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"It's So Gross, but Familiar": A Campus' Racial Past, Present, and Undergraduate Experiences With On-Campus and Online Racisms

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“It’s So Gross, but Familiar”:

A Campus’ Racial Past, Present, and Undergraduate Experiences With On-Campus and Online Racisms

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Education

by

Michael Wade Moses II

2020

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

"It's So Gross, but Familiar":

A Campus' Racial Past, Present, and Undergraduate Experiences

With On-Campus and Online Racisms

by

Michael Wade Moses II

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2020

Professor Douglas Kellner, Co-Chair

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Postsecondary institutions are working to remedy campus race relations. Although initiatives from course requirements to diversity offices have been implemented, racialized disparities remain a pressing concern. The online domain has also challenged institutions to consider what responsibility campuses have in the racial climate experiences of students' web-based interactions. This dissertation study therefore examines whether diversity work has created institutional change and positively shaped the campus experience for racially diverse students. Drawing upon critical race theories in education, I conducted a qualitative phenomenological study to explore how undergraduates make sense of their contemporary campus racial climate

experiences in relation to their perceptions about their institution's historical legacies of racism. Data collection methods included textual analysis of campus artifacts, video-elicited focus groups, semi-structured walking interviews, and ethnographic observations of 12 undergraduate students attending the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

Three findings emerged from the study. First, minoritized students negotiate their online experiences with a greater sense of autonomy to avoid racial hostility. Their on-campus experiences, in contrast, are often fixed by uncontrollable circumstances such as required courses taught by racially insensitive instructors. Second, Students of Color identified direct parallels between their contemporary experiences and the racialized ideologies behind past racial incidents at UCLA. They noted, for example, how stereotypes used in the YouTube video "Asians in the Library" (2011) were consistent with how their contemporary peers envision Asian and Asian American students as the "model minority." Third, despite UCLA's public history of racial incidents, participants came to their studies believing UCLA would be a "dream"-like escape from their racialized pasts. Their individual encounters with racial microaggressions from peers and instructors marked the beginning of their idyllic expectations of UCLA to fade away.

Participants' experiences demonstrate, despite advertised institutional investments in diversity over time, little substantive improvements have occurred within their campus' racial climate. Findings have implications for how administrators and practitioners work to better serve the needs of racially diverse students. Moreover, this study contributes to methodological practice by situating social media texts as elicitation devices to nuance the study of campus racial climate within contemporary digital cultures.

The dissertation of Michael Wade Moses II is approved.

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2020

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am my father's son.

I am my mother's child.

I am my brother's keeper.

This dissertation would not be if it were not for the foundation and strength my parents and baby brother have instilled in me throughout my 32 years of life. I write in honor of them, their love of humanity, and their intergenerational legacy. Thank you for your patience in seeing me through to this work.

I am also indebted to the endless love and support poured into me from extended family, friends, colleagues, students, and mentors. To you all, I express gratitude. Here, I acknowledge by name many who have been along with me at various points throughout this process. If only these acknowledgments could truly account for all of you who have left lasting impressions upon me and my pursuit of this work. For individuals I mistakenly fail to mention, please know your energy has not gone unnoticed.

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Thank you, too, for the reminders that there is more to this academic game than what is written on a page or the lines on my CV. You all remind me to be accountable and take what I know to do good in the world and impart that energy positively onto others.

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Danny – Profe, what can I say? The words on this page cannot fully express my gratitude for your presence, emotional support, and fervent care for student development. I aspire to be for my students what you have been for me and countless others.

Doug – Thank you for your and Rhonda's support over the years. My entry into the field of education begins with you all. I look forward to sharing you all's passion for cultural studies and scholarly inquiry with future cohorts of students.

Terri – Quite frankly, there is not enough space in these acknowledgments to adequately express my appreciation for you. I have been lucky to apprentice under you as an educator and methodologist for several years, and I have appreciated every single moment. You have pushed me to be the best thinker, mentor, and person I can be. I look forward to pouring into my students the way you have poured into me, my peers, and our many 222 qualitative researchers.

Lastly, as I write these acknowledgments and final words of this dissertation, I would be remiss to not acknowledge the global pain caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and unrest against police brutality toward Black bodies. I lack the words to appropriately characterize my feelings

and commentary on these haunting realities. To say I am emotionally jaded and undoubtedly concerned is an understatement, for the old world we once knew is burning for a new and unsettling one to rise. I will come to more fully process and make sense of this moment in time. To conclude my acknowledgments, I want to extend thanks to the many Black artists who have fed my soul throughout this and other changing seasons of our collective memory.

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With love,

Michael W. Moses II

June 2020

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Chapter 1:

Contextualizing Undergraduate Experiences With Racial Diversity in Higher Education

On the night of August 20, 2018, a crowd of nearly 250 people convened at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (UNC; Stancill, 2018). With ropes and banners, some of them reading, "It was time for a 'world without white supremacy'" (Jaschik, 2018a, para. 2), crowd members repeatedly tugged and climatically cheered after toppling Silent Sam to the ground. For several decades, Silent Sam was a contentious subject for UNC students, faculty, staff, and North Carolina government officials (Whitford, 2018). For many, the statue's presence represented a historical legacy of racism as Silent Sam, erected in 1913, was constructed as a memorial for fallen soldiers who fought for the Confederacy during the Civil War (Moody, 2018). Critics often cited the racist language used during Silent Sam's dedication speech in which a UNC donor shared how he horsewhipped "a negro wench" some 100 yards from the statue's original location (Woods, 2018). Despite these concerns, university officials neglected to act on behalf of concerned community members, leading campus activists to uproot Silent Sam on their own (Whitford, 2018). In response, UNC administration pledged to identify "a safe, legal and alternative location for Silent Sam" (Folt, 2018, para. 4); however, students, faculty, and staff lamented the proposed $5 million construction of a new building and nearly $800,000 annual costs for maintenance to house Silent Sam could be better used to serve minoritized students on campus (Jaschik, 2018b). Several dozen graduate student teaching assistants subsequently planned to withhold grades to over 2,000 students in an ongoing effort to end UNC's commitment to preserving Silent Sam (Jaschik, 2018c). Concerns about costs ultimately pushed the Board of Governors to reject the $5 million endeavor, forcing UNC leadership to reconsider their plans for finding Silent Sam a new home (Drew, 2018).

The case of UNC's Silent Sam represents a national, ongoing struggle regarding race and racism within higher education. In recent years, a number of institutions have reported incidents related to their campuses' history of racism. For example, at Georgetown University, a novel admissions plan, granting preferential treatment to descendants, was designed to atone for the university's profiting from the sale of 272 enslaved Africans nearly 200 years ago. Similar to UNC, at Duke, a Confederate statue was safely removed after ongoing discussions between the university's president and students, faculty, alumni, senior leaders, and trustees. Concerns about institutional legacies of racism, however, have not occurred in isolation as many critics and students alike have tied these relics of historical racism to contemporary issues with campus racism. Black faculty at UNC, for example, argued Silent Sam threatens their safety: "A monument to white supremacy, steeped in a history of violence against Black people, . . . creates a racially hostile work environment and diminishes the University's reputation worldwide" ("Letter: UNC Black Faculty," 2018, para. 2). UNC undergraduate Tarik Woods (2018) also shared how past representations of racism effect student populations:

> I strongly believe the most prevalent feeling among my fellow students, including myself, toward Silent Sam is anger. Anger that a symbol of discrimination and hate would be allowed to remain at the forefront of our campus for more than 100 years. Anger that our fellow students were jailed and punished for attempting to rectify this wrong. Anger that our efforts to persuade our administrators, the Board of Trustees and the Board of Governors of this internal abuse was met with further attacks on our fight against injustice. (para. 5)

Woods' (2018) remarks illuminate how an institution's historical past with racism directly impacts students' present experiences. He noted how advocacy against racist artifacts like Silent

Sam have impacted not only students' emotional well-being but also their record as students have been "jailed and punished" for their "fight against injustice" (Woods, 2018, para. 5).

This relationship between an institution's historical past and the contemporary present is exacerbated by the reality that undergraduate students' experiences with racism have transcended the physical locale of campuses and now occur online. Recently, for example, college-centric meme[1] pages or groups, in which students post memes that chronicle student life and pose social commentary, have gained increasing attention and notable popularity at institutions such as Harvard; Yale; University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA); Duke; and other "Ivies and baby Ivies" (Tulp & Kruzman, 2017, para. 10). At face value, meme sharing appears to be light-hearted, innocuous fun, but it also has been critiqued for spreading racist and offensive content and commentary, forcing institutions of higher education to manage issues of campus racism in unfamiliar territory. For instance, at Pomona College, an undergraduate student named Ross Steinberg chose to speak out against "U PC BREAUX" [read "You Politically Correct, Bro?"]—a private Facebook group exclusive to invited current and former students of the Claremont Colleges featuring offensive memes and comment threads about racialized and other minoritized populations (Steinberg, 2017):

> These memes included a joke about turning in undocumented immigrants to ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] because they were being too loud, an obscene image depicting a man ejaculating while thinking about the Holocaust, an image of a woman and her daughter in front of a school bus with the text implying that the woman is going to use her daughter in a suicide bombing, a post making light of the June 2017

[1] Lexico—a collaboration between Dictionary.com and Oxford University Press—defines a meme as "a humorous image, video, piece of text, etc., that is copied (often with slight variations) and spread rapidly by Internet users" (Lexico, n.d.).

> London Bridge terrorist attack, and countless images and comments mocking and sexualizing the appearance of women. (para. 5)

In response, Pomona leadership created a Bias Incident Response Team to determine if the Facebook group violated the student handbook (Roll, 2017); however, as online racially biased-related incidents remain a relatively new phenomenon for institutions to address, academic scholarship needs to learn more about what students' online experiences look like in relation to their on-campus experiences with campus racism. Currently, Harvard has set a standard for how to deal with similar situations. In early 2017, the private university chose to revoke the admissions of 10 incoming students after their documented participation on a racist memes page (Jaschik, 2017). Racialized online aggressions, however, as the Pomona College example suggests, are not exclusive to students' online interactions prior to attending college; therefore, we need an empirical knowledge base that unearths what students' online experiences with racism look like during college, particularly in relation to their on-campus experiences.

Road Map of the Chapter

This dissertation titled, *"It's So Gross, but Familiar": A Campus' Racial Past, Present, and Undergraduate Experiences With On-Campus and Online Racisms*, addresses the scholarly dilemma described previously through a qualitative phenomenological approach to inquiry. This chapter's opening vignette demonstrates how institutional histories of racism currently influence contemporary understandings about race and diversity on college campuses around the country. Moreover, contemporary experiences with campus racism, due to the rise and usage of social media and information technologies such as Facebook and Twitter, now constitute students' racialized encounters with peers while using the internet. As the remaining chapters of this dissertation demonstrate, undergraduate students identify how "gross" yet all too "familiar" their

present-day experiences with online and on-campus racisms are to their campus' past legacies of racism. This chapter aims to provide readers with a foundation about the intellectual and real-world stakes of this project, answering to what scholarly conversations does this study substantively contribute. I continue by rooting the study's purpose and research questions in a brief discussion of the current literature on undergraduate student experiences with race and racism in higher education. Next, in an effort to demonstrate how my own educational experiences shaped my journey to this work, I, as the researcher, offer a personal vignette to aid readers' sense making about my choices throughout the design, data collection, analysis, and writing of this study. This chapter then defines key terms used throughout the dissertation and explains the ethnographic and critical race storytelling traditions that inform my approach to scholarly writing. I conclude this chapter by providing a road map to guide readers throughout the remaining chapters of the dissertation.

Purpose of the Study

Higher education researchers have extensively explored the contours and implications of campus racial climate as a field of study (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Hurtado, 1992; Hurtado et al., 1998, 1999; Rankin & Reason, 2005). Some scholars have demonstrated undergraduate students, specifically Students of Color and White students, have contrasting perceptions about the campus racial climate of an institution (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Hurtado et al., 1998; Rankin & Reason, 2005); however, few studies (Yeung & Johnston, 2014) have investigated how undergraduate students make sense of their campuses' legacies and representations of racism (e.g., UNC's Silent Sam), and fewer studies have questioned how undergraduate students' contemporary experiences look in relation to their campus' legacies of racism. This line of inquiry is important to consider as postsecondary institutions continue to recruit racially

underrepresented students in a moment in time when they have seemingly contradictory rhetoric and practices of racial diversity (Cole & Harper, 2017; Harris et al., 2015). Institutions express commitments for racial equity, diversity, and inclusion all while racist on-campus and online interactions are covertly and overtly sanctioned.

With the rising influence of social media technologies on the undergraduate experience, recent literature has challenged the field of higher education to consider how campus life and the racialized experiences of students are now occurring in the online world (Rowan-Kenyon et al., 2016). However, to date, scholars have not attended to the increasing presence of online racism and its relationship to the racism undergraduates experience on campus. Researchers, for example, must ask: How do undergraduates make sense of the racist content on Facebook meme pages such as "Harvard Memes for Elitist 1% Tweens" in relation to their everyday on-campus experiences? Additionally, social media texts, similar to the latter, have challenged higher education practitioners to more quickly respond to the viral and racialized nature of today's campus experience. Without an adequate analysis of these phenomena—campus historical legacies of racism in relation to students' on-campus and online experiences with racism—the field underestimates the extent to which history, institutional policies and practices, and online and on-campus racisms relate to one another and shape the undergraduate experience. This line of inquiry is important as it can inform institutional practitioner-led efforts to improve campus race relations for marginalized student populations.

Considering these gaps in our knowledge, the purpose of this dissertation is twofold: (a) to understand how undergraduate students articulate their present-day racial climate experiences in relation to their institution's historical legacies of racism and (b) to understand the similarities

and differences between the experiences of Students of Color with online and on-campus racisms. Given these purposes, the study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. How do undergraduate students' contemporary campus racial climate experiences relate to their perceptions about their institution's historical legacies of racism?
2. What is the relationship between the online and on-campus racisms experienced by undergraduate Students of Color?

Using qualitative phenomenology as a methodological design, this dissertation offers empirical evidence to inform institutional and practitioner-based efforts to ameliorate the campus experiences of undergraduate students, primarily Students of Color. Drawing from a variety of data sources, including video-elicited focus groups, semi-structured walking interviews, ethnographic observations of participant life on campus, textual analysis, and document collection, this dissertation extends previous research on campus racial climate by explicitly drawing connections between online and on-campus racialized experiences (Gin et al., 2017; Martínez-Alemán & Wartman, 2008; Museus & Truong, 2013; Tynes et al., 2013). This dissertation also complicates our understandings of the contemporary racialized present in relation to institutional legacies of racism. With this line of inquiry, the field will have a more nuanced knowledge base to inform higher education practitioners' efforts to lessen the impact of racism on students' collegiate experiences. Specifically, it offers a measure of how campuses are serving their students: Are institutional leaders substantively working to improve the campus race relations? Additionally, this dissertation contributes theoretically and methodologically by positing social media as analytic tools to understand the unique and contextualized nature of a given campus' racialized present. Before summarizing the study's conceptual framework,

methodology, content, and organization, I use the next section to describe more broadly how I, as the researcher, came to this line of inquiry.

Personal Relationship to the Work

Tatiana, Friyana, and I had recently begun our master's program in African American studies at UCLA as we drove along Wilshire Boulevard on a fall day in 2010. Gazing out the backseat window, I thought about a Paul Mooney interview I recently watched on WorldStarHipHop.com. Mooney is a legendary Black comedian whom I had recently come to know and enjoy through his unapologetic yet thought-provoking performances about race on the hit comedy series *The Chappelle Show*. After watching the interview, however, I left disapproving of his views on racism in the United States.

"Oh yeah, did y'all see that Paul Mooney interview on WorldStar?"[2] I asked Tatiana and Friyana, both sitting in the front.

"Nah. Why, was it good?" Tatiana asked.

"Hmmmmm, it was interesting. I had some issues with the way he talked about racism. He said Black folks can't be racist, and I don't know. I just don't agree with that. I feel like there's definitely ways we can be racist."

Everything fell silent.

Tatiana, originally from Jamaica, Queens, New York City and a proud graduate of Clark Atlanta University—a historically Black university—turned her head slightly. She hesitated, then returned her gaze out the windshield, beginning to reshape the fullness of her natural 'fro as if to say, "*Friyana, girl, you go 'head and take this one*." Friyana, a slim, Indian-American woman

[2] Note, quotations appearing in this vignette, highlighting the experiences that led me to this dissertation topic, are paraphrased and reconstructed from memory.

with uniquely dyed magenta and black hair, took notice to Tati's cue and made eye contact with me through her rearview mirror.

"Michael, I think you mean that Black people can be prejudiced or discriminatory, but they can't be racist. They have no power."

My eyes furrowed in confusion: "*Power? What she mean Black people don't have power?*" The concept was foreign to me.

"I don't follow, Fri. You mean to tell me that in individual encounters or workplace settings Black folks can't have power over Whites?"

"It's not that simple. I think of how Professor [Darnell] Hunt teaches it in his undergraduate classes. People of Color do not have the social means to systematically displace and disenfranchise people the way Whites have done to us. That's how power works. It's more complicated than individual interactions."

Everything Friyana said made sense, but most of my experiences up until that point led me to believe racism was about individuals and their own personal racial biases and prejudices.

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I grew up in Marietta, Georgia, a predominantly White, middle-class suburb of Atlanta, where everyone, regardless of race, seemed to coexist in harmony. We lived by an "I respect you, you respect me" way of life. I believed if I did the "right" thing, everything would bode well for me: I would be treated fairly, and there would be no need to worry about "racism" negatively impacting my life. I blissfully drank that Southern-flavored Kool-Aid of White-washed diversity, for the racial mystique of suburban life was all I knew.

These beliefs accompanied me as I attended Georgia Southwestern State University on a soccer scholarship. I enjoyed my time at this small state university, yet I knew there was more

for me to learn. I applied to graduate school and was relieved once I received my acceptance letter from UCLA. I told my teammates all of my "hard work" had paid off. "If I can do it, anyone can," I said so assuredly. My thoughts about my future were at an optimistic high. As I started my graduate studies, however, I began to learn more about the meritocratic ideology of hard work and its ties to ideologies about race, social class, and gender in the United States.

****

As a master's student in African American studies, I read writings by feminist and critical scholars such as Kimberlé Crenshaw and Stuart Hall. I initially struggled with abstract concepts like intersectionality and structural racism, yet I more fully understood them as I began to listen to and learn from my friends and their experiences. Tatiana and Friyana, for example, made sure I "checked my privilege": "But, Michael, you have to realize that 'hard work' and meritocracy is a lie. Men be out here sayin' the dumbest shit and reap the benefits while Women of Color, who've often done twice the work, earn less than men and White women."

These truths shattered the world I once knew. I resisted. I tried challenging and rebutting Tatiana and Friyana; yet, over time, this new way of seeing the world began to not only sound right but also feel right to me. I began to see how race had shaped my experiences as a mild-mannered, middle-class, Black boy from Georgia's White suburbs. I began to see how racism is more complex than just individuals and their own personal racial biases and prejudices. Befriending Women of Color like Tatiana and Friyana and reading theorists like Crenshaw and Hall have been integral to my development and understanding of racism and other forms of social oppression. Quite frankly, I wonder where I would currently stand in my understanding of the social world if it were not for those crucial, early years at UCLA.

From these experiences, I am drawn to what the dynamic landscape of higher education can offer students in their personal development with race and related social issues. This dissertation, therefore, builds upon my own personal experiences of listening and learning from others as I seek to qualitatively understand how undergraduate students' on-campus and online experiences with racial climate relate to their perceptions of institutional legacies of racism. I write this dissertation as an extension of my own journey and effort to highlight the potential collegiate settings have to diversify our ways of seeing and aide us in reading the world more critically.

Operationalizing Key Terms and Writing Commitments

Central to any research study is the specialized language, or jargon, used to describe unique and nuanced phenomena within the social world. This study draws upon critical traditions across the social sciences to effectively describe how the experiences of undergraduate Students of Color are directly influenced by the way race has been used to organize U.S. society. This form of social organization is shaped by *racism*, which I define in this dissertation as a context-rooted system of race-based oppression that has systematically disenfranchised Communities of Color in relation to their White counterparts. In Chapter 2, I provide further explanation and detail how Omi and Winant's (2015) theory of racial formation informs this study's understanding of race and racism within the postsecondary context.

Throughout the dissertation, I frequently use words like "underrepresented," "marginalized," "racialized," or "minoritized" to acknowledge the history of social processes that have disenfranchised People of Color. For example, my use of minoritized instead of "minority" draws from higher education scholar Shaun R. Harper's (2012) use of the term:

> To signify the social construction of underrepresentation and subordination in U.S. social institutions, including colleges and universities. Persons are not born into a minority status . . . they are rendered minorities in particular situations and institutional environments that sustain an overrepresentation of Whiteness. (p. 9)

Educational anthropologist Teresa L. McCarty (2002) also noted "'minority' is stigmatizing and often numerically inaccurate. . . . 'Minoritized' more accurately conveys the power relations and processes by which certain groups are socially, economically and politically marginalized within the larger society" (p. xv). Racialized refers to the social process through which "*the extension of racial meaning* [is assigned] *to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice, or group* [emphasis in original]" (Omi & Winant, 2015, p. 111). Racialized is similar to minoritized in that "persons are not born into a [racial] minority status . . . they are rendered [racialized] minorities" (Harper, 2012, p. 9). The substantive distinction between minority and minoritized or racial and racialized is that the grammatical usage of the words' past-participle verb forms, in lieu of their more commonly used nominal and adjectival forms (i.e., minority and racial), allows this dissertation a rhetorical means to connote both the power and humanity that shape the conditions of Students of Color. In other words, the humanity of marginalized student groups is systematically dismissed and erased *by* other human beings (i.e., peers, faculty, staff, and administration). I find it imperative then to intentionally use language that centers these histories of human interaction to remind the higher education community that *we*, as agentive beings, ultimately possess the tools needed to effectively remedy the conditions that continue to disenfranchise marginalized student populations.

Lastly, central to this dissertation's inquiry is an interest in making sense of a campus' present in relation to its past. I therefore draw upon higher education literature to operationalize

these periods of time within this study. Hereinafter, I use the term *campus culture* to make sense of the patterned behaviors, values, and events of an institution's past (Kuh & Hall, 1993). The term *campus racial climate* (or simply "climate") is used to characterize students' contemporary experiences with racism at their respective institution (Museus et al., 2015). In Chapter 2, the dissertation's detailed discussion of relevant empirical literature and theoretical underpinnings, I provide further definition of these terms and the ways I use them throughout the design, collection, and analysis of this study; however, here, it remains important to note both the past and present (or culture and climate) are dynamic and mutually related concepts. The past shapes our present, and our understandings of the past are informed by our experiencing of the present. Moreover, within the context of higher education, campus culture and climate are harmonious yet relative entities. For example, Alumni of Color could more favorably perceive the contemporary campus experience of Students of Color because current enrollment demographics may have exponentially increased its percentage of racially diverse students since the alumni's time on campus. As such, operationalizing culture from climate and the past from the present is an inherently intricate intellectual exercise. Nonetheless, my effort to tease apart these concepts is done to highlight the area of inquiry that can materialize the scholarly community's commitment to social justice and change within the racialized landscape of higher education.

My commitment to justly represent the experiences of the study's undergraduate participants is also evident in my style and approach to writing. This commitment is apparent in my decision to capitalize racial, ethnic, and identity groups. This decision, however, did not come without my own journey of resistance and growth in thought. Over the course of the study, I grappled with how scholars have increasingly chosen to capitalize traditionally noncapitalized words, for example "Students of Color," as a form of linguistic empowerment (Harris, 2017) and

have chosen not to capitalize "white" to "reject the grammatical representation of power capitalization brings to the term *white*" (Pérez Huber, 2010, p. 93). I originally believed this counterhegemonic approach to capitalization led to more questions than answers for readers. I thus chose to only capitalize racial and ethnic groups like "Black," "Asian," and "White" and not capitalize words like "students of color" or "communities of color"; however, with further gestation, I began to acknowledge the linguistic significance in capitalizing identity groups like Students of Color. While reading a supplemental style guide for bias-free writing created by the *Journal for College Student Development*, I experienced a moment of revelation that convinced me why I should capitalize collective identities like "Women of Color" for example:

> *Use parallel construction when discussing multiple groups.* This could mean avoiding the need to capitalize one racial group (e.g., White) but not capitalizing others (e.g., students of color). Instead, an acronym such as ALANA (referring to African, Latinx, Asian, and Native Americans) may be used instead of "People of Color." For example, "ALANA and White students" avoids privileging White in capitalization. (Liddell, 2018, p. 2)

The grammatical logic of parallel constructions made me consider the rhetorical equity at stake when I chose to capitalize "White" but not "students of color." Through this bias-free approach to writing, I now aim to center the humanity and agency of Communities of Color and disrupt the everyday forms of racism that preserve the power, status, and privilege of Whiteness through academic writing.

My final commitment resides in my intention to write in a qualitative ethnographic tradition that privileges storytelling as a means of meaning making and knowledge production. Throughout the remaining chapters, I present a number of vignettes, or brief descriptive and telling moments, to root readers within the intuitional context and setting of participants'

everyday experiences with online and on-campus racisms. With these vignettes, I draw upon the storytelling traditions of critical race methodology (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) as a rhetorical approach to challenge the "master narrative" of academic scholarship that narrowly defines racially minoritized students and Communities of Color. A master narrative "essentializes and wipes out the complexities and richness of a group's cultural life" (Montecinos, 1995, p. 293). Moreover, as critical race scholars of education Daniel G. Solórzano and Tara J. Yosso (2002) noted, these narratives maneuver intersectionally and privilege "Whites, men, the middle and/or upper class, and heterosexuals by naming these social locations as natural or normative points of reference" (p. 28). As such, these narratives prioritize cultural deficit approaches to understand the educational attainment of Students of Color. I use vignettes then as a counter-storytelling method—"a tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 32). Via this critical approach, I aim to interrogate the majoritarian narrative about racial diversity within higher education as one that, by design, serves the interest of "all" but ultimately, in practice, as this dissertation's findings demonstrate, underserves Students of Color and preserves White interests.

Layout of the Dissertation

The remaining chapters of the dissertation describe in greater detail the conceptual framing, methodology, findings, and implications of the proposed study. In Chapter 2, titled "Conceptualizing a Framework to Study a Campus' Past, Present, and Undergraduate Experiences With Online and On-Campus Racisms," I begin with an empirical review of higher education literature related to campus racial climate, outlining in detail how this body of work informs the design and framing of the dissertation's modes of data collection and analysis. I end this review of the literature by highlighting critical, conceptual calls to action related to the study

of race and racism within higher education. In particular, I describe Shaun Harper's (2012) desire to name racism and Christine Stanley's (2007) discussion of the master narrative to motivate this dissertation's use of qualitative methods to explore racism within the undergraduate student experience. In Chapter 2, I then move to outlining the theory of racial formation (Omi & Winant, 2015) and critical race theory in education (Ladson Billings & Tate, 1995) as the primary schools of thought guiding the study's understanding of race and racism as social phenomena. I end my discussion of theory by highlighting campus culture (Kuh & Hall, 1993) as an institutional lens to make sense of race and racism's manifestations within the postsecondary education contexts. I conclude by naming racial microaggressions (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015a; Solórzano, 1998) as a framework to understand the everyday campus experiences of Students of Color.

Chapter 3, titled "A Qualitative Phenomenology of Online and On-Campus Racisms," outlines my methodological approach to designing a qualitative phenomenological study of campus racial climate. I begin by articulating the reasons for a phenomenological design and summarize the study's sequencing of qualitative methods—video-elicited focus groups, semi-structured walking interviews, ethnographic observations, textual analysis, and document collection—and recruitment and selection of the study's research participants. I then detail each individual method, highlighting its merits and relationship to other methods, before describing my approach to data analysis. I conclude with a summary of my researcher positionality, highlighting the ways in which my assumptions and values as a researcher influenced my approach to methodology and shaped my relationship with my participants and the data.

