program. Rachel, Krystle, Kari, Annie, Damani, Channel, Ana Gomez, Marlen, Ana Romero, Billy, Vicky, ‘Inoke, Heather, Katherine, Sharim, Cindy, Manpreet, Justin, Annie Le,

your ongoing support, encouragement, and advice kept me going and reminded me I am not alone in this process. Thank you! Michael, Socorro, Tanya, Alma, Johnny, and Nichole, thank you for always being willing to share your guidance and advice with me. I also want to thank Denise Pacheco, Ifeoma Amah, and Justyn Patterson for supporting me as I navigated this doctoral program. Thank you, Michelle Gaston, for allowing me to work with the Center for the Advancement of Teaching.

I also want to thank particular spaces and centers at UCLA. To the First-Gen Graduate Student Council, thank you for providing me with a support system, creating a space where I felt a sense of belonging, and a place to celebrate first-gen identities. To the RAC familia, this space cultivated and sharpened my critical race lens since I was an undergraduate student. Thank you to all of you, you have made me into a better person and scholar. To the 222 research community, thank you for cultivating my skills as a qualitative researcher and allowing me to serve as a special reader. To AAP and GMRP you always provided me with a home away from home. Alice Ho, as an undergraduate McNair Scholar, you believed in me. As a PhD student, I served as McNair Mentor, which provided me with financial support, helped me build community, and constantly served as a reminder for why I was pursuing this degree. Lastly, thank you UCLA Graduate Division for your financial support during my dissertation writing year.

To my village and community outside of UCLA, thank you. My entire UT family (Kati Mariscal, Victor Saenz, Richard Reddick, Juan Gonzalez, Charles Lu, Anthony Heaven, Rachel Roberson, Ryan Miller, Leonard Moore, Darren Kelly, Thais Moore, and Dr. Brown), McNair cohort (Frania, Justin, Avriel, and Eboni), Susie, Kati, Chris, dance community, and childhood friends (Tresjere, Jisela, Aryssa, Milana, Humberto, Camila, Chicas, and Cassie), thank you.

While I could write endless words about each of you, I will just say thank you for your continuous support and encouragement during graduate school.

I also want to sincerely thank the editing team at Heartful Editor for the countless hours they spent editing this dissertation. Adam Ross Nelson, Katie Sorokas, and Lindsey Dippold, thank you for making me a better writer and for your attention to detail. This dissertation could not have been possible without your accountability and support.

I also want to thank all the students I had the pleasure of working with at Fairfax High School, UCLA, UT Austin, and CSUN over the past 10 years. You all made working in the field of education a gift. You inspire and teach me every day.

Lastly, I want to thank the participants in this study, who entrusted me with their stories and experiences. They expressed such vulnerability and honesty with me, I am forever grateful to have learned from them as well. Thank you.

VITA

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Personal Statement

My grandfather was a baker in post-World War 2, Naples, Italy. My father was one of 10 children who grew up in an orphanage in Naples, because his mother did not have the financial means to raise him. However, my grandfather and father migrated to the United States voluntarily. As a first-generation, Italian American whose first language was Italian, my ethnic and immigrant identity primarily informed my world views as a child. Values instilled in me included utmost respect for my elders, valuing my education, and prioritizing family. As a first-generation college student, I was the first in my family to graduate from high school, college, and graduate school. My tears of joy represented far more than my individual accomplishments. Coming from a working-class background, I attended K-12 schools with predominantly working-class Students of Color[1] in Los Angeles, California. Like most white[2] Americans, I was unaware of my racial identity as a child. Living in a world where whiteness is normalized meant I never faced experiences of racial oppression and was taught to repress realities of race relations in my environment. Thus, I tell my story to neither acknowledge only my oppressions nor to re-center my whiteness, but rather to be critical of my racial and gender identity and white supremacy . . . in an attempt to "locate it, demystify it, and, if possible, discontinue its hold on education" (Leonardo, 2013, p. 91).

---

[1] Guided by Pérez Huber (2010) and Harris and Patton (2019), I capitalized Scholars of Color and all of its derivatives as a form of linguistic empowerment.

[2] Following the lead of scholars like Matias (2016) and Pérez Huber (2010), I refrained from capitalizing the word "white" to challenge hegemonic grammatical norms, and "reject the grammatical representation of power capitalization brings to the term 'white'" (Pérez Huber, 2010, p. 93).

Fast forward to college, I wrote my first racial autobiography as an undergraduate student. This was the first time I recognized I was tracked as a gifted student partially because I was one of the few white students in my second-grade classroom with a white teacher—allowing me to challenge and question my white immigrant notion of meritocracy and bootstrap mentality. The course instructor and our assignments prompted me to spend my next 3 years as an undergraduate cognitively exploring issues of race in education and emotionally processing my feelings of guilt and helplessness due to my white female racialization.

As I continued into graduate studies, I was interested in exploring issues of race through the lens of whiteness. Interacting with my peers, I became aware my white female socialization and choice to be silent contributed to my negligence by not naming gendered racism amongst other white female peers. These were extremely difficult, but pivotal, experiences. Thus, I decided to explore white undergraduate women's experiences with whiteness and their perceptions of UCLA to recognize my agency to work toward eradicating structures of oppression. Although acknowledging my privileges was a key part of development of my sociopolitical identity, it is necessary to point out a race confessional, like this one, is only beneficial if it is proceeded with action.

I share my reflections not solely to acknowledge my privileges, but to demonstrate my commitment to action. My personal narrative serves as rationale for why I am passionate about this study. I am passionate about dismantling structures of heteropatriarchy and white supremacy, while recognizing I will always have my blind spots. More specifically, I will continue to grapple with understanding my whiteness and womanhood and how to align myself with struggles of Women and People of Color. My experiences as a white woman motivate me to help other white students, and, particularly white undergraduate women, develop their own

understanding about interlocking systems of privilege and oppression. As a white woman, I believe it is my duty to inform other white people inside and outside of the academy, including white women, that Women of Color's and People of Color's racial knowledge is the essential source of liberation for us all.

I begin this dissertation with my own story, because it is my main source of motivation for this work. In this chapter, I first discuss the problem statement, presenting why a study on white undergraduate women's experiences and perceptions of whiteness at UCLA is needed. Second, I discuss various relevant concepts and terminology. Third, I present the purpose of the study and research questions, which I used to aid me in this investigation. Fourth, I make the argument this dissertation is highly significant, because it extends the campus racial climate and critical whiteness in higher education literature, providing new theoretical contributions by shedding light on how racial exclusion operates through the lives of white undergraduate women.

Problem Statement

White supremacy permeates all social institutions, including college campuses (Owen, 2007). Thus, critical whiteness scholars in higher education began naming whiteness and how it manifests in the college campus context. This research is often normed around white college men (Cabrera, 2018) and white college students at large (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Foste, 2019a, 2019b; Jayakumar & Adamian, 2017). Thus, researchers examined white supremacy and whiteness in higher education through a masculinist or gender-neutral lens (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Cabrera, 2018; Foste, 2019a, 2019b; Jayakumar & Adamian, 2017). Additionally, we often associate white supremacy with masculinity. For instance, on August 11, 2017, a group of white supremacists marched on University of Virginia's college campus with torches and chanted "white lives matter" (Payton, 2017, para. 1), marking their intention to protect and uphold white

supremacy in this country. The pictures presented in the media suggested images of white supremacist *men* in bermuda shorts holding tiki torches. I use this example to illustrate the historical legacy of overt white supremacy is still present in the current political context, and it is still strongly associated with white men (McRae, 2018).

The lack of a gendered lens and the way people associate white supremacy with masculinity are two reasons why white women's ways of using white supremacy to their own gains remain less visible (McRae, 2018). Although popular news media reporters highlight white women's overt participation in hostile campus racial climates (Rees, 2015; The Associated Press, 2011), little empirical research exists on white women's experiences with whiteness on college campuses. Examples of white undergraduate women participating in college racial incidents at UCLA include Alexandra Wallace, who created the Asians in the library video (The Associated Press, 2011), and the 2015 "Kanye-Western" fraternity party at UCLA, where white women dressed in blackface and culturally appropriative costumes (Rees, 2015). However, white women can also uphold white racial dominance in more insidious ways that are limitedly explored (McRae, 2018). In this study, I examined white undergraduate women, how they make sense of whiteness in their lives, and their perceptions of the UCLA campus. If we do not connect white undergraduate women's experiences and perception of whiteness to systemic forms of whiteness at UCLA, whiteness and womanhood will remain insidious and, in turn, harder to disrupt and challenge.

White women are an important group to examine, because scholars have argued the position of holding a *one-up one-down identity* (Accapadi, 2007), can serve as a potential place of rupture for challenging the *white hegemonic alliance* (Nishi, Guida, & Walker, In review;

Nishi & Parker, 2018). Accapadi (2007) discussed being white and a woman as an example of a one-up-one down identity. Allen (2009) defined a hegemonic alliance as

> a political bond formed between dominant and subordinate groups. Consciously or not, the subordinate group participates in the perpetuation of its own lower status by going along with beliefs and behaviors that maintain the hegemonic system and thus the higher status of the dominant group. Hegemony works more on the level of ideological control than repressive force. (p. 226)

Therefore, white hegemonic alliance is a political bond between white women and white men or poor and non-poor white people, who work together, consciously or not, to maintain white supremacy as an ideological system of control. Those arguing to challenge white hegemonic alliance claim white women can use their understanding of gendered oppression to challenge racial oppression and white domination (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Cabrera, 2018). An example of this argument includes Bonilla-Silva's (2010) research on racial attitudes of white college students, conducted via surveys and interviews. He claimed racially progressive young white women used their experiences of discrimination as women to understand People of Color's racial oppression, although, white women sometimes still held color-blind views. Bonilla-Silva (2010) posited "white-women from working class origins are the most likely candidates to commit racial treason in the U.S" (p. 16). He defines racial treason as when one turns against their own race. Researchers of teaching social justice, privilege, and oppression uphold a similar, but more general claim, arguing those with at least one oppressed identity are much more likely to connect their experiences of marginality with other forms of marginality (Cabrera, 2018; Johnson, 2006).

Third-world feminists emerged in opposition to white, second-wave feminists, who examined gender as a single-pronged issue, and critiqued white feminism for the erasure of

Women of Color's experiences (hooks, 1994; Lorde, 1979). Third-world feminists believed white women should not be "left off the hook" (hooks, 1994, p. 109) for their "white female complicity" (hooks, 1994, p. 109) because they self-identify as a woman and carry, at a minimum one oppressed identity (hooks, 1994). As hooks (1994) stated, time and time again, white women have profited from and cashed in their whiteness, "ensuring that contact between the two groups should always place white in a position over Black" (p. 94). Scholars have also argued white women exert whiteness in ways that cause harm and violence to People of Color (Matias, 2019; Ozias, 2017). A recent iteration of white women profiting and cashing in their whiteness was the 2016 U.S. presidential election, when 53% of white women and 44% of college-educated, white women voted for Trump (CNN, 2016). These statistics illustrate a powerful example of how white women opt in to profiting from whiteness in place of supporting more marginalized groups. As stated powerfully by Bauer (2017),

> comparing this data to the 94% of Black women and 68% of Latina women who voted for Hillary Clinton, it is clear that gender is not the universal unifier that first wave feminism thought it might be: when white women are (collectively) faced with a choice, they side with whiteness by way of patriarchy. (p. 6)

In sum, third-world feminists have pushed white women to acknowledge their racism, which has been left unresolved.

Additionally, third-world feminists also argued white women must play a role in challenging everyday racism enacted by other white women (Combahee River Collective, 1978; hooks, 1994; Lorde, 1979). The Combahee River Collective in 1978 argued "eliminating racism in the white women's movement is by definition work for white women to do" (para. 30). Lorde (1979) poignantly stated, "Mainstream communication does not want women, particularly white

women, responding to racism. It wants racism to be accepted as an immutable given in the fabric of your existence, like evening time or the common cold" (p. 129). In other words, our capitalist white heteropatriarchal structure does not want women across differences to challenge systems of oppression, because doing so would create ruptures in the white hegemonic alliance (Lorde, 1979). This study is important because I challenge what "mainstream communication" (Lorde, 1979, p. 129) wants white women to do. I, as the researcher, sought to create the possibility for white women to attempt to respond to whiteness.

I was motivated to interrogate white women's racialized and gendered experiences and understandings by the complexities I saw in the literature, including white, working-class women being able to understand oppression through their minoritized gender status (Bonilla-Silva, 2010) and white feminists failure of fulfilling "the promise of sisterhood" (hooks, 1994, p. 103) with Women of Color. While I agree white women are trying to understand racial oppression through their other forms of marginality, it is clear they are still failing. The reality of white women's racialized experiences and perceptions are far more layered and complex than the current words available to describe them. Therefore, with this study, I aimed to illuminate how whiteness and womanhood operates in the lives of white undergraduate women at UCLA. By understanding how whiteness and womanhood operates in the college campus context, this research will also provide information on how whiteness and womanhood is developed and sustained in other environments after college.

Higher Education Context

Researchers define institutions of higher education as white racialized spaces (Gusa, 2010), and 95.5% of universities and colleges are historically white (Brunsma, Brown, & Placier, 2013). A historically white institution is

> an institution of higher education whose histories, traditions, symbols, stories, icons, curriculum, and processes were all designed by whites, for whites, to reproduce whiteness via a white experience at the exclusion of others who, since the 1950s and 1960s, have been allowed in such spaces. (Brunsma et al., 2013, p. 719)

Most U.S. institutions of higher education remain predominantly white, defined as any college campus where white people account for at least 50% or greater of student enrollment (Brown & Dancy, 2010). Some institutions are no longer predominantly white because of an increase in enrollment of Students of Color, yet remain historically white. An example of this type of an institution is UCLA. UCLA and other historically white universities are important sites to explore whiteness, because researchers can study how whiteness adapts and continues to uphold white interests.

On a national scale, white undergraduate students often come from racially and socioeconomically homogenous neighborhoods and schools due to racial segregation in the United States (DiAngelo, 2011; Foste, 2019a; Tatum, 1994). Consequently, institutions of higher education are a space where white students come into contact with students from racial and class backgrounds different than their own—especially at historically white institutions. However, even in historically white institutions, scholars argued, “Most white students emerge from college with their walls of whiteness essentially unchallenged, unscathed, and, often, strengthened” (Brunsma et al.,2013, p. 718).

Additionally, structural diversity on a college campus does not guarantee students from different racial backgrounds will interact (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002). In one study with survey and interview data from Southern, Midwestern, and West Coast universities, 70% of white college students had no meaningful interactions with Black people (Bonilla-Silva, 2010).

Of 38 white interviewees who did not have Black friends before college, only two developed friendships with Black people in college (Bonilla-Silva, 2010). Thus, while scholars argued attending college *can* be a potentially transformative phase in a white student's racial development (Cabrera, 2012; Reason, Millar, & Scales, 2005), it is clear this is not the norm for most white students on college campuses (Bonilla-Silva, 2010).

Racially segregated white sub-environments like fraternities often reify white supremacy on college campuses (Cabrera, 2012). Cabrera (2012) focused specifically on racial ideologies of white undergraduate men who participated in sub-environments, like white fraternities. These spaces are overwhelmingly white, because students explicitly select members and may exclude People of Color in their selection process. However, researchers know far less about white undergraduate women and how their participation in white sub-environments could be contributing to their understanding of racism. Thus, with this study, I contribute to the research literature by interrogating how white undergraduate women experience and perceive whiteness at UCLA, a historically white institution. I also demonstrated how their experiences and perceptions uphold or, sometimes, challenge white racial dominance. In this study, I use UCLA as one illustrative case to theorize more broadly about transferable trends and patterns related to how whiteness manifests across the higher education landscape.

Relevant Terminology and Concepts

Prior to further discussing the purpose of this study, research questions, and significance, I will briefly define various terms like *race*, *racism*, *macroaggression, white supremacy*, *whiteness*, *whiteness and womanhood*, and *one-up one-down identities*. I use these terms throughout this study and need to differentiate my use from more common definitions.

Scholars define *race* as a socially constructed category and as the basis for creation of difference and inequality (Omi & Winant, 2014). The concept of race justified racism and perpetuated inequalities (Omi & Winant, 2014). Solórzano (1997) stated, "Race is a socially constructed category used to differentiate racial groups, and to show and justify the superiority or dominance of one race over another" (p. 8). Although race is socially constructed, white people and People of Color experience very real consequences from it, albeit in different ways. Society still operates on the premise of the *racial contract*, a set of formal and informal agreements made by white people to categorize the rest of humans as "nonwhite" persons with an inferior moral and civil status (Mills, 1997). White people designed this categorization to privilege white people and simultaneously exploit People of Color.

Based on this understanding of the definition of race and the racial contract, race cannot exist without *racism*. Defined by Pérez-Huber, Benavides Lopez, Malagon, Velez, and Solórzano (2008),

> Racism is the assigning of values to real or imagined differences, in order to justify white supremacy, to the benefit of whites and at the expense of People of Color, and thereby to defend the right of whites to dominance. (p. 41)

Adding to this definition, Solórzano (1997) argued racism is tied to institutional power. By defining racism as tied to institutional power and a manifestation of white supremacy, no other group in the United States can be racist other than white people. White people are the only racial group that possess this form of structured racial power. Critical race legal scholar, Derrick Bell (2005) stated, "Racism lies at the center, not the periphery; in the permanent, not in the fleeting; in the real lives of Black and white people, not in the sentimental caverns of the mind"

(p. 336). Bell illustrated how race and racism permeates lives of People of Color and white people.

While white perpetrators enact racial injustices upon People of Color via *microaggressions*, these injustices stem from *macroaggressions.* Macroaggressions are "the set of beliefs and/or ideologies that justify actual or potential social arrangements that legitimate the interests and/or positions of a dominant group over non-dominant groups, that in turn lead to related structures and acts of subordination" (Pérez-Huber & Solórzano, 2015, p. 303). Thus, racism is only a *symptom* of the disease of white supremacy, which is a macroaggression. The macroaggression, white supremacy, is in fact the *actual* disease. Macroagressions are part of Pérez-Huber and Solórzano's (2015) microagression analytical framework. The framework illustrates three layers of a racial microaggression: a) the microaggression is in the innermost layer of the square, b) institutionalized racism lies outside of that square, and c) macroaggressions lie on the outermost layer (Pérez-Huber & Solórzano, 2015).

The field of epidemiology uses a framework to understand how white people's individual actions and beliefs are socio-politically situated in environments. This framework in turn informs structures, which are all supported by the ideology of white supremacy (Pérez-Huber & Solórzano, 2015). *White supremacy* is "a particular power structure of formal or informal rule, socioeconomic privilege, and norms for the differential distribution of material wealth and opportunities, benefits and burdens, rights and duties" (Mills, 1997, p. 3). This definition of white supremacy is important to understand as it relates to this study. White supremacy is far more structurally embedded in social institutions than most white people understand or recognize. Additionally, white supremacy and white racial dominance are macroaggressions. I

use these two terms, white supremacy and white racial dominance interchangeably throughout this study.

Similar to white supremacy, *whiteness* is understood as "an ideology untied to certain bodies, but an articulation of disparate elements—some racial, some not—in order to build a racial cosmology that benefits Whites in absolute ways and minority groups relative only to one another" (Leonardo & Broderick, 2011, p. 2209). In other words, whiteness is not a descriptor of, or equivalent to, white people as a homogenous racial group, but rather a term used to explain a system of policies and practices codified in law and maintained by society in which people conceptualize white ways of being and thinking as superior and more deserving. Additionally, because whiteness' is malleable it is effective in structuring society (Cabrera, Franklin, & Watson, 2016). Whiteness is invisible and, oftentimes, taken for granted by white people and in society at large (Cabrera, 2018; Mills, 1997). Whiteness' invisibility is evident in white people's racial ideologies, as white people have a low tolerance for acknowledging racism (Sleeter, 1993).

In this study, I specifically focus on white undergraduate women and uncover their beliefs and ways they perceive the campus environment at UCLA, and, in turn, how their perceptions contribute to legitimizing dominant ideologies and macroaggressions, like white supremacy. Therefore, while I examine whiteness in the lives of white women, I am also specifically conducting a gendered interrogation of whiteness (Bauer, 2017). In other words, I examine the contextual nature of whiteness as it intertwines with womahood (Levine-Rasky, 2002).

I also refer to this gendered interrogation of whiteness as an *one-up one-down identity* (Accapadi, 2007). Although I explore intersecting social identities, I intentionally do not use intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991) as my theoretical framework, because I am not

examining two layers of oppression. Accapadi (2007) used the term, one-up one-down social identities, as she researched specifically gender and race to discuss how white women benefit from racial privilege through their interactions with Women of Color. Thus, I use the concept of one-up one-down identities to make sense of how white racial privilege intersects with gender for white undergraduate women in this study.

Lastly, I closely examine white undergraduate women's perceptions of the lived environment at UCLA. By examining the lived environment, I specifically look at how racism and whiteness operate at UCLA through a spatial analysis. As Cabrera, Watson, and Franklin (2016) discussed, "White privilege and racial power are often not directly addressed in higher education literature and particularly in the campus ecology literature" (p. 121). Thus, in this study, I attempt to take account for whiteness and how it operates in the lived environment at UCLA.

Purpose of the Study

White men are often envisioned as perpetuators of white racism (McRae, 2018). Often leaving white women overlooked, who make up 30% of the student population (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2015). Thus, I argue a need exists of a more adequate understanding of how whiteness is upheld in gendered ways. While scholars recently began studying whiteness and white supremacy and how it operates in college campus contexts (Cabrera, 2018; Foste, 2019; Gusa, 2010; Jayakumar & Adamian, 2017), none of these researchers addressed the central question of how whiteness and womanhood (Bauer, 2017) impacts the campus racial climate. Such research is needed to challenge white supremacy and make institutions of higher education more welcoming environments for racially minoritized faculty, staff, and students.

In my research, I examine and theorize about whiteness, gender, and the lived environment for white undergraduate women at UCLA, a historically white institution. Historically white institutions are interesting contexts to explore whiteness, because the student population is no longer predominantly white, but white dominant structures remain intact (Bell, 1991). I use UCLA as one illustrative case to theorize more broadly about transferable trends and patterns related to how whiteness manifests across the higher education landscape.

Current higher education researchers of race and racism primarily explored experiences of Students of Color (Clark & Mitchell, 2018; Griffin, Muñiz, & Espinosa, 2012; Nguyen, Chan, Nguyen, & Teranishi, 2017; Yosso, Smith, Ceja, & Solórzano, 2009). This literature significantly contributes to the understanding of how campus racial climate impacts learning outcomes and the experiences of Students of Color and contributes to their inclusion on the college campus. However, the opposite of inclusion is exclusion. Additional research is needed to examine how white women make sense of whiteness and the campus racial environment to better understand how whiteness excludes Students of Color. In other words, examining the experiences of white undergraduate women will paint a fuller picture of how white racial dominance operates from the other side of the racial inclusion/exclusion coin, both individually and institutionally. Thus, I seek to contribute to this body of literature by focusing on white undergraduate women, who are oftentimes enacting racialized violence on Students of Color. I used the following research questions to guide this study:

1. How do white undergraduate women interpret whiteness in their lives at UCLA?
2. How do white undergraduate women perceive UCLA's campus environment?
3. How do these perceptions work to uphold and or challenge white supremacy?

4. What are the structures (policies and processes) at UCLA that influence white women's understandings of whiteness?

In this study, I attempted to make the ways/policies/structures in which whiteness and womanhood operates more visible. Additionally, I sought to connect white undergraduate women's individual experiences and perceptions in relationship to whiteness to how whiteness was being upheld and, sometimes, challenged at UCLA. Lastly, I sought to explore how white women contribute to maintaining and challenging whiteness at UCLA through their perceptions of the campus environment. With this study, I inform researchers and higher education practitioners about specific ways whiteness remains normalized on college campuses through white undergraduate women's experiences.

Significance of the Study

This study is important for various reasons. First, this study will contribute to further theorizing around whiteness and womanhood and how it manifests in the college campus context. Second, this research extends our current understanding of campus racial climate from the other side of the racial exclusion coin. The intention of naming this whiteness is to hopefully chip away at the exclusion and racial violence Students of Color experience on college campuses. Third, a critical whiteness approach is needed to name various machinations of whiteness in higher education literature. While critical whiteness scholarship in higher education is more prevalent in recent years, this study extends the current application of critical whiteness concepts in the higher education literature. Fourth, I examine the racialization of space through perceptions of white undergraduate women at UCLA. Fifth, in this study, I operationalize critical whiteness concepts in the research design process, which will elicit new understandings of how whiteness operates in the lived environment. Sixth, the findings are important on a national scale,

given our current sociopolitical context. An update to how whiteness is operating in the lives of white undergraduate women, given the resurgence of overt white supremacy, will provide new understandings of how this current sociopolitical context has shaped their experiences.

In sum, while Women of Color have challenged white women about their racism and failures to address racial injustices since antebellum times (hooks, 1994), few white women have worked to overcome their own racism and address systematic racism. Thus, white supremacy's enduring prominence from the inception of this country to now, white women's less obvious contribution to white racial dominance, and my own positionality as a white woman invested in naming and challenging white supremacy guide this study. While I focused on white undergraduate women on one college campus in this study, it has far-reaching implications for better understanding whiteness and womanhood, white supremacy, and its ever-strong presence in our current political times. The findings of this study will contribute to the small, but emerging body of knowledge in critical whiteness studies in higher education. I explore and theorize about whiteness, gender, and space at one historically white university, namely UCLA.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I introduced myself and my motivations to conduct this study. Second, I discussed various reasons I decided to study white undergraduate women in the college campus context. Third, I introduced key terms and concepts used throughout this study. Fourth, I discussed the purpose of the study and introduced the research questions. Fifth, I discussed the significance of this study.

To briefly summarize my research, I offer the following outline. In Chapter 2, I examine existing literature and theoretical frameworks, which I used to guide this study. These include third-world feminists' critiques of white women upholding racism, critical whiteness studies

scholarship in higher education, race and racism higher education scholarship on white undergraduate women, and critical race theory concepts. In Chapter 3, I discuss the research methodology, including data collection methods, data analysis, limitations of this study, and how I addressed trustworthiness. In Chapter 4, I provide participant profiles organized by political affiliation. In Chapters 5 and 6, I present findings of my research questions. In Chapter 7, I conclude with theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical contributions of this study and policy and practical implications.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

In this study, I explore how undergraduate white women understand whiteness in their lives, their perceptions of the campus environment at UCLA, and, in turn, how their understandings and perceptions contribute to maintaining and, sometimes, challenging whiteness. Very few researchers have examined the way one-up one-down identities (Accapadi, 2007), specifically how gender and racial privilege operate and the relationship between individual white women's experiences on college campuses, and how white women's individual experiences connect to how white racial dominance is upheld in institutions of higher education. Thus, I divide the bodies of literature I used to inform this study into five sections and take a comprehensive review of the focus of this study.

In the first section, I provide earlier theorization of how gender and racial privilege operate, which consists of Women of Color illustrating how white women have upheld racism through exclusion. I follow with a subsection, in which I overview the small, yet notable, existing literature, which I used to explore critical whiteness, or how white women understand and participate in racist practices. In the second section, I introduce critical whiteness studies (CWS) as a field, and I discuss various critical whiteness concepts I used to inform this study. These include a) whiteness as a structuring property, b) ontological expansiveness, c) white complicity, and d) color-evasiveness. In the third section, I discuss literature in which researchers have a) applied critical whiteness studies in the field of higher education, primarily with college undergraduates and their racial ideologies; b) racialization of space in higher education; and c) research in which has examined white undergraduate women. This final body of literature has developmental orientation. In the fourth section, I introduce critical race theory (CRT) and CRT tools I used to inform this study. These include literature on campus racial climate,

microaggression analytical framework, and majoritarian stories. In the fifth section, I conclude by addressing theoretical, methodological, and knowledge gaps I intend to fill through this study and discussing how I shaped the design of this study with theoretical frameworks.

Whiteness as Contextual: "White Female Complicity"

I begin by briefly discussing third-world feminists' critiques of white feminists and how white feminists have contributed to racism, as this study serves as a response to those critiques. It is important to begin with a geneaology of whiteness studies, because it is this foundational work that paved the way for scholars of whiteness to critically examine their own racialized and gendered selves (Ahmed, 2004). Following a brief discussion of this literature, I present four key studies with focuses on white women and their participation in racism (Frankenberg, 1993; McRae, 2018; Newman, 1999; Trepagnier, 2010).

Third-world feminists have been critiquing white feminism and how myself and other white women, participated in, and still participate in, racism by not recognizing in-group differences amongst women since the 19th century. However, this criticism significantly grew in the 70s and 80s. As Audre Lorde (1979) stated 40 years ago, we live in a profit-driven economy, where people must be left out. Due to this "complex hierarchal bureaucracy" (Hurtado, 1989, p. 833), we have been programmed to fear and loath difference, and we "face the pitfall of being seduced into joining the oppressor under the pretense of sharing power" (Lorde, 1979, p. 118). Ten years later, Hurtado (1989) examined relational positioning of various socially constructed groups and the relationship of white women and Women of Color in relation to white men. Hurtado (1989) remarked:

> If a working class white woman marries a professional white man, her offspring would automatically acquire the privileged position of the father . . . white men need white

women in a way that they do not need women of Color because women of Color cannot fulfill white men's need for racially pure offspring. (p. 844)

Social positioning of white women in relation to their white male counterparts and Women of Color is important to consider in the matrix of domination (Collins, 1993). Collins theorized the matrix of domination around experiences of Black women as a both/and conceptual understanding of various interlocking systems of oppression. Collins (1993) argued issues of oppression are interconnected. Applying the matrix of domination, Hurtado (1989) critiqued, white men will always value white women in ways they do not value Women of Color, even though the patriarchy impacts white women and Women of Color. Hurtado (1989) called for white women to recognize "their subordination, based on seduction, has separated them from other women of color who are subordinated by rejection" (p. 855). Similarly, thinking about white women in relation to white men, Ladowsky (1995) pondered, 69% of white women opposed affirmative action specifically for women, and this may be true because "victims of affirmative action's reverse discrimination . . . are their husbands, brothers, or sons" (p. 22). Ladowsky (1995) questioned if standing by one's man is the reason why white women will vote against affirmative action.

Lorde and Alarcón illustrated that when we[3], white women, attempt to recognize differences with third-world feminists, we belittle works like the contributions of *This Bridge Called My Back* to the field of gender studies (Alarcón, 1991), and inappropriately cite third-world feminist scholarship in our own work (Lorde, 1979). Feminists of color have named white female complicity and white racism inherent in the field of gender studies (Alarcón, 1991; Lorde,

[3] Given my identity as white CwS scholar, I, at times utilize we/our/ours pronouns when referring to myself and other white people in order to not distance myself from my complicity (Applebaum, 2010) in white supremacy.

1979), yet many of their calls and requests for white women to acknowledge their racism have been left unresolved. White women personally and systematically contribute to racism in their everyday lives by ignoring their differences in relation to Women of Color, and by erasing, belittling, and appropriating their work in gender studies scholarship (Alarcón, 1991; Lorde, 1979). This has been a continuous failure to fulfill "the promise of sisterhood" (hooks, 1994, p. 103). As stated by those in the Combahee River Collective in 1978, "eliminating racism in the white women's movement is by definition work for white women to do" (para. 30). I am motivated to explore white undergraduate women's interpretations of whiteness, and how they maintain and, sometimes, challenge whiteness at UCLA, because of the harms enacted upon Women of Color and to understand why white women protect their whiteness.

White womanhood. Third-world feminists have identified the harm and violence we are enacting as white women makes this an important intersection of identities to explore in relationship to how we sustain and sometimes challenge white supremacy. As Levine-Rasky (2002) discussed, "whiteness qualified by gender is a crucial dimension of contextuality" (p. 336). Accapadi (2007) referred to white women as holding a "one up-one down positioning" (p. 210). She defined one-up one-down positioning as anyone who holds an identity that is privileged and another that is oppressed. Because of the privilege of whiteness, she stated, "our societal norms allow white women to toggle their identities, meaning they can choose to be a woman and choose to be white" (Accapadi, 2007, p. 210). In Accapadi's (2007) case study, she illustrated the way white women student affairs professionals' emotions, specifically tears, are often valued and seen as more worthy than the emotional reactions of Women of Color. I use Accapadi's (2007) notion of one-up one-down positioning in this study and intentionally do not

utilize intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989,1991) as my theoretical framework because I am not examining two layers of oppression.

Leonardo (2013) also raised the complexities of one-up one-down positioning. He stated, “whiteness is all they may have” (p. 102), when referring to white people who carry a “legitimate injury,” like being a woman or working class. They use their whiteness to shield and protect themselves. To use Leonardo’s metaphor, while these injured white people do not “call the shots, they frequently pull the trigger” (p. 102). According to Leonardo, white people’s relational positioning in the interlocking systems of oppression means that if they abandoned whiteness it would put them “at risk with little protection against either sexism or capitalist exploitation” (Leonardo, 2013, p. 102). In other words, Leonardo argued that whites who carry a one-up one-down identity, do not want to pay the price it would take to become a race traitor. Allen (2009), a critical whiteness scholar, referred to examining whiteness contextually, or in relationship to classed and gendered locations, as a *white hegemonic alliance*. In the context of whiteness and class, he defined the white hegemonic alliance as a political bond formed between poor and nonpoor white people, when, consciously or not, “the subordinate group participates in the perpetuation of its own lower status by going along with beliefs and behaviors that maintain the hegemonic system and thus the higher status of the dominant group” (Allen, 2009, p. 226). Allen (2009) argued:

> This alliance has tremendous strength and is arguably the primary mortar holding together White supremacist structure, it has a number of cracks and crevices that need to be exposed and widened in the hope of bringing the whole structure crashing down. (p. 210)

Other scholars have also raised questions on the possibility of widening the crack in the white hegemonic alliance across gender lines (Nishi, Guida, & Walker, In review; Nishi & Parker, 2017; Parker & Nishi, 2018;). These scholars and their critical examination of whiteness and how it impacts how white women uphold the white hegemonic alliance (Allen, 2009) contributed significantly to our understanding of how complex and multi-layered whiteness and womanhood is, which has yet to be fully and empirically explored.

Additionally, Levine-Rasky (2002) also discussed whiteness as contextual, or always in relationship to other socially constructed identities. While discussing whiteness and gender, Levine-Rasky (2002) argued:

> White women's privilege may function as a struggle for agency and power delimited by patriarchy. This strategy affords some degree of dignity to white women, though at the expense of racialized others, and at the price of their silent complicity with their own domination. (p. 337)

Critical whiteness pedagogues argued exploring the embodiment of whiteness in the classroom, without examining it with other social identities, makes it difficult to name. This prevents students from marking, understanding, and examining "how whiteness operates in [their] own lives, in classrooms, and [in their] lived experiences" (Zingsheim & Goltz, 2011, p. 215). The authors noted "the mysterious machinations of whiteness . . . are made more visible in their articulations with gender, class, and sexuality" (Zingsheim & Goltz, 2011, p. 229) when students are asked to embody racialized subject positions. Students perform examples in their classroom, such as "upper middle-class women pushing double strollers while sipping Starbucks . . . [and] white women clutching their purses as they pass an African American male on the street" (Zingsheim & Goltz, 2011, p. 230).

Stated simply, many third-world Feminists and, more recently, some white scholars began to question the white hegemonic alliance and critique the ways white women often remain complicit with white supremacy, rather than attempt to challenge and expose white supremacy. Although I focused on white undergraduate women in this study, we can fall into the same traps of upholding white supremacy as previously discussed. Therefore, in this study, I seek to examine how white undergraduate women uphold and sometimes challenge white supremacy in gendered ways. Examining white undergraduate women in relationship to their social identities prevents gendered interrogations of whiteness from remaining abstract and makes more visible the machinations of white womanhood.

White women upholding racism. Some white women began to respond to Women of Color's charges and frustration to acknowledge the intersection of race with other social positionings (e.g., ethnicity, class status, sexuality, nationality, ability status) (Frankenberg, 1993; McRae, 2018; Newman, 1999; Trepagnier, 2010). A sociologist by training, Frankenberg (1993) interrogated advantages women had from whiteness and how whiteness intersected with gender, sexuality, and class in their daily life. Through 30 life histories, Frankenberg (1993) argued race shapes white women's lives. Frankenberg's (1993) study has been central to laying the groundwork for future research on white women and their one-up, one-down positioning. She illustrated white women use various paradigms related to race matters: essentialism, use of biological explanations of race to explain racial inferiority, colorblindness and power, evasiveness, resistance to race and denial of white privilege and race cognizance, and acknowledgement of race privilege. Additionally, white women have racialized femininities, that is they constructed femininity "in ways differentiated by race and culture" (p. 85). For those not in interracial relationships, these relationships were a source of anxiety, disapproval, and taboo.

For those in interracial relationships or who had interracial children, she argued white women become more conscious of the racial ordering of society in these relationships. Participants, through their discussions of interracial sexuality and relationships, highlighted the co-construction of whiteness and the relation to gender. Lastly, Frankenberg (1993) found white women only described white culture as a relational category, comparing it to People of Color's culture. Frankenberg (1993) provided context and laid the foundation for how whiteness and womanhood manifests for white women in her work. Recently, others have continued Frankenberg's line of work.

Trepagnier (2010) examined how "well-meaning" (p. 3) white women, majority of whom hold college degrees, think and feel about racism. Differing from Frankenberg, Trepagnier targeted white women who identified as liberal and progressive. After conducting focus groups with 25 white women, she argued well-meaning white women are a large contributor to institutional racism due to their passivity on race issues. In other words, "the passivity of well-meaning white people encourages institutional racism" by not interrupting it (Trepagnier, 2010, p. 82). Trepagnier identified two specific forms of silent racism in her data: stereotypical images and paternalistic assumptions. Additionally, Trepagnier identified specific ways her participants expressed passivity towards racism, which included detachment from race matters, apprehension of being perceived as racist, and confusion about what constitutes something as racist and/or not racist. Trepagnier (2010) expanded notions of racism to move beyond color-blind racism to include "silent racism" (p. 15) in the sociological literature (see Figure 1). In sum, she argued oppositional categories of racist and non-racist must be changed to a continuum, so well-meaning white women can recognize the inherent racism in them and how they are part of the expanding on Trepagnier's work, future scholars should utilize this problem. Borrowing and

expanding on Trepagnier's work, future scholars should utilize this continuum to build upon Trepagnier's continuum and better understand how white undergraduate women understand and participate in racism.

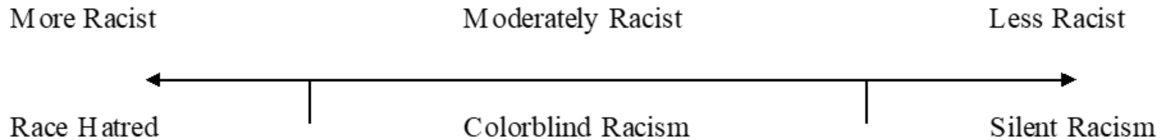

*Figure 1.*Racism on the Racism Continuum. This figure demonstrates how racism operates on a continuum. From *Silent Racism: How Well-Meaning White People Perpetuate the Racial Divide* (p. 21) by B. Trepagnier, 2010, Boulder, London: Paradigm Publishers. Copyright 2010 by Paradigm Publishers.

Historians uncovered white women developed and depended upon explicit racial ideologies to promote feminist causes (Newman, 1999) and crafted white supremacist politics in their everyday lives (McRae, 2018). These studies serve as compelling examples that reveal the role white women have played in contributing to racism. Tracing white women segregationists from 1920-1970, McRae (208) illustrated "quotidian work" (p. 3) done by white women "on the ground" (p. 3), which helped shape and sustain white supremacist politics. This quotidian work consisted of white women ensuring that racial segregation "seeped into the nooks and crannies of public life and private matters, of congressional campaigns and PTA meetings, of cotton policy and household economies, and of textbook debates and day care decisions" (McRae, 2018, p. 4). Examining the lives of four educated, politically active white women, McRae (2018) found the work of female segregationists occurred in four areas: "social welfare policies implemented at a local level, public education, electoral politics, and popular culture" (p. 6). Newman (1999) similarly traced the racist history of white women from 1870-1920, shedding light on how

"contemporary [feminist] discourses continue to draw on their assimilationist legacies" (p. 30). She argued middle-class white women gained the right to vote through utilizing racist and imperialist rhetoric, and saw themselves as "'civilizers' of the race" (p. 23), which further solidified their beliefs they were culturally, biologically, and morally superior to People and Women of Color (Newman, 1999). Lastly, challenging highly patriarchal gender norms of their time, middle-class white women used imperialist logics to "develop new identities for themselves as missionaries, explorers, educators, and ethnographers" (Newman, 1999, p. 20). Utilizing Leonardo's (2013) metaphor again, these scholars point to examples of white women, not calling the shots, but pulling the trigger and upholding the white hegemonic alliance.

In sum, whiteness researchers must begin their geneaology by discussing the work of Third World feminists and not limit their referencing to white scholars who more recently began doing this work (Ahmed, 2004). Third-world feminists contributed tremendously to our understanding of whiteness; they are not making something unseen seen (like most white whiteness scholars), rather, they are making something already seen to them visible in another way.

While these scholars informed us of how white women upheld racism historically and whiteness's role in their everyday lives in the 1990s, new research is needed to continue to address the gap in the literature. With the exception of one study (Ozias, 2017), no recent studies have included how white undergraduate women make sense of their whiteness and their perceptions of the college campus environment. More researchers need to examine gendered interrogations of whiteness and how white undergraduate women remain complicit and, sometimes, challenge white supremacy in the college context environment.

Critical Whiteness Studies

Critical whiteness studies has been recognized by race scholars for only the past 20 years; however, Scholars of Color have theorized around race and whiteness in the past, including DuBois, who wrote *Darkwater* in 1920, and James Baldwin, who wrote “White Man’s Guilt” in 1965 (Cabrera, 2018). Critical whiteness studies emerged as “a critical investigation of the white race” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 83) and explore what it means to be white, how whiteness was and is established within the law, the phenomenon of white power and white supremacy, and privileges of members of the white race. Additionally, Levine-Rasky (2002) pointed out the study of whiteness has been approached in three particular ways: whiteness as critical, relational, and contextual. According to Levine-Rasky (2002), “critical perspectives emphasize a normative position on issues of social injustice, and its commitment to change inequitable social relations” (p. 320). Relational studies of whiteness situate whiteness as “an emergent category that is inextricably related to other” (Levine-Rasky, 2002, p. 325). While contextual studies situate whiteness with intersecting sites of social identity. I approached examining and theorizing about whiteness as both critical and contextual in this study.

While critical whiteness studies are used in many fields, higher education scholars have only recently begun using this theoretical framework (Cabrera et al., 2016). In turn, this has resulted in more recent theorizations around whiteness and its manifestation in higher education institutions. Applying the field of CWS to higher education, Cabrera, Franklin and Watson (2017) highlighted six theoretical underpinnings of critical whiteness studies, which they recommend researchers use to explore and interrogate whiteness. The five theoretical underpinnings include whiteness as: a) colorblindness, b) epistemologies of ignorance, c) ontological expansiveness, d) property, and e) assumed racial comfort or racial “safety” (Cabrera

et al., 2017, p. 20). Critical whiteness studies and various concepts used in CWS are powerful tools to bring new understandings to the field of higher education, as it relates to whiteness as a structuring property. In this sub-section, I discuss four critical whiteness concepts, which I use to examine whiteness. These include a) whiteness as a structuring property, b) ontological expansiveness, c) white complicity, and d) color-evasiveness.

Whiteness as a structuring property. As stated by Owen (2007), "whiteness is a social structure that normalizes the interests, needs and values of those racialized as white" (p. 211) and has various "functional properties" (p. 205), some of which I mention here. First, whiteness shapes the cognitive framework of white people, because it is the structuring property of the social system into which white people are socialized. Second, "whiteness defines a specifically racialized social location of structural advantage" (p. 206). Third, whiteness is normalized. Fourth, whiteness is often invisible to whites, while simultaneously very visible to People of Color. Fifth, a functional property of whiteness is its borders are constantly redefined. However, whiteness is also a structuring property of our social systems. As explained by Owen (2007), "whiteness shapes the cognitive frameworks of agents because, first, it is a structuring property of the social system into which agents are socialized and acculturated, and, second, it constitutes part of the conditions (acknowledged and unacknowledged) of action" (p. 208). Because whiteness functions in this structuring way "then it must be understood as deeply embedded in the everyday, normal functioning of those systems, and because of its hegemony within the system, it is reproduced largely behind the backs of social agents" (Owen, 2007, p. 209). Whiteness's ability to operate consciously and unconsciously means that it does not need social agents "to structure and legitimize the present (racialized) social formation" (Owen, 2007, p. 209).

Moreover, for whiteness to function, it "must always be grounded in specific contexts of its manifestation" (p. 206). For the case of this study, the specific context in which whiteness manifests is at UCLA, a campus no longer considered predominantly white, but still historically white. Studying whiteness at UCLA, an institution once predominantly white, but now historically white, is an exemplar illustration of how whiteness's borders can be redefined, but still remain intact (Bell, 2005). Utilizing critical whiteness as a functioning property of social institutions, operating "largely behind the backs of social agents" (p. 209) is a key reason I used Owen's (2007) conceptualization of whiteness as the theoretical framing of this study.

Ontological expansiveness. Sullivan (2006), a critical whiteness philosopher, theorized ontological expansiveness is the belief white people have a way of being that is expansive and free. In her own words, ontological expansiveness is when "white people tend to act and think as if all spaces whether geographical, physical, linguistic, economic, spiritual, bodily, or otherwise are or should be available for them to move in and out of as they wish" (Sullivan, 2006, p. 10). Although Sullivan (2006) did not study ontological expansiveness in relation to gender, she stated, "white women's whiteness provides them a racial license to unencumbered spatial existence" (Sullivan, 2006, p. 148).

Expanding on ontological expansiveness, we, as white people, often feel like we should "be allowed an expansiveness when transacting with its world that is not equally available to non-white people" (Sullivan, 2006, p. 146). Sullivan referenced appropriation of land from American Indians as a historical example of ontological expansiveness and appropriation of nonwhite spaces by self-proclaimed antiracists as present-day examples. Sullivan's concept of ontological expansiveness explains the various ways expansiveness takes place. As Sullivan argued, white people live their space as "corporeal entitlement to spatiality" (p. 148). This

exemplifies how ontological expansiveness physically and cognitively occur—by assuming one has rights to occupy a particular place. Sullivan (2006) posited white men tend to live space more expansively than do white women. For example, Sullivan (2006) explained that white men reside in working-class, non-white communities to rebel against their parents, whereas white middle-to-upper class women avoid these communities out of fear of being sexually attacked.

While Sullivan conceptualized ontological expansiveness generally, scholars have begun to theorize similar notions in the higher education space (Gusa, 2010). Gusa (2010) significantly contributed to our theoretical understanding of how white institutional presence manifests in predominantly white universities. Research on how ontological expansiveness operates for white undergraduate women is limited. Cabrera, Franklin, and Watson (2016) stated "the intersection of racial privilege, the physical environment of the campus, and the overall climate is critically underexplored" (p. 102). Thus, I used ontological expansiveness, one of the six theoretical underpinnings identified by Cabrera et al. (2017), to explore race and space from perspectives of white undergraduate women to contribute to the existing gap in the knowledge. I explored how space is raced "and how bodies become raced through their lived spatiality" (Sullivan, 2006, p. 143) at UCLA through experiences of white undergraduate women. Ontological expansiveness is an important conceptual tool, which I used to see the racialization of space for white undergraduate women.

White complicity. Critical whiteness scholar Barbara Applebaum (2010, 2013) conceptualized white complicity as white people believing, by being white, they are also being good. Citing Ahmed (2004), Applebaum depicted white complicity as white people asking questions (e.g., "what can we do?") when discussing and dealing with the reality of racial injustice. Ahmed (2004) argued it is in the act of this questioning that privilege is being

reinscribed, rather than challenging racial injustice. Another example of how white goodness functions is when white people confess their/our complicity in whiteness. While this may seem progressive, this confessing and acknowledging of white complicity "actually functions to demonstrate one's goodness" (Applebaum, 2013, p. 24). Therefore, when white people make this declaration, we must remain in the critique of our own goodness. According to Applebaum (2010), "preserving white moral innocence is impossible" (p. 5), and, if we begin with this assertion, we can better understand how we are always complicit in white supremacy.

