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APPROVAL SHEET

The Place of Diversity: Race, Space, and Higher Education in the Post-Civil Rights South

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An abstract of
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ABSTRACT

The Place of Diversity: Race, Space, and Higher Education in the Post-Civil Rights South
by Shan Mukhtar

In the current era, diversity has become the symbolic and structural framework through which universities and colleges express racial and ethnic difference and often seek to remedy racial conflict on their campuses. The meaning of diversity is highly contested in both academic and public discourse. On one hand, diversity is critiqued for being deliberately vague, universal, and apathetic toward racial and ethnic power relations. On the other, affirmative action and diversity have been consistently challenged in the courts for being discriminatory and detrimental to the "business of education." As such the production of diversity, what I call *diversity formation*, is a tenuous endeavor that universities continue to engage but also resist defining in concrete ways. I suggest that by addressing the local, place-based processes through which particular definitions of diversity are created and implemented, one can understand more fully the limitations of diversity as a higher education framework for addressing racism. I use semi-structured interviews and participant observations of 40 staff, faculty, and students that work within offices and committees related to diversity at an urban, majority-minority university in the southeast United States. My findings draw attention to the social and spatial factors that make diversity programs incompatible with efforts to diminish social segregation along racial and ethnic lines, provide substantive opportunities for the recruitment and advancement of non-white faculty and administrators, or address the racial, ethnic and socioeconomic relations that come into play in the building of a university campus.

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For Khurram

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Tendencies and constraints... define the terrain on which historical forces move— they define the horizon of possibilities. But they can, neither in the first nor last instance, fully determine the content of political and economic struggles. –Stuart Hall (1986)

PROLOGUE: An Introduction to Diversity

Higher education and the 'terrain' of diversity

The term "diversity" and the post-secondary structures that produce it are now common within the vernacular of universities. There are offices and administrative positions dedicated to diversity; incentives in the form of awards, such as the HEED Award[1] and the Carnegie classification[2] that are given to universities who can show that they excel at it; and there are numerous ways to invoke the diversity of the university space, such as a department's diversity, the university community's diversity, a university's diversity-based plans and missions, among others. Diversity is not just promoted as an institutional ethic or mission, it is embedded symbolically within multiple layers of the organizational structures and spaces of the university.

Diversity has expanded in its verbiage over the thirty-six years that it has been a dominant legal and institutional signifier for race and ethnicity.[3] For instance, it has come to comprise many more minority identities: gender, sexuality, nationality, religion, socioeconomic class, and most recently, disability.[4] However, I argue that while notions of who is diverse and

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[1] The HEED Award was created by the diversity-focused magazine, *Insight*. The award is based on a self-nomination and a "peer-review" by the magazine's editorial board.

[2] The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has multiple "classifications" for which any "accredited, degree-granting colleges and universities in the United States represented in the National Center for Education Statistics" can apply. These classifications assess institutions' performance based on a variety of categories ranging from undergraduate education to the size and setting of the university. Carnegie has also introduced a *Community Engagement Classification*, which evaluates "collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity" (*Carnegie Foundation*). For an institution like Public U, its sense of "community" and "civic" engagement is deeply connected to its production of particular forms of diversity in relation to the city where it is located.

[3] The Supreme Court identified racial and ethnic diversity as a "compelling interest" in post-secondary admissions in *Bakke v. Regents of the University of California* (1978).

[4] The American with Disabilities Act (1990) and its amendments put into motion national-level legal and public discourse on ability in relation to civil and human rights. Disability policies and services have come to be classified under the umbrella of diversity, and disability protections are conducted by offices of affirmative action and

how diversity can be achieved have expanded, diversity most often refers to variance in the racial and ethnic identities represented in a space. For example, the debate over whether 'a diverse student body' is of 'compelling interest' to higher education has focused overwhelmingly on whether this interest shows preferential treatment toward black and Latina/o students.[5] Both legally and within 'common'[6] discourse, race and ethnicity sit at the center of debates on the validity and efficacy of diversity in post-secondary education. I thus approach this study from the understanding that the social and structural mechanisms through which diversity is produced are highly racialized, despite claims of universality.