Chapter 4, titled "Undergraduate Experiences With a Campus' Racial Past and Present," is the first of two findings chapters. This chapter specifically draws upon data from video-elicited focus groups, textual analysis, and document collection to understand how participants

make sense of their contemporary experience with the racial climate in relation to their perceptions about their institution's historical legacies of racism. I begin the chapter with a vignette to situate the methodological context for readers, describing the ways in which participants and the researcher interacted during focus groups. I then summarize the makeup of each focus group and then turn to presenting excerpts of the data to illustrate a portion of the study's findings.

Chapter 5, titled "Student of Color Online and On-Campus Experiences With Racism," the final findings chapter, primarily draws upon data from data collection with focal participants including semi-structured walking interviews, ethnographic observations of participant life on campus, and document collection to understand the relationship between Student of Color on-campus and online experiences with racism. I begin the chapter with a vignette to situate the methodological context for readers, describing the ways in which focal participants and the researcher interacted. I then summarize the personality and experiences of each focal participant via brief, narrative portraits and then turn to presenting excerpts of the data to illustrate a portion of the study's findings.

I conclude the dissertation with Chapter 6, titled "Diversity, Institutional Realities, and Their Effects on the Racial Climate Experiences of Undergraduates of Color," which brings the study's findings back to explicitly answer its research questions. I describe limitations of the present study and then place my findings in direct conversation with existing literature to articulate the significance of the study's conclusions. I conclude by outlining the study's implications for both higher education researchers and practitioners.

Chapter 2:

Conceptualizing a Framework to Study a Campus' Past, Present, and Undergraduate Experiences With Online and On-Campus Racisms

The present chapter outlines the empirical and theoretical bodies of literature this dissertation study draws upon to understand the relationship between an institution's racialized past and present and undergraduate Student of Color experiences with on-campus and online racisms. I begin by describing campus racial climate as the primary empirical body of higher education scholarship that informs the design of this study. This section specifically outlines the development of this field of study as one that now incorporates the experiences of multiple racially minoritized populations as well as racialized encounters occurring within the online domain. This chapter then reviews meta-syntheses that identify concerning trends within the field of higher education's study of race and racism. I identify and explain these trends in detail as further motivation for the critical framing of this dissertation's inquiry into the campus racial climate experiences of undergraduate students. I conclude this chapter by outlining the theories I use to make sense of how racism operates within the undergraduate setting. I name the theory of racial formation (Omi & Winant, 2015) as the primary lens that informs this study's understanding of race-based oppression in the United States. I then review the frameworks of campus culture (Kuh & Hall, 1993) and racial and visual microaggressions (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015a, 2015b) as concepts to operationalize the racialized past and present of UCLA as the study's research site. I end with a summative statement about how I explicitly use these concepts and theories throughout the design, collection, and analysis of this study.

Literature Review

In the 1990s, Sylvia Hurtado (1992) and colleagues (1998, 1999) created a framework to understand climate as a multidimensional construct encompassing campus community members' attitudes, perceptions, behaviors, and expectations with regard to issues of race, ethnicity, and diversity. More specifically, the campus racial climate framework (CRC) provides a lens to understand how external and internal forces shape an institution's racial climate. Government initiatives (e.g., state affirmative action policies) and sociohistorical forces (e.g., the Black Lives Matter movement) are external domains that shape the following institutional components of a campus' climate: (a) historical legacy of exclusion or inclusion, (b) structural diversity, (c) psychological dimension, and (d) behavioral dimension. As the field's most comprehensive and well-established framework for understanding campus climate, CRC has shaped the existing body of knowledge about racialized student groups and their differing perceptions about race and racism on campus. For example, White students not only view campus racial climate more positively but also view their racially minoritized peers' experiences in ways that contrast with the lived experiences of Students of Color (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Hurtado, 1992; Hurtado et al., 2012; Rankin & Reason, 2005). Additionally, White students' views about race and diversity often align with what scholars call colorblind frames of race relations—an assumption of beliefs that race does and/or should not play a role in understanding U.S. social relations. In contrast, Students of Color often believe the significance of race is a result of unequal power relations between racialized groups in the United States (Warikoo, 2016; Warikoo & de Novais, 2015).

Over time, the field of CRC has responded to critiques that have challenged traditional approaches to studying race and racism in higher education. Historically, the field has situated its study of campus race relations along a Black and White binary (Chang, 1993; Gee, 1999; Wu,

1995); however, researchers have called for scholarship to account for the range of racialized campus experiences that complicate and problematize said binary (Harper & Hurtado, 2007). For example, scholars have documented the ways in which Asian, Asian American, and Pacific Islander students are indeed a racialized demographic that has been rendered invisible within higher education research (Chou & Feagin, 2008; Museus, 2009; Teranishi, 2010). Scholars have also noted the unique racialized experiences of Latinx students that often occur along the intersections of immigration status, language, phenotype, ethnicity, and accent (Yosso, 2005; Yosso et al., 2004). Lastly, scholars of Indigenous studies in education question how postsecondary institutions operate as sites of colonialism and imperialism and continue to oppress Native populations (Brayboy, 2005; Castagno & Lee, 2007; Covarrubias & Windchief, 2009; Waterman, 2019).

Although the field of campus racial climate has broadened its understanding of how race and racism uniquely impact minoritized populations, few climate studies have used campus culture—the "collective, mutually shaping patterns of institutional history, mission, physical settings, norms, traditions, values, practices, beliefs, and assumptions which guide the behavior of individuals and groups in an institution of higher education" (Kuh & Hall, 1993, p. 2)—as a concept to contextualize our understanding of contemporary racial climate experiences. The distinction I make here between campus climate and campus culture, which I further clarify in the Theoretical Framework section of this chapter, is that climate refers to the "current perceptions, attitudes, and expectations that define the institution and its members" (Bauer, 1998, p. 2) while culture refers to an amalgamation of an institution's values and patterns that have developed over time. Campus culture is indeed a developing product of patterns across an institution's past behaviors, values, and events whereas climate refers to how stakeholders

experience a collegiate setting within the contemporary moment of their respective campus experience. I acknowledge that disentangling the past from the present (i.e., culture from climate) is a challenging intellectual exercise: These concepts are too mutually dependent for either to be exclusively divorced from the other. That said, I broach this conceptualization of culture and climate as distinct demarcations of time to consider the kinds of scholarly inquiries that can aid in gauging whether contemporary efforts for racial diversity are actualizing material campus change and remedying historical legacies of racism.

Fanny P. Yeung and Marc P. Johnston (2014), for example, sought to measure the impact of an unplanned, racially biased, viral video on student perceptions of campus climate and culture. To measure the video's impact, Yeung and Johnston created pre- and post-groups based upon the time survey respondents at a public, highly selective research institution completed the Diverse Learning Environments Survey (DLE).[3] Respondents who submitted the survey before the video's release were characterized as the pre-incident group, and respondents who completed the survey the day of or after the video's release were characterized as the post-incident group.

Although Yeung and Johnston's (2014) approach to studying perceptions of campus climate and culture was appropriate given the unplanned nature of the racial incident, two limitations to their study are worth noting. First, Yeung and Johnston acknowledged concepts of campus climate and culture are often conflated and used interchangeably (Museus et al., 2015); however, despite their efforts to distinguish the terms, they noted the DLE is not designed to measure campus culture as a concept. Future research designs should employ conceptual frameworks and methodologies that intentionally operationalize campus climate and culture as

[3] The DLE captures student perceptions regarding institutional climates, perceptions about campus practices, and student learning outcomes. The DLE is available for use by 2- and 4-year institutions and is administered by UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute.

distinct concepts. Second, Yeung and Johnston (2014) asserted the likelihood that "all respondents post incident were aware of the campus incident" (p. 255), yet they provided no evidence to suggest all or even a majority of post-incident respondents were aware of the racially biased incident prior to completing the survey. Additionally, they reported there was "not a spike in survey respondents immediately after the incident" (Yeung & Johnston, 2014, p. 255), which further challenges their original assumption that the post-incident respondents were aware of and impassioned by the racially biased, viral video to complete the DLE survey. These limitations leave room to question the extent to which their study, although novel in its approach, could study students' perceptions of the relationship between campus culture and climate; therefore, more research needs to intentionally theorize and methodologically operationalize campus climate and culture as distinct concepts. Research on the nuances between these concepts and experiences for institutional stakeholders will lead to more robust understandings about institutional racial politics. This dissertation study aims to examine this relationship as an important topic for administrators and practitioners to better understand how an institution's campus culture has changed over time to adequately address issues of race and racism within the postsecondary student experience.

An additional area of importance in campus racial climate research is the manifestations of the campus climate experience within the online realm. Traditionally, the field of campus racial climate research has examined the student experience within the physical locale of campus. For example, research has indicated campus racial and ethnic diversity has educational and civic benefits for both Students of Color and White students (Gurin et al., 2002; Jayakumar, 2008). Research also has demonstrated how climate negatively affects degree completion for Students of Color, particularly in STEM fields (Johnson, 2012).

Exclusively framing campus as a physical phenomenon limits the field's understanding of climate in that many aspects of the collegiate experience now exist in the digital world (Rowan-Kenyon et al., 2016). For instance, Brendesha M. Tynes and colleagues (2013) concluded Black students experienced more online racial discrimination and subsequently had more negative views about the campus racial climate than their White counterparts. Additionally, Kevin J. Gin and colleagues (2017) concluded Students of Color encountered racial hostility online, which produced racial battle fatigue and cultural paranoia. These studies positioning climate as an online phenomenon are consistent with findings that characterize how undergraduate students perceive campus racial climate differently along racial lines (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Rankin & Reason, 2005). This growing body of literature on students' racialized experiences online has enhanced higher education's understating of campus racial climate; however, this literature has not adequately addressed the similarities and differences between online and on-campus experiences with racial climate. With an understanding of this relationship, the field will have a more nuanced knowledge base to inform higher education administrators' and practitioners' efforts to lessen the impact of racism on students' collegiate experiences.

Meta-Synthesis of Higher Education's Study of Race and Racism

I now identify three themes characterizing the ways in which researchers conduct and conceptualize the study of race and racism within the field of higher education. These themes—(a) need for qualitative inquiry (Harper & Hurtado, 2007), (b) racial difference without naming "racism" (Harper, 2012), and (c) Whites as the comparative standard in research (Stanley, 2007)—draw from both formal and informal syntheses of the literature and challenge the field's epistemological and methodological assumptions about academic research. Throughout this

section, I demonstrate how these themes perpetuate what Christine Stanley (2007) called the master narrative—a dominant and often unquestioned script that defines what is valued as scholarship and who can create scholarship. I end this discussion by situating this dissertation as an intentional effort to challenge these trends within higher education research.

I use Shaun Harper and Sylvia Hurtado's (2007) "Nine Themes in Campus Racial Climates and Implications for Institutional Transformation" to understand the first trend within the field: the need for qualitative inquiry. For this paper, Harper and Hurtado conducted a 15-year synthesis of campus racial climate research and a multisite qualitative study informed by their synthesis. From their qualitative study, they found students have had few, if any, opportunities to discuss their racialized experiences on campus: "Student participants (Whites and racial/ethnic minorities alike) indicated that it [their study] was the first time any institutional effort was made to inquire about the qualitative realities of their racialized experiences" (Harper & Hurtado, 2007, p. 19). They also found Students of Color and White students believed their institutions to be negligent in efforts to address racial awareness and understanding. Although Harper and Hurtado do not explicitly draw a connection between these two findings, readers can suspect they are related: Student beliefs of institutional negligence may be indirectly influenced by the absence of formal and informal spaces designed for them to qualitatively reflect on and discuss their experiences with race and racism. Additionally, the authors indicated 71% of the journal articles they reviewed used solely quantitative methods in their approach to researching campus racial climate. Stanley (2007) described this methodological predilection for quantitative paradigms as a master narrative of education research. I discuss this concept in greater detail in the following sections; however, I introduce it here to question how the field's underuse of qualitative methods may preserve the existing conditions of campus racial climates across the

nation and inhibit students from receiving the full benefits of educational diversity (Hurtado et al., 2012).

I use another synthesis from Harper (2012) to demonstrate the second trend in the field: racial difference without naming racism. In his synthesis of 255 articles from seven peer-reviewed academic journals that publish empirical research on postsecondary education, Harper noted the following "semantic substitutes" as frequently used words to characterize racial differences across collegiate settings: "alienating," "hostile," "marginalizing," "chilly," "harmful," "isolating," "unfriendly," "negative," "antagonistic," "unwelcoming," "prejudicial," "discriminatory," "exclusionary," and "unsupportive" (p. 20). Harper (2012) argued, through this seemingly benign and unintentional failure to name racism, academic researchers uphold the ideologies that allow systemic racial disparities to persist:

> In order to get beyond persistent racial disparities and to realize the vision for a version of American higher education that is truly equitable and inclusive, we must first take account of racism and its harmful effects on people in postsecondary contexts. (p. 22)

Harper's article brings into question how an intentional naming of racism may change not only the ways in which we understand and conduct research related to racial difference in higher education but also the extent to which oppressed communities experience racism in hegemonic ways (Museus et al., 2015).

Lastly, I discuss Stanley's (2007) "When Counter Narratives Meet Master Narratives in the Journal Editorial-Review Process" to highlight the third trend in the field: Whites as the comparative standard in research. In this article, Stanley (2007) problematized the editorial-review process in academic publishing as a function of the master narrative, which she defined as "mental models of how voices of the dominant culture have justified systems and rules in

educational research, in such a way that makes these models 'the standard'" (p. 15). Specifically, she questioned the practice of using Whites as the comparative group for understanding the experiences of People of Color. This approach to research, Stanley argued, perpetuates an academic tradition that frames Whites as good and normative and People of Color as less than and dependent on Whiteness. Within the field of higher education, this comparative approach to campus racial climate has traditionally abstained from naming racism as a plausible explanation for racially marginalized experiences and racial difference in higher education (Harper, 2012); rather, this comparative framing of racialized minority experiences in relation to White experiences reifies the status quo and preserves the interests of the dominant group.

In response to these trends, this dissertation study not only seeks to challenge but also name racism as an everyday reality of today's colleges and universities. In particular, I draw upon Mica Pollock's discussion of race work in education. In *Colormute* (2005), Pollock described the phenomenon of race envisioned as the work and burden of People of Color; however, she urged educators to position Whites not as the comparative standard (Stanley, 2007) but as racialized subjects that benefit from racism. This dissertation draws from Pollock's perspective as its original motivation for the inclusion of White students was to remain consistent with the everyday reality of the campus racial climate experience: White students are often the perpetrators of racial violence on campus; therefore, if institutions are indeed invested in ameliorating their racial politics and experiences of community members, it is important to know how Whites also experience the campus racial climate, not as victims but as privileged, racialized beings. Additionally, as the forthcoming Theoretical Framework section details, I use an ensemble of critical theories from the fields of sociology and education to problematize student experiences and perceptions with campus racial climate and culture. This study frames

race, racism, and higher education as interdependent phenomena. As such, my inclusion of White participants is done to consider how Whites participate in the campus racial climate with the ultimate aim of centering the experiences of Students of Color as those disproportionately affected by racism within higher education.

Theoretical Framework

This section outlines my use of critical social theories to understand how race and racism influence the undergraduate racial climate experience. I begin by reviewing the theory of racial formation (Omi & Winant, 2015) to understand how race operates more broadly as a tool to organize society. I then identify campus culture (Kuh & Hall, 1993) and racial and visual microaggressions (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015a, 2015b) as two distinct lenses to make sense of the racialized past and present within the higher education context. I conclude with an articulation of how these theories go on to inform the study's methodological design.

Theory of Racial Formation

The theory of racial formation, developed by sociologists Michael Omi and Howard Winant (2015), offers this dissertation study a lens to understand the complexity of race and racism as sociohistorical phenomena. Omi and Winant (2015) defined this theory as "*the sociohistorical process by which racial identities are created, lived out, transformed, and destroyed* [emphasis in original]" (p. 109). In other words, race and racism change and take on different meanings based upon social processes related to specific geographical and historical moments in time. For the purposes of this dissertation, this theory provides a language to comprehend how undergraduate students make sense of the ways race and racism operate on their campus. This framework also provides reasoning for why researchers should examine

issues of race and racism as unique and complex phenomena of an individual campus climate rather than as simplified and prescriptive outcomes of today's universities and colleges.

To begin, I use Omi and Winant's (2015) definitions of race and racialization as a foundation to understand the larger theory. "Race," as Omi and Winant (2015) defined it, "is a concept, a representation or signification of identity that refers to different types of human bodies, to the perceived corporeal and phenotypic markers of difference and the meanings and social practices that are ascribed to these differences" (p. 111). More commonly, these representations of race refer to differences such as skin pigmentation. For example, darker, more melanated complexions are often associated with Black people, and lighter, less melanated complexions are associated with White people. However, these differences have also been attributed to other qualities such as intelligence (e.g., Black/Latinx are read as incompetent; White/Asian are read as competent [Hall, 1997]) and sexuality (e.g., Black men/Asian women are read as hypersexual and desirable; Black women/Asian men are read as less desirable [Collins, 2004]). This attribution of social meaning is a result of racialization, which is "*the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice, or group* [emphasis in original]*"* (Omi & Winant, 2015, p. 111). It is this process of racialization, Omi and Winant argued, that allows race to serve as an organizing principle in society. Borrowing from this logic, I conceptualize race not only as a corporeal distinction that suggests an individual's cultural and ethnic heritage but also as a social construct that has historically been used to organize communities within a U.S. social hierarchy.

In this dissertation, I also acknowledge that people, across and within racial groups, wrestle with and differ on how race operates within a larger body of social ideology. Omi and Winant (2015) presented one of the ways in which people make sense of race and racism. They

argued the rise of neoliberal policies—those policies that deregulate economic markets, prioritize private over public enterprise, and value individual needs over collective community-based needs (Harvey, 2005)—resulted in a narrow and colorblind interpretation of racism, spanning from the 1960s into the 2010s. Within this particular era, racism has been framed as an individual problem rather than a structural problem, with "racial prejudice or discrimination," in general, as the focal concern. For instance, in 2011, UCLA administration decided against disciplinary actions toward Alexandra Wallace, at the time a third-year White female undergraduate student infamously known for her racially insensitive YouTube video titled "Asians in the Library." The administration deemed the Student Code of Conduct was not violated (Mashhood, 2011), yet a number of key stakeholders (e.g., Chancellor Gene Block) made a point to distance themselves and UCLA from Wallace's "thoughtless and hurtful comments" (Block, 2011). Through this distancing, UCLA framed racism as a problem for Alexandra Wallace, the individual student, to resolve. Through this colorblind, individualized framing of racism, Omi and Winant argued, institutions such as UCLA preserve the racial status quo by centering phenotypic difference (i.e., marketing racial and ethnic diversity) yet simultaneously neglecting the everyday realities of campus racial climate for Students of Color (e.g., encountering racial microaggressions).

To account for these everyday realities, I employ a structural understanding of racism. Again, I borrow from Omi and Winant's (2015) understanding of how events, processes, and practices work to maintain social hierarchy and power. They write:

> While the problem of conceptual inflation and its political implications are evident in an era of colorblindness, the term "racism" is also subject to conceptual *de*flation [emphasis in original]. That is, what is considered racist is often defined very narrowly, in ways that

> obscure rather than reveal the pervasiveness and persistence of racial inequality in the United States. . . . A racial project can be defined as racist if it *creates or reproduces structures of domination based on racial significations and identities* [emphasis in original]. (Omi & Winant, 2015, p. 128)

Within a U.S. context, racism is the sociohistorical processes that have systematically disenfranchised Communities of Color and privileged the experiences, values, and ideals of White people (i.e., Whiteness). As mentioned previously, the way race operates and situates within this narrative of racism evolves in relation to history, time, and overall context (Omi & Winant, 2015); therefore, this conceptual framework, borrowing from Omi and Winant's theory of racial formation, provides a lens to understand the particularities of how different racialized student groups make sense of issues of race and racism at UCLA.

Campus Racial Climate

As a field, campus racial climate sets out to illuminate how students report their experiences with racialized dimensions of the campus climate. A large proportion of this body of research has sought to understand how campus climates have negatively impacted Students of Color and influenced negative outcomes (e.g., sense of belonging or persistence and degree completion; Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Locks et al., 2008; Strayhorn, 2012). Conceptually, campus racial climate has been defined in a number of ways (Bauer, 1998; Hurtado et al., 1999; Solórzano et al., 2000), but a vast majority of racial climate research draws upon Hurtado and colleagues' (1998, 1999) framing of climate as a multidimensional construct encompassing campus community members' attitudes, perceptions, behaviors, and expectations with regard to issues of race, ethnicity, and diversity. In particular, this framing constitutes factors such as the structural diversity of college campuses, psychological dimensions of the climate, behavioral

dimensions of the climate, and history of inclusion or exclusion of various racial groups at postsecondary institutions. However, when attempting to measure the effectiveness of racial inclusion efforts across colleges and universities, the campus racial climate framework is limited in that the concepts of past and present are interrelated within the framework's conception of the internal dimensions of climate. Within this study, I therefore conceptually distinguish between campus climate and culture as distinct lenses to make sense of the racialized present and past of an institution.

Scholars have noted, although the concepts of campus racial climate and culture are often conflated (Museus et al., 2015), these concepts indeed reflect distinct conceptual phenomena (Bauer, 1998). Sam Museus and colleagues (2015) noted this distinction in their synthesis on the study of race and racism within higher education:

> Some authors have asserted that campus climate has to do with *current* perceptions, beliefs, and perspectives that exist within college campus environments, while the concept of campus culture refers to the *deeply embedded* [emphasis in original] cultural values, beliefs, attitudes, perspectives, and assumptions that permeate and shape behavior at postsecondary institutions. (p. 31)

Additionally, climate is considered the more malleable of the two phenomena. This is to say, climate experiences can be easily influenced or changed by institutional efforts to immediately respond to issues of race and racism or the entering and leaving of student cohorts. In contrast, culture is woven into the institutional fabric of postsecondary campuses (Bauer, 1998), foregrounding how past legacies and practices have worked to shape the institutional practices around race and racism. For these reasons, scholars have argued culture must be taken into

consideration if institutions are serious in their long-term efforts to effectively transform their campuses into more equitable spaces (Museus et al., 2012).

Campus Culture

I draw upon George D. Kuh and Jenness E. Hall's (1993) conceptualization of campus culture from a student affairs perspective. My primary reference to these scholars' use of the term is that they acknowledge culture is the "confluence of institutional history, campus traditions, and the values and assumptions" (Kuh & Hall, 1993, p. 1) that shape the character of a given institution of higher education. As such, they defined campus culture as

> the collective, mutually shaping patterns of institutional history, mission, physical settings, norms, traditions, values, practices, beliefs and assumptions which guide the behavior of individuals and groups in an institution of higher education and which provide frames of reference for interpreting the meanings of events and actions on and off campus. (Kuh & Hall, 1993, p. 2)

Kuh and Hall also noted how culture is a mutually shaping phenomenon in that it influences campus community members and is also influenced and defined by community members. Because of this reciprocal relationship, campus cultures remain relatively stable over time. This is not to say the concept of campus culture is stagnant, for when individuals move in and out of the setting and interact with structural elements of the campus, change indeed does occur; however, I draw a limitation of this particular conception of culture to acknowledge its undertheorizing of race. This conception of culture serves well as an understanding of an amalgamation of an institution's past. Meaning the "mutually shaping patterns of institutional history, mission, physical settings, norms, traditions, values, practices, beliefs and assumptions" (Kuh & Hall, 1993, p. 2) of an institution serve as a historical reference of an institution's

character to further make sense of contemporary and present day climate experiences. I now look to critical race theory in education to understand how race and racism are inextricably linked within a campus' culture despite its subtle changes over time.

Critical Race Theory in Education and Racial Microaggressions

This dissertation study employs critical race theory (CRT) in education, specifically the framework of racial microaggressions, to make sense of undergraduate student understandings of race and racism. In particular, this framework offers: (a) a lens to prioritize the inextricable link between racism and education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) (b) a lens to understand and center the everyday experiences of Students of Color on historically or predominantly White campuses (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015a), and (c) a lens to account for the intersectional nature between race and other identity politics (e.g., gender, sexuality, and class; Solórzano, 1998). In this section, I discuss these aspects in detail and end with a discussion on how CRT in education fits within the larger conceptual framework of this study.

At its broadest scope, CRT in education allows researchers to examine the relationship between race and education. This theory specifically posits racism is a deeply entrenched component of U.S. society and, therefore, inextricably connected to the U.S. education system (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Since its origins in the mid-1990s, CRT in education has provided theoretical, pedagogical, and methodological contributions to the field of education. For purposes of this dissertation, I use CRT as a foundational lens to investigate issues of race and racism at today's institution of higher learning.

In particular, I employ the framework of racial microaggressions to situate CRT within the everyday experiences of undergraduate Students of Color. Pérez Huber and Solórzano (2015a) provided the following definition:

> Racial microaggressions are a form of systemic, everyday racism used to keep those at the racial margins in their place. They are: (1) verbal and non-verbal assaults directed toward People of Color, often carried out in subtle, automatic or unconscious forms; (2) layered assaults, based on race and its intersections with gender, class, sexuality, language, immigration status, phenotype, accent, or surname; and (3) cumulative assaults that take a psychological, physiological, and academic toll on People of Color. . . . They are the everyday reflections of larger racist structures and ideological beliefs that impact People of Color's lives. (p. 6)

Racial microaggressions from a critical race perspective differ from microaggressions work in social psychology (Sue et al., 2007) in that racial microaggressions in CRT's epistemological orientation focuses solely on the experiences of People of Color. Derald Wing Sue and colleagues (2007) investigated not only the targeted experiences of People of Color but also the subconscious behavior of perpetrators (i.e., White people): Their actions are done "with only the best intentions" (p. 277) and often without conscious awareness that their actions perpetuate dominant narratives about race relations in the United States.

In contrast, a critical race perspective uses the framework of racial microaggressions to highlight how pervasive White supremacist ideologies are within the everyday workings of higher education institutions. The Moreno Report (Moreno et al., 2013), released by an independent review team appointed to investigate issues of bias, discrimination, and intolerance among faculty, highlighted examples of racial microaggressions targeting Faculty of Color at UCLA:

> In one account from a senior faculty member, an African-American full professor from an Ivy League institution was rejected for a position at UCLA primarily on the basis of a

> plagiarism accusation involving a single citation in a 300-page manuscript. While the senior faculty member disputed the merit of the plagiarism accusation, he was most upset by the "racist" tenor of the discussion about the candidate, which implied that the candidate was incompetent, a shyster, and a hustler. (p. 15)

This incident constitutes a racial microaggression because it implicitly suggests Faculty of Color do not belong in esteemed positions at majority White institutions such as UCLA. The characterization of the candidate as "incompetent" and "a hustler" align with historically dominant social narratives that have casted Black and Brown communities as intellectually inferior and amoral. A critical race approach would also be interested in knowing how microaggressions, such as the aforementioned, affect the performance and well-being of Faculty of Color. In a similar vein, I use the framework of racial microaggressions to understand how Students of Color experience the racial campus climate at UCLA.