Sullivan (2014) discussed what white complicity looks like in well-meaning white people. She believed those who fight for anti-racism do "not necessarily attempt to eliminate racial injustice—which, to be successful, might involve strategies or tactics that don't make white people look or feel morally good" (p. 5). Instead, we often operate from "a desire to be recognized as Not Racist, perhaps especially by people of color" (Sullivan, 2014, p. 5). bell hooks supported Sullivan's concepts. hooks (2003) stated "anti-racist white folks recognize that their ongoing resistance to white supremacism is genuine when it is not determined in any way by the approval or disapproval of people of color" (p. 65). In other words, once white people acknowledge their complicity with white domination, they become more aware of ways they are "complicit with rather than hover apart from white domination" (Sullivan, 2014, p. 65). In this study, I use the white complicity frame to examine how white undergraduate women attempt to be perceived as good white people and create distance from acknowledging how they may be complicit in upholding white racial domination at UCLA.

Color-evasiveness. As defined by Bonilla-Silva (2010), racial ideologies are "the racially based frameworks used by actors to explain and justify (dominant race) or challenge (subordinate race or races) the racial status quo" (p. 9). Racial ideologies have common frames,

styles, and racial stories. In a seminal sociological study, Bonilla Silva (2010) interviewed white students from three colleges and universities and adults around Detroit, Michigan, and named four frames white people use to justify racial inequality, all which contribute to a "new colorblind racism." Bonilla-Silva's most prominent finding and frame is the notion of abstract liberalism, meaning white people use abstract notions of individualism, universalism, and egalitarianism to ignore effects of past and current discrimination. The other three frames white people rely on include naturalization, cultural racism, and the minimization of racism. White people use these frames as intellectual road maps and paths to interpret information. Although Bonilla-Silva (2010) did not focus on how colorblind racism intersects with gender, he briefly stated racially progressive young women in his study used their experiences of discrimination as women to understand People of Color's racial oppression, while still maintaining color-blind views.

More recently, the ideology of colorblind racism has been referred to as color-evasiveness, which Annamma et al. (2016) believed more accurately depicted "the social and material consequences of racism and ableism" (p. 154). Compared to colorblind racism, color-evasiveness is when white people actively evade discussions of race, in a way that is both passive and, yet, undeniably purposeful. Additionally, color-evasiveness as a concept acknowledges racism is perpetuated through sight, and informed by "visuals, graphic, text, speech, and audio" (Annamma et al., 2016, p. 155). I used color-evasiveness to explore ways white undergraduate women used distancing strategies and discursive moves to uphold white supremacy in this study.

Critical Whiteness Studies and Higher Education

As mentioned earlier, critical whiteness studies in the field of higher education has become more prominent in the past 3 to 4 years and the work of Cabrera et al. (2016) served as an important tool for mapping the future directions that CWS scholarship can take in the field of higher education. Those relevant to this current study include whiteness as colorblindness and ontological expansiveness. Of the five theoretical underpinnings highlighted by Cabrera et al. (2016) colorblind racism has been more commonly used, namely with white undergraduate men and white undergraduates more generally. While ontological expansiveness has been more limitedly used in higher education scholarship. Accordingly, in this section, I summarize empirical studies that use colorblind racism as a theoretical tool.

Bonilla-Silva and Forman (2000) examined white college students' racial ideologies by comparing survey data to in-depth interview data. They illustrated a paradox—white students seem more racially tolerant in survey data than in qualitative data. Using a discursive approach to decipher meanings of white students' racial views, Bonilla-Silva and Forman (2000) found a new "racetalk" (p. 52), or a way of talking about racial issues in public venues which upholds white supremacy. White people express their views on interracial marriage, affirmative action, and discrimination towards Black people in sanitized ways. Compared to studies with a focus on racial attitudes and how they improve over time in college, especially for white women when compared to white men (Fischer, 2011; Rodgers, Sedlacek, & Bachhuber, 1979; Smith, 1993; Smith, Senter, & Strachan, 2013; Spanierman, Beard, & Todd; 2012), Bonilla-Silva and Forman (2000) illustrated the nuanced and complex methods necessary for us to understand how white students are discussing and thinking about issues of race. Based on their findings, it is evident quantitative analyses of survey data on white racial attitudes are a false representation of white

people's racial beliefs. White people answer questions on survey instruments in a politically correct fashion, and do not disclose white racial ideologies, which are far less malleable than their racial attitudes. This is another example of how racism continues to adapt. Thus, by exploring racial ideologies of white women, I questioned how white undergraduate women adapt rationalizations of race and racism to maintain white dominance and avoid naming racism, especially in their own communities.

Further developing Bonilla-Silva's (2010) and Bonilla-Silva and Forman (2000) work on racial ideologies, Cabrera (2018) explored white undergraduate men's racial ideologies utilizing a critical whiteness studies lens. Cabrera (2018) explored how white undergraduate males attempt to work through their whiteness; claim victimization, which reinforces white supremacy (2014a); use racial joking (2014b); and express feelings related to their racial ideologies (2014c). Cabrera (2014c) found white undergraduate men who held color-blind ideologies had two distinct emotional responses, apathy and anger. Cabrera (2014c) argued white men frame their emotions regarding race as facts, which, in turn, supports racial stratification. While Cabrera contributed to the understanding of how racial affect is connected to structural and systemic racism through his research of white men's emotions, a gap exists in the exploration of white undergraduate women.

Additionally, Cabrera (2014a) found white undergraduate men used individual definitions of racism and lived in environments with high racial segregation before and during college, which, in turn, which contributed to them seeing little racism. He explained that "four mutually reinforcing spheres (background, behavior, ideology, and environment)" contributed to participants' view that racism did not exist or was minimal in current society (p. 12). Additionally, they framed themselves as victims of reverse racism. White men also blamed

People of Color for racial antagonism (on and off campus), which rationalized their persistence to continue to self-segregate on college campuses. White men's choice to self-segregate on college campuses lead to the creation of campus sub-environments that were predominantly white (Cabrera, 2014a). Strikingly, noting the relationship of whiteness to structure, Cabrera stated:

> These four mutually reinforcing spheres (background, behavior, ideology, and environment) created a cyclical logic whereby the participants believed there was no racism or minimal racism in contemporary society, because they saw none in their experiences. (p. 12)

Cabrera (2014b) also examined racial joking of 29 white college undergraduates and found participants identified this as a common example of racism. Participants justified telling racial jokes in all white spaces by arguing minorities were too sensitive to find the jokes amusing. Additionally, participants believed racial jokes were harmless; however, Cabrera (2014b) argued the underlying ideologies of these jokes made the jokes and the participants defending them the problem. In turn, "within these White enclaves, both the joke tellers and listeners share responsibility for their respective roles in creating racist social practices" (Cabrera, 2014b, p. 11).

Further building on the work of Cabrera (2018), Bonilla-Silva (2010), and Bonilla-Silva and Forman (2000) scholars used the theoretical tool of colorblindness to understand how white collegians utilized colorblind ideologies (Foste, 2019a, 2019b; Jayakumar & Adamian, 2016, 2017). These researchers highlighted the ever-evolving machinations of whiteness and how, 2 decades later, colorblind frames are still relevant. Foste (2019b) explored how white student leaders' co-curricular involvement shaped their experiences and engagements with whiteness and

racism at one Midwestern institution. He illustrated white student leaders were often preoccupied with presenting themselves as racially good and innocent. He referred to this as the enlightenment narrative, a discursive strategy white student leaders used to present themselves as racially conscious. Foste (2019a) also found white students used two other rhetorical strategies to rationalize and justify the racial status quo on campus. These included narratives of campus racial harmony and narratives of imposition. Campus racial harmony narratives consisted of "distorted perceptions of the institution as welcoming and inclusive to all students (p. 245), and narratives of imposition highlighted "paternalistic evaluations of student activists, discrediting their critiques of white supremacy" (p. 245).

Jayakumar and Adamian (2016, 2017) explored experiences of white undergraduates at three HBCUs, and found participants used a fifth frame of colorblind ideology, which looked different than the four frames developed by Bonilla-Silva (2010). Jayakumar and Adamian (2017) proposed a disconnected power-analysis frame. In this frame, Jayakumar and Adamian (2017) found white undergraduate students a) acknowledged and discussed racism to earn "race cachet" (p. 923), rather than denounce racism by rejecting colorblind thinking; b) denounced racism as performed by others through the "white relativism effect" (p. 928); and c) employed a "different white" (p. 928) argument, in which they acknowledged racism, but avoided responsibility. These researchers illustrated how whiteness continues to evolve over time and maintains and reproduces the racial status quo, albeit, in different ways depending on institutional context.

Bonilla-Silva (2010), Bonilla-Silva and Forman (2011), Cabrera (2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2018), Foste (2019a, 2019b), and Jayakumar and Adamian (2016, 2017) found racial ideologies of white undergraduates significantly contribute to understanding colorblindness and how

colorblindness is articulated by white college students. However, the scholars did not use a gendered lens. This limits our understanding of the manifestation of whiteness in gendered ways. Building on the previous research, I utilized "color-evasiveness" (Annamma et al, 2016, p.147) as a critical whiteness theoretical tool to explore how white undergraduate women make sense of whiteness in their lives and their perceptions of the campus environment at UCLA.

Critical whiteness studies and the lived environment. Few researchers have used critical whiteness concepts to examine the campus racial climate and campus ecology (Cabrera et al., 2016; Foste, 2019b; Gusa, 2010). Gusa (2010) scrutinized the culture of whiteness at predominantly white universities using existing campus racial climate literature as a lens. She labeled embedded white cultural ideology as white institutional presence. Gusa (2010) assigned four attributes to this ideology: White ascendancy, monoculturalism, White blindness, and White estrangement. White ascendency "includes a sense of superiority, a sense of entitlement, domination over racial discourse, and White victimization" (Gusa, 2010, p. 472). White blindness is operationalizing colorblind ideologies (Bonilla-Silva, 2010) on a college campus by various campus stakeholders. Applying this concept to predominantly white universities, Gusa (2010) argued white institutional presence would remain on a campus due to "white oversight and erroneous understanding of their racialized campus" (p. 478). Lastly, white estrangement is the "distancing of Whites physically and socially from people of color" (Gusa, 2010, p. 478). Gusa (2010) conceptualized the way whiteness operates in predominantly white institutions in an attempt to uproot white supremacy. I used white ascendency, white blindness, and white estrangement to guide this study.

Cabrera et al. (2016) similarly built on Gusa's work (2010) and offered a critique of existing campus ecology literature and incorporated a racialized lens. Utilizing critical whiteness

concepts like ontological expansiveness, epistemologies of ignorance, and racial safety, Cabrera et al. (2016) problematized perceptions of safety, inclusion, and non-verbal messages on the college campus. Cabrera et al. (2016) poignantly stated, "Campus images are not neutral, but students' interpretation of these cultural symbols frequently varies by their relationship to systemic racial power" (p. 130). Applying the notion of ontological expansiveness to the context of the college campus, the authors argued there is "a belief that the entire campus should be open and accessible to all students" (p. 121). This finding was confirmed by Foste (2019b), who found white students in the Midwest often used narratives of campus racial harmony. They believed their campus was welcoming and inclusive to everyone regardless of race. Additionally, Cabrera et al. (2016) argued college campuses are imbued with nonverbal messages, which are transmitted through infrastructure of the college campus. Ultimately, Cabrera et al. (2016) argued focusing on racial inclusion, safety, and comfort of white students prevents white students from engaging in white racial dissonance. These scholars helped lay the foundation for my conceptualization of how white undergraduate women make sense of the lived environment and campus racial climate at UCLA.

White undergraduate cisgendered women in higher education. In the field of higher education and student affairs, research on the role of race in white women's lives has primarily built upon the lineage of white racial identity development models. Racial identity development is "the process of defining for oneself the personal significance and social meaning of belonging to a particular racial group" (Tatum, 1994, p. 22). Helms (1992) created the model of white identity development (WIDM) to raise awareness for white people to understand the role they have in maintaining and creating a racist society, and the need for white people to act responsibly to dismantle it. Helm's (1992) model was heavily influenced by Cross's Black identity

development model. Helm's model consists of two main phases: 1) abandonment of racism and 2) development of a non-racist identity. Several other models were developed after Helm's (1992) model (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010; Sue & Sue, 2013); however, Helm's model was seminal in the psychology field. Helm's WIDM has been heavily used in higher education scholarship, but many scholars have focused on the second phase of her model—evolution of a nonracist identity phase (Linder, 2015; Reason et al., 2005; Robbins, 2016). In this section, I discuss this literature and how it guides current understandings of white women and how they make sense of their racialized and gendered identity.

Linder (2015) operationalized the constructs of gender and race while studying undergraduate white women. Linder (2015) explored experiences of six self-identified white, undergraduate, antiracist women and developed an antiracist, white feminist identity model. Through this model, she demonstrated three stages white, undergraduate antiracist women experience. First, white feminist women experience resistance, defensiveness, and anger. Then, they feel stuck due to feelings of shame, guilt, and fear of appearing racist. Women had moments of over-analysis and hyperawareness due to these feelings, which oftentimes lead to inaction. Lastly, at times, participants were able to move through these first two stages and engage in antiracist action, but moving to the third stage proved to be challenging. While other researchers had linear approaches to identity development, Linder (2015) highlighted the messy and cyclical nature of white, antiracist, feminist development.

Robbins (2016) focused on racial consciousness, identity, and dissonance of a slightly different population, white, graduate student women in higher education and student affairs programs. Studying their graduate school experiences, Robbins and Jones (2016) found white women avoided resistance as a defense mechanism strategy when they were faced with racial

dissonance in their programs, perhaps, because they knew denial and anger were undesirable in a higher education student affairs context. Additionally, for those attempting "transformative action" (Robbins & Jones, 2016, p. 640), they were attached to being a " 'good' " (p. 645) white woman who wanted to dismantle white privilege, which is, in and of itself, a possessive investment in whiteness. Lastly, few participants recognized the choice to " 'weigh the risks' of challenging other white individuals was itself a manifestation of white privilege" (Robbins & Jones, 2016, p. 646). White women graduate students struggle with understanding themselves and what to do with their experiences with racial dissonance.

Directly related to my study on undergraduate white women, Robbins (2017) also studied how racial dissonance occurred for white women in their pre-professional, e.g., college, experiences. Her finding most relevant to this present study is not all participants experienced racial dissonance in college, proving college does not necessarily facilitate critical identity exploration for white students. Of the ones who did experience racial dissonance, a range of co-curricular and classroom experiences contributed to racial dissonance (e.g., faculty Mentors of Color, courses on race and racism). Lastly, in a theoretical piece, Robbins and Quaye (2014) explored use of intersectionality to illustrate the messiness of gender oppression and racial privilege. They argued the messiness should not be shied away from but embraced. At the same time, one must be critical of when one is focusing on their gender oppression and not simultaneously recognizing their racial privilege. While Robbins' provided insight into the process of racial dissonance for white women, questions still remain on how white women participate in racism, which I sought to address in the present study.

Linder (2015), Robbins (2016, 2017), Robbins and Jones (2016), and Robbins and Quaye's (2014) operationalized gender and race for white women in higher education

scholarship and contributed to the understanding of how white women make sense of their racial selves *individually*. However, these studies utilized developmental approaches and do not pay significant attention to how whiteness operates as a structuring property (Owen, 2007). Developmental theorists who use white racial identity shed light on how white women make sense of *race* by centering their individual experiences. Researchers cannot, by nature, use development theories to better understand how *racism* and whiteness as a structuring property connect to white undergraduate women's racial and gendered experiences and understandings. More research is needed to uncover how white undergraduate women's individual understandings and experiences connect to structural understandings of how whiteness is upheld and maintained in the college setting.

In response to this gap in the literature, I will discuss the work of Ozias (2017) and Mata (2018), who explored how white women in higher education contribute to racially unjust systems, specifically in institutions of higher education. In Ozias's (2017) critical narrative inquiry of cis-gendered, undergraduate, white women, she explored how white women experience college and "do racism" (p. xii), defined as "their positioning and participation in white supremacist capitalist heteropatriarchy" (p. 28). Ozias' noteworthy findings include undergraduate white women "do racism" (p. xii) by demanding to be treated nicely, being silent when discussing racism, feeling entitled to space on campus, and performing ignorance to protect themselves. To explicate these findings in further detail, Ozias (2017) found white women reported wanting to feel like they were being treated nicely in situations with conflict around difference, and, when they were not given research opportunities, which were given to others, they perceived this as feeling unjustly excluded. Additionally, in their racetalk, white, undergraduate women used culture to stand in for race, utilizing colorblind ideologies. White

women also discussed feeling like they had a public right to space on campus and enjoyed studying in spaces that felt "exclusive," or quiet and hard to access. Mata (2018) interviewed 23 white women student affairs professionals at two public universities about their experiences with race through a critical whiteness studies lens. She found that all participants' racial understandings originated from a colorblind lens. Additionally, when this colorblind lens was disrupted it elicited emotional reactions to whiteness "specifically anger, avoidance, self-victimization and tears" (Mata, 2018, p. iii). The main themes that came from her dissertation study include: "emotional resistance to race, distance from racial terminology, identity as a minimization tool, evolution of awareness, as well as re-centering and challenging Whiteness" (Mata, 2018, p. iii). Mata also highlighted:

> a maneuver used to avoid race was avoiding racial terminology altogether as well as using other identities such as gender, sexual orientation and ability status to minimize the racial focus. Additionally, several participants encountered racial dissonance and continued to grapple with race as Whites and a few recognize the power there is in being White women in a student affairs organization. (Mata, 2018, p. iii)

Both Ozias (2017) and Mata (2018)'s work are some of the first studies I have seen which bridge the various gaps in literature mentioned above, by examining white women in higher education through a critical whiteness studies lens. While Ozias (2017) highlighted ways white women experience the college campus and do racism, I will add to existing literature with the present study by focusing on white women's racial ideologies and how they conceptualize use of space, physically and metaphorically, on the college campus. Mata (2018) also examined the way white women student affairs professionals utilize colorblind ideologies and emotionalities of whiteness. Because I feature photo-elicitation and walking interviews in my

current study, this lends itself to nuanced ways white womanhood operates in higher education. These methodological considerations were intentionally designed to provide a new analysis to examine nuance and context of whiteness, gender, and lived environment on college campuses.

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory, as a movement, is a group of activists and scholars who are looking to transform the relationship among race, racism, and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Critical race theory emerged in the 1970s in the field of law, as a response to the stalling of many civil rights advances of the 60s (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Critical race theorists questioned foundations of the liberal order in traditional civil rights discourse and has been applied in many fields, such as education. An important distinction about CRT as a theoretical framework is that it's intention is not solely to explain and understand social situations, but also to *transform* them for the better (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) introduced CRT in the field of education, and it has been used in education research ever since. Scholars have used CRT to look at educational inequities, which include school discipline, tracking, curriculum, and testing (Ladson-Billings, 1998). In this section, I discuss various critical race tools, which I used in this study. These include research on campus racial climate, microaggressions, and majoritarian stories.

Campus Racial Climate

One way in which whiteness manifests is through unwelcoming and exclusionary racial climates and environments Students of Color experience in institutions of higher education. Researchers on campus racial climate outline negative experiences faced by Students of Color (Cress & Ikeda, 2003; D'Augelli & Hershberger, 1993; Griffin, Muñiz, & Espinosa, 2012; Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005). Additionally, white undergraduate women made up 30% of all

undergraduate students at post-secondary institutions in 2015 (NCES, 2015), yet existing campus climate scholars primarily explored experiences of Students of Color (Clark & Mitchell, 2018; Griffin et al., 2012; Nguyen et al., 2017; Yosso et al.,2009). Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Penderson, and Allen (1999) illustrated how negative campus racial climates harm Students of Color and white students and has real effects on students' educational outcomes. While this literature has significantly contributed to our understanding of how campus climate impacts learning outcomes and experiences of Students of Color on college campuses, additional researchers must examine how white women understand racism to explicate how racism in higher education operates from the other side of the coin. Thus, I will contribute to race and racism higher education literature by focusing on white women, who oftentimes contribute to hostile campus climates experienced by Students of Color.

Additionally, Harper and Hurtado's (2007) meta-analysis of studies on campus climate illustrated Asian American, Black, Latinx, and Native American students at predominantly white universities felt their campuses privileged white interests, and only felt cultural ownership over spaces like ethnic and multicultural centers. They also found 15 years of research on campus racial climate, from 1992-2007, consistently suggested white peers do not report similar experiences as Students of Color. Additionally, in their own multi-campus study, during their focus groups with white students leaders they found these students were most satisfied with their social environments and assumed that their Peers of Color experienced their institution in a similar way (Harper & Hurtado, 2007). Harper and Hurtado (2007) confirmed previous research on how white students assess campus racial climate. The everyday racism and hostile environments People and Students of Color experience in predominantly white universities make it an important topic to further examine how racist practices are enacted by white students, and

white women specifically, and what structures (policies and processes) in these institutions continue to normalize white domination.

In sum, predominantly white institutions are oftentimes unwelcoming and unsafe for People of Color and further uphold white supremacy and the privileging of white people. The unsafe and unwelcoming climate Students of Color experience guides the motivation for this study. I explore how white undergraduate women make sense of whiteness in their lives and how they perceive lived campus environments not solely to better understand this phenomenon, but more importantly, as an effort to chip away at the racial violence white undergraduate women enact upon Students of Color.

Microagression analytical model. I used the microagression analytical framework, a CRT theoretical tool used in education, to frame my research questions (Pérez-Huber & Solórzano, 2015). The microagression analytical framework comes from a lineage of 20 years of scholarship on racial microaggressions in the field of education (Solórzano, 1997; Solórzano & Villalpando, 1998) and the harm they enact upon Students and People of Color. This scholarship was in turn informed by Chester Pierce, who has examined the concept of microagressions for over 40 years (Pérez-Huber & Solórzano, 2015).

Pérez-Huber and Solórzano (2015) developed the microagression analytical model as a way "to illustrate the inextricable and complex relationship between the everyday microaggressions experienced by People of Color, with institutional racism (e.g., structures and processes), and ideologies of white supremacy that maintain racial subordination" (p. 298). The framework includes three layers to a *racial microagression* (see Figure 2; Pérez-Huber & Solórzano, 2015a): a) the microagression is the innermost layer of the square, b) institutionalized racism lies outside of the center square, and c) *macroaggressions* are on the outermost layer.

Utilizing the framework of epidemiology, Pérez-Huber and Solórzano (2015) argued racism enacted on the individual and institutional level is only a *symptom* of the disease, while white supremacy is in fact the *actual* disease.

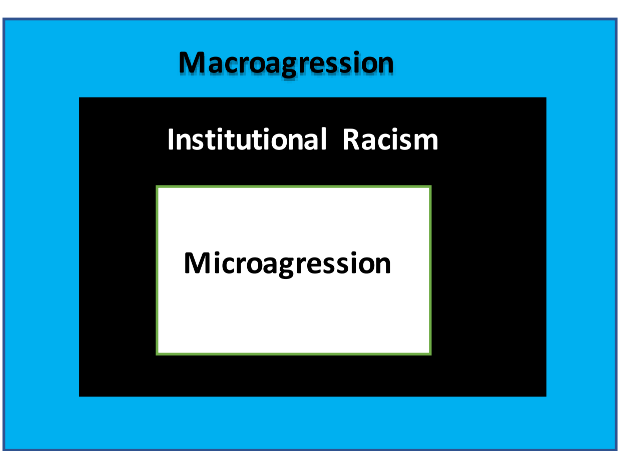

Figure 2. A Racial Microagressions Model. From "Racial Microaggressions as a Tool for Critical Race Research," by L. Pérez-Huber and D. Solórzano, 2015, *Race Ethnicity & Education, 18*, p. 302.

The microaggression analytic framework is an important theoretical tool for this study, as I use it to examine how individual white undergraduate women's experiences with whiteness at UCLA, the structures on the college campus they participate in, and how their experiences and perceptions contribute to upholding white supremacy are inter-related. As articulated by Pérez-Huber and Sólorzano (2015), "everyday experiences with racism are more than an individual experience, but part of a larger systemic racism that includes institutional and ideological forms" (p. 301). Thus, the microagression model lends itself well to illustrate this relationship between individuals, institutional racism (structures and processes), and ideologies. In my first research question, I ask how white undergraduate women make sense of whiteness in their lives at UCLA (which maps onto the individual level of the model). Research Questions 2 and 4 are: 2) How do

white undergraduate women perceive UCLA's campus environment? and 4) what are the structures (policies and processes) at UCLA that influence white women's understandings of whiteness? While all four of these questions map onto the second square in the model, they also explore relationships between all three layers, illustrating the inextricable relationship between them. This is why in the figure they are seen as different sized boxes that fit within one another, with the largest box being macroagressions. Lastly, research question 3) How do these perceptions work to uphold and or challenge white supremacy? ties individual white women's experiences with "the ideological foundations for the reproduction and perpetuation of institutional and everyday racism—white supremacy" (Pérez-Huber & Solórzano, 2015, p. 302).

Majoritarian stories. I guided this study with the concept of majoritarian stories. One of the five key tenets that make up CRT includes challenging dominant ideologies (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). CRT scholars argued race neutrality and objectivity act as a camouflage to serve dominant groups in society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). Additionally, Yosso (2006) explained majoritarian storytelling "is a method of recounting the experiences and perspectives of those with racial and social privilege" (p. 9). These narratives often silence and dismiss people "who offer evidence contradicting theses racially unbalanced portrayals" (p. 9). Additionally, people do not often question majoritarian stories which allows whiteness and white supremacy to remain invisible.

To challenge majoritarian stories, CRT scholars have used counterstorytelling to recount experiences of People of Color. While I do not draw on experiences of People of Color, I do use experiences of Students of Color in the literature to juxtapose experiences shared by white undergraduate women to understand and make more visible majoritarian narratives in this study. In other words, examining white undergraduate women's experiences and perceptions of the

lived environment at UCLA, without comparing them to perceptions Students of Color have of the campus racial climate, makes it difficult to see how whiteness and white supremacy operates at UCLA. Thus, I use the concept of majoritarian stories to name how whiteness functions and operates at UCLA.

Chapter Summary

In this study, I sought to examine how white undergraduate women make sense of whiteness in their lives and their perceptions of the campus environment at UCLA. To investigate this issue, I reviewed limited studies in which researchers directly explore whiteness and womanhood, but I found several relevant studies across multiple fields. Thus, I completed a comprehensive examination of what we know about white undergraduate women and their participation in racism, drawing upon third-world feminist critiques, sociological studies of white women and how they understand race, undergraduate students' racial ideologies, and, lastly, studies on white undergraduate women and their racial understandings in this literature review.

Third-world feminists teach that white women protect their whiteness and this is a complex and multi-layered phenomenon, which needs to be further empirically explored. White women historically participated in quotidian acts to maintain white supremacy and to gain leverage in the women's movement. While sociological scholars also explore what it means for white women to be white, this study contributes to further understanding of how white women understand their whiteness, and how this is either upheld, or sometimes challenged, at UCLA. This study contributes to existing literature by not leaving how white undergraduate women perpetuate racism at UCLA under-theorized.

The few scholars who do use critical whiteness studies when examining white students' racial understandings focus solely on white males (Cabrera, 2012, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2018),

white student leaders (Foste, 2019a, 2019b), and white undergraduates in general (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Bonilla-Silva & Forman, 2011; Jayakumar & Adamian, 2016, 2017). Researchers who have taken up the racial understandings of white women (Linder, 2015; Robbins 2012; Robbins & Jones, 2016) often rely on developmental models to explain white identity. Thus, to add to this body of work, I examined white undergraduate women through a critical whiteness studies lens, and also used a gender analysis to explore how white undergraduate women make sense of whiteness at UCLA. To my knowledge, Ozias (2017) and Mata (2018) are the only researchers to explore white women in higher education experiences through a critical whiteness lens. While Ozias's (2017) study significantly contributed to the subject matter specifically for white undergraduate women, the methodologies I employ allow me to further explicate how space is raced and race is spaced on the college campus.

Additionally, in this chapter, I discussed two theories that inform this study, CWS and CRT. The theoretical frameworks of CWS and CRT directly inform the research questions which guide this study. Both of these frameworks, CRT and CWS, are guided by challenging dominant ideologies like white supremacy. This is a key reason why I use both to guide this study. However, each theoretical framework has different tools and concepts that lend themselves to the development of this study. For instance, I use CWS concepts like whiteness as a structuring property, white complicity, ontological expansiveness, and color-evasiveness to explore how white undergraduate women make sense of whiteness in their lives and how they perceive the UCLA campus lived environment. Given that I am examining whiteness and womanhood particularly, I also use Accapadi's (2007) one-up one-down positioning to explore research Question 1. Lastly, I also use CRT concepts like the microaggression model, campus racial climate literature, and majoritarian stories. These constructs helped me illustrate how whiteness

operated in white undergraduate women's experiences and perceptions at UCLA. These are some of the major theoretical tools I used to make sense of data in this study.

In the next chapter, I discuss the methodology and methods I used to guide this study. First, I remind the reader of my research questions and discuss why I used a phenomenology as a methodology to guide this study. Second, I discuss my recruitment and selection process and introduce the participants of the study. Third, I discuss my data collection procedures. Fourth, I discuss my data analysis process. Fifth, I address issues of trustworthiness and accountability and limitations of this study.

Chapter 3: Methods

In this chapter, I provide a discussion of the research design, data collection procedures, and analysis process. First, I will discuss the research questions, which guide this study. I also discuss why I used a phenomenological approach. Second, I discuss how I used my pilot study to develop the current study, including participant recruitment and selection procedures. I also highlight the focal participant's demographic and academic profiles. Third, I will discuss the data collection process, including my five data collection methods. Fourth, I discuss my data analysis process. Lastly, I will conclude with issues of trustworthiness, limitations of the study, and my positionality as a researcher.

Research Questions

I examined how white undergraduate women make sense of whiteness in their own lives and their perceptions of the campus environment at UCLA. I sought to document how participants' experiences at UCLA informed their understandings of race and whiteness. The following research questions frame my study.

I posed the following research questions to frame my study of how white women understand whiteness in their own lives at UCLA and how their experiences at UCLA inform their understandings.

1. How do white undergraduate women interpret whiteness in their lives at UCLA?
2. How do white undergraduate women perceive UCLA's campus environment?
3. How do these perceptions work to uphold and or challenge white supremacy?
4. What are the structures (policies and processes) at UCLA that influence white women's understandings of whiteness?

Phenomenological Study Design

My study used a phenomenolgical study design. I used phenomenologically based interviewing because the aim was to have "participants reconstruct [their] experience with the topic under study" (Seidman, 2013, p. 14). Seidman (2013) highlighted four themes that guide phenomenological based interviewing. First, this type of interviewing attempts to capture the experiences of participants and how they make meaning of those experiences (Seidman, 2013). The aim of this study was to gain a rich understanding of how white undergraduate women experience and perceive whiteness at UCLA. Thus, I asked participants to reconstruct and reflect on their experiences. Second, this type of interviewing attempts to capture participants' experiences from their subjective point of view (Seidman, 2013). Accordingly, this study draws on a variety of qualitative case study methods including a demographic questionnaire, guided interviews, photo-elicitation interviews, walking interviews, and research memos to gain participants' points of view. Gathering data from various sources better captures social phenomena and the everyday life experiences of participants. Third, there was a focus on participants reflecting on and reconstructing what made up their lived experiences. I did this by implementing a series of three separate interviews with each participant. Fourth, I paid close attention to participants' meaning-making of their experiences within their contexts (Seidman, 2013). By focusing on how they made meaning of their experiences within their context I was able to focus on how each participant made sense of their experience from their point of view.

Study Site-Institutional Context

The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) is an important site to conduct this study because, as discussed in Chapter 1, while UCLA is no longer considered a predominantly white university, (i.e., the white population is less than half) it remains a historically white

institution. Institutions like UCLA are important places to explore whiteness because it is an example of an institution that can maintain and uphold white whiteness, even when an institution's racial demographic composition changes (Bell, 2005). While my unit of analysis for this study is white undergraduate women and how they understand whiteness, the context is also important. Informed by critical frameworks and theories, I am also seeking to "examine power-laden social and cultural processes within particular social sites" (Given, 2008, p. 2). In this study I used UCLA as a particular social site to examine whiteness and white supremacy on a college campus.

Pilot Study

Lessons learned from the pilot study helped me as I made methodological decisions about the current study. During the pilot study, I investigated how white undergraduate women understand and experience race and racism on a college campus. I conducted five semi-structured interviews with self-identified undergraduate white women at UCLA (see Table 1). Interviews lasted, on average, 60 minutes. The shortest interview lasted approximately 40 minutes while the longest lasted 1 hour and 15 minutes. Table 1 provides information about the pilot study participants. The final column in Table 1 is important to note because it indicates if the participant was a member of a Panhellenic Sorority. Three participants in the study participated in panhellenic sororities.

As I analyzed these data, I found evidence that white non-sorority women and white sorority women have different experiences on the college campus as it relates to how they understand race and racism. This confirms findings from Cabrera (2018) who found that white fraternity members often claimed racial victimization and minimized racism. Thus, two narrative profiles were created to generate themes from the interview transcripts: 1) white non-sorority

women and 2) white sorority women. From white non-sorority women, I found that racism was understood as structural and that their involvement in organizations and events during their college experiences played a large role in informing their racial understandings and attempting to work through whiteness. From white sorority women, I found that racism is defined as individualistic and the important role Greek life played on bypassing their racial awareness, and how this in turn upholds white supremacy on the college campus.

Table 1

Winter 2016 Pilot Study Participants

Participant Pseudonym	Hometown	Year	Major	Panhellenic Sorority[4]
Rebecca	Scottsdale, AZ	3rd year	English	Yes
Natalie	Pasadena, CA	2nd year	Chicano/a Studies	No
Elizabeth	Yucaipa, CA	5th year	Geography	No
Megan	Granite Bay, CA	1st year	Electrical Engineering	Yes
Jade	Agoura, CA	2nd year	Communication Studies	Yes

My investigation during the pilot study helped me make at least three important decisions about the current study. First, conducting the pilot study, I learned that one-time semi-structured interviews were not fully effective in gaining a deep understanding of race and racism. Thus, I did not use pilot study data in the analysis of my subsequent study. I also utilized findings from the pilot study as I made various other decisions regarding the current study, including those

[4] Panhellenic sororities are defined as the "governing body of the 11 National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) inter/national women's sororities and 2 associate member Chapters" (UCLA Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life, n.d., para. 34).

regarding recruitment strategies, selection criteria, and methods related to data collection and analysis.

Participant Selection Criteria

To select participants for the current study, I used a criteria to be eligible for inclusion: a) she/they must self-identify as a white undergraduate woman and b) she/they must have been at UCLA for at least 1 year. Through purposive sampling, 11 focal participants at UCLA who self-identify as white undergraduate women participated in this study. Purposeful sampling is defined as the use of "context-rich and detailed accounts of specific populations and locations" (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 128). I utilized purposeful sampling in this study to select participants to capture the particular experiences of white undergraduate women attending UCLA.

Because I am particularly interested in exploring how white undergraduate women understand racism on the college campus, what sub-environments they participate in, and how those environments uphold white racial dominance, it was necessary to select participants with at least a year of on-campus experience. I designed this inclusion criteria when I surmised that those with less than a year of experience on campus would not yet be ready to reflect on their thinking over time. The one year requirement serves as important inclusion criteria because it solidified that the participants I interviewed have already had some experiences on the college campus that inform their racial understandings. Interviewing white women about their racial understandings are key to this study because a) few researchers have examined this particular group with a critical whiteness lens (Ozias, 2017) b) matching the race and gender of the interviewer often increases trustworthiness (Seidman, 2013), and c) I have a personal investment in naming and challenging racism with other white women.

Recruitment Procedures

To recruit participants, I began by using a targeted sampling method, reaching out to student offices, the sorority life office, residential life, and the women's center. I sent these centers a recruitment email and requested for it to be sent out to listservs. I also offered to visit center events and meetings to introduce and present my study to potential participants in the email. The email included a description of the study, criteria for participation, my contact information, and a link to a brief demographic questionnaire (see Appendix A). Following this email strategy, I received low response rates on the demographic questionnaire. My second step consisted of reaching out to academic advisors in the College of Letters and Science. I asked these advisors to forward my email to their students. My third strategy was to post digital flyers in residential life. I also posted electronic versions of the same flyer on social media pages (see Appendix B). The flyer included a brief description of my study, my contact information, and a link to the questionnaire. Lastly, I utilized snowball sampling (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Snowball sampling is when participants are asked to invite other relevant contacts who would be good sources given the participant criteria and focus of inquiry (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). This purposeful sampling strategy solicited one additional participant for the study. Lastly, completing the demographic questionnaire was a necessary first-step in participation. In total, 58 white women filled out the demographic questionnaire.

Participant Selection

To select women to participate as focal participants in the study, I also decided to ensure that I diversified my sample of undergraduate white women as much as possible and explored the multiple sub-environments in which students participate. I employed a diverse sampling strategy because I sought perspectives that went beyond my own experience and positionality

and that were representative of the UCLA campus. To do this, I employed a participant selection rubric. I examined two dimensions to ensure my sample was diverse. I first sought to ensure participants came from various majors and sub-environments. I enforced a requirement that no more than three participants could share the same major or be involved in the same sub-environment. I also worked to ensure there be at least three transfer students in the sample. Second, I sought to include a diverse range of social identities. The demographic questionnaire asked questions related to social identities (i.e., socioeconomic status, ethnicity, citizenship status, political identity, and sexual orientation). I utilized this academic, environmental, and social identity information to ensure my sample was diverse.

Of the 58 people who returned the questionnaire, 44 expressed interest in further participation. Based on the participant selection rubric I discussed above, I then emailed 30 of those 44 women an invitation to participate in the study. I asked if they would be willing to speak for 15 minutes to discuss the study further. Of the 30 women I contacted via email, I spoke to 16 women on the phone. These 16 were the only ones that followed up after I contacted them via email. During the phone meeting, I introduced myself, introduced the study, explained the time commitment, and what I would ask of them. This conversation gave potential participants an opportunity to decide whether they remained interested and willing to participate. If they remained interested, we scheduled our first interview via phone or, at a later date, via email.

Focal Participants

Eleven self-identified white women decided to participate in this study over the course of the fall quarter in 2018. All participants were between the ages of 18-21. Table 2 includes further information regarding participant demographics. The pseudonyms utilized in this study were

self-selected pseudonyms participants chose for themselves during our first interview together. In the event that a participant did not provide me with a pseudonym I made one up.

Table 2

Fall 2018 Personal Demographics of Participants

Pseudonym	Sexual Orientation	Income	Political Views	Hometown	First-Gen
Cindy	Pansexual	$30,000 to $39,999	Far left	San Bernadino, CA	Y
Kimberly	Heterosexual	$60,000 to $79,999	Liberal	Barstow, CA	N
Samantha	Heterosexual	$80,000 to $99,999	Middle-of-the-road	Chicago, IL	N
Veronica	Heterosexual	$100,000 to $199,999	Liberal	Sonoma County, CA	Y
River	Bisexual	More than $200,000	Far left	Okaloosa County, FL	N
Karen	Pansexual	$40,000 to $59,999	Far Left	Victor Valley, CA	Y
Daisy	Lesbian	$80,000 to $99,999	Liberal	Salt Lake City, UT	N
Josephine	Heterosexual	$80,000 to $99,999	Middle-of-the-road	Merced County, CA	N
Natasha	Heterosexual	More than $200,000	Middle-of-the-road	St. Croix, Virgin Islands	N
Rebecca	Heterosexual	$100,000 to $199,999	Middle-of-the-road	Pasadena, CA	N
Angelica	Heterosexual	More than $200,000	Conservative	Orange County, CA	N

Seven of the participants identified as heterosexual and three as pansexual, bisexual, and/or lesbian. Incomes varied. Eight participants reported annual family incomes above $80,000 and three participants reported incomes between $30,000-$79,000 with the median income of $80,000. Political views also varied. Three participants identified as far left, three as liberal, four as middle-of-the road, and one as conservative. While most participants were from various

places in California, four participants were out-of-state participants. Lastly, three participants identified as first-generation college students.

Table 3 provides further information regarding the participants' academic lives. Years in college varied. There were three second-years, five third-years, and three fourth-years. Major areas of study included social sciences (6), the STEM field (4), and humanities (1). Lastly, involvement on campus included social, service, and professional organizations.

Table 3

Fall 2018 Academic Demographics of Participants

Pseudonym	Year	Major	Involvement
Cindy	2	Marine Biology	Queer Alliance, Gender Sexuality Society Living Learning Community
Kimberly	3	Cognitive Science	Bjork Research Laboratory, Active Minds
Samantha	2	Psychology	Psychology Organization
Veronica	4	American Literature and Culture and History	American Association of University Women, Femme Magazine, Bruin Political Union, Central for Liberal Arts and Free Institutions
River	3	Environmental Science	Knitting Club, Environmental Student Network
Karen	3	Aerospace engineering	Rocket Science and LGBT student org Prism
Daisy	3	Math	Climbing Team, Bruin Film Society, Undergrad Math Student Association, German Club
Josephine	3	Statistics	Statistics Club, ACTS 2 Fellowship, Beach Volleyball, German Club, Bruin Sports Analytics
Natasha	4	Psychology	Society of Physical and Occupational Therapists
Rebecca	2	Psychology	Alpha Gamma Delta Sorority, IM Cornhole, Tutorfly
Angelica	4	Environmental Studies	UCLA Christians, Toastmaster, Geography Association

Study Setting

UCLA is a 4-year public research university located on the West Coast in the United States and is classified with highest research activity and very high research activity (NCES,

n.d.). In the 2017-2018 academic year, the demographic makeup of undergraduate students consisted of 28% Asian, 27% White, 22% Latino/a, 5% two or more races, 3% Black, 2% Race/ethnicity unknown, less than 1% Pacific Islander, and less than 1% American Indian or Alaska Native, 12% Non-resident alien (NCES, 2017; IPEDS, n.d.). The campus is also 43% male and 57% female (NCES, 2017). More than 50% of the undergraduates receive need-based scholarships or grant aid (NCES, 2017). There is a total enrollment of about 31,000 undergraduate students (NCES, 2017). Nearly one-third of the undergraduate population earning a degree in 2015-2016 were first generation college graduates, meaning neither parent had a 4-year degree (NCES, 2017).

Data Collection Procedures

Studying and talking about racism with white individuals is methodologically challenging. According to Sleeter (1993), white people are frequently uncomfortable when the topic of discussion is race. Bonilla-Silva and Forman (2000) illustrated the sanitization of ideas around race when comparing survey data to interview data. This entailed participants reporting racial attitudes that were tolerant or ambivalent in surveys. In the 2009 ethnographic study, Pollock (2009) showed informal conversations with white teacher participants about race were far more explicit than compared to a formal interviewing environment. Trepagnier (2010) used focus groups for her data collection to "explore racism from the inside out because it allows the researcher to probe beyond the surface" (p. 160). Lastly, Boucher (2018) found photo elicitation interviews proved to be an important methodological tool when discussing race with white teachers because it allowed participants to use the photos as a mediator. It was particularly helpful because the photos depicted particular moments in the classroom which then elicited

more detailed responses from white teachers about their relationships with their African American students.

Taking into consideration the methodological challenges mentioned above, I implemented data collection methods in a manner designed to a) circumvent some of the challenges presented and b) to permit triangulation of the data. Triangulation is a technique that adds trustworthiness because it can help the researcher to understand if different methods of data collection offer convergent results (J. A. Maxwell, 2013). Each participant participated in a) a brief demographic questionnaire, b) an informal interview, c) a photo elicitation interview, and d) a walking interview. Lastly, I also utilized my own research memos as a data collection method. Because participation in this study was time intensive, I compensated each participant with a $20 Amazon gift card and offered snacks and drinks at each of our meetings. Each component of the research design is explained further in the following section.

Part 1: Demographic questionnaire. Each potential participant began by filling out a demographic questionnaire, which they received via email and through recruitment flyers (see Appendix C). The questionnaire asked participants items related to demographic background, including year in school, major course of study, first year or transfer admitted student, socioeconomic status, ethnic identity, racial identity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and political identity. Questions related to socioeconomic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, and political identity were asked through a list students had options selecting from. These questions were taken from the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA Freshmen Survey (HERI, n.d.). The pick list for socioeconomic status students had options to select from included: less than $20,000, $20,000-$29,000, $30,000-$39,000, $40,000-$59,000, $60,000-$79,000, $80,000-$99,000, $100,000-$199,000, more than $200,000. The pick list for gender identity

students had options to select from included: gender queer/ gender non-conforming, trans woman, trans man, woman, man, and not listed above. If they selected not listed above they had a space to enter the gender identity of their preference. The pick list for sexual orientation students had options to select from included: gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, pansexual, asexual, heterosexual, and not listed above. If they selected not listed above they had a space to enter the sexual orientation of their preference. The pick list for political orientation students had options to select from included: far left, liberal, middle-of-the-road, conservative, and far right. I did not provide definitions of the political orientation options. I did not tabulate gender identity in my tables because each participant identified as cisgender. Additionally, I utilized the colorblind ideology scale to explore participant experiences and views on race (Cabrera, 2009). I also asked participants to share some of the student organizations they are involved in on campus. The final question asked participants if they were interested in further participation in the study.

Part 2: Guided interview. As discussed in the literature review, little research exists on how undergraduate white women understand and participate in racism. Additionally, as previously mentioned, racism is a challenging topic to discuss with white participants. Thus, the first method of data collection that I used consisted of a guided interview (see Appendix D). Guided interview is often used as a first interview because it helps establish trust between the researcher and participant (Olson, 2016). Guided interviews are left somewhat free and open-ended to allow the participant to tell their story. Below are examples of questions I posed to help participants tell their story:

- Tell me about your background (family, school, friendships, neighborhood) and experiences.
- How did those experiences inform your racial understandings?

- I am interested in your story and college experience and whatever you want to tell me about it.
- Tell me about what or how you have learned about race and racism in your college experiences.
- How has being in college shaped how you understand race and racism?

As Ozias (2017) discussed, silence around issues of racism is very common. Due to white women's socialization, probing questions such as "tell me more about that" and "what exactly do you mean" helped participants elaborate on their views. The opportunity to include these probing questions was intended as a strength. These probing questions are a strategy also used by Trepagnier (2010) in her study with well-meaning white women. Interviews lasted 60-90 minutes. Upon completing these interviews, I shared instructions for the following interview. I also began to code for themes in the interview transcripts and used those emerging themes as topics to further explore during the following interview.

Part 3: Photo elicitation interview. Upon completing our first interview, participants were given brief oral and written instructions for the photo elicitation interviewing (PEI) activity (see Appendix E). They were asked to complete the photo-taking activity over the course of one week. Upon completing the PEI activity, participants were asked to share their photos during an interview. Students emailed the photos to me before our PEI. I began the PEI by following up from the last interview and stated, "is there anything else you have thought of since we last talked that you would like to add?" This, at times, invited participants to share various ideas they had been reflecting on since the last time we met. For five of the participants, this consisted of things like someone important in their life they forgot to mention, a concept I had raised during our interview that they had been thinking about, or a discussion they had with someone about

participating in this study. This proved to be valuable because it allowed for the beginning of our time together to be a space for further reflection for participants to discuss issues related to race and racism in their lives. For the remainder of our time, the interview was informal. The main questions included: Please share with me what is going on here? Why did you decide to bring in this photo? Do you think race is absent or present in this photo? (see Appendix E).