Further, diversity has given rise to an institutional language of difference that includes terms such as "inclusion," "equity," "multicultural," "intercultural," "community" and "opportunity." None of these terms or the offices, staff and faculty positions, dedicated funding, or policies that accompany them are mutually exclusive. Nor are they uniformly defined from one post-secondary institution to another. One college may house its diversity work under the auspices of an Office of Diversity. Another may have an Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. While others may call it Multicultural Affairs, Opportunity Development, and so on.

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addressed within university discrimination policies. As gender and sexuality in relation to diversity have often been critiqued for engaging in a race neutral queering of the body and mind, so has traditional disability discourse and notably the academic field of Disability Studies (DS). However, there is also contemporary scholarship and advocacy in DS that approaches this field directly through critical race and sociological frameworks (Clare, 1999; Erevelles, 2011; Balcazar, et. al., 2010)

[5] The case law and popular referenda on race and ethnicity as factors in higher education admissions include: *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978), California *Proposition 209* (1996), *Hopwood v. University of Texas* (1997), *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003), *Gratz v. Bollinger* (2003), *Fisher v. University of Texas* (2013), *and Schuette v. Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action* (2014).

[6] After Congress barred people from Asia, including "the whole of India" from being eligible for U.S. citizenship. In *United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind* (1923), the plaintiff challenged this legislation not on the basis of constitutionality, but on the basis of racial classification. Thind argued that people from his region and caste qualified as being of "Aryan" descent, and thus should be allowed to apply for citizenship. Prior to 1917, Indians had been able to apply for naturalized citizenship through the "Caucasian" category, which included western Asians, northern Indians, and North Africans. In *Thind*, the Court ruled that based on the "common understanding" of "white persons" in the U.S., technical classifications related to cultural or linguistic descent (such as Aryan) could not be used to claim white status. Almaguer (1997) outlined the importance of *Thind* and similar cases in entrenching "common" whites' perceptions of whiteness into U.S. racial case law.

Still others, such as the university where I conducted this research study, have multiple diversity units. The same differentiations also take place among the appointed, elected, and self-formed committees made up of faculty and students that comprise voluntary or "service" diversity work at colleges and universities. While certain terms, such as full inclusion, do reference specific theoretical approaches to diversity[7], the work that these offices and committees perform is mostly consistent across both institutions and monikers. As I show here, the spaces within which diversity work takes place at one university may have varying goals, but they all produce similarly racialized definitions of diversity, and subsequently employ a similar set of approaches to producing 'a sense'[8] of racial and ethnic diversity.

In these ways, Diversity with a capital D reflects the crystallization and expansion of racialized frameworks developed initially in the 1970s, first through narratives of white resistance to civil rights legislation, and then within the legal discourse on race and ethnicity in higher education introduced in *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978). They include the idea that affirmative action is a form of minority 'backlash' against the 'good faith effort' of whites to make racial 'progress' (Hampton, et. al., 2006), that race neutrality and

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[7] The term *inclusion*, and its subcategories *partial inclusion* and *full inclusion* emerged as a response to the educational and social inequities created by traditional "special education" programs. Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994), among others have brought ability-based inclusion theories and practices into diversity discourse by focusing on "culturally relevant teaching" as a way to empower "students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (pp. 17-18). Ladson-Billings (1995) also described this approach to teaching as one that recognizes "the need for the students to operate in the dual worlds of their home community and the white community" (pp. 162-163)—i.e. the *double consciousness* of being a young black person living in a pre-dominantly black lower-income space, and negotiating this identity daily against the backdrop of a white-dominant public education system.

[8] Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan's work on individual and group emotional attachment to place in *topophilia* (1974) and the need for cultural definitions of "space and place" (1977) have provided the most well-developed framework for studying the relationships between people and places. Thus when I refer to a "sense" of diversity, I draw from Tuan's "sense of place." Tuan defines this as the way that people organize the relationship between human bodies and the places they occupy around the meaning and purpose of place. Similarly, a sense of diversity is the way that both people and institutions interpret and value racial and ethnic difference, and organize systems of diversity based on culturally formed meanings of, for example, "racial equality" and "racial discrimination."

colorblindness are the only way to avoid 'reverse racial discrimination'[9], and that the end of *de juris* discrimination and segregation spelled the end of structural racism in the US.[10] Critical responses to these marginalizing interpretations of racial and ethnic identity have addressed their relationship to the advent of more subtle and subverted forms of racism from the early post-civil rights era in the 1970s to the 'Age of Obama'[11] in the 2000s.