Another merit this critical race approach to racial microaggressions affords this study is its capacity to analyze everyday forms of oppression from an intersectional perspective. As stated earlier, racial microaggressions are "layered assaults, based on race and its *intersections with gender, class, sexuality, language, immigration status, phenotype, accent, or surname* [emphasis added]" (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015a, p. 6). Through an intersectional approach, the framework of racial microaggressions allows for a more nuanced understanding of the educational experiences of Students of Color. Daniel Solórzano (1998) described how Chicana/o Ford Fellows expressed similar frustrations about their graduate student experience in predominantly White programs. For example, they often felt out of place and misjudged by their advisors and other faculty members, yet the stories of Chicana Fellows further detail this narrative by describing experiences of sexism. One fellow recounted the sense of alienation she

felt after she revealed her pregnancy to colleagues and faculty advisors. Another noted the sexist comments and behavior she encountered at conferences where she was the only Woman of Color. This intersectional approach to racial microaggressions broadens this study's understanding of not only how pervasive and rooted racism is in education settings but also how issues of identity politics are highly interconnected and dependent on one another. This framework complements the design of this dissertation study as I recruited participants along the gender spectrum (i.e., female, male, and gender nonconforming) who may discuss gender and sexuality issues as interdependent aspects of the campus racial climate.

Lastly, to understand the online and visual manifestations within higher education, I also drew upon Pérez Huber and Solórzano's (2015b) concept of visual racial microaggressions. Visual microaggressions are similar to the CRT definition of racial microaggressions, but they are different in that they "can emerge in various mediums such as textbooks, children's books, advertisements, film and television, dance and theater performance, and public signage and statuary" (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2005b, p. 225). With this definition, it is theoretically plausible to make sense of everyday components of the student online experience—scrolling down their Facebook newsfeed, responding to a funny meme, or commenting on a friend's post—as a visual form of everyday racism.

In summary, this chapter offers a framework to understand how race and racism shape the undergraduate collegiate experience within a neoliberal moment in time. I draw from a critical school of thought to conceptualize how racialized power dynamics shape the experiences of Students of Color. The lenses of campus culture and racial microaggressions allow the study to consider what the past of UCLA, as the study's research site, looks like via-a-vis students' contemporary experiences. In Chapter 3, the study's methodology chapter, I further explain how

I operationalized the racialized past and present within the modes of collection, analysis, and reporting of qualitative data. I specifically used the racial and visual microaggressions framework to center the study's data collection around the YouTube video "Asians in the Library" as an elicitation device and example artifact of UCLA campus culture and undergraduate social media behavior. Thereafter, I employed semi-structured walking interviews and ethnographic observations to garner an in-depth examination of participants' on-campus and online experiences. I return to this chapter's conceptual framing of race and racism in higher education in the dissertation's concluding chapter to discuss the significance of the study's findings and implications for research and practice.

Chapter 3:

A Qualitative Phenomenology of Online and On-Campus Racisms

Thus far, I have articulated a rationale for why further inquiry into undergraduate student campus racial climate experiences and perceptions is warranted. I draw specifically upon campus culture (Kuh & Hall, 1993), visual and racial microaggressions (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015a, 2015b; Solórzano, 1998), and the theory of racial formation (Omi & Winant, 2015) to conceptualize the relationship between race, racism, and higher education and answer the following research questions:

1. How do undergraduate students' contemporary campus racial climate experiences relate to their perceptions about their institution's historical legacies of racism?
2. What is the relationship between the online and on-campus racisms experienced by undergraduate Students of Color?

The current chapter highlights the methodological design of this dissertation and choices I made to adequately understand the racialized nature of undergraduate climate experiences.

I begin by providing a rationale for this dissertation's use of a phenomenological approach to methodology (Moustakas, 1994) to study the undergraduate campus racial climate experience within the unique context of the research site—the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). What follows is a discussion of participant recruitment strategies and demographics as well as a description of the study's overall methodological structure, featuring textual analysis, video-elicited focus groups, semi-structured walking interviews, ethnographic observations of participant life on campus, and document collection of campus artifacts. I then present a discussion of my positionality as the researcher and a detailed description of my approach to qualitative data analysis. I end with a contextualizing discussion on how I have

chosen to report back and present the study's findings in the subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

Qualitative Phenomenological Design

This dissertation's primary purpose was to understand nuanced undergraduate experiences with campus racial climate. As such, I was keen to employ a methodology that allowed for the centering of student experience as the primary unit of analysis. Additionally, a methodology that prioritized context as a way of knowing was also ideal as the dissertation's conceptual framework (Omi & Winant, 2015; Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015a; Solórzano, 1998) values sociohistorical specificity as a means to understand how race and racism operate across institutions of higher education. I therefore employed a qualitative phenomenological design (Moustakas, 1994) to grasp the qualities of students' "everyday life and social action" (Schram, 2003, p. 71) and comprehensively understand the nature of their shared experience with the climate and culture of on-campus and online racisms at UCLA. The study used textual analysis, focus groups, walking interviews, ethnographic observations, and document collection (all discussed in detail in forthcoming sections) as a methodological ensemble to robustly explore how UCLA undergraduate students make sense of and experience issues of race and racism in on-campus and online contexts.

To briefly summarize, data collection began with textual analysis of racialized campus events and two focus groups, informed by video elicitation methods (Harper, 2002; Kelly & Kortegast, 2018), to understand the racial climate and culture of UCLA from a broad purview. Three participants were then chosen as focal participants to complete semi-structured walking interviews and ethnographic observations to understand how preliminary themes from focus groups manifested within the everyday and nuanced experiences of individual students. Lastly,

documents, such as the campus' official newsletter (*Daily Bruin*), were collected to further contextualize and triangulate data gathered across focus groups, interviews, and observations. This methodological arrangement offered a rich dataset to understand the undergraduate student experience with the campus racial climate at UCLA as a unique setting. Additionally, the data and their subsequent analysis provide insight and implications for practitioners' and administrators' efforts to better address students' experiences with racism in higher education.

Research Site

Central to this study's conceptual framework is the importance of sociohistorical specificity to make sense of race and racism via qualitative methods (Nespor, 2000; Omi & Winant, 2015; Walford, 2005). I therefore challenge the conventional methodological practice of research site anonymity to preserve the histories of racism at UCLA as central to my analysis; however, identifying information of all participants (discussed under the proceeding heading) remain confidential.

UCLA is a large, Research 1 institution located on the Western coast of the United States. Annually, it receives more applicants for undergraduate admissions than most institutions of higher education in the United States (Vazquez, 2016). Demographically, as of Fall 2017, its undergraduate population consisted of 5.2% Black, 0.5% American Indian/Alaska Native, 31.6% Asian/Pacific Islander, 21.3% Hispanic, 26.1% White, 3.5% domestic, race/ethnicity unknown, and 11.8% international students (UCLA Undergraduate Admission, n.d.). For the purposes of this dissertation's interests, UCLA is an ideal research site because of the number of racial incidents reported in recent history.

To ensure I accurately understood UCLA's history and campus culture, I conducted a textual analysis of racialized events in recent years (see Table 1). Textual analysis offered a tool

to make sense of UCLA's past by identifying patterns in the language and meanings of cultural artifacts (Brennen, 2013). In conducting this analysis, I wanted to ensure I included events related to my participants' contemporary experiences and also consistent with contemporary theories about race and racism, such as the theory of racial formation (Omi & Winant, 2015). Therefore, I began the timeline no earlier than 2006—the academic year prior to Gene Block's appointment as UCLA chancellor—to guarantee my understanding of UCLA's campus culture fell within the current administration's tenure at UCLA, and I incorporated events that occurred prior to my participants' entry into UCLA, which was no earlier than Fall 2014.

Table 1

Racialized Incidents at UCLA Between 2011-2017

Event Name	Year	Event Summary
"Asians in the Library"	2011	Former undergraduate released a racist and viral YouTube video targeting Asian students
UCLA holistic review	2012	Law professor questioned the racial implications of UCLA's admissions
"Black Male Bruins"	2013	Black male undergraduates questioned the low number of enrolled Black males via a viral YouTube video
The Moreno Report	2013	External report characterized racial discrimination within UCLA faculty ranks
Fliers to Asian American Studies Center	2014	Asian American Studies Center received racist and sexist flyers
Passing of the UCLA diversity requirement	2015	Faculty voted to official pass a one-course diversity requirement for undergraduate students
The Kanye Western Party	2015	Fraternity and sorority co-hosted a blackface themed party
USAC President controversy	2017	Photo of the student body president throwing a gang sign circulated via social media

I then searched the *Daily Bruin* for (a) existing timelines related to race at UCLA, (b) postings with keywords such as "race" and "racism" as well as other proxies such as "diversity, equity, and inclusion," and (c) events I already knew to be well-known, publicized racist events at UCLA. This search yielded eight events between 2006 and 2017. I then closely reviewed

campus reporting from the *Daily Bruin* about these events and created one paragraph synopses that captured the major takeaways of each event and answered the following: What happened? Who was involved? How did community members respond? What was the institutional response? From this work, I gleaned that UCLA's campus culture regarding racism is by no means preventative: By and large, it is a reactionary culture with a particular emphasis on "saving face" or protecting the public image of UCLA as a brand by rhetorically distancing itself from the racialized events in question. Additionally, in many cases, UCLA abstained from formally sanctioning individual students or student groups for their actions. This reality of UCLA's campus culture was often evident in Gene Block's public responses to events. For example, in response to "Asians in the Library,"[4] which was a viral YouTube video in which a White, female undergraduate mocked Asian students in her rant about their "lack of manners" in the library, Block, in his own YouTube video response, shared that this student was describing a UCLA that was "not the university I know" (Block, 2011). In his response, Block failed to name the words "race," "racism," or "racist" and, instead, referred to Asians as a "particular ethnic group" (see Appendix A for full transcript).

In summary, the textual analysis of both on-campus and online racialized incidents served as a means to represent the "collective, mutually shaping patterns" (Kuh & Hall, 1993, p. 2) of UCLA's campus culture in recent years. Additionally, the UCLA undergraduate online presence was further solidified in Fall 2016 with the creation of the "UCLA Meme for Sick AF[5] Tweens" Facebook page, on which undergraduates post comedic memes lampooning various

[4] This particular event will be discussed in detail as the dissertation's primary representation of UCLA's campus culture under the Focus Groups section of this chapter.

[5] "AF" is a contemporary abbreviation for "as fuck"; therefore, the title of this Facebook page reads aloud as "UCLA Memes for Sick as Fuck Tweens."

aspects of their UCLA experience (e.g., finals week, dining hall culture, dorm life, UCLA Chancellor Gene Block). For these reasons, UCLA serves as an ideal site to investigate the relationship between campus climate and culture through and understanding of undergraduate on-campus and online experiences with racism.

Participant Recruitment

Upon receiving IRB approval, participant recruitment took place between March and April 2018. Originally, I employed purposive sampling strategies (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) to intake 16 to 20 participants as an optimal sample size to understand the undergraduate racial climate experience at UCLA. I first chose to tap into my network of UCLA colleagues (primarily other graduate students) to reach undergraduates from a range of identity and disciplinary backgrounds. Via email and Instagram, I asked my peers if they had access to five or more undergraduate students and if they would mind me making an in-person recruitment appearance before their students. This in-person approach to recruitment allowed students to see and hear me describe my study, ask clarifying questions, and ultimately decide if I, as a researcher, was worthy of their trust as a research participant. Overall, I made 12 in-person recruitment efforts to students across classes and undergraduate research initiatives in humanities and social sciences programs. In cases when an in-person appearance was not feasible, I forwarded the study's recruitment literature to other gatekeepers of interest (e.g., departmental student affairs officers, lab managers).

I was originally interested in participants enrolled as full-time UCLA undergraduate students who had been at UCLA for at least one full academic year. During recruitment, however, I realized my inclusion criterion—seeking participants who had been at UCLA for at least a full year—prevented interested transfer students from participating. To prevent having a

sample overly representative of non-transfer students, I redefined the study's inclusion criteria to allow for students who had been at UCLA for at least one full quarter. In total, I received emails expressing an interest to participate from 23 undergraduate students. Of those 23, 16 students met with me in person, and one student met with me via phone for a brief informational discussion, at which point I shared specific details about the study (e.g., expectations for participation) and gained verbal consent for study participation from students. Students also filled out a 1-page background information sheet (see Appendix B). These sheets provided me with relevant demographics related to the study (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, age, year in school) and also informed the final selection of participants.

After discussions with prospective participants, a Doodle poll was sent out to gauge availability for focus group days and times. Of the 17 students who received the poll, 16 students responded and received an email notification informing them of their respective focus group date and time. I originally intended to facilitate two focus groups comprised of 8 to 10 students each. However, based on student availabilities, seven students were scheduled to attend the focus group on Monday, April 16, and nine were scheduled to attend the focus group on Thursday, April 19. In total, 6 of the 7 scheduled students attended Monday's focus group, and 6 of the 9 scheduled students attended Thursday's focus group, totaling 12 student participants for focus groups.

Demographically, participating students comprised a robust diversity sample of the UCLA undergraduate student body. Students came from the following self-identified racial backgrounds: five Black, three Latino/as, one American Indian, one Other, and two White (see Table 2). Eight of the participants identified as women, two identified as men, and two participants self-identified with either a combination of "he" and "they" pronouns or no

pronouns at all. Participants also came from a range of years at UCLA: one second year, seven third years, two third-year transfers, and two fourth-year transfer students. Choices of major and minor study came from a range of humanities, social sciences, and STEM fields (e.g., psychology, art, neuroscience, and education studies). A majority of participants were born and raised in California, and only two participants identified as out-of-state students. All but one participant lived either on campus or in an off-campus apartment near UCLA. The average age of participants was 21.

Focus Groups

Focus groups afforded the study a data gathering strategy to generate rich qualitative data related to participants' experiences with the racial climate at UCLA. In particular, they allowed students to hear and respond to each other's perspectives to make further meaning about their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). To operationalize and represent the concept of campus culture (Kuh & Hall, 1993) within the data collection process, I designed focus groups to use one event from the textual analysis of UCLA racialized incidents as a visual-elicitation device (Kelly & Kortegast, 2018). This approach allowed for the methodological design to center a cultural artifact from UCLA's past as a representation of campus culture and trigger participants' subconscious memories in ways that are not feasible in a words-based, one-on-one interview setting (Harper, 2002). I chose the YouTube video "Asians in the Library," released in 2011 by Alexandra Wallace, as the visual-elicitation device because the video (a) received local and national attention for its racist commentary, (b) was released prior to participants' entry into UCLA, and (c) represented a contemporary means through which today's undergraduate students experience racism across online platforms. As such, "Asians in the Library" and the administrative response to it served as a representative slice of UCLA campus culture.

Table 2

Focus Group Participant Demographics

Pseudonym	Race/Ethnicity	Pronouns	Year	Major/Minor	Age	Home City/State	Housing (for Academic Year)
Aïcha	Black/Guinean American	She, Her, Hers	3rd year transfer	Gender Studies Music Industry	23	New York/NY	Residence hall
Aziza	Black/African American	She, Her, Hers	3rd year	African American Studies Education	20	Inglewood/ CA	Residence hall
Christian	Other/Mexican	N/A	3rd year	Neuroscience Music Industry	21	Igo/CA	Off-campus apartment
Dianne*[6]	Black/Black and Mexican	She, Her, Hers	3rd year	Psychology and Art	20	San Jose/CA	Off-campus apartment
Gabriel	Latinx/Mexican	He, Him, His; They, Them, Their(s)	3rd year	Human Biology & Society and Chicanx Studies	21	Baja California/ México	Residence hall
Josephine	White/Israeli	She, Her, Hers	3rd year transfer	Undeclared Undeclared	19	Los Angeles/CA	Residence Hall
Julia	White/European White	She, Her, Hers	3rd year	Psychology and Sociology	21	Evanston/IL	Off-campus apartment
Michelle	Black/African American and German	She, Her, Hers	3rd year	Sociology/Education and Civic Engagement	20	Southern California	Off-campus apartment
Noah*	Latino/Mexican American	He, Him, His	3rd year	Economics/Education Studies	20	Los Angeles/CA	Residence hall
Randy	Black/American	He, Him, His	4th year transfer	English/Art History	33	Los Angeles/CA	With family
Sienna	Latina/Mexican, Native American, and Puerto Rican	She, Her, Hers	2nd year	Fine Art/Chicano Studies and Film	19	San Jose/CA	Residence hall
Taylor*	American Indian	She, Her, Hers	4th year transfer	English Education	23	Los Angeles/CA	Off-campus apartment

[6] Asterisked participants in Table 2 were selected as focal participants for the study. Selection process and brief, introductory portraits of focal participants are discussed in the Selection of Focal Participants section of this chapter.

"Asians in the Library" was released in March of 2011 by Alexandra Wallace—at the time, a White, third-year UCLA undergraduate student. In the video, Wallace (2011) vents about her frustrations with Asian students and their lack of "manners": "I'll be like deep into my studying . . . and then all of a sudden . . . over here from somewhere, 'Ohhhh, ching chong, ling, long, ting, tong, ohhhhhh!'" (see Appendix C for full transcript). The video, shortly after its release, received national attention for its racist remarks; yet, despite the controversy, UCLA officials abstained from implementing institutional reform or sanctioning Wallace who ultimately left the school after receiving death threats.

In April 2018, I convened two focus groups, which I began by providing opening remarks, including formally welcoming students, introducing them to my research assistant,[7] establishing ground rules, defining key terms (e.g., racism), and contextualizing the YouTube video and UCLA's response to it. After watching the video, I asked participants the following guiding questions (see Appendix D for full script and protocol):

1. What are your initial thoughts and feelings after watching?
2. In what ways are issues in this video similar and/or different to your experiences with online racism at UCLA?
3. How might the video's commentary have ramifications for multiple racial groups at UCLA (e.g., Blacks, Native students)?
4. What are other words, phrases, and examples that you would use to characterize your experiences with racism at UCLA?
5. What is the relationship between online racism and on-campus racism at UCLA?

[7] In the forthcoming Researcher Positionality section, I describe how I met my research assistant, who he is, why I brought him onto the study, and what level of involvement he had with the study.

6. How would you characterize the campus administration's responses to instances of online racism similar to this video?

Questions were designed to understand participants' thoughts and feelings about the video and parallels between the video as a representation of campus culture and students' contemporary experiences with climate. Additionally, I designed the focus group protocol as the primary instrument to understand students' experiences with racism online (e.g., across social media platforms). Upon ending the focus group, I asked participants to complete a 1-page questionnaire (see Appendix E) asking for self-reported frequencies of social media usage and routine activities (e.g., a class lecture, work study hours), at which I, as the researcher, could potentially conduct ethnographic observations during subsequent data collection with focal participants (described in detail in forthcoming sections). Focus Group A occurred on Monday, April 16, and Focus Group B occurred on Thursday, April 19. Both focus groups took place in classrooms in UCLA's Moore Hall, lasting 1 hour and 14 minutes and 1 hour and 9 minutes, respectively. Participants were offered food and light refreshments as compensation for their time. Lastly, audio files were sent out for professional transcription. Next, I describe the demographic makeup and tenor of each focus group.

Focus Group A. Participants from Focus Group A were from a range of diverse backgrounds. In total, there were two Black, two Latino/as, one American Indian, and one White student. Four of the participants identified as women; two identified as men. There was a diversity of years at UCLA: one second year, two third years, one third-year transfer, and two fourth-year transfers. Participants' choices of major and minor study came from a range of humanities and social sciences fields (e.g., psychology, economics, art, and education studies). All six Focus Group A participants were also born and raised in California. All but one

participant lived either on campus or at an off-campus apartment near UCLA. The average age of participants was 22.

Overall, participants engaged in cordial and generative dialogue over the duration of the focus group. Prior to its beginning, two participants—Dianne and Sienna—realized they were both art students and began discussing their shared experiences as one of few Students of Color in their program. Outside of their conversation, the room was filled with anticipation as students quietly waited for the focus group to commence. Once we began, participants each shared their racialized experience at UCLA with the group. I forgot to have students briefly introduce themselves and share their names at the focus group's start; however, students demonstrated their familiarity and comfort as they referred to one another with eye contact and gesturing in an effort to build upon each other's experiences.

Focus Group B. Demographics of Focus Group B differed from Focus Group A in a number of ways. In total, there were three Black, one White, one Latinx,[8] and one Other (although of Mexican ethnicity) student. Similar to Focus Group A, four participants identified as women; two participants selected a combination of "he" and "they" pronouns or no pronouns at all. The range of years at UCLA was less diverse than Focus Group A: All six of Focus Group B's participants were third-year students, one of whom was a third-year transfer. Participants' majors and minors was more diverse than Focus Group A: Five participants came from humanities or social sciences—one of whom also double majored in a STEM field. Another participant's major was exclusively based in a STEM field. Place of origin of students in Focus Group B was also more diverse than Focus Group A: Four students identified areas of California as home, and two participants identified as out-of-state students. All participants from Focus

[8] Although sharing similar ethnic heritage with the Latino/a students in Focus Group A, this student's experiences and personal politics more appropriately fit within the gender nonbinary term of Latinx.

Group B lived either on campus or at an off-campus apartment near UCLA. The average age of participants was 21.

Overall, the tenor of Focus Group B was relatively more intimate than Focus Group A. The lively nature of this group was partly due to the fact that 4 of the 6 participants knew each other, as these four students—Aïcha, Aziza, Gabriel, and Michelle—were all in the same UCLA McNair Scholars cohort. This concentration of McNair scholars was solely a result of participants' schedules and their availability to participate in the focus groups. However, their familiarity did not prevent them from interacting with the other two participants. In fact, Julia—a non-McNair participant—quickly bonded with Michelle and engaged the rest of the group in a conversation about Coachella, an annual music festival hosted over two weekends in Indio, CA. The group's natural ability to "break the ice" made for a vibrant atmosphere. Thanks to my research assistant, I was reminded to have students introduce themselves briefly by name. After doing so, students shared their experiences with one another, addressing a range of topics: the "gross yet familiar" relationship they have with the "Asians in the Library" video, the political climate regarding President Donald Trump and its influence on their online experiences, and their unique experiences with race at UCLA resulting from the campus' status as a research-intensive institution.

The nature of their experiences was similar to those in Focus Group A in that they both shared familiarity with the commentary of "Asians in the Library." The major differences were the unprompted discussions of President Donald Trump and explicit naming of UCLA as a research-intensive institution. My research assistant and I were somewhat surprised by the discussions of Donald Trump's presidency as this topic only came up minimally in Focus Group A. Additionally, the focus group protocol did not probe for discussions of the nation's political

climate at the time. Despite my surprise, I did not attempt to steer participants "back on track" as their discussions of President Trump related to how they navigated online platforms and their racialized experiences overall as college students. Lastly, their discussion of UCLA as a research-intensive institution, I suspect, was closely related to the majority presence of McNair scholars in Focus Group B. The McNair participants, at the time, were finishing their first year of thinking extensively about academic research; therefore, they were primed to think about how research has been used as a tool to make sense of the social world. However, this overrepresentation of McNair scholars is not a limitation of the present study as these students' experiences closely aligned with the experiences shared by Focus Group A. In fact, all 12 focus group participants shared personal experiences in which they themselves experienced racial microaggressions on campus or they heard second hand that another peer had experienced racial microaggressions on campus. Focus Group B's characterization of UCLA as a research-intensive institution provided an insightful way to further make sense of the data within the larger context of UCLA as a unique postsecondary setting.

Overall, the aforementioned differences in tenor do not pose a threat to the validity of the study's data and analysis. Demographic differences in each focus group were a result of participants' individual scheduling needs. Considering the subtle differences between the groups, I suspect different demographic configurations would not substantially alter neither the experiences participants chose to share nor the approach I chose to make sense of the data. I drew upon several strategies of data triangulation to validate my analysis. For example, during formal analysis (described in detail under this chapter's Data Analysis heading), I referred to documents collected about campus events to ensure my interpretation and contextualization of events focus group participants referenced were accurate. I also used walking interview methods

and ethnographic observations of focal participant life on campus to corroborate preliminary themes from the data. I end this chapter with a description of how the overall tenor of focus groups informed my analytic approach and reporting of the data. In Chapter 4, I share findings that reflect upon the focus groups as a primary source of data. There, I revisit the differences in tenor outlined previously, situating readers in the qualities and interactions of each focus group as a means to further contextualize a portion of the study's findings.

Selection of Focal Participants

Upon completion of focus groups, I selected four focal participants to further understand the everyday nuanced experiences students have with the racial climate at UCLA. I based the selection of focal participants upon a number of factors. First, I only considered students who expressed interest in potentially serving as a focal participant during their respective informational meeting with me prior to consenting to participate in the study. I then considered demographic factors (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, year in school) as I did not want the sample of focal participants to overly represent a particular identity. For example, I was interested in having an equal representation of gender identities as gender was not a focus of interest included in the study's original design. Second, I reviewed focus group audio files to consider participants who were open to share and descriptive in recounting their experiences to ensure further time spent with students would result in the additional collection of informative data. These considerations resulted in the selection of four focal participants; however, data collection was completed with only 3 of the 4. One participant was unable to meet the study's expectations for data collection, and their walking interview and observational data were subsequently removed

from the larger dataset.[9] The selected students—Dianne, Noah, and Taylor—received an email notification informing them of their selection and requesting their consent for continued participation in the study. Additionally, selected students were informed they would receive a $50 Amazon gift card as a token of appreciation upon completion of the study. The forthcoming paragraphs provide brief characterizations of each focal participant to offer readers a better sense of who they are.

Dianne. Dianne was a 20-year-old, mixed race, Black woman born and raised in Northern California. She was born to a Black mother and half-Mexican father. Dianne's experiences with the racial climate at UCLA manifested in both social and academic spaces. For example, her studies in the art program did not center the inclusion or discussion of Artists of Color. Instead, Dianne intentionally chose to use her art as a creative means to process her own experiences and feelings about race and racism. She was an art and psychology double major. In Fall 2018, she was preparing applications for graduate school and had bittersweet feelings about entering her final year of study at UCLA.

Noah. At the time of the study, Noah was a 20-year-old, third-year student born and raised in Los Angeles. Although he identified as Mexican American, he did not consider himself to be "traditionally Mexican" as he did not grow up speaking Spanish and was raised alongside his mother's side of the family—many of whom are Black. During his first years at UCLA, he felt he had little in common with his peers as he grew up in the predominantly Black and Brown and working-class communities of Watts and Compton, Los Angeles. As a result, he felt the need

[9] Although interested in the study, this participant, over the course of data collection, demonstrated repeated behaviors (e.g., use of phone during focus group; speed walking throughout the walking interview; arriving late to scheduled meeting time) that prevented collection of rich data for subsequent analysis. We parted ways with mutual understanding, and the participant's individual datasets were deleted and not included in focal participant analysis.

to combat stereotypical and racialized understandings about his communities while at UCLA. Over time, he grew increasingly comfortable taking pride in his upbringing and found community particularly in UCLA's Academic Advancement Program. He was an economics major and education studies minor. In October 2018, he had begun his final year of study at UCLA and aspired to be a teacher in K-12 education.

Taylor. Taylor was a 23-year-old, fourth-year transfer student born and raised in the Greater Los Angeles area. She was born to a Mexican mother and Native American father and was primarily raised alongside her Native relatives. Upon transferring to UCLA, Taylor had a difficult time feeling comfortable and welcome on campus. She faced a number of racially hostile encounters in both social and academic settings, which led her to seriously consider transferring out of UCLA after her first year; however, she began to enjoy her time on campus once she started working in UCLA's Academic Advancement Program (AAP). There, she felt comfortable and valued working among primarily Students and Staff of Color. While at UCLA, she majored in English and minored in education studies. After graduating from UCLA in June 2018, she planned to become a teacher.