The use of PEI methodology has increased (Clark-Ibáñez, 2004). However in higher education research, the use of written text has been historically prioritized over visual methods (Kelly & Kortegast, 2018). PEI and the use of photos can mediate communication between the researcher at participant (Clark-Ibáñez, 2004) and open possibilities for new understandings of how individuals experience higher education institutions (Kortegast, McCann, Branch, Latz, Kelly, & Linder, 2019). In order to challenge traditional power dynamics between researcher and participant, participants take photographs of what matters to them. As stated by Clark-Ibáñez (2004), at times, what is photographed is less important than the personal narratives the photos illustrate. In sum, when implementing PEI as a methodology, the researcher focuses on the subjective meaning of the photo for the participant (Clark-Ibáñez). Boucher (2018) argued that photo elicitation allowed for more honesty in conversations about race. Cognizant to the aforementioned methodological challenges, traditional interview methods suffer because white individuals are averse to discussing race. Using PEI is a methodological choice that mitigates those challenges. Thus, I utilized participant-generated visuals, specifically participant-driven photos and PEI as a mediator to discuss issues of race on the college campus with undergraduate white women. PEI's are also informed by the conceptual tool of ontological expansiveness, which is defined as white people acting and thinking as if they should be entitled to all spaces (Sullivan, 2010). PEI and the participants' photos allowed me to examine how whiteness is a

learned structural orientation (Yancy, 2012). Unlike traditional interview methods, PEI helps the researcher "empower . . . the interviewees to teach the researcher about aspects of their social world otherwise ignored or taken for granted" (Clark-Ibáñez, 2004, p. 1524). Photographs can be a methodological tool that serve as a catalyst for meaning making that often "remain dormant in a face-to-face interview" (Clark-Ibáñez, 2004, p. 1513). For instance, in Clark-Ibáñez (2004) study this looked like photos serving as a way for participants to make indirect associations with ideas related to the photographs.

There are three challenges that researchers implementing PEI most overcome. First, not all participants may be able to take their own photographs, and this assumes participants are able-bodied. While I did not have any participant who identified as having a disability, in the case that participants were not able to take their own photos, I planned to give them the option of having proxy respondents, someone who can take photos on their behalf to ensure no participant is excluded from participating. In implementing this procedure, I replicated the approach of one other study (Dunne, Hallett, Kay, & Woolhouse, 2017). Second, researchers need to protect the confidentiality of participants that are depicted in the photos. The use of PEI potentially threatens confidentiality because the photos are in contexts that include non-participants. These non-participants would not necessarily be aware of the study or of their participation. Without knowing of the study, non-participants are unable to consent to participation. Thus, it becomes necessary to protect photograph subjects and their identity. One way to protect photograph subjects anonymity is to insert emojis within the images, a strategy that I utilized (Dunne et al., 2017). While most of the photos within this study do not include images of identifiable participants and non-participants, for those that do I used emoji's to cover their faces to ensure anonymity. Third, when implementing PEI activity, the researcher must not assume each

participant has access to a smart phone to take photos. While I did not come across this issue, for any participant who did not have access to a smart phone, I planned to provide them with a digital camera. At the end of the PEI, I discussed instructions for when we would conduct our final walking interview. Additionally, walking often involves more social interactions by design. Thus, with each participant, I engaged in a conversation regarding how participants would like to handle encounters with others. This was implemented to maintain confidentiality. I took into consideration the methodological challenges addressed from one other study as rationale for engaging in this discussion around confidentiality with participants (Harris, 2016).

Part 4: Walking interview. A week following the photo elicitation interviews, I conducted walking interviews on UCLA's campus with participants (see Appendix F). Like photo elicitation methods, the walking interview is also a powerful qualitative tool because it allows for *in situ,* more natural interactions and understandings of particular settings. Harris (2016a) expanded the use of walking interviews into higher education research, specifically for multiracial undergraduate women and their racialized experiences. I expanded the use of this method to explore white undergraduate women's experiences on the college campus.

The walking interview is a tool that helped me explore how undergraduate white women understand and participate in racism on the college campus because it allowed me to explore how one "perceive[s], navigate[s], and interact[s] *in situ* within [a] historically White environment" (Harris, 2016, p. 368). Combining the sit-down interview with the photo elicitation interview and the walking interview served to elicit memories for participants that may not be explored in traditional sit-down interviews (Maxwell, 2013). In other words, I used multiple data collection methods as a way to examine "different aspects of the phenomena" that I am studying (Maxwell, 2013, p. 102).

During the walking interview, I asked participants to take me to places on campus that are most salient to them at UCLA. I specifically asked participants to consider places that relate to their racial understandings. I did a majority of the walking interviews during peak social periods on campus. Scheduling during peak social periods was an attempt to capture more *in situ* social interactions. In implementing this procedure, I replicated the approach of at least one other study (Harris, 2016). While most of the interviews were scheduled between the hours of 11am-2pm, some participants' schedules did not allow us to conduct the walking interviews at this time. This led us to schedule them slightly later in the afternoon. Lastly, another challenge associated with the walking interview includes the assumption that all participants are able-bodied/able to walk in a particular space (Harris, 2016). Thus, to prevent participants from being excluded, I planned the option to offer a ride-along, where we would drive within the space, and/or a conversation utilizing a campus map in place of the walking interview. I did not utilize this option.

At the end of the walking interview, I spent the last 10 minutes sitting down with each participant and provided them with questions for a final reflection (see Appendix F). During the reflection, I asked participants to provide feedback about their experience participating in the study. I asked them specifically what they felt like they were taking away from the interview. I also asked if they would expand on any thoughts about race, racism, or race relations. In implementing this procedure, I replicated the approach of at least one other study (Trepagnier, 2010). I included a final reflection as part of the study to promote catalytic validity. Catalytic validity is “when a research project has an impact on participants in such a way that it changes their behavior or perspective regarding the topic” (Trepagnier, 2010, p. 161). Other researchers have shown (Sleeter, 1993, Tatum, 1994) and as confirmed by my pilot study, white people do

not have many spaces to discuss and explore how they come to understand race and racism. After participating in my pilot study, many participants thanked me for giving them a space to reflect on their understandings about race and racism. Thus, I incorporated a formal way for participants to reflect on their experience in the study, which is a strength of this study. I sought to provide a way to a) see what they got out of or did not get out of participating in the study and b) a space to share their own feedback about their participation in this study.

Lastly, my use of photo elicitation interviews and walking interviews was also informed by the conceptual tool of ontological expansiveness and my desire to examine the college campus space through a critical whiteness lens. By incorporating the critical whiteness concept of ontological expansiveness into my research design my intention was to operationalize and explore white racial spatial logics at UCLA. White racial spatial logics specifically refer to how white undergraduate white women made sense of how race in the college environment is spaced and how space is raced.

Part 5: Research memos. I wrote research memos to record my thoughts and reactions after each part of my data collection process (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Research memos are utilized to record "observations and reflections about various aspects of your study" (Ravitch & Carl, 206, p. 116). In this study, I utilized research memos to process information as I was developing the study, to document my own experiences, and to explore answers to the research questions. I explain this further in the upcoming sections.

Data Analysis

My data analysis process consisted of several steps. To analyze the interview data, I first listened and transcribed the audio interview recordings. I made note of emotional reactions, silences, and pauses in my transcriptions. As I listened to and transcribed each interview, I took

notes and wrote research memos of tentative ideas (J. A. Maxwell, 2013). Research memos help make sense of individual experiences within larger structural systems. I then uploaded these transcripts into Dedoose (Version 8.2.14), an online qualitative data analysis software. The software assisted me in better organizing the data. I used Dedoose to code and as I searched to understand the relationships between codes.

Once all the data were uploaded into Dedoose, I read my entire data corpus without interruption. This uninterrupted read involved reading each of the three interview transcripts per participant (31 interviews) without taking notes until the very end to get a full picture of the data. In implementing this procedure, I replicated the approach suggested by Ravitch & Carl (2016) so I could understand the overarching context and become immersed in the entire data corpus. Afterward, I began reading and coding by method, reading the first interview of each of 11 women. I read them in a specific order after separating the participants into broad categories, which I conceptualized as "working through whiteness" and "upholding whiteness" (Cabrera, 2009). I preliminarily did this based on my understanding of the existing literature, which illustrated the distinctions between the two (Cabrera, 2018). Working through whiteness is defined as participants who expressed "systemic understandings of racism, 2) auto-criticism regarding racial bias, 3) willingness to consider race-conscious policies, and 4) actions that supported racial justice" (Cabrera, 2012, p. 96). While normalizing whiteness is conceptualized as participants who had racial ideologies that "recreate and reinforce the existing paradigm of White supremacy by normalizing Whiteness, believing the U.S. system is truly open/meritocratic, and undercutting the significance of contemporary racism" (Cabrera, 2012, p. 97).

I started with the four women in the upholding whiteness category. I then moved on to the few participants of which I was unsure. Lastly, I went through the transcripts for the women in the "working through whiteness" category. As I went through the transcripts, I utilized both deductive/a priori and inductive/emergent coding processes. To code my data in the first round, I utilized several coding approaches, which included in-vivo coding, process coding, values coding, and versus coding. Additionally, I also connected the data with a particular highlighted color to visualize how much I was using one strategy over others.

In-vivo, process, and descriptive coding are known as initial coding approaches (Saldaña, 2016). In-vivo, as defined by (Saldaña, 2016), is the process of using a short phrase from the actual language found in participants' transcripts. Process coding, as defined by (Saldaña, 2016), is the process of using gerunds to connote human actions that the researcher observes in the transcripts. I used in-vivo and process coding to stay close to the data during my first review of the transcripts. I chose to utilize in-vivo coding to understand participants' concepts and ideas from their point of view and experiences (Saldaña, 2016, p. 106). One example of an in-vivo code I utilized included things like "oh rich white Americans" to illustrate when participants discussed how whiteness is often associated with assumptions related to socioeconomic status. Another example of an in-vivo code I used included "but not the Mexican ones" to illustrate when participants utilized racial stereotyping and deficit ways of thinking about Communities of Color. In contrast, process coding utilizes gerunds to connote action in the data. This includes observable actions and "conceptual actions relayed by participants" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 78). An example of a gerund I coded was omitting race discussions to illustrate conceptually what I saw participants doing in the narrative they were sharing. Lastly, descriptive coding, as defined by Saldaña (2016), is the process of coding data using a word or phrase that highlights the basic

topic of the passage in the transcript. I used descriptive coding as a way to capture main ideas that were coming up in participants' experiences and perceptions. Examples of this code include things like *not belonging, race as absent,* and *race as present.*

I also utilized other coding methods, which included values coding and versus coding. Values coding, as defined by Saldaña (2016), is the process of coding data that reflects a participants' worldviews and perspectives. Values coding allowed me to code for participants' values, attitudes, and beliefs. Given that my study explores racial understanding and experiences of undergraduate white women at UCLA, values coding is an important strategy to capture what participants think about race and racism. Additionally, because this is a phenomenological study with the unit of analysis being understanding the experiences and perceptions of white undergraduate women, these strategies helped me explore participant perspectives and world views. Some of the values I coded for included *white women as innocent*, *race as not important*, and *different cultural experiences*. Versus coding, as defined by Saldaña (2016), is the process of capturing competing goals within participants and focusing on patterns that reveal contradictions. This coding strategy was also selected due to the nature of this study. Because participant narratives seemed to contradict ideas expressed or certain moments of their lives being different than others, I utilized versus coding to capture things like *community college vs. UCLA*, *UCLA race discourse vs. home no race discourse*, *white racial self vs. People of Color*.

After coding the first three interviews utilizing these coding methods, I had 90 codes total and needed to condense some of my codes. I did this by individually looking at each code and beginning to put them into categories (Coté, Salmella, Baria, & Russell, 1993). During the same time, I began to look at which codes overlapped and captured similar concepts and began to merge those codes together. Examples of merging codes included *omitting race discussions* and

belief that people do not want to talk about race with white people or *white people are the minority* and *experiencing otherness*.

Utilizing theoretical concepts in critical whiteness, existing empirical literature, and the stories in the data themselves to guide my coding process, I went through one round of coding with all 31 interviews. Throughout the coding process, I iteratively refined my codebook and developed descriptions for each code, which I have attached as my finalized codebook (see Appendix G). With the 102 codes I developed (52 parent codes and 46 child codes), I then looked at the frequency counts of the codes. The codes that I used the most included *race and class* (142), *race and gender* (124), *racial discussion* (98), *Friends of Color* (88), *race evasiveness* (78) and *racial insulation* (50).

In my second cycle of coding, I utilized meta-coding to understand how my first-cycle codes fit into more abstract conceptual categories. I continued to incorporate inductive codes, keeping critical whiteness concepts, gender, and ontological expansiveness in mind. In intersectionality work, Bowleg (2008) stated one must "interpret this individual level data within a larger sociohistorical context of structural inequality that may not be explicit or directly observable in the data" (p. 320). Thus, some things I coded for also included *policies on campus (15)*, *ontological expansiveness (32), awareness of ontological expansiveness (10), sub-environments (352)*. Throughout my second cycle of coding, I continued to refine my codebook. I continued to write research memos as I made sense of the data and to make my interpretations and the participants' experiences as transparent as possible.

In addition to employing the two-cycle coding method, I also looked for "rich points" in the data. Informed by critical ethnographic methods, I used rich points to question objective, subjective, and normative truth claims I see within the data (Trepagnier, 2010). Given that I am

examining how white undergraduate women's experiences and perceptions of whiteness and existing researchers found that racially privileged individuals struggle with naming and identifying racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2010, Cabrera 2014a; Sleeter, 1993), I cannot rely solely on participant world views. Cabrera (2016) poignantly contemplates a similar concern and question. He states that if whiteness represents, an inverted epistemology, an epistemology of ignorance, how do we as researchers interpret the narratives of White participants as concurrently accurate and inaccurate? In addition, white participants often hold views and use language that distorts racial reality (Trepagnier, 2010). Thus, the coding method of looking for rich points allows me as a white researcher to see where there are disagreements in translation between the world of the participants and my viewpoints as the researcher. The intention of this is to "reveal underlying assumptions regarding power hierarchies, inequities, and cultural knowledge" (Cook, 2008, p. 5). Upon observing a rich data point, I asked, what happened in this rich data point and why? These questions were considered by balancing both a priori theoretical assumptions and the data as my primary source of insight.

Accountability and Trustworthiness

My subjectivity and position in my research were a tool for me to better understand my research bias. As I previously mentioned, I utilized a research journal throughout the data collection and analysis process. Journaling allowed for my reflexivity and a medium to reflect on my own biases. I used this journal to examine how I processed information, documented my experiences, and explored answers to the research questions. At least one other researcher has used journaling in a similar manner (J. A. Maxwell, 2013). Keeping a research journal and writing research memos after each interview allowed me to explore reactivity. Exploring reactivity is to constantly explore how I was influencing what participants share with me (J. A.

Maxwell, 2013). Additionally, as discussed above in my data analysis section, looking for rich points in the data also contributed to making apparent my researcher bias. These rich data points helped me identify and look at places where there were disagreements between participant world views and my own.

In addition to my bias, J. A. Maxwell (2013) and Ravitch and Carl (2016) identified various ways qualitative researchers can improve validity, which have been considered throughout this study. I particularly implemented sustained involvement with participants, various forms of triangulation, and dialogic engagement. In the study, I spent more time with participants to sustain our involvement with each other, while the pilot study consisted of one interview. The present study consisted of three interviews, which lasted approximately 3 hours. This sustained involvement provided an opportunity to collect more complete data. A more complete data set enabled me to check and confirm my observations. Next, I implemented various types of triangulation. This included methodological, theoretical, and perspectival triangulation. Methodological triangulation included implementing multiple methods. In the present study, I collected a demographic questionnaire from each participant. I also completed three different interviews with different methods (i.e., guided interview, PEI, and walking interview). This multi-faceted approach permitted me to triangulate my findings but also contributed to a better understanding of the participants. I also utilized theoretical triangulation in this study. Theoretical triangulation allowed me to use a range of theories and theoretical constructs to frame the study and make sense of the data (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The theoretical constructs I used in this study included ontological expansiveness, white complicity, whiteness as a structuring property, majoritarian stories, campus racial climate literature, the microaggression analytical framework, and one-up one-down identities. To achieve data and

perspectival triangulation, I used a “systematic inclusion of a range of participants perspectives” (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 196). Participants ranged in their socioeconomic status, political orientation, year in school, and major. This helped me seek nuance, complexity, and disagreement in participants’ perspectives, which I used to make sense of the data as a whole. Lastly, I also used dialogic engagement. Dialogic engagement is a validity strategy (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). This strategy tests validity by sharing one’s research with others so that I can “challenge my interpretations of the research process and data” (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I implemented dialogic engagement in this study at every stage of the research process having individuals more familiar with and less familiar with the study challenge my assumptions and interpretations of the data.

Limitations

There were four main limitations to this study. First, this study examined the experiences of only self-identified women undergraduate students. Thus, while my recruitment was open to all women-identified students to participate, I acknowledge that this could have prevented non-binary white undergraduates from participating in this study. Little empirical research has been done on self-identified undergraduate white women and how they understand race, thus future studies could center and focus on how non-binary white undergraduates make sense of race. Secondly, this study sought to explore students at one 4-year institution. Thus, future studies could expand this study to examine different institutional types, including community colleges, private institutions, HSIs (Hispanic serving institutions), HBCUs (Historically Black colleges and universities), and women’s colleges to understand how institutional type effects white women’s experiences with race. Third, UCLA is located on the West Coast. Therefore, examining historically white institutions in other geographical regions could further help

elucidate how geographical region plays a role in one's understanding of race and how white racial dominance is upheld. Fourth, examining whiteness through white people telling stories about white subjects is only a partial way to examine the structure of whiteness and white supremacy "and may even reinforce these oppressions" (Preston, 2007, p. 8). However, this does not mean that this work should not be done; it just needs to recognize its partiality. As a white woman interviewing undergraduate white women, there are things participants may say that my positionality may make it possible for me to see and, simultaneously, difficult for me to see.

Positionality

Researchers have taught us about whiteness' insidious nature (Leonardo, 2009; Bonilla-Silva, 2010). Thus, this study calls for me, as a white cis-gendered female researcher, to make whiteness' insidious nature more seen. In Chapter 1, the reader will recall my own account of the way I understand race and my various other social identities and how this has informed my life experiences and desire to conduct this study. As were my study participants, I was a former undergraduate white cisgender heterosexual woman that attended UCLA, a 4-year university on the west coast. I believe my emic, or insider positionality, as I interviewed female-identifying undergraduate students at a similar institution assisted me in establishing trustworthy interview relationships. My shared racial and gender identity with participants allowed me to develop effective interview relationships. I believe this positionality was especially important given that I examined topics like racism, which have been proven difficult to study with white individuals.

As Gallagher (2000) explained, "whites are comfortable expressing their racism to white strangers because they believe their skin color makes them kindred spirits in racism" (p. 72). Nevertheless, being a racial insider does not always guarantee insider status. For instance, Gallagher (2000) reflected on his experiences as a white man studying white identity and how

his various other social identities (i.e., being an older white man with a working-class background), contributed to him being seen, at times, as an outsider. He also shared how his olive skin, dark eyes, and dark hair possibly contributed to him being perceived as racially ambiguous. Thus, I took these reflections as a cautionary note as I executed this study. Similar to Gallagher, I also carried an etic role in this study. An etic role is defined as ways in which I, as a researcher, was outside and unfamiliar with participants' particular ways of being (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). My etic role in this study consisted of my lack of familiarity with various student organizations and sub-environments, my status as a doctoral student, and various social identities I may not have in common with participants (upper-class, queer, rural upbringing). My insider and outsider positionalities allowed me to share proximity with my participants.

Lastly, I analyzed and interpreted the data based on my personal and theoretical assumptions that I used to guide this study. These assumptions include my belief that as a white person, I am committed to challenging dominant ideologies like white supremacy. Additionally, another assumption I hold is that I am aware that all participants did not hold similar viewpoints to my own. Despite this disagreement, I listened to participants with a sympathetic ear and, at times also challenged them through a Critical whiteness Methodology (Corces-Zimmerman & Guida, 2019). A sympathetic ear means, while I disagree and disapprove of racism, I strived to "understand the person whose racism [was] being portrayed" (Trepagnier, 2010, p. 160) and attempted to probe students to think about their ideologies and ways they upheld racism on occasion as well. An implication for interacting with participants with a sympathetic ear is that if participants held viewpoints different than my own "the chance to engage in direct anti-racism was lost" (Gallagher, 2000, p. 74). Thus, I attempted to strike a balance, engaging participants to think deeper about whiteness and racism, while also acknowledge that as a white researcher there

were also ways in which I upheld whiteness through the course of the interview (Guida & Corces-Zimmerman, 2019).

Being a white woman conducting research on how white women understand and participate in racism also means I am simultaneously deeply examining my own understandings of racism and how I participate. As critical whiteness philosopher Yancy (2012) stated, whites need to ask themselves, how does it feel to be the problem? And must “tarry with the reality of their embeddedness” (p. 166). My whiteness is a messy embodied phenomenon; thus, I cannot solely examine whiteness conceptually, but must also ongoingly examine my whiteness on an interpersonal level (Yancy, 2012). Tarrying involves instigating action and critique, which is what I attempt to do in this study. While I agree with Yancy (2012) that “white antiracists are indeed racists” (p. 175), I also acknowledge my responsibility that I, as a white individual, must lift the “yokes of oppression that burden both [people of color] and [whites]” (Delagado & Stefancic, 1997, p. 616). I recognize these limitations while still attempting to work at challenging my own whiteness every day.

My status as a doctoral student is another privilege I grappled with and took into consideration as I conducted this study. Research has illustrated that unlike most People of Color, most white people have not spent much time reflecting on their white racial identity or have much racial awareness (Tatum, 1994; Thandeka, 1999). As a doctoral student, I have had the privilege of studying and exploring issues of race and racism for the past 7 years. Over this time, I have ongoingly questioned and tried to understand racism and what my role is in attempting to challenge it. I share this, not to assume that other women in this study have not also spent time developing their own racial awareness, but rather to acknowledge my own privilege

as it relates to the time I have had to develop my own racial awareness when I interacted and engaged with participants.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I discussed how I used a phenomenological approach to design and explore white undergraduate women's experiences and perceptions of whiteness at UCLA. I began by discussing my research design and how I came to select the participants for this study. Next, I discussed my data collection methods. I collected data via a) demographic questionnaire, b) guided interview, c) photo-elicitation interview, d) walking interview, and e) research memos. I then discussed the various data analysis strategies, which consisted of multiple coding strategies. These coding strategies were a) in-vivo coding, b) descriptive coding, and c) values coding. My goal when coding was also to look for rich points in the data. Identifying and then focusing on these rich points was an important step in the process because it helped me unpack when participants' viewpoints were different than my own. Afterward, I discussed accountability and trustworthiness. In discussing accountability and trustworthiness, I identified aspects of my study that ensured accountability and trustworthiness. Most notably, sustained involvement with participants, various forms of triangulation, and dialogic engagement. I also outlined and discussed four limitations of this study. I concluded with my positionality and its importance as I examined whiteness as an embodied phenomenon within myself and through the experiences of participants.

In the next chapter, I introduce the reader to my participants by sharing a brief profile of each participant. I introduce the participants based on the ways they politically identified in the following order: Far Left, Liberal, Middle-of-the-Road, and Conservative. I conclude by highlighting the key themes that emerged from the participant profiles.

Chapter 4: Participant Profiles: Pre College Experiences and Environments

To highlight the diverse sampling method used in this study and to introduce the reader to my participants, I begin by sharing a brief profile of each participant. I provide these narratives as important context. I show how my participants learned about race. I also narrate their transition from home environments to UCLA. These narratives are a range of students' perspectives. I mean to illuminate the different ways each white woman in this study understands their white identity. In these profiles, I help the reader understand participants through the lenses of multiple intersecting social identities and academic and social involvement at UCLA.

I introduce participant profiles in groups based on their political identification. I organized by political identification because political ideologies are highly correlated with racial ideologies (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Sniderman, Crosby, & Howell, 2000). For example, Cabrera (2018) leveraged this correlation in his study of white undergraduate men on two college campuses. The political identifications participants chose included Far Left, Liberal, Middle-of-the-road, and Conservative.

To develop these profiles, I relied upon research memos, words from participants themselves, and my understanding and interpretation of each participant. These data allowed me to paint a picture of each participant. I begin with Cindy, River, and Karen, who identified as Far Left. Next, I describe Kimberly, Veronica, and Daisy, who identified as Liberal. Then, I describe Josephine, Natasha, Rebecca, and Samantha, who identified as Middle-of-the-road. Lastly, I describe Amanda, who identified as Conservative.

Far Left

In this section, I share participant profiles from the three participants in this study who self-identified politically as Far Left, which includes Cindy, River, and Karen.

Cindy. During our first meeting, Cindy wore black, thick-rimmed, oval-shaped glasses, and had light blue and blonde hair. Her hair was braided to one side, which laid on her left shoulder, while the right side of her hair was shaved off (Guida, Memo October 15th, 2018). She stood at about 6 feet tall and wore a blue skirt and black shirt with a design on the front. She is a second-year marine biology major, 19 years old, and originally from San Bernardino, California. Although she spent most of her life in the San Bernardino area, she moved there from Ventura County in middle school to be closer to her grandparents. This move impacted how she understood race because, as she explained, she went from a predominantly white space to a "predominantly Latinx space" (Guida, Memo 10/15/18) where she often felt "singled out" (Cindy, Interview 1).

While living in San Bernadino, Cindy's family's class status shifted, partially due to her father's death during her freshmen year of high school. Her father's death impacted her mother's ability to support her. During this time, her mom was working at Amazon making $12.50 an hour. Cindy's experiences as working class also seemed to largely impact how she felt growing up in high school. She remembered being stereotyped as a rich white kid in her predominantly Latinx school, and she expressed how this bothered her because she was not rich.

One of Cindy's most formative teachers in high school, with whom she is still in communication, was Dr. Williams, a Black woman with a doctorate in education. She expressed Dr. Williams played a memorable role on her understanding of race. According to Cindy, in Williams' classroom they discussed politics—particularly the 2016 presidential election, watched Hotel Rwanda, and read a memoir on child slaves in west Africa. As Cindy elaborated on how this classroom experience impacted her, she stated:

> To be perfectly honest I think it was mostly through the presidential race. So we [were] talking about how white people are mostly unaffected by all of the things that Donald Trump is saying he is going to do as president. And then how this doesn't affect us, but this affects People of Color a lot. And like DACA and building a wall, there's so many undocumented students at my school and that affected them a lot. (Cindy, Interview 1)

Cindy recounted these memories as being important to shaping how she understood race growing up.

In her transition to college, Cindy also expressed, "coming to UCLA, I, saw a lot more white people (laughs) than I had seen in so long, you know, because I did six years of public school in San Bernadino county" (Cindy, Interview 1). This move to UCLA created a third shift regarding her racial environment, returning to an environment with more white people that resembled her experiences in Ventura county. Cindy also identifies as pansexual and as a first-generation college student. When she is not studying or working for UCLA parking, she spends much of her time working with Queer Alliance on campus and the Gender Sexuality Society (GSS) Living Learning Community (LLC). Cindy's experiences at UCLA have been largely shaped by her experiences living in the GSS LLC in the residence hall. This was evident when she shared during our first interview:

> There's a queer floor, it's called the GSS LLC on the hill and it's super expensive to live on, but I figured that it was probably the best way to join the queer community and get to know like my queer peers. And so most almost all of my friends that I have now also lived on GSS, they lived on it last year, they live on it this year, so I'd say that my friend group is just like queer People of Color, mostly, who I live with. (Cindy, Interview 1)

Here, Cindy shared living in the GSS LLC and having "queer People of Color" as her main friend group has also significantly shaped her understandings and experiences with race during her time at UCLA.

River. When we first met, River came to our meeting wearing a dark blue pom-pom knit beanie that had a "G" written on the front, which said "governor" on it. She had light olive skin and was wearing dark brown, tortoise-rimmed glasses. Her hair was straight, dark brown, and short with layers, which reached the top of her shoulders. When I arrived for our meeting, she was patiently waiting for me with a calm and inviting demeanor. River is a third-year, out-of-state student, majoring in environmental science. She is 20 years old and originally from Okaloosa County in Florida. River described the racial composition of her experiences growing up in the following way, "I'd say everywhere I went to school was definitely a primarily white school. My town is primarily white. There's a large . . . But because it's a military area, there was a large, relatively large Pilipino population, Pilipino, Vietnamese" (River, Interview 1). While River grew up in predominantly white spaces, she remembered particular ethnic enclaves in her larger community, one being the religious space she was a part of growing up. River grew up Catholic and attended church regularly, which she shared had "a decent minority of Pilipino, Korean, Vietnamese" racial make-up. This experience included lessons she learned specifically from her Vietnamese priest:

> My favorite priest who moved away a year before I graduated was Vietnamese. He fought in Vietnam and he had all these stories about . . . He would give . . . It was illegal to do mass, but he would give secrets masses for people in the Army, because he fought against his will for the Communist side or whatever. (River, Interview 1)

River shared many memories and experiences she had specifically with People of Color as we discussed how she learned about race. River also shared various other memories particularly about two of her Friends of Color growing up, who she discussed as influential to how she learned about race growing up. These experiences River mentions about her friends of color seem to revolve primarily around "food and hair" growing up (River, Interview 1).

Coming to UCLA, River also expressed how she noticed her experiences as an out-of-state student were very different from her peers who had grown up in California. In comparing herself to her peers, she stated that she remembers the specific time she first met a Black person:

> I would talk to people who had a much more diverse upbringing from out here. I'm like, "Did you remember something like that?" [They're] like, "No, why would I remember," because they were just exposed to more people from an earlier age. (River, Interview 1)

River makes sense of her experiences growing up in Florida as different from her peers who grew up in California. As she stated, an experience like remembering the first Black person she met was not as memorable for her peers. Additionally, when we began talking about college, she talked a lot about her peers and environmental science where she is jokingly the "token white friend." She identifies as upper class and is involved in organizations on campus like the Knitting Club and the Environmental Student Network.

River also identifies as bisexual and used her experiences as bisexual to make sense of how racism and oppression operate. Once we were discussing her involvement with the Environmentalists of Color Collective at UCLA, River shared the importance of having a space designated for People of Color. She stated, "it's really important for people to have their own common spaces. Obviously, if that was the purpose for them to have it, I would not want to mess

with that at all" (River, Interview 2). When I asked how she became aware of "not wanting to intrude," she shared:

> I'm bisexual, and so as a comparison, a rough comparison is like I feel uncomfortable in certain spaces that are supposed to be for LGBT people and there's a lot of straight people there who are just, I don't know, for whatever reason. It's like you appreciate the input of allies, but it's like this isn't for you. So I can see how that could directly be the same thing basically for clubs related to race or culture or ethnicity. That would definitely be where some of that understanding would come from, but other than that, I don't really know. (River, Interview 2)

In this example, we see River draw from her experiences as bisexual as a "comparison" to make sense of the importance of spaces for marginalized groups (River, Interview 2). She also discussed caring a lot about environmental justice and grappling with how to do that in a way that is impactful, but does not talk over People of Color (Guida Memo, October 29, 2018).

Karen. Karen's hair was wavy and long, it went about to her mid back, and was blonde at the top and blue at the bottom. The blue was faint, as if it had been there for several months and had been slowly fading away. She was about 5 feet and 6 or 7 inches tall. At first, Karen was quite timid and slightly uncomfortable with some of the things we discussed. Experiences growing up with her parents and her father, who she described as a strong Conservative Trump supporter, were particularly difficult to discuss (Guida Memo, October 30, 2018). However, Karen grew more comfortable sharing her opinions and experiences over the course of our time together.

Karen is a third-year aerospace engineering student who came to UCLA from a town in Victor Valley in the high desert of California in San Bernadino County. Growing up, she moved

around a couple of times; however, she always stayed in the high desert. Her family's various moves made in the high desert gave Karen an understanding of race and class and how they manifested. For instance, she shared the first small town she lived in was predominantly white and Latinx, but when she moved "it was much more, it was less white there, there were a lot more Black people so it wasn't like a straight up just white and Latinx people, still no Asian people" (Karen, Interview 1). She also described the town and family environment as very conservative. This made it hard for her to have exposure to other viewpoints growing up.

Additionally, she expressed that online social media spaces played a significant role in her understanding of issues related to race, class, gender, and sexual orientation since they were the only places where she was able to learn from others with opposing views from the people she grew up around.

In discussing her struggles transitioning from her experiences growing up to her time at UCLA, she shared:

> I mean my parents, one parent is a republican, like a hard core republican. So yeah like, like closet racist (high pitch voice). So that was something that like you kind of internalized and had to work to unlearn especially when I got to college. Because you grow up in this area in a town that's super white and like you don't hear anything from the other perspective you just got this one person saying like "oh Mexicans are so awful." And then you have to be like ok. And then you are kind of like maybe that's not right, but you still internalize it. (Karen, Interview 1)

Here, Karen was sharing how she struggled arriving to UCLA with beliefs and values she was exposed to growing up, particularly from her father, and how she grappled with making sense of that upon arriving at UCLA. During our interview, she also used the metaphor of replacing an

old couch to depict what her experiences at UCLA have been like as it related to how she has approached learning about race and racism. In her own words, "you're like getting rid of the old couch and you're like okay I got to get a new couch" (Karen, Interview 1). In this analogy the old couch for Karen are the former values she was taught and the new couch are the values she is working to replace them with. Karen also identifies as pansexual and middle class. She discussed her time living on the GSS LLC as important to her experiences at UCLA and is involved on campus with organizations like Rocket Science and the LGBT student organization prism.

Liberal

In this section, I share participant profiles from the three participants in this study who self-identified politically as Liberal. This includes Kimberly, Veronica, and Daisy.

Kimberly. When we first met, Kimberly was wearing black rectangular glasses and had dark brown hair, a little over shoulder-length. She had a small stud nose ring, which sat on the right side of her nose, light green eyes, and wore a striped button-up shirt. She had a seemingly timid voice and personality and carried a coding textbook with the title *C+* in her hand. She graciously accepted some of the snacks I offered during our first meeting. As she took some snacks, we began our first interview.

Kimberly is 20 years old and comes to UCLA from a small town in the Mojave Desert near Barstow in San Bernadino county. She is also a third-year cognitive science major. While she came into UCLA as a biology major, she expressed "it was very challenging [at UCLA] and [she] fell out of love with it as a subject" (Kimberly, Interview 1). She grew up in a predominantly Latino neighborhood where she remembers being one of the few white students and families growing up in the town. Kimberly shared a memory of often being called a white girl in school and painfully recalls how one of her close Native American friends said they could

not be friends with her anymore because Kimberly could not understand her experience. Additionally, as she recounted how she remembers race growing up, she shared with me that she did not really feel like race affected her growing up. When I asked her to tell me more, she stated:

> I think maybe because of that growing up I was kind of ignorant to like my race until maybe 4th or 5th grade, when I noticed like a lot of my friends were Brown or whatever and I was White. And I was like oh I kind of understand that. (Kimberly, Interview 1)

These experiences shaped her perceptions and understanding of race growing up. Additionally, she shared that her father is Conservative and that she grew up hearing comments from her Irish grandmother, who calls people “illegal aliens” (Guida Memo, October 16, 2018).

Upon arriving to UCLA, one thing Kimberly immediately noticed is how race and class shape employment at UCLA. Kimberly recounted:

> I remember when I first got here one of the things I noticed was . . . the races of like the working class jobs or whatever. Because back home I never noticed like oh like, people or like the correlation between having a certain occupation and like your race. Because I remember noticing like I felt like a lot of the dining hall workers here are Latino or Black and that like really stood out to me. Cuz I feel like back home anyone had any job you know? Like you never notice like one group of people is like correlated with a certain occupation. . .I remember walking down Bruinwalk and seeing you know like Latino babysitters like walking with these little white kids, like babysitting them you know. I would have never seen that growing up. (Kimberly, Interview 1)

Kimberly's experiences growing up in Barstow significantly contrasted how she perceived race and class distinctions at UCLA. Kimberly also expressed that, upon arriving to UCLA, she felt like people hung primarily around their own race. In her own words:

> here it's different. I feel like people stick to their own race. I know I said that before in this conversation, but I think it stands out to me all the time. Every day I'll be walking somewhere and I'll just notice how I don't know. People, I guess they just feel so comfortable sticking to their own race. And it's not just other minorities. Even white people. I feel like white people, they just stick together here. (Kimberly, Interview 1)

She expressed frustration that UCLA is racially segregated in this way and shares how her interracial relationship with her partner, who is half Guatemalan and half Salvadorian, would not be possible. As she states, "if that's how things were, I would have never met my boyfriend" (Kimberly, Interview 1). Kimberly was not involved in many extracurriculars on campus, but she does participate in the Bjork Research Laboratory and Active Minds.

Veronica. Veronica and I had to make our first meeting quite late at the end of the day, since we both had very busy schedules. It was about 8 PM when I arrived at the interview room, where I found Veronica waiting for me sitting on the floor outside of the room. She was about 5 feet and 8 inches tall and slender. She was wearing a white, collared shirt with a V-shaped neckline. Her dark brown hair was messily pulled back in a bun and she spoke quite quickly, which she attributed to her extensive experience with debate team. This debate instinct was evident because every time I posed a question, she seemed to burst at the seams with thoughts and experiences to share. Although our first meeting began late in the day, she still seemed very open and interested in participating in the study (Guida Memo, October 25, 2018).

Veronica is a fourth-year transfer student, double-majoring in American literature and culture and history. She is 21 years old and originally from a small town in Norther California's Sonoma County. In our first meeting, Veronica expressed at length the important role community college had in her understanding of race and racism. She shares with me it exposed her to different ideas, which she was not taught in public school growing up and at home. She also stated community college was the first time she was in spaces where she was one of the few white students. During our interview, Veronica was very honest and frank about her racialized experiences growing up. She expressed, while growing up, she identified as a Republican, and, over time, realized the things she was supporting were "racist policies" (Veronica, Interview 1). Additionally, she shared her parents had very colorblind views of racism. Contextualizing how this manifested in her experience living in Sonoma County, she shared:

> My parents were very like we don't see difference, everyone is human, ugh you know like field workers are just as equal to everyone else who works in the winery. That kind of thing. So there was never really a discussion. (Veronica, Interview 1)

Veronica also identifies as heterosexual, upper class, and is a first-generation college student. Upon arriving to UCLA, she became heavily involved in primarily feminist and political organizations on campus, some of which include the American Association of University Women (AAUW), Femme Magazine, Bruin Political Union, and the Center for Liberal Arts and Free Institutions. One of the primary things Veronica noticed about race was how much more in proximity she was to Asian American students. For instance, she shared two of her roommates are Asian American and, while she "had always thought about racism in terms of Brown or Black," she realized "Asian Americans have their own experience of course" (Veronica, Interview 1). Lastly, she spent a significant amount of time sharing the various organizations she

is involved in and how organizations like AAUW at UCLA consists of predominantly white women and her concerns about those spaces.

Daisy. The first time we met, Daisy had a black and white, vertically-striped shirt on and straight blonde hair. She had a small but strong frame, standing at about 5 feet and 2 inches, and her white cut-off t-shirt illustrated her muscular arms. She also had long blonde hair and blue eyes. During our interview, Daisy was quite talkative and comfortable expressing her opinions and thoughts.

She is a third-year, out of state student majoring in mathematics. She is 21 years old and grew up in the suburbs of Salt Lake City Utah, which were predominantly white and Mormon, a religious identity with which she did not identify. During our first interview, Daisy described her experiences learning about race growing up in this manner:

> As a kid, we definitely, you know, I had all my Rosa Parks books. I definitely understood that racism was a thing. I don't remember like explicitly my parents sitting me down and being like, Black people are a thing that exists, I mean I was in a really white area. (Daisy, Interview 1)

As stated here, Daisy fondly remembers having books about Rosa Parks growing up. She also shares that most of her schooling environments were predominantly white. While Daisy shared that she does not remember explicit conversations about race and racism, she does remember her dad discussing his experiences as a white man in the Peace Corps in Niger, Africa. This, in fact, prompted him to give her an African name. Daisy also expressed that her mom's "whole side of the family is very like ardent feminists" (Daisy, Interview 1), and she remembers having lots of discussions related to gender, race, and politics growing up. Additionally, she shared her parents identified as "hippies," and she extensively traveled with her family while growing up, including

spending one year on her own in Germany for high school. Race also seemed to become prominent for her in 12th grade when college admissions discussions began. As she shared:

> This Peruvian girl also got into Yale. And she got in early decision and you know. So then it was a big deal for people who were still you know, didn't know where they were going . . . And she was really happy, but I think a lot of people sort of suggested to her that she wouldn't have gotten in if she were white or Asian. (Daisy, Interview 1)

Daisy recounted these memories as formative to moments when she began to think about race more before coming to UCLA.

Daisy also identifies as lesbian and upper class. Upon arriving to UCLA, Daisy shared that she dated a "woke" female-identified student who identifies as mixed race (Daisy, Interview 1). The conversations she had with this person pushed her thinking about issues related to race in a space that allows her to feel comfortable. In Daisy's own words, "she'll answer my dumb questions or sort of have a conversation with me, which has been really . . . eye opening, because I haven't had really any African American friends just because I've never really encountered very many" (Daisy, Interview 1). Lastly, Daisy is involved in various organizations like the Climbing Team, Bruin Film Society, Undergrad Math Student Association, and the German Club.

Middle-of-the-road

In this section, I share participant profiles from the three participants in this study who self-identified politically as Middle-of-the-Road. This includes Samantha, Josephine, Natasha, and Rebecca.

Samantha. When we first met, Samantha wore a dark blue and white tie-dye-like shirt, and her glasses were wide-framed, somewhat matching her shirt, which was dark blue with a hint

of white (Guida Memo, October 22, 2018). Samantha also had a wide face, olive skin, light hazel eyes and wavy, dark brown hair. Phenotypically, I found myself second-guessing if she was white when we first met. As I stated in my memo, "she challenged my expectations because I immediately wasn't sure if she was white or not, in fact, I was confused. I even thought to myself, maybe she's half white and identifies as white. I let the thoughts fade to the background and figured I would learn more as we began the interview. About 10 to 15 minutes into our conversation we talked about how people growing up always would ask her "what are you?" and how people say she is "Latina passing" (Guida, Memo, 10-22-18).

Samantha is a second-year, out-of-state, psychology student. She is originally from the suburbs of Chicago, Illinois and is 18 years old. She identifies as heterosexual and middle class. Samantha grew up in, what she described as, a "lower-middle class" suburb in Chicago and "a very diverse neighborhood" (Samantha, Interview 1). However, in 7th grade, her family moved.

Upon moving to an "upper-middle class neighborhood" (Samantha, Interview 1), Samantha shared class differences became much more apparent to her. She also described her high school experience as very multicultural and "surprisingly [she] felt like more comfortable with [her Hispanic and Middle Eastern friends] than [she] did with like a group of like white friends" (Samantha, Interview 1). Additionally, Samantha expressed that she was aware of race growing up because she "would always be asked by kids like what are you?" (Samantha, Interview 1). Other experiences that heavily influenced how Samantha saw race growing up included her high school relationship with a Palestinian man and her family's backlash over this relationship. For instance, Samantha told me her father would tell her she should only date "European" men. Outside of her father's disapproval, the many conversations she has had with

her partner, one specifically about being stopped and searched at the airport, also significantly informed her understandings of race and racism.

Samantha's transition to UCLA as an out-of-state student was quite challenging. She shared how her friendships in high school shaped who she became friends with at UCLA. Samantha stated:

> In college it was really intimidating. Like I'm intimidated to be friends with white people and maybe that sounds weird, but like I don't know. I feel like because of my high school experience it was just like harder to like make friends like that and it was. (Samantha, Interview 1)

Elaborating on this experience, she remembered hearing another white woman at UCLA say she only made friends with people that looked like her, which caused her to feel like she would not be accepted by other white women. Lastly, she expressed that she chose to make friends with more Mexicans and Asians at UCLA because of her high school experience. While Samantha is not heavily involved in many organizations quite yet, she has begun to explore clubs related to her field of interest, psychology.

Josephine. Josephine had long, dark brown hair, which she often wore in a ponytail during the course of our interviews. She had brown eyes and stood at about 5 feet, 6 inches tall. The first time we met, she waited for me outside of the Math Sciences building, which she knew quite well because she is a statistics major. Our first interview was conducted in a small private room in the Math Sciences building. She spoke quite slowly and thoughtfully throughout our meeting. She is a third-year student who grew up in the small town in Merced County in California, which is located in the Central Valley. Before becoming a statistics major, she

considered majoring in mathematics, but found herself more at home and comfortable in the statistics department. She is 20 years old and identifies as heterosexual and upper class.

Growing up, her environment consisted of "a big farming community" and small conservative town, where she often worked on her family's' farm (Josephine, Interview 1). She described the racial composition of her environment in the following way, "as far as race is concerned . . . there wasn't much diversity around there. Umm let's see there was white, Mexican, and Portuguese" (Josephine, Interview 1). Josephine shared that she did not interact much with Mexican students at school because they were in the dual-immersion program. Additionally, she shared that she had various transitions in her schooling experiences, which included public school, home school, and private school. In high school, she played volleyball growing up, a space that was also predominantly white. Lastly, she does not remember race being discussed at home, but explicitly remembers her family's and community's reaction to the 2012 presidential election. Josephine shared:

> When Obama became president that was a big thing in my community and my umm town. Like my parents weren't thrilled about it, like my cousins also weren't thrilled about it. No one in like my town was actually happy about it and they just kept bringing up the discussion like, he's just they're cuz he's Black or whatever, like that's why he got into office or something . . .That was just a discussion among them, but I mean, like that just happened around me, I never (laugh) shared my own opinions, or I didn't really have them because I didn't really keep up with politics really at that age you know? So I didn't really know what was going on but yeah that's something that they discussed a lot, they did not like Obama. (Josephine, Interview 1)

While Josephine stated she did not necessarily have political opinions of her own at the time, this was one significant moment in her life where she recalls she was learning about race. After growing up in this small conservative town, Josephine shared she looked forward to leaving and coming to UCLA. In her own words:

> I definitely like in high school, I was ready to get out of that sort of small town vibe and some people didn't want to leave at all. They were like, I can wait to get out, I was kind of sick of everyone (laughs) honestly because being around the same people for so long and we're all just I don't know being the same and just having that farmer attitude, they didn't want to learn anything more, they just had their opinions, umm very closed off. (Josephine, Interview 1)

Josephine shared with me that many of her friends went to local California state colleges to study agriculture. Contrastingly, Josephine was "sick of everyone" and had the desire to leave her small town and experience something different. Additionally, as previously illustrated, Josephine's experiences and understandings of race growing up seemed to be heavily impacted from her time and experience living in a rural town in Northern California, where there were lots of "farmer attitude[s]."

Throughout the course of our first interview, Josephine often contrasted her growing up experiences to those of others in her environment at UCLA. She described them both as "two cultural divides." Elaborating on this further, she stated,

> I see myself as . . . like I don't know how this sounds, but like really white compared to other people that I like come here, which I mean I am. I think just growing up and like that sort of what they discussed in politics, just middle-class white family. Like I feel

> like, my family fits that picture perfectly and that's just sort of the like viewed perspective people have of me just coming here. (Josephine, Interview 1)

This seems to become apparent to Josephine only upon arriving to UCLA, where she can compare her experiences to the various people she interacted with at UCLA. She also shared race being discussed openly was very different than her home environment. This becomes very prominent to her in her freshmen year during the 2016 presidential election:

> I came from a conservative community so all my friends are talking about how like and like my family obviously they wanted Trump to win, like super Trump and stuff . . . So when the election came, everyone here was just so Anti-Trump, just like wow these are two like cultural divides . . . like just being in college like white or not these people from different backgrounds just umm like unanimously they were against Trump and like everything he did . . . I went and voted and then I went and watched the . . . election like in carnesale commons. I remember. . and everyone has their shirts on and people were like decked out. And people were like really into this election and like wow. And then the election you know like, Trump won, that was crazy and people were like crying and stuff. And I'm like these people are so dramatic and I cannot believe this is like happening. And then everyone went and rioted in the streets and stuff like wow these people are, this is really crazy, like this is such a weird environment to be in like . . . right now, cuz I know in the central valley they're all celebrating probably, they're super happy that he won. And that the outcome is like this. And it's like the polar opposite in like LA . . . It was just yeah that was a weird time. (Josephine, Interview 1)

Here, Josephine shared a powerful depiction of how starkly different her experiences at home were in relation to UCLA. Lastly, Josephine expressed she is involved in various

organizations on campus like the Statistics Club, ACTS 2 Fellowship, Beach Volleyball, German Club, and Bruin Sports Analytics.

Natasha. Natasha had long and wavy light brown hair, which reached down past her mid-back. She had light blue, round eyes and a tall and slender frame. During our meeting, Natasha wore a pink, long sleeve shirt with an abstract purple, green, light blue, and yellow pattern on the front with dark blue jeans. Natasha was very soft-spoken and seemed a bit uncomfortable when we first met. She was a fourth-year transfer student, majoring in psychology, and 21 years old.