Scholars have argued that diversity's ability to produce its own language while becoming increasingly abstract in definition reflects its power to make invisible the structural realities of contemporary racism. These critiques extend from Blumer's (1958) description of how a group sense of collective identity, superiority, and antagonism is the basis for societal prejudice, to Bonilla-Silva, Forman, and Jung's more recent work on how the idealizing of racially and ethnically transcendent, or *post-racial*, social interactions and structures has exacerbated both overt and subtle forms of racism in the current era (Jung, 2009; Bonilla-Silva, 2009; Forman, 2014). A core aspect of these arguments is that concepts such as diversity, multiculturalism, and inclusion have become appropriated by a master narrative of 'assimilation' into whiteness (Jung,

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[9] The *Bakke* case brought to legal fruition a wider discourse in the mid-1970s on "reverse racial discrimination" (Ely, 1974)—that is, the perceived effect on majority groups when minority identities are used as positive factors in, among other things, college admissions. The Supreme Court stated in *Bakke* (1978) that "this issue has generated a considerable amount of scholarly controversy," and cited ten articles, most of which were written between 1974 and 1977 on the use of race as a factor in public contracts, workplaces, and colleges and universities.

[10] Building on Forman (2004), Forman and Lewis (2006) characterized the transition from overt racism to subtle racism in the post-civil rights time period as stemming from *racial apathy*: "a kind of prejudice, one that is pernicious not because of the direct harm it inflicts on individual ethnoracial minorities, but rather because of its indirect influence on ethnoracial minorities' life chances through its creation of a societal climate that prevents many Whites and some ethnoracial minorities from recognizing or taking actions to redress persistent racial inequality. In short, racial apathy reflects callousness to the plight of racial and ethnic minorities (e.g., 'I don't care. It's their problem, not mine')" (p. 179).

[11] *The Economist* (2004) first referred to *post-racialism* in relation to Barack Obama in 2004, during Obama's run against Alan Keyes in Illinois for the U.S. Senate that year. The article read, "The Republicans' fatal mistake was to think that the best way to counter a black man was with another black man. The point about Mr. Obama--as the Republicans might have realised if they had paid greater attention to his speech in Boston—is that he is a post-racial candidate. Mr. Obama is the son of a black man from Kenya and a white woman from Kansas who was brought up by his white mother and grandparents in Hawaii and South-East Asia. He appeals just as strongly to white suburban voters as he does to blacks" ("The Politics of Tokenism," 32). Andra Gillespie's (2009) *Whose Black Politics? Cases in Post-Racial Black Leadership* also examines the political trajectories of this younger generation of civil rights "beneficiaries."

2009). That is, traditional approaches to diversity and multiculturalism have sought to turn

racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse people into "just people" (Gilroy, 1987,

p. 57).

Simultaneously, the organized resistance of whites and some racial and ethnic minorities

to civil rights policies (particularly affirmative action) has resulted in diversity in higher

education being contested heavily in the courts since the 1970s, most recently in *Fisher v.*

University of Texas at Austin (2013) and *Schuette v. Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action*

(2014). These legal challenges to diversity have framed it as "preferential treatment" of blacks

and Latinas/os, and thus equivalent to racial discrimination.[12] In this sense, one could also

interpret the growth in the number and meanings of diversity referents as universities reacting to

the destabilizing of diversity in the current era. As one interview participant in this study stated,

> I want institutionally that to be a goal, something that was, highly encouraged. I know
>
> there's the threat of uh, affirmative action being struck down most likely that some
>
> universities don't want the hassle of having written something written in the books.
>
> (*Faculty Interview 2513*)

The participant argued that the university seeks to shield itself from the legal liability that

is now attached steadfastly to non-white racial and ethnic consciousness. Certainly when a

university addresses rote difference without addressing the consistencies within racial and ethnic

power relations in the United States, the result is diversity that is universal in its definitions of

equality, and fragmented in its implementation of programs and services. For example, my field

site, Public U," has an office for Opportunity Development and Diversity Education housed