Walking Interviews

Focal participant data collection began by conducting one semi-structured walking interview with each student. This method allowed for context rooted, or in situ (Harris, 2016), understandings of participants' on-campus racialized experiences. In relation to focus groups (described in preceding paragraphs), the walking interview method physically situated participants' experiences within the spatial context of UCLA's campus. This method also allowed for an understanding of how students (a) perceive and navigate the space of their higher education context; (b) make sense of their past, present, and future memories; and (c) establish

and maintain social relationships on campus (Harris, 2016). Prior to these interviews, I met with each focal participant briefly at Kerckhoff Patio (an outdoor seating area outside of a campus coffee shop) to discuss expectations for the remaining data collection. At this meeting, I gave students a campus map and asked them to circle on it locations that were influential in their experiences with the racial climate at UCLA (see Appendix F). After reviewing the map, the participant and I selected a day and time for the interview as well as a starting location to meet.

On the day of the interview, each participant and I met at the agreed upon starting location. In all cases, this location was the Bruin Bear statue located at the heart of campus. I greeted the participant. We shared casual exchanges, for example:

Moses: *With a slight smile* You're always on time. I love it!

Noah: *Laughs* You know, I try to be.

Both: *Shake hands and sit down on the cement benches behind the Bruin Bear*

Moses: Nah, I appreciate it—truly. How you been?

Noah: I've been good, I've been good. Excited for this interview!

Moses: *Laughs* Good, good. I'm glad to hear. As am I.

I then reminded participants we would be using the campus map (see Appendix F) as a general guide for the interview: "We'll walk to it [the circled location on the campus map], and as we come upon it, I'd like for you to discuss a number of things." At this point, I summarized for participants the following as questions to consider as we walked throughout campus (see Appendix G for full script and protocol): What is this particular area on campus? What does it mean to you? How does it relate to race and racism on campus?

Because each interview was led by the individual focal participant and their experiences, no interview was alike. Although each walking interview began at the Bruin Bear (primarily out

of convenience for both participants and me), each interview proceeded and ended differently. With Taylor, for example, we walked mostly along the Northeast side of campus and ended in front of Kaplan Hall[10] where she shared about her racialized experiences in her major classes. Contrastingly, with Noah, we walked across both the Northeast and West sides of campus and ended at the doorway of his dorm, discussing his experiences on the Hill (a term frequently used to refer to where undergraduates live on campus). However, across all the walking interviews, buildings and other landmarks on campus served as visual stimuli and context-based triggers that evoked memories about participants' experiences with the racial climate at UCLA. Interviews lasted an average of 65 minutes, and audio files were sent out for professional transcription upon completion.

Ethnographic Observations of Campus Life

To further understand focal participants' day-to-day interactions with the racial climate at UCLA, ethnographic observations were conducted with each participant upon the completion of their respective walking interview. During the design of the study, a predetermined observation site was not established as I was interested in first learning about individuals' general experiences with the racial climate before selecting a site. After reviewing focal participants' walking interviews, I realized each student named spaces on campus that allowed them to navigate the racial climate in healthy and restorative ways. Noah, in particular, referred to such a space as his "second home." Upon approval from each focal participant, I then chose these second homes, representing positive experiences with the racial climate for participants, to

[10] At the time of data collection (spring 2018), this building was known as the humanities building. However, in the summer of 2018, UCLA announced the building would be renamed Renée and David Kaplan Hall after receiving a multi-million-dollar donation in the family's name.

further triangulate data from focus groups and walking interviews that spoke to negative experiences with racial microaggressions and other forms of discrimination on campus.

For Noah, his second home was in Campbell Hall–the building housing UCLA's AAP, which offers academic support for historically underrepresented undergraduate students. Noah had been a part of AAP programming since his first year at UCLA, and because it is a space inhabited by predominantly Black and Brown students and staff, Noah always felt comfortable and valued in this space. I therefore chose to observe Noah in his role as an AAP tutor for an undergraduate course to further understand the values and practices that made AAP a second home for him. Similar to Noah, Taylor characterized AAP as a space where she felt safe and saw herself in others. She specifically identified her job working with AAP's community college transfer program as her second home. Taylor, her supervisor, and her coworkers granted me permission to observe her at work, enabling me to further understand her role within the program and how this work had sustained her throughout her UCLA journey. Lastly, Dianne described her art as a space of comfort and reflection. I therefore observed her during the studio portion of one of her art major courses. During these instances, I periodically watched her paint as we casually engaged in a discussion about her work and its relationship to her experiences with race and racism at UCLA. These observations, because they took place within the focal participants' second homes, allowed for a more intimate and nuanced look into their experiences with UCLA's racial climate. A total of two hour-long observations were conducted with each participant. Observations were audio recorded, and raw field notes were expanded for contextualization and analysis upon the completion of each observation.

Document Collection

To contextualize my analysis, I collected documents related to students' experiences with the racial climate throughout the duration of data collection. Unlike the study's use of focus groups and walking interviews, documents were not collected to serve as a primary source of data. The collection of documents instead served as a secondary source of data to operationalize the concept of campus culture within the UCLA setting and triangulate and contextualize data from other methods. For instance, in focus groups and walking interviews, students frequently referred to racial incidents such as the "Kanye Western" themed party or the controversy surrounding the student-body president. To properly understand students' commentary about these events, I referred back to the textual analysis I conducted on UCLA's campus culture related to race and racism. My understanding of the latter events and this textual analysis were informed by my review of the *Daily Bruin*'s online repository. Furthermore, because this study is a phenomenology specific to the UCLA undergraduate experience, I chose to restrict my analysis of documents to outlets within the UCLA community. I chose not to review commentary from outside bloggers and reporters in an effort to further understand how UCLA community members make sense of their institution's racial climate and specific context. Additionally, throughout data collection, participants either pointed me in the direction of online artifacts to examine or they directly messaged me topics and/or artifacts to be mindful of during data analysis. For instance, focal participants sent me memes from a UCLA-affiliated Facebook page to help me make sense of points raised throughout data collection. In short, this approach to document collection offered necessary context to aid my interpretations of students' experiences with the racial climate both online and on campus.

Researcher Positionality

Like any researcher conscious of how research has historically misrepresented and harmed marginalized populations, I have been mindful about my own privilege as the researcher throughout the duration of this study. Over the years, discussions of researcher positionality have increasingly gained traction in predominantly qualitative and social justice-oriented academic circles (Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Smith, 2013; Villenas, 1996); however, I have also questioned how some application of these important discussions have felt meaningless and prescriptive at times. For some, positionality is merely a buzz word to demonstrate their awareness of the "right" and in vogue thing to say. My intention with the forthcoming discussion of my researcher positionality is not to list off my race, gender, class, and other identity markers for the sake of doing an academic roll call; rather, I choose to highlight methodological choices I made throughout the research process to broker trust with my participants and ensure I "got it right" regarding the presentation of their experiences to readers.

I was conscious of how brokering trust and rapport began at the point of participant recruitment, so I chose to make a number of in-class appearances to make recruitment more personable. With this approach, prospective participants saw me interact with their instructor (in most cases, my peer) prior to my introduction to the class, hear how I described my work, and familiarize themselves with how I present myself to the world in general. Students were also able to ask any questions they may have had and, then, ultimately decide if I was worthy of their time, energy, and trust. This approach proved fruitful in the end as 9 of the study's 12 focus group participants came from these in-person recruitment efforts. I suspect this approach made the research process appear less foreign and, possibly, more welcoming for prospective participants.

Recruiting a research assistant (RA) for my study also had unexpected advantages on the research process. I primarily chose to have an undergraduate RA to engage in a process of dialogic engagement (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Meaning, I can only make sense of my work through an ongoing process of sharing my ideas, research dilemmas, and writing with trusted colleagues. Through their constructive feedback and questions, I am able to move the work forward. I envisioned having an assistant to hear my ideas on data collection procedures and focal participant selection would help to unpack my assumptions and manage data collection logistics. My other motivation in recruiting an RA was the opportunity to mentor a prospective graduate student. I met my RA, Chris Estrella, during August 2017—the summer before data collection. At the time, Chris was preparing for his third year as a psychology major and education studies minor. I was one of few graduate students working as a peer learning facilitator for AAP's Freshmen/Transfer Summer Program. Over time, Chris and I befriended each other. He shared a number of curiosities he had about applying to graduate school and his desire to conduct academic research on the educational experiences of young Men of Color. Chris mentioned he was also looking for research experience, so I proposed my study as a limited opportunity to be involved in the focus group data collection process. Chris aided my recruitment efforts, attended and took notes during focus groups, and troubleshooted my thoughts about selections for the study's focal participants. Having Chris by my side during both focus groups established a sense of comfort and broke a barrier of trust between the focus group participants and me. In him, they saw themselves on the "other side" of the process. The McNair scholars, as well as other participants interested in graduate school, saw a peer actually *doing* the research they aspired to do one day. In me, they saw a researcher who had pre-existing relationships and

investments with their undergraduate peers. I imagine this approach made participants feel they were among shared company.

Lastly, my own personality traits influenced my ability to broker rapport with participants. My natural instinct is to listen to and understand how others operate in the world prior to projecting my own sensibilities. Also, as discussed in this dissertation's opening chapter, my worldview as a middle class, Black male from the South, since my time at UCLA, has grown increasingly mindful of the many different racialized, gendered, and cultural perspectives the world has to offer. Throughout this journey, I have learned "truth" is relative and often particular to an individual's values and beliefs. My interest as a researcher, then, prioritizes that I report back how the insider and outsider perspectives of both my participants and me work in tandem to reflect their experiences as authentically and robustly as possible. As I made sense of the data, I therefore chose to share with participants portions of my writing and analytic dilemmas to ensure their experiences remained at the heart of the study's analysis as opposed to my own interpretations and biases as the researcher.

Data Analysis

As a qualitative phenomenological study, this dissertation prioritized understanding themes within the UCLA undergraduate racial climate experience as its primary unit of analysis. The study's larger methodological design encompasses focus group and walking interview methods as primary sources of data and ethnographic observation, textual analysis, and document collection methods as secondary, contextual sources of data. I chose to draw upon specific methods from the larger methodological design to answer the unique and particular needs of each of the study's research questions. The forthcoming paragraphs detail how I chose to approach analysis to answer the following questions:

1. How do undergraduate students' contemporary campus racial climate experiences relate to their perceptions about their institution's historical legacies of racism?
2. What is the relationship between the online and on-campus racisms experienced by undergraduate Students of Color?

To answer the first research question on campus climate and culture, my attention to analysis focused on data in which students articulated associations between the YouTube video "Asians in the Library" and their experiences with the contemporary racial climate. I focused on data from the study's focus groups, textual analysis, and document collection as these methods offered a rich dataset that operationalized the concept of campus culture and elicited students' present-day experiences with the racial climate. After cleaning transcripts, I began by open coding each focus group as an individual dataset with a combination of what Johnny Saldaña (2016) calls descriptive, in vivo, and versus coding. This ensemble of coding strategies enabled me to use summative phrases or participants' language to characterize portions of racialized power dynamics and social relations within the data. During this process, I regularly returned to the transcripts to ensure codes accurately reflected participants' accounts. In moments when my naming of a code was overly informed by the literature, I marked such codes to return to later and recode with language derived from participants' accounts. For example, I originally coded portions of data as "neoliberal ideologies about racism" and, upon reflection, realized my use of "neoliberal" is a term informed by Michael Omi and Howard Winant's (2015) theory of racial formation and David Harvey's (2005) *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Participants did not use the term neoliberal to describe their experiences; therefore, I returned to and recoded these data with a descriptive code, "race ideologies/describing race ideologies," as a more reflective labeling of the actual contents of the text.

To aid this process, I also engaged in ongoing analytic memos (Bazeley, 2013), drafted working code trees to visualize relationships among the codes, and tracked the interactive development of my interpretations overtime. Additionally, I looked to documents, such as administrative responses and reporting from the *Daily Bruin*, to further understand other UCLA-specific racialized incidents to which participants referred throughout the focus groups. This process concluded with a 1-page memo reflecting the major themes of each focus group. With these memos, I looked across the focus groups, as individual datasets, for similarities and differences with particular attention to disconfirming evidence that may challenge assertions emerging from the data. I then conducted member checks with available participants to contextualize my analysis and unpack my biases as an outsider to the phenomenon of study. To conclude, I placed my analysis in tandem with the study's framework to contextualize findings and discuss implications for the field.

To summarize thus far, my approach to formal data analysis mirrored the ordering of the study's data collection procedures. I began by systematically reviewing focus group data because, as the first sources of data collected, these data offered a lens to make sense of the undergraduate racial climate experience from a broad and varied perspective. These data, therefore, informed my selection of focal participants and the nature of data collection thereafter. For example, focal participants either explicitly re-described or built upon themes and topics discussed during focus groups. In short, I examined focus group data first to understand the range of experiences participants had with the racial climate. I then analyzed the walking interview and observational data to get a closer, in-depth understanding of climate via the experiences of three focal participants. In the forthcoming paragraph, I explain how I moved across the study's data sources to answer the dissertation's second research question: What is the

relationship between the online and on-campus racisms experienced by undergraduate Students of Color?

To begin, I engaged in a process of coding and redefining my codes to ensure my interpretations accurately reflected the contents of each focal participants' interview and observation data. I specifically used the same coding strategies used for the focus group data—descriptive, in vivo, and versus coding (Saldaña, 2016)—as these approaches offered an effective means to understand the context-specific ways racialized power dynamics shape the undergraduate student experience with campus racial climate. I treated each focal participant and their respective data as a distinct dataset. Meaning, I looked at Dianne's, Noah's, and Taylor's data in isolation to preserve the integrity and unique personality of each participant's experiences. My approach to coding sought to capture the essence of these individuals' storied experiences at UCLA. After coding, I then drafted memos (no more than three single-spaced pages each) that reflected the character and essence of each participant's experience in a portrait like manner (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). I subsequently met with each participant to summarize what I had done analytically, allow time for them to read through and annotate the memo, and briefly discuss any questions or concerns they had concerning my representation of their experiences. All of these meetings were fruitful. In some instances, participants corrected my characterization of their upbringing. Dianne, for example, pushed back on my original use of "a non-college-going environment" to characterize her precollege days. She shared that both of her parents went to and encouraged her to go college; however, overall, in the community she grew up in, a majority of students did not leave home for college. In other instances, for example, with Noah, I shared my reservations about potential language I could use to characterize his youth. I shared that I removed phrasing like "gang-related activities" to qualify

some of the things Noah witnessed growing up as the characterization seemed trite and not fitting of his overall experience. He agreed and shared similar concerns himself. Sharing my original concern allowed for a generative, more detailed discussion about what he witnessed growing up and how it does not necessarily represent him and his community as a whole.

Upon revising the memos with feedback from member checking, I then looked across the focal participants' memos to understand what shared experiences exist between their on-campus and online experiences with racism. During this time, I also went back to focus group data to reflect on excerpts from the transcripts that spoke to focal participants' experiences online as the focus group protocol was the study's primary instrument to investigate students' online experiences. Participants' online experiences were also discussed in walking interview and observational data; however, detailed vignettes and other responses were richly captured within the focus group data, so I chose to revisit this data source to triangulate my understandings from walking interview and observational data.

Lastly, similar to my analysis of focus group data, documents collected from focal participants (e.g., photos of their workspace; text message exchanges between participants and me) were used to contextualize the presentation of these individuals' experiences as a whole. My analyses of these data concluded by putting my understandings about focal participants' on-campus and online experiences in conversation with the literature to articulate the findings' significance for the field and implications for practice and research.

I also made important decisions on the reporting and representing of the study's findings. Common in social science research is the use of frequencies or descriptive statistics to reaffirm or complicate an assertion supported by qualitative data. However, I have chosen to minimally employ frequencies (e.g., "Seven out of the 12 participants experienced a particular form of

discrimination") in the reporting of this study as the sentiments shared across both focus groups were of mutual understanding. Both focus groups housed students from a range of different race/ethnic and gender backgrounds. Regardless of these differences, during focus groups, students expressed a sense of agreement in which they frequently built upon the experiences shared by others. Rarely, if ever, were there moments of disagreeing, combating, or interrupting of others; rather, students listened and shared in ways that demonstrated their collective understanding and belief that the racial climate at UCLA is a cause for concern for all students. While analyzing the data, I found the use of frequency counts to be a rhetorically ineffective way to represent the culture shared among these students. Instead, I have chosen to represent quotes that highlight major themes from the data that participants, despite their differences, collectively agreed had implications for racial equity and inclusion at UCLA. With this approach to analysis and representation, I share with readers, in the forthcoming findings chapters, a story of collective sentiments and shared humanity among a group of students invested in the racialized well-being of themselves and their peers.

Chapter 4:

Undergraduate Experiences With a Campus' Racial Past and Present

"How was it?"[11]

"How was what?" Michelle responded, looking toward me with confusion.

"How was *it*?" I emphatically asked again. Her eyebrows furrowed even more.

"Coachella,[12] Michelle. Your shirt."

"Oohhhhh!" She embarrassingly grinned. "I keep forgetting I'm wearing this." She sat in the left corner of the classroom, wearing a long-sleeved black T-shirt with the word "Coachella" printed across its center. She, a third-year, Black female undergraduate student, proceeded to tell Chris (my research assistant) and me about her weekend at the annual music festival. "Oh, it was great! I'm pretty tired. I mean, I'm still recovering because it was a long weekend, but it was definitely worth it. Have you ever been?"

"No, I've never been to it," Chris shared.

"Yea, same for me," I added. "I watch on YouTube, but that's about it. I'm an old man at heart, so I can't really do those crowds." Chris and Michelle both laughed, and we casually carried on the conversation as I continued to prepare the room for the evening's focus group. "Hhmmm, what do y'all think? I bought this butternut squash and potatoes from Whole Foods for folks who can't eat pizza. I'm wondering if I should heat it up real quick. What y'all think?"

Chris looked to Michelle to see what she preferred as the food was primarily for her and other participants. She slightly shrugged her shoulders along with a gentle nod of her head as if

[11] Quotations appearing in the opening vignette of this chapter are paraphrased and reconstructed from jottings recorded in the researcher's observational notes taken before, during, and after each focus group.

[12] Coachella, short for The Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival, is an annual music festival that occurs in April over two back-to-back weekends in Indio, CA. It is one of the world's largest, most famous, and most profitable music festivals.

to gesture, "*Yeah, it's probably best to heat that up*." With close to 15 minutes before our start time, I headed to the Graduate Student Lounge to use the microwave.

It was a Thursday evening in mid-April 2018. The halls of UCLA's Moore Hall were relatively quiet as the majority of the day's work had ended. Many students, faculty, and staff had left for the day. As I turned out of the room, I noticed Christian kneeling down on the floor with his laptop open.

"Christian. Hi! We're in that room on the left with the open door." I pointed behind me to where we would be meeting.

"Oh, hi! Thanks!" Christian, a third-year, Mexican American student, then collected his things and began walking to our meeting room.

As I made my way to the microwave, I wondered what tonight's group of students would be like: *Within the last 24 hours, two of the nine scheduled participants have already informed me that they will not be able to make it. Will anymore not show? Monday's focus group was relatively quiet in the beginning. I wonder what the personality of tonight's group will be like. Hopefully, I remember to have students briefly introduce themselves to the group before we start; I definitely forgot to do that on Monday*.

Upon my return to our room, a lively discussion about Beyoncé's performance at Coachella was underway. Both Aïcha and Aziza, third-year Black women, had arrived. Julia as well. She, a third-year, White female undergraduate, contributed heavily to the conversation as she, like Michelle, had gone to Coachella the previous weekend as well.

"Yeah, I was trying to buy some of her [Beyoncé's] merch,[13] but it was sold out within an hour after the show."

[13] "Merch" is slang and short for the word "merchandise."

"Right! I heard those letterman jackets were goin' for $500," said Aziza.

"Who has 500 dollas like that tho?" asked Aïcha. We all laughed out of earnest yet concerned amusement—*Who really has $500 for concert paraphernalia?*

The time was 6:15 p.m. Five of the now seven scheduled participants had arrived and sat around the long tables set up in the shape of the letter "U." I proceeded to make an introductory announcement before we officially began the focus group.

"Hi, everyone! We'll begin things more formally here in a second. In the meantime, please come get a plate of food. There's a women's restroom on this floor to our left, and the men's restroom is on the first and second floors. We're waiting on a few more folks, and then we'll get started." I then played some music—Solange Knowles' *A Seat at the Table* (2016)—from my laptop to continue the light and personable feel of the room.

"Yesssss, come on, Solange!" Aziza exclaimed.

I smiled as I stepped out of the room one more time to check and see if any participants were lost. Sure enough, as I was nearing the end of the hall, Gabriel, a third-year Latinx student, was looking at a wall map to find the room.

"Hi, Gabriel! We're in that door right next to the blue recycling bin."

Upon my return, participants continued to talk about Beychella (Beyoncé's Coachella performance). Many had grabbed food to accompany their discussion. I poked my head out into the hall one last time to see if our final participant would show. No one was in sight, so I closed the door behind me and walked to the other side of the room to close the window. Looking at my phone, I noted the time was a minute short of 6:20 p.m. I turned to students to officially start the focus group.

"I want to thank you all again for showing up this evening and also having a lovely impromptu discussion about the Queen that is Beyoncé. That truly warms my heart." Everyone laughed and smiled as we proceeded to begin our formal discussion of race and racism at UCLA.

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This chapter's opening vignette highlights the second of two evenings in which I had the privilege of hearing from a group of UCLA undergraduates about their racial climate experiences. This vignette, in particular, centers me, the researcher, as an active agent in the research process. I greeted participants by name, inquired about how they were doing, and provided light refreshments to welcome everyone to the focus group setting. These actions were done intentionally to help participants feel at ease and comfortable to share about their racialized experiences on campus as candidly as possible. Each focus group housed a mixed composition of racial and ethnic diversity. I revisit these demographics in further detail in forthcoming paragraphs. I broach the topic now to highlight the methodological decisions on my end to create a safe and welcoming space for students to share their experiences despite the mixed-race composition of each focus group.

Student participants did not describe a singular and collective experience as some students spoke firsthand about the discrimination they faced at UCLA. Other participants could only speak to instances of racism they heard or saw from secondary accounts. These differences aside, students expressed shared sentiments that race at UCLA, contrary to popular belief, is indeed a problem. As the researcher, it was therefore imperative for me to create a welcoming space for participants to share uncomfortable experiences with campus racism. Without this approach, the study's participants would have been less inclined to share with such honesty and detail as the chapter's presentation of findings will soon reveal.

In this chapter, I examine data from the study's two video-elicited focus groups to understand how a group of 12 racially diverse UCLA undergraduates experience the campus racial climate and perceive the campus culture around race and racism: How do these students' experiences and perceptions align and/or diverge? What do participants' experiences and perceptions suggest about UCLA's racial politics? These questions guided my analysis and sense making of these focus groups. In Chapter 6, I put these data in direct conversation with the dissertation's research questions to articulate implications for research and practice. For this chapter's purposes, I present three salient themes from my analysis of the focus group data to characterize a story about participants' contemporary experiences with the racial climate in relation to their perceptions about their institution's racialized past.

The organization of this chapter proceeds as follows: To further contextualize the unique qualities and demographics of each focus group, I provide tables and narrative description highlighting the ways in which the tenor and makeup of each focus group was similar and/or different. I then introduce salient themes from the data analysis to anchor the story of these focus groups within a brief narrative discussion about my specific approach to making sense of the focus group data. This orienting introduction precedes an extensive exploration of these themes as findings substantiated by relevant excerpts from the data and descriptive analytic commentary. I end with a closing vignette to conclude the visual image of this chapter's story and offer more texture, character, and depth to this chapter's presentation of findings. This vignette serves as a telling moment allowing readers to pause and make further sense of participants' experiences from their voices. I revisit this concluding vignette in the dissertation's final chapter to tie together interrelated strands of the story and suggest what these participants' experiences mean for continued theoretical, empirical, and methodological advances in higher education.

The Qualities of Each Focus Group

Although the general consensus shared among participants was that UCLA's treatment of race and racism is a cause for concern, there were distinct differences within the composition of each focus group. Focus Group A occurred on Monday, April 16, 2018, and consisted of students from diverse backgrounds (see Table 3). In total, there were two Black, two Latino/a, one American Indian, and one White student. Four of the participants identified as women; two identified as men. There was a diversity of years at UCLA: one second-year, two third-year, one third-year transfer, and two fourth-year transfer students. Participants' choices of major and minor study came from a range of humanities and social sciences fields (e.g., psychology, economics, art, and education studies). All six participants in Focus Group A were raised in California. All but one participant lived either on campus or at an off-campus apartment near UCLA. The average age of participants was 22.

Table 3

Focus Group A Participant Demographics

Pseudonym	Race/Ethnicity	Pronouns	Year	Major/Minor	Age	Home City/State	Housing (for Academic Year)
Dianne	Black/Black and Mexican	She, Her, Hers	3rd year	Psychology/Art	20	San Jose/CA	Off-campus apartment
Josephine	White/Israeli	She, Her, Hers	3rd year transfer	Undeclared/Undeclared	19	Los Angeles/CA	Residence Hall
Noah	Latino/Mexican American	He, Him, His	3rd year	Economics/Education Studies	20	Los Angeles/CA	Residence hall
Randy	Black/American	He, Him, His	4th year transfer	English/Art History	33	Los Angeles/CA	With family
Sienna	Latina/Mexican, Native American, and Puerto Rican	She, Her, Hers	2nd year	Fine Art/Chicano Studies and Film	19	San Jose/CA	Residence hall
Taylor	American Indian	She, Her, Hers	4th year transfer	English/Education	23	Los Angeles/CA	Off-campus apartment

The demographics of Focus Group B differed slightly from those of Focus Group A (see Table 4). In total, there were three Black, one White, one Latinx,[14] and one Other (although of Mexican ethnicity) student. Similar to Focus Group A, four participants identified as women; two participants selected a combination of "he" and "they" pronouns or no pronouns at all. The range of years at UCLA was less diverse than Focus Group A: All six Focus Group B participants were third-year students, one of whom was a third-year transfer student. Participants' choice of majors and minors was more diverse than Focus Group A: Five participants came from humanities or social sciences, one of whom also double majored in a STEM field. Another participant's major was exclusively based in a STEM field. Place of origin of Focus Group B was also more diverse than Focus Group A: Four students identified areas of California as home while two participants identified as out-of-state students. All participants from Focus Group B lived either on campus or an off-campus apartment near UCLA. The average age of participants was 21.

Overall, both focus groups addressed similar topics of discussion. After watching the "Asians in the Library" YouTube video, participants (a) began sharing their thoughts and feelings in response to the video, (b) highlighted their experiences with racism online, (c) discussed elements of the video that reminded them of situations they either experienced or heard about on-campus, and (d) concluded with their thoughts on the adequacy of UCLA administrative responses to racial incidents.

[14] Although sharing similar ethnic heritage with the Latino/a students in Focus Group A, this student's experiences and personal politics more appropriately fit within the gender nonbinary term of Latinx.