Unlike many other participants in this study, Natasha grew up in St. Croix, a predominantly Black environment where race was often discussed, and her understandings of race were heavily impacted by her experiences growing up on the island. Explaining racial demographics further, Natasha shared, "white people are the minority there. It was really a mixed culture, I'd say. It was mainly African American, so it was . . . I really appreciate the culture, growing up there, because it was just so unique" (Natasha, Interview 1). However, even though the island Natasha grew up on was predominantly Black, her neighborhood where she grew up was predominantly white. As she explains, when her parents had her and her brother they moved to the "east end" of the island, "which was the wealthier area. A lot of [her] neighbors were white, which is not characteristic of the island, which was kind of different" (Natasha, Interview 1).

Natasha's experiences living in a racially segregated environment also seemed to go hand-in-and with her socioeconomic status as upper class. As she explained, her family on her father's side had been "making rum for like three generations [in St. Croix]" (Natasha, Interview 1). Before this, she shared, "I think we had land, and a plantation, and that kind of thing"

(Natasha, Interview #). Natasha's family's history of slave ownership made her not only seen as white, but white and rich by the community in St. Croix. Additionally, she expressed that she vividly saw racial differences growing up, and people often referred to her as a white girl. In her own words, "a lot of the kids would pick fun . . . I got along well with everybody, but a lot of kids sometimes would pick fun at me for being white (Natasha, Interview 1).

Natasha also shared her parents were not always "fully accepting of some other races" (Natasha, Interview 1), and she was taught to be silent about noticing or recognizing racial difference. One memory, which illustrates this, includes an experience from childhood. Natasha recalled:

> I was in the grocery store, with my mom, in a cart or something. I was like, "Look, mom. She's a different color," and she was like, "Shh. Be quiet." She didn't want to be embarrassed or something, but that was the first time even realized that people, I guess, were different. (Natasha, Interview 1)

Another example that impacted how she understood race included in high school, when she began dating a Black man on the island. Natasha expressed that her parents told her she could not date him anymore when they found out, and her father went and spoke to him about it. When I asked her if she spoke with them about this, she stated:

> Well, it was funny because, my mom and dad, they sat me down and they're like, "We don't want you talk to him anymore." They said, "It's not because of his race, it's because he's older, he's not good for you," that kind of thing, but they would kind of throw in subtle things about . . . It was getting kind of, maybe, about wealth, about education. They were throwing in other things, but I felt like it was about race, even if there was . . . The fact that they had to say that it wasn't kind of showed to me that it was.

> I don't know if that makes sense at all, but it seemed like they were coming up with excuses about how it wasn't about race when it kind of was. (Natasha, Interview 1)

Natasha's racial understandings were impacted by seeing how her parents reacted to this experience and the ways she learned to be silent about race differences.

Natasha moved to Santa Barbara from St. Croix to attend community college. Unlike her growing up experiences, Natasha felt like race was rarely discussed at Santa Barbara Community College. Natasha also identifies as heterosexual and shared she was in an interracial relationship in community college. As she described how different racial dynamics are in Santa Barbara, she shared:

> I guess that's one of the nice things about not being an exception here. It's not as salient to my identity. People don't point out that I'm white, because a lot of people are white, so I guess that's kind of been cool. Even though a lot of my friends, like my two best friends, are Mexican, and my boyfriend's Mexican, that kind of thing. Even though they're different races, it's never something that's pointed out, that I'm white. I guess I kind of appreciate that. (Natasha, Interview 1)

Given Natasha's experiences in St. Croix of being made fun of for being white, she felt relief coming to Santa Barbara where being white was "never something that's pointed out." Lastly, coming to UCLA from Santa Barbara was also a big transition for her. While she was not heavily involved on campus, she participates in the Society of Physical and Occupational Therapists.

Rebecca. Rebecca had golden blonde hair with some hints of brown that went down to her mid-shoulders. Her hair was parted on the left side. She also had blue eyes and a bright smile with a left dimple. She wore a mustard yellow blouse with white polka dots and a small necklace with a gold circular pendant with the initial "R" engraved on it. The morning of our meeting, she

seemed quite cheerful and was ready to begin our conversation (Guida Memo, November 13, 2018). She is a 20-year-old, second-year psychology major and originally from Pasadena, California.

During our first meeting, Rebecca shared she grew up in a predominantly Asian and white environment. As she shared, “the whole San Gabriel Valley is very Asian, so I’ve grown up among the Asian culture and I don’t know. Like, my best friends are Asian and yeah” (Rebecca, Interview 1). Similar to many other participants in this study, race did not feel prominent to Rebecca growing up; however, she did notice that Asian students and white students often hung out separately in school. Additionally, Rebecca does not recall any discussions of race growing up. However, she does recall various memories that elicit her grandfather as being “kind of racist” (Rebecca, Interview 1). She also shared memories about growing up with her father who often wanted to celebrate Mexican culture via Día de los Muertos events and Cinco de Mayo parties, about which she more recently feels conflicted. As it relates to her father’s interest in celebrating Mexican culture, she shared:

> I’m always conflicted about him . . . Not celebrating, but being so into the Mexican culture, ‘cause I don’t know if it’s being insensitive or not. ‘Cause, he really likes it and will talk about it and be like, “The Mexican culture’s so great. Everyone should be more like them” and all this stuff. But then, just because he is a white man, I feel like that can change people’s perspective and when he says things, it can change what he means. I can’t think of any specific things that he’ll say, but I just know he really likes the Mexican culture. (Rebecca, Interview 1)

This is something that only becomes apparent and conflicting to Rebecca after spending some time at UCLA.

Rebecca’s family identifies as politically Conservative. Rebecca described UCLA as “a liberal college,” and she has experienced a lot of confusion over her political stance since arriving (Rebecca, Interview 1). During the course of our first interview, we spent a lot of time talking about her family’s political views and how her experiences at UCLA in relationship to their conservative views have been a source of uncertainty for her about her own evolving political views. She shared she often struggles talking to her family about issues related to politics. Rebecca stated:

> It’s kind of four against one. I have an older brother and a younger sister and they both told me that they’re conservative and I don’t know where I am, so I never really talk about it . . . I don’t like talking to either side because I feel like they’re all yelling at me to choose their side and I’m like, “I don’t know what I want and how I feel” and stuff like that. So, that’s where I am. (Rebecca, Interview 1)

Growing up with siblings and parents who identify as politically conservative, having a current roommate who has far more liberal views, and taking a gender studies course in college has exposed Rebecca to new issues and ways of thinking that she had not explored before college (Guida Memo, November 13, 2018). As she discusses the gender studies course she took, she stated:

> That class really opened my eyes to a lot of things, ‘cause I feel like before then, I hadn’t really thought about anything really . . . And, my family’s kind of conservative, too. So, when I was talking the class, some of the things I didn’t like about it and then some of the things, I did. And, it took me like, a year to figure out things with that class and I was still struggling with it. So, that class . . . It had me reflect on my past and then I was like, “Oh,

> I could see how this would look bad." And so, I became aware like, last year. So, I'm still juggling my feelings and everything. (Rebecca, Interview 1)

At the time of our interviews, Rebecca had spent 1 year at UCLA. She has experienced cognitive dissonance over this course and other experiences, and this makes her feel uncertain about where she stands. Building on how this course shaped her perceptions, Rebecca shared:

> So, in high school I was like, "I am not a feminist. That word is gross . . . 'Cause, at the time, I also didn't know what feminism really meant and then in my class, they were like, "Oh. Feminism is equality." And then, that took me a long time to understand, 'cause I was like, "I don't . . . " 'Cause, I feel like there's negative connotations with feminism, like as a word, because of the . . . Alt left? Can I say that? (Rebecca, Interview 1)

Rebecca's perceptions of various social issues were evolving and in a state of flux during our time together. Additionally, her family's political views were playing a large role in her understandings of race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and other social identities. Lastly, she identifies as upper class and heterosexual. Some of the organizations she is involved in include a predominantly white sorority on campus, IM Cornhole, and Tutorfly.

Conservative

In this section, I share participant profiles from the one participant in this study who self-identified politically as Conservative, Angelica.

Angelica. Angelica is a fourth-year transfer student and environmental studies major originally from Orange County, California. She identifies as upper class and heterosexual. Unlike, the other 10 participants in this study, Angelica and I only met once for the first interview, so I had less of an opportunity to capture descriptive information about her. Although she initially agreed to meet with me for all three interviews, she did not respond to my follow-up

requests to meet after the first interview. I believe this was partially due to some of the issues that came up during her first interview, which I will address further.

Like many other participants in this study, Angelica shared that she grew up in a "very white community." She states, "I grew up . . . in a really sheltered area, it was like a large, gated community" (Angelica, Interview 1). When I asked her questions about race growing up, she explains that race did not matter to her much growing up. When I asked particularly about how she was taught about race at home, she shared "I don't think it was really important in our family to talk about race" (Angelica, Interview 1). Angelica's struggle to discuss questions related to race led her to share during the interview, "maybe I'm not the best subject for this" (Angelica, Interview 1). Nevertheless, I reassured her that her experiences were important for this study and that I was not looking for any particular answers. She also attended predominantly white schools, with some Asian and Mexican students and very few Black students.

Angelica did not feel like race was prominent in her growing up experiences and often referred to issues of class when I asked her questions about race. For instance, when I asked her about the role of community and how they shaped how she understood race, she shares that "it was more like economic status that like separated people out by race" (Angelica, Interview 1). Additionally, when she shared she saw opportunities being different for different racial groups at school, she further alluded to opportunities pertaining to class. Angelica stated:

> It was kind of related to race, but not that much because a lot of the Asian people in our class were really, came from really really wealthy families. And then but the Mexican kids in our class were more like poor and umm like didn't come from wealthy families . . . .It was more economic than race, but there was definitely ties in that sense. (Angelica, Interview 1)

Overall, Angelica reiterated several times that race is not salient to her experiences and, at times, attempted to also articulate how disparities manifest through a class lens and not necessarily a race lens. I believe her feelings about not being the best "subject" to study could have contributed to her decision to not respond to any of my later meeting requests to which she had formerly agreed.

However, Angelica does share that race seemed to become more formative to her experiences after arriving at community college. Angelica attended a community college before transferring to UCLA, and she described her community college as a "heavy Hispanic school" (Angelica, Interview 1). Attending this community college illustrated to her "there is a big difference in opportunity . . . people of different races experience" (Angelica, Interview 1). Additionally, Angelica was attending college around the time of the 2016 presidential election. Similar to Josephine, Angelica expressed that being there during that time allowed her to see how heavily and negatively impacted individuals at the community college were from the outcome of the election and how different this was for her neighborhood. Angelica reflected:

> My area was super conservative and then going to community college umm obviously it's a different group of people with different umm views . . . . I mean I think both views have value and merit to them. Umm I think I am very middle of the road, but I umm it's definitely, eye opening to go to community college and like talk to people and like be umm working and going to school. (Angelica, Interview 1)

Going from her conservative neighborhood to her community college on a daily basis, she describes the experience as "eye opening" and references people going to work and school as something that is eye opening to her. Pertaining to the election, Angelica also noted that because

her peers were "disadvantaged" she could visibly see "the sadness on campus" (Angelica, Interview 1) the weeks following the election.

While Angelica began to make sense of how race could be impacting People of Color's lives at her community college, Angelica simultaneously expressed she felt like "a minority" at her community college (Angelica, Interview 1). Angelica stated:

> I think I felt like I had to work harder, I don't know like, I feel like whenever you're a part of the minority you feel like you have to prove yourself more. So I felt like being white I had to really like work hard. I worked really hard to like prove myself to my teachers. (Angelica, Interview 1)

In the earlier excerpt we see that Angelica began to think about the impact of race and racism while she was at the community college. However, in this excerpt she also expressed racial beliefs that as a white person she believes she had to work harder than her Peers of Color.

Lastly, coming to UCLA was "kind of like a culture shock" for Angelica because she was coming from a space that she estimates was about 70% white (Angelica, Interview 1). She shared:

> It's so weird like coming here, like race is such an issue, that is totally put on the forefront of like everything . . . coming here, like everyone really wants to talk about their experiences as umm, from there background, which I think has value, but, it's different. (Angelica, Interview 1)

At UCLA, Angelica struggled with how frequently race was being brought up. She discussed one particular course she took where she "was the only white person maybe" other than the professor and how she felt "really embarrassed to talk about [her] experience" (Angelica, Interview 1). Describing one particular moment in class, she stated:

> I just remember this Black girl behind me and she's like shaking my head like I don't get it, and I'm like oh my god, I don't know I felt awful, like I don't know if it was her or if it was me or if it was the movie. (Angelica, Interview 1)

Throughout our discussion, Angelica expressed various feelings of guilt as it relates to being white. In another instance, she expressed, "everyone here is super liberal and super Far Left and super like for like social justice and everything, I felt really guilty that I was white." Lastly, Angelica shared her time in college has actually made her political views on various issues shift. "Coming here I was super super liberal" and then some negative experiences in college have made her "more conservative" (Angelica, Interview 1). Some of the organizations she is involved in include UCLA Christians, Toastmaster, and the Geography Association.

How Precollege Experiences and Environments Shape Racial Understandings

Like many other white Americans in the United States, seven of the participants in this study lived in predominantly white environments before attending UCLA. While there were four participants who lived in communities that had more People of Color, they each in some ways remained in spaces that were racially insulated. For instance, Cindy for some part of her life previously lived in a predominantly white environment, Ventura County. Natasha lived in racially segregated neighborhood in St. Croix and Karen attended a predominantly white school in San Bernadino County. Due to their racial insulation in white communities growing up, race often only became more salient later in life. For example, for Angelica and Veronica, this occurred when they both attended a community college, and, for others, it becomes more apparent in middle or high school or not until they arrived at UCLA. Important to note here is that their experiences in these racially segregated and predominantly white environments played a large role in shaping how they then made sense of race at UCLA.

Although these profiles were organized by political ideologies, exploring participant's narratives in depth revealed that while political ideology did often relate to racial ideologies, there was much more nuance and complexity to unpack as it related to how each participant made sense of their whiteness. In other words, solely using political ideology to make sense of participants' racial ideologies did not necessarily paint a full picture.

Seven of the participants in this study shared their family members held conservative political views. Conservative political views often translated into their family's racial beliefs (e.g., not being supportive of their interracial relationships). These racial beliefs also come in the form espousing ideologies like "all immigrants are illegal aliens," (Kimberly, Interview 1) and silencing their children when racial differences are pointed out. Additionally, many of the participants shared memories and recollections of the 2016 presidential election when prompted about questions related to learning about race and racism. The sociopolitical context of collecting this data during the Trump presidency and the discussions that this context invited into their families and communities also played a large role in how they learned about race and racism. In sum, the conservative viewpoints their families held impacted how these white undergraduate women learned about race growing up.

Additionally, seven of the 11 participants in this study discussed their experiences in interracial relationships as significant to how they have learned about race and racism. Some of these relationships took place before their college experience and others occurred upon arriving to their community college or at UCLA. Sometimes, these relationships helped them understand how race and racism shapes People of Color's lives, like when Samantha talked to her boyfriend about his experience being searched at the airport. Other times, it results in backlash from family members, particularly their fathers, who are against them dating a Person of Color, like for

Samantha and Natasha. Overall, this confirms Frankenberg's (1993) findings that interracial relationships do play a large role in helping white women understand how race and racism operate.

Lastly, many participants shared how their social identities (sexual orientation, socioeconomic status) and precollege environments informed how they understood race. For instance, the four out-of-state students in this study shared how different California's racial composition was in relationship to their home states and how this impacted their understandings of race. Additionally, the four students who came from smaller, more rural towns also discussed how geographical context was important for understanding race and racism, particularly because it limited their exposure to other value systems and ideas (e.g., Karen needing to replace her "old couch"; Karen, Interview 1). Additionally, out of the four participants who identified as LGBTQ in this study, three politically identified as Far Left.

During the course of their interviews, every participant often compared their experiences growing up to what they experienced upon arriving at UCLA to make sense of how race and racism was operating in this new context. Transitions in general (e.g., moving from one place to another whether in childhood, adolescence, or for the first time at UCLA), served as important ways to understand race and racism. For instance, for Cindy this included her move from Ventura County which was predominantly white to San Bernadino County which was predominantly Latinx and then to UCLA. Another example includes Natasha's experience going from St. Croix a predominantly Black environment to Santa Barbara a predominantly white environment to UCLA. Regardless of context, these shifting demographics and transitions played a role in how each participant learned about race.

Lastly, participants also discussed the importance of parents and extended family as people that played a formative role in how they were socialized and learned about issues of race. Most participants discussed that their parents did not talk about race explicitly growing up. However, they did share more passive and covert experiences that did teach them about race. For instance, Daisy fondly recalls having Rosa Parks books growing up. Natasha recalls her parents sitting her down and telling her that she couldn't date a young Black man and using various reasons to explain why including education status and older age, even though she felt like it was mainly because of his race.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented the profiles of each participant. These profiles introduced the reader to each participant's various social identities and lived experiences. I use these profiles to show how participant environments shaped how they learned about race precollege. I then also discussed how each participant navigated issues of race as they transitioned to UCLA. Also, central for these profiles was how their extra-curricular involvement on-campus mixed with issues of race. I used my understandings of the participants and their words to contextualize who they are. I concluded by weaving resonant themes and threads together.

In the next chapter, I will answer my first research question, *How do white undergraduate women interpret whiteness in their lives at UCLA?* I answer this question by presenting three main findings. First, white undergraduate women in this study interpret whiteness in their lives via their gender and socioeconomic identities. Second, white undergraduate women interpret whiteness through white goodness and white ignorance. Third, they uphold racism through race evasiveness, racial stereotyping, and racial victimization.

Chapter 5: Whiteness as Contextual and Ways white Women Uphold whiteness

In this chapter, I answer my first research question: *How do white undergraduate women interpret whiteness in their lives at UCLA?* Three main themes explain how undergraduate white women interpret the role of whiteness in their own lives. These themes include a) understanding whiteness through "one-up one-down" social identities including socioeconomic status and gender, b) utilizing white ignorance and white goodness c) and upholding racism through color-evasiveness and racial victimization. Thus, I will first begin this chapter by explaining how white women understand their whiteness through their socioeconomic and gendered understandings. Next, I illustrate how white goodness and white ignorance played a large role in how they understood their whiteness. Lastly, I illustrate how they make sense of their whiteness by utilizing color-evasiveness and racial victimization to uphold white supremacy.

How Social Identities Impact How White Women Understand Their Whiteness

In this study, I found that participants often used their social identities to make sense of whiteness, particularly socioeconomic status and gender. While these identities at times gave them insight or understanding regarding how racial oppression operates and manifests, it also was used as a way to uphold whiteness. In other words, understanding other forms of oppression (e.g., working class, a woman) does not necessarily mean that white women "get" white supremacy.

Whiteness and socioeconomic status. Although most of the questions in the interviews pertained to participant racial experiences, it was quite evident that class experiences significantly impacted their understanding of being white, as the code race and class was coded for 124 times in this study (one of the most significant codes). The subthemes regarding socioeconomic status, which I will discuss in this section, include, first, that participant

perceptions of socioeconomic issues in their own lives and in the lives of others highlighted the inextricable link of race and class in their understandings of whiteness. This was understood in varying ways. Second, this manifested as the perceptions they had of others regarding their class status. Lastly, this also acted as a distraction or way to avoid acknowledging whiteness.

Race and class as inextricably linked. Three of the participants' understandings of whiteness went hand in hand with their understanding of socioeconomic status. This is particularly prominent for Natasha, a transfer student from St. Croix. Numerous times throughout our interview when I asked her questions related to how she acknowledged race growing up she would share, "Growing up, [race and class] were always very connected to me because it was almost like, *if you were a white person, you likely had money*[5]. It was kind of like a double association" (Natasha, Interview 1). Her experiences growing up as a white woman in St. Croix, a predominantly Black and formerly colonized island, made her understand her whiteness and her family's socioeconomic status as interconnected. Again, she made this very clear when she told me,

> being white and the wealth thing was pretty much *linked in an untieable way* for me. It wasn't just that I was white, *it was that I was white and that I had money* that made me kind of different from everybody else. (Natasha, Interview 1)

Natasha's unique experiences growing up in a predominantly Black environment made race and class inextricably linked for her. As she stated, she was not only white, she was white and "had money" and often felt very different from everyone else around her. She reiterated how race and class is interconnected for her when she stated, "if you were a white person, you likely had

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[5] The text in italics is used to illustrate when I as the author added emphasis to the text unless noted otherwise.

money" (Natasha, Interview 1). Lastly, she further illustrated this point later by saying race and class were "linked in an untieable way" (Natasha, Interview 1). It was interesting to find that Natasha discussed class, even when my questions did not prompt reflections related to class. Although Josephine grew up in a rural area of California, which was predominantly white, she shared a similar association of issues of race and class as Natasha. This is expressed particularly when Josephine moved from public school in her small rural Central California town to a private school a little further away from home. Josephine explained, "then private school . . . they were, mostly white like and rich" (Josephine, Interview 1). Josephine made it a point to discuss how the students at her private school were not only white, but "white" and "rich" (Josephine, Interview 1).

Lastly, for Samantha, an out of state student from the suburbs of Chicago, race and class were also inherently tied in racialized ways. When we discussed her growing up experiences and what lead her family to move to a new neighborhood she stated:

> the kids I went to school with and there backgrounds you know it was like the town I lived in like was on the border of another town that was like *very poor* and like didn't have access to a lot of . . . resources . . . like *those* [emphasis in original] kids came to our neighborhood, my parents like, didn't like me being out with them or anything, so it was kind of just like then *I like felt it, you know? the tensions between that like money and race.* (Samantha, Interview 1)

Samantha's example also illustrates the inverse relationship that is exhibited by Natasha and Josephine. According to Samantha, "those kids" from the other town who came to her neighborhood were "poor and didn't have access to a lot of resources" (Samantha, Interview 1). When I asked Samantha to share some concrete examples of what she meant by the

neighborhood was getting bad, she stated "there was a lot of people moving out and instead of like it becoming a place where like *it wasn't being gentrified* at that point *it was kind of the opposite of it*" (Samantha, Interview 1). In other words, if a neighborhood is not being "gentrified," then my interpretation of this is that working-class People of Color are moving into the neighborhood. By stating that the opposite of gentrification is happening implied that according to Samantha, People of Color were moving into a neighborhood that was formerly predominantly white. While this example did not illustrate the same point I made, it does illustrate the inverse relationship. While Natasha and Josephine connected white people with being rich as inextricably linked, Samantha here is similarly connecting white neighborhoods with being rich neighborhoods and People of Color moving to the neighborhood as making it a more working-class neighborhood. Not only did Samantha utilize racially coded and color-evasive language to discuss her understandings of race and class, she also shared that this shift in demographics of her neighborhood, contributed to her parents wanting to move out of the neighborhood. As she indicated, "my parents like, didn't like me being out with them or anything" (Samantha, Interview 1). This eventually led to her family moving to another more middle-class neighborhood in the suburbs of Chicago.

Whiteness and money: "Oh rich white Americans." Participants in this study also often discussed their perception that being seen by People of Color as white meant that they were often seen as rich. I present three examples that illustrate this. When I asked Angelica about what experiences she had that contributed to how she saw herself racially, she shared an experience when she traveled to Cancun, Mexico. She stated:

> when I was in Mexico and like if you're walking around, I feel like, *they'd like, see you white people and they're like, oh money,* and like, I don't know, it's like *they'll try and*

> *rip you off*, so, which is yeah . . . I was in Cancun. This was last year. And umm at Christmas time we were like walking around the little marketplace and I felt like *they were like oh rich white Americans* and they were like really really nagging us to buy stuff. (Angelica, Interview 1)

Here Angelica shared that her experience in Mexico last year prompted her to see herself as white. Additionally, this particular experience as a white tourist contributed to how she saw herself racially. However, she does not only address race as expressed in my question, but connected her understanding of being white to how she is also perceived as having more money by the Mexican people she interacted with there. Her use of “they’d like, see you white people and they’re like, oh money” and “oh rich white Americans” illustrated this point quite clearly. Not only does Angelica express how she felt she was associated as being seen as upper-class during her vacation in Mexico, she also has deficit and stereotypical views of the people with whom she interacted, assuming that they will try and rip her off because she is white.

Natasha described a similar perception of her peers who were also predominantly Students of Color, “they’d say like, oh, you’re rich. My parents have to pay for this and that and you don’t have to” (Natasha, Interview 1). Natasha spent a significant time in our interview discussing the way her peers in her environment who were predominantly Students of Color associated her as being not only white, but also “rich.” This association to race and class was also connected to place for Natasha. As she expressed, living on the “East end” of the island often caused her to be associated with being white and financially well off. As she recalled how race, class, and place were interconnected she recounts this phrase as if it were a commonly held belief, “Oh, you live on East end? You’re a white girl.” It was kind of just like an identity thing. Living on the east end was kind of known that you were going to be white” (Natasha Interview

1). Here again, we see Natasha's perception that People of Color around her associated her not only as being white and rich, but living on the "east end" associated her with being "a white girl" (Natasha, Interview 1). Natasha also elaborated on this point by directly connecting this commonly held belief as "an identity thing" (Natasha, Interview 1). This further indicated how strong the ties between living on the west end was with being white and financially well off. Lastly, Cindy expressed having experiences of being perceived by her peers as financially well of because she is white as well:

> People used to definitely think I was a rich white kid, which was frustrating, especially my later years of high school because I definitely wasn't, like my mom made garbage money and we were like really struggling, so like there was several instances where they were like *oh your just a rich white kid* and I would be like oh no I have no money, so (laughs) but um that's pretty much it I think, I guess that's more economic than racial. (Cindy, Interview 1)

Cindy here is aware that the experience she shared is more "economic than racial," but like the other participants, she also says she was often seen as a "rich white kid" by her predominantly Latinx peers in high school. While class is not something that I prompted during interviews, these findings make it evident that participants often spoke about their racialized experiences in relationship to their experiences with class. In addition, their white identity was often associated with their socioeconomic status.

False parallels: A semantic tool to evade acknowledging white privilege. Additionally, two of the white working class undergraduate women and one of the upper class women in this study also used socioeconomic status as a way to semantically evade acknowledging whiteness and white privilege. In other words, one of the ways they evade white privilege is through the

tool of false parallels. For instance, Cindy moved to San Bernardino in middle school, a predominantly Latinx community to live closer to her grandparents, after spending her elementary years in Santa Barbara, a predominantly white community. During her time living in San Bernardino, her father passed away, which significantly affected her family's income, in Cindy's words this was a "big shift, huge shift" (Cindy, Interview 1). To provide more context for the magnitude of this shift, Cindy shared:

> [her mom] was working [at] Amazon making $12.50 an hour and [they] owned a house and [they] had a new car . . . and [her] dad didn't have medical insurance when he was in the hospital, so [they] had medical bills, so [her] mom ended up filing for bankruptcy." (Cindy, Interview 1)

This experience significantly affected how she felt she could relate to the predominantly working class Latinx community she went to high school in. As we discussed her experiences living in this community, I asked her what it felt like to be one of the few white students growing up in a predominantly Latinx neighborhood and school. Cindy stated:

> I was definitely aware of [being one of the few white students], all of high school, but . . . you know, I was in a *very similar situation* to all of them umm, like economically and so . . . like culturally it was a little bit different, but like, *we shared similar experiences when it came to like economic stuff*, like I got free and reduced lunch and almost, I think like 85% of my high school got free and reduced lunch so *we all kind of understood that you know?* (Cindy, Interview 1)

Similar to some of the examples provided earlier, while I asked Cindy particularly about her racialized experiences growing up in this community, she answered the question through a classed lens. Cindy shared that she was in a "very similar situation" as her peers and that they

shared “similar experiences when it came to economic stuff” (Cindy, Interview 1). As illustrated here, although I asked Cindy particularly about her experiences with being white in this context where she was one of the few white students, Cindy referred to her experiences with phrases like “in a very similar situation” and “we all . . . understood you know?” (Cindy, Interview 1). Cindy does later acknowledge that what she is pointing out is more “economic than racial” (Cindy, Interview 1). Nevertheless, Cindy’s cognitive connecting of socioeconomic status to her experiences illustrate how shared SES with her Peers of Color can also operate as a false parallel. While all of these similarities and relatable experiences she has to her peers are true, Cindy is also utilizing these experiences growing up working class as a way to not engage with how she is also different than her peers racially. While she does point out that “culturally they were a little bit different” (Cindy, Interview 1), Cindy still spent most of her time drawing false parallels here, evading from acknowledging how white privilege manifested in this working-class context.

Similarly, Kimberly, another white woman who grew up in a predominantly Latinx community, also often made sense of her whiteness through her classed understandings. During our first interview, Kimberly shared that her mom grew up working class and “had a very tough life” (Kimberly, Interview 1). Understanding class disadvantage through her mom’s experience and other working-class white peers made it difficult for her to understand and acknowledge how white privilege operated for working class whites. In our conversations about white privilege, she stated, “[growing up] *I didn’t really see white privilege that much around me* because there wasn’t like a lot of other white people and then again that’s not like there’s anyone, like *any rich white people* around me” (Kimberly, Interview 1). Here Kimberly is arguing that she didn’t “see white privilege” because there were few white people around her and because there were not

"any rich white people" around her. The way she makes this claim, it seems as if Kimberly believes white privilege can only exist in the context of white people who are non-poor.

After she shared this, I followed up to ask her if she thought that working-class whites benefit from white privilege. Kimberly responded, "I guess it depends what you mean by white privilege. I feel like, I don't know how to explain it because *it gets really difficult*" (Kimberly, Interview 1). It seemed as if my question opened up some ideas of nuance for Kimberly. For example, she stated, "it depends what you mean by white privilege." Furthermore, my question also seemed to prompt some uncertainty for Kimberly. This is evident through her response, which included, "I don't know how to explain" and "it gets really difficult." Lastly, another example of how understandings of socioeconomic status can derail white undergraduate women from understanding whiteness includes a conversation Kimberly had with a student. Kimberly recounted:

> I was in the library and then this kid, I forget like why he even started it, but he told me like oh I got everything in life because I'm white and like that *really bothered me* because I guess like I tried to reason why someone would have that viewpoint and stuff, but I feel like that's not necessarily true, cuz like my mom is white *but she had a very tough life*, like she definitely didn't get everything. (Kimberly, Interview 1)

Here in this example Kimberly is "really bothered" by what the other student tells her, that she got everything in life because she is white. She then used her mother who is white and who had a tough life as evidence for why this statement is incorrect. Kimberly here explains that class oppression significantly affected her mother's quality of life. However, she makes sense of this "false parallel" erasing the truth that white privilege does exist and supports her getting things in life, regardless of her mother's class status.

The various examples presented in this section illustrate how white women's understandings of their whiteness were heavily influenced by how they understood socioeconomic status, how others perceived their own socioeconomic status, and how they used socioeconomic as a false parallel, which prevented them from acknowledging white privilege. Because socioeconomic status was not a central area of focus in this study and participants were not prompted often to discuss socioeconomic status, this was somewhat of an unanticipated finding in this study. Participants from differing socioeconomic statuses made these connections between socioeconomic status and race, including working class white women and middle/upper class white women in this study. While participants across varying socioeconomic statuses made these connections to race, it is also clear that the contexts in which participants grew up also played a large role in their conceptualization of race and its connection to socioeconomic status. For instance, Natasha's understandings of race and class were heavily shaped by her experiences growing up wealthy in a predominantly Black environment on the island of St. Croix. While Kimberly and Cindy, who both grew up in predominantly Latinx and working-class environment as working class white women, understood the inextricable relationship to race and class, while also used it false parallels as a tool to evade from acknowledging white privilege. This desire to relate to their peers by understanding their class struggles and semantically evading white privilege because of their shared socioeconomic experiences in turn upholds white supremacy.

Whiteness and gender. White women in this study also often expressed that they made sense of whiteness in their lives through their gendered experiences in various ways. The first subthemes which will be covered in the following section include instances when a particular experience or interaction makes them more aware of how race and gender are impacting their own lives and the lives of others, but remain complicit in upholding whiteness. The second

subtheme includes white women acknowledging when their experiences as white women differs from that of Women of Color or People of Color.

White women understanding race and gender, but still complicit in whiteness. White undergraduate women in this study often described particular experiences and moments in their lives which helped them better understand the intersection of race and gender. Sometimes this involved interactions with people they were intimately close to and at other times they were participating more so as bystanders. In this section, I will discuss three of these experiences participants had which shaped their understandings of race and gender. I will also illustrate how these experiences, while impactful to their race and gendered understandings, are still often rife with problematic ways of upholding whiteness.

Daisy, a lesbian out of state student from Utah, shared on several occasions how her experiences and conversations dating a cisgender woman who identifies as half Black and half white informed her race/gender understandings. When asking her more about this relationship and how it has impacted her race and gendered understandings, she shared:

> She doesn't look super African-American except her hair, which is like *the most gorgeous thing ever.* And, you know, also a lot of talking about hair, which is . . . a very different experience both from sort of a physiological standpoint and a cultural one, I guess. Which I found very very interesting.
>
> Tonia: Can you say more?
>
> Daisy: *Well, it's a big thing for African-American women, right? Their hair.* There's a lot of *time and effort and money put into it* . . . she was kind of talking about why people don't like it when . . . you know, if a white person had cornrows or dreadlocks or you know *how that used to be a big point of discrimination for people.* (Daisy, Interview 1)

During our follow-up interview, the discussion is revisited when I ask Daisy a follow up question about her experiences with her romantic partner. I asked:

> Tonia: So was that conversation around hair something that you learned via your conversation with her?
>
> Daisy: Yeah, I mean I think that I had an understanding of it, but to sort of put it in context and also, *you know, that's the way you get to touch Black people's hair*, so I got to, you know, explore that in a little bit more intimate context. You know, *talking about her hair, and it was really important to her* and, you know, *I think it's really hot*, so, you know, it had that, I guess romantic aspect, sexual aspect as well, which was new, for me. (Daisy, Interview 3)

Daisy shared here the conversations she has had with her partner as it relates to her racialized experiences with hair. She expressed that these conversations with her partner significantly contributed to her more intimately learning about these issues. For instance, Daisy states "well it's a big thing for African-American women right?" and how it has also been "a big point of discrimination" (Daisy, Interview 1). Daisy also expressed that talking about her partner's hair with her was something she realized was very important to her. While it is clear that Daisy is learning from these experiences about race and gender from her conversations with her partner, they are not absent of problematic thoughts around these issues. First, Daisy makes two comments that continue to exotify and sexualize mixed-race women, referring to her hair "as the most gorgeous thing ever" (Daisy, Interview 1) and that being able to touch it in an intimate setting is "really hot" (Daisy, Interview 3). She also indicated "that's the way you get to touch Black people's hair," making it seem like a novel sought after experience, further hinting to the exotification Daisy feels towards mixed-race women. Second, Daisy expressed the experiences

Black women face having “dreadlocks or cornrows” as something that “used to be a big point of discrimination” (Daisy, Interview 1). Daisy’s use of the word “used to be” indicates that she believes this to be an issue of the past.

Samantha, an out of state student from Chicago, discussed an experience in the workplace on campus that she describes as being important to how she understands race. The story she recalled here took place in the Court of Sciences Food center in South campus. Samantha stated:

> What really made me realize that race was important to people in society was we were working and it was close to closing time and *a huge group of boys came in and they were all white* . . . and we weren’t busy, so they brought in a lot of business and there was quite a few of them and all. It was mostly girls working and these girls, I want to say they were Latina girls, ‘cause they all . . . they usually speak Spanish to each other and to the supervisors and that’s also something that made me realize that race was present because it’s like *you think everyone would just speak English in the workplace*, but they would always talk, make jokes and stuff but besides that, when these boys came in, they clearly were just like whispering to each other about it and they were just like oh, I know, *they like seemed uncomfortable* in kind of a joking way ‘cause I was almost unsure if they were uncomfortable because they were the stereotypical frat boy I guess you could say and so *that made me realize that there was a difference and they realize it as much as anyone else too.* (Samantha, Interview 2)

In this story, Samantha expressed that this experience “made [her] realize that race was important to people in society” (Samantha, Interview 2). As she perceived what occurred, she shared that a large group of white men came in to her workplace, who looked like “the

stereotypical frat boy," and that this makes her Latina co-workers who are also students at UCLA uncomfortable. She then reiterated this point at the end of her story, "that made me realize that there was a difference and they realize it as much as anyone else too." While Samantha observed this interaction and noted the different reaction her Latina co-workers had to the large group of white men coming in to purchase food, she also expressed racist beliefs about using a language other than English towards her co-workers who chose to use Spanish in the workplace. As she described the story she stated, "they usually speak Spanish to each other and to the supervisors . . . because it's like you think everyone would just speak English in the workplace." This illustrated Samantha's beliefs that English should be used in the workplace and her frustrations about Spanish being used in the workplace. When I asked for her to further elaborate on her experiences in this workplace, she also shared:

> I quit recently because I just did not feel comfortable working there anymore. I felt like *that was the one place I felt very alienated in*, and it just did not make me want to go to work anymore and so I thought the best thing was just to leave. It was . . . I was working there for about three months, I guess, and after three months you would think that you would feel comfortable with the people you're working with, *but I never did.* I never felt like I fit in, and I don't know what the root cause of that reason was, but I guess *I just couldn't relate to anyone on a deeper level like everyone else could and so I guess that's why I left.* (Samantha, Interview 2)

Samantha here shared that not only did she learn through this working environment that race impacted particularly her Latina colleagues, but also that the environment was so uncomfortable for her that she decided to quit the job. As she stated, it was the one place she felt "alienated in" on campus. While she expressed that she is unsure regarding what may have

caused her to feel this way, her discussions earlier about coworkers communicating to each other in Spanish provide context and understanding for why she may have left the on-campus job. Like Daisy, although this experience served as an eye-opening or "aha" moment for Samantha, it also illustrated how she simultaneously remains complicit in whiteness.

Rebecca, a cisgender woman from Southern California, also shared a story about a close friend who identified as a Woman of Color, which illustrated how this experience impacted her understanding of race and gender. Rebecca shared:

> She always says she's not the typical Indian, because she said she doesn't have the physical attributes of the typical Indian. Also, she came from a really white hometown, and I feel like that's really shaped her, because also they had this thing called the peanut butter test. *So if you were darker than peanut butter, you weren't touchable sexually, which I think really screwed with her, because she talks about it a lot.* (Rebecca, Interview 1)

Rebecca here shared how her friends experience growing up as a Woman of Color in a "really white town" who received violent messaging around not being "touchable sexually" because her skin was "darker than peanut butter" deeply affected her. Rebecca also indicated she thinks this sort of gendered and racist messaging affected her friend "because she talks about it a lot." Hearing and witnessing experiences like those Daisy, Samantha, and now Rebecca described, illustrates how white undergraduate women's understandings of race and gender has been informed by their interactions and experiences with Women of Color. Nevertheless, as we see with the examples from Daisy and Samantha, even as they begin to understand how race and gender intersect in ways that they may not have been familiar with before because of their own whiteness, they still participate in upholding whiteness. In the case of Daisy, this is done through

the sexualization of her mixed-race partner and with Samantha this is evident through her language beliefs about the assumption that English should be used in the workplace.

Acknowledging the contradictions of multiple identities: "Yes, I'm a woman in STEM, but I'm a white woman in STEM**.**" The women in this study also at times expressed the ways that they understood how their experiences as white women were different than the experiences of Women of Color or People of Color. Through examples by Veronica, Karen, and Cindy, I will illustrate how they understood the contradictions of their multiple identities as privileged by whiteness and disadvantaged by being women. Veronica, a woman from Northern California who was heavily involved in various feminist organizations, shared a story about how her colleague, who is a Woman of Color struggled in many ways that looked different than her own struggles as a white woman. Veronica shared:

> Well, the editor in chief last year, she's actually from India, so she's Indian, she was an international student and she was talking about the struggle of getting a visa, even a student visa to come over here . . . Then she was graduating which was making it even more difficult. She wanted to stay here and she also felt conflict with wanting to go back home, emotionally, but politically it was really hard. Her describing the process to me of *what it's like* to be an international student and *to be a woman of color on campus* and to have an accent and to also be the smartest woman that I know, but *not really be taken seriously all the time because she has an accent.* She was just infuriated by that. *I can't relate to that because I am white and because I have a strong presence*. *In terms of gender it's a little different*, *trying to speak in front of men is different, but in terms of a female community I'm often taken more seriously than someone like Amita who's not taken that seriously.* (Veronica, Interview 2)

In this example, we learn that Veronica's interactions with her friend, Amita, make her aware of how difficult it is for her to "be an international student on campus and to be a woman of color on campus . . . but not really be taken seriously all the time" (Veronica, Interview 2). Unlike the examples discussed in the former subsection, here Veronica directly connected Amita's experience with her own as a white woman, "I can't relate to that because I'm white and because I have a strong presence" (Veronica, Interview 2). Veronica is aware of how her privilege as being white gave her the privilege of "having a strong presence." However, she then expressed how this often feels different for her when she's in a group of women versus a group of men, "trying to speak in front of men is different, but in terms of a female community I'm often taken more seriously" (Veronica, Interview 2).

Karen and Cindy also expressed similar understandings of the contradictions of their multiple identities being white women in STEM majors. Karen is an engineering student, and, during our time together, she expressed several times how the racial composition of the faculty in her department were overwhelmingly cisgender white men. This becomes quite salient during our final walking interview. Karen and I walked around campus to places that are important to her, and, as she walked me through the engineering building, we happened to walk past a bulletin board, which displayed photos of the entire engineering department (see Figure 3). A conversation about the racial make-up of her department faculty ensued. Karen shared:

> Karen: Because most of the other departments look like that too. I looked through them. *I think we have maybe in the whole school one or two Black professors*.
>
> Tonia: Were you looking with that intention in mind?

Karen: Yeah. It's intimidating when you're coming in and you look at that wall. *At least I'm white and I can look at that and go, okay cool. A lot of these people, like that one professor that I said was a wholesome dad, reminds me a lot of my uncle. It's like these are people that are familiar, they look like me.* I'm like, okay cool. I took a class that was a little seminar class for first-gen kids, and it was under the poli sci department. The professor said *she was the first Black woman in the department*. She got hired like 10 years ago and *she's the only Black woman in the department still.* It made me curious to look at ours and be like, with that in mind. (Karen, Interview 3)

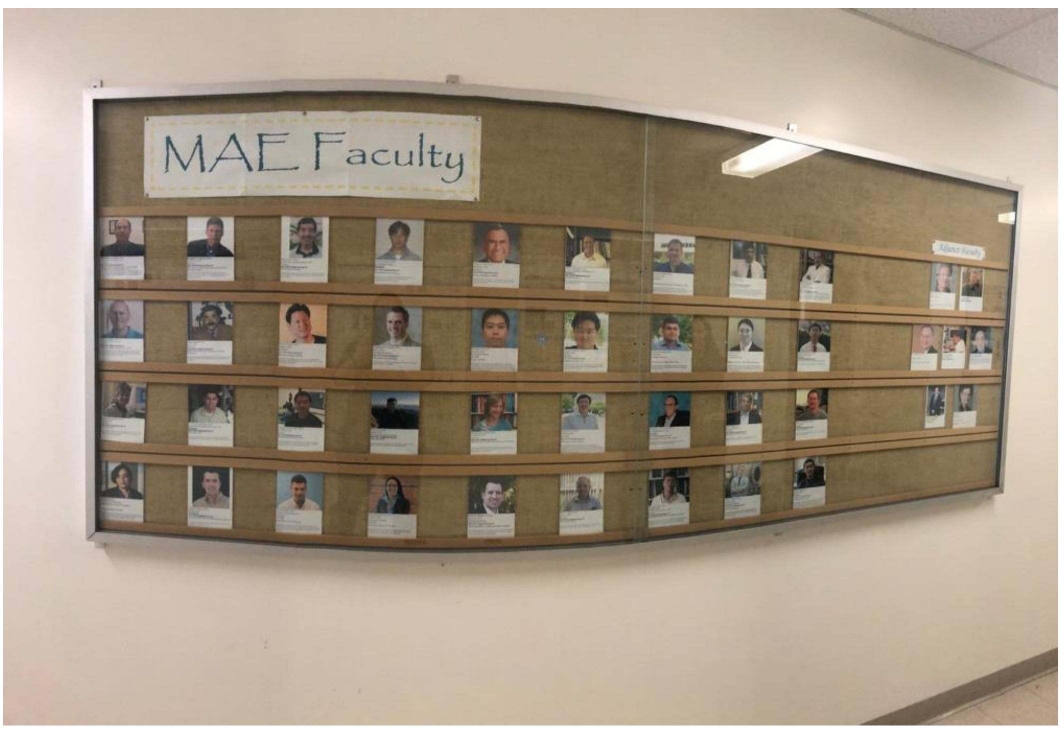

Figure 3. MAE Faculty Board. Bulletin board which displays images of the engineering department faculty.

Throughout our interviews together, Karen expressed her frustrations with the overwhelming majority of the faculty in her department being white men, but here she also

indicated how she is “at least white” and how one of her professors “reminds [her] of her uncle” (Karen, Interview 3). Even though she is a white woman in the department, there is a level of familiarity and ability to identify with the white male faculty in a way that Students of Color or Women of Color cannot. She then shared a memory she has from her first-gen seminar, where her Black female professor in the political science department shared that she is the only Black woman in the department and, that even after being in the department for 10 years, she remains the only Black woman. Karen shared her understanding of her racialized and gendered experiences in the STEM environment as a white woman and how her whiteness played a role in her ability to feel more comfortable than People of Color would in that environment.

Lastly, Cindy, a marine biology major, also expressed similar sentiments about being a white woman in STEM. In our second interview together, Cindy and I discussed places where she felt like she belongs and does not belong on campus. She then mentions the Court of Sciences as a space where she feels like she belongs. Cindy said:

> But let’s see . . . I feel like I belong in the Court of Sciences. I don’t feel at all disadvantaged. *Yes, I’m a woman in STEM, but I’m a white woman in STEM*, is kind of how I look at that . . . But yeah. The Court of Sciences, *I feel like I’m definitely in a privileged place, because I think People of Color might be more at a disadvantage academically in general, because there’s so many resources for white students*, but. . .let’s see. I don’t feel like I’m at a disadvantage, is the best way to put it. (Cindy, Interview 2)

Cindy expressed what Karen suggested about being a white woman in the STEM environment in more straightforward words. Cindy stated, “yes, I’m a woman in STEM, but I’m a white woman in STEM” (Cindy, Interview 2). This indicated that she is acknowledging there

may be some challenges for women in STEM, but she also then followed this by saying, "but I'm a white woman in STEM." Including "white woman in STEM" directly following "I'm a woman in STEM" helps to paint a picture of how Cindy was able to make sense of the contradictions of her multiple identities. Cindy shortly thereafter acknowledged she is in a "privileged place," and People of Color are at a disadvantage given the amount of resources white students have that Students of Color do not.

White Goodness and White Ignorance

In this study, I found that white undergraduate women have a strong desire to be seen as good people. The women in this study often expressed this desire to be seen as good in various ways. First, this entailed distancing and separating themselves from other white people who they believed were racist. Second, it consisted of wanting to see one's self and one's actions as good as an attempt to maintain white moral innocence. Third, it also manifested as white undergraduate women worrying about what is permissible to People of Color.

Distancing strategies to absolve one's self from whiteness: Those "other whites" who are racist. Many participants in this study utilized distancing strategies to attempt to distinguish themselves from other white people who were racist. Here I utilize three excerpts from Cindy, Rebecca, and Veronica to illustrate this point. During my first interview with Cindy, I asked her what her parents and family taught her about race and racism growing up. She said, "my parents were very good about not being racist" (Cindy, Interview 1). She then proceeded to tell me, "as an adult [she has] come to find out *a lot of white people are more racist than [she] thought*" (Cindy, Interview 1). Cindy also shared she never explicitly learned about things like white privilege, but then reiterated her initial point, "[my parents] were very good about *don't be racists*" (Cindy, Interview 1). In this example, Cindy made the point that she had learned "a lot

of white people are more racist than she thought." By stating this, Cindy cognitively separated herself from other white people, which is a discursive way of separating one's self from being implicated in whiteness and white supremacy. In other words, when white people, myself included, see ourselves as different and "less racist" as other white people, we attempt to preserve our own desire to be seen as good. Additionally, the messaging from her parents to "not be racist" also illustrated the way Cindy was socialized to not see herself as a participant in racism, even though as white people we are.