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[12] It is important to note that while affirmative action and diversity include all the federally protected identity categories—"race, color, gender..." —the Supreme Court case law on diversity in higher education is entirely comprised of legal challenges regarding race and ethnicity as factors in college admissions.

within its human resources unit. This office coordinates the university's affirmative action and anti-discrimination policies and employee trainings. Public U also has an Office of Multicultural Affairs and an Office of Intercultural Relations in the Division of Student Affairs, which deal primarily with the student body. Multicultural Affairs acts as an administrative unit for multiple offices related to minority students. It supports "Latino Outreach" and "Black Student Achievement," as well as the Civic Engagement office and another for the advisement of "International Students and Scholars." Meanwhile the mission of Intercultural Relations is to promote "cross-cultural interaction, awareness, communication, dialogue, and mutual learning through the integration of engaging activities and programs" (Public U Website, *Intercultural Relations*). The University Senate has its own "Cultural Diversity" committee made up of staff, faculty, and student officers on the Senate, many of whom also hold other diversity-based positions (Public U Website, *University Senate Committees*).

These are just the university-funded diversity structures at Public U. They comprise space, jobs, organizational charts, missions, and university-wide programs. There are also department level diversity committees formed by faculty members or students, sometimes as long-term bodies, other times on an *ad hoc* basis in response to a specific event or issue. Further, each diversity-focused group has created its own localized definitions of what diversity means and how it can or should be operationalized, with little to no communication with other diversity groups. And finally, superimposed onto this complex structure is the university's wider history, identity and policies regarding race and ethnicity. These institutional stories comprise a master narrative that acts as a dominant force in diversity discourse at Public U, but does not fully define it.

Through such disparate mechanisms, Public U has created its own 'common' language of diversity, which uses tropes and images of racial and ethnic difference alongside a language of race neutrality to produce a distinct racial and ethnic culture at the university. These ground level narratives (stories, definitions) and structures (offices and committees, practices, policies) of diversity at Public U are at the heart of how diversity has developed in particular time and place-based context at the university; I refer to them collectively as *diversity formation*. Using Omi and Winant's definition of *racial formation*, I define *diversity formation* as the dual process by which "social, economic and political forces determine the content and importance" of diversity structures and spaces, and in turn how the formation of diversity determines wider "racial meanings" (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 61). I also draw from Omi and Winant's emphasis on racial formation on both micro- and macro- levels by focusing on interconnected relationship between personal and public diversity narratives, the university's structures, and campus spaces.

I have approached diversity formation from two main fields of analysis—narrative, and space/place[13]; I seek to fill a gap in knowledge about the racialized narratives and spaces through which diversity formation takes place, and how they inform and are informed by the university's institutional discourse. Stu has also allowed me to analyze the different methods for diversity formation employed at Public U by staffed offices and voluntary committees, and their relationship to larger systems of inequity at the university. For example, I found consistencies in the ways that staff, faculty, and students performing diversity work in discrete spaces described

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[13] Throughout the dissertation, I refer to this aspect of the study as space/place or space and place. In doing so I reference the inextricable relationship between the literal and geographical place where Public U's campus is located, and the socially constructed, negotiated, and enforced spaces that Public U uses to define itself in relation to diversity both on and off campus. This understanding comes largely from Tuan (1977) and Anzaldúa (1987), both of whom articulated an interwoven and politically engaged relationship between the places where people live and the spaces where they form and perform certain racial and ethnic identities. The term space also references the offices and committees, i.e. diversity work spaces, where the different stories and structures of diversity come together in the production of diversity practices.

and told stories about Public U's university-wide diversity missions and strategies. I argue that the roles that narratives, and space/place play in diversity formation are critical to understanding how diversity structures are built.