Table 4

Focus Group B Participant Demographics

Pseudonym	Race/Ethnicity	Pronouns	Year	Major/Minor	Age	Home City/State	Housing (for Academic Year)
Aïcha*[15]	Black/Guinean American	She, Her, Hers	3rd year transfer	Gender Studies/Music Industry	23	New York/NY	Residence hall
Aziza*	Black/African American	She, Her, Hers	3rd year	African American Studies/Education	20	Inglewood/CA	Residence hall
Christian	Other/Mexican	N/A	3rd year	Neuroscience/Music Industry	21	Igo/CA	Off-campus apartment
Gabriel*	Latinx/Mexican	He, Him, His; They, Them, Their(s)	3rd year	Human Biology & Society and Chicanx Studies	21	Baja California/ México	Residence hall
Julia	White/European White	She, Her, Hers	3rd year	Psychology and Sociology	21	Evanston/IL	Off-campus apartment
Michelle*	Black/African American and German	She, Her, Hers	3rd year	Sociology/Education and Civic Engagement	20	Southern California	Off-campus apartment

The nature of these discussions differed in two noticeable ways: First, when asked about how the video related to their online experiences, participants in Focus Group A immediately drew connections between what they saw in the "Asians in the Library" video and their experiences with racism on campus as opposed to online. After participants shared some of their on-campus experiences, as the facilitator, I reposed the question about online experiences to ensure they had thoroughly addressed the topic of online experiences prior to continuing. In contrast, when asked about how the video related to their online experiences, Focus Group B immediately spoke to the online dimension of the question, as opposed to beginning with on-campus experiences. Lastly, the discussion of online experiences among Focus Group B featured

[15] Asterisked participants in Table 4 were members of UCLA's McNair Research Scholars Program—a 2-year research intensive that prepares undergraduates from underrepresented backgrounds for doctoral programs.

substantial commentary about the media's coverage of President Donald Trump. Participants shared a number of examples about how, as college students, they have had to navigate the political support of President Trump on their timelines.[16] Some participants—Christian and Michelle for example—frequently encountered pro-Trump support from posts that advocated for conservative stances on race and immigration in the United States. This support, participants shared, came from both peers and community members from their respective hometowns and friends and associates at UCLA.

Although the aforementioned were noticeable yet unexpected differences during data collection, they had no significant influence on data analysis as they both fit within participants' characterization of their racialized experiences more broadly. Furthermore, despite differences in demographics, the sentiments expressed across both focus groups was one of shared understandings and mutual investment and belief that the racial climate at UCLA is a cause for concern for all students. In the forthcoming section, I have therefore selected data that evoke themes and sentiments shared across focus group participants' experiences with UCLA's racial climate and campus culture.

Findings

As a means to make sense of the focus group data, I sought to understand the ways in which UCLA undergraduates experience the campus' racial climate and perceive the campus' culture around race and racism. My phenomenological approach to analysis therefore aimed to remain as close to the data as possible in an effort to represent participants' authentic and lived perspectives. This process began with open coding and included the labeling of initial chunks of data that captured insightful information about participants' experiences and perspectives. Codes

[16] "Timelines" refer to the mostly chronological (with the exception of some platforms such as Instagram) ordering of posts on an individual's personally curated social media page.

included in vivo codes, such as “gross but familiar,” and literature-informed codes, such as “racial microaggressions,” which allowed for my analysis to account for both participant-derived language along with my initial interpretations informed by my theoretical training. Through a process of constant comparison, salient codes were combined when they shared similar properties. For example, “everyday racial microaggressions” was initially used to label the salient open codes “not feeling valued on campus,” “on-campus racial incidents,” and “negative racial interactions with peers and instructors.” Through further analysis and workshopping of my initial groupings with trusted colleagues, I concluded “everyday racial microaggressions” was too broad of a label and needed to be refined. Further comparison enabled me to determine the unique properties of codes such as “on-campus racial incidents,” referring to events that garnered attention from news outlets, which became categorized as “UCLA racial culture and context” whereas the “not feeling valued on campus” and “negative racial interactions with peers and instructors” codes were classified as “racial microaggressions shaping sense of belonging.”

This process concluded in the form of three salient themes: (a) continuity of racialized ideologies across past and present; (b) racial microaggressions shaping sense of belonging; and (c) UCLA—seemingly a “dream,” actually a research institution. These three themes highlight the parallels students articulated between their contemporary experiences with the UCLA campus racial climate and the YouTube video “Asians in the Library” as a representation of UCLA’s past. Participants’ discussions illustrated similarities across the ways in which racialized identities were conceived and targeted across the past and present at UCLA. This racialization was evident in students’ candid sharing about racial microaggressions that directly impact the sense of belonging of racially minoritized students on campus. Lastly, the focus group discussions frequently invoked the branding of UCLA as a liberal bastion of diversity as an

idyllic image that lured participants into believing they would *not* encounter racism throughout their Bruin experience. Participants shared, however, that early on into their time at UCLA, they soon realized UCLA *actually* functioned as a research-intensive institution where the needs and backgrounds of minoritized student populations were not prioritized. I begin the findings section by presenting a descriptive narrative of the three themes along with relevant analytic commentary. This chapter's denouement section provides a closing vignette to tie together various strands from this chapter's presentation of data in the voice of participants that I will further consider in the dissertation's final chapter and discussion of implications for research and practice.

Continuity of Racialized Ideologies Across Past and Present

At the time of "Asians in the Library" (2011), many of the study's participants were beginning high school. Some had seen the video prior to participating in the focus groups; others had not. Regardless of this prior experience, after watching the video together, participants expressed a sense of shared frustration with "Asians in the Library" as they found the video's racialized ideologies, or messages about race, consistent with their contemporary experiences with race and racism at UCLA. Upon hearing me ask for their initial feelings and reactions to the video, Christian, shaking his head in presumed disappointment, broke the room's silence with a brief yet perceptive statement: "It's [the "Asians in the Library" video] so gross, but familiar at the same time." Other participants, patiently waiting and listening with intent to their peers' offerings, unpacked the simultaneously "gross" yet "familiar" aspects of the video:

> Aïcha: [Alexandra Wallace is] like, "No, I'm not talking about my friends. . . . I'm talking about everyone else." . . . And I thought at least that was very interesting because it's the most prominent sign that you are about to do or say

something that's pretty racist, you know? Because when you know somebody, then there's no way that you could just see [a racially minoritized group] as like one monolith group.

Julia: Yeah, it reminds me of when people are like, "No, I'm not racist. I have Black friends or Asian friends," and that's just not the point obviously.

Aziza: Yeah, I think it's something that people might think, but it's crazy that she was like obviously stupid enough and bold enough to make a video saying it. But I do feel like there are people on this campus who probably do think that about whatever race and probably just wouldn't say it.

Gabriel: And I think going off of that point, at least in this campus, in my experience, it's interesting to see how people obviously think this way, but it's like those little things that kind of like trigger them to then be like overtly racism, just 'cause here at UCLA, people are not necessarily overtly or openly racist, but then when little things like that [Asian students talking in the library] happen, then that's when they show their true colors. 'Cause, even then she's like, "You know, people shouldn't be talking in the library in general, but I've noticed this specific racial group doing it, so let me talk all the shit on the racial group." And I feel like there's been so many instances like that on this campus before that to me—I had seen that video before like way back when it was posted, but even now seeing it again, I mean this literally happens all the time.

At face value, racialized ideologies are conceptual frames that shape individuals' views and sense making about race, racism, and the world at large. Often, these ideologies go unnoticed as taken for granted, race-based assumptions in students' everyday lives; however, as

Aïcha, Julia, Aziza, and Gabriel's exchange exhibits, racialized ideologies also represent conceptual race frames, or racial stereotypes, held by peers, faculty, and other institutional community members, that participants deemed racially problematic or questionable. These ideologies, for participants, operated on implicit assumptions about race that privilege and normalize the superiority of White bodies and ideals over Students of Color and their cultural perspectives. Additionally, participants spoke to how these ideologies have remained recognizable over the years. For example, Aïcha, a Black female transfer student, in the above exchange, implied problematic racialized ideologies occur frequently enough for Students of Color to know and anticipate when something racist is about to be said or done: "[Alexandra Wallace is] like, 'No, I'm not talking about my friends. . . . I'm talking about everyone else.' . . . And I thought at least that was very interesting because it's the most prominent sign that you are about to do or say something that's pretty racist, you know?"

Students also questioned the pervasive nature of race-based impersonations, as Sienna's comments illuminate:

> Something that I've noticed over the years, like, people do impressions of other races often and don't see that as being harmful. But then you'll notice that is paired with all these violent, racist things [Alexandra Wallace is] saying throughout the video. And I think that underlines the fact that like when you're doing something like that, you are being racist; you are harming other people.

Sienna, a second-year Latina, in this instance challenged what she viewed as a noticeable trend of thought and behavior—race-based impersonations treated as playful and harmless. She, along with her focus group peers, considered impersonations like "Asians in the Library" to be acts of violence toward racially minoritized groups.

As discussions about their initial feelings and reactions continued, participants shared contemporary instances that racially targeted Asian students similarly as "Asians in the Library." Josephine, an Israeli American, third-year transfer student, discussed how frequently her peers make seemingly lighthearted jokes about Asians at UCLA:

> I actually see a lot of racism revolving around the Asians at UCLA. For example, I think either on the memes page or on Twitter, someone was making fun of how some of their male Asian professors look the same, and they couldn't distinguish between them. And that's really offensive because you can't just suggest that everyone of a certain race and a gender within that race look the exact same. That is beyond ignorant and offensive, and I saw that recently, like this year [the 2017-2018 academic year].

Josephine's account prompted Noah, a Latino third-year student, to share how racialized ideologies and stereotyping also manifest within students' perceptions about Asians as the "model minority":

> After one of our discussions, one of my fellow peers approached me. He's like, "How'd you feel about the midterm?" He was a White male. He expressed how glad he was to take the class now that there weren't so many Asians in the class, so the average [grade] will be lower in the class. And it's kind of like a double edged sword in the fact that, one, he's saying Asians are the "model minority" myth, but then, . . . he sees a Person of Color [i.e., Noah], then he's like, "Oh,' you know, 'lower expectation." So, he's glad he's taking it now rather when, you know, Asians take the class.

Josephine immediately built upon Noah's story by revealing her roommate felt similarly:

> I've seen that also. One of my roommates is a biochem major. And at the start of the quarter [Spring 2018], she came to me after one of her classes and was like, "There aren't

> that many Asians in the class, so I think I can get an A." [I] was like, "What's the correlation?" Like, "I don't get it."

Participants highlighted how the racialized ideologies they were frustrated by in "Asians in the Library," which often occurred in the form of racist impersonations and stereotypes, are consistent with contemporary students' perceptions about their Asian peers as a racial monolith. Josephine characterized the phenomenon of students joking about their inability to distinguish one Asian male instructor from the next because they all "look the exact same." In Noah's account, Asians are casted as smart but, in the eyes of some students, obstacles in the way of their peers' ability to receive the highest marks. As minoritized students along lines of race and/or gender, participants saw themselves in the targeting of their Asian peers. In fact, participants expressed how Asians, as the targeted group of Alexandra Wallace's YouTube video, could be treated as a "surrogate" for other racially minoritized populations on campus. As Aïcha asserted:

> [Alexandra Wallace] could have interchanged that group [Asians] with any other group. She could have said, "I hate all these Black people here on campus" or "I hate all of these Latinos on campus." . . . I've heard so many of those things [Wallace's commentary] being said about all Communities of Color before.

In the next section, I detail how participants' shared sentiments about the racialized ideologies within "Asians in the Library" broached a number of anecdotes about the ways in which these ideologies ungirded participants' experiences with racial microaggressions at UCLA. The forthcoming section takes a pointed look at how these ideologies manifested in the everyday and affected the sense of belonging of Students of Color.

Racial Microaggressions Shaping Sense of Belonging

Within critical race studies in education, racial microaggressions are subtle, everyday forms of racism manifesting in the form of (non)verbal, cumulative, and layered assaults that take a psychological, physiological, and academic toll on Students of Color (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015a). Although often occurring in unintended and unconscious forms, racial microaggressions are pernicious and worthy of study as they are "guided by ideologies of white supremacy that justify the superiority of a dominant group (whites) over non-dominant groups (People of Color)" (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015a, p. 2). For example, Noah, a Latino male, recounted a racial microaggression he encountered while playing a casual game of pickup basketball at the campus' main gym:

> My buddy introduced me to one of his buddies. . . . "Where are you from?" I'm like, "I'm from Watts." He stopped and said, "What?" He was in awe, like, "No way you're from Watts. You're a Person of Color, and you're here at UCLA." Then, a little later, he's like, "Hey, go scare the other team with your Watts mentality." So, kind of building on like I'm a Person of Color and I'm from this community, so I must be this tough, you know, scary figure. . . .
>
> Also my roommate, he would introduce me like, "Oh, this is my roommate. He's a Mexican from Compton." . . . So, that's how he introduced me to all his friends. And I eventually had to tell him about that. But it's just crazy. Like that's my defining characteristics, Mexican, Compton. And even when his father came over, he's [his roommate's father] like, "Oh, you're the tough guy from Compton, right?" So, I just have to deal with stuff like that a lot here on campus.

In these instances, peers relied on stereotypical and racist imagery of Latinos as hard, scary, and presumed thugs to inform their interactions with Noah. Peers and their family alike also assumed Noah is "tough" because he grew up in both Compton and Watts, two predominantly Black and Latino working-class neighboring communities in South Los Angeles. However, sentiments like, "'No way you're from Watts. You're a Person of Color, and you're here at UCLA'" are insidious for their suggestion that Noah and other Black and Latino working-class students like him do not belong at traditionally White institutions like UCLA.

Racial microaggressions similar to the one described above were a salient theme throughout the focus group discussions. Most participants spoke to experiences with microaggressions that targeted them specifically as a Student of Color (i.e., first-hand accounts). A small minority of participants, primarily Christian, Josephine, and Julia (students who identified as either racially other or White), described microaggressions that were disclosed to them by their close friends and peers (i.e., secondary accounts). These experiences with racial microaggressions, as the forthcoming focus group data reveal, permeated both social and academic spaces and had a particular effect on students' sense of belonging on campus.

Christian, a neuroscience major, described an interaction highlighting how peer-to-peer interactions have implications for what racialized bodies belong and have visibility on campus. He shared an encounter his roommate told him about regarding a Black student walking the halls of an engineering building:

> [Christian's roommate] was telling me one time walking in Engineering IV, he saw a Black student walking his way. His immediate thought was like, "What are they doing here?" Like, "They don't belong here." And then caught himself and was like, "What the fuck? That's not an okay thought to have." But because like that demographic is

> literally—or I mean not literally, never represented—but because he never saw, like, in his class. In his experience, [seeing a Black student in an engineering building] was so weird to him that his first thought was like, "Wow, they don't belong here."

Racial microaggressions are indeed an action: Perpetrators assault racially minoritized victims. However, in this instance, Christian reveals how racial microaggressions are also a mode of thought; they are frames guided by White supremacy that inform the ways students walk through and make sense of the world. Although he did not verbally or physically interact with the Black student walking the halls, Christian's roommate recognized how his thought process, or assumptions, about who belongs in the engineering halls were laced with racist thought. In his previous experience, he never saw Black students in his classes; therefore, he assumed Black students do not study engineering, thus thinking, "What are they doing here? . . . They don't belong here." Upon further thought, he questioned his assertion as "'not an okay thought to have,'" for it wrongfully assumes Black students are not capable of studying engineering and are, therefore, intellectually inferior to Asian and White male students—the majority demographic of UCLA engineering majors. Additionally, it is worth noting the original assumption of Christian's roommate did not question or consider the institutional and structural components that prevent Black students from studying engineering (e.g., lack of culturally relevant pedagogy, implicit bias in the classroom); rather, the assumption operated on a default setting of White supremacist thought and reified a de facto culture stating Black students do not belong in the more "intellectually" challenging fields of study like engineering.

Participants' experiences also illuminated how Student of Color concerns for belonging also manifested in the classroom and in their interactions with instructors. Sienna's account, as one of few Students of Color in her art classes, sheds light on this phenomenon:

> My first experience with racism on campus was probably my first quarter here last year [2016-2017 academic year]. I'm in the Fine Art Department, which is primarily a White department. . . . And my painting teacher—one of the first things she said was, one, you need to spend money to make good art, which is very like classist and obviously not true. And, I remember she showed us a presentation of all of her artwork, and she's a [White] graffiti artist in San Francisco. And, before she started the slide show, . . . she just casually said, "Oh, I do real graffiti art. None of that gang banger shit," which is clearly targeting like Black and Brown folks who do graffiti art. . . .
>
> And throughout that whole quarter, I constantly felt like one, White artwork was taken so much more seriously. Like people literally would say after class, "I did that in an hour before class started." And that art was the art that got scholarships and praise and critical thinking during class. And then students of color who presented their work, rarely did anyone even try to analyze it. Rarely was any recognition given. And I constantly felt like one I didn't belong there. I actually considered changing schools because I just felt so othered in those classrooms.

Sienna's experiences highlight how racial microaggressions can occur in multiple forms within the classroom setting. They can occur in random, isolated verbal assaults (e.g., her instructor saying, "I do real graffiti art—none of that gang banger shit."). They can occur within formal assessments of student work (e.g., work done by White students received "scholarships," "praise," and "critical thinking" while "rarely did anyone even try to analyze [the work of Students of Color]."). Additionally, racial microaggressions can occur within the curriculum design of the class. In Sienna's experience, the pedagogical decision to primarily center and teach the art of White Europeans served as a curricular reminder that her work as an Artist of

Color is not valued in mainstream circles of the art community. These facts have ramifications for not only students' intellectual and creative development—for example, Sienna shared she and her peers were exposed to a narrowly curated (read as predominantly White) list of what is worth knowing within a Western academic tradition—but also curricular based racial microaggressions have implications for students' emotional well-being. Sienna described feeling isolated, alone, silenced, and othered—so much so she considered changing schools as the repeated takeaway message from her experience was she and her Peers of Color did not belong. Their work, informed by their experiences as Artists of Color, did not matter.

UCLA – Seemingly a "Dream," Actually a Research Institution

Throughout the focus groups, participants drew connections between Alexandra Wallace's commentary targeting Asians and their contemporary experiences with the racial climate on campus. Their experiences with racial microaggressions demonstrate they, too, have been racially targeted or have witnessed the casting of their peers as racially other. Their accounts make further sense upon considering how participants, over the years, came to understand UCLA as a postsecondary institution: At the start of their UCLA journey, many envisioned the campus would be "different"—a "dream"-like escape from their past experiences with racism. Dianne, a Black female, third-year student, shared how she had to reconsider what she imagined UCLA to be during the aftermath of a 2015 on-campus racialized incident:

> I remember [the "Kanye Western" themed party] being a big part of my freshman year because I was like, "I love UCLA," and then, that happened, and I was like, "Where the frick did I decide to go to school?" Like, "Why am I here?" I went to the rally that happened that day, and I was like, "This is shitty." Like, "This is so bad."

> I had class the next day, and we talked about it. My teacher was like, "We're not going to do class. We're going to talk about this." And there's this kid who was like, "Well you guys don't even get it." Like, "It was just a party." . . . and then I'm just like sitting there. I am so new to like talking about stuff because I came from a super racist high school where I was just like "Huhhhhh!" [*releases heavy sigh of exhaustion*] trying to like get through high school and then college, and I was like, "UCLA is amazing!" And, then I get here, and [the "Kanye Western"] happened fall quarter, freshman year. I'm like, "Where am I, like, where am I?"

Dianne and other participants discussed in particular the "Kanye Western"—a Greek life party hosted by Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity and Alpha Phi sorority in early October of 2015 (Maskara & Henthorn, 2015). Party guests, most of whom were White, were invited to wear costumes emulating rapper Kanye West, a Black American, and Kim Kardashian, a reality TV star of Armenian American ancestry. Many arrived wearing baggy clothes, plumped lips, and padded bottoms; some went as far as to adorn their faces with brown paint and black soot, which Black students and others criticized as blatant minstrelsy and blackface. In response, several hundred community members protested on campus, and UCLA administration indefinitely suspended the fraternity's and sorority's social events while an investigation took place.

At the time of the "Kanye Western," Dianne was looking to begin a new chapter in her life. She assumed UCLA would be the reprieve she needed from the racism of her high school. However, within her first couple of weeks on campus, Dianne realized UCLA was not the idyllic site she once dreamt of: '"Where the frick did I decide to go to school?'" she wondered. Dianne went on to describe how one of her instructors made space for students to discuss their feelings and reactions to the party, yet they were met with resistance that worked to silence and belittle

their critiques: "'Well you guys don't even get it.' Like, 'It was just a party,'" a peer stated in the party's defense. As the loudest voice in the room, this peer made it difficult for Dianne to process the racialized significance of the "Kanye Western." Additionally, this incident forced Dianne to re-evaluate what she once believed UCLA to be as she was left to wonder why "Kanye Western"-like events were "continually happening in all parts of life"—across both her high school and collegiate experiences.

Students posed their own explanations as to why "Kanye Western"-like events continued to be part and parcel to their UCLA experience. After discussing how they came to realize UCLA is not the racial utopia the institution is often touted to be, students also shared factors, they believed, worked to shape their unique racialized experience as UCLA undergraduates. Aziza, for example, a third-year Black woman, poignantly described how the undergraduate racial climate experience is particular to UCLA's status as a research-intensive institution:

> I think that UCLA, [the racial climate is] very specific because the [faculty] are researchers, so they think they know everything about the topic. It's like you are being taught by these experts. So, I feel like these experts feel that they know everything about the subject, which I mean yeah, okay, they know a lot. They dedicated years to researching this [given topic], but it's also like, now that they're in this sort of framework, they feel like they can just say anything or that they've gotten by for so long on thinking that all Black people or all People of Color have family in prison [for example] that they can just say [it] and it'd be okay. So, I think that it's definitely [a] UCLA research institution kind of thing. . . . It's just very interesting that they're always just like, "I've been researching this; I've been studying this, so I know it," and it's like, "You don't." Or even, "There's more to add."

Aziza's perspective offers a lens to make sense of how race works at UCLA. First, because UCLA faculty are trained as researchers and considered experts in their areas of study, within the classroom, faculty perspectives matter most. In the preceding quote, Aziza cited an instance of a White instructor telling his African American studies students on the first day of class, "I'm really lax about attendance, so if any of y'all ever need to visit family in prison, you're good." Making racist assumptions about Communities of Color before a group of students on the first day of class, Aziza suggests, goes a long way in shaping the dynamic and feel of a classroom for students. In response to this experience Aziza shared, focus group participants expressed shock and dismay, further suggesting how such comments from faculty could make Students of Color feel unsafe in the classroom; however, another dimension of this quote is that faculty's status as researchers, according to Aziza, serves as a pass for their own racial insensitivities. The institutional culture suggests faculty know best as the experts. As Aziza stated, a level of trust should be afforded to faculty as they have spent years studying and developing their intellectual prowess; however, participants also shared how students from minoritized backgrounds can substantially contribute to the classroom environment by not only diversifying the classroom's phenotypic makeup but also pushing faculty's frames of thought. Aïcha, for example, shared how questionable she found the course content and pedagogy of one of her communication studies courses:

> One class we're talking about music, and [the instructor] referred to countries from West Africa as like, oh, you know, "These underdeveloped places that don't have a lot of resources," or he was talking about one musical instrument that I know very well because my family members use it, and he was just talking about it almost like very objectifying anthropology kind of lens. He was teaching very disconnected, and he didn't even take

> the chance to be like, "Is there anybody in this class that's from West Africa that would to add this?" you know? Of course, he was a White man, and his TA was a White man. So, none of them could check themselves to know like, "Maybe something that I'm teaching could be offensive," you know? Because "racist" is the trigger word, but it [an instructor's course material and/or pedagogical approach] could be discriminatory, or it could just be that you're not doing your research properly and like we can call you out. Just because you have a degree doesn't make you an expert on everything, you know?

UCLA structuring through the positionality and frames of administration and faculty reifies an inherent power hierarchy that displaces the needs of students, primarily Students of Color, as subordinate to less marginalized stakeholders on campus.

This inherent power dynamic can best be seen through an incident Taylor, a fourth-year American Indian transfer student, had to navigate with a White instructor. Taylor shared how an originally innocuous meeting with a once trusted advisor quickly turned sour:

> I was talking to a professor, and she said, "What classes are you going to take next quarter?" And, I'm like, "I think I might want to take an American Indian Studies course, but the only class open is taught by this White professor, and I haven't heard good reviews [about] him from other Native students on campus." And, she was like, "Well, that doesn't mean you shouldn't take the class. Why wouldn't you take it?" And, I'm like, "He is White, and I just feel like the perspective is going to be biased on certain things." She just looked at me. She's like, "Well, I don't think that's right. Just because they're not Native doesn't mean they can't teach that." And then she got angry at me, and she told me like, "I don't support that kind of racism." And I'm like, "Okay," and I didn't say anything

> because I still have 6 weeks left in the class. I don't want to say anything. . . . She made me feel like my own experiences being Native didn't matter at all.

Taylor's interaction highlights a contemporary racialized ideology in which White people argue they, too, can be the victims of racism—a phenomenon frequently described as "reverse racism." This colorblind interpretation of racial discrimination proports if we, as a society, strive to look past and not see race (i.e., phenotypic color distinctions), then all people—White people included—are potential victims of racial discrimination. The instructor's disregard for Taylor's intuition and resourcefulness to seek the counsel of more senior Native peers served as a casual reminder her identity as a Native student should not inform decisions on her academic trajectory. In short, her Native identity does not belong in the classroom; it should be left at the door. More importantly, this interaction is a telling characterization of how students must decide the best course of action in response to microaggressions: Should I educate the other person? Should I respond at all? Will my reaction affect my grade? With 6 weeks remaining in the course, Taylor decided it was in her best interest to not challenge her instructor's anger and criticism. Accounts similar to Taylor's highlight the everyday reality and power dynamics Students of Color must navigate to prevent instructor-to-student microaggressions from negatively impacting their overall well-being and academic performance. Moreover, participants' accounts demonstrate an incongruence between what students imagined UCLA to be and what students actually experience on UCLA's campus. This reality has significance for how institutional leaders can work to change contemporary student experiences with climate in relation to past cultures of racism and inequity.

Denouement

Focus groups with students demonstrated the connections participants saw between the past and present of UCLA. Their commentary likened the racist beliefs of the "Asians in the Library" video with the racialized ideologies that informed the everyday campus experiences of Undergraduates of Color. Participants shared how these ideologies often materialized in the form of racial microaggressions from both their peers and course instructors, and, despite their institution's public history with racialized campus incidents, participants reported feelings of surprise when they first encountered racism on UCLA's campus. Participants originally thought UCLA would be a "dream"-like, liberal escape from racism.

Students' individual encounters with campus racism were also discussed in relation to their perceptions about how UCLA manages issues of race from an institutional perspective. This chapter's closing vignette sheds light on these perceptions and offers insight into how participants' individual encounters with racism can inform an institution's understanding of whether change has occurred on its campus. In this particular vignette, students question the efficacy of the diversity course requirement as an initiative designed to ameliorate campus racial climate experiences for marginalized campus groups. Here, this chapter ends by privileging the voices of student participants; however, I return to this vignette in Chapter 6 to offer recommendations for how campuses can rethink their approach to the design of diversity-related interventions.

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"Any other thoughts about that? I know it's a loaded question thinking about the relationship between our on-campus and online experiences with racism." I paused before scanning the room from right to left, making eye contact with each participant to ensure they

each had a chance to share additional perspectives they may have had. “Okay, so the last question here: How would you characterize the campus administration’s responses to instances of racism whether they be online or on-campus here at UCLA?”

Before I finished the question, to my left, Josephine definitively responded, “I think they’re really bad. The responses are awful. Like there is a lack of response. That’s it.” Noah quickly followed: “They don’t truly care, and it’s more of like, ‘Well, we have to do this to save face.’” Sienna affirmed Noah with an audible “Mmmm hmmmmm.” He continued:

> It’s more of, like, this is a politically correct thing to do, so they have to send out a message. But I feel it doesn’t seem genuine at all, their message. It just seems like just a political move they have to do because they want people to keep applying. They want people to keep buying merchandise. They want people to come to their football games. So, they’re just trying to save their image rather than really look out for the People of Color on campus.

Sienna furthered Noah’s line of thought:

> Yeah, I think there’s a huge focus on like getting People of Color on their pamphlets, on their magazines . . . Like that is where they care about People of Color on campus. But then day to day, when Students of Color are expressing that they’re uncomfortable, like I don’t know, how’d the administration respond to the Blackface party? Because that was like before I came. Because from what I heard, they were really quick to like sweep it under the rug and like get that distance from them.