Many of the participants in this study utilized similar distancing strategies when referencing racist family members. When Rebecca and I discussed how her family influenced her racial understandings, Rebecca begrudgingly told me, "I think my grandpa . . . He's like, *kind of* racist" (Rebecca, Interview 1). Her use of the phrase "kind of" signals a distancing from fully admitting and naming some of his actions as racist. When we revisited the role of family in our second interview, Rebecca admitted:

> When I talk about my family, like *in this setting*, it seems like *they're not horrible people,* but it just seems like . . . I don't know, I just realize I don't agree with everything that they say or do, and their views and stuff. But then *when I'm with my family, it seems different* just because sometimes they'll say something and I'm like, *"Oh, haha, that's funny I guess."* I was thinking about my grandpa specifically, because I'm like, "Oh my gosh." *When I was talking about it, he seems really racist and really bad*, but then *when I'm with him*, it's just kind of like, not funny but *it's normal I guess.* (Rebecca, Interview 2)

Rebecca shared in our second interview how she struggled with our conversations, particularly processing issues around her family and their views, some as they pertain to race and

racism with me. Rebecca stated that her family are not "horrible people" (Rebecca, Interview 2). This qualifying statement is used as a way to ensure that we still see her family as good people. She then shared that she struggled because when she spoke about her family "in [the interview] setting" with me "he seems really racist and really bad" (Rebecca, Interview 2). That feels very different to her than when she is in those family settings where racism is normalized. This illustrated how Rebecca has a desire for her and her family's actions to be seen as good. During our conversations, Rebecca noticed how she has normalized some of her family's behaviors, like laughed at a racist joke they made. Similar to Cindy's comments, Rebecca has also distanced herself from her white family members' racist actions and beliefs.

A similar situation occurred during a conversation I had with Kimberly. During our first interview, Kimberly told me she has some nieces in her family who are "half Black" and other nieces who are "half Mexican" (Kimberly, Interview 1). I then ask her how having family members who are "half Black" or "half Mexican" have impacted her understandings of race. This seemed to trigger a memory for her where she shared:

> I remember sometimes I would get kinda mad at my grandma because she'd be like prejudice *or I guess racist*, like *she wouldn't really say anything like too messed up*, but like, I don't know she'd be saying shit like, oh Mexicans are illegal immigrants or whatever. (Kimberly, Interview 1)

Here, Kimberly initially described her grandmother as prejudice. She then changed her description of her grandmother as being "*I guess* racist." Similar to Rebecca's use of "kind of," Kimberly also used "I guess" in a similar way, as a way to soften the blow or reluctantly acknowledge that her family member believes, says, or does racist things. Kimberly then further tried to minimize her grandmother's racism, saying "she wouldn't really say anything too messed

up." This is followed by an example of something her grandmother said, for example, "oh Mexicans are illegal immigrants." Asserting a stereotype that all Mexicans are illegal immigrants is, in fact, a racist statement. Nonetheless, in this example, Kimberly tells us the things she said were not "too messed up" (Kimberly, Interview 1). Similar to Rebecca, Kimberly here attempted to defend her grandmother, by saying things she said were not "too messed up." However, this also raised a question. If Kimberly truly believes that the example she provided was not "too messed up" (Kimberly, Interview 1) then what sort of comment or belief is egregious enough to be seen as concerning?

Ultimately, by not acknowledging or recognizing how we as white people (Cindy, Rebecca, and Kimberly included) are all implicated in white supremacy, we continue to utilize distancing strategies from whiteness as an effort to continue to see ourselves as good. In the case of Cindy, this manifested as her pointing to other white people as being racist. In the case of Rebecca and Kimberly, this occurred through a reluctance to acknowledge racism and it's embeddedness in their own family members.

Desire to see one's self and one's racialized actions as good. The desire to see one's self and one's action as good also came up often in my interviews with participants. I illustrate two examples of how white women express their desire to see themselves/others as good. In the first example, Daisy told me a story about how she learned about race and racism in elementary school through participating in a Civil Rights school play. During out third interview, we revisited the discussion we had during our first interview, and I asked more specifically about some points she had alluded to regarding blackface. I asked:

> Tonia: Oh yeah, so I was looking at our first interview and we were, you were talking about a memory in second grade. About the civil rights . . .

Daisy: The play, yeah.

Tonia: Yeah. And I was curious, you mentioned the painting of people's faces.

Daisy: Yep.

Tonia: Can you say more about that? . . .

Daisy: *I don't think anyone thought it was bad at all*, like *I mean we were clearly trying to represent things well.* I mean, it was definitely *intended to be reverent and caring* and all this. (Daisy, Interview 3)

When I asked Daisy to tell me more about this experience, she immediately responded by saying, "I don't think anyone thought it was bad at all . . . we were clearly trying to represent things well" (Daisy, Interview 3). In this statement, we see how Daisy became defensive of the school's teachers, faculty, and administration and expressed the intentions of the school staff as having good intentions. In her perception, the intention was "to be reverent and caring." I then asked Daisy a follow-up question about the experience:

Tonia: Is that something that you've thought about before we talked about it? Or was it like.

Daisy: I thought of it cause of the, remember that, was it Megyn Kelly? I don't remember, there was *something in the news about someone who said that it wasn't, like blackface wasn't racist, and I was like oh of course it is.* And then I was thinking about that. (Daisy, Interview 3)

Here Daisy followed up by asserting that she does agree blackface is racist and someone saying it was not racist in the news caused her to recall her experience participating in a school play where blackface occurred. While she made the connection here that blackface is, in fact, a racist act, she initially defended her school and their actions, attempting to keep their goodness

preserved. This illustrates how white undergraduate women often attempt to keep their white moral innocence intact, even when they may be aware of their wrong doing.

This desire to keep one's moral innocence intact is also evident with Natasha when we discussed a memory from her elementary school experience where her peers and teachers on two separate occasions commented on her family's slave history. I asked:

> Tonia: You mentioned a kid in school, maybe, once in fifth grade, mentioned this comment, and then this teacher made this comment. I'm just wondering, how did you cope with that or deal with that?
>
> Natasha: Whenever people said it, it was more like in a joking manner, because *my brother and I are, I don't know, polite and nice*. *It was never like we wanted to hurt or be mean to anybody.* (Natasha, Interview 1)

Natasha reacted to this comment by her peers and teacher by rationalizing it as a joke. She shared that her brother and her are "polite and nice" (Natasha, Interview 1). Based on this comment it is evident that Natasha wanted to continue to appear "nice" and she further reiterated that her intentions were never to hurt anyone, similar to Daisy's comments about her elementary school staff. Instead of acknowledging Natasha's complicity in white supremacy by the acts of her ancestors she attempted to maintain white moral innocence. I then asked her a follow up question to tell me more about how she made sense of these comments. Natasha replied:

> I would take it in and think about it, but *I wouldn't accept it as who I was because it's not, I never owned . . . I never would ever, obviously*. *I know that I'm a nice person* and that *I like people, all different types of people*. I guess *I just wouldn't accept it as part of me*, I would just let it be part of my history, and kind of be like, "*Oh, they just know*

about what my ancestors did. They don't mean that to me, *even though they're saying it."* I don't know, *I wouldn't associate it with me*, per say, I guess. (Natasha, Interview 1)

Similar to earlier comments, Natasha reminds us that she coped with these facts shared about her and her family by rationalizing again that she is a "nice person" and is different from her ancestors. Additionally, she utilized distancing strategies by saying, "they don't mean that to me, even though they're saying it." To conclude her thought, she then reminded me that she would not "associate" these facts with herself. Natasha here is coping with her feelings of white guilt by reassuring herself that she is nice and a good person. Lastly, her reference to liking all different types of people is used to further her belief that she is a good person.

Seeking (dis)approval from People of Color. Lastly, white women in this study also often feared doing something wrong from the perspective of People of Color. In this study, this particularly manifested as open-ended questions participants were seeking answers to. This is a similar, but different form, of wanting to be seen as a good white person. For instance, in the first example, Rebecca is re-telling me an experience about a discussion she had regarding cultural appropriation. After she told me the story, she expressed:

> I don't know. I just don't know how to balance it, cause *I want to celebrate other cultures* and see what it's all about, *but then how do you not step over the line of being rude?* (Rebecca, Interview 1)

Here, Rebecca expressed her appreciation and desire to "celebrate other cultures," but then posed the question "but then how do you not step over the line of being rude?" (Rebecca, Interview 1). While Rebecca's question could be seen as insightful and thoughtful, her intention is to not be seen as "rude," illustrating that the motivation of her question is driven by her desire to keep her white goodness intact. The question is framed in such a way where what Rebecca

really wanted to know is how can she "celebrate another culture" to the extent that People of Color will see it as permissible.

While Veronica had more insight about race, racism, and whiteness throughout our interviews, here she utilized similar questions as Rebecca. In our interview, I open-endedly asked Veronica if she saw herself as a white woman and if so, how? Veronica shared that she does see herself as a white woman. She then explicated further:

> Yes I see myself as a white woman, umm mainly I view that in terms of white feminism, like I see myself as a (laughs) that's bad to say, I don't see myself as a white feminist, *I try to not be a white feminist*, which I never really learned that term until, like, a little later into like my discovery of feminism and then realized like oh my god no like that's me. And then trying to like reform that within myself . . . *I definitely view myself as being white and coming from a place of privilege and I'm just really trying to do my best.* I've definitely accepted that and will always confront that and admit that people and now just trying to figure out like I said how to like make that I don't want to say work in my favor, but like ugh I really want to make the world a better place, like I really want to do that with my life, but *I also really don't want to be a white savior* (laughs) so I'm just like, like at this point in my life, *I'm just trying to reconcile being white and also trying to help people, but not like taking that place from someone who could be a person of color, like when is it appropriate to act and not act?* And that sort of thing. (Veronica, Interview 1)

Here, Veronica expressed that she does see herself as a white woman, and, because of her heavy involvement in feminist organizations, this particularly applied to her trying to "not be a white feminist" (Veronica, Interview 1). This acknowledgement of white feminism and trying to

not be one comes after she learned what this term meant, and she was, in fact, participating in white feminism before she learned about the concept. As she said, “oh my god no like that’s me.” She then admitted to her privilege as a white woman, and she is “really trying to do [her] best” (Veronica, Interview 1). In her trying to figure out how to do her organizing work better, she then also expressed her concern to “not be a white savior” (Veronica, Interview 1). Ultimately she posed the question, “I’m just trying to reconcile being white and also trying to help people, but not like taking that place from someone who could be a person of color, like when is it appropriate to act and not act?” (Veronica, Interview 1). Similarly to my commentary about Rebecca, while Veronica’s questions could be seen as helpful, Veronica’s questioning of “appropriateness to act” could be driven by her desire to seek approval or disapproval of People of Color and be seen, ultimately, as a good white person.

Refusals upholding white ignorance. Additionally, I also found that white undergraduate women often utilized refusals as ways to keep their white innocence intact, which prevented them from seeing when they were making incorrect judgments about moral situations. I define refusals in this context as when one does not want to acknowledge or accept the racial harm in which they are implicated. Revisiting Natasha’s experience pertaining to her family’s known history of having slaves, Natasha shared, “back home, people would mention my history, and being a slave” (Natasha Interview 1). When I asked her how that made her feel she stated,

> It felt unfair to me. I know that it’s awful that happened, but for me personally, in fifth grade, hearing that from another child, I was just like, “Oh, that hurts. *I don’t want you to think of me like that.”* (Natasha, Interview 1)

Natasha’s use of “I don’t want you to think of me like that” even though she knew her family formerly had slaves, was a way of cognitively distancing herself from wanting to

acknowledge this aspect of her family's history. Unlike other participants in this study, Natasha is unique in that her family's racial past is more explicit and well-known across the island, as this comment about her owning slaves was also made by her P.E. teacher in elementary school. This indisputable fact, unlike whites in the U.S. who often say "my family didn't own slaves" (Matias, 2016), prevented her from being able to distance herself from these racial truths of her and her family's past. Even though she knows this racial past to be true, she utilized a refusal and desire to not have her peers see her through that lens.

Another instance of refusal is evident through a story from Rebecca, who is from Pasadena, CA. She shared a moment where she suggested throwing a Cinco de Mayo party in her dorm. Her roommate, a Woman of Color, responds to her suggestion by telling her, "you can't wear a sombrero because whenever white people wear sombreros, it's like they're making fun of Mexican culture" (Rebecca, Interview 1). Rebecca then stated, "Wait. So, *I was going to still wear a sombrero*" (Rebecca, Interview 1). In Rebecca's case, this manifested as choosing to wear a sombrero after being told it is a culturally appropriative practice. Both participants here, Natasha and Rebecca, attempted to maintain their perceived white innocence, even when presented with an alternative perspective, which upholds white domination and white supremacy.

White Undergraduate Women Uphold Racism Via Color-Evasiveness and Racial Victimization

In this section, I argue that white undergraduate women rationalize and make sense of whiteness via color-evasiveness and racial victimization.

Color-evasiveness. White undergraduate women often upheld color-evasive ideologies, that is, they actively avoided talking about race and utilized semantic distancing strategies to evade racial conversations. This was evident in their socialization growing up and, more

recently, in the conversations they had or refused to have with their family members about race and racism. In this subsection, I present ways in which white undergraduate women in this study were socialized and taught to adopt color-evasive ideologies and how these color-evasive ideologies were then perpetuated during their time at UCLA, particularly with their family members.

As described in Chapter 4, a majority of the participants in this study did not grow up actively discussing race or issues of racism with parents or in their communities. At times, they were even taught to be silent about race. I use examples from Natasha, Samantha, and River, who each express similar sentiments about race not being important or acknowledged when growing up. For instance, in my first interview with Samantha, she shared, "No, it was something I was completely unaware about I think. And I think my parents like didn't really talk. It was something that like they didn't really mention as far as my friends went I guess" (Samantha, Interview 1). A majority of the other participants in this study expressed similar experiences. Referring back to Natasha's experiences with peers and teachers referring to her family as having slaves, I asked her if she ever discussed this experience at home. She explained:

> No, because I knew it would probably just make my mom mad or something. I don't know. Me and my brother, I guess, *never really brought it up because we really don't really talk, I guess, much about it at home*. *We have this big history, but I don't know, really, too much about it. I don't really know why we don't talk about it*, but I mean, I'd like to know more so at least I'm informed about that kind of thing, but we've never. Everything I know is just kind of from me looking it up, or asking, or that kind of thing. We never really discussed it that much. (Natasha, Interview 1)

Here, Natasha shared an important illustration of the way silence and color-evasiveness operates in her family as it relates to discussing issues of race and racism and particularly her family's relationship to slavery. While Natasha knows her family has a history directly connected to slavery, she does not know much about it and her parents have not talked to her about it. "We don't talk about it at home" (Natasha, Interview 1) speaks to an unwritten rule that perhaps Natasha and her brother followed as it related to discussing issues of race and racism at home. The following memory Natasha shares also provides further context for how this rule may have been taught or enforced at home. The memory involves Natasha recounting an experience she had when she was very young at the grocery store. Natasha and her mother are in the grocery store, and she remembers pointing at a Woman of Color and saying "Look, mom. She's a different color" (Natasha, Interview 1). Her mom responds by saying "Shh. Be quiet" (Natasha, Interview 1). As I ask Natasha what this experience felt like to her, she shared:

> Well, to me it was just a realization. There was no bias, there was no me hating or caring that they were a different color. I was just like, "Wow, they're a different color." *So, when she said that, it made me like, "Oh, should I not notice?"* I don't know, I guess that was kind of the experience that I had with that. I mean, I was really little, so I just kind of remember feeling it. I don't have the precise exactly how I felt. (Natasha, Interview 1)

Natasha's mother's response to tell her to be quiet played a significant role in how Natasha then interpreted that message. As Natasha shared in this excerpt, all she was doing was noting a difference between herself and this woman. So when her mom responds to this by shushing her, she then questioned, "oh should I not notice?" (Natasha, Interview 1). This experience helps to portray the way white undergraduate women in this study were taught color-evasive ideologies growing up.

While River's experience with family was slightly different than the other examples mentioned, it also illustrated the way color-evasiveness can also be taught under the guise of multiculturalism. River shared:

> [her] mom's general approach to most things is just like *everyone is holding hands and dancing around*. My mom is very, just very loving of all people, and I think my mom, until this day, she's, and this is something I have a part of too, is we're very interested learning about different kinds of people. (River, Interview 1)

River framed this "philosophy" that her mother taught her as a way to be curious about who people are and to learn about someone that is different than you. This notion of "everyone is holding hands and dancing around" does not explicitly name race and racism and can often socialize white people to think that they believe in equality without a deep understanding of how this way of thinking is harmful to People of Color. These examples of the ways undergraduate white women were taught to think and intentionally not think or notice race then also played a large role in how they dealt with issues of race and racism within their families as they got older. The following examples illustrate how many of the undergraduate white women in this study had a hard time confronting racism with their family members.

Karen, Veronica, and Josephine all shared examples of avoiding discussions of race and racism with their family members, particularly with family members who had political ideologies that were conservative. In the first example, Karen and I discussed her experiences with family members who have different political ideologies than her own. I then specifically asked how she deals with her maternal grandmother when comments like these are being made. She stated:

> I don't know. I feel like especially with my dad's side of the family but like with her, *I've still just kind of learned to avoid talking about those kinds of things.* So I have them all blocked on Facebook so when I do have a discussion about things that I think they would disagree with, it's somewhere they don't see it. Because I hit that point where it was like, I had so many friends who would try and educate my family and high school friends, about racism and homophobia, and they don't listen. And I got tired of my friends wasting time and effort on that. And so, I *just tried to kind of avoid those conversations in the spaces I'm in with her*, or at least avoid starting them. (Karen, Interview 1)

In this excerpt, Karen expressed that she had "learned to avoid talking about those kinds of things" (Karen, Interview 1) and chose to block family members on Facebook when discussing issues related to racism and homophobia. Karen expressed frustration and provided rationale that she does so, so that her friends do not waste their time and effort trying to change her family members views. However, she then also reiterated her choice to "avoid those conversations in the spaces [she is in] with her" (Karen, Interview 1). This example illustrated the way that Karen chose to avoid these conversations with family members. As Karen and I discussed this further, she shared, "It's so draining to try and correct them on that. It's why I avoid it now" (Karen, Interview 1). This choice to avoid these discussions with family members illustrates the way white undergraduate women in this study utilize silence.

This distancing strategy is also evident in two examples from Veronica. When Veronica and I discussed her time in community college and particularly how she navigated when issues of race and racism came up, she shared that throughout community college she often feared not wanting to appear racist. When I ask her to tell me more about this, she reflected:

> I felt like at first my position was just to like kind of *silence myself*. Like okay I'm gonna stay out of this conversation like, *I can't relate to them so I'm not going to say anything*, I don't want to come off as being racist, like *just totally distancing*. . .I want to know what we can do better as a country and as white people and I don't think that you can do that by I'm realizing now that it's not beneficial for me to do that by just sitting there like I do also need to engage a little bit so it has changed. (Veronica, Interview 1)

Here, Veronica explained that during her time in community college when issues related to race and racism came up, she often took the approach of silencing herself. She rationalized being silent because she couldn't relate and didn't want to appear racist, so instead she chose to be "just totally distancing." Although, Veronica feels, as a white person, this is no longer the most beneficial approach, here she provides some reflection of how this approach for her has changed over time. However, when Veronica and I discuss her relationship with her father who had a profound impact on her interest in politics growing up, she shared that discussing issues of race is something she struggles challenging him about. Veronica explained:

> I'm not . . . comfortable talking to my dad about and pointing out when my dad is racist. Pointing out when he is sexist. And pointing out all these things and he gets really upset, but I'll still do it. But *I . . . have not confronted the colorblindness thing* because I've been wanting to ask him why he did that? Because my dad has told me, like he says all of the time, I'm not racist, I'm not racist, I'm not racist and I really believe that he thinks he is not racist . . . and there's been a lot of ways I don't think he's racist. I just think that he's complicit in the system, but . . . *I've never been comfortable talking to him about that because I know it would just like tear him apart, because he really just believes that that's gonna make the world a better place, is to be colorblind*. Is to just accept that we

are all human, like all lives matter, like all that kind of stuff. He really thinks that is the way to solve like all of the racial problems in America. And I just know that it would be a sensitive topic, *so I have not confronted him about that* and I have considered it and thought about it, and I just don't, at this point, I don't know what to do. (Veronica, Interview 1)

Here Veronica expressed how she wrestled with the idea of confronting her father about some of his racial beliefs, particularly his "colorblindness." She also specifically mentioned that she had chosen not to confront "the colorblindness thing" with her father because he believed he is not racist and at times she also felt as if he was not racist. In the end, she chose to distance herself from the conversation with him "because he really just believes that [having a colorblind ideology is] gonna make the world a better place." Veronica provided various reasons why she ultimately chose not to confront her father about this issue. This is another example of how white undergraduate women in this study often opted for silence with their family members regarding matters related to race and racism.

Josephine also shared an experience she had with her mother where she utilized a distancing strategy and refused to engage with her mother regarding a judgement she expressed towards the Latinx community. During our walking interview, Josephine shared with me that she made a trip home recently and during her trip home a conversation ensued. She shared:

Josephine: When I was at home there was one particular conversation I had with my mom because my sister is living in Santa Cruz or something with one of her friends and her friend's family and I didn't ever see her friend. I was like "oh, do you have a picture?" And [my] mom's like, "yeah" and showed them. "Oh, that's cool are they Mexican is that what they are?" Then [my] mom's like, "yeah." And then I'm like "oh,

cool." And she's like, "yeah, your sister just can't stay away from Mexicans." I'm like, "that's racist." Then she's like, "you're the one who asked if they were Mexican." That's not the same thing, really. I don't think she gets it particularly because I get how she doesn't get it. You can't, in my area, you never had a conversation about race comfortably without being racist. Here you can I feel like. Race is a very open thing that you can talk about and not be racist . . .

Tonia: Okay . . . did the conversation move beyond that with your mom or was that where it ended?

Josephine: That's where it ended. "Wow that's racist." She's like, "oh, my gosh no it wasn't." Yeah it was, but she doesn't get that. I don't know.

Tonia: Yeah I think just from my own experiences, those conversations can be really difficult to have, but I have tried to learn over time to lean into them and talk about this.

Josephine: That's the thing, *I can't do that right now.* They're very stubborn you know? It's hard. *I know I should, I leave it where it's at.* I'm just like you're racist and then the conversation just stops there because then they don't want to talk about it anymore *and I don't really want to get into this argument with you about how you're racist because it makes me sad.* (Josephine, Interview 3)

Here Josephine shared a story about a conversation she had with her mother and how she told her mom what she said was racist, but that the conversation did not go beyond that. I then empathized and shared with Josephine that while I know those conversations can be challenging, I still think it's important to "lean into" them. Josephine then responded by telling me, "I can't do that right now . . . I know I should, I leave it where it's at." Ultimately Josephine shared, "I don't really want to get into this argument with you about how you're racist because it makes me

sad." Josephine's story and decision to not take these conversations further is indicative of the way many participants felt about discussing issues of racism with their family members. In sum, color-evasiveness was not only taught to participants by their parents growing up, but was also then often used by participants to remain silent about issues of racism during conversations with their respective family members.

Racial victimization. Another way white women made sense of whiteness in their lives was by expressing feelings of racial victimization, or feeling like they were the true victims of multiculturalism. This often came up as expressing they felt "attacked," targeted because they were white, that they could not say particular things as white people, or as "not enough" of a marginalized group. In this section, I illustrate these various manifestations of racial victimization through stories shared by five participants in this study—Josephine, Rebecca, Kimberly, Daisy, and Angelica.

During my various interviews with participants, the idea of feeling attacked often came up during our discussions. I utilize examples here from both Josephine and Rebecca to elaborate further on this concept. Josephine expressed feelings of being attacked when we discussed the conversations her friends and her have at UCLA related to race and racism. During our first interview, Josephine expressed that on twitter her peers often bring up that white racism does not exist. In response to these comments, Josephine expressed feeling attacked. As she initially described it, she shared:

> So like I don't know. I feel sometimes. I don't want to say I feel attacked because that's kind of dramatic. I think like I don't feel attacked, but I do feel like *I take hits* a lot more than my friends who are like different races who have like historically you know racial . .

> . discrimination and like they’re culture and like history and stuff. (Josephine, Interview 1)

Here Josephine struggled with how best to capture how she felt. She does not necessarily want to use the term “attacked,” as she admits it may be “kind of dramatic.” However, she ultimately boiled it down to feeling as though she takes more hits than her friends who “are like different races.” This expression of feeling like she takes more “hits” than her friends of “different races” illustrates the way she felt like a victim and marginalized as a white undergraduate woman compared to her friends.

Rebecca also expressed frustration and feelings of being attacked when she attended the Annual Women’s March for the first time. As she shared her experience, she said:

> The actual walking part made me kind of sad, ‘cause I saw all these signs that were like, “Trump sucks” and it was kind of like, “Aw.” That kind of . . . I don’t know. Just ‘cause, also, my family voted for him so it’s like, “Oh.” They were like, “Trump supporters, blah, blah, blah.” And I’m like, *“Ah.” I feel attacked.* And, I didn’t even vote for him but I’m like, “My family did.” And . . .I don’t know. (Rebecca, Interview 1)

In this excerpt, Rebecca expressed that being at the women’s march and seeing signs that disfavored Trump bothered her. As she stated rather explicitly, “Ah. I feel attacked.” While she clarified she did not vote for Trump (because she was not old enough), her family did vote for Trump. Thus, being at this rally made her feel attacked. While this example did not explicitly name race as a point of contention, given what we know about Trump and that he supports various racist policies, I argue that even in this example there are racial undertone’s to Rebecca expression of feeling attacked. As my conversation with Rebecca carried on, she expressed again her feelings of being attacked. Rebecca stated,

> I feel like also, I don't know. I feel like there's a *double standard* for white people. Everyone's like, "Oh, you have privilege and all this stuff," but then I feel like . . . I guess *I'm going to use the word attacked again. Sometimes I feel attacked for being white* and I'm like, "Well what am I supposed to do about that?" (Rebecca, Interview 1)

Here Rebecca is building on some of her frustrations she initially shared about what occurred at the Women's March. She expressed there is a "double standard for white people." She then expressed that although she knows white people "have privilege and all this stuff" she still felt "attacked for being white." This idea of being attacked signals that both Rebecca and Josephine felt like they were victims when it came to issues related to race and racism, and they understood their whiteness through this lens.

Related to feeling attacked, other ways that racial victimization appeared to be prevalent in my conversations with participants in this study included when they expressed being targeted for being white, similar to the excerpt I shared from Rebecca in the previous example. Here I utilize two other examples from Angelica and Josephine to elaborate. During my conversations with Angelica, she often expressed that race was not relevant to her growing up experiences. However, she does begin to notice racial differences when she arrives to community college, an environment which had a significantly larger proportion of Latinx students. It is in this environment she expressed she felt racially victimized and at a disadvantage because she is white. Angelica stated:

> Yeah, I think being more of a minority there. I think I felt like I had to work harder, I don't know like, I feel like whenever you're a part of the minority you feel like you have to prove yourself more, so *I felt like being white I had to really like work hard*. I worked really hard to like prove myself to my teachers umm but yeah. (Angelica, Interview 1)

Angelica expressed that being "part of the minority" in this community college environment meant that she had to "prove [herself] more." She reaffirms her statement when she said, "I felt like being white I had to really like work hard." Based on Angelica's views, it is clear that she believes, as a white student in this predominantly Latinx community, she is disadvantaged for being white and has to work harder to prove herself.

The next example occurred during a conversation Josephine and I had where she explained where she stood on the concept of white racism. Specifically in this moment, I asked Josephine to elaborate on what she meant by feeling attacked. Josephine stated:

> If white people want to say they feel attacked umm like you really can't being a white person . . . I feel like I could not say oh I'm kind of offended because you used race as like a card . . . I feel like that card is just not something I could play . . . whereas one of my like Black or like Mexican friends could and they wouldn't necessarily get like attacked . . . and like be called out. Like you don't get to say this sort of thing . . . that's kind of where I am on white racism. (Josephine, Interview 1)

Josephine here expressed she felt as though she did not have the right to "play the race card" the way her "Black or like Mexican friends could." Similar to the instance mentioned earlier, in this instance, we see Josephine use the word "attacked," but then explain that it is something not permissible for her to feel as a white person. Josephine clearly felt like she was not able to express particular feelings because she is white. This indicates how Josephine feels wronged or at a disadvantage because she is white.

Elaborating on this concept of being marginalized for being white further, I include an example from Kimberly, who suggested that she was marginalized specifically as a "white female" in one of her introductory STEM courses. Kimberly shared:

> I guess I'd be like the majority minority because I remember walking into that class and thinking out of a lecture of 300 there might be like two other white females in this class, and I remember thinking like, I felt like most of the students in the class were either Asian or white males. And I remember I would be asking people like oh do you want to study together? I must have asked like 20 people in there if they want to study together sometime and they all turned me down. Like I never found anyone in that class to study with me and *I felt like maybe it was cuz oh I'm a white female*, like *I'm not a part of their* click. (Kimberly, Interview 1)

Kimberly shared in this excerpt how she struggled to find classmates to study with. She mentioned that there were approximately 2 white females out of 300 students total, where the majority of the class was "either Asian or white males." After asking and being turned down by many people regarding studying together she thinks that her difficulty to find people to study with could be attributed to her race and gender. Kimberly stated, "I felt like maybe it was cuz oh I'm a white female." While Kimberly expressed uncertainty that her identity as a white woman could have caused her to feel isolated in this space, she does consider the possibility of her being a white woman as a cause for her being left out and marginalized.

Lastly, feelings of racial victimization for Josephine are evident in one final story. During our third and final walking interview together, Josephine and I discussed more details about her experiences with peers and friends at UCLA. As we discuss this matter, she shared another story about her frustrations with one of her friends who identifies as Muslim. As she explained, she becomes frustrated with him because he often makes fun of Christianity, a religious identity Josephine strongly identifies with. As she tells me the story, she concludes by pointing out ways in which she thinks her friend is contradictory. She said:

> [It] also doesn't make sense because our friends who are Black, they're really devout Christians and he loves them. He would never talk to them about Christianity at all or any comment. But he'll do that to me and then say *it's about me being white*, *my beliefs*. (Josephine, Interview 3)

Josephine here compared how her friend treated her in relationship to her Black Christian peers. She argued that "he loves them" and "would never talk to them about Christianity." This illustrates how she juxtaposes how he treats them to how he treats her. She then ends by stating, "it's about me being white." In this example, we see how Josephine felt as though being white made her a victim or targeted in a way that her Black Christian peers may not have been. In these examples, we see how both Josephine and Angelica compare themselves to their Peers of Color to illustrate the way they feel disadvantaged or targeted because they are white.

Another way that racial victimization manifested itself in participant stories included what participants felt like they could or could not say due to their racial identity. This also played a role in how they understood their whiteness. In the following examples each participant shared a story about how they feel like what they say or other white people say is not permissible or acceptable. Almost as if it feels unfair or unjust to them that because they identify as white they are not able to get away with things that People of Color are.

For instance, Rebecca made sense of her whiteness by expressing that because her father was white he was not able to say particular things. When we discussed her father's affinity towards Mexican culture, she shared, "just because he is a white man, I feel like that can change people's perspective and when he says things, it can change what he means" (Rebecca, Interview 1). In this example, Rebecca argued that because her father "is a white man," this changes people's perspectives about what he says. This indicates Rebecca feels like her father's racial

identity as white is being targeted. Her comment also sheds light on an assumption from which Rebecca is operating. The assumption is that we should be able to say whatever we want regardless of our race.

This sentiment is apparent with other participants as well. For example, Angelica and I discussed an experience she had in a classroom where they were having a discussion about a Spike Lee film. She raised her hand in this class and shared that her Peers of Color had a negative reaction to her comments. She stated:

> Yeah, I think *I felt like it was because I was white*, like I don't think I was saying anything that was outrageous, like but I was commenting on like this like scene in the movie that was like super radicalized and I felt like I. *Because I was white it was kind of looked down upon in my eyes*, but I don't know what the actual reality of the situation was, yeah. (Angelica, Interview 1)

Similar to Kimberly, Angelica questioned whether or not her assessment of the experience was accurate. Nevertheless, Angelica stated she did not think what she shared about the film was particularly "outrageous," but "because [she] was white it was kind of looked down upon." Here, again, we see how participants in this study felt like what they said as white people was looked down upon, as if being a Person of Color would make what they said more acceptable or permissible.

Lastly, this same feeling is expressed by another participant Daisy. It is our final interview together, and Daisy was discussing racial joking on campus with me. She stated:

> Daisy: I mean, I have sort of, there have definitely been things where people will make fun of various ethnic groups, and it's usually white people. I think not because of anything other than, that's like the only thing you're really allowed to do.

Tonia: What do you mean by that?

Daisy: I think it's highly not culturally acceptable on campus if you were say, a white person making fun of say, anybody.

Tonia: Everybody.

Daisy: You know, Chinese students, whomever. Like that's not quite as acceptable as sort of the other way around. (Daisy, Interview 3)

This last example further illustrates how white women felt victimized as white people in this study. Daisy stated that "various ethnic groups" make fun of "usually white people." She argued that it is the only thing that is "allowed." In other words, Daisy felt as though as a white person she was not allowed to make these racial jokes the way others were.

Not as common in my participant's narratives, but also worth mentioning is the way that one participant expressed that she did not feel marginalized enough as a white lesbian undergraduate student. This particularly came up when we discussed spaces like the LGBT center on campus:

> *A lot of the meetings and things they have there are not for my demographic*, so they'll have like something for trans people and something for LGBT People of Color and something for LGBT Asians and LGBTQs and LGBT Christians and it's just like *there's no just plain White LGBT folk.* (Daisy, Interview 2)

In this example, Daisy expressed how the programming that she saw available in the LGBT center "[were] not for [her] demographic." They have "LGBT Asians" and "LGBT People of Color," but "no just plain white LGBT folk." When I asked her to explain what she meant about this further, she stated:

> It's not good enough *just to be lesbian*. You have to be also like of color and trans and then you can complain and then you can have the resources, but just to sort of be . . .like at*tain the bare minimum of unfortunate minority status isn't enough.* (Daisy, Interview 2)

Here Daisy vented about her frustrations as not having "enough" of a "minority status." She problematically stated, "it's not good enough just to be lesbian." While racial victimization in the final two examples looked different than many of the others, overall we see the various ways five women in this study felt racially victimized for being white.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I answer the following research question: *How do white undergraduate women make sense of whiteness in their lives at UCLA?* I have shown that white undergraduate women make sense of their whiteness at UCLA in three particular ways. The first main theme consisted of white undergraduate women in this study make sense of their whiteness via their one-up one-down social identities, particularly socioeconomic status and gender. For socioeconomic status, this is sometimes seen as inextricably linked to race. Other times it served as a "false parallel," a tool for evading acknowledgement of white privilege. For gender, this consisted of white undergraduate women discussing particular instances that made them more aware of how race and gender impacted their own lives or the lives of others around them, but remained complicit in upholding whiteness and comparing their experiences to those of Women or People of Color. The second main theme consisted of white undergraduate women making sense of their whiteness through utilizing white goodness and white ignorance, often as a way to strive to keep their white innocence intact. The third main theme involved white undergraduate women using color-evasiveness and racial victimization to rationalize and make sense of their whiteness. Their use of these ideologies also often kept white supremacy intact.

This study found that white women utilized their "one-up one-down" social identities to make sense of their whiteness. As this relates to socioeconomic status particularly, the white undergraduate women in this study often used their socioeconomic status as a way to consciously and unconsciously maintain the white hegemonic alliance (Allen, 2009). In my interviews with most participants, while issues of class were not particularly prompted for, participants discussed the inextricable link of race and class, in their own lives and in others around them. For some participants in this study, they also utilized socioeconomic status as a way to relate to their working-class Peers of Color, which kept whiteness intact. This confirms Allen's (2009) arguments that white people often use working class status to name marginalization and ignore racial advantages by asking the reoccurring question: "What about poor white people?" (p. 210). Allen reflects on this semantic move and argues it is a specific intra-racial semantic move his non-poor students make in the classroom to evade acknowledgement of white privilege. In the current study, I add to this existing knowledge by illustrating how white working-class undergraduate women also utilize this semantic move as a "false parallel" tool.

Additionally, the white undergraduate women in this study also utilized their cis-gendered identities as women to make sense of their whiteness. Scholars have argued that the position of being white and a woman can serve as a potential place of rupture for challenging the white hegemonic alliance (Nishi, Guida, & Walker, In review; Nishi & Parker, 2018). However, we also know that white women more often than not exert their whiteness in ways that causes harm to People of Color (Bauer, 2017; Mata, 2018; Matias, 2019; Ozias, 2017). In this study Veronica, Karen, and Cindy's narratives help illustrate how they make sense of being white women on the college campus and how this puts them at an advantage because of their whiteness. For instance, they articulate even though particular issues of sexism can affect them

(e.g., speaking up in large groups of men or having lots of white men as their faculty members), they understand that being white women puts them at an advantage from their Women of Color and Student of Color colleagues. While these narratives exemplify how their raced and gendered understandings are developing, we also know that race confessionals do not actually contribute to dismantling white supremacy without a commitment to action (Leonardo, 2009). Instead race confessionals can operate in a performative way, to demonstrate one's moral goodness (Ahmed, 2004; Applebaum, 2013). Thus, these understandings of race and gender for the white undergraduate women in this study, illustrate how white undergraduate women often are still complicit in maintaining whiteness, even when they become more aware of the intersections of issues related to race and gender. In other words, one understanding or being from a particular oppressed group (working class, cisgender women) can work to maintain the white hegemonic alliance (Allen, 2009). They also often "saw" themselves through the "eyes" of Women of Color. Additionally, the stories white undergraduate women shared specifically about their understandings of issues related to the experiences of Women and People of Color also served as a semantic way to distance themselves from engaging in an interrogation of their own whiteness. In other words, while they were drawing attention to racial issues through the lens of People of Color's experiences this also worked to distance themselves from whiteness.

The second main theme found in this study was that white undergraduate women often used white goodness and white ignorance to keep white supremacy intact. In this study, white goodness manifested as a) participants wanting to be seen as separate from "other whites" who were racist, b) participants wanting their actions to be seen as good, and c) participants wanting to act and be in ways that they believed were permissible to People of Color. In various ways, these findings confirm the work of Jayakumar and Adamian (2017). In their study, they found

that white undergraduate students at a Historically Black College distanced themselves from whiteness and called this the "white relativism effect" or "the different white" strategy (Jayakumar & Adamian, 2017). The different white strategy confirms a subfinding from this study, which is participants wanted to see themselves as separate from other whites.

Critical whiteness scholar Barbara Applebaum (2010, 2013) conceptualizes white goodness as white people believing that by being white they are also being good. Citing Ahmed's (2004) theorizing around this concept, Applebaum depicts this as white people asking questions like, what can we do? when discussing and dealing with the reality of racial injustice. Ahmed (2004) argues it is in the act of this questioning that privilege is being reinscribed rather than challenging racial injustice. Another example of how white goodness operates is when we (meaning whites) confess our complicity in whiteness. While this may seem progressive, it "actually functions to demonstrate one's goodness" (Applebaum, 2013, p. 24). Therefore, when whites make this declaration we must remain in the critique of our own goodness. According to Applebaum (2010), "preserving white moral innocence is impossible" (p. 5), and, if we begin with this assertion, we can better understand how we are always complicit in white supremacy. By utilizing the conceptual frame of white goodness it becomes very evident how white women enacted this. For instance, in the case of Natasha, who was aware of her family's relationship to slave owning history, we see her hold onto this desire of wanting to be seen as a good person. In addition, there were many instances where participants recognized and acknowledged their privilege as white woman. However, if we apply Ahmed's (2004) critiques of whiteness scholarship and Applebaum's (2013) theorizing of goodness here, we better understand how when participants acknowledge their privilege this "actually functions to demonstrate [our] goodness" (Applebaum, 2013, p. 24). This study thus builds on this critical whiteness concept of

white goodness by empirically demonstrating the particulars around how white goodness manifests for undergraduate white women at UCLA when making sense of their whiteness. Additionally, building on Bonilla-Silva's four color-blind frames, Jayakumar and Adamian (2017) argued participants in their study utilized a fifth frame, different from those Bonilla-Silva found. This frame consists of the disconnected power analysis frame. This frame "challenges the presumption that engagement with people of color and an understanding of racism will lead to antiracist commitments" (Jayakumar & Adamian, 2017, p. 932). In this study, I also confirmed this notion illustrating, while various participants were aware of systemic racism and how they were advantaged as white woman at UCLA, this often did not translate into action.

bell hooks also told us "anti-racist white folks recognize that their ongoing resistance to white supremacism is genuine when it is not determined in any way by the approval or disapproval of people of color" (bell hooks, 2003, p. 65). Given hooks' argument, the subfinding in this study that white undergraduate women want to act in ways that are permissible to Women and People of Color helps us see that this does not come from a genuine place of challenging white supremacy. This relates to Ahmed's (2004) critique of the what can we (white people) do question. Lastly, building on Mills (2007) concept of white ignorance, the findings in this study also support Mueller's (2017) findings. Muller (2017) found "whites bypass and mystify racial learning" in her racial inequality and the wealth gap course as a way "to creatively [defend] the ideologies that buttress racial domination and white supremacy" (p. 219).

The third finding of this study is that white undergraduate women often utilized color-evasiveness and racial victimization as a way to enact and maintain whiteness. Based on participant narratives, it was evident that most participants were socialized to uphold color-evasive ideologies growing up. In turn, they in the present day often did not want to confront or

engage in conversations about racism with their families. This was a common way color-evasiveness manifested itself in this study. Annamma et al. (2016) argued "in the context of white supremacy, actively avoiding talking about race is a form of power" (p. 155). The excerpts in this study empirically contribute to the way we see this occurring with white undergraduate women at UCLA. Karen, Josephine, and Natasha all share examples where they actively chose to evade discussions that pertained to issues related to racism. The authors who conceptualize color-evasiveness also argue that this terminology as opposed to color-blindness acknowledges "that to avoid talking about race is a way to willfully ignore the experiences of people of color, and makes the goal of erasure more fully discernible. In other words, to use the term 'evade' highlights an attempt to obliterate" (Annamma et al., 2016, p. 156). Thus, this study helps to illustrate how this evasion takes place amongst white undergraduate women. This also confirms Ozias (2017) findings that white undergraduate women often do racism by way of silences. Racial victimization is a concept in critical whiteness and race studies, which has been more commonly explored in research on the racial ideologies of white individuals (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Cabrera, 2014c, 2018). Cabrera (2014c) found white undergraduate men often expressed this as his participant's feeling like they were the true victims of multiculturalism. While this was also confirmed in this study, this study also extended his findings. White undergraduate women in this study not only expressed racial victimization in this way, but they also discussed this as a) feeling "attacked" for being white, b) feeling like they weren't allowed to say particular things as white, and c) as "not enough" of a marginalized group. Thus, this study extends our current understanding of racial victimization and points to the particular ways it manifests for white undergraduate women.

In the next chapter, I answer my second and third research question: *How do white undergraduate women perceive UCLA's campus environment? How do these perceptions work to uphold and or challenge white supremacy?* Utilizing data primarily from the photo-elicitation and walking interviews, I answer this research question via three main findings. First, race is salient for white undergraduate women in spaces that predominantly Students of Color frequent. Second, whiteness was everywhere at UCLA. Third, participants were both aware and unaware of how they were taking up space at UCLA.

Chapter 6: Race, Gender, and the Lived Environment at UCLA

In this chapter, I answer my second research question: *How do white undergraduate women perceive UCLA's campus environment? How do these perceptions work to uphold and or challenge white supremacy?* I take a closer look at space and the lived environment at UCLA to understand how white undergraduate women make sense of race and gender in various on campus spaces in which they participate. In turn, I look at how their understandings of those spaces serve to either maintain or disrupt whiteness at UCLA. I answer my research question in this chapter with a particular focus on presenting images from my photo-elicitation interviews and excerpts from my photo elicitation and walking interviews. I selected these methods to answer these questions because they provide analytical insights related to the nuance and context of whiteness, gender, and lived environment on college campuses.

In this chapter, I first argue white undergraduate women in this study were aware of their racial and gendered experiences. This awareness was more significant in a few specific contexts. One context in which racial and gendered experiences were more front of mind is where participants were one of few white students in the space. Another such context was where a language other than English was being spoken. I also collected evidence that shows awareness of racial and gendered experiences was greater in places where they knew Students of Color frequented. Second, white women also felt like they were white women everywhere on campus and presented various UCLA symbols and images that illustrated how whiteness was "everywhere" on campus. This included aerial images of the UCLA campus and UCLA symbols, including the Bruin bear statue and the Inverted Fountain. Third, participants sometimes challenged notions regarding their entitlement to space, taking up questions regarding whether they should or should not take up space. And at other times they felt entitled to various spaces on

UCLA's campus, even when they felt like they did not belong. This included spaces like racial dialogues, off-campus parties/fundraisers, and the UCLA library.

Subenvironments That Made Whiteness and Gender Visible

Participants shared particular spaces on campus made them more aware of their white racial identity, and others made them more aware of their gendered identity. Participants expressed this in four forms. First, participants shared an awareness of their whiteness and sometimes gender most often in contexts where they were one of the few shite students. Second, participants discussed spaces where languages other than English changed the role of race from absent to visible**.** Third, one participant evidenced her awareness of whiteness, and, sometimes gender, as she presented various photos of spaces on campus where she believed many Students and Staff of Color frequented. Fourth, participants described STEM subenvironments as spaces where their gendered identity was most visible. Additionally, when these STEM subenvironments experiences are examined with gender in relationship to race, we see how white undergraduate women are able to name gendered microaggressions and perhaps perpetuate racial microaggressions or stereotypical beliefs at the same time.

Frequenting spaces with predominantly Students of Color. Two participants felt an awareness of whiteness when participating in spaces that Students of Color frequented. Cindy was heavily involved in the Queer Student Center and provided the first example. When she presented this image (see Figure 4), Cindy used this space to represent a place where she felt her whiteness was visible. As Cindy pulled up the image on her iPhone, she stated:

> *This is, where I do feel white*, because I wanted to mix up the photos. So, this is a picture of the Queer Student Center, and this is the home of Queer Alliance on campus. And I took this picture because, as I told you in our last talk, I'm on the board for QA, and *I'm*

one of the only white people on the board. And so recognizing that . . . and I know that I'm white, and I know that . . . most of our board is QTPOC. And so . . . it's like I talk at that QTPOC conference. But that applies to them, and it doesn't apply to me, stuff like that was why I took that picture. (Cindy, Interview 2)

Figure 4. Queer Alliance Office. Image of the inside of the Queer Alliance office in Ackerman.

Here, Cindy shared how being on the leadership board of the Queer Alliance with primarily queer and trans People of Color made her "feel white" and that she "recogniz[ed] that." She also shared discussions happened amongst the board, for instance, the QTPOC conference, which are issues that do not apply to her, but do apply to her QTPOC colleagues. Experiences,

conversations, and interactions in this particular space made Cindy aware of her being "one of the only white people on the board."