To that end I have focused this research study on the people who do the work of diversity and the spaces where institutional definitions diversity are created and put into practice by the university. I contend that while institutional structures at Public U do indeed determine the terrain of diversity work at the university, they do not entirely dictate the ways that diversity workers define and implements diversity on a local level. And, I seek to unearth the everyday life of diversity in a higher education space, which receives little attention in race and ethnic studies and higher education studies. By studying narratives—rather than discourse, which refers to more systemized and stable forms of knowledge and communication (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Kendall & Whitman, 1999)—I am also able to bring to a forefront the racialized storytelling which makes up institutional structures of diversity. As Lakoff and Johnson (2003) argued, talking about sociopolitical processes through an imposed story structure, that is the form of a story and the use of metaphors, is "pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action" (p. 4). Diversity narratives act as a storied link between diversity workers' individual experiences and viewpoints about race and ethnicity, the collective theorization and practice of diversity in smaller groups such as offices and committees, and the relationship of these two to Public U's top-down institutional racial discourse.

Similarly, the ways in which Public U has defined the geographical and cultural parameters of its space and place both engage and eschew the university's diversity goals. For instance, the structural barriers to moving diversity initiatives forward showed particular patterns based on whether the work was taking place in an academic environment (among faculty and

students) or an administrative environment (among staff members). Also, the fact that the university both heavily promotes its success in matriculating the highest numbers of black undergraduates in its home state while simultaneously buying up and culturally appropriating the historically black neighborhood adjacent to its campus. These and other findings demonstrate more broadly that understanding the social and spatial aspects of diversity formation can create fuller and more nuanced understanding of the the issues that emerge when universities attempt to use diversity as a salve for institutional racism.

How the dissertation is organized

In Chapter I, I outline the methods this study employed, including its theoretical framing, field research and data analysis. I show that focusing on racial and ethnic diversity formation has influenced how I defined the scope of existing diversity research and what I seek to contribute to it. In particular, I focus on the ways in which a case study approach best serves the goal of bringing to surface the complex social and spatial interactions, and personal and public relationships through which diversity formation takes place. I also address in greater depth the logistical factors that affected how conducted the study, including institutional anonymity.

Chapter II provides a review of the critical literature on racial and ethnic formation and racism that informs the study. I refer to this body of knowledge as *critical diversity studies*. It emphasizes the role of diversity as a signifier for race and ethnicity and the dominant role of whiteness and 'free market' politics within diversity discourse. Diversity has come to represent other identity categories in university settings—notably gender, sexuality, ability, and socioeconomic class—but its origins lie in legal and public discourse on affirmative action in higher education in the 1970s; diversity became the compromise between "race neutral" admissions and traditional forms of affirmative action such as separate admissions committees

for minority applicants. Challenges to diversity traditionally name black and Latina/o people as its primary beneficiaries. This is evidenced both in the case law and in public forms of anti-affirmative backlash, such as the 1974 Boston busing boycott and more recently the "Increase Diversity Bake Sale" at UC Berkeley in 2011. The distinction between expansive and racialized definitions of diversity is important to the analyses which comprise this dissertation.

In Chapter III, I present the relevant histories that inform the study. I construct a genealogy for diversity formation through the legal and political discourse that has affected its development in higher education. This chapter is critical to my argument that diversity writ large serves foremost as a signifier for racial and ethnic identity, both within narratives that express the importance of diversity and those that characterize it as a form of discrimination. As the study shows, the argument that diversity is or should be "not just race"—an idea that participants in the study brought up multiple times when discussing diversity initiatives and incentives—was often contradicted by how participants described the diverseness of people and places at Public U. These descriptions carried over into how the university's narratives about itself intermingled with its historicization of racism and racial progress in the city, as I illustrate in a historical analysis of the place of Public U.

Chapter IV addresses diversity formation at Public U through the lens of racialized narratives. Here, I first focus on the social processes that comprise how diversity workers at Public U define diversity at and for the university. I analyze participants' personal and diversity work narratives on race and ethnicity alongside institutional narratives produced by the university in a promotional or public relations capacity, such as Public U's expansive website, news publications, and policy materials like the *Diversity Strategic Plan*. Through patterns that I discovered in participants' stories about race and ethnicity, their descriptions of diversity and

diversity work at Public U, and the university's public narratives about diversity, I show the intersecting relationship between social constructions of diversity and the development of diversity-based programming, policies, and representations.