Other participants in the room began to share their perspectives on the administrative response to the “Kanye Western” party. Josephine disclosed how informational sessions were held to inform partygoers attending an event in Blackface or “wearing clothes that are drug related” are

discouraged. Dianne wondered if the campus received "a fun little email from Gene Block" about the party. Randy offered there are limited venues for Students of Color to voice their concerns in the form of student-led panels or towns halls, yet the overall sentiment was the institutional response to racism was "lacking."

Josephine particularly questioned the efficacy of the diversity requirement implemented in 2015:

> The diversity requirement is supposed to like help get rid of people who are ignorant and just racist from ignorance. But I feel like it doesn't really help. Like that's not an adequate solution. I feel like that's the only thing [UCLA administration] actually tried to solve the problem.

"Kind of like off of that," Dianne stated as she furthered the discussion:

> I think I've had several people complain to me about having to do the diversity requirement because it just doesn't work with what they enjoy learning about. And it's strange because most of the People of Color that I know that have taken those classes are like, "Oh, that's such a great class. It was just so important to my education because I never had an opportunity out of a class like that before." And everyone else say, "I mean I *guess* I can take Asian American studies if I have to. I heard that one's kind of easy" or something like that. Like the people that should be getting so bad that I don't feel like they are or they don't care enough to try to.

Josephine agreed: "Yeah. And some people just take it to satisfy the requirement than like seeing the actual purpose and like taking something from it."

Sienna concluded the discussion by sharing how she witnessed this lack of care in classes she took:

I remember the first Chicano studies class I took, we learned about the history of wealth versus income and like why certain people are in business that they are. There's so much important history there. And I remember thinking like, "How is this not a requirement? How are people walking around not understanding like these structures that have been in place for like hundreds and hundreds of years that lead to where we are right now? How is that optional?"

And like, yeah, there's so many White people in like Chicano studies classes who are sleeping in class, who don't care, who don't read, who complain about the class and don't understand what we're being taught is so essential to interacting with each other and understanding each other's social locations. So yeah, the diversity requirement does not do much for that problem.

Chapter 5:

Student of Color Online and On-Campus Experiences With Racism

"Are you able to go home often?"[17]

"Yea, I can go home every weekend if I wanted, but I try not to."

Noah and I were making our way toward the Hill—the dreaded, steep incline UCLA undergraduates often trek to get to campus. It was early evening, and the sky's clouds remained overcast from the light rain earlier that day. We had met for an interview, walking to and from places on campus that informed Noah's racialized experience at UCLA. We started centrally, beginning at the Bruin Bear, a statue of the institution's mascot; we made our way to the Northeast side of campus, turning around at Bunche Hall, a 12-story building and home to some of the campus' social sciences and humanities departments, including Chicano/a studies, history, and political science; and then we cut back, passing the Bruin Bear once more, to end the interview at the entrance of Noah's residence hall.

Noah was excited to share his experiences. He arrived promptly as usual, wearing his routine aesthetic—a Lakers ball cap, jeans, long sleeve T-shirt, Nike skateboard backpack, and 2-cm-wide black hoops accenting his ears. As we walked, he reflected on UCLA's racial climate, often ending with self-reflexive commentary that spoke to his truth yet acknowledged the possibility of his peers' contrasting interpretations.

Forty minutes into the interview, we approached the traffic light demarcating the main campus from the residence halls (more commonly referred to as the Hill). Students filled both

[17] Note, quotations appearing in the opening vignette of this chapter are verbatim and transcribed from the audio-recorded walking interview conducted with Noah. The walking interview was used to learn more about participants' individual experiences with racism at UCLA. The walking nature of these interviews allowed for the campus—its buildings, landmarks, and community members—to serve as organic interview probes to elicit rich and context-specific information about participants' experiences.

sides of the crosswalk, eagerly waiting to make it across the busy intersection. While we waited for the light to turn green, Noah remembered other instances when race factored into his UCLA experience:

> Something I never really talked about, being on campus sometimes, it's just comfortable for me—sometimes I wear my hoodie. But you know, just being a Brown dude walking around UCLA with a hoodie, I do feel like sometimes people are, you know, "What's this dude doing?" Like, when I'm walking around, I feel like sometimes I have to put on a smile. If not, people are like, "Who's this dude?" So, yeah, that's definitely a thing. I don't know if it's just, like, me being hypersensitive or hyperaware or whatever. But I feel that, and sometimes I'm like, "I've got to put up a front." If not, I don't know. I just feel like people sometimes view me as, like, "Oh, he's shifty." It's weird.
>
> I said, "Shifty, as in?"
>
> Noah responded: "Like, sneaky. Like, 'Yo, you've got to watch out. What's he gonna do?' type of thing."
>
> "Have you explicitly encountered that?"
>
> "I haven't. But I just feel like I get those looks."
>
> "That's fair."

As a Black American male, I understood and empathized with Noah's feelings. Like many Men of Color, Noah was haunted by how the hoodie symbolized criminality and wrongdoing in the murder and news coverage of Trayvon Martin.[18] At UCLA, located among the

[18] On February 26, 2012 in Sanford, Florida, George Zimmerman, a mixed-race Latino, shot and killed Trayvon Martin—a 17-year-old, Black male high school student. On neighborhood patrol, Zimmerman said that he mistook Martin, wearing a dark colored hoodie, for a criminal and fatally shot him after a physical altercation between the two. Activism in response to the shooting, trial, and Zimmerman's acquittal has since been cited as an impetus for the Black Lives Matter movement (Noble, 2014).

predominantly White and affluent communities of Bel Air, Beverly Hills, and Brentwood, Noah's concerns for how his peers perceive his hooded Brown body are appropriate. Noah continued sharing:

> One thing I forgot to mention—again, I don't know if this was just being hypersensitive, but they were offering free food at [the Student Activities Center]. There was this super long line, and I was in the line. This White dude came up to me and was like, "Oh, what's this line for?" I'm like, "Oh, there's free food." And he looked. He's like, "Hhhmmph, no wonder." So, I don't know if I was just reading into it too much. I was like, "I don't get it." Like, did he look at me like, "Oh, of course you're [a Latino] gonna be here for free food," or it's like, "Oh, free food? Of course, there's a big line." I don't know.

I asked Noah, "It was you and, like, who was around you?" and Noah responded, "My friends who were also of Color. So, again, like, I don't know if I was just being hypersensitive."

****

Noah's hyperawareness and sensitivity to race relations on campus are common to the Student of Color experience at majority White institutions (Harper & Hurtado, 2007). Noah, similar to Dianne and Taylor (the study's other two focal participants), expressed a heightened awareness of how race informs not only his individual experience as a Latino but also his peers' perceptions about the racial climate at UCLA. At times, as Noah's vignette demonstrates, this awareness can leave students to wonder whether they are "reading too much" into a situation. Such doubt can be debilitating and alienating. This doubt aside, a hyperawareness and sensitivity to race on campus influences how Students of Color navigate an institution like UCLA. This chapter takes an ethnographic look at how this awareness guides the racialized experiences of Dianne, Noah, and Taylor in both online and on-campus settings.

In this chapter, I draw primarily upon focal participant data collection in the form of semi-structured walking interviews and ethnographic observations to understand the unique nature of Student of Color experiences with online and on-campus racisms. I further contextualize these sources with data from Dianne, Noah, and Taylor's participation in the study's video-elicited focus groups and documents collected throughout my individual time with them as focal participants. In Chapter 6, I put these data in direct conversation with the dissertation's research questions to articulate implications for research and practice. For this chapter, I present three salient themes to understand and compare the patterns of experiences across focal participants' interactions with racism both online and on campus.

The organization of this chapter proceeds as follows: To further contextualize the unique personality and character of each focal participant, I provide a table and narrative portraits to compare the tenor and makeup of data collection for each focal participant. I then introduce salient themes from data analysis to anchor the experiences of these focal participants within a brief narrative discussion about my specific approach to making sense of the walking interview and ethnographic observational datasets. This orienting information precedes an extensive exploration into these themes as findings substantiated by relevant excerpts from the data and descriptive analytic commentary. I end with a closing vignette to conclude the visual image of this chapter's story and offer more texture, character, and depth to this chapter's presentation of findings. This vignette serves as a telling moment allowing readers to pause and make further sense of participants' experiences from their voices. I revisit this concluding vignette in the dissertation's final chapter to tie together interrelated strands of the story and further argue what participants' experiences mean for continued theoretical, empirical, and methodological advances in the field of higher education.

Focal Participant Portraits

Focal participants were from a range of diverse backgrounds (see Table 5). In total, there was one Black (Dianne), one Latino (Noah), and one American Indian student (Taylor). Two of the three participants—Dianne and Taylor—identified as women; Noah identified as a male. All three participants were in the latter years of their UCLA experience: Dianne and Noah were third-year students, and Taylor was a fourth-year transfer student. Participants' choices of major and minor consisted of primarily social sciences and humanities based fields including English (Taylor), economics (Noah), psychology, and art (Dianne). Noah and Taylor chose education studies as a minor. All three focal participants considered California home—Noah and Taylor from Los Angeles and Dianne from the San Jose/Bay Area. Noah was the sole focal participant who lived on campus while Dianne and Taylor lived in an off-campus apartment near UCLA. The average age of the focal participants was 21 years. Next, I provide brief portraits of each of the three focal participants.

Dianne

Born to a Black woman and a half-Mexican man, Dianne was a mixed-race Black woman who was born and raised in California. She grew up in the Northern part of the state and had two distinct racialized and class-based experiences growing up. In her earlier years, she grew up in an all Mexican neighborhood. Although she understood Mexican culture and has limited fluency in Spanish, she felt like she was not "enough" to fit into the culture entirely. During those years, she grew up poor and was one of few Black kids in the community.

Table 5

Focal Participant Demographics

Pseudonym	Race/Ethnicity	Pronouns	Year	Major/Minor	Age	Home City/State	Housing (for Academic Year)
Dianne	Black/Black and Mexican	She, Her, Hers	3rd year	Psychology and Art	20	San Jose/CA	Off-campus apartment
Noah	Latino/Mexican American	He, Him, His	3rd year	Economics/Education Studies	20	Los Angeles/CA	Residence hall
Taylor	American Indian	She, Her, Hers	4th year transfer	English/Education	23	Los Angeles/CA	Off-campus apartment

At the age of 9, Dianne moved into a White community after her mom married a White man with a financial background that allowed for comfortable living. This new community was familiar for Dianne in the sense that, again, she was one of few Black kids; however, this community differed in that it was predominantly White. To Dianne's surprise, there were so few visibly Black students that the East Indian students at her new middle and high schools referred to themselves as "Black" and wore stereotypical Black clothing (i.e., baggy pants and shirts). Within Dianne's friend group, students were diverse: There was a Black girl, an Asian girl, and a White girl, but, even within this group, Dianne lamented, everyone did not quite "get it" regarding race.

Although her parents were college educated, Dianne grew up in communities where most people did not go to college. In fact, she shared how a childhood friend was in awe yet proud by the fact Dianne would be attending UCLA: "'Where we grow up,' her friend stated, 'people don't go to college.'" For Dianne, UCLA, a school she dreamt about attending since fifth grade, was a space for her to not only pursue her educational ambitions but also escape from the racist experiences of her past. She shared how students from her high school were racist and rarely received repercussions for their actions. For example, on Cinco de Mayo, students would come to campus with American flags and say, "'Go back to your country!'" Another student tweeted,

"'If it ain't White, it ain't right. #whitepower.'" For these actions, to Dianne's disappointment, school officials abstained from enforcing repercussions.

Shortly after her arrival at UCLA, Dianne began to notice race and racism would influence her collegiate experience as well. Socially, Dianne noticed how race shaped roommate experiences in college. During her first year on the Hill (i.e., the residence halls), Dianne realized there was a floor for only Black students. She lived beneath this floor her first year and wished she knew about such a designated floor prior to making her housing decision for the year. Dianne's second year, she roomed with a White girl from Bakersfield, CA—a conservative community Northeast of the Greater Los Angeles area. This began a friendship tinged with racial discomfort for Dianne. At the time of the study, Dianne continued to live with this roommate off campus, but she had lost hope in getting this roommate to understand where she was coming from with regard to racial justice and awareness.

Within her studies as an art student, Dianne encountered uncomfortable experiences related to her peers' and instructors' understandings about race as well. Many of these instances occurred during "critique"—a time in which a student displays their artwork for feedback from their peers and instructor. In one instance, a Filipino student displayed a painting featuring a person wearing a gorilla mask adorned with chains. Dianne sat uncomfortably in silence, listening to others address the painting for everything but its racial undertones, until the only other Black peer said, "'So, are we just not gonna talk about race?'"

Despite experiences like the latter, in which racialized minorities are rarely centered in the art curriculum at UCLA, art has served as a space for Dianne to make sense of the world. During her first year, for example, Dianne made a video in response to the "Kanye Western"-themed Greek life party. In the video, she retwists her dreadlocks while a poem from a campus

protest in response to the "Kanye Western" plays in the background. For Dianne, this video represents a sense of comfort with herself as a Black woman, much of which she represents through how she chooses to wear her hair:

> So, I cut off my hair before I came in as a freshmen 'cause . . . me doing my hair in dreads is like, it was a "Fuck you!" to White culture if I'm being completely honest. It was like I lived in this space for 9 years where I just didn't feel I could be me because I was Black and everyone around me was White. And I was like, "Okay, when I go to college, I'm gonna be as much me as I can possibly be in that instance and that involves being Black. And I'm not gonna straighten my hair anymore," like I stopped straightening my hair. I cut off all the part[s] that were straight, and I just started from the ground up, and my hair was this short. Freshmen year I was bald and not cute (*laughs*).

Around the time she made this video, Dianne also noticed a change in her own views:

> I thought anything was up for grabs for joke, 'cause I just love making jokes about everything. Like everything's fair game, but like after that I was like, "Nah, like not everything's fair game. There's certain things you don't touch because of how they hurt other people."

Noah

Noah was a 20-year-old, third-year student born and raised in the Los Angeles. Although he identified as Mexican American, he did not consider himself to be "traditionally Mexican" as he did not grow up speaking Spanish and was raised alongside his mother's side of the family, many of whom are Black. Growing up in Watts and Compton, Noah lived in a working-class household among his mom and two younger brothers. He received a quality education, attending a well-known STEM-oriented high school with a predominantly Black and Brown student

population. There, he felt "fortunate": "We had great teachers, a great college counselor. I had great mentors, and I think all that kind of helped me and prepared me for UCLA." During his high school years, he was also introduced to college-level ideas about racial oppression and social justice. For instance, Antonio Gramsci's "hegemony," Daniel Solórzano's "transformational resistance," and Tara Yosso's "community cultural wealth" were all concepts he first learned as a part of a community organization serving local elementary, middle, and high school students.

Upon arriving to UCLA, Noah admittedly had never seen "this many White people" before. He did not necessarily experience culture shock; rather, he felt he did not relate well to the larger campus. Fortunately, a freshmen summer bridge program served as a helpful transitioning tool for Noah to create a support network early in his UCLA journey. This experience left him not only feeling academically capable—because of his high school preparation, he felt accustomed to the rigors of the bridge program's course work—but also the program offered him an opportunity to get "to know people that looked like [him]." This program is housed in Campbell Hall, a space Noah described as his "second home":

> Campbell Hall is full of People of Color. I feel like I can relate to the people here, not only 'cause, you know, we're the same race or ethnicity, but I just feel like these people come from similar backgrounds that I come from, so again, I can relate to them. Instead of, like, when I was walking down Bruin Walk, I kind of felt that, like, "Oh, no! These people are definitely not like me."

As his first and second years at UCLA progressed, Noah stuck mostly to himself and a close circle of friends. In fact, he would spend most of his weekends back home with family during those years; however, Noah said he was forever grateful for the network the summer bridge

program provided him throughout those early days at UCLA and beyond. For one, it provided access to resources to use during the full academic year. It also introduced him to opportunities for future employment as he eventually began working as a peer tutor at Campbell Hall. Lastly, it offered him a core group of friends—a home-like feeling—that he would rely on moving forward with his UCLA coursework.

Coming to college, Noah thought about what degree would allow him to make the most money as possible upon graduation. UCLA did not offer a business degree for undergraduates, so he chose economics as the next best choice; however, it was in his experiences as an economics major Noah realized how race influences the ways in which his peers interact with him and other People of Color. For instance, as an economics major, Noah was one of few Students of Color in his classes. He expressed gratitude for his summer bridge program friends as they strategized and selected classes they knew they could take together and support each other through. However, even with this support, Noah lamented how his experiences as a Latino economics major were isolating.

Racialized experiences similar to this chapter's opening vignette left Noah to wonder about the legitimacy of his thoughts and feelings: Wait, did that just happen? Am I making that up? Am I being too sensitive? His willingness to question and see how race shapes collegiate relations, however, positively informed his ability to understand the experiences of students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds. For example, he acknowledged racial microaggressions are "especially more common for Black folks" as they make up a smaller percentage of the campus' population. He recounted an experience while giving a campus tour in which a young teenage woman asked if they would be seeing any basketball players along the way. Noah acknowledged the possibility: '"Oh, maybe. You never know.'" Shortly thereafter, a Black guy

walked by and the girl quickly asked, "'Oh, is he a basketball player?,'" to which Noah responded "'No, he's not a basketball player.'" This type of racialized targeting, regardless of whether it is directed toward him, did not necessarily unnerve Noah. His natural instinct was to "just kind of ignore" it; however, his upbringing, education, and individual personality allowed him to be aware of how his Peers of Color may feel targeted by issues impacting campus life.

As he developed over the years, Noah also shifted in his career aspirations. Originally, he was interested in following the money; however, in his experiences as an economics major, he soon realized money-driven spaces would not allow him to talk about "real issues." In the fall of his second year, he began taking classes in the education studies minor. He also joined different organizations like Students for Educational Reform. In these spaces, in which he often spoke about issues of racial justice and social transformation, Noah found his passion lied more in teaching than a money-driven profession. Over the years, he practiced his craft as an educator by giving back to where his UCLA adventure began—Campbell Hall. There he worked with Black, Brown, and other first-generation college students in ways that were not only helpful for students but also fulfilling for Noah as an individual. Upon graduation, Noah planned to pursue a master's teaching credential and teach social studies.

Overall, Noah took a positive outlook to life. He acknowledged racism is trying and difficult to navigate as a Student of Color going to college in a community noticeably different from his own; yet, his choice to "ignore" elements beyond his control has helped "to keep [him] sane." He was thoughtful, relatable, and admired by his peers. He also deeply cared about his work and the relationships he built with people around him.

Taylor

Taylor was a 23-year-old, fourth-year transfer student born and raised in the Greater Los Angeles area. She was born to a Mexican mother and Native American father and was primarily raised alongside her Native relatives. From a young age, she knew she was Native and grew up with many of the locals her age from the Native Los Angeles community. She went to predominantly White K-12 schools where she had particularly bad experiences; however, she credits her ability to navigate White spaces to her dad's "rough" and "straightforward" approach to parenting: "My dad's like very rough, but he's very straightforward, which I appreciate. Sometimes I need that." Her dad's words were often points of reference and motivation once Taylor made the decision to transfer to UCLA from a local community college.

Upon arriving at UCLA, Taylor was excited to begin a new chapter in her life. Attending UCLA was a "dream" for her, and she imagined it would be an experience different from the racialized experiences of her past. Early in her days on campus, Taylor quickly realized issues of race would impact her everyday UCLA experience. For example, a few weeks into fall quarter of 2016, Taylor had an off-putting interaction with a White male peer at an Alumni Center event. The White male refused to sit at the same table as Taylor and another female student "because nobody important [was] sitting there." Elsewhere, Taylor struggled with finding her place within the larger Native community on campus (e.g., campus organizations, student groups). Additionally, Taylor had a White female roommate who made living in the residence halls her first year at UCLA difficult and at times uncomfortable. All these experiences were occurring within Taylor's first couple of months at UCLA and led her to strongly consider transferring out of UCLA.

Her coursework was also a space where Taylor experienced racial microaggressions. Coming to UCLA, Taylor chose to be an English major and later decided to pursue an education studies minor to complement her studies. Within her studies in the English Department, which she described as a predominantly White space, Taylor felt as if her identity as a Native student was not valued. For example, during her second quarter at UCLA, Taylor met a White female professor who she originally valued as a close confidant, but, over time, Taylor felt differently about their relationship. While sharing her experiences as a Native student, Taylor was disappointed when this White professor conflated Taylor's racialized experiences and concerns with the "difficulties" of her mostly White peers. In another course, in light of the professor's critique of the stereotypical representations of Native people in the novel *Ramona*, Taylor was bemused by the professor's choice to offer a Troll doll dressed in stereotypical Indigenous clothing as a lighthearted prize for students. Another instructor assumed Taylor was a bilingual speaker given the grammar errors in one of her papers for the class. These experiences left Taylor to wonder if anything other than White was considered of worth at UCLA.

Whiteness was also a theme Taylor noticed within the transfer community at UCLA. From campus events to postings on the transfer student Facebook page, the transfer experience at UCLA, according to Taylor, was a predominantly White experience. These observations led Taylor to invoke some control over her UCLA experience. She noted how most, if not all, of her friends on social media were People of Color. Her close confidants on campus were People of Color as well. Over time, she found herself returning to a familiar space (Campbell Hall) to identify as home during her UCLA experience.

For Taylor, Campbell Hall represented a sense of comfort and familiarity as it is home to academic access and outreach programs for historically underrepresented students and the

campus' American Indian studies program: "It's friendly. It's like being at home. People say 'Hi!' to each other. . . . It's just very communal." At the end of her first year at UCLA (Spring 2017), Taylor applied for a position in the community college program of UCLA's Academic Advancement Program (AAP) housed in Campbell Hall. She knew of this particular program as she once participated in it as a community college student in 2014. In her role, she worked as a liaison to recruit Native community college students interested in transferring to UCLA. Taylor made a point to share that she began enjoying her UCLA experience once she started working for the community college program. She continued to work in this program until the summer after she graduated (August 2018).

Nearing the end of her UCLA journey, Taylor expressed reservations about her postgraduation plans: "I'm terrified" were her exact words to lightly characterize her feelings about her future. She originally thought she would pursue a teaching credential for graduate school; however, she did not want to make such a commitment as she was uncertain about what exactly she wanted to do. My interactions with Taylor led me to believe, regardless of what she ultimately decided, Taylor would do well for herself during her post-UCLA years. In relation to her peers, she presented herself in a calm and collected manner. She was thoughtful, mature, and professionally cordial in her interactions with acquaintances. Like most students, once she was in a space of comfort, such as Campbell Hall, Taylor was quick to smile, laugh, and talk about what she did on the weekend with her friends.

Findings

My analysis of data from walking interviews and ethnographic observations of focal participants' life on campus sought to understand the relationship between Student of Color experiences with online and on-campus racisms. This process began with open coding and

included the labeling of initial chunks of data that captured insightful information about participants' experiences and perspectives. Codes were specific to behaviors and interactions within the categories of the online and on-campus domains. Through a process of constant comparison, salient codes were combined when they shared similar properties. For example, "racialized online meme sharing" and "peer-to-peer racialized incidents" were originally used to categorize distinct interactions participants had within their respective online and on-campus experiences. Such coding gave equal weight and emphasis to these two particular phenomena of racism. Through further analysis and reflecting on my coding, I concluded framing the online and on-campus as distinct and independent domains lacked the analytic nuance needed to capture the complexity of participants' experiences. Further coding allowed me to detail the nuanced relationship of my coding. For example, "racialized online meme sharing," referring to online behavior participants knew of but did not actively participate in, became categorized under "a diversity of online behavior" to illuminate the individual agency Students of Color have in curating their own online based experience. Codes like "peer-to-peer racialized incidents," however, best fit within the theme "random yet pervasive on-campus encounters" to depict the ways in which participants must interact with race even when they do not want to on campus.

This process concluded in the form of three salient themes: (a) a diversity of online behavior, (b) online spaces mirroring on-campus tensions, and (c) random yet pervasive on-campus racialized encounters. These three themes highlight the parallels between focal participants' online and on-campus experiences with racism. Participants' perspectives illustrated the unique ways in which their social media usage ebbed and flowed yet ultimately depended on their choice of what they chose to see and respond to on their social media timelines. The racialized nature of their online experience, as participants' accounts illustrate, were directly

informed by on-campus patterns and tensions related to racialized student dynamics. This phenomenon was primarily evident in the common practice of online meme sharing across student social media pages. Lastly, focal participant data collection revealed students' on-campus experiences uniquely differed from their online experiences because students had less control over the frequently pervasive yet random interactions with racism they encountered from peers and instructors.

I begin the Findings section by presenting a descriptive narrative of the three themes along with relevant analytic commentary. This chapter's denouement section provides a closing vignette to describe how Students of Color remedy their experiences of hyperawareness and sensitivity to race in the form of safe spaces—or what participants referred to as "my second home." I further consider these points in the dissertation's final chapter and discussion of implications for research and practice.

A Diversity of Online Behavior

As undergraduate students during the late 2010s, Dianne, Noah, and Taylor—the study's focal participants—came of age at a digital moment in time. All three participants ended their K-12 schooling aware of the everyday prevalence of social media technologies. This awareness, however, does not assume they actively use social media technologies as some participants did not begin using online-based platforms until college. For example, Noah shared how many of his high school friends were surprised when hearing he began using Facebook in college:

> I definitely use Facebook now. But my first year [at UCLA], I didn't. So, when I actually created Facebook, they [his friends] were like, "You're on Facebook?!?" They were just, you know, surprised by it, 'cause I just don't use social media.

Variance in student social media usage is also apparent in how Dianne, Noah, and Taylor used social media at the time of the study. For one, they used a variety of different platforms. At the time of data collection, Dianne, Noah, and Taylor reported using a range of social media platforms at different frequencies (see Table 6). Diane reported using Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat on an hourly basis throughout the day. In comparison, she only used Twitter on a daily basis and rarely did she use Tumblr. Noah only used Facebook on an hourly basis. Noah used iFunny and Reddit daily, but he checked Twitter only weekly. Similar to Dianne, Taylor checked her Instagram and Snapchat accounts on an hourly basis. She used Facebook and Twitter less frequently and rarely did she use her Tumblr as well.

Table 6

Focal Participant Social Media Usage

Participant	Hourly Usage	Daily Usage	Weekly Usage	Rarely Use
Dianne	Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat	Twitter		Tumblr
Noah	Facebook	iFunny, Reddit	Twitter	
Taylor	Instagram, Snapchat	Facebook, Twitter		Tumblr

Participant responses to online racism vary as well, fitting the particular emotional and social needs of the individual student. For example, during a video-elicited focus group, in response to a peer's discussion of defriending[19] people, Dianne shared how she likes to see the good and bad of social media:

> I've yet to unfriend anyone on Facebook or Instagram. . . . if I see something that's upsetting or problematic, I'll be like, "No, I need to see this." . . . Being able to see that, it validates my experience has been a way where I'm like, "No, I'm not making this

[19] "Defriending" represents the act of deleting a contact who was once a member of an individual's Facebook friend's list. This practice has influenced the similar phenomenon of "unfollowing" individuals on social media platforms like Twitter and Instagram.

> [upsetting or problematic stuff] up. No, this happened. This is like a part of my everyday life."

In contrast, Taylor shared how she often lacked the energy and intention to argue with other Facebook users about social issues: "I'm not the person to comment and to get into those [social and political] debates online because I don't have the energy and time. I don't want to waste my energy on that." From these observations, there is no singular online racialized experience for Students of Color. A range of responses to online racism exists. Participants shared an awareness of online-based racism both related to general society (e.g., Donald Trump's presidency) and their collegiate experiences. Their responses thereafter are informed by their ability to navigate and filter racialized content in ways that align with their needs as individuals.