The Academic Advancement Program (AAP) was another space where two working-class women in this study mentioned feeling their whiteness. AAP is a university-wide academic program for undergraduate students that serves first-generation, low-income, and students who have been historically underrepresented in higher education (UCLA, Academic Advancement Program, n.d., para. 1). Kimberly displayed an image of a bulletin boards in AAP (see Figure 5). When she showed me this image, she explained:

> So I applied . . . to AAP for tutoring and stuff 'cause a lot of people told me I should and *I don't think white people are usually admitted into there*. You know, I'm trying to find out where . . . just like regardless, you get admitted into it, like automatically, I suppose. But I applied into it and I got in but *I'm definitely probably one of the only white girls they've ever seen there*, and sometimes I feel kind of bad using it because I feel like *maybe I shouldn't be here* . . . taking . . . those resources away, but I kind of really need it at the same time but I don't know, *I felt weird there after a while*, so I just haven't been using it. (Kimberly, Interview 2)

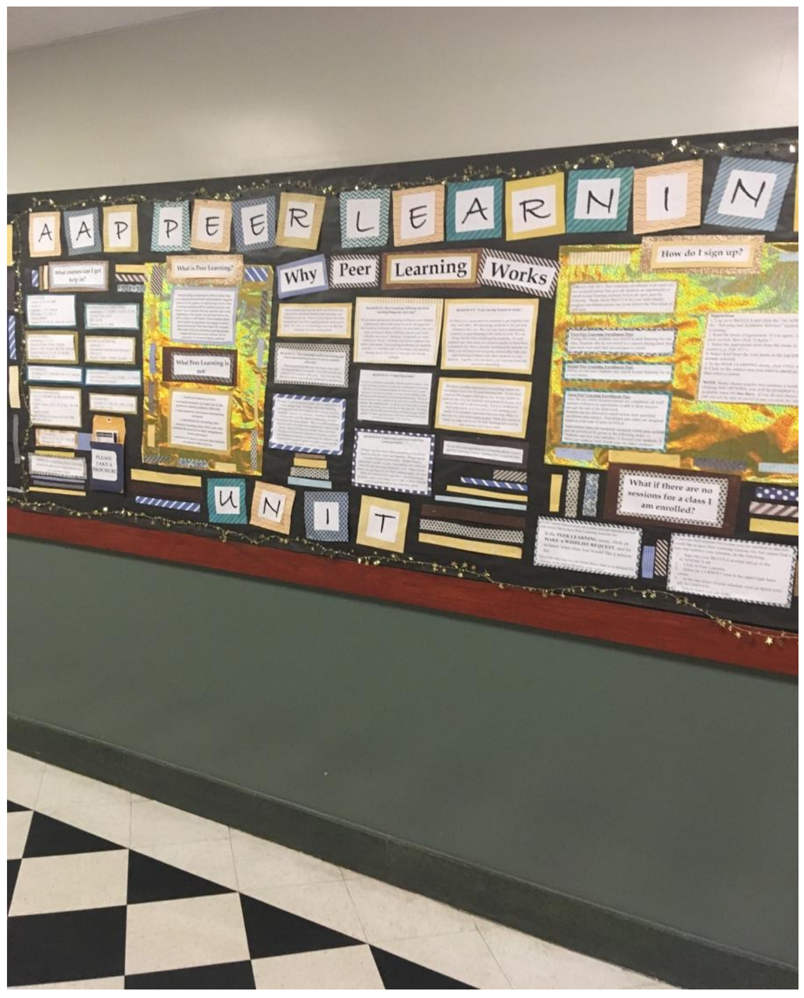

Figure 5. AAP Bulletin Board. Peer learning bulletin board inside of the Academic Advancement Program building in Campbell Hall.

In this example, Kimberly expressed she applied to AAP for support services, a space that primarily serves first generation, low income, Students of Color on campus and described it as a place where she's "definitely probably one of the only white girls they've ever seen there." Based on this statement, it seems similar to Cindy. Kimberly's identity as a white woman was salient because this is a space Kimberly perceives few white women frequent. Her comment that she does not "think white people are usually admitted into there" further upholds the notion that Kimberly did not believe many white people were also AAP students. Lastly, Kimberly

expressed uncertainty about whether she should be using AAP services and, ultimately, decided not to use them because she "felt weird there after a while." This points to Kimberly being aware of being white in a space with predominantly Students of Color. This most likely contributes to why being one of the few white students in this subenvironment may also be an uncomfortable experience for her.

Similar to Kimberly, Cindy also provided an example of AAP as a space where she mentioned feeling her whiteness. When I asked Cindy to show me her next photo, she told me the next photo was taken to address the question, "Where does she feel like she does not belong on campus?" To which she responded:

> Cindy: So I come from a single parent family, and I come from a low income family, so I get the advantage of using the AAP program. *But I also recognize that the AAP program was not made for white students*, *it was made for Students of Color* who were academically disadvantaged. And while I'm very appreciative that I can take advantage of that program, *I don't always feel like it's my space to be in*.
>
> Tonia: Has there been any experience, or what is it about the space that makes you feel that way?
>
> Cindy: So Campbell Hall is the site where the two Black students were killed during the Civil Rights Movement, which I believe that's why AAP is housed there, if I'm not mistaken, and just *recognizing that that wasn't a program that was made for me*. But I do get to take advantage of it because I'm not as privileged as some people. (Cindy, Interview 2)

Like Kimberly, Cindy also shared coming from a disadvantaged background allowed her to access resources and support available in AAP, but she did not always feel comfortable utilizing those resources (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Campbell Hall. North entrance of Campbell Hall with students walking by in the distance.

As Cindy stated, it “doesn’t always feel like it’s [her] space to be in.” She also explicitly pointed out the “AAP program was not made for white students, it was made for Students of

Color." When I asked her to elaborate what made her feel that way, she then further pointed to the racial history of Campbell Hall where AAP is housed. Cindy shared, "Campbell Hall is the site where the two Black students were killed during the Civil Rights Movement." Cindy and Kimberly shared differing stories about AAP, and Cindy had a bit more understanding of the program and its history. Both still acknowledged it was a space where they did not always feel like they belonged as white undergraduate women.

The Racialization of Certain Languages That Changed the Role of Race From Absent to Salient

Participants also discussed use of Mandarin and Spanish in certain spaces on campus, as places where their whiteness felt more salient and race felt present. For Samantha and Josephine, they described this in their workplace. Samantha and Josephine work in food services on campus. For Daisy, this occurred specifically in her student organization.

As discussed in Chapter 6, Samantha discussed her workplace as a space in which her race and her own racial awareness felt more salient, particularly because most of her co-workers spoke Spanish in the workplace. Samantha expressed she took this photo of her workplace (see Figure 7), the South Campus student center, as a space where she felt that race was present. As she stated, "I think the workplace is kind of the biggest one for me" (Samantha, Interview 2). When I asked Samantha more about why she "did not feel comfortable" and "alienated" (Samantha, Interview 2) working there, she shared:

> *I don't think it was necessarily because of race*, *because I was one of the only* . . . Cause many of the people who work there are People of Color and it was kind of just that dynamic between everyone. And especially I think it was a huge thing with the supervisors *because they would speak Spanish to the other people that work there* and it

was just kind of like oh, *if you can't understand Spanish or speak it, then you can't be their friend* and I know you're not supposed to be friends with your supervisors, but they were because they had that kind of bond and so *that made me uncomfortable* because just because I can't do things like that, *I don't deserve the same respect that they do*. (Samantha, Interview 2)

Figure 7. South Campus Student Center. Several students in line for food at the South Campus Student Center.

Samantha began by sharing she did not think she felt alienated “because of race.” She then indicated that she “was one of the only . . .” Samantha’s words trailed off before she finished her thought. From a following comment, I inferred her complete thought was she was one of the only white students working there. I make this inference because she instead shifted gears to explain, “many of the people who work there are People of Color.” After not attributing her feelings of alienation in this workplace environment to race, she explained the supervisors “would speak Spanish to the other people that work there.” Based on those experiences she expressed, “if you can’t understand Spanish or speak it, then you can’t be their friend.” Ultimately, the use of Spanish in her workplace on campus “made [her] uncomfortable.” Not only did it make Samantha uncomfortable, she also felt as though she was not given “the same respect” her colleagues received because of her lack of Spanish speaking abilities. Samantha’s choice to not finish her first sentence about being white illustrates her use of color-evasive discourse (discussed previously in Chapter 6) to avoid discussing her own white racial identity. She then also attributed her feelings of alienation in this environment to not be about race, but we know race and language, among various other identity markers, are always intersecting for Latinx individuals (Pérez Huber, 2010; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). Thus, we see here the notion of the Spanish language becoming a proxy for race for Samantha. Lastly, most places at UCLA did not make race salient for Samantha. Therefore, she brought in a photo of a space where she is predominantly working with People of Color who speak Spanish. Similar to Cindy and Kimberly, this is a space where race feels most salient to Samantha, when she is one few white students in the space.

Josephine presented a similar image and shared this image represented a place in which she felt race was present at UCLA (see Figure 8). Josephine stated:

That's the kitchen in Ackerman where I work. *I do feel race is present here*. I work in food preparation, right? For all the campus stores and stuff where you have little sandwiches and fruits and stuff that you buy. That's my job. Then, everyone there is Latino, pretty much. I'd say a good portion of them and, especially, in where I work. *They all speak Spanish and I don't speak Spanish.* In that respect, *I feel like I don't belong there very well*. I started working there this quarter, this year. Definitely, it was a difficult adjustment, I think, working there because they all, the career workers, if I'm in there working with them, *they'll speak Spanish to each other the entire time and it's just, I don't know, it's kind of awkward*. (Josephine, Interview 2)

Figure 8. UCLA Catering Workspace. Food preparation table inside of the UCLA catering workspace kitchen in Ackerman Union.

Like Samantha's feelings about her workplace, Josephine also does not feel like she belongs in this environment at UCLA. She credited her sense of not belonging to the fact her coworkers "all speak Spanish and [she does not] speak Spanish." She ended her thoughts by stating, "It's kind of awkward." As Josephine and I continued to discuss her experiences in this workplace at UCLA, she told me, "I think they show bias towards people that also speak Spanish" (Josephine, Interview 2). I asked her to elaborate on this point, "How do you feel like that's played out or how have you seen that?" She responded by explaining she has a coworker, and "she's been there for 3 years, and she's never been promoted." Josephine reflected, "I just don't think it's on the table for her because she doesn't speak Spanish" (Josephine, Interview 2).

Josephine also shared there were many spaces she felt like she belonged. Josephine's thoughts on feeling like she did not belong supports my claim that white undergraduate women at UCLA felt most out of place in spaces where English was not the primary language. However, in this example, we not only see how race is salient for Josephine in this space, but we also see her utilizing racial victimization as previously discussed in Chapter 6.

The last example demonstrates how white undergraduate women expressed whiteness feels more salient only when they were in spaces where a language other than English was being spoken. I also had a discussion with Daisy about the use of Mandarin in her math student organization during our photo elicitation interview (see Figure 9). The conversation began when Daisy brought in an image of the Engineering Science library and described it as a place where she spent a lot of time. In Daisy's own words, "It's the best place to go if you want to be around a bunch of people doing math and programming and stressing out and you just need that vibe of, 'We are all in this for the long haul, and it is hard'" (Daisy, Interview 2). We then discussed the racial demographics of the space, and she explained, "everyone's Asian, everyone" (Daisy,

Interview 2). However, Daisy described everyone being Asian in that space as normal to her because she's "in a major where a lot of people are Asian" (Daisy, Interview 2). Daisy elaborated on this point:

> So many of my friends are Asian, specifically Asian but also other races, but a lot of Asian friends. My roommate is Asian, my best friend is Asian, just like people in my class are Asian, so *I feel totally feel comfortable with that*. I think the thing is that I'm lucky because I don't think there's really any bad thing about being White. So it's like, "Oh, I'm the only White person here, but who cares?" (Daisy, Interview 2)

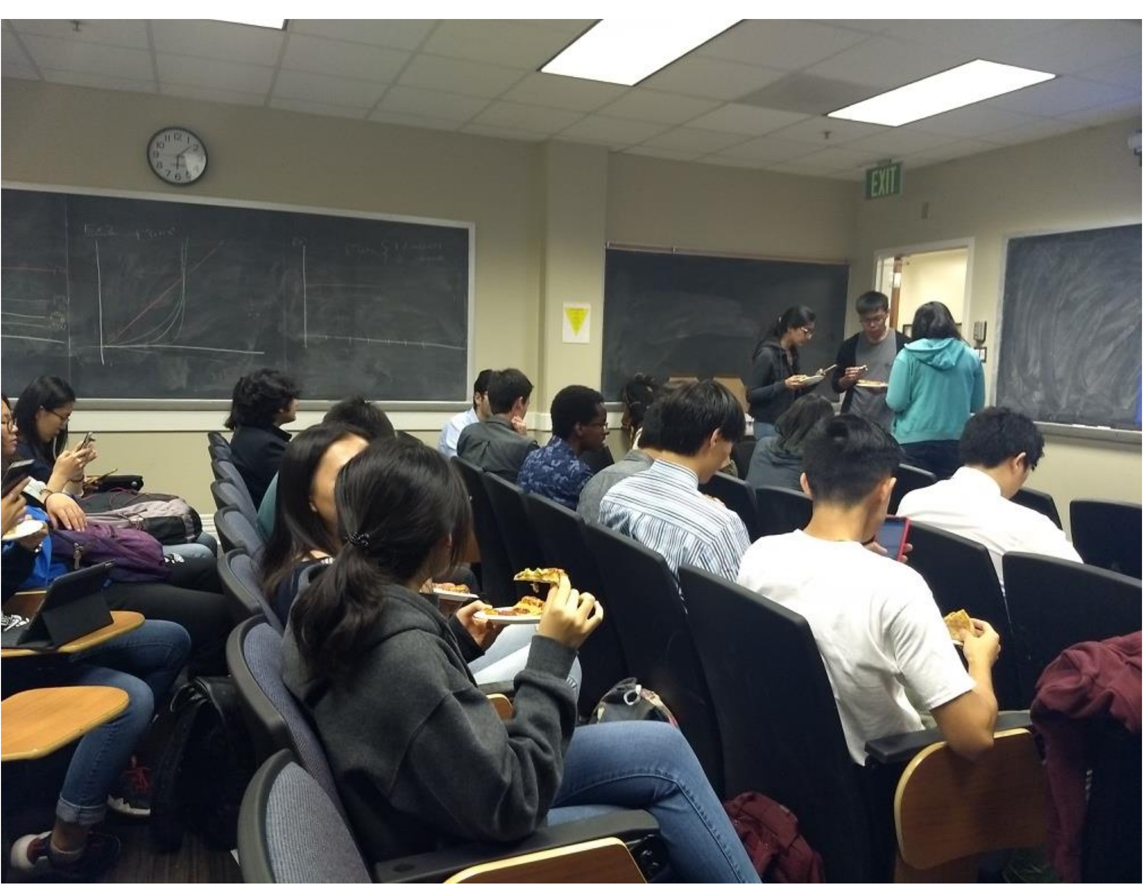

Figure 9. Undergraduate Math Student Association. Students inside of a classroom convening for the Undergraduate Math Student Association.

Daisy then juxtaposed this experience as being the only white person in this environment with another environment at UCLA. She is also one of the only white people in the Math undergraduate student organization. Daisy stated:

> *The only time that I sort of feel uncomfortable is when everyone's speaking Mandarin.* Like there's a picture of a situation I was in where all the people next to me are speaking in . . . assume it's Mandarin, I don't know, I can't tell Mandarin from Cantonese and the people in front of me are too, and the people over there are. It's just like, "Ah," but *it's a language thing, it's not really a race thing*. (Daisy, Interview 2)

Daisy explained she is used to being one of the few white students in her Math major and amongst her friends, and it does not make her uncomfortable. Quite the contrary, she stated, "I feel totally feel comfortable with that." Daisy further made this point by rhetorically stating, "Oh, I'm the only White person here, but who cares?" Daisy then compared this experience with another image. The image depicted Daisy's first-person view of her experience at an undergraduate Math Student association meeting. She shared, "The only time that I sort of feel uncomfortable is when everyone's speaking Mandarin," "all the people next to [her] are speaking in . . . Mandarin," and the "people in front of [her] are too." Like Samantha's thoughts, Daisy then explained, "it's a language thing, it's not really a race thing."

Daisy's experience is very similar to the one's described by Josephine and Samantha in their workplace. However, unlike Samantha and Josephine, Daisy does not express feeling as uncomfortable as Samantha and Josephine in environments where English is not the primary language spoken. This raises questions regarding if Daisy's comfortability is particular to her frequent interactions with Asian students at UCLA or if it pertains to Asian students being the largest racial group at UCLA and this being more normalized? It also raises questions regarding

why Josephine and Samantha felt particularly uncomfortable in their Spanish speaking workplaces on campus. While we do not know the answer to these questions based on the data from the existing study, future studies could explore how white women perceive non-dominant language spaces in historically white college contexts. Additionally, it is important to point out that only particular languages, Mandarin and Spanish, were seen as racialized. For instance, two participants did discuss attending their German language club. However, this was not a space that they described race was present, highlighting how race and language become related to whiteness and non-whiteness (Rosa & Flores, 2017).

Students and People of Color as the majority in particular spaces. Although this was not a common pattern across participants, Veronica presented three images where she mentioned feeling her whiteness and gender because the environment, space, or event was predominantly frequented by Students and Staff of Color. Veronica's examples include the football practice center, the UCLA underground parking lot, and the University of California (UC) workers strike. I asked her why she shared these photos and described them as places where she felt race was present. Veronica explained each one was a space predominantly frequented by Students or People of Color. For example, when Veronica showed me an image of the football center (see Figure 10), she stated:

> That's the football center. I didn't actually know about it last year, but I live off campus and *my walk to and from school every day I walk past the football center* and *it's pretty much the only place on campus that I see more People of Color*. I don't know if congregation is the right word, but it's not one or two people that are walking by, it's the entire sports teams will walk by and *the majority of them are People of Color*. In the mornings they're working out. *To me it's a place where I think about the way that People*

of Color are treated on campus and where their place is on campus . . . it's the only place on campus that I have seen a lot of African American or Black individuals. (Veronica, Interview 2)

Figure 10. Wasserman Football Center. Outside of the main entrance of Wasserman Football Center.

Veronica described how her daily walk from her off-campus apartment to campus involved walking past the football center. She explained, "it's pretty much the only place on campus that I see more People of Color." Not only does she see "one or two people that are walking by," but "the entire sports teams will walk by." Again, emphasizing "the majority of them are People of Color." As mentioned earlier, Cindy and Kimberly described similar experiences when they participated in programs put on by AAP. However, in this example,

Veronica is pointing out a space she does not participate in, but does "walk past" "every day." While Veronica shared this is a space where race is present and salient for her because the majority of the people in this space are People of Color, she also critiqued the dynamics of this space as one of the few that she sees as racialized, "it's a place where I think about the way that People of Color are treated on campus and where their place is on campus." Veronica's insight that UCLA is sending a message to its students, the football center is "[Students of Color] place on campus" is an important critique of the racial messaging UCLA emits to students, staff, and the community at large. Lastly, she noted, "it's the only place on campus that I have seen a lot of African American or Black individuals."

Another image Veronica brought in was an image of UCLA's underground Parking Lot 7 (see Figure 11). It was not until Veronica began explaining to me why she brought this photo in that I understood why she saw it as a racialized space. Veronica described:

> This is the parking garage where there's the rec field and the soccer field on top of it . . . I took this photo because Asian American, well, I should start off by saying dance groups practice there. *It seems like the majority of people that are in the dance groups that practice there are Asian American* . . . I guess it's something I noticed last year when I first came. A lot of the dance groups on campus are, and I was thinking about this when I was walking to this meeting tonight, I keep walking by, the way that I've been going home is different than last year, *but, the Asian dance groups practice here in the parking garages* but then there's also the *traditional Mexican American where they have the big skirts, that dancing, they also practice right outside Pauley Pavilion on a different side which I now walk by.* (Veronica, Interview 2)

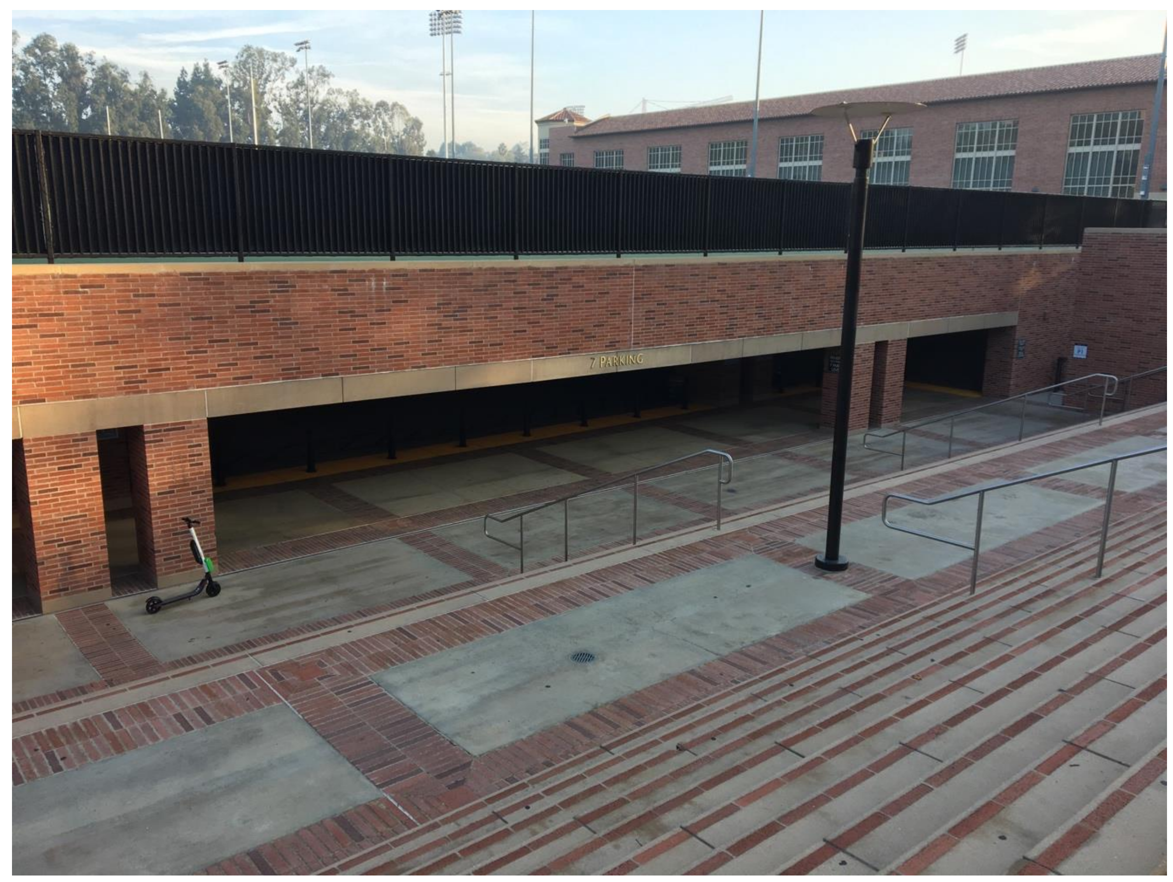

Figure 11. Parking Lot 7. Image of underground entrance of Parking Lot 7.

In this example, Veronica described how she noticed “the majority of people that are in the dance groups that practice [in the UCLA parking lots] . . . are Asian American.” This is something she noticed last year when she arrived at UCLA. While the image of the parking lot alone would not help explain why Veronica chose this photo, her narrative helped paint a more complete picture. Similar to the other image she shared, while she herself is not a participant of any dance groups, she does notice racial patterns and the homogeneity of these cultural dance groups. She also pointed out that she also noticed a “traditional Mexican American” dance group that practices in a nearby outdoor space on campus. These examples shed light on how race is

constantly operating at UCLA and the spatial realities of racialization at UCLA. This is most obvious for Veronica when she is walking to and from her off-campus apartment and campus.

Lastly, to further illustrate this finding, Veronica also shared sentiments expressed by most of the participants about when she was more aware of her whiteness on campus in a more explicit way. When I asked Veronica, "where do you feel like a white woman on campus?" she replied:

> I feel like a white woman on campus *only when I'm not with other white people*. Walking by the Asian American groups or walking by the football center and being the only white woman around or being in the African American class, *I very much felt like a white woman*. (Veronica, Interview 2)

Here Veronica clearly explicated how she only felt "like a white woman on campus" when she is "not with other white people." She provides three examples of this: walking by the predominantly Asian American dance group practice on campus, by the football center, and being in her African American studies class. She then concluded by reminding me it is in those particular spaces and places on campus she "very much felt like a white woman."

STEM Spaces as a "Toxic Male Atmosphere"

Three of the participants who were STEM majors during the time of this study expressed their STEM subenvironment was a "toxic male atmosphere" (Daisy, Interview 2). I used "toxic male subenvironment" as an in-vivo code from Daisy's interview to code this concept when I saw it across other participants' experiences. These were environments where they experienced discomfort, not belonging, and or gendered microaggressions. Additionally, while white women often found these spaces to be hostile and unwelcoming, they also, at times, upheld racialized beliefs about these subenvironments.

Karen, an engineering major, expressed experiences of discomfort and not belonging in the engineering department. As we discussed the photos she brought in for the photo elicitation interview, she compared her experience in her engineering courses to a space where she feels more comfortable, the LGBT center. As we discussed the LGBT center, I asked Karen:

> Tonia: And is the LGBT Center somewhere that you feel like you belong? Is that a space you go to?
>
> Karen: Yeah. It's a nice space on campus to study and be around people that are at least more similar to me rather than the *dude bro-y-ness of the engineering school* and the engineering library.
>
> Tonia: Can you say more about what that sort of dude bro-y-ness means?
>
> Karen: I don't know how to explain that one. It's just like, I don't know, *when you're around a lot of men, it's very intimidating.* And they're all, in the engineering, by this point, *we've all been taking the same classes together for over 2 years*. And so *they've got their clicks of men*, and so it's just *giant groups of them.* And there's a lot of frat boys which surprises me. And they have that personality going on. I don't know. It's just like, *they have distinctly masculine energy*. (Karen, Interview 2).

Here, Karen juxtaposed the LGBT center as somewhere where there are people that are more similar to her in comparison to her engineering subenvironment, which includes the engineering school and the engineering library. She described these spaces on campus as "dude bro-y-ness." When I asked her to tell me more about what this means to her she stated, "when you're around a lot of men it's very intimidating." While she has been in coursework with the same group of students for over 2 years, they have created "their clicks of men" and her description of them as "giant groups of them" further elucidates how this space is intimidating

for Karen. This “clique-y-ness” described by Karen is also mentioned by Josephine, “the white guys in math classes would only talk to each other and in their little groups or cliques or whatever and they’d go off to the side” (Josephine, Interview 2).

Daisy, a math major, also expressed ways that as a white woman she struggled with the STEM subenvironment. During our photo elicitation interview Daisy showed me an image of her classmate (see Figure 12) and explained, “That would be my math class with *my single female classmate* in the foreground looking all excited” (Daisy, Interview 2).

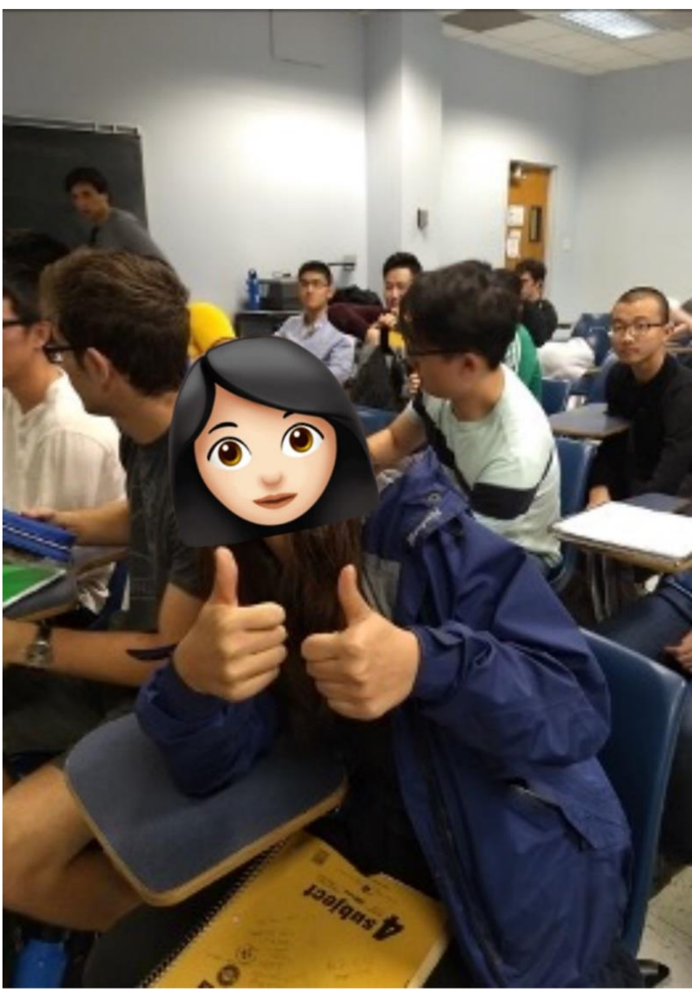

Figure 12. Honors Math Class Students. A group of students in Honors Math class, one woman in the front and various men in the background.

Daisy included an image of her "single female classmate" to point to the lack of gender representation she experienced in her math courses at UCLA. As we discussed the class further and why she decided to take a picture of it, Daisy shared:

> Daisy: It's fabulous subject matter. The professor is okay, but it is like *toxic male atmosphere*, like in the most nerdy way possible.
>
> Tonia: What is that? Can you explain what that feels like?
>
> Daisy: I think the thing is people in math often rest their egos upon their ability in math and nothing else, often because they don't really have anything else going for them, so it turns into a *proverbial penis measuring contest* and it's really annoying. (Daisy, Interview 2)

Although Daisy used different words than other participants in this study, she also described this environment as a "*toxic male atmosphere*." When I asked her to explain further she stated her math classes felt like a "proverbial penis measuring contest" where lots of men are using their egos to demonstrate their math abilities. Daisy also expressed how she struggled specifically with her honors math course as it relates to the "atmosphere and the attitudes towards women" (Daisy, Interview 2). When I asked her to tell me more about this course and her experiences, she stated:

> So, the other girl, she asked the professor to clarify a notational thing because the professor sucks at notation. It's incredibly annoying. He just makes things more difficult than they need to be, so it's a fairly mundane question that's really just asking him to clarify something. *One of the other students turns around and starts to explain . . . the entire concept over again.* First of all, *it wasn't what she asked,* and then also *he's not the professor.* This was in lecture and *I'd never seen that happen before*, *where a student*

asked a question and some kid just turns around and starts answering. Sometimes people will say things, sort of offhandedly if the professor is struggling to find some words. Like it's not totally unheard of, but to really just . . . and *also the fact that he turned around was really weird. Like I've never seen that.* So it's a lot of that *body language stuff.* People really like to explain stuff to one another. It's not as if the mansplaining is just men to women, like there's a lot of condescending explanation to go around, but *it seems like people are jumping at it even more when one of us chicas asks a question.* (Daisy, Interview 2)

In this story Daisy recalled a time when her "single female classmate" asked a clarifying question and how one other male student responded to this question in the classroom. She shared, "He [turned] around and [started] to explain . . . the entire concept over again." This was something Daisy had never experienced before. A male student, without being prompted by the professor or anyone else in class, turning around to explain the concept to classmate. Daisy then explained that because this was not even the question the student asked, it was clear to her how this male student perhaps made an assumption about Daisy's classmate and her ability to understand the concept being taught in the honors math course. Lastly, Daisy pointed out that while she thinks "mansplaining" is a common occurrence in her courses, "it seems like people are jumping at it even more when one of [the] chicas asks a question." Daisy also expressed her frustration that she often felt like she had "to make up for something or represent something [as] really annoying" (Daisy, Interview 2).

While white undergraduate women experience hostility and describe STEM subenvironments as uninviting, they also sometimes upheld racialized stereotypes or beliefs about their professors, classmates, and teaching assistants (TA). I base this finding on evidence

from a conversation I had with Josephine where we discussed why she felt the Math department was “hostile” towards her (Josephine, Interview 2). While Josephine came in as an applied math major, she eventually switched over to statistics. In our photo elicitation interview she shared an image of the Math Sciences building with me (see Figure 13) and stated:

> Josephine: So, that’s math sciences . . . that’s important to me, because I spend a lot of my time there because my major was Applied Math when I came to college. I really liked math and then math was hard and . . . it’s a place I feel . . . because the statistics doesn’t have a building, it’s in math sciences, but it’s on it’s own floor and it’s just weird because *I feel like I belong there more than I did actual math* . . . and [the] approach to education [in math] . . . seems very hostile to me as opposed to where I’m at now which, I think, is *a lot more inviting and friendlier*, kind of, accommodating because I think it’s a smaller group. (Josephine, Interview 2)

When I asked her what made Applied Math feel hostile, she stated:

> Well, *I felt it was a very male oriented major*, kind of thing. The math professors, when I took lower division math courses, they weren’t super friendly and they didn’t really care, I felt, and *I never, in any of my math classes, have ever had a female, a white female especially*, like TA or professor or anything. I think it had . . . no, even statistics I had one female TA but *it’s all very male oriented* and *the TA’s are usually . . . they don’t speak English that well.* They *can’t communicate* or they *can’t teach the subject matter* very well *or they just don’t care*, really, they’re just there because they think there’s more and they understand it but they can’t communicate that to someone else and that sort of thing so it’s just, kind of, *a hard environment to try and understand in.* (Josephine, Interview 2)

Figure 13. Entrance to Mathematical Sciences Building.

Here Josephine reiterated her point that “[applied math] was a very male oriented major,” and the feeling she gets in her statistics courses is “more inviting and friendlier.” She further pointed to her frustration in this applied math major by stating, “I never, in any of my math classes, have ever had a female, a white female especially.” While she gave several reasons to make sense of why these spaces comparatively felt this way to her, e.g., statistics is a smaller group, instructors did not teach well in math, she ultimately also felt it was connected to the ability for her TA’s and or professor’s to speak English. As she stated, “they don’t speak English that well” and it is “a hard environment to try and understand in.” Here Josephine expressed

subtle ways she felt uncomfortable as a woman in this space. Simultaneously, she also upholds problematic beliefs about most likely male professors who are not white and who perhaps speak English as their second language. She faults their lack of English language speaking abilities as part of why she is unable to learn in her courses.

Daisy also upheld the model minority myth about her peers in Math. She stated:

> I sort of sometimes frame it in that sense of like *Asian girls are good at this*, White boys are good at this, *Asian boys are good at this*, *White girls, not so much*. It's mostly an excuse if it's like, "Oh, well there are girls who are really good at this, they're just Asian ones." It's like, "Okay, well, so then *I'm at a disadvantage 'cause I'm White*." (Daisy, Interview 2)

While Daisy discussed various ways she had experienced marginalization as a white woman in the STEM subenvironment, she then also upheld model minority myths about her peers, making assumptions that "Asian girls are good at this" and "Asian boys are good at this," but she's "at a disadvantage 'cause [she is] white." Not only do we see her express racial victimization as discussed in Chapter 6, we also see how white undergraduate women in the STEM subenvironment name sexism, but often uphold racism.

While each participant described their STEM subenvironments slightly differently (e.g., dude bro-y-ness, male oriented, or as a toxic male atmosphere) it is clear that this subenvironment makes white undergraduate women in this study feel underrepresented, marginalized, and uncomfortable. However, it is only when we examine these experiences with gender in relationship to race that we see how white undergraduate women are able to name gendered microaggressions and perhaps perpetuate racial microaggressions or stereotypical beliefs at the same time.

To summarize, most of the undergraduate white women in this study discussed various places on campus where race felt salient to them as spaces that were predominantly frequented by People of Color or where a language other than English was being spoken and that gender felt most salient to them in spaces like the STEM subenvironment. Whiteness is innocuous (Owen, 2007) and as white individuals we often do not conceptualize ourselves as racialized (Tatum, 1994). This being said, the analogy of whiteness being an ocean and white people being the fish in that ocean (K. E. Maxwell, 2004) has been used to explicate how as white people it is hard for us to understand how whiteness operates. Just like fish are unaware of being in water, white people are often unaware of being surrounded by whiteness. This analogy helps to shed light on this finding. If whiteness is the sea and the white undergraduate women in this study are the fish, then it takes the fish being removed from the water, or prompted to move from the water to the shore in this photo elicitation activity, where whiteness is no longer operating as an unspoken norm, for them to realize or become aware that they have been in the water all along. This finding is in direct relationship to the next finding, which illustrates that white women feel like white undergraduate women everywhere at UCLA.

Whiteness Everywhere

Since UCLA has enrolled majority white students since its founding and continues to reproduce whiteness via its histories, traditions, symbols, stories, icons, curriculum it is a historically white institution (Brunsma et al., 2013). In this section, I illustrate how the stories and experiences of white undergraduate women navigating the lived environment at UCLA further help illustrate the ways in which UCLA is a white serving institution. I first illustrate the way white undergraduate women used aerial images to illustrate how whiteness operates at UCLA. I then pay particular attention to white cisgendered women's perceptions of UCLA

symbols and how these symbols represented feelings of pride, relaxation, and beliefs in diversity, which were sometimes shared as assumptions that all students feel and or experience at UCLA.

Aerial images of UCLA that depict whiteness as the norm. While there were particular spaces that the participants in this study described as spaces that made race more salient to them, participants also shared sentiments and images, which illustrated that they felt like white women everywhere on campus. In particular, some participants brought in images of campus that are "high up," which they described as photos that attempted to capture as much of campus as they could. These photos were taken to illustrate where they felt like white women, have power, and/or felt like they belong. For instance, Samantha took an image from the top of a building on south campus (see Figure 14). As she showed me this photo, she stated:

> Samantha: This one is kind of abstract but *I tried to get as much of campus as I could* and also I think one of the questions were where do you feel like you have most power on campus or where do you feel like a white woman and *I feel like a white woman everywhere on campus, so I wanted to portray that* and this picture is also taken from a spot that became important to me recently. It's on the roof of one of the buildings and I feel like that's a very calm place to be to . . . I'm usually there doing homework with friends or something and I feel like that's just a great place to be on campus, just to be, if that makes sense. So that was an important place to me, just like viewing everything.
>
> Tonia: Okay and then you said as far as like the abstract and feeling like you have power and feeling like a white woman on campus, do you feel like . . . Could you say more about that?
>
> Samantha: Yeah, so *I don't think there should be any place on campus where I don't feel like a white woman*. *I don't know what would cause me not to feel like it*, 'cause it is a

part of who I am, so I don't ... Especially 'cause *UCLA's so accommodating and so diverse*, I don't think that there could ever be a place where I don't feel like it, like I don't have power I guess, and it being so high up, it's just like you feel like you've made it. (Samantha, Interview 2)

Figure 14. South Campus. Aerial view from the top of a building in South campus overlooking the Court of Sciences.

In this excerpt, Samantha responded to two questions simultaneously that I asked her to think about as she took the photos, one being where do you feel like you have power on campus and the second being where do you feel like a white woman on campus. She then brought a photo of campus which, attempts to capture "as much of campus as [she] could" and refers to the image as "being so high up." She decided to take the image in this manner to demonstrate how

she felt "like a white woman everywhere on campus." When I asked her to say more about this she further reiterated, "I don't think there should be any place on campus where I don't feel like a white woman. I don't know what would cause me not to feel like it." Unlike Cindy and Kimberly, Samantha does not frequent many spaces on campus where there are predominantly Students of Color. Thus, based on her particular experiences on campus she feels like a white woman everywhere and does not see why she should not feel that way. She then expressed that because she believed UCLA is such a diverse campus, this also served as a rationale for why she was able to feel that way. Samantha's response to these questions and the image she provided illustrate how whiteness being normalized at UCLA made her feel like a white woman, everywhere. However, based on how she shared this information, it is not clear whether she was aware that being a white woman in this *white space* provided her with the privilege to not have to think about race. Nevertheless, this story helps us also see how Samantha is internalizing the normalization of whiteness.

Contrarily, Cindy and Karen also shared similar types of images for reasons similar to that of Samantha. However, Cindy and Karen provide explanations of these images that offer a different understanding of how whiteness is impacting their lives and experiences at UCLA. In my second interview with Cindy she shared the following description regarding why she decided to bring in a panoramic photo of the UCLA campus (see Figure 15). Cindy stated:

> Cindy: It's *a picture from the hill overlooking most of the central part of campus*. You can see jan steps, you can see IM field. And basically this is in response to the question . . . Where do you feel like you belong on campus, because *I don't really feel like I don't belong anywhere*, and I don't feel outed or ostracized anywhere on this campus, was basically what that picture means.

Tonia: Okay. What do you think makes you not feel outed or ostracized?

Cindy: I'm not really a minority on this campus, *I'm a white woman*, and *white people make up the second largest ethnicity group on this campus.* And *I feel like I belong here, maybe more than some people might*, I think is what that picture means.

Tonia: Okay. And why this particular image to illustrate that?

Cindy: It's one of my favorite views of campus for sure, and *it shows a lot of the campus.* Yeah, yes, a lot of the campus. And yeah, it's the best in person shot that you can get, because there's beautiful pictures of the campus, but they're taken from up high. (Cindy, Interview 2)

Cindy shared that she took a picture from a hill that overlooks a large part of the campus to illustrate and symbolize that she felt like she belonged everywhere on campus. When I asked her why she felt that way she shared, "I'm a white woman, and white people make up the second-largest ethnicity group on this campus. And I feel like I belong here, maybe more than some people might" (Cindy, Interview 2). While Cindy is sharing similar sentiments to Samantha about being a white woman on campus, Cindy also shared her insight that others may not feel the same way she does and acknowledges that being the second-largest racial/ethnicity group on campus contributed to why she feels like she belongs. Thus, Cindy was able to explicitly connect what she knows about the racial/ethnic make-up of UCLA's undergraduate population to why she felt like she belonged at UCLA.

Figure 15. UCLA Intramural Sports Field. Aerial view of the intramural sports field and UCLA track taken at the UCLA residential halls.

Karen shared a similar sentiment as Cindy and also took a similar photo. During my second interview with Karen, she demonstrated a photo on her iPhone of South Campus (see Figure 16). In return, I asked her an open-ended question, can you tell me more about this image? Karen responded:

> Karen: So, *this is a warped panorama of South Campus, the top of Boelter Hall*. I took this when thinking about that list of questions . . . Thinking about where do I feel like I have power on campus, because *I feel like honestly most places, because I'm a white woman*, I have. And academia, *it's not so much designed for women*, but *it is really*

designed for white people. So I have power institutionally in most parts of campus. South Campus is the only place I actually take classes.

Tonia: Okay. Can you say more about, what do you think makes you feel like you have power on campus in general and in this space?

Karen: Aside from the fact that this space is designed for my demographic, I feel like just *white women have this assumed innocence in general society*. So when I go to these places, *the way I'm viewed is like, oh, I'm an innocent, pure being*. And so I start with that power dynamic already in place. (Karen, Interview 2)

Figure 16. Court of Sciences. Aerial view of the Court of Sciences building taken from the top of a building in South Campus.

Karen shared that she felt like she has power most places on campus because she's a white woman. When she explained further, she stated, "and academia, it's not so much designed for women, but it is really designed for white people" (Karen, Interview 2). In this statement, Karen further demonstrated her understanding of the contradiction of her multiple identities—she acknowledged that academia is not designed for white women, but is designed for white people.

She then extended her understanding of being a white woman to imply that she is given assumed innocence as a white woman in society and that this assumed innocence contributes to power dynamics and how others receive her and make assumptions about her as an "innocent, pure being." Karen also presented an image of an organization she is heavily involved in at UCLA, Rocket Project, to demonstrate how she felt whiteness was everywhere at UCLA (see Figure 17). She explained that she "spent 8 hours doing stuff with them the past week" and described this club as "the club [she does] the most with." As she pulled out the image, she explained to me that while she initially was going to take a photo of the Rocket project lab where she spends a lot of her time, she instead decided to take a photo of the bulletin board because the board more accurately depicted the demographic make-up of the club. As we discussed her experiences with her engineering classmates who participated in the club, she shared:

> Karen: When I was there the other day I was like, *the lead for my team is white a lot of* The sub leads are also white. *I did spend 6 hours on Friday making a piece called a boat* tail *working with other white students on doing this*. And a couple of them were women, but *it was still just all white*. And *our advising professor is a white guy*.
>
> Tonia: Is this something that you're aware of when you're in this space? Is it something you think about after?

Karen: I think *it's something I'm aware of* when I come to this space *because it's probably the least diverse of the spaces that I have to go to*. Because it's like in my class, at least there's slightly more diversity because you have to go to class or in other lower time commitment clubs that you go to once for 2 hours for fun, that's not as big of a time commitment, so you can just go do that. So it's not an issue if you have things like work. (Karen, Interview 2)

Figure 17. AIAA Bulletin Board. Image of a bulletin board in the Engineering department, which highlights the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) club on campus.

In this example, Karen illustrated that a majority of the demographic make-up of this club is white. "Our advising professor is a white guy," "working with other white students," and "the

lead for my team is white, a lot of the sub leads are also white" are all examples that illustrate how this space is a predominantly white space. When I asked Karen to describe whether she was aware of this when she is in this space she pointed out, "it's something I'm aware of when I come to this space because it's probably the least diverse of the spaces that I have to go to." This provides important insight to illustrate how Karen is aware of the overwhelmingly homogenous racial composition of this space primarily because she can compare it to other spaces she participates in which are more racially diverse. Lastly, she also points out that the amount of time commitment this club entails also makes it difficult for students to join who also have work commitments.

Another example that illustrates the finding that white women often feel comfortable and like white woman on campus is illustrated by a response presented by Veronica. Veronica stated:

> In general, I don't usually view it that way. Like I said, *I don't really think about race in that way unless I'm trying to be critical*. It's usually more retroactive, like when I'm thinking about an action that I took and like "oh, how could I have made that a better interaction?" But yeah, *I don't walk around and think "oh, I'm a white woman on this campus" I often feel comfortable just walking around and being*. (Veronica, Interview 2)

Veronica's description of when she is cognizant of race on campus is powerfully depicted in this excerpt. Put simply in Veronica's own words, she does not "really think about race in that way unless [she is] trying to be critical." As she explained, "I don't walk around and think 'oh, I'm a white woman on this campus' I often feel comfortable just walking around and being." Veronica's honest and reflective thoughts here point to the essence of whiteness and how the white undergraduate women in this study were able to allow their identities as white to fall to the wayside when they navigated campus spaces. One final quote by River also explicated this point.

During our photo elicitation interview I asked River, "is there anywhere where you feel like you have power [on campus]? Is there anywhere where you feel like you don't have power on campus]?" River responded by stating:

> *I feel like I have power on most places on campus* just because, I don't know. *I can't necessarily, right now at least, think of an example of where I wouldn't feel like I had power*, especially just because it's like I'm going to college, and I have control of going to class and putting in the effort and things like that. Yeah, I'm not in any organizations where I don't have a voice or anything like that, so I don't know. I'm trying to even think of an example that I don't experience where I wouldn't have power, but I don't know. Yeah, *I don't really feel powerless on campus*. (River, Interview 2)

River shared that she can not think of examples "where [she] wouldn't feel like [she] had power." As she thinks through the question a bit more she then reiterated, "I don't really feel powerless on campus." It is clear that white women's experiences and understandings of themselves as racialized and gendered beings is dependent on the context in which they are in the college campus environment. However, Samantha, Cindy, Karen, Veronica, and River's experiences and photo-taking strategies illustrate how their experiences as white and women make their spatialized realities on campus easier to navigate.

White cisgendered women's perceptions of campus environment. Cabrera et al. (2016) argued when conducting research on campus ecology in higher education, we must include white supremacy in our analyses as part of the macrosystem. They also poignantly stated, "campus images are not neutral, but students' interpretation of these cultural symbols frequently varies by their relationship to systemic racial power" (Cabrera et al., 2016, p. 130). Applying the notion of ontological expansiveness to the context of the college campus, the authors argue that

this is “a belief that the entire campus should be open and accessible to all students (p. 121).” Additionally, college campuses are imbued with nonverbal messages which are transmitted through the infrastructure of the college campus. Keeping their critique of campus ecology and how the apply ontological expansiveness to the college campus in mind, in this section, I illustrate how white undergraduate women in this study often interpreted UCLA symbols as illustrations of pride/inclusion, belonging, and diversity. Their interpretation of these symbols are directly related to their relationship as cisgendered white women to systemic racial power. While I received a variety of types of photos from each participant, 14 out of the 65 participant-generated photos were UCLA symbols commonly associated with UCLA. The UCLA symbols participants took images of included the UCLA Bruin Bear, the inverted fountain, the north campus sculpture garden, and Royce Hall. Participants shared that these cultural symbols helped unite and connect everyone to the UCLA campus.

I will begin by highlighting three participants' perceptions of the UCLA Bruin Bear statue. Natasha shared an image of the Bruin Bear to illustrate her pride for having been accepted to UCLA (see Figure 18):

> Natasha: Well I picked the bear because I walk by it every day on my way home from school and *when I first got to UCLA people were really happy to be in front of it* and there was always kids and tourists and stuff. I don’t know, it’s just *something that makes me feel proud*, I guess, that I go here ‘cause I see people like, “*Oh I’m at UCLA. I’m in front of the bear.”* I don’t know. That’s why I thought of it.
>
> Tonia: Okay what do you think the bear means to you particularly?