In Chapter V, I address the relationship of the space/place of the Public U to diversity formation in the university. I examine the aspects of diversity work at Public U that deal with defining campus spaces: a) the development of a sense of residential and educational community; b) engagement with ideas of civil or public service; and c) promotion of the university as an urban enterprise. I also look at the spaces where diversity workers create and implement definitions of diversity—localized, university-wide, and cross-institutional—and show similarities and difference in the kinds of diversity formation that take place in each space.

Chapter VI discusses the major findings of the study. I highlight the implications of this work for the development of interdisciplinary approaches to studying diversity formation in university settings. I also offer critiques of diversity work, taking into account the complex interplay of racialized people and spaces/places that produces diversity structures at Public U. I also speak to the limitations of the case study and knowledge that emerged through the process of conducting field research. Finally, I provide an overview of additional research that could build on the current findings and extend this narrative and place-based framework to other diversity-focused inquiries, such as the globalization of American post-secondary education.

CHAPTER I: Research Methods

The case study approach

I chose Public U as the site of the case study because it is a large public university of over 30,000 students located in the southeastern USA. Public U is located in a city center and describes itself as a "true urban university" with "diversity in [its] DNA" (Public U Materials, *Admissions*; Public U Magazine, 2013). Its development as a racially and ethnically diverse space is connected to two major histories: anti-black racism and major civil rights mobilizations across the state university system in the 1950s and 1960s; and the constriction and expansion of the city center through desegregation and white flight in the 1970s and gentrification of in-town neighborhoods from the 1990s to the present. Both theoretical and practical approaches to racial and ethnic diversity at Public U are very much linked to these local histories of race and place.

As I show in the study, Public U's ranking as one of the top universities in the country for "graduating minority students" has contributed to its institutional narrative of diversity; but this newer narrative exists alongside a history of resistance toward desegregation and anti-black racism on campus. A staff member participant described it in the following way,

> *Staff Interview 0812*: Even though it may have a different feel to it, sometimes I think it's really a traditionally white campus in its history, leadership, you know, if you go to the cafeteria now you can see 100 years of all the different [Public U] leaders and it's all of these white men. That's who was at the table when values for this place from its inception were set. Although some of those values were I think applicable for everyone, but certainly I do believe that who they had in mind originally were people like themselves, by skin color and by gender.

Further, a majority-minority university presents a complex field of study because it has potential for generating analyses which speak to the close-at-hand majority-minority population shift in the United States, which has produced a flurry of media attention every four years each time the Census Bureau makes its population predictions.[14] Put into conversation with narratives of *post-racialism* that emerged during the candidacy and election of President Barack Obama, the notion of a majority-minority United States, or even a majority-minority university like Public U, becomes part of a larger discourse on the future of race and ethnic relations and power dynamics. For instance, after the 2012 Census results confirmed a 2043 majority-minority shift in the U.S., Kayne (2013) of NBC News wrote, "For years, Americans of Asian, black and Hispanic descent have stood poised to topple the demographic hegemony historically held by whites."

What this statement does not address, however, is the lack of shift in economic and social power and resources across racial lines to accompany the demographic majority of people of color in the U.S., and the continued segmentation of minority groups into those that are culturally inferior or complete outsiders (all blacks; Latina/o people of African and/or indigenous descent, especially migrant laborers; low-income East and South Asians and North Africans, particularly those with refugee status), and those that represent the image of high-achieving, politically inactive "model" minorities (higher income East and South Asians, assimilated and/or non-Muslim Arabs) (Bonilla-Silva & Glover, 2006).

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[14] In August 2008, after the release of Census Bureau predictions about the future of race and ethnicity in the U.S., both New York Times and CNN published major articles on the impending majority-minority shift due to take place in 2042, which the articles noted was eight years earlier than the previous Census prediction of 2050 (Roberts, 2008; CNN, 2008). NBC News and Brookings Institute, among others, published another series of reports and articles after the 2012 Census results made similar predications.

Barack Obama became the definitive candidate for this new "post-everything" and I add, *post-everyone* generation of voters (Currier, 2008). Showing that this prediction about the future of U.S. politics had extended out from an exclusively white racial imagination and into minority group narratives, in August of 2008 the *New York Times* quoted a black pollster in the Obama campaign who articulated the same viewpoint.