Participants also shared how a common medium for racialized content is in the increasingly popular sharing of memes. Since 2016, the "UCLA Memes for Sick AF Tweens"[20] Facebook page has been a space for UCLA undergraduates to share images that satirize their UCLA experience; however, as Noah recounted, racist and generally offensive undertones often influence this popular form of web-based sharing with peers:

> You see a lot of images or memes regarding the model minority myth. It would be a meme like, "Oh, they're just so hardworking." You know, but they'll be clever or funny about it. You see a lot of those. I don't think you see a lot of attacks on Black and Brown folks because I think people are like, "Oh, no! That's going too far." But I guess when they make fun of Asian groups, it's fine. Hmm, what else? I think a little bit you'll see the stigma, again, of North Campus versus South Campus type of thing. And they'll rag

[20] Read aloud as "UCLA Memes for Sick as Fuck Tweens."

on certain majors like Chicanx studies, African American studies. Like, "Oh, that's not even a major."

Noah's discussion of the memes page highlights a racialized theme consistent with other data points within the Student of Color experience at UCLA. In Chapter 4, I discussed undergraduate students' ability to identify consistent trends between a representation of UCLA's racialized past and students' contemporary racial climate experiences. Josephine, a White, female student, specifically noted how her peers jokingly believed all their Asian male instructors looked the same. Similarly, here, Noah shared how Asian identities are a frequent source for "clever or funny" entertainment. Within online spaces, according to Noah, blatant stereotyping of Black and Brown students is considered "going too far," yet it is common to see memes and other online posts that characterize Asians as "the model minority myth" as "'they're just so hardworking.'" In the next section, I describe how these memes also reveal how the online domain is a space where on-campus racialized tensions manifest as well.

Online Spaces Mirroring On-Campus Tensions

Over the course of data collection, participants shared example memes that came from the UCLA Facebook memes page. Students randomly post on this page multiple times a day; therefore, the following memes are not representative of the full scope of content posted on the page. Nonetheless, they offer a glimpse into the often-unquestioned racialized nature of the meme-sharing phenomenon. Highlighted in Figure 1, for example, one meme pokes fun at Asian male instructors in the sciences.

Figure 1

Meme of Asian Male Instructor

This meme, in particular, requests for "Life Science 4 [an undergraduate course at UCLA] students' reactions only." The meme features a picture of an unnamed Asian male situated under the following three quotations: "Okay, we stop in 5 seconds," "I will stop right now," and "Question at all?" This pairing of an unnamed Asian male along with the quotations mirroring nonnative or "broken" English-speaking patterns targets Asian male instructors as unrecognizable and perpetual foreigners on UCLA's campus. Another meme, seen in Figure 2, jokingly suggests the international student experience is exclusively an Asian student experience.

Figure 2

Meme of Crazy Rich Asians

This meme features a promotional poster for the movie *Crazy Rich Asians* (2018). The poster is in its original format with the exception of photoshopped UCLA ball caps adorning the heads of the lead actress and actor. The student who posted the meme left a caption reading "There's a movie about the International Students." This meme suggests, for one, "International Students" at UCLA are synonymous with "Asian." Therefore, international students of Black, Latinx, and White racialized identities, hailing from countries in Africa, Europe, South America, and elsewhere, are not colloquially read as "international." Secondly, this meme suggests a majority, if not all, Asian international students come from wealthy backgrounds. This

characterization misrepresents Asian international students as economically privileged and protected from any forms of social oppressions such as racism.

In short, the sharing of racialized memes is an undeniable component of the UCLA undergraduate online experience. In fact, in an aforementioned quote, Noah draws an insightful contrast between the visible presence of memes targeting Asians in relation to the paucity of memes targeting Black and Brown identities: "I don't think you see a lot of attacks on Black and Brown folks because I think people are like, 'Oh, no! That's going too far.'" This contrast highlights important dimensions within the online experience for Undergraduates of Color. For one, at UCLA, the targeting of Asians more readily passes as a culturally acceptable and often unquestioned form of racial joking. The online world also reflects the racialized implications for academic majors and minors of study at UCLA. One meme, in particular, questions the rigor and economic viability of sociology majors (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

Meme of "Sociology Major Start Pack"

This meme is complex as, for one, it features a number of images and memes copied and pasted to make one large collage-based meme. The meme was also posted by a South Campus[21] major as the poster's caption reads "sincerely, a south campus major." The larger meme itself reads "sociology major starter pack" with the following memes copied and pasted below it: The top left image features an unidentified White male with the top caption reading "Sociology 101" and bottom caption reading "'Man, gender is a social construct.'" Another meme highlights a screenshot of a Google search for "sociology jobs" with the search yielding "Did you mean: unemployment benefits" as a result. Another meme highlights the word "triggered." The bottom left corner features a meme with a cisgender-presenting man and woman. The male's caption reads, "Ma'am could you please calm d-." The assumed woman interrupts by saying, "Did you just assume my gender?!?" To its right, another meme features a White male with his arms crossed under a caption reading, "No, you check your privilege." Another meme reads, "The White privilege conference." Another meme features a White male drinking what appears to be beer under the caption "What does it look like I'm doing? Studying sociology." Another meme is a screenshot of a text conversation. A texter says, "I'm at a bar [right now] [laughing my ass off]." Their peer, in response, states, "Shouldn't you be studying right now." The original texter responds with, "I'm a [sociology] major[.] dude[,] I am studying." Read together, these memes suggest sociology and presumably other North Campus majors at UCLA lack rigor, are unemployable, and entertain questionable topics like race, gender, trauma, and social privilege.

[21] Within the UCLA community, North and South Campus refer to the geographic demarcation of buildings and departments on the North and South sides of campus; however, within the undergraduate context specifically, North and South Campus represents an intellectual divide. South Campus—home to the medical school and other STEM departments—is viewed as more intellectually rigorous and economically viable than North Campus, which houses social sciences and humanities disciplines as well as professional schools such as law, education, and social welfare.

My time with Dianne confirmed this theme of online manifestations of on-campus racialized tensions. As we walked down from the undergraduate residence halls, passing UCLA's track and field stadium prompted Dianne to discuss the stereotyping of Black students on campus. She began by sharing how her cousin was on UCLA's track and field team, leading her to reveal she has often felt Black students are assumed to get into UCLA for either their athletic prowess or other skill-based talent (e.g., within Dianne's case, art). The presiding assumption is Black students do not get into UCLA for their "intellect." Dianne continued sharing how North and South Campus majors are stereotyped as well. This stereotyping has been evident in her interactions with one of her roommates:

> I have a [Chinese] roommate who is an aerospace engineer [a South Campus major]. It started a lot sophomore year where she'd just be like, "No, but you guys don't get it. I'm an engineer. I'm doing college." Her thing was like, "No, no, no, but I'm an engineer. The stuff that I'm doing is more important. The stuff that I'm doing is way harder." And I'm just like, "Huh?" . . . She'll never say like, "You're wasting your time." She'll just be like, "Yeah but like you're doing art" and like, "Oh no, no, but you're doing psych."

As an art and psychology double major, Dianne left interactions similar to the latter confused by the unquestioned assumptions that stereotype academic majors on campus. Her roommate suggested Dianne and other North Campus majors are not "doing college" or "important" work in general. Although Dianne's interaction with her roommate did not explicitly mention race, their interaction, in light of Noah's discussion of the UCLA memes page, was indeed racialized. As Noah shared, North Campus majors like Asian American studies and African American studies—home to predominantly Students of Color—are "not even [considered] a major" by some UCLA undergraduate students. Similarly, the sociology meme in

Figure 3 ridicules North Campus majors for studying topics like gender, White privilege, and other forms of social oppression.

Random yet Pervasive On-Campus Racialized Encounters

Within their on-campus experiences, participants demonstrated many of their interactions with race and racism often occurred beyond their control and to their discomfort. In other words, although Students of Color could navigate the campus' racialized dynamics using word of mouth oral histories from more senior peers or lessons learned from their own personal experiences on campus, Students of Color often found themselves in on-campus situations that prompt racially hostile dynamics beyond the individual student's control. In some cases, the dynamics and culture of the setting compelled students to see a racially hostile scenario to its end despite students' desires to do otherwise. For example, Dianne shared an encounter with a White female peer during one of her art classes:

> Two quarters ago, I did this artwork that was exemplifying how I felt the summer went for me 'cause it was [a] very racially tense summer. So, I did this chess [painting] that was [a] White Power fist against [a] Black Power fist and the title was "I Plan on Winning." . . . It came to critique time, and there was this girl who I don't know her exact ethnicity, but she was like, "Well I'm White. Are you saying that I'm on the bad side?" And I was just like, "Um, no, no, these are Black Power and White Power fists . . ."

Dianne summarized how she explained the symbolic representations of her painting to her peer: "Black Power isn't just Black people are better than White people, but White Power is very much White people are better than Black people." The few other Students of Color in the class attempted to aid Dianne in the explanation of her work to the White peer; however, as Dianne continued to share, their efforts were to no avail:

> She [the White female peer] just went off and was like, "Well, what does this [painting] mean? Like, should I be offended? I don't know if I should be offended by this." . . . This girl was just like, "But I'm technically White, so you're saying like I'm a bad person," and then all this stuff, and I'm just like, "Wow!" . . . That was very strange. I called my mom afterwards and was like, "This bitch just went off on me during my critique, and she just doesn't understand." I was so upset.

Dianne's experience reveals the reality Students of Colors encounter within the classroom context of traditionally White institutions. During "critique," Dianne was expected to display her work, summarize her motivations and intentions, and then field a question-and-answer session with her peers and instructor. To Dianne's pleasure, her White instructor enjoyed her piece's social commentary about race, noting its applicability to both past and contemporary race relations in the United States. During this particular critique, however, a majority of time and emotional energy was dedicated to teaching the White female peer about race. Instead of receiving substantive feedback about her artistry, Dianne was tasked to educate her peer about race and racism. Furthermore, as the expectation during critique is to engage your critics in a discussion about your work, Dianne felt compelled to engage the back and forth with her White female peer; however, as Dianne's frustration suggests, her critique was more about reassuring her peer's confidence she was not "a bad person" as opposed to developing Dianne's artistry as a creative. This example demonstrates a common and often unavoidable reality for Students of Color—to educate their White peers and others about U.S. race relations.

Denouement

My time with focal participants revealed the diverse, similar, and uncontrollable ways Undergraduates of Color experience online and on-campus forms of racism. These experiences

were diverse in that students found they often had more agency in how they mediated the online world; thus, there was a range in participant usage of online social media technologies and responses to online racialized aggressions. When these online aggressions occurred, participants found online racialized tensions closely mirrored existing on-campus racialized tensions. From my interactions with Dianne, Noah, and Taylor, the substantive difference between their online and on-campus experiences lied in the lack of control participants had in either avoiding or responding to on-campus racialized incidents.

These random yet pervasive on-campus racialized encounters can indeed be challenging and at times alienating for Students of Color; however, despite these challenges, participants demonstrated they were able to identify on-campus spaces for themselves to be comfortable and seek necessary counsel. This reality was evident in participants' discussions of home-like environments where they felt at ease and safe to be themselves as students proud of their racial and ethnic identities. I came to know these spaces—or "my second home" as participants called them—during my walking interviews with each focal participant. For example, after ending a discussion about his thoughts on the unique yet particular experiences of Black and Latinx students on campus, Noah and I began to transition to our next stop along his walking interview:

Noah: So, Campbell, my second home.

Moses: Your second home?

Noah: Yeah, I'm always there in Campbell. . . . Before it was a lot of just services that they offer. So, a lot of peer learning services, which is basically like tutoring. And now I actually became one of the tutors, so now I'm there for work as well.

The following vignette illuminates the possibilities spaces like multicultural centers and services on campus can offer marginalized student groups. As I will further address in Chapter 6, these spaces provide students an avenue to learn and gain a greater awareness of interracial difference. Most visibly, however, as the following vignette with Taylor depicts, these spaces offer a place of belonging, communal fellowship, and employment for Students of Color when they are unable to feel at "home" in the larger campus community.

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Sitting at a desk she shares with student workers and full-time staff within UCLA's AAP's community college outreach initiative, Taylor picked up the office phone to dial a prospective transfer student: "Hi, is this Karla?"

> Hi, this is Taylor. I'm calling from UCLA's [community college program]. I'm calling you in regard to the application you submitted for the Native and Pacific Islander summer program. I'm going over your application, and I've noticed you have not yet created a UC TAP account, and, whoever is doing your letter of recommendation, they haven't submitted it yet, so I just wanted to let you know because everything—all parts of the application—are due by June 1st.

Similar to Taylor's call to Karla offering outreach, the community college initiative's workspace within AAP was one of support, affirmation, and community for many undergraduate students from working-class and racially minoritized backgrounds. Prior to calling Karla, Taylor pulled out a small lunch box from a refrigerator with a sign reading, "This is a communal space. Please keep the fridge and microwave spotless." Taylor's work area featured posters celebrating the ethnic identities of the program's students. One poster was a poem printed in Spanish advocating for a simple yet fulfilling way of life:

Vive simple.[22]

Sueña grande.

Da gracias.

Da amor.

Rie mucho.

Another poster with a centered cartoon image of a Latina student dressed in her graduate ceremony cap and gown highlighted the words "undocumented, unafraid and unapologetic" in boldfaced font above her. One panel of wall space featured a large sheet of parchment paper with a monarch butterfly—a symbol of Latinx migration—painted across its center. Just below the butterfly was the question, "How has [the community college program] impacted you?," to which students attached their written responses on butterfly shaped Post-It notes around the larger butterfly. Taylor's butterfly Post-It read, "[The program] gave me the confidence to pursue higher education and has been one of my safe spaces on campus."

From the networks of support and outreach to the visible recognition of underrepresented student identities, this program represents comfort and belonging for Students of Color who are often left unnoticed by the dominant culture of a campus like UCLA. As Taylor stated, safe spaces like AAP and its respective programs and location on campus—Campbell Hall—provide a place of belonging, communal fellowship, and scholastic and professional development for UCLA Undergraduates of Color:

Campbell is where I work. This is probably one of the few or only buildings where I feel comfortable in all the time. I've never had a bad experience in here. . . . I feel like when I

[22] Translated into English, the signs reads, "Live simply. Dream big. Give thanks. Give love. Smile a lot."

go in here everybody is just super nice. Compared to—when we go to the humanities [building], that's my department's [building], everybody is just very serious, and here, it's like being at home. That's how I view it. I don't know if it's because the students that are in AAP are Students of Color.

Just the atmosphere [is] different. It's friendly. It's like being at home. People say "Hi!" to each other. If there's free food—normally Dr. Alexander [AAP's director] will have meetings a lot, and there'll be food leftover from those meetings. Then somebody, I forgot what her name is, but she'll send out an email to the whole building like, "There's food down here." It's just very communal. I feel this marks—when I started working here—the starting point of me actually enjoying my UCLA experience.

Chapter 6:

Diversity, Institutional Realities, and Their Effects on the Racial Climate Experiences of Undergraduates of Color

On January 8, 2019, the *Daily Bruin* released a column reporting the implementation of a new mandate requiring applicants for faculty positions to submit an equity, diversity, and inclusion statement (Chavez-Martinez, 2019). This document, according to UCLA's Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (hereafter, EDI), asks candidates to describe "their past, present and future contributions to equity, diversity and inclusion" (Chavez-Martinez, 2019, para. 2). According to Scott Waugh, who served as UCLA's executive vice chancellor and provost at the time of this study, these statements serve as an institutional approach to more regularly gather information related to "equity, diversity, and inclusion."[23] EDI noted the implementation of this mandate helps UCLA "live up to its ideals"; however, EDI officials also acknowledged the mandate is "only a modest attempt at resolving the campus' lack of faculty diversity" (Chavez-Martinez, 2019, para. 4). For example, as of February 2016, faculty at UCLA remained roughly two thirds White and two thirds male. In comparison, the undergraduate student body during the 2015-2016 academic year consisted of 27% White and 44% male students. With such a disproportionate representation of White, male faculty members in relation to undergraduate student demographics, concerned UCLA community members are indeed left to question how equity, diversity, and inclusion statements will substantively aid the campus' problem with faculty diversity. Moreover, these numbers leave to question how this new hiring initiative can

[23] I quote this use of "equity, diversity and inclusion" to remain consistent with the *Daily Bruin*'s reporting and description of this mandate and call into question the lack of specificity around what kinds of equity, diversity, and inclusion UCLA is particularly invested in (e.g., race/ethnic, class, gender-based diversity). Additionally, my use of quotations problematizes who the universalizing notion of "equity, diversity, and inclusion" actually serves. I revisit these considerations in detail later in this chapter.

effectively work to create equitable faculty-student interactions and inclusive classroom conditions for undergraduate Students of Color.

Seven days removed from its reporting of the new diversity statement requirement, the *Daily Bruin* reported on 200 faculty members' concerns about the lack of diversity on the search committee tasked to hire the new chair of UCLA's Psychiatry Department and director of the Semel Institute of Neuroscience and Human Behavior (Chavez & Nucci, 2019). Of the 11 committee members, seven were White men, three were White women, and one was a Latino man. To ease faculty concerns, the administration said they made their best efforts to keep diversity in mind when composing the committee. For instance, Kelsey Martin, dean of UCLA's School of Medicine, revealed the committee met guidelines set by EDI. She also stated that, in 2017, she implemented a requirement for all search committees to have 25% representation of "diverse groups, namely women or racial minorities" (Chavez-Martinez & Nucci, 2019, para. 11). For many of the concerned 200 faculty members, a 25% representation of minoritized faculty is too low a benchmark to effectively work toward racial and ethnic diversity.

This mismatch between the rhetoric of institutions—represented by UCLA's diversity statement mandate—and the lived practice of institutions—evident in the composition of the majority White and male search committee—symbolizes the racialized and gendered stakes at play for Students of Color at traditionally and majority White campuses around the country. Such a mismatch leaves to question how, despite an administration's best intentions, institutional diversity practices continue to reaffirm the racialized status quo within higher education? Moreover, how do these administrative decisions about institutional directions for diversity impact the everyday experiences of undergraduate Students of Color? In this chapter, I summarize the substantive lessons from Chapters 4 and 5 as a means of offering answers to these

questions and propose recommendations for both student and academic affairs practice and campus racial climate research.

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I began this chapter with a vignette from UCLA's institutional context as an entrée into thinking about the relationship between diversity cultures, encompassing an institution's policies and practices, and its influence of the campus racial climate experiences of Undergraduates of Color. At the time of this study, institutional investments in EDI are often tasked and colloquially understood to improve racialized interactions among various stakeholders on a college campus, including students, faculty, and staff (Harris et al., 2015). This interpretation suggests diversity-related policies specific to either student or academic affairs do not operate in isolation of one another. Rather, policies such as UCLA's diversity statement mandate that primarily impact faculty hiring also directly impact student experiences in the classroom, for these potential faculty hires, for example, have the opportunity to either create inclusive learning environments or perpetuate a culture of racial microaggressions toward minoritized students. In this chapter, I refer to this and other telling vignettes from the dissertation's findings chapters to reveal the study's significance for higher education research and practice.

My purposes in this concluding chapter are threefold: First, I explicitly put the data and themes from Chapters 4 and 5 in conversation with the study's research questions. In this section, I provide clear answers to the research questions and articulate assertions that will contribute to empirical understandings in the field of higher education about the campus racial climate experiences of Students of Color. Second, I aim to discuss institutional approaches to diversity, akin to policies and practices highlighted in the opening vignette, that shape how students experience the campus racial climate. In particular, I draw upon Omi and Winant's

(2015) understandings of race and racism in a neoliberal era to examine how institutional practices of diversity reify systemic racialized oppression. My third purpose is to highlight the study's implications for student and academic affairs practice and campus racial climate research.

Limitations

Limitations of the study include the unequal representation of racialized student identities on campus. In the original study design, I sought to understand the relationship between student experiences with climate and perceptions of culture from Students of Color and their White peers. However, despite my best efforts, recruitment yielded no participation from Asian students and students from African or Middle Eastern countries of origin, and few White students. Because the study's video elicitation artifact, "Asians in the Library" specifically targets Asian international students, no participation from Asian students limits the study's perspective on the unique ways Asian, Asian American, and Pacific Islander students are racialized and treated at UCLA. Despite these limitations, I chose to include data from White participants as their inclusion does not challenge the dissertation's ability to understand the racially minoritized student experience. As data from Chapters 4 and 5 demonstrate, White participants shared perspectives that aligned with their Peers of Color and offered valuable analytic considerations regarding interracial difference and awareness. I further address these points in forthcoming paragraphs of the Discussion section. An additional limitation regarding the study's participants is the sample size. The limited number of 12 focus group and three focal participants prevents me from making claims representative of the target population; rather, the small sample size was consistent with the study's aims of exploring students' on-campus and online experiences with race and racism in depth.

Additionally, the study's effort to operationalize the past of UCLA included the use of one YouTube video from UCLA's past. Future research would benefit from the inclusion of archival methods or climate perspectives from the period of time researchers wish to compare to the present to operationalize more rich and robust conceptualizations of the past. With these limitations in mind, the study's findings have particular importance for how practice and research in the field of higher education and student affairs can better meet the needs of racially minoritized students and move toward cultures of equity and inclusion of diverse populations.

Discussion

This study explores the relationship between an institution's racial past and present through the following questions:

1. How do undergraduate students' contemporary campus racial climate experiences relate to their perceptions about their institution's historical legacies of racism?
2. What is the relationship between the online and on-campus racisms experienced by undergraduate Students of Color?

These questions were addressed through a qualitative phenomenological design, including textual analysis of campus artifacts, video-elicited focus groups, semi-structured walking interviews, and ethnographic observations of a mutually agreed upon portion of participants' daily life on campus.

Findings demonstrate UCLA undergraduates are able to identify similarities between the institutional histories and practices of their campus and their everyday experiences with the contemporary campus racial climate. In particular, students highlighted continuities across the racialized ideologies present in the "Asians in the Library" video and the contemporary, everyday racial microaggressions they have either experienced and/or witnessed. For example,

students identified how the targeting of Asian students as foreigners in the video was consistent with how participants witnessed their contemporary peers' characterization of Asians as a monolithic "model minority" group.

The data also demonstrate that, despite UCLA's past racist incidents, students come to UCLA viewing it as their "dream school"—a place where the problems of race and racism do not exist. Additionally, the online and on-campus racialized experiences for undergraduate Students of Color are mediated via the individual student's ability to negotiate and filter their experience. Within online experiences, Students of Color have more autonomy to shape and potentially avoid racially hostile experiences. Taylor, for example, disclosed how she chooses not to engage with racist and problematic remarks posted by other users across her social media profiles: "I'm not the person to comment and to get into those [social and political] debates online because I don't have the energy and time. I don't want to waste my energy on that." In contrast, on campus, Students of Color have less autonomy to curate their racialized encounters, as reflected in Taylor's decision to not challenge a faculty mentor's suggestion that Taylor was engaging in "racist" behavior as she had "6 weeks left" in the course and did not want to negatively impact her grade.

Using the theory of racial formation (Omi & Winant, 2015) and campus culture (Kuh & Hall, 1993) as conceptual lenses, this study's findings indicate UCLA's branding and responses to campus incidents are informed by neoliberal ideologies about race and racism. Omi and Winant's (2015) theory of racial formation argues "what is considered racist is often defined very narrowly, in ways that obscure rather than reveal the pervasiveness and persistence of racial inequality in the United States" (p. 128). With economic moves toward neoliberalism in the 1960s, Omi and Winant (2015) argued colorblind interpretations of oppression came to

prominence, framing racism as an *individual* rather than a structural (or societal) problem. As microcosms of U.S. society, institutions of higher education have adopted not only the economic initiatives of neoliberalism but also its racial ideologies. According to critical theorist Sara Ahmed (2012), this social influence has led to a politics of diversity in the form of "happy talk"—"a habit of talking in mission talk" or "a way of telling a happy story of the institution" (p. 10). Such "happy" stories of an institution are evident in examples similar to this chapter's opening vignette about the *Daily Bruin*'s reporting of the new diversity statement initiative as an "institutional success" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 10) story. By centering this initiative as front-page campus news, the *Daily Bruin* engages in a happy discourse that presents UCLA as seemingly concerned and proactive about ameliorating racial diversity. However, what is at stake with institutional happy talk is the ability to interrogate how institutional responses and diversity programming are closely tied to dominant ideologies of race and racism in the United States.

Within UCLA's recent history, colorblind interpretations of racism as an individual problem, as opposed to structural or institutional, are evident. UCLA Chancellor Gene Block (2011) characterized the "Asians in the Library" video as an individual aberration deviating from the "pride" UCLA students, faculty, and staff take "in having one of the most diverse campuses in the nation." As this study's findings illustrate, this political maneuvering on the university's behalf works to protect the institution's public image and reputation. Dianne and other focus group participants came to UCLA, despite its documented racialized history, believing negative experiences related to race were a part of their individual pasts; however, using example participant experiences with racial microaggressions (highlighted in Chapter 4) and theoretical contributions from race scholars in higher education, I now demonstrate how the neoliberal racial

ideologies of UCLA's campus culture also manifest in students' experiences with the racial climate.

Scholars have discussed how neoliberal institutional cultures and their reduction of racism as individual aberrations operate covertly to shape the everyday racialized experiences of students (Garcia et al., 2011; Harper, 2012). Gina Garcia and colleagues (2011) noted how "the embedded nature of racism within structural elements of colleges and universities can lead individual students, faculty, and practitioners to commit racist acts, often without full recognition of how their actions may be racist" (p. 13). Harper (2012) also provided a frame for understanding how individuals and their actions work to reify a multilevel system of racial oppression by defining racism as

> individual actions (both intentional and unconscious) that engender marginalization and inflict varying degrees of harm on minoritized persons; structures that determine and cyclically remanufacture racial inequity; and institutional norms that sustain White privilege and permit the ongoing subordination of minoritized persons. (p. 10)

By framing racism as a structural problem that then informs individual and institutional decisions, scholars and practitioners can begin to understand how seemingly benign remarks, actions, and practices are part of a larger system that perpetuates a culture of racism and silences the voices and concerns of Students of Color. Dianne, as an example, recounted how a White peer repeatedly stated the "Kanye Western" "was just a party," and the partygoers "didn't mean any harm." Within a neoliberal framing, such comments suggest critics' claims of racism mischaracterized the intentions of partygoers. This peer, however, similar to Alexandra Wallace in the YouTube video "Asians in the Library" (2011), was unaware of how his thoughts and commentary about race and racism were consistent with dominant discourses that prioritize the

intentions and motives of an individual as a means to obscure the pervasiveness of racism as a structural and institutional problem (Omi & Winant, 2015).

To further understand the empirical significance of the study's findings, it is also important to note participants' abilities to identify racialized ideologies that specifically target Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) students. Participants highlighted racial stereotyping of Asians as a monolithic group as a continuity between the "Asians in the Library" video and participants' contemporary experiences with the racial climate. In particular, Noah described how the "model minority myth" influences how students envision their Asian peers as primarily hardworking and studious students. This narrow and often unquestioned interpretation of Asian identity works not only to marginalize further AAPI students who do not fit the stereotypical mold of the "model minority" but also to reaffirm the exclusion and underwritten diversity of the Asian community within the literature on race and racism in higher education (Museus et al., 2013).

Participants from the present study—none of whom were of AAPI descent—demonstrate students are able to question racist behavior against students of a racialized group other than their own. Participants recognized how the experiences of AAPI students are rendered negligible in the everyday of campus life. At UCLA, Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islanders comprise 33.5% of the population (Nguyen et al., 2016). However, the ethnic diversity of this population is often aggregated and thereby erased as students, according to Josephine in Chapter 4, frequently joked they "couldn't distinguish between them [their Asian male instructors]," further suggesting the AAPI community at UCLA continues to be treated, as Alexandra Wallace described them in 2011, as monolithic "hoards."