Natasha: *It's just like a symbol, I guess of being somewhere that I'm proud of*. I'm happy that I'm at UCLA. *I feel like it's an accomplishment.* I guess to me *it just kind of stands for something that I'm proud of.* (Natasha, Interview 2)

Figure 18. UCLA Bruin Bear. Bronze statue of UCLA bruin bear and student walking by in the background.

In this excerpt, Natasha shared that the bear represents "something that makes her feel proud" and that "it feels like an accomplishment." It is also a space that she described as where "people were really happy to be in front of it and there was always kids and tourists and stuff." In other words, for Natasha, the bear represents a sense of pride that she attends UCLA.

Rebecca, also utilized an image of the Bruin Bear to illustrate a similar sentiment (see Figure 19). As she shows me an image of the Bruin Bear during out photo elicitation interview, she stated:

> Okay, so this is the Bruin Bear, and these are all my roommates . . . *I also think the Bruin bear is like a symbol of school spirit and school pride, and something that we can all identify with*. *Like we're all Bruins*. And also, *that's where I took my first picture at UCLA too, so it's just kind of special*, and the people in it are also special. So double special. (Rebecca, Interview 2)

Figure 19. Students Around Bruin Bear. Research participant standing in front of the UCLA Bruin bear statue with one friend on the right of her and four friends on top of the bear.

Here Rebecca described the bruin bear as "a symbol of school spirit and school pride." She also believed it is "something that we can all identify with. Like we're all Bruins." While Rebecca may be right that all students at UCLA are referred to as "Bruins" given this is the

school mascot, the assumption that all students can identify with UCLA cultural symbols like the Bruin Bear seems to be rife with white privilege.

Samantha also shared similar sentiments as Rebecca about the bear. Samantha stated:

> Samantha: So like around here, I think, is like an important place to me because it's also one *of the most memorable places for me at UCLA*. I think this was kind of like the first location that I associate with campus and coming here . . . and it's just like *the culture of campus is here*, there's always something going on. *It's just the tradition with the bear and rubbing its paw before finals for good luck and everything*. I think this almost *feels like a home for everyone*, it's where people get together, it's kind of just like *the landmark of campus.*
>
> Tonia: Okay, okay and is that what makes it important? It feels like a landmark? It feels important?
>
> Samantha: Yeah, for sure. I think it's just like everyone knows where it is, it's just like *something familiar between everyone here*. (Samantha, Interview 3)

Similar to Rebecca, Samantha assumed, "this almost feels like a home for everyone." She also recalled the traditions associated with the bear and referred to it as a "landmark of campus."

Natasha, Rebecca, and Samantha all point to this symbol as one of the first things they associated with being an undergraduate student at UCLA. Returning to the notion that students' perceptions of cultural symbols on a college campus are entirely dependent on their relationship to power, the experiences Natasha, Rebecca, and Samantha shared as white undergraduate women are majoritarian UCLA narratives about school pride, accomplishment, and shared student values. Delgado (1993) explained that a majoritarian story is a story that is told from the perspective of those in power "and whose story is a natural part of the dominant discourse" (as

cited in Solórzano and Yosso, 2001, p. 475). Additionally, using the concept of ontological expansiveness, which is the belief that most white people feel entitled to have access to all spaces, this becomes evident through the photos and narratives by these participants. I argue that this majoritarian or dominant UCLA narrative is an example of how ontological expansiveness manifests at UCLA. As Cabrera et al. (2016) discussed ontological expansiveness on the college campus is the notion the entire campus should be open and accessible to all students. Rebecca and Samantha's assumptions that the Bruin Bear is something "we can all identify with" and as "something familiar between everyone here" are further evidence of this notion of ontological expansiveness.

Four participants also discussed UCLA symbols and places on campus they like to go to, which invite feelings of peace, calmness, comfort, and belonging. During my walking interview with Samantha, as our 1-hour walk around campus was coming to an end, we passed by the inverted fountain on South campus. As we walked by, she shared:

> It's very comfortable here because like this is where I'll be spending a lot of my time working on my research for UCLA. *I do like to spend a lot of time here at the inverted fountain* and *it's also quiet* . . . and there's usually something interesting going on here for some reason you know, people were doing graduation photos inside the fountain so it's just like I view this location . . . and just like *relaxation* and entertainment. (Samantha, Interview 3)

Here Samantha shared that the inverted fountain is somewhere that is "very comfortable," "quiet," and "relax[ing]." Other participants also described places like the inverted fountain and sculpture garden as places they found peace and calmness on campus. During my walking interview with Rebecca, we began at her sorority house on Hilgard. After she showed me around

the bathroom, her bedroom, and the common areas, we began her typical walk to campus, where one the first spaces she encounters on campus included passing the inverted fountain. Similar to Samantha, Rebecca also shared how calming and relaxing the inverted fountain was to her as we walked by. Rebecca shared:

> I think . . . *it relaxes me a lot*, *like the sound*, and I like to watch the water go over the rocks because it kind of remind me also of camping, and my family and I used to camp a lot. So just the relaxing and also, I think I mentioned last time, *the whole being like Bruintized thing* that like that *links everyone together*. I think that's important. (Rebecca, Interview 3)

Here Rebecca reiterated similar sentiments that the fountain "relaxes [her] a lot." She also mentioned the belief that the fountain "links everyone together." Similar to her previous notions about the bear, Rebecca expressed that UCLA symbols, like the inverted fountain, are spaces she felt brought the UCLA community together.

While Josephine described a different space on campus, she also felt very similar feelings of relaxation and peace (see Figure 20):

> Josephine: Just a really nice place to go, on campus I feel, *just to relax* and I'd lay down and nap or I'd do homework out on the lawn around all the sculptures. And then you'd see people around you just all doing the same. Everyone's just either walking to class or *just taking it easy* over there on campus. It's just a nice place.
>
> Tonia: And then do you think that race is absent or present in this environment?
>
> Josephine: I think it's very absent, because, I don't know, North campus is different, I think. *Race is less . . . present in North campus because you've got, sort of, a variety of everyone* and it's more fluid in an artistic sense and everyone's just really chill and

everyone talks to everyone. Where South campus has a different, sort of, vibe. Everyone has their set groups and cliques and walking to your classes and there's nowhere relaxing like that, I feel like, in North campus, or South campus, it's just more, I don't know, *an inviting environment*. (Josephine, Interview 2)

Figure 20. UCLA Sculpture Garden. South entrance of UCLA sculpture garden.

Josephine described the UCLA sculpture garden as somewhere she also goes "just to relax." It is also somewhere where students are "just taking it easy." When I asked Josephine to share if she felt race was present or absent in this environment on campus, she stated, "race is

less . . . present in North campus because you've got, sort of, a variety of everyone." Juxtaposing this space with South campus, she also described it as a place where "everyone talks to everyone" and a more "inviting environment." Returning to the concept of ontological expansiveness, Josephine makes the assumption that in North campus race is absent because everyone talks to everyone. While this may very well be how she perceives this campus space, her standpoint as a white woman, helps to illustrate how whiteness operates as norm and how unconsciously this occurs for white women at UCLA. This becomes evident when Josephine's narrative is juxtaposed with findings from campus racial climate literature. Various studies have found that Students of Color experience predominantly white institutions as hostile and unwelcoming (Cress & Ikeda, 2003; D'Augelli & Hershberger, 1993; Griffin et al., 2012; Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005; Solórzano et al., 2009). Putting this study's findings in conversation with findings from the experiences of Students of Color on the same type of campus, helps to illustrate how other examples of the inverted fountain as a calming and relaxing place also operate as examples of ontological expansiveness, that every student should feel comfortable and relaxed in these culturally symbolic spaces.

Lastly, participants also often expressed a belief they held that UCLA was a diverse place. Here I present four examples from participants to illustrate this finding. For instance, one participant River brought an image of the Powell library and stated (see Figure 21):

> River: It's Powell. Just one of the things I really like about going to college and this college specifically, *which has a very diverse student body*, is just *being in big spaces like this*, like the plaza outside of Powell where there's just *all kinds of different people all the time bustling through.*

Tonia: Okay. Do you feel like this image you took, does this feel like a place where you belong?

River: Yes, for sure.

Tonia: What do you think makes it feel that way for you?

River: I mean, again, *with the concept of diversity*, I think *any place that fosters diversity is a place where anyone is* welcome, and so that's not just checking off minority groups or anything. That's diversity being all kinds of people. Yeah, for sure I'd feel welcome in that space. (River, Interview 2)

Figure 21. Powell Hall Entrance. Front entrance of Powell Hall and many students walking to and from classes.

In this example, River explicated this image of Powell library with "all kinds of different people bustling through" illustrates how diverse of a place UCLA is to her. River explained, "one of the things [she] really [likes] about going to college" and elaborated "and this college specifically" is its "very diverse student body." When I asked her if she felt like she belonged in this space, she affirmed she does. As she stated, "any place that fosters diversity is a place where anyone is welcome." She further explained, this is "not just checking off minority groups," but rather "diversity of all kinds of people." This image and narrative was common amongst white undergraduate women in this study, particularly when they came from racially homogenous white home and or schooling environments before arriving to UCLA. As illustrated in another example from Kimberly, Kimberly also felt like the diversity at UCLA meant that everyone felt comfortable in her psychology course. As Kimberly and I discussed the image she brought in of her psychology class, I asked her:

> Tonia: Do you think that race is absent and/or present in this space?
>
> Kimberly: I guess maybe *race is always present* but *the way it feels there is it feels absent*, 'cause I feel like *regardless of who you are*, you know, I feel like maybe there's a good mix of races in psychology classes. Like, *you don't walk in there and feel like*, okay *intimidated you feel like okay people from all sorts of educational backgrounds or like ethnic backgrounds are here taking psychology classes, you know.* So I guess maybe, I don't know, both absent and present but *I feel like absent in the sense that you feel like . . . everyone just goes there*, you don't really think about being there. *You don't think about who you are there.* You just go there, do your business, *you don't question whether you belong or anything, at least for me*. (Kimberly, Interview 2)

Kimberly shared while "race is always present . . . the way it feels there is it feels absent." She explained, "you don't walk in" and feel intimidated in this space because "there's a good mix of races in psychology classes." Kimberly then further elaborated on her answer to my question about whether race is absent and or present, "both absent and present but I feel like absent in the sense that you feel like . . . everyone just goes there." Kimberly shared how being a white undergraduate woman taking courses in the psychology department allowed her to feel like race was absent, partially because she believed the space is very ethnically diverse and has people from "all different educational backgrounds." For most of her answer, she described this as being a blanket truth; however, further in her answer, she expressed she does not "question whether [she belongs] or anything, at least for [her]." This again illustrates that white undergraduate women perceive UCLA to be a diverse place, and this diversity makes race feel absent to them.

To clarify how white undergraduate women were conceptualizing when race felt absent and or present to them, I asked Josephine a clarifying question based on my observations of her responses at the end of our photo elicitation interview:

> Tonia: If race is absent it could be . . . it sounds like, let me know if this is fair, when it's a predominantly white environment or when it's a diverse environment. Would you say it would be both?
>
> Josephine: Yeah . . . I feel like I don't, besides being in volleyball, which I do find is predominantly white, *everywhere else is predominantly not white or pretty diverse* around or mostly just guys, in which, I think, just being a guy overshadows what particular race they might be. But, yeah*, mostly diverse areas are when race is absent*, I'd say. (Josephine, Interview 2)

Here, Josephine explained that she does not spend time in spaces that are predominantly white at UCLA, except for her club volleyball team, further affirming this claim that white undergraduate women feel like "everywhere else is . . . pretty diverse." She then pointed out that when she is around "mostly guys" this "overshadows what particular race they might be." In other words, as discussed in Chapter 6, race becomes less salient for Josephine and gender becomes more salient.

Lastly, Rebecca also discussed diversity at UCLA and specifically how it manifested in her sorority subenvironment. As she described her sorority experience with me and compared her sorority to other sororities, she often made reference to her sorority as not being a "top house." I was unfamiliar with the term. So, I asked her a clarifying question regarding what the term "top house" meant. Rebecca replied:

> Rebecca: Top house is like typical sorority and fraternities. The super pretty girls, the super rich girls, the super outgoing girls, and boys. So a top house, everyone wants to, not be them, but they get invited to a bunch of things, and they just have a good reputation, I guess.
>
> Tonia: Okay.
>
> Rebecca: *So our house is not a top house. We are at the very bottom, which I actually kind of like, because I think it adds more diversity*. And not everyone is the typical sorority girl, which is nice, and also there's not pressure. I feel like if I was in the top house, there'd be pressure to ... I don't know, just be awesome all the time, which I'm not.
>
> Tonia: Okay. Do you feel like race is present or absent in your sorority?

Rebecca: *In my specific sorority, I think we have more diversity than the other sororities.* But still, *the majority of us are white*. But we definitely have more nonwhite girls in the house than the other ones, which I kind of talked about during recruitment too. Because we aren't the typical sorority. You look around the room, and there's so many different types of people, but then also most of them are white. But also, I feel like most people aren't like . . . then I think of a sorority, I kind of think of the college or the movie version of sororities. (Rebecca, Interview 2)

Rebecca first explained what the meaning of being a top house entailed, the "super pretty girls, the super rich girls, the super outgoing girls" and "their good reputation." Next, she explained her house "is not a top house." Instead, they "are at the very bottom," which she likes because "it adds more diversity." Using color-evasive language as discussed in Chapter 5, Rebecca is implying that being in a top house is also synonymous with it being predominantly white. This is evident by Rebecca leaving white out of her descriptors for a top house, but later references race as an aspect of being in a "not top house." In other words, in the panhellenic predominantly white sorority subenvironment, according to Rebecca, being a house at the very bottom, adds more diversity. While Rebecca does explain that her sorority is majority white, the "nonwhite girls" they have makes them not the "typical sorority" and perhaps also plasy a role in their sorority being seen as a house "at the very bottom."

White undergraduate women in this study often perceived UCLA overall to be a place inviting of diversity, which is contingent upon their own social positioning as white women in this environment. Additionally, they took photos of various symbols and spaces on campus to portray their feelings of pride, belongingness, relaxation, and belief in diversity at UCLA. While at times they were conscious of how their own social positioning as white women made these

perceptions true, for the most part they assumed this was true for all UCLA students. This further points to the ways in which whiteness is oftentimes invisible for white undergraduate women and taken for granted in historically white institutional environments like UCLA.

"Taking Up Space": (Un)Awareness and Challenges

In this section, I use the theoretical construct of ontological expansiveness to discuss how white undergraduate women were aware and unaware of how they were "taking up space" in different environments at UCLA. I will begin by discussing the experiences of participants who were aware of taking up space and then follow with discussing the experiences of participants who were unaware of how this notion of taking up space was disregarded.

Awareness of taking up space: "Not wanting to intrude." As Sullivan shared, in *White Privilege: The Unconscious Habits of Racial Privilege,* white people often physically and metaphorically navigate the world as though they have access to every and any space. Applying this concept within the context of the stories of white undergraduate women at UCLA, a majority of this study's participants operate in the ways described by Sullivan. As discussed in previous subsections, there were moments where four of the white women in this study thought about their white racial identity and the question of "taking up space" and what that means. This thoughtfulness was evident primarily with the four students in this study who were involved in spaces or organizations that primarily served racially minoritized students. Additionally, this also was something of which three of the four bisexual and pansexual students in this study were cognizant. In my data I find 10 stories that support this finding. I share four of these stories in this section. Being more aware of how taking up space came up for the three students in this study who identified as both pansexual and bisexual. I noticed that this related to their experiences working with LGBTQ groups on campus, frequenting the LGBT student center, and

or making sense of their own sexual orientation in relationship to this concept of "taking up space." For instance, when Karen and I discussed why the LGBT center was an important space on campus to her she shared that she sometimes frequented the weekly talks and discussion groups in that space. When I asked her if she attends them, she shared:

> Some of them. *Some of them aren't meant for me*, like there's a person of color one that was a little bit earlier today. *Obviously I don't go to that one*, but they have a fandom one that they do that I like. (Karen, Interview 3)

Karen makes it clear she is aware that the LGBT center has programming that is not meant for her and that "obviously [she] does not go to [those].

Cindy also discussed this several times during our interview, often referring to it as "taking up space." Cindy served in a leadership role in the Queer Student Alliance organization and she shared with me that she is one of two white people on the board. As we discussed what her experiences are like in this organization, she often shared how she is learning to be in that space. As I asked her to tell me more about what that learning process has been like for her, she stated:

> Cindy: So it's just like I said about *taking up space* . . . Steven needs help with QTPOC like programming. And I can't help with that, because I don't know enough about the QTPOC groups on campus specifically, 'cause they've changed so much since I first learned about them. *I don't know about those spaces enough to make as many suggestions as I might if I maybe was a person of color.* So stuff like that. They want to start a QTPOC tour. I don't know anything about the QTPOC history on campus specifically, so I can't help with that. Stuff like that, I'd say.
>
> Tonia: And what do those conversations look like?

Cindy: I mean, *I just back off. It's no big deal. I just recognize that it's not my space.* Like 'cause Steven wanted to make the QTPOC tour, and I was like, "Oh, that's really cool, but I can't help." And they were like, "Yeah." But it's a mutual realization, but it really doesn't bother me at all.

Tonia: *It's just more of like an acknowledgment of like, I am the white person in this space?*

Cindy: Yes. Mm-hmm (affirmative). (Cindy, Interview 2)

Cindy indicated how she recognized that being white she was not going to be able to help with the QTPOC programming, "I don't know about those spaces enough to make as many suggestions as I might if I maybe was a person of color." When I asked how she navigated those conversations she replied by stating, "I just back off. It's no big deal. I just recognize that it's not my space." I then sought to clarify how Cindy made sense of these interactions with her QTPOC peers, "*It's just more of like an acknowledgment of like, I am the white person in this space?"* Cindy's "yes. Mm-hmm" signified that she accepted this and gave her Peers of Color the space they needed to work on these various projects, for example, the QTPOC tour and QTPOC programming that as a pansexual white woman she knows she cannot contribute to.

Lastly, another example from River, who identified as bisexual, illustrates a similar approach to that of Cindy and Karen, but in a different context. During our photo elicitation interview, I asked River whether or not there were any spaces on campus where she felt like she did not belong. From this question, she then shared specifically about her experiences attending an event for the Environmentalists of Color Collective. As we discussed her experiences in this organization, she explained, while it is a "club consisted of probably a lot of People of Color and on topics of People of Color" she would not "feel uncomfortable participating in that group."

Mainly because the organization is "more of an environmental justice club in general . . . it's a topic I care about, and the environment is the central thread in that." As she further attempted to make sense of this, she shared:

> It's not like I would be going to an Asian-American club or something like that. *The purpose of the club is not to just be for People of Color*. Because as soon as I went to an event for that, they were all like, "You should join." I was like, "Oh, cool." (River, Interview 2)

River explained to me that she felt comfortable being a part of this club because while it was predominantly frequented by Students of Color and on topics of People of Color she was passionate about environmental justice, which is why she attended. She then juxtaposed this with comparing it to another organization, "It's not like I would be going to an Asian-American club." Here I can see that River's cognitive processing regarding which spaces she can be in and perhaps which ones are not for her. I then asked her to share more about her decision-making process to frequent this club:

> Tonia: Was there maybe hesitancy or thoughts or a conversation before going?
>
> River: Yeah. In the beginning, I didn't . . . because *I went to the panel that they had where they talked a lot about environmental justice, and I was thinking a lot about where I can fit in to these conversations*. I wasn't really sure about how I fit in, and I didn't even think of participating in the club. But then *as soon as she was introducing me to her friends, the people in the club, they're like, "Oh yeah, you should come." There was no doubt.* There was no conversation or no doubt about it. *Even when I first came into the event, it was like, "Oh, this is our secretary," and she was white.* I was like, oh. I just didn't know what kind of mindset there would be behind that.

Tonia: Yeah, like whether it was a designated space for People of Color.

River: Right. *It was like a me not wanting to intrude thing, obviously*. (River, Interview 2)

River shared that she initially did have hesitation before attending one of the club's events because she was "thinking a lot about where [she] can fit in to these conversations." Upon attending, she realized that other club members were white and when others encouraged her to come she decided she wanted to be involved. River's hesitation or uncertainty can be seen when she mentioned, "I just didn't know what kind of mindset there would be behind that." I then affirmed her thoughts by stating, "Yeah, like whether it was a designated space for People of Color." To which she responded, "it was like a me not wanting to intrude thing, obviously." This conversation illustrated how River navigates these decisions and environments, like the Environmentalists of Color collective as a white undergraduate women at UCLA. As she stated, there is a desire for her to "not [want] to intrude."

River shared that her desire to "not [want] to intrude is connected to her understanding of other spaces that are designed for other marginalized groups. I asked her, how do you think [not wanting to intrude is] something you've become aware of or become reflective of? To this question, River replied:

> Well, because *it's really important for people to have their own common spaces* . . . guess one perspective is *I'm bisexual,* and so as a comparison*, a rough comparison is like I feel uncomfortable in certain spaces that are supposed to be for LGBT people and there's a lot of straight people* there who are just, I don't know, for whatever reason. *It's like you appreciate the input of allies, but it's like this isn't for you.* So *I can see how that could directly be the same thing basically for clubs related to race or culture or ethnicity.* That

would definitely be where some of that understanding would come from, but other than that, I don't really know. (River, Interview 2)

Here River explained that "it's really important for people to have their own common spaces." She then discussed how her identity as bisexual helped her make a "rough comparison" for how to understand this concept. River stated, "I feel uncomfortable in certain spaces that are supposed to be for LGBT people and there's a lot of straight people there." River acknowledged how her own discomfort when individuals with dominant identities attend events for marginalized groups makes her uncomfortable and how she roughly can compare this to other groups designed for marginalized groups. River stated, I can see how that could directly "be the same thing basically for clubs related to race or culture or ethnicity."

While Cindy, River, and Karen all discussed different spaces, some centering programming around LGBT issues, they each made decisions regarding what to participate or not participate in with their understanding that some spaces are not made for them. Veronica also discussed this notion when I asked her where she felt like she did not belong on campus, Veronica stated:

> *Some of the places that I mentioned where it seems, it's not like they say "white people not allowed" but it feels that way* and *I'm okay with that because I've got plenty of spaces on campus where white people are allowed*. I feel fine but there's definitely places that I wouldn't go or I wouldn't be a part of. (Veronica, Interview 2)

Veronica explained that at UCLA there are various groups and organizations where she feels as though the space covertly is not inviting to white people. Nevertheless, Veronica recognized, "I'm okay with that because I've got plenty of spaces on campus where white people are allowed." As Sullivan (2006) explained, the entitlement to space that white people engage in

is a way of being, something they are typically unconscious participating in. However, in these examples, we see Cindy, Karen, River, and Veronica consciously think about their place as white undergraduate women at UCLA and what this means in relationship to whether they should participate in particular events, organizations, or programming on campus.

However, this notion of taking up space and becoming involved is also something they were still seeking resolve about. As Cindy shared:

> Most of the queer students on campus are QTPOC they are People of Color and so that's an interesting space to be in because they talk about QTPOC problems a lot and so that doesn't always apply to me, which is okay, because everybody has their own problem, but umm yeah *the queer spaces on campus are very interesting because I, you know, I don't always fit in, and that's okay, and that's something that I'm still learning to deal with.* (Cindy, Interview 1)

Here Cindy shared how "most of the queer students on campus are QTPOC." She then referred to this as "an interesting space to be in" and explained twice in her answer that things not applying to her "is okay." Lastly, she stated, "the queer spaces on campus are very interesting because I, you know, I don't always fit in . . . that's something that I'm still learning to deal with." Cindy stated that being one of the few white people in these spaces is "something [she is] still learning to deal with." River expressed a similar experience to Cindy as it related to her being passionate about the field of environmental justice and understanding her place in that work. River shared:

> *It comes up, sometimes, of me being in this field faced with all these problems where often I'm . . . care so much about these issues, but it is, it's interesting coming from my position of being white and where I fit in solving them*, and *that's something I still think*

> *about and I'm not always sure about*. But like I talked about earlier, *I think the best use of that is being able to amplify other people's voices*, since I do come from a place of privilege. (River, Interview 1)

River mentioned, "it's interesting coming from my position of being white and where I fit in solving them." This illustrates that while she was cognizant of not wanting to take up space or intrude in spaces she felt were designated for People of Color, she also grappled with how she as a white undergraduate woman fits in with helping to solve issues of environmental justice. As River stated, "that's something I still think about and I'm not always sure about." Ultimately, she concluded, "I think the best use of that is being able to amplify other people's voices." These examples demonstrate the way these participants were critically reflective about race and space.

Unawareness of "taking up space." As discussed in a previous section of this chapter, if UCLA is a sea of whiteness, and white undergraduate women are fish in the water, then whiteness is often invisible to them (K. E. Maxwell, 2004). While this was evident in various examples of the stories provided by study participants, in this section I specifically look at how ontological expansiveness (Sullivan, 2006) manifested through narratives from participants. These examples demonstrate how participants sometimes upheld the maintenance of whiteness at UCLA. Continuing to examine the stories of undergraduate white women through the lens of ontological expansiveness, the following examples illustrate particular ways white undergraduate women navigated spaces at UCLA and made sense of their right to belong. In the first example, Daisy and I discussed why she enjoyed her discussions with her bi-racial partner far more than other racial discussions she had in the past. She stated:

> I feel like, we can actually talk about it whereas sometimes when you are having conversations about race with someone of another race *it's very much like they are telling*

you they're experience and the *idea is you are supposed to just listen*, which is valid, but then you know she'll answer my dumb questions or sort of have a conversation with me, which has been really very eye opening. (Daisy, Interview 1)

Here Daisy expressed that she enjoys her conversations with her partner because she will "answer [her] dumb questions" and or will engage in a "conversation [with] her." Whereas in other conversations she has had, "it's very much like they are telling you they're experience and the idea is you are supposed to just listen." While she explained, "this is valid." She also prefers the conversations she has with her partner more. Even though Daisy does not directly refute this idea, she does not necessarily agree with the notion that when engaging in cross-racial conversations, as a white person, you should "just listen." Understanding this logic through the lens of ontological expansiveness, Daisy feels the right and entitlement to engage in racial discussions in the way she prefers to do it. The notion of ontological expansiveness points to both how white people metaphorically and literally feel entitlement to space. Daisy's resistance to the idea that she should just listen during racial dialogues is an example of how she metaphorically feels entitled to particular ways of being and participating in racial discussions at UCLA.

The following two examples are illustrations of how white undergraduate women at UCLA feel entitlement to space. Samantha and I discussed where she felt like she belonged and did not belong at UCLA. To answer where Samantha felt like she did not belong, she stated:

> Don't belong, yeah. *Sometimes in the library I guess* 'cause you don't . . . *I don't see many other white women*, but I still choose to go there because I feel like just because I'm not a majority there, I don't feel like a majority, *I still feel like I deserve to be in a place*

like that, just like everyone else who's there. So, *I guess that's a place where I feel like I shouldn't belong, but I do belong anyway.* (Samantha, Interview 2)

Samantha discussed that the UCLA library is somewhere she frequented but she does not feel like she belongs there because she did not "see many other white women." Nevertheless, she still chooses to go there because she "still [feels] like [she deserves] to be in a place like that." Ultimately, she stated, "I guess that's a place where I feel like I shouldn't belong, but I do belong anyway." In this example, we see how even in a space where Samantha does not see other white women like her, she still chose to be there, and asserts that it's a place where she chooses to go. While Samantha does not feel like she belongs there she ultimately states, "I do belong anyway." Understanding this through the lens of ontological expansiveness, it becomes evident that Samantha did feel entitlement to space, like frequenting the UCLA library, regardless of whether she saw others who looked like her there or not.

Lastly, Josephine also described an experience where she felt the right to be somewhere related to UCLA where there were not many other white people, specifically a fundraiser for an organization on campus whose mission is for Black undergraduate women at UCLA to promote and normalize the beauty of their natural hair. During our walking interview, Josephine shared a story with me about this fundraiser she attended with some of her roommates. When I asked her to tell me more about this experience, she expressed:

Josephine: I was sort of surprised but I thought it was a fundraiser so there would be a few people that are not Black there. *But there were like no whites there.* I don't know if they were talking about us or whatever, if they did I didn't really notice. But it was just funny to me. I wasn't completely expecting it, but I was sort of. I had it in the back of my

mind if that were the case it'll be fine. *They're not gonna kick us out.* I think she thought they were going to ask us to leave or something like we didn't go there.

Tonia: It wasn't designated as a Black only space?

Josephine: No. That's the thing. *There are Black parties and I think those are . . . we could be asked to leave from those. But this was a fundraiser, we paid to get in and I don't think they care as long as we gave our money. That's what I took it as.* (Josephine, Interview 3)

Here Josephine discussed that because this event was specifically a fundraiser, she believed "there would be a few people that are not Black there" and was surprised to arrive and see "no whites there." While Josephine expressed that she may have felt some tension or discomfort in that environment she ultimately knew, "it'll be fine. They're not gonna kick us out." Again, thinking about ontological expansiveness and how white people feel entitled to spaces, in this example we see how Josephine rationalized that she should not only have the right to attend a campus fundraiser for a Black undergraduate women's organization, but also that she was confident even if it was a space with predominantly Black people that she would not get kicked out. I then sought to clarify whether the space was a space specifically for Black students. Josephine responded by explaining that "this was a fundraiser" and not a "Black only space" and she could not be asked to leave this type of event, whereas she could be asked to leave a Black party. She rationalized that, "we paid to get in and I don't think they care as long as we gave our money." Both her comments that she could not get kicked out and that she did not think event organizers cared that she and her friend were there illustrate the way ontological expansiveness operates in the UCLA campus environment for white undergraduate women. Even in spaces

where they may not feel comfortable or like they belong, they assert themselves to also be in those spaces.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I answer my second and third research questions. That is, *how do white undergraduate women perceive UCLA's campus environment? How do these perceptions work to uphold and or challenge white supremacy at UCLA?* I have shown white undergraduate women perceive UCLA's campus environment in three particular ways. The first main finding was that particular subenvironments made whiteness visible and sometimes gender. Whiteness is visible to undergraduate white women on campus primarily in spaces where they were one of few white students, where languages other than English were spoken, or spaces where they knew few white students frequented. Gender was often more visible specifically in STEM subenvironments at UCLA. Gender was most visible for the white undergraduate women who described their experiences majoring in STEM at UCLA. The second main finding was that white undergraduate women's perceptions of the campus environment highlight the pervasiveness of whiteness at UCLA. This finding was exhibited first through the aerial photos they took of the campus. In other words, white undergraduate women literally visualized their belonging as everywhere. Second, this was exhibited through the use of UCLA symbols, which they brought in to exemplify how UCLA represents and evokes feelings of pride, relaxation, and diversity. The third main finding was that while white undergraduate women often feel entitled to space in most UCLA subenvironments, four participants particularly were conscious of these assumptions and attempted to not act in ways that would perpetuate these assumptions.

The first main finding was that race became visible in specific subenvironments at UCLA for white undergraduate women in this study. Additionally, gender became visible in one

particular subenvironment. Spaces where race was more visible for participants included spaces where there were predominantly Students of Color and spaces where languages other than English were spoken. Several participants in this study mentioned race was visible to them at UCLA in places like the Academic Advancement Program, the Football Athletic Center, dance groups, and the Queer Student Alliance. These findings confirm many sociological studies and theories related to whiteness, which have illustrated we often understand who we are based on learning who we are not (Cooley, 1920).

Additionally, white women in this study also pointed out spaces, like their work environments in food services and in club organizations, as spaces where they felt they did not belong, which in turn made race more visible for them. These spaces were all subenvironments at UCLA where languages other than English were primarily being spoken, specifically Spanish in the workplace and Mandarin in the student organization. This finding confirms the work of Flores and Nelson (2017) who argued that "certain racialized subjects language patterns are construed and valued" (p. 628). Additionally, Daisy did not express feelings of not belonging when she was in environments where Mandarin was being spoken, but Josephine and Samantha did in environments where Spanish was being spoken. This also confirms Cabrera's (2018) work, who found that white college men expressed feelings of exclusion when they were in environments where languages other than English were spoken.

Additionally, gender seemed to be most visible for white undergraduate women in this study in STEM subenvironments. In these subevironments, which included STEM classrooms, STEM office hours, and the engineering library, participants described these spaces as "toxic male environments," which they experienced as uncomfortable and uninviting spaces, which at times lead to gender microaggressions. My findings confirmed Miller, Vaccaro, Kimball, and

Forester's (2020) findings. The authors found STEM students with minoritized identities of sexuality and or gender described these environments as dude or bro culture and felt as though they were being treated as not smart or invisible. Findings from other studies confirm existing findings in my study where white undergraduate women often also expressed feeling intimidated by the large cliques of men in these subenvironments, who often treated them as if they were unintelligent. This also confirms findings from McCabe (2009), who found that white undergraduate women experienced gender microaggressions, specifically in male-dominated majors. The existing study also points to ways white undergraduate women were simultaneously marginalized by gender and upholding racialized stereotypes of their TA's and professors in the STEM subenvironment.

The second main finding in this chapter is white undergraduate women perceive UCLA's campus environment as a space where they feel like white women everywhere. This is evident through images of aerial photos of the UCLA campus and their stories of UCLA symbols, which exemplify feelings of pride, belonging, calmness, and diversity for the participants in this study. As discussed in Chapter 1, UCLA is a historically white institution, which means that while the student population is no longer predominantly white it is still an institution of higher education whose history, traditions, symbols, stories, and other processes were designed by whites and for whites to reproduce whiteness (Brunsma et al., 2013). Additionally, keeping Cabrera et al., (2016) charge in mind, we must examine the campus lived environment through the macro lens of white supremacy, the aerial images of UCLA's campus presented by white women in this study illustrated the way their racially privileged social positioning allowed them to view themselves as white women everywhere, whether they were conscious of this or not. Participants like Samantha, Cindy, Karen, Veronica, and River's experiences and photo-taking strategies

illustrate how their experiences as white and women make their spatialized realities on campus easier to navigate.

Additionally, of the 65 participant-generated photos in this study, 14 of them were images of UCLA cultural symbols, including the UCLA Bruin Bear, the sculpture garden, and inverted fountain. As previously discussed in this chapter, these cultural symbols are interpreted differently by various campus community members depending on their relationship to systemic racial power (Cabrera et al., 2016). Many women in this study presented these images to illustrate how they felt proud to be UCLA Bruins, as spaces where they felt calm, and to symbolize how much they valued the diversity UCLA represents. They also often expressed assumptions that these images represented these feelings for all UCLA students. The existing research on campus racial climate outlines negative experiences faced by Students of Color (Cress & Ikeda, 2003; D'Augelli & Hershberger, 1993; Griffin, et al., 2012; Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005). Thus, when my findings are juxtaposed to the existing campus racial climate literature, this helps to illustrate how my findings produced majoritarian stories and dominant narratives about their experiences as white women at UCLA (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Therefore, the fact that most participants in this study were able to find ease, peace, pride, and identify with UCLA cultural symbols exemplifies how these narratives are majoritarian stories.

Sensoy and DiAngelo (2017) suggested we are deeply immersed into our taken-for-granted norms and culture similar to "a fish that is immersed in water from consciousness and thus cannot know that it is separate from the water (p. 36)." This analogy helps illuminate how ontological expansiveness operates for the white undergraduate women in this study. In their stories about UCLA and what it means to them they make several assumptions that these cultural

symbols bind them together to other Bruins and is something each student at UCLA can identify with. These assumptions illustrate the way being immersed in the water prevents these women from being able to see that they are operating from a place of being entitled to space at UCLA.

The last finding in this chapter was white undergraduate women were both aware and unaware of how they were taking up space at UCLA. For four participants particularly, there were moments when they were reflective of ways they were taking up space at UCLA and discussed the challenges associated with being reflective of this, which served to work towards challenging white supremacy. Juxtaposing these limited, but important examples with ontological expansiveness (Sullivan, 2006) I argue the notion of actually *being* aware of how white undergraduate women are taking up space at UCLA is a form of *ontological retractiveness.* In other words, participants who are more conscious of whiteness and how it operates did attempt to operate in such a way that drew back or did not make assumptions about their entitlement and right to all spaces.

For others, their ways of being and thinking on campus allowed them to operate under assumptions that they were entitled to space, whether they felt they belonged in those spaces or not. For the former participants, they shared multiple instances where they acknowledged that they have plenty of spaces on campus that are made for them as white students and in turn wanted to be sure they were not taking up space. For the latter participants, their stories about choosing to attend an event or be in a space where there were not many other white women (whether they felt comfortable there or not) highlights what Sullivan (2006) theorized about. Sullivan stated white women have a way of being that is expansive and free. The findings in this study highlight examples of how white undergraduate women at UCLA did this in concrete

ways. Overall, these findings push our understanding of the racialization of space for white undergraduate women.

In the next chapter, I first revisit the research questions of this study. Next, I discuss contributions to theory, methodology, and pedagogy. Then, I discuss implication for policy and practice. Lastly, I discuss directions for future research and my concluding thoughts.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

I used my own experiences as a white undergraduate woman who attended UCLA as a guide for this dissertation. I aimed to theorize and examine the complexities of whiteness, gender, and the lived environment of white undergraduate women in the context of a white-serving and historically white institution. In this conclusion, I review my research questions and discuss my findings. As a reminder, I examined four research questions:

1. How do white undergraduate women interpret whiteness in their lives at UCLA?
2. How do white undergraduate women perceive UCLA's campus environment?
3. How do these perceptions work to uphold and or challenge white supremacy?
4. What are the structures (policies and processes) at UCLA that influence white women's understandings of whiteness?

I revisit the four research questions in the first section of this chapter. Second, I discuss the theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical contributions of this study. Third, I provide implications for policy and practice. Lastly, I discuss recommendations for future research and concluding thoughts.

Revisiting the Research Questions

In this section, I highlight findings from Chapters 4-6. Chapter 4 introduced the reader to the 11 participants in this study. Themes across participants include their pre-college environments, the importance of transitions in their lives, and the sociopolitical context of data collection. Chapter 5 focused on answering Research Question 1) How do white undergraduate women interpret whiteness in their lives at UCLA? and Research Question 3) How do these perceptions work to uphold and or challenge white supremacy? The main three themes, which answer these research questions, include a) understanding whiteness through one-up one-down

(Accapadi, 2007) social identities, including socioeconomic status and gender; b) utilizing white ignorance and white goodness; and c) upholding racism through color-evasiveness and racial victimization. Chapter 6 focused on answering Research Questions 2) How do white undergraduate women perceive UCLA's campus environment? and 3) How do these perceptions work to uphold and or challenge white supremacy?

Chapter 4. In Chapter 4, entitled *Participant Profiles,* I introduced each participant in this study. I paid attention to how each participant learned about race before arriving to UCLA. I described their transitions from the home environment to UCLA's environment. I also illustrated how participants' intersecting social identities influenced how they made sense of their experiences as white undergraduate women. I described how academic and social involvement at UCLA influenced how participants made sense of their experiences as white undergraduate women. I shared each woman's experiences as context for understanding each participant individually. I also used this context to explore various themes, which resonated across their stories.

While each participant had unique precollege experiences, three themes across the 11 participant experiences and narratives became apparent. The first theme was seven participants, a majority, came from predominantly white precollege environments. While four participants did not come from predominantly white environments, each one, in some way or another, still spent some time in a racially homogenous space. Examples of these homogenous spaces were Natasha's racially segregated neighborhood and Karen's racially segregated primary and secondary schools. The contexts participants grew up in significantly shaped their awareness or lack thereof of racial difference.

A second theme was their transitions were experiences that helped them make sense of race and racism. Examples of these transitions were moving from one neighborhood to the next, their community college to UCLA, or from their home state to California. Each transition in their lives shaped their ability to compare how one racial environment was similar and or different to the following environment. For instance, Veronica and Amanda both attended community college. Arriving at UCLA was the first time they were in an environment where the majority of the student population consisted of Students of Color. Additionally, for Samantha, Karen, and Cindy, moving from one neighborhood to another as children helped them gain insight and awareness regarding how place influences their racial and socioeconomic environments. The participants' transitions shaped how they were making sense of race.

The third theme is that this data was collected during Fall 2018, well into the Trump presidency. Many participants discussed issues of race and racism within the sociopolitical context of Trump's presidency. Although I did not ask about current sociopolitical contexts, participants often shared experiences that involved them reflecting on Trump's election and policies. The sociopolitical context of our time prompted women to share various experiences as it related to race and racism. Additionally, most participants in this study shared they had family members who identified as politically conservative and voted for Trump. Family members who held conservative also impacted how these white undergraduate women learned about race growing up. Family members with conservative views also shaped how participants were socialized growing up. Family members and extended family members sent racial messages. These racial messages shaped how participants learned about race and racism. For instance, two participants recalled their father's disapproval towards them dating Men of Color in their

adolescence. Other participants remembered parents and grandparents supporting racist policies and enforcing racial stereotypes.

Chapter 5. In Chapter 5, entitled *Whiteness as contextual: Whiteness and complicity as qualified by gender,* I answered my first research question, *How do white undergraduate women interpret whiteness in their lives at UCLA?* I found three themes in the data to answer this question by illustrating how white undergraduate women interpret and construct whiteness in their own lives. These themes include a) understanding whiteness through one-up one-down (Accapadi, 2007) social identities, including socioeconomic status and gender, b) utilizing white ignorance and white goodness, and c) upholding racism through color-evasiveness and racial victimization.

The first theme provides insight into how white undergraduate women make sense of their whiteness contextually, that is, often in relationship to their gendered and classed identities. As Levine-Rasky (2002) pointed out, "whiteness as qualified by gender is a crucial dimension of contextuality" (p. 336). An unanticipated finding in this study was white women's understandings of their whiteness was heavily influenced by how they understood socioeconomic status and how others perceived their own socioeconomic status. Put simply by Natasha, "if you were a white person, you likely had money," in her environment growing up in St. Croix. However, socioeconomic status was used as a semantic tool to avoid acknowledging whiteness. The working-class women in this study struggled to disentangle their relationship to white privilege and their class status. For instance, Kimberly and I had a lengthy discussion about the intersection of her class and race identities. She expressed not always being able to see how her whiteness operated in her working-class home environment.

Additionally, the second theme was that white undergraduate women shared instances when a particular experience or interaction made them more aware of how race and gender impacted their own lives, and the lives of Women and People of Color, but remained complicit in upholding whiteness. White women acknowledged when their experiences as white women differed from Women of Color or People of Color. These findings provided insight into how white women can sometimes understand oppression through their gendered lens, but their whiteness is also used as "a struggle for agency and power delimited by patriarchy" (Levine-Rasky, 2002, p. 337). For instance, Daisy discussed how her conversations with her significant other, a bi-racial woman, helped her better understand the politics of hair for Black women, while she simultaneously exotified her partner. Participants acknowledging their one-up one-down identities is exemplified through this statement from Cindy: "Yes, I'm a woman in STEM, but I'm a white woman in STEM." These narratives exemplify that white undergraduate women's raced and gendered understandings are developing. However, we also know that race confessionals do not actually contribute to dismantling white supremacy without a commitment to action (Leonardo, 2009). Therefore, white undergraduate women solely acknowledging their privilege still contributes to complicity in whiteness (Applebaum, 2010, 2013). Additionally, white undergraduate women's ability to see racial issues through the experiences of Women and People of Color also served as a way to pay attention to race, without paying attention to their whiteness. In other words, this attention placed on the experiences of People and Women of Color also served as a semantic move and distancing strategy from interrogating their own whiteness.

The third theme in this chapter was white undergraduate women make sense of their whiteness using color-evasiveness and racial victimization. Pérez-Huber and Solórzano (2015)

discussed that the "everyday experiences" of People of Color enduring "racism are more than an individual experience" (p. 301). They are in fact "part of a larger systemic racism that includes institutional and ideological forms" (p. 301). Utilizing the microaggression analytical framework it then becomes evident that white undergraduate women utilizing color-evasiveness and victimization upholds racial ideologies of white supremacy. White undergraduate women often upheld color-evasive ideologies. They actively avoided talking about race and utilized semantic distancing strategies to evade racial conversations. Color-evasiveness and semantic distancing were evident in my data. Participants shared stories related to their socialization experiences, where parents would be silent about issues related to racism. In turn, this silence impacted conversations they had, or refused to have, with their family members about race and racism in the present day. For example, Josephine shared, even when those conversations begin between her and her mother to date, Josephine chooses not to discuss them further. In other words, white undergraduate women are socialized and taught to adopt color-evasive ideologies. These color-evasive ideologies, in turn, were perpetuated during their time at UCLA. Additionally, participants also expressed ideologies of racial victimization. These ideologies of racial victimization surfaced in four particular ways: a) expressing they felt "attacked," b) targeted because they were white, c) they could not say particular things as white people, or d) as "not enough" of a marginalized group.

Chapter 6. In Chapter 6, entitled *Race, gender, and the lived environment at UCLA,* I answered my second and third research questions: *How do white undergraduate women perceive UCLA's campus environment? How do these perceptions work to uphold and or challenge white supremacy?* Three findings pertain to how white undergraduate women perceive their campus environment: a) Race was salient for participants in subenvironments where predominantly

People of Color frequented, b) participants were able to feel like white women everywhere on UCLA's campus, and c) participants were both aware and unaware of how they were taking up space at UCLA.

The first main finding pertains to how white undergraduate women perceive their campus environment. Most undergraduate white women in this study race as visible to them on campus as spaces that were predominantly frequented by People of Color or where a language other than English was being spoken. However, it is important to note that only certain languages, in this case, Spanish and Mandarin, were being seen as racialized. Additionally, gender felt most visible to them in spaces like the STEM subenvironment. This finding demonstrates that whiteness operates as the cultural norm at UCLA and how gender inequities often conflate issues of race as less visible to white women. In other words, if UCLA is a sea of whiteness, and white undergraduate women are fish in the water, then whiteness is often invisible to them.

The second main finding illustrated how white women felt their whiteness everywhere on campus. That is, they took pictures of aerial images of campus and UCLA symbols, and both served to illustrate the pervasiveness and invisibility of whiteness being everywhere in historically white and white-serving institutions. For instance, Cindy, Karen, and Samantha all took aerial images of UCLA and discussed how this image symbolically represented ways they were able to feel like white women everywhere at UCLA. Additionally, my data also suggest white undergraduate women associate UCLA symbols as representations of pride, peacefulness, and diversity, all of which serve to reinforce dominant narratives and whiteness within this institutional culture.

The third main finding illustrated how participants were both aware and unaware of ways they were "taking up space" at UCLA. As critical whiteness philosopher Sullivan (2006)

explained, white people often have a way of feeling entitled to space, metaphorically and physically. Participants operated in ways that exemplified how ontological expansiveness operated for white undergraduate women within the UCLA context. Stories and examples from Samantha, Josephine, and Daisy exhibit how ontological expansiveness operates in racial dialogues, campus public spaces, and off-campus parties and fundraisers. In each example, participants discussed they feel a right to a space, even at times when they do not feel like they belong there.

While this notion of ontological expansiveness was exhibited by participants, four participants were also particularly reflective and thoughtful of ways in which they were "taking up space" or "not wanting to intrude." These four participants had been in various campus spaces that were mostly frequented by People of Color. Additionally, three of four identified as bisexual and or pansexual. This illustrates how their minoritized sexual orientation could be informing their awareness of taking up space. One participant, River, did loosely make this connection. She explained that she developed an awareness to not want to intrude in spaces intended for People of Color by relating this to how she feels when heterosexual individuals intrude LGBT spaces, particularly when the space is not meant for them. This notion of actually *being* more aware of how white undergraduate women are taking up space at UCLA looks like *ontological retractiveness.* In other words, participants who are more conscious of how whiteness operates attempted to behave in manners that drew back or did not make assumptions about their entitlement and right to all spaces.

Contributions and Implications

In the following section, I discuss the ways this study contributes theoretically, methodologically, and pedagogically to our existing understanding of whiteness, gender, and

space in white-serving and historically white institutions. Additionally, I provide implications for policy and practice.