I'm the new black politics… The people I work with are the new black politics. We don't carry around that history. We see the world through post-civil-rights eyes. (Bai, 2008)

This statement emphasized that "post-everything" does not simply reference a transcendence of racial and ethnic identity, it also alludes to an erasure of the histories of racial and ethnic conflict and oppression. Similarly, the continuity of Public U's characterization of itself as the "lifeblood of the historic downtown core" in the majority black city where it is located is dependent on the invisibility of Public U's racial climate. The stories left out of the university's diversity narratives include the lengths to which university administrators went to prevent black students from being admitted to the university in the late 1950s, making Public U the last institution in the state system to comply with court-ordered desegregation (Reed, ; and the mass protest of black students in 1992 due to systemic racial hostilities on campus that resulted in the formation of its African American Studies department among other systems of support for students and faculty of color; and the controversy in 2013 (the school's centennial year) when Public U became one of the university sites where white students have attempted to form a White Student Union (WSU) on campus (Blow, 2010).

There are also divergent stories about Public U's relationship to the city space and to what the university has referred to as its "sense of place" (Public U Website, *2005-2015 Master Plan*). The Public U presence and identity in the city were illustrated within a well-publicized

Main Street Master Plan that was first introduced in 1994 and then expanded in 1997-1999, 2005, and 2012. It described a vision of making the downtown area a "cleaner, greener" and "user-friendly" space, in which the "urban fabric and the campus are inseparable" (Public U Website, *2005-2015 Master Plan*; Public U Magazine, 2013). However the plan itself, while emphasizing a need for the university to "be part of the city, not apart from the city," articulates its goal of creating "stronger connections" to the city as making the pathways and exterior spaces of the university more cohesive and Public U's branding more "memorable" across the different buildings and city streets that the university occupies (Public U Website, *1997-2005 Master Plan*) and "to create a respite from some of the unpleasant facts of urban life" in order to fulfill Public U's "vision of a traditional campus experience" within the city (Public U Website, *2005-2015 Master Plan*). The two goals—being "part of the city" and creating a "respite from... urban life"—while articulated in concert with each other are clearly in conflict. This tension between Public U's "sense of place" and the life and place of city perceived even among diversity workers at the university as a "black" space is reflected in the ever-present tension within Public U's diversity formation.

It is important to note this place-based political and social context within which diversity work at Public U is performed. The resulting definitions of racial and ethnic diversity at Public U often complement its highly visible status as an "urban," "diverse," "global," and "enterprising" space; but there are also other stories that either call into question the university's public narratives, or that reproduce these dominant narratives within highly contentious ways that have a destabilizing effect. As I've already stated, researching diversity formation through narrative and space/place provides the opportunity to develop a more nuanced and comprehensive store of knowledge about the structural and social *habitus* of diversity at Public U—that is, the

assumptions and "inertia of habit" that guide its diversity formation (Ganz, 2009)—and the spaces of counteractive storytelling and place-making that disrupt the inertia.

The methodological framework for the study puts these localized, social processes of diversity formation at the center of a larger discourse on race and ethnicity in the post-civil rights era. Here I use Long's (1992) approach to culture and agency, which focused on "the culturally constructed variations of human agency and the concrete forms of discursive and non-discursive means expressed through different actor strategies and conceptions of power" (Torres, as cited in Long & Long, 1992, p. 86). The study focuses thus on "identify[ing] and characteriz[ing] 'rationales' peoples use to form their approaches to diversity formation rather than assessing the level of their rationality (p. 86). In order to do this, I seek to find links between participants'" symbols and definitions [and] the social relationships and groups that provide those conceptions" (Denzin, 1970, p. 18). My methodology thus focuses on the intersection of symbolic language about diversity and the interactive social processes that produce diversity work and diversity outcomes. For instance, at Public U there was a narrative and structural conflict within departmental hiring processes between racialized value of diversity and another value that's been constructed as race neutral: merit. Whether couched in notions of work ethic or academic rigor and achievement, the ideological adherence to merit structures to determine who "deserves" to be in an institution was often at the center of debates over faculty recruitment, promotion, and rewards. One faculty participant who chaired a departmental diversity committee at Public U explained the silence around issues of race and ethnicity when talking about diversity,

> *Faculty Interview 1813*: Diversity within the faculty is a very touchy subject to tell you
>
> the truth. So even if we have goals for [diversity] we can, cannot just simply say we
>
> should get more people of color, or those who have particular [research] subjects. I think

that doesn't fly well with people. So we, you know we have to have some kind of angle...

We cannot [assign] an ethnicity or particular cultural background as a way of defining the

future.

Other interviews and observations confirmed that efforts to improve diversity among

faculty almost always culminated in a "fight" between those who supported faculty from

"underrepresented groups" and the "value of diversity," and those who supported "another

value"—the ability "to be tenured." The terms upon which this value was constructed was not in

question within participants' descriptions of the conflict between diversity and merit. Rather, the

need for diversity, and its social, structural and symbolic status were continuously in flux as

diversity workers—the staff, faculty, and students who do diversity work at the university—

negotiated different "angle[s]" through which a case for diversity could be made.

Diversity workers in unnatural settings

Racial and ethnic difference is at the forefront of how diversity is narrated and

represented at Public U. At the same time it is a "touchy subject" that often becomes silenced

and made invisible within diversity work. Therefore, I argue that the role of diversity workers in

both reproducing and resisting these contradictory ideas about diversity is critical to

understanding diversity formation. This focus on diversity workers and diversity work spaces is

what I call "the study of people in [unnatural] settings" (Feagin, Orum & Sjoberg, 1991). Here I

both reference and complicate Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg's (1991) description of the "everyday

life world[s]" accessible through "studying human events and actions in their natural settings"

(p.7). Coming from a critical race and ethnic studies approach to racial and ethnic formation, I

begin with the understanding that the presence of racism at Public U is permanent (Bell, 1992),

but also subject to change based on historical, social and spatial context (powell, 1991). Thus

there is no "natural" state for diversity formation in post-secondary education, at Public U or elsewhere. It has been highly constricted by legal precedence from the 1970s forward, and through ideologies of merit and desert, which have deep roots in academic institutions.

There is also no singular, natural mode of institutional racism. The very thing that makes racism sustainable is its flexibility and responsiveness to social change. But this does not eliminate its ability to be shifted or become weakened, but rather necessitates that the theoretical and practicable framing of counter-racist work also be dynamic. Diversity and diversity work, however, present new challenges for combatting racism in higher education. Diversity has produced its own language and basic set of approaches, most of which rely on the practice of diversity in professionalized settings such as diversity-related offices, that are organized in consistent ways that complement rather than disrupt existing hierarchies at the institution. For example, the vast majority of professional diversity work at Public U is done by individuals who are part of the university's "Office and Administrative Staff," a job category in which 58% of the workers identify as black women. There are 10 Assistant Vice President, Associate Dean, or Associate Provost positions at Public U that are currently held by non-white administrators (seven black women, one black man, and two East or South Asian men). Of these positions, two are directly related to diversity, while another five are related to aspects of student, staff, and faculty life that are linked to issues of diversity: international initiatives, student retention, faculty affairs, student affairs, and ombudsperson.[15]

Thus the work of diversity at Public U is marked not just by its focus on defining the meaning and parameters of racial and ethnic equality, diversity positions are disproportionately held by people of color (particularly black women). Putting this into the wider context of

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[15] Also, it is important to note that no positions at Public that report directly to the President or Chancellor are related to diversity or held by non-whites.

diversity formation, this study thus argues that diversity work is actually *race work*; that is, it is a form of labor that helps produce the racial and ethnic make-up, culture, and racialized structures of the institution. As I have highlighted here and will analyze in depth throughout the dissertation, both the language of diversity *and* the language of anti-diversity support this claim. For instance, the legal and public debates over diversity in higher education that emerged with *Bakke* and continue to this day are overwhelmingly debates over the legitimacy of non-white racial and ethnic consciousness and civil rights in the U.S. at a time when state-sanctioned segregation and overt forms racism are seen by most whites as already having been eradicated in the 1960s.

Given the conditions upon which diversity work is performed and who does this work, I assert that just as diversity work is race work, diversity workers are *race workers*. They engage in