The significance of these findings about interracial discrimination and awareness could partly be due to the unique context of the research site. At UCLA, there are a number of funded ethnic studies departments and programs along with multicultural centers and student organizations. This multicultural presence speaks to possible benefits and outcomes when institutions provide financial support and programming for racially diverse students. However, more research is needed to have a more comprehensive understanding about the relationship between institutional supports and student development of interracial awareness of discrimination and bias.

Student experiences within the online domain also have significance for the field's understanding of the parallels between past and present manifestations of campus racism. Cultural studies literature positions media as a primary conduit that informs our everyday sense making about race and racism (Kellner, 1995). Often unbeknownst to viewers, media images are ripe with stereotypes and assumptions about racialized groups and social hierarchy in the United States. Although critical race scholarship does not explicitly center media as a primary conduit of racism, Perez Huber and Solórzano (2015b) have theorized visual microaggressions as a distinct media-based racial slight that reaffirms racism. Using this lens, findings from the study align with a growing body of research that positions online platforms as an extension of students' campus racial climate experiences (Gin et al., 2017; Tynes et al., 2013). Participants, for example, spoke to how the online domain was often a place where on-campus tensions also manifested and further normalized campus racism. Student-created memes highlighted in Chapter 5, for instance, depict the ways in which online meme-sharing pages serve as a secondary platform for students to circulate racialized jokes about not only Asian students but also North Campus (social sciences and humanities) majors on campus.

In summary, findings from the study demonstrate undergraduate students identify direct similarities between their contemporary experiences with the campus racial climate and the racist patterns of their campus' past and culture. This reality has particular significance for colleges and universities that market themselves under the guise of racial equity, diversity, and inclusion. Within a neoliberal era, institutions of higher education have aggressively used the language of equity, diversity, and inclusion as tools not only to recruit students and faculty but also to preserve their social reputations. The UCLA context reveals students are intimately familiar yet frustrated by the similarities between their contemporary experiences with the racial climate and the institution's legacies of racism. The incongruence between institutional branding about racial diversity and students' everyday experience leaves questions for administrators, practitioners, and researchers to further consider: How can scholarship investigating the relationship between campus racial climate and culture inform practice that can match the diverse "brand" of the institution and bring about substantive change?

Implications

Higher education scholars and student affairs professionals have developed a number of policies and initiatives to improve diversity on college campuses. I therefore do not deem this discussion of implications to be worthwhile by centering suggestions for new interventions and models. Participants' experiences in this study suggest more substantive and ideological considerations are of concern than the mere presence of diversity-related initiatives. Rather, racialized ideologies shape students' past and present experiences with the racial climate in both on-campus and online settings. I aim to discuss, then, how the ideological assumptions of practitioners and researchers should work to combat and problematize structural ideologies of

racial oppression. I draw upon a critique from pre-eminent higher education scholar Lori Patton Davis to further situate the study's implications for practice.

Considerations for Practice

In 2007, Patton and colleagues called for the use of critical race perspectives to account for the limitations of student development theory as the primary theory used to train student affairs professionals. The authors noted how reflecting on the presence of racial oppression within the profession of student affairs and the personal lives of practitioners would work to achieve a more socially just campus: "Consistently ignoring race and its systemic complexities further disadvantages students of color. When professionals recognize the complicity of their actions in maintaining campus environments that oppress nondominant populations, they can move toward realizing the goals of social justice" (Patton et al., 2007, p. 49). Nearly a decade later, Patton (2016) lamented the persistence of a raceless approach to higher education theory and practice: "It is dangerous to believe the cure for racism/White supremacy is contained in law and policy alone. Their effectiveness is closely linked to how they are interpreted and implemented" (p. 332). Patton's guidance is a timely reminder given the present study's participants and their ability to draw parallels between their contemporary experiences and a past campus incident. This study's implications for practice echo Patton's sage commentary imploring the field to situate a critical race perspective within its design and implementation of interventions aimed at creating cultures of diversity and inclusion around the country. Without a critical approach to diversity-related practice, higher education will continue to see a mismatch between an institution's rhetoric and its actual practice of diversity similar to the mismatch highlighted in this chapter's opening vignette about the UCLA diversity statement mandate and the majority White composition of a faculty search committee.

Using a critical race theoretical perspective, UCLA administrative leadership could foresee how the application of their diversity initiatives is tied to the interrelated nature of their policies, mandates, and practice. Firstly, with a critical perspective, the administrative leadership involved in the formation of the search committee, introduced at the beginning of this chapter, could have concluded that a committee comprised of seven White men, three White women, and one Latino reaffirms the status quo of institutional decision-making power in higher education. Higher education scholar Diane Lynn Gusa (2010) theorized Whiteness as the often unseen yet everyday assumption that structures White racialized experiences throughout dimensions of a campus' climate, including administrative power. In the UCLA example, the dean of UCLA's School of Medicine, Kelsey Martin, noted the composition of the majority White faculty search committee was approved by the campus' EDI guidelines. This revelation demonstrates how the absence of critical perspectives from the top down can have material effects on how diversity policies are carried out. Additionally, a critical race perspective would enable leadership to question how a majority White committee would be prepared and equipped to read and review diversity statements when they themselves are not from racially minoritized backgrounds.

Diversity course requirements are an additional area that could be enhanced by a critical race approach to practice. In Chapter 4's closing vignette, Sienna suggested how ineffective a diversity course requirement can be if it is designed as a "one-and-done" solution to climate change:

> There's so many White people in like Chicano studies classes who are sleeping in class, who don't care, who don't read, who complain about the class and don't understand what we're being taught is so essential to interacting with each other and understanding each

other's social locations. So yeah, the diversity requirement does not do much for that problem.

In its current format, the UCLA diversity requirement requires undergraduate students to take one diversity course prior to graduating. As Sienna shared, students, particularly White students, come to these courses under the impression they are a burden rather than a formative space for them to develop their social awareness. With a critical race approach to practice, institutional decision makers could understand how the curriculum across disciplines works to normalize White culture and sources of knowledge (Gusa, 2010). This understanding would then likely lead to questions about how a standalone diversity course requirement could work to elicit racial climate change if the majority of students' coursework privileges majoritarian perspectives that epistemologically oppose the perspectives presented in students' one required diversity course. A critical race approach would call for decision makers to consider the ways the diversity requirement could be used in tandem with other interventions to systematically enhance the cultural inclusivity of the curriculum. For example, how could teaching and learning centers or inclusive and culturally relevant pedagogy workshops be used to improve faculty instruction campus wide to ensure the proposed benefits of a diversity course are not occurring in isolation? Chapter 4 of this study highlighted a number of participant experiences with peer-to-peer and instructor-to-student racial microaggressions within the classroom. These interactions illuminate how widespread and harmful standards of Whiteness operate in undergraduate courses for Students of Color. Using a critical race approach to practice, campus decision makers will be better equipped to effectively design multipronged initiatives to improve campus race relations through curricula-based interventions.

To conclude this discussion on the implications for practice, I revisit Taylor's insightful remarks from Chapter 5's closing vignette about the qualities of Campbell Hall that make her feel at home:

> Just the atmosphere [is] different. It's friendly. It's like being at home. People say "Hi!" to each other. If there's free food—normally Dr. Alexander [AAP's director] will have meetings a lot, and there'll be food leftover from those meetings. Then somebody, I forgot what her name is, but she'll send out an email to the whole building like, "There's food down here." It's just very communal. I feel this marks—when I started working here—the starting point of me actually enjoying my UCLA experience.

As a "home," Campbell Hall is "friendly" and "communal." This valuing of community offers a way for Students of Color like Taylor to enjoy their UCLA experience and develop in a campus environment where they feel safe and welcome. Within a critical race approach to educational practice is an intention to honor and center the experiential knowledge and histories of Communities of Color (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). This valuing of community, similar to Campbell Hall, offers researchers, practitioners, and the scholarly community more broadly an avenue to acknowledge the strength and agency within historically underrepresented communities and provide inclusive spaces for voices historically casted to the margins of society. To ensure the landscape of racial diversity is one that substantively includes and equitably treats Students of Color, our theoretical "home" informing our practice must be one that centers racialized communities most vulnerable to the pernicious omnipresence of Whiteness in postsecondary education.

Considerations for Research

Similar to scholarship from Harper (2012), findings from this study suggest implications for our methodological practices as researchers of campus racial climate and student affairs. Harper encouraged higher education professionals to consider how we can ever hope to see change and improved conditions on college campuses if we, as researchers, are fearful of naming racism as a plausible explanation for the number of racial disparities we study. Similarly, I wonder how we are ever to move the needle for change if we do not consider the ways we can methodologically position the past and present as indicators of institutional shifts in culture. This study posits operationalizing the past and present within the research process as an innovative means to measure whether noticeable change has occurred across contemporary campus racial climates. This particular approach is not exclusive to qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methodological approaches; rather, these tools can be used in a number of innovative, methodological ways to better understand how change has occurred across time. What can such inquiries afford our sense making about racialized dynamics on campus? How can our methods push us to more effectively enable such change? Without interrogating the past in relation to the present, I imagine our inquiries *for* social justice may in fact be reifying the status quo rather than pushing us to actualize and embody institutional change.

A final methodological note of consideration is the relationship between social media and campus racial climate research. Given the reality that social media technologies are increasingly the norm within the everyday lexicon of today's college-going students, higher education scholars of race and racism should begin to incorporate social media in the research process. This approach to scholarly inquiry will align with the everyday racialized assumptions students make about their world in ways more traditional methods (e.g., word-based, sit-down interviews)

cannot. Furthermore, the use of social media more seamlessly integrates disparate components of the research process (e.g., the design of methodological protocols) to align with the context specificity of students' everyday lives. For the study of race and racism, this approach is novel because it not only can allow students to discuss their contemporary climate experiences in relation to their campus' past but also can center the pervasive presence of social media in the lives of today's undergraduate students. To date, higher education studies rarely integrate social media and other everyday components of undergraduate life in the research process, losing significant context regarding the influence of information technological advances in students' lives (Kortegast et al., 2019). This study's methodological contribution therefore has importance for scholars' abilities to collect data that accurately reflect the racialized context of students' experiences within today's social media zeitgeist.

Conclusion

My time with the study's research participants proved enlightening regarding the vestiges of institutional racism on contemporary campus life. Working with Noah, in particular, demonstrated the ways racialized ideologies inform the conscious movements of Undergraduates of Color throughout their everyday lives on campus. I return to Chapter 5's opening vignette, featuring portions of my walking interview with Noah, to offer concluding remarks about this dissertation's findings, contributions, and importance for future scholarship and higher education practice.

In route to conclude his walking interview, Noah and I walked up the inclined pavement just before the 4-way traffic intersection leading to his residence hall on UCLA's Hill. While waiting for the light to change, Noah remembered how "hypersensitive" and "hyperaware" he felt frequenting and attending a traditionally White campus like UCLA:

> Something I never really talked about, being on campus sometimes, it's just comfortable for me—sometimes I wear my hoodie. But you know, just being a Brown dude walking around UCLA with a hoodie, I do feel like sometimes people are, you know, "What's this dude doing?" Like, when I'm walking around, I feel like sometimes I have to put on a smile. If not, people are like, "Who's this dude?" So, yeah, that's definitely a thing. I don't know if it's just, like, me being hypersensitive or hyperaware or whatever. But I feel that, and sometimes I'm like, "I've got to put up a front." If not, I don't know. I just feel like people sometimes view me as, like, "Oh, he's shifty." It's weird.

Moments later, Noah continued his commentary on being hypersensitive by sharing an additional interaction when he was conscious of his presence as a Student of Color on campus:

> One thing I forgot to mention—again, I don't know if this was just being hypersensitive, but they were offering free food at SAC [the Student Activities Center]. There was this super long line, and I was in the line. This White dude came up to me and was like, "Oh, what's this line for?" I'm like, "Oh, there's free food." And he looked. He's like, "Hhhmmph, no wonder." So, I don't know if I was just reading into it too much. I was like, "I don't get it." Like, did he look at me like, "Oh, of course you're [a Latino] gonna be here for free food," or it's like, "Oh, free food? Of course, there's a big line." I don't know.

Noah's experiences are telling because they highlight how the experiences of Students of Color are often ruled by the dominant, White gaze and assumptions about racially minoritized populations. This fact is evident in Noah's sharing about his hoodie and its significance in the predominantly White community of Westwood, Brentwood, and Beverly Hills, California—the neighboring communities home to UCLA. As a socially aware, young Man of Color, Noah knew

how the hoodie has been racialized to project criminality and wrongdoing onto the bodies of Brown and Black men in the United States. As such, Noah intentionally chose to offset that (mis)reading of his body by deciding to "put on a smile" to ease the racialized anxieties of other campus community members. This consciousness has left Noah to be hyperaware or hypersensitive, as he frequently stated, leaving him to question himself and his interpretations of seemingly less innocuous situations. For example, as his encounter with the White male at the Student Activities Center reveals, the presence of the White gaze is so pervasive that Noah could easily see his racialized self being othered and rendered less than for standing in line for free food. Yet, at the same time, Noah also doubted his own self as if to give the White male the benefit of the doubt: "I don't know if I was just reading into it too much." "I don't know," stated Noah, ultimately leaving to question whether the racialized dynamics of his encounter are real or made up in his mind and hypersensitive nature to race.

These vignettes are important to note because they, along with many others highlighted in this dissertation, occurred at an institutional moment in time that champions diversity not only at UCLA but also across institutions nationwide. However, despite the lauded presence of diversity at UCLA and elsewhere, Noah and the study's other participants reveal little has shifted in the way institutional community members think about and engage with racially minoritized populations. From the instructor of the African American studies class who told students it was fine if they missed class to visit family members in jail (referenced in Chapter 4) to the undergraduate peers who casually joked about how all of their Asian male instructors looked alike (referenced in both Chapters 4 and 5), participants' insights show how a racialized discourse that privileges Whiteness over Brown and Blackness pervades UCLA's campus across both historical and contemporary moments in time. This norm is unfortunately evident despite

the increasing presence of the campus' diversity initiatives like its course requirement for undergraduate students and its diversity statement requirement for faculty hiring.

So, what can be done? What can institutions do to create substantive change within the higher education context? As Noah's hypersensitivity and hyperawareness suggest, much of the Student of Color experience results from how others perceive them and then choose to act based upon those perceptions. In the interest of these students, it would therefore be ideal for institutional leaders to act on their care for these students and adapt critical worldviews, particularly critical race frameworks, that vigorously question and reject standards, norms, and practices that privilege Whiteness. With critical race approaches to the practice of higher education, rather, campuses will be able to center community as an ideal that truly celebrates and embodies racial diversity that is inclusive and valuing of those identities who have historically been casted to the margins of society. Without such an approach, we will continue to make superficial changes to the face of diversity, implementing initiative after initiative, without substantively reckoning with the soul and moral compass that guides our actions.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

"UCLA Chancellor Appalled by Student Video" Transcript

Speaker: UCLA Chancellor Gene Block, 2011

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6feGp0GQVJ8
UCLA's official YouTube account

A video posted on YouTube this weekend, making derogatory and stereotypical remarks toward a particular ethnic group, has roiled our campus and caused a lot of pain. This has been a sad day for UCLA and a disappointing one for me personally. The student in the video referred to "our school." The UCLA described in the video is *not* [added emphasis by speaker] the university I know. Students, staff, and faculty that I speak with everyday take pride in having one of the most diverse campuses in the nation. Our campus reflects the many communities of California and our world, and this greatly enriches the UCLA academic experience. I've heard from many people that they are offended and outraged over the comments that were made. Regardless of how offended I am or you may be by this video, I hope that we can remain civil in our discourse. As scholars and members of a campus community, we have a responsibility to honor and respect one another.

Appendix B

Participant Background Questionnaire

1. How do you want to be named in the study? Given Name or Pseudonym

   If pseudonym, please write it out. _____

2. Do you have preferred gender pronouns? Yes or No

   If yes, please circle or fill in your preferred pronouns.

   She, Her, Her(s)
   He, Him, His
   They, Them, Their(s)

   _____

3. Age _____

4. Race _____

5. Ethnicity _____

6. Year at UCLA SO JR SR 5th

7. Are you a transfer student? Yes or No

8. Are you an international student? Yes or No

9. Have you declared a major? Yes or No

   If yes, what? _____

10. Have you declared a minor? Yes or No

    If yes, what? _____

11. Where do you live during the academic school year (fall, winter, and spring quarters)?

    __ Residence Hall __ Off-Campus Apartment

    __ Fraternity Housing __ Sorority Housing

    __ with family __ Other

12. Please list your participation in any clubs, organizations, or extracurricular activities that are important to you?

13. Home City and State/Country _____

Appendix C

"Asians in the Library" Transcript

Speaker: Alexandra Wallace, 2011

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zQR01qltgo8

Okay, so, here at UCLA, it's Finals Week. So, we know that I'm not the most politically correct person, so don't take this offensively. I don't mean it toward any of my friends. I mean it toward random people that I don't even know in the library. So, you guys are not the problem.

The problem is these hordes of Asian people that UCLA accepts into our school every single year, which is fine, but if you're going to come to UCLA, then use American manners.

So, it used to really bug me, but it doesn't bother me anymore, the fact that all the Asian people that live in all the apartments around me, their moms and their brothers and their sisters and their grandmas and their grandpas and their cousins and everybody that they know that they brought along from Asia with them comes here on the weekend to do their laundry, buy their groceries, and cook their food for the week. It's seriously without fail. You will always see old Asian people running around this apartment complex every weekend; that's what they do—they don't teach their kids to fend for themselves. You know what they don't also teach them is their manners, which brings me to my next point.

Hi, in America, we do not talk on our cell-phones in the library. I swear, every 5 minutes, I will be, okay not 5 minutes, say like 15 minutes, I'll be like deep into my studying, into my political science theories and arguments and all that stuff, getting it all down, like typing away furiously, blah, blah, blah. And then all of a sudden, when I'm about to, like, reach an epiphany, over here from somewhere, "Ohhhh, ching chong, ling, long, ting, tong, ohhhhhh!"

Are you freaking kidding me? In the middle of Finals Week.

So, being the polite, nice, American girl that my mama raised me to be, I kind of just gave him what anybody else would do that kind of like *she proceeds to slightly cringe her shoulders, neck, and face and lifts her index finger to her lips to indicate a whispered "shhhhhhh" sound* "You know, it's a library." Like, "We're trying to study. Thanks."

And then it's the same thing 5 minutes later, but it's somebody else, you know. I swear they're going through their whole families just checking on everybody from the tsunami thing. I mean, I know, okay, that sounds horrible, like I feel bad for all people affected by the tsunami, but if you're going to go like call your address book, like you might as well go outside because if something is wrong, you might really freak out if you're in the library and everybody's quite, like, you seriously should go outside if you're going to do that.

So, thanks for listening. That was my rant. I just, even if you're not Asian, you really shouldn't be on your cellphone in the library. But, I've just never seen that happen before. So, thank you for listening and have a nice day.

Appendix D

Focus Group Script and Protocol

I am interested in knowing more about undergraduate student experiences with online and on-campus racisms. For the purposes of today's meeting, we will look closely at online racism by watching an infamous YouTube video from UCLA's past. Prior to today, you may have seen and/or heard about this video's circulation across a number of social media outlets. It's perfectly fine if you have. I'd like for us to watch the video and then collectively discuss your thoughts about it. I'll have some guiding as well as follow-up questions to steer the discussion. I'm mostly interested in your perspectives and experiences, so there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. I want you to speak to your experiences as informed members of this campus community, and remember, this focus group is a conversation among you all as students, which is to say the bulk of the talking will be done by you all; I will only randomly chime in to pose a question or redirect the conversation. Chris, my research assistant, will be taking notes to aid our analysis of tonight's discussion.

Please also consider that there may be some differences in perspective among you all. I encourage us all to critique or respond to the idea as opposed to the individual person. We should also be mindful that no response to anything said in here is a personal attack on our individual character. Please use our differences to make further sense of the video and campus racism in general. I'm curious to see how you all build upon each other's ideas and experiences regardless of how similar they are.

Some of you may also wonder what do I mean by "racism at UCLA." You're right: Defining race and racism is one of the more challenging social tasks of American history. Some people may define racism as explicit race-based discrimination done toward a specific individual or group of people. Others may define racism as sociohistorical practices that subordinate people of color under the social standing of Whites. My understanding acknowledges racism as a system of race-based oppression that develops and changes over time, which is to say that distinct forms of racism can exist simultaneously. Therefore, tonight, I want to hear what instinctually comes up for you when you think of racism at UCLA as racism is too complex for one finite definition or experience to exist.

Now to contextualize the video—it was released in 2011 by a then third year, White female, UCLA undergraduate student. Within hours of its release, the video received both local and national attention for its racist commentary. UCLA administrators deemed that the student did not violate any university policies, so they abstained from formally punishing the student. However, after receiving death threats, the student and her parents decided it was in her best interest to withdraw from UCLA. Any questions before we begin watching?

Guiding Questions

1. What are your initial thoughts and feelings after watching?
2. In what ways are issues in this video similar and/or different to your experiences with online racism at UCLA?
    a. How does campus racism influence who you follow or friend on social media?
    b. How do you respond to encountering racism online? How does it affect you?

3. How might the video's commentary have ramifications for multiple racial groups at UCLA (e.g., Asians, Blacks, Whites)?
    a. We know that this video directly targets Asian students, but how might it indirectly target other raced groups at UCLA?
4. What are other words, phrases, and examples that you would use to characterize your experiences with racism at UCLA?
5. What is the relationship between online racism and on-campus racism at UCLA?
    a. How do they influence one another? How would you characterize the relationship between them?
6. How would you characterize the campus administration's responses to instances of online racism similar to this video?

Appendix E

Social Media and Observation Questionnaire

Name _____

Please use an "X" to mark how regularly you check or post on the listed social media platforms. If you use any of these platforms beyond a weekly period, please mark "Rarely Use."

Social Media Platform	Hourly	Daily	Weekly	Rarely Use
Facebook				
Instagram				
Snapchat				
Twitter				
Tumblr				
Other				
Other				

If you marked "Other", please list the names of your other frequently used social media platforms here:

_____

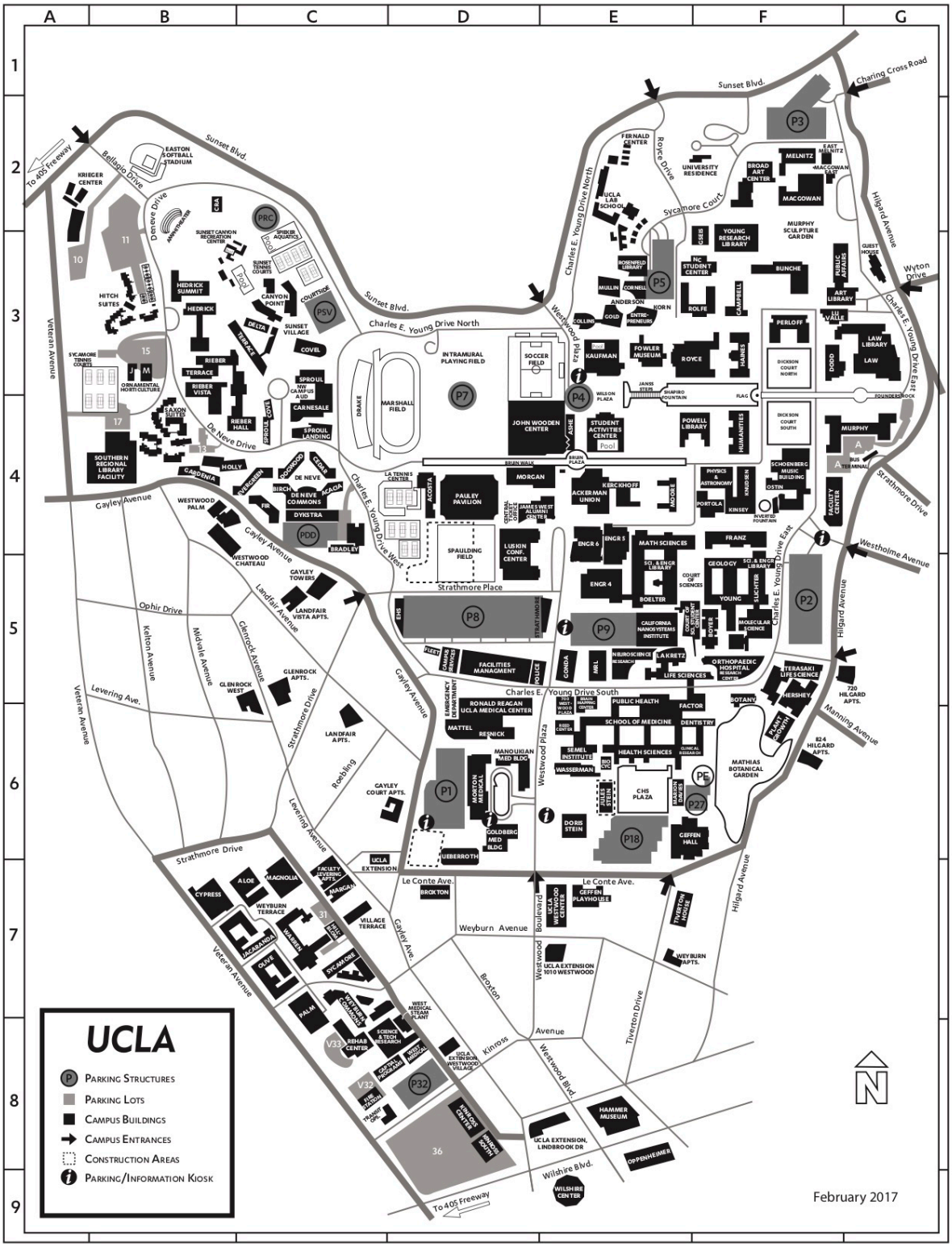
Please list two parts of your weekly routine that you feel either explicitly or implicitly deals with issues of race and racism at UCLA. This routine event can be a class that is, for example, explicitly titled "The Sociology of Race in America." It can also be a space that may not directly deal with issues of race, which in turn leads you to question how you interact and move in the space. What you list here is not finite or set-in-stone. Instead, this list offers potential spaces I can observe your weekly routine if I choose you as a focal participant for the study.

1. _____

2. _____

Appendix F

UCLA Campus Map



Appendix G

Walking Interview Protocol

Hi,

Today we'll be conducting the walking interview portion of the study. To begin, please circle on the campus map areas that have been influential in your understandings of and experiences with race and racism on campus. These places, for example, could have directly impacted you or they could represent, to your knowledge, campus experiences of other students (e.g., friends and peers).

Now that you've circled these areas, we'll begin the interview.

We will use this map as a general guide, and what I'd like for you to do is to start with any one of these areas on campus. We'll walk to it, and as we come upon it, I'd like for you to discuss a number of things: What is this particular area on campus? What does it mean to you? How does it relate to race and racism on campus? We'll do that for most, if not all, of the areas of the map you've circled. Throughout, I'll ask follow-up questions based upon the things you share. If at any point you grow tired, want to take rest, or even end the interview for whatever reason, please let me know and we can do so. Any questions? Okay. Let's begin.

1) Why did you circle this spot on the map?
    a. How would you describe your feelings (about the racial climate) now in relation to when you first got to UCLA?
2) Where to next?
    a. What does this location (or idea) mean for you as a student who experiences issues of race and racism at UCLA?
    b. How would you characterize the values, people, and/or practices of what goes on here in relation to other spaces you frequent on campus?
3) In the focus group, the idea of _____ came up. How has that manifested in your experiences?
4) Considering the things we've discussed and the places we've walked thus far, what connections exist between them and your experiences with online racism?

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