Theoretical contributions. People who have at least one oppressed identity are much more likely to connect their experiences of marginality with other forms of marginality (Cabrera, 2012; Johnson, 2006). Applying this notion would mean white undergraduate women in this study could use their other forms of marginality (sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, gender) to make sense of racial oppression. Bonilla-Silva (2010) claimed "white-women from working class origins are the most likely candidates to commit racial treason in the U.S" (p. 16). Racial treason is when one turns against their own race, in this case, their white race. Scholars also argued the position of being white and a woman could serve as a potential place of rupture for challenging the white hegemonic alliance (Nishi, Guida, & Walker, In review; Nishi & Parker, 2018). However, white women often exert whiteness in ways that cause harm to People of Color (Mata, 2018; Matias, 2019, Ozias, 2017). The findings in this study point to both possibilities. First, I argue undergraduate white women interpret whiteness in their own lives through understanding their socioeconomic status and gendered experiences, and upholding color-evasive ideologies. Therefore, I extended the meaning of existing one-up one-down identity theory in higher education. This theoretical extension provides a demonstration of complex ways social identities, like gender and class, relate to whiteness. This extension also further indicates how social identity can keep white women complicit in upholding white supremacy. White undergraduate women in this study were aware of gender oppression, while simultaneously upholding white complicity. Additionally, white women in the STEM subenvironment were often unwelcome in these spaces and found them unwelcoming. Simultaneously, white women also upheld racialized beliefs about these STEM

subenvironments. In this study, I confirm the findings of third world feminists' who have critiqued white women of their shortcomings since the 19th century. This phenomenon is powerfully depicted by Levine-Rasky (2002):

> White women's privilege may function as a struggle for agency and power delimited by patriarchy. This strategy affords some degree of dignity to white women, though at the expense of racialized others, and at the price of their silent complicity with their own domination. (p. 337)

In other words, white women use whiteness as a way to struggle for power in ways that cause harm to other Women and People of Color. Overall, I complicate whiteness and womanhood, and our beliefs in its possibilities, pushing us to further question what it will take to make cracks in the white hegemonic alliance.

The findings contribute to our current understanding of campus ecology literature by centering critiques of whiteness and white supremacy, and how whiteness operates on historically white college campuses for white undergraduate women. Cabrera et al. (2016) shared "the intersection of racial privilege, the physical environment of the campus, and the overall climate is critically underexplored" (p. 102). This study addressed ways UCLA operates as a racialized space through experiences and narratives of white undergraduate women. A main finding related to race, space, and gender is white undergraduate women perceive UCLA's campus environment as a space they feel like white women everywhere. This is evident through their choice to bring in aerial images of the college campus, which illustrates how white institutional presence (Gusa, 2010) at UCLA makes the campus environment welcoming and inviting for white undergraduate women. Additionally, their accompanying narratives illustrate

the normality of being white. As Samantha said, "I don't think there should be any place on campus where I don't feel like a white woman" (Samantha, Interview 2).

This research contributes to existing theoretical concepts associated with critical whiteness, such as white goodness, silent racism, racial victimization, color-evasiveness, and ontological expansiveness. As discussed in Chapter 6, white undergraduate women in this study often expressed a strong desire to be seen as a good person. First, this entailed distancing themselves from racist behaviors and attitudes of other white people. Second, it consisted of wanting to see one's self and one's actions as good (not racist). Disregarding or not recognizing one's own racist actions or beliefs is an attempt to maintain white moral innocence. Third, white goodness and white complicity manifested as white undergraduate women worried about managing their own behaviors in a manner that would be regarded as permissible or not racially offensive to People of Color. Based on my study, I found distancing behavior among participants confirmed the findings offered by other higher education scholars, white students often use distancing strategies. These distancing strategies let white students see "other white people" as the problem (Foste, 2019a; Jayakumar & Adamian, 2017). Distancing keeps white supremacy intact because white individuals falsely self-absolve from taking any responsibility for racist ways of "other whites" and for their own racist behaviors. To challenge this notion, Trepagnier (2010) argued oppositional categories of racist and non-racist must be changed to a continuum. Trepagnier's supposition is a continuum that will help well-meaning white women recognize racism within us and that we are part of the problem. Building on Bonilla-Silva's (2010) colorblind racism work, Trepagnier (2010) presented a continuum for whites (see Figure 1). In this continuum, she places colorblind racism in the middle of the continuum, but also provides space for silent racism. Since we all participate in silent racism, this continuum is a tool to

acknowledge our responsibility. The data in this study confirmed Trepagnier's findings, including well-meaning whites being detached from race matters and having apprehension of being viewed as racist.

Notions of white goodness are also found as white women acknowledged their privilege. While this is important, and often a necessary, first step towards antiracist actions and ways of being, critical whiteness Scholars of Color demonstrated admitting one's privilege actually also further reinforces white people's goodness (Ahmed, 2004; Leonardo, 2013). Stated by Leonardo (2013), "narratives of confession" also have the "unfortunate effect of violating the sensibilities of people of color by intensifying the well-known history of white privilege through the act of repetition . . . repetition serves to reinforce those privileges when it stays at the level of confessionals" (Leonardo, 2013, p. 101). Discussions about whiteness and how white women make sense of it in their lives need to move beyond the acknowledgment of white privilege.

Racial victimization was a common way white women in this study made sense of whiteness in their lives. Cabrera (2018) and Bonilla-Silva (2010) found how white college men and white college students exhibit racial victimization. An example of racial victimization is the various ways white college men claimed they were victims of multiculturalism (Cabrera, 2018). While this was prevalent for white undergraduate women in this study, they also expressed racial victimization in three specific ways. First, evidence of racial victimization included feelings of being "attacked" for being white. Second, participants expressed feeling they were not allowed to say particular things due to being white. Third, they expressed they were "not enough" of a marginalized group.

While further exploration of these forms of racial victimization professed by white undergraduate women is needed, several Women of Color scholars illustrated the way white

women use feelings of pain and being attacked. These expressions are humanized by society (Matias, 2016), and, in turn, are seen as more valuable and worthy of attention than feelings of Women of Color (Accapadi, 2007).

Additionally, I utilized ontological expansiveness (Sullivan, 2006), as a theoretical framework to make sense of how white undergraduate women perceived the campus environment and campus ecology in racialized ways. Sullivan (2006) claimed anyone who viewed space as race-neutral is complicit with white privilege and systems of white domination. Sullivan also theorized ontological expansiveness is the notion white people have a way of being physically and metaphorically that make them feel entitled to space. While higher education literature has explored race, space, and place in limited ways, scholars argued predominantly white universities are often imbued with white institutional presence (Brunsma et al., 2013; Cabrera et al.,2016; Gusa, 2010). While few researchers examined the campus ecology through the lens of CWS, Cabrera et al. (2016) began these efforts in their conceptual article, when they problematized perceptions of safety and inclusion on the college campus. The authors argued the comfort white students are given in race dialogues on campus leaves white students in racial-arrested development. In this article, they also charge "campus images are not neutral, but students' interpretation of these cultural symbols frequently varies by their relationship to systemic racial power" (Cabrera et al., 2016, p. 130). To my knowledge, the only other researchers to examine how white women feel entitlement to space on the college campus includes Ozias's (2017) dissertation. In her study, Ozias found white undergraduate women valued quiet spaces on campus, where they could be alone and of which no one else knew. In this study, participants discussed spaces that felt peaceful and calming, but not necessarily hard to access. Thus, I expand our understanding of ontological expansiveness and empirically

document the dominant narratives that uphold white supremacy at UCLA. The findings of this study are evidence white undergraduate women felt entitled to spaces at UCLA, even when they did not feel like they belonged there or that were meant to be for People of Color.

Additionally, four of the 11 participants were aware and reflective of ways they were taking up space at UCLA. While more research is needed to further theorize this concept, I argue some white undergraduate women in this study were operating in an *ontologically retractive* way at UCLA. Cindy, River, and Karen illustrated they did not want to intrude or "take up space" in subenvironments on campus meant for People of Color, and intentionally retracted or took a step back in moments when space was not meant for them to take up. For example, Cindy expressing support of her colleagues organizing a Queer Trans People of Color (QTPOC) tour, but not necessarily getting involved because she knew it was not her place because she identifies as a white woman.

Methodological contributions. This study also includes methodological contributions. During the conceptualization of this study, I realized few researchers took up the question of how white scholars conducting CWS research should engage with white participants. These pragmatic, day-to-day tensions regarding how to conduct a study, when the researcher is attempting to challenge whiteness as a white woman with other white women, lead a publication where my colleague and I put forward five tenets for a critical whiteness methodology (CwM; Corces-Zimmerman & Guida, 2019). A CwM is intended to challenge and educate white people through a critical whiteness research praxis and methodology and is structured around 5 core tenets: 1) centrality of whiteness and white supremacy in higher education, 2) research as critical whiteness praxis, 3) responsibility to challenge whiteness through the research process, 4) whiteness as rhetorical, emotional, and epistemological, and 5) white research as complicit in

whiteness. These five tenets are divided into two levels, one that focuses on systemic social dynamics that influence the data collection process and a second that speaks to individual-level considerations rooted in interpersonal or intrapersonal manifestations of whiteness (Corces-Zimmerman & Guida, 2019). While I did not have critical whiteness methodology fully operationalized in the current study, the questions that arose from conducting this study served as an outcome that led to the development of Critical whiteness Methodology. In other words, CwM was both enacted in this study and was an outcome of this study. An example of a way I enacted CwM in practice included ensuring data collection entailed multiple points of contact with participants and asking probing follow-up questions which challenged whiteness. While an example of how CwM developed as an outcome of this study included being aware of when we, as researchers and interviewers, use rhetorical strategies to avoid whiteness (Corces-Zimmerman & Guida, 2019).

Additionally, I use my experience conducting this study to demonstrate that doing research as an insider serves to reach deeper meanings between interviewers and participants, due to their shared understandings and experiences. The utility of conducting research as an insider is evident in a conversation I had with Cindy, around the notion of taking up space. Cindy explained she understood the ways in which she could not contribute to developing programming for QTPOC events as a white woman on a board with primarily QTPOC colleagues. To further understand her point of view, I asked her, "It's just more of like an acknowledgment of like, I am the white person in this space?" (Cindy, Interview 1). To which Cindy responds, "yes." This follow-up question is an example of many moments during data collection, where I used my own understanding of issues related to race and racism to make meaning of participants' experiences. In this example, I applied my own experiences as a white woman in spaces with predominantly

other Students, Staff, or Faculty of Color to understand how Cindy was using her awareness of being white in this space as a moment to defer to those with lived experiences and knowledge that she simply did not hold as a white undergraduate woman. In sum, this excerpt is an example of how being an insider allowed me to ask a question which helped me make meaning during data collection of how she navigated these interactions.

In this study, I utilized qualitative methods, specifically photo elicitation and walking-interview methods, which have yet to be widely used in critical whiteness studies research. Researchers of critical whiteness studies in higher education are examining important questions about white supremacy. However, we have yet to imagine and design robust methods for resisting the ways whiteness and heteropatriarchy constantly "ambush" (Yancy, 2012, p. 169) white women's efforts toward racial justice solidarity in research or daily practice. Thus, I argue we may be able to use visual methods with a critical whiteness lens (Ahmed, 2004; Leonardo, 2009), like photo elicitation, to crack the walls of whiteness encountered when white researchers interview white women about race.

Researchers use photo elicitation as a method to uncover and deconstruct the taken-for-granted assumptions and ideologies embedded within photos (Denton, Kortegast, & Miller, 2018). One powerful way photo elicitation was utilized, in conjunction with critical whiteness, was to uncover ways space and place on the college campus was often de-racialized and sometimes racialized. Thus, the use of participant supplied images helped deconstruct what and whose interests were being represented through the use of images. The possibility of photo-elicitation as a data collection method, is that it can be used by researchers to name whiteness and make it more visible. Additionally, the risk of this method is that whiteness can go unnoticed. For instance, when race and space was not seen as racialized by white women

participants, this could have allowed participants to participate in white racial bonding with me as a white women interviewer. This could occur particularly during moments where I may have not returned to discussing how they saw race and or whiteness operating in the images.

As Leonardo (2009) explained, whiteness studies scholars paid credence to the notion whites are unaware of race and are racially ignorant. While acknowledging this ignorance is helpful to a certain degree, the ignorance also needs to be problematized. To resolve this problematization, we need to expose white people's knowledge "about their full participation in race relations" (Leonardo, 2009 p. 107). By constructing white people as knowledgeable about race, we can hold ourselves accountable to our race-based decisions and dismantle our perceived innocence (Leonardo, 2009). Photo elicitation was used to challenge the myth of white ignorance by asking participants to take photos of places they felt like they a) belonged or did not belong, b) power or did not have power, and c) were white woman on campus. By making whiteness visible through photo prompts and discussing images afterward in an interview context, I attempted to work against "whites racial knowledge's insistence on maintaining its own invisibility" (Leonardo, 2009, p. 110). I argue these specific data collection methods contributed to the uncovering of the everydayness and permeation of whiteness shared by participants in their experiences at UCLA.

Pedagogical contributions. If UCLA is a sea of whiteness, and white undergraduate women are fish in the water, then whiteness is often invisible to them. Asking participants to think about how whiteness shapes their lives, and whether they see race as present or absent in various UCLA subenvironments, was an attempt to move participants onto the seashore. Building on methodological contributions of photo elicitation to CWS research, I argue photo

elicitation methods served as a pedagogical tool for challenging the normality of whiteness in higher education institutions.

While photo elicitation is used in higher education classroom contexts to facilitate learning, students developed critical literacy skills by participating in a study in which the researcher utilized these interview methods (Jackel, 2018; Kelly & Sihite, 2018). The photo project was an opportunity for participants to see how space is raced in the college environment, in ways they previously had not explored. In some instances, they became more aware of the racialization of space through this activity. This is evident through their comparative reflections of how they previously de-racialized space. For instance, Natasha shared with me the Bruin Bear was a space where race was absent to her during our photo elicitation interview. However, we passed by the Bruin Bear on our first stop of our walking interview, and I asked Natasha:

> Tonia: Can we talk about if race was absent or present here?
>
> Natasha: I said absent, now that I've been walking by more, I've started to notice groups for younger kids that are here with their school, which I think is cool. More than just a bunch of white kids. I don't know if that's relevant, but I thought that was kind of neat, a lot of [crosstalk].
>
> Tonia: Do you feel like that reflection or recognizing the bear was a part of our photo activity, doing the photo activity and thinking about race being present or absent?
>
> Natasha: Yeah, definitely. Because now that I've been going past some of the places that we talked about, I've been kind of thinking I guess more about how it would be relevant.

Similar to Jackel's (2018) experience using photo elicitation in the classroom, I found utilizing visuals of the college campus challenged students to "critically investigate spaces and visuals" (p. 109) on campus to examine both "implicit and explicit messages communicated to student"

(p. 109). Thus, researchers and teachers in higher education programs, teacher education programs, and undergraduate courses could utilize this photo-elicitation activity pedagogically to push students to become more cognizant of race. This could be facilitated in the form of an in-class assignment. Students can be given time to go take photos of campus and provided guiding questions (like I shared with participants). Additionally, this could also be given as an out-of-class assignment accompanied by a writing assignment as it relates to photos they took. Students could then bring the photos to class and use them to discuss how space is racialized on campus.

Additionally, I engaged with participants in discussions related to whiteness during our multiple rounds of interviews. I coded these interactions as "teaching moments." For instance, I transcribed students' Interview 1, processed the discussion through my own racial understandings, and developed follow-up questions. I used this process to bring deeper focus and attention to problematic beliefs upheld by students, including during my follow-up discussion with Kimberly. She explained her poor, working-class, white peers were not privileged. I attempted to pull apart distinctions between white privilege and class privilege with follow-up questions. I asked, "do you think that working class whites have white privilege?" (Kimberly, Interview 1). And during our photo elicitation interview I asked her, "How would you say that being working class intersects with race as it relates to being white and as it relates to being a person of color?" and "do you think that there's differences in experiences for white working class people and working class People of Color?" (Kimberly, Interview 2). Her initial response to the first question was, "I guess it depends what you mean by white privilege. I feel like, I don't know how to explain it because it gets really difficult." (Kimberly, Interview 1). I then asked her to define white privilege for me. She explained:

> I understand it to be like, I think there is like an economic component to it. I think that it would be like . . . because your white over the years your family was more likely to have educated people and stuff in your family and because of that . . . your great grandparents went to school and they supported their grandparents in going to school and getting a good job and it goes down the line (Kimberly, Interview 1).

Here we see Kimberly explain there is an "economic component" to white privilege. Towards the end of her thinking through this question, she stated, "so I guess that is privilege, but maybe, the argument should be then like, the extent to which someone has white privilege" (Kimberly, Interview 1). Here it is evident that through our discussion, Kimberly made sense of privilege as relative to different social identities, to a certain degree.

Additionally, I asked participants three reflective questions regarding their experience in this study at the end of each interview. Most participants shared they enjoyed the space to think about race and whiteness. Additionally, they expressed they walked away, wanting to understand more about race and whiteness. When I asked Rebecca what she was taking away from participating in this study, she explained:

> I think that I'm learning that there are racial issues and even within my family there are issues, so I think I'll take away I don't know exactly, but I think I'll be more aware, like I said. And also, as I grow older and if I start raising a family . . . I think I'd want to do it a little differently than my parents and I think I don't want to shy away from talking about the tough issues or subjects. I also learned I think I need to not do research, but I guess kind of do research about race and how it affects people because I feel like I don't know that much. (Rebecca, Interview 3)

Rebecca's sentiments echo other participants' feelings about wanting to be more engaged with whiteness in their own lives and how it operates at UCLA. White students and white women need to be in classrooms and campus organizations, where they are being pushed to have these conversations, and intimately think about how whiteness operates in their own lives.

Implications for policy. In addition to theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical contributions, the research findings include implications for policy at UCLA and historically white institutions. First, undergraduate students are required to take a diversity course at UCLA in the College of Letters and Science, School of Music, School of Public Affairs, and School of Arts and Architecture (UCLA, n.d.). Students are required to take one course related to perspectives of difference, such as examining issues related to race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, age, language, nationality, citizenship status, and place of origin. In this study, I found that many white undergraduate women arrive to UCLA from racially homogenous environments where discussions about race were often upholding dominant racial ideologies. Given this information, diversity course policies at UCLA should specifically aim to challenge whiteness amongst white college students, and be infused throughout the curriculum, rather than limited to one course. White students have at least 17 years of white socialization and require far more than one course on perspectives of difference to impact how they make sense of whiteness in their lives.

Institution administrators must also develop a strategic plan to disrupt the normative nature of whiteness embedded in the spatial make-up of the institution. In this study, I found that white undergraduate women make sense of race and space by normalizing whiteness and making assumptions that everyone feels connected to UCLA and welcome on campus. Given these findings around race and space, developing a strategic plan would include changing our

understanding of UCLA symbols, like the Bruin Bear Statue and inverted fountain. These spaces serve to uphold dominant narratives about UCLA. These dominant narratives are often told and re-told during orientation, when students are taken on a campus tour. Narratives include rituals and meaning-making students then feel are applicable to all students attending UCLA. Therefore, UCLA statues and symbols, the messages delivered about them, and the rituals practiced at new student orientation must be changed to make the racial history of UCLA more visible.

Another novel way to make whiteness more visible could be to implement a whiteness tour at UCLA, which would highlight how whiteness has been upheld since UCLA's inception. This could be implemented as a separate stand-alone tour to increase our racial cognizance of UCLA's history of whiteness. While a separate tour is an option, I would argue elements of the whiteness tour must be embedded in the standard UCLA and orientation tours I mentioned above.

Lastly, participants who spent most of their time in the STEM at UCLA critiqued it as a "toxic male" subenvironment and critiqued the lack of representation of (white) women, Women of Color, and Faculty of Color in STEM courses. Participants' experiences with gendered microaggressions in this environment provide evidence for the importance of creating a critical mass of white women and Women of Color in STEM. While the concept of critical mass has been primarily used in affirmative action legal rulings (*Grutter v. Bollinger*, 2003), experiences shared by women in this study make a case for why critical mass is also important as it relates to gender in the STEM subenvironment (Kanter, 1977). The concept of having a critical mass of an underrepresented group is important because it will prevent said group from feeling tokenized on a college campus. Therefore, I am arguing we need a critical mass of white women and Women of Color in STEM subenvironments as well. A critical mass of both white women and Women of

Color in STEM will help these women not feel like the spokespersons for their gender and race in their STEM courses or clubs.

Implications for practice. I suggest four implications for practice. First, higher education and student affairs faculty need better training for how to engage student affairs professionals in challenging whiteness. For instance, master's students need coursework and training about whiteness and white womanhood taught in higher education student affairs professional programs. Since these professionals will be a common point of contact for white undergraduate women students, they need tools to unpack how one-up one-down identities operate and maintain white complicity. Tools for engaging in how to unpack one-up one-down identities is important for anyone engaging in programming for white undergraduate women. Additionally, more white women specifically need to be trained to push back on these dominant racial ways of thinking, so they can engage in these conversations with white undergraduate women in the college context. Student affairs professionals and faculty should be given tools from teaching and learning centers on campus to better understand how semantic distancing operates for white undergraduate women. This type of training can help those who need to challenge these notions when they arise.

Second, institutions need more curriculum that provides white undergraduate women with an understanding of how whiteness and white complicity operate. University leaders should also provide white undergraduate women with a curriculum that teaches them about white goodness, racial victimization, ontological expansiveness, and color-evasiveness. White undergraduate women need to be more aware of how they consciously and unconsciously utilize these strategies. Additionally, I found white women were silent with their family members, as it pertained to challenging issues of race and racism. Faculty and student affairs practitioners need

to teach white women how to engage in dialogue and challenge whiteness with family and friends.

Third, universities should not allow white students to form racially homogenous white subenvironments on the college campus. Seven of the participants in this study lived in predominantly white environments before attending UCLA. Due to their racial insulation in white communities growing up, race often only became more salient later in life. Additionally, coming from racially segregated and predominantly white environments played a large role in shaping how they then made sense of race upon arriving at UCLA and from not participating in more racially diverse organizations and subenvironments. The participants who did participate in more racially diverse spaces at UCLA were more racially cognizant of notions related to "taking up space" in the college campus context. Thus, white students should be involved in subenvironments that are not predominantly white.

Fourth, participants discussed the importance of parents and extended family as people that played a formative role in how they were socialized and learned about issues of race pre-college. If parents and extended family are playing key roles in children's socialization, often in ways that uphold whiteness, teachers can play an important role in undoing and challenging these dominant narratives and ways of upholding whiteness. This finding has direct practical implications for K-12 educators and K-12 teacher education programs. K-12 teachers and faculty who train teachers also need to engage in curriculum in their classrooms that promote anti-racism and challenge whiteness. However, pre-service teachers can only do this once they have deeply examined their own whiteness.

Future Directions

Few scholars examined how whiteness operates on college campuses through experiences of white undergraduate women using a critical whiteness studies lens. However, this intersection of topics is a growing area of research. There is still much to explore and question for this line of inquiry on whiteness and white women in higher education.

Participants in this study discussed the importance of parents and extended family as people that played a formative role in how they were socialized and learned about issues of race. While this study focused primarily on these participants' time in college, future research should intentionally explore how participants' pre-college experiences with whiteness impact their experiences and perceptions with whiteness in college.

In this study, I focused on white undergraduate women at UCLA, a white-serving and historically white institution on the West coast. Examining experiences of cisgendered women within this institutional context helped expose ways whiteness is often invisible to white undergraduate women in these institutional types. For instance, white undergraduate women associated UCLA symbols as representations of pride, peacefulness, and diversity. These symbols and representations serve to reinforce dominant narratives and whiteness in the institutional culture. Therefore, it would be advantageous for future researchers to examine how gendered whiteness operates in other institutional types. For instance, how do white undergraduate women perceive the campus environment at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, community colleges, Hispanic Serving Institutions, or Women’s Colleges?

In this study, I focused on 11 white undergraduate women at UCLA, a majority of whom were in-state students. While I did not expect to recruit out-of-state participants, 4 of the 11 were out-of-state students. Out-of-state students spent a significant amount of time discussing how

different California's demographics were to their home states (The Virgin Islands, Florida, Illinois, and Utah). Future research should include a focus on the influence of geography. Future researchers should take up questions to further examine the nuance of different intersections of identities with whiteness. For example, I found the working-class, white, undergraduate women often utilized their working-class status as a way to evade whiteness. This class-based evasion needs to be studied further. Future scholars need to explore why white undergraduate women are not acknowledging their whiteness, if they come from working-class contexts. Future researchers could look specifically at white, working-class, undergraduate women, and how they make sense of their whiteness. While I found white, undergraduate women were making connections to whiteness and class and whiteness and gender, researchers need to look explicitly at how these three social constructions (whiteness, class, and gender) come together when white undergraduate women are making sense of their whiteness.

Additionally, I found that the pansexual and bisexual participants in this study who participated in spaces predominantly frequented by Students of Color were more aware of what it meant to take up space as white women. One participant connected that she developed this awareness by connecting it to heterosexual individuals frequenting spaces meant for LGBTQ individuals. Thus, future research should also explore the intersection of sexual orientation and whiteness. In this study, I explicitly focused on race, thus future researchers could examine all three dimensions of identity equally, and in relationship to one another. Additionally, I identify as a first-generation Italian American and white woman. Scholars like Levine-Rasky (2000) have argued that when white individuals are exposed to critical whiteness curriculum they often spend time focusing on their ethnicity which "eschews the unjust social and historical conditions in which these categories emerged in relation to each other" (p. 278). This helps to illustrate that

ethnic whites struggle to make sense of their whiteness and ethnicity (McDermott & Samson, 2005) and that it can often serve as a way to absolve from acknowledging whiteness and white supremacy (Levine-Rasky, 2000). Therefore, future scholars could take up the intersection of ethnicity, whiteness, and gender.

In this study, I focused on white, undergraduate women and their experiences with whiteness and womanhood and how race and space impact their college-going experience. However, future researchers could also examine subsets of other white women who occupy the college campus. Such subsets include student affairs staff, faculty members, graduate students, and master's and doctoral students in higher education programs. Examining whiteness and womanhood and how it operates in these sub-populations of white women could deepen their own understanding of whiteness and womanhood and how it is present in the college context.

Lastly, there are also multiple implications for future research, which can be explored with existing data from this dissertation. For instance, participants expressed feelings of embarrassment, shame, guilt, and fear, as related to racial issues. Thus, future researchers could take a closer look at the emotionalities of whiteness (Matias, 2016), as expressed by white undergraduate women in this study. This could build on the work of Linder (2015), who developed a conceptual model for antiracist white feminist identity development and (Whitehead, Weston, & Evans, 2019) who developed a white racial engagement model. Additionally, I also coded for "*teachable moment*" 83 times across the transcripts. I defined a teachable moment as a moment I believed a discussion about race and or racism was informative for the participant. These included moments in the transcript where I probed further and or provided more context with my own experiences and understandings of race and racism. The discussion between Kimberly and I related to class privilege and white privilege is an example of

what coding for a teachable moment looked like in my data set. Thus, a closer look at these moments could demonstrate how challenging whiteness can take place through the data collection process. I can use this data to demonstrate how researchers can utilize interviews as a pedagogical space. This would also extend the empirical scholarship my co-author and I have begun around critical whiteness methodology (Guida & Corces-Zimmerman, 2019). In this work, we examined existing transcripts from white researchers who are conducting CWS research with white participants and considered ways that they could employ a critical whiteness methodology.

Three of 11 participants identified as transfer students. I propose future researchers compare transfer students with students who attended UCLA directly following high school. A comparative approach could include a more nuanced understanding of how attending community college shapes how white undergraduate women make meaning of whiteness in their lives and in the lived environment at UCLA. Lastly, these data were collected in 2018, 2 years into Trump's term as president. While my interview protocol did not specifically ask questions related to the election of Trump, many participants discussed the sociopolitical context that informed how they were making sense of whiteness in their lives. A future article could more closely examine how conversations about the 2016 presidential election informed white undergraduate women's sense-making of race and racism during this time.

Conclusion

In Chapter 1, I began this dissertation with my own lived experiences, which served as my motivation to study the experiences of white undergraduate women at UCLA. I shared my own white female socialization was to participate in white silence. My socialization contributed to why I wanted to engage other white undergraduate women with making sense of whiteness in their lives. I pursued this engagement through my study of how whiteness at UCLA impacts their

perceptions of the college campus environment. Using findings from this study, I confirmed my own personal experiences; white, undergraduate women's socialization processes often upheld color-evasive ideologies. This socialization, in turn, contributes to my and other white women's lack of response to taking action to address issues of race and racism. This dissertation was my own way of attempting to break away from this silence. I chose to center a critique of whiteness and womanhood in higher education institutions, with the hopes of finding ways to ameliorate effects of racism, by engaging in antiracism with other white undergraduate women.

Using this study's findings, I built significantly on the previous understandings of how white, undergraduate women make sense of whiteness and their perceptions of the college campus environment. Drawing on critical whiteness and critical race studies concepts, I explored how 11 UCLA white undergraduate women understand their whiteness through 31 60-minute interviews, featuring photo elicitation and walking interviews. I found white undergraduate women make sense of their whiteness through a) their "one-up one-down" social identities, including socioeconomic status and gender; b) utilizing white ignorance and white goodness; and c) upholding racism through color-evasiveness and racial victimization. I also found white women perceive their campus environment via d) their racial and gendered experiences in specific contexts, e) feeling like they are white women everywhere on campus, and f) through their awareness and unawareness of taking up space at UCLA. I illustrated how whiteness operates as the cultural norm at UCLA and how gender inequities often conflate issues of race as less visible to white women.

I use these findings to push boundaries of existing research concerning whiteness and womanhood in higher education and critical whiteness scholarship. Many researchers who take a critical whiteness approach to examine white college students have been normed around white

men (Cabrera, 2018). Additionally, while scholars recently began to turn their attention towards critiquing whiteness and white supremacy, and how it operates in college campus contexts (Foste, 2019a, 2019b; Gusa, 2010; Jayakumar & Adamian, 2017), researchers have not addressed the central question of how whiteness and gender impact the campus racial climate. I used findings of this study to highlight complex ways whiteness and womanhood functions in the experiences of white undergraduate women in a historically white institutional context and pushed boundaries of campus ecology literature to include a critique of whiteness.

Finally, I end this chapter on a more personal note. Throughout the course of conducting this dissertation study, I am reminded challenging whiteness is an ongoing choice I have to engage in as a white woman. Bell (1991) uses his theory of racial realism to remind us racism is permanent and embedded in the very fabric of our society, including our white-serving and historically white institutions. I choose to engage in anti-racist research and practice knowing racial structures will remain intact. Racial permanence prompts me to be more vigilant in my attempt to challenge whiteness and white supremacy (Applebaum, 2010). Ultimately, my intention of this study was to better understand how whiteness and womanhood manifests in historically white institutions, so we can attempt to "locate it, demystify it, and, if possible, discontinue its hold on education" (Leonardo, 2013, p. 91).

Appendix A: Demographic Questionnaire

White Undergraduate Women and Race

Instruction: Understanding white women's experiences with race at UCLA

Thank you for your interest in this study regarding understanding white women's experiences with race at UCLA. I would like to ask you a few questions in this survey in order to determine whether you may be eligible for the research. Before I begin the screening I would like to tell you a little bit about the research. This study is examining the ways in which race is understood through the experiences of undergraduate white women and seeks to explore how your experiences particularly as a college student inform your understandings of race and racism.

This survey will take about 10 minutes. I will ask you questions related to your demographic background, experiences with race, and views on race. You do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to answer or are uncomfortable answering, and you may stop at any time. Your participation in the screening is voluntary. Please mark your most thoughtful and appropriate responses on each question.

Your answers will be confidential. No one will know your answers except for the research team. If you do not qualify for the study your answers will be destroyed. Alternately, if you qualify for the research and decide to participate, and sign the research informed consent form, your answers will be kept with the research record.

By filling out this survey and answering yes to the final question on the screening, you are agreeing to further participation in this study.

If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or if you wish to voice any problems or concerns you may have about the study to someone other than the researchers, please call the UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program at (310) 825-7122.

Thank you again for your willingness to answer our questions.

Q43 Please click on the box to verify you are not a robot before continuing with the survey.

Q4 Contact Information

Note: This information will be used to contact you for a follow-up study if you are willing to participate. Otherwise, your name, student identification number and email address will only be used if we need to follow-up with you regarding an answer or comment that you provide.

- o Full Name (1) ____
- o E-mail (2) ____
- o Phone Number (3) ____
- o University ID Number (4) ______________________________________

Q7 Background Information

- o Year in School (1) ____
- o Major (2) ____
- o Age (3) ____

Q12 What was your class standing when you entered UCLA?

- o First-year Freshmen admit (1)
- o Transfer admit (2)

Q39 Do you self-identify racially as White/Caucasian?

- o Yes (1)
- o No (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Do you self-identify racially as White/Caucasian? = No

Q14 What is your current Gender Identity? Mark one response only.

- o Gender queer/Gender non-conforming (1)
- o Trans Woman (2)
- o Trans Man (3)
- o Woman (4)
- o Man (5)
- o Not listed above (6) ___________________________

Q15 What is your sexual orientation? (Optional)

- o Gay (2)
- o Lesbian (3)
- o Bisexual (4)
- o Queer (5)
- o Pansexual (6)
- o Asexual (7)
- o Heterosexual/Straight (8)
- o Not Listed Above (9) ________________________________
- o

Q17 How do you identify ethnically?

____

Q18 What was the approximate combined income of your parents before taxes last year? Include taxable and nontaxable income from all sources. Mark one.

- o Less than $20,000 (1)
- o $20,000 to $29,999 (2)
- o $30,000 to $39,999 (3)
- o $40,000 to $59,999 (4)
- o $60,000 to $79,999 (5)
- o $80,000 to $99,999 (6)
- o $100,000 to $199,999 (7)
- o More than $200,000 (8)

Q19 Indicate the highest level of education completed by your mother/guardian.

- o High school diploma or less (1)
- o Some college or postsecondary education (2)
- o Associate's degree (3)
- o Bachelor's degree (4)
- o Some graduate or professional (5)
- o Graduate or professional degree (e.g., MA, PhD, MD, JD) (6)
- o Other (7)
- o Unknown (8)

Q20 Indicate the highest level of education completed by your father/guardian.

- High school diploma or less (1)
- Some college or postsecondary education (2)
- Associate's degree (3)
- Bachelor's degree (4)
- Some graduate or professional (5)
- Graduate or professional degree (e.g., MA, PhD, MD, JD) (6)
- Other (7)
- Unknown (8)

Q21 How would you characterize your political views?

- Far left (1)
- Liberal (2)
- Middle-of-the-road (3)
- Conservative (4)
- Far right (5)

Q22 What clubs/organizations do you belong to on campus? (I.e. social fraternity or sorority, pre-professional or departmental club, played club, intramural, or recreational sports, played intercollegiate athletics, study abroad, leadership training, student government, ethnic/racial student organization, undergraduate research program, or LGBTQ student organization.)

____

Q24 Approximately, what proportion of the people in the neighborhood where you grew up were white?

- Between 0% and 25% (1)
- Between 25% and 50% (2)
- About 50% (3)
- Between 50% and 75% (4)
- Between 75% and 100% (5)

Q26 Approximately, what proportion of the other students in your high school were white?

- Between 0% and 25% (1)
- Between 25% and 50% (2)
- About 50% (3)
- Between 50% and 75% (4)
- Between 75% and 100% (5)

Q24 How often do you think about issues of race?

- Multiple times per day (1)
- More than once per week (2)
- Once a week (3)
- Once a month (4)
- Less than once a month (5)
- Less than once a year (6)

Q25 Think of the six people with whom you interact the most on an almost daily basis. Of these six, how many are of each of the following groups? Please fill in the number that fall within each group:

- Black (1) ________________________________
- Latina/o (2) ______________________________
- Native American (3) ______________________
- Asian/Pacific Islander (4) _________________
- White (6) ________________________________
- Mixed Race (7) ___________________________

Q26 Have you invited a Black, Latina/o, Native American, Asian/Pacific Islander, or Mixed Race person for lunch or dinner recently?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q27 Think of your three closest friends, other than relatives. How often do you engage in social activities with them?

- More than once per week (1)
- Once per week (2)
- Once a month (3)
- Less than once a month (4)
- Less than once a year (5)

Q28 How many of these three friends are White?

- None (1)
- One (2)
- Two (3)
- Three (4)

Q29 Have you ever had a romantic relationship with a person from the following racial groups?

	Yes (1)	No (2)
Black (1)	o	o
Latina/o (2)	o	o
Native American (3)	o	o
Asian/Pacific Islander (4)	o	o
White (5)	o	o
Mixed Race (6)	o	o

Q33 To what degree do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Strongly Disagree (1) Disagree (2) Agree (3) Strongly Agree (4)

- White people in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin. (1)
- Race is very important in determining who is successful and who is not. (2)
- Racial and ethnic minorities do not have the same opportunities as white people in the U.S. (3)
- Everyone who works hard, no matter what race they are, has an equal chance to become rich. (4)
- Social policies, such as affirmative action, discriminate unfairly against white people. (5)
- White people in the U.S. are discriminated against because of the color of the skin. (6)
- Due to racial discrimination, programs such as affirmative action are necessary to help create equality. (7)
- Racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin. (8)
- Immigrants should try to fit into the culture and values of the U.S. (9)
- Racial problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations. (10)
- Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension. (11)
- Racism is a major problem in the U.S. (12)
- It is important for public schools to teach about the history and contributions of racial and ethnic minorities. (13)
- It is important for political leaders to talk about racism to help work through or solve society's problems. (14)

- Racism may have been a problem in the past, but it is not an important problem today. (15)

Q34 Are you interested in being contacted to possibly further participate in this study? Further participation consists of a series of three in person interviews over the course of the next month. Compensation for this includes a $20 gift certificate and a professional headshot.

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Display This Question:

If Are you interested in being contacted to possibly further participate in this study? Further part... = Yes

Q38 How would you prefer to be contacted? (Select all that apply.)

- Email (1)
- Phone (2)

Q37 Thank you for your time and for participating in this survey.

Appendix B: Participant Flyer

UNDERSTANDING WHITE WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES WITH RACE AT UCLA

Do you self-identify as a white undergraduate woman?
Have you been on campus for at least one year?
If so, consider participating in this study and receive a $20 gift card

Begin by filling out this 10 minute questionnaire:
http://bit.ly/whitewomenandrace

Questions? Please contact tonia.guida@ucla.edu

01097 UCLA IRB Approved Approval Date: 9/12/2018 Through: 8/19/2021 Committe

Appendix C: Recruitment Email

Hello,

My name is Tonia Guida and I am a graduate student who self-identifies as a white woman recruiting other self-identified white undergraduate women to explore white women's experiences with race at UCLA for my dissertation.

Have you been on campus for at least one year and self-identify as an undergraduate white woman? If so, consider participating in this study to receive a $20 gift card. To begin, please fill out this brief online questionnaire, which will take no more than 10 minutes total.

If you have any questions please contact me directly via email at (email address).

Appendix D: Guided Interview

Welcoming Comments

Thank you for meeting with me today. Before we begin, I want to introduce myself and tell you about this study. My name is Tonia Guida and I am a researcher from UCLA's College of Education.

The purpose of the study is to understand how White women understand and experience race. Our interview today is to help inform our understanding of students' experiences and is in no way an evaluation of you. Please feel free to share whatever you wish during this interview. If you would rather not respond to a particular question, simply say "I pass." At any time you can excuse yourself without any consequences to your standing as a student.

I will be passing out a consent form that asks for your permission to participate in this study. I will give you a few minutes to review the information on the form and confirm that you are interested in participating.

I also ask for your permission to tape record the interview and to take notes during our dialogue. In order to protect your real name and identification, I will transcribe the dialogue by a inserting pseudonym. Do you have any questions before we start? And do you have a preference for what pseudonym I use?

1. Describe where you born and where you grew up.
2. Describe your experiences with race before coming to college. What was the role of community, family, friendships, and/or neighborhood) in how you understood race.
3. How did your parents shape how you understood race growing up?
4. Describe the racial make-up of people where you lived growing up?
5. Describe the racial make-up of people where you went to school growing up? (elementary, middle, and high school)
6. Did you notice race differences when you were growing up?
7. What experiences contributed to how you saw yourself racially?
8. What experiences prior to college (in particular) shaped your understanding of race? Can you provide examples or tell me a story about what experiences helped you see yourself racially or learn more about race.
9. I am interested in your story/college experience and whatever you want to tell me about it.
10. Tell me more about your social and academic experiences since being in college.
    a. Follow-up: How has race played into that?
11. How has being in college shaped how you understand race and racism?
12. Tell me (a story) about your interactions with peers on campus as it relates to race.
13. How have faculty/staff at the institution impacted your time in college?
14. Is there anything else that you want to add?

Appendix E: Photo Elicitation Interview Instructions

What you'll do: Within the next week**,** take up to *6 pictures total* of the places, people, and/or things that are most important to you as it relates to where you spend most of your time at UCLA.
Questions to consider: 1) Where do you feel like you belong/don't belong on campus? 2) What organizations on campus are important to you? 3) How do you see race absent and/or present in these environments? 4) Where do you feel like you are a white woman on campus? 5) Where do you feel like you have/don't have some power on campus?
Next steps: We'll take some time a week from now to talk about the photos you took. Email me the photos before we meet (email address). Email/call me with any questions (XXX) XXX-XXXX. Have fun!

Photo-elicitation Interview Protocol

1. Is there anything else you've thought of or that has come up since we last talked that you would like to add?

2. Please share the various photos you took/brought in with you.

3. Please share with me what is going on here (in each photo)?

4. Why did you decide to take/bring this photo? (in each photo)

5. What makes this photo important for how race is absent and/or present at UCLA? (in each photo)

6. What about this space makes race absent or present for you?

7. What photos did you take/bring that make you feel like you belong on campus?

8. What photos did you take/bring that make you feel like you don't belong on campus?

9. What organizations or spaces on campus are important to you?

Appendix F: Walking Interview Protocol

1. Is there anything else you've thought of since we last talked that you would like to add?
2. What makes the various areas we are visiting today important to how you understand race on the college campus?
3. When (and where) do you think about being a white woman on campus?
4. Tell me about your interactions as it relates to race off campus. When and where do you think about being a white woman off campus?

Reflective Questions

5. What was participating in this study like for you?
6. Do you have any further thoughts on race and racism after the course of our interviews?
7. Is there any final comments you'd like to add?

Appendix G: Codebook

Title	Description
colorblind racism	the racial ideology (Bonilla-Silva, 2013) based on the superficial extension of the principles of liberalism to racial matters that results in “raceless” explanations for all sort of race-related affairs
racial victimization	whites as the true victims of multiculturalism (Cabrera, 2014c)
"not a good place to raise your kids"	Racially coded language
comm. college	discussion of community college experience
community college as positive	community college as a positive experience
community college vs. home environment	comparison of home/school environment and community college environment
community college vs. UCLA	comparison of community college environment and UCLA environment
cultural appropriation	cultural elements are copied from PoC by white people and these elements are used outside of their original cultural context
De-(racialization) of space on campus	
Race as absent	
Race as different than the norm	
Race as present	
empathy	empathizing with feelings related to the harm racism causes
ethnic white	Participants who discussed white people who refer to an immigration history from European countries
experience of otherness	Participant expresses experience where they feel like an outsider
family history	Participant refers to their family history
colonization	reference to colonization/settler colonialism as it relates to family history
Family of Color	Reference to a family member who is a Person of Color
Friends of Color	Reference to a friend who is a Person of Color
Bi-racial friends	Reference to a friend who is Bi-racial
Honorary white	individuals and groups who, in a racial hierarchy with Whites at the top and Blacks at the bottom, occupy a "preferred", intermediate status
Gendered experiences	
“I’m the only girl in here”	
Counter gender space	
Gender microaggression	

Non-Verbal messaging	
"toxic male atmosphere"	
Interesting Quotes	
neighborhood vs. UCLA	Comparison between their community growing up and UCLA
neighborhood and race	A neighborhood being associated with a particular race
Ontological expansiveness	acting and thinking as if all spaces whether geographical, physical, linguistic, economic, spiritual, bodily, or otherwise--are or should be available for them to move in and out of as they wish
Awareness of OE	Participant discusses their understanding and caution around not treating all spaces as available for them to move in and out of as they wish
parents beliefs vs. her beliefs	Contrast or comparison between what she believes and what her parents believe
policy	Discussion related to a state or university policy
political views	discussion related to one's political view
apolitical	participant discusses themselves or someone else being apolitical (not having an opinion on a political issue)
process	A process connected to UCLA
campus messaging	
hiring practices	Hiring practices at UCLA
race and citizenship	
race and class	Discussion of race and it's connection to class
race and gender	Discussion of race and it's connection to gender
race and language	Discussion of race and it's connection to language
race and politics	Discussion of race and it's connection to politics
race and election	Discussion of race and it's connection specifically to Trump presidency/presidential race
race and sexuality	Discussion of race and it's connection to sexuality
B: Dating PoC	Beliefs around dating PoC comes up
interracial relationship/dating	Dicussion of their experiences in interracial relationships/dating
race and social media	How participant thinks about race/engages with race via social media platforms (facebook, twitter, instagram, reddit)
race and travel experience	how race informed one's travel experience (inside and outside U.S.)
race vs. culture	Discussion/comparison between race and culture
V: Different cultural experience	
racial awareness	Discussion of when participant becomes more cognizant of race
racial discussion	Participant discusses a time when they had a conversation that pertained to race
listening race discussions	Participant discusses a time when they listened to a conversation that pertained to race

race discourse UCLA vs. no race discourse at home	Participant compares race not being discussed in their community and then coming to UCLA where it is discussed far more
racial diversity	a certain place/space being described as racially diverse
"I think that the diversity is fabulous"	Racial diversity as positive experience
B: ucla as diverse	when participants describe UCLA as being racially diverse
racial insulation	spaces that are predominantly white which protect white people from race-based stress (DiAngelo, 2011)
pred. Asian	Discussion of a space being predominantly Asian
Pred. Latinx	
racial segregation	When racial groups are separated in neighborhood, school, classes at school, in organizations, and other spaces/environments
racial divide at UCLA	Participant discusses a racial division they notice at UCLA specifically
racism	"the assigning of values to real or imagined differences in order to justify white supremacy, to the benefit of whites and at the expense of People of Color, and thereby defend the right of whites to dominance" (Pérez-Huber, 2010)
Action towards racism	
anti-Blackness	Racial oppression specifically directed towards Black people (Dumas, 2016) emerges from Afro-pessimism, inherent belief that Black people are have sub-human recognition through the white gaze
microaggression	
understanding inequities	participants discuss a racial inequity and how it operates in the U.S. context
religion	participant discusses experiences related to religious upbringing/religious environment where they grew up
rural/small town experience	Describing their growing up experience as being in a rural or small town setting
Sense of belonging	
Not belonging	
silent racism	passivity on race issues
racial stereotypes	Discussion of a belief about typical characteristics of members of a given ethnic group or nationality, their status, society and cultural norms.
race evasiveness	distancing/detachment of race matters
White saviority	a form of benevolence, when white people think they are doing good for PoC
sub-environments	reference to various sub-environments mentioned at UCLA
academic environment	
activism	
cultural subenvironments	
faculty	
housing subenvironment	
organization/club sub-environment	

sorority	
student groups	
work subenvironment	
Clubs/Organizations	question on questionnaire which asked them to list the student orgs they are involved in
LGBT center subenvironment	
LGBT floor subenvironment	
social subenvironment	
STEM subenvironment	
teachable moment	discussion of race with someone which was informative for participant (these include moments in transcript where I probe further and or provide more context with my experiences and/or understandings of race and racism)
Transition from home to UCLA	
“6 Black people at our school”	
"culture shock"	A significant shift from one environment to another
B: adopt parents’ beliefs	Participant takes on the belief of a parent/caregiver
her upbringing vs. friends upbringing	Participant refers to their experiences growing up being different than a friends experience growing up
UCLA as liberal or "very far left school"	discussion of UCLA as a liberal/far left place
V: race as not important	discussion of race as not being important
white as norm	reference to whiteness being the norm
white emotionalities	the racialized ways white people experience emotions
white embarassment	
white fear	apprehension and fear of being perceived as racist
white guilt	
white shame	
white complicity	when participant believes they are innocent, well-meaning, and good-intentioned bearing no responsibility for racism (Applebaum, 2010; Bailey, 2015)
B: white women and innocence	belief that white women are perceived and should be perceived as innocent
white privilege	the various societal privileges that benefit white people
White self vs. PoC	Participant makes comparison between themselves and a Person of Color

Key:

Parent Code	
Child Code	
Further Child Code	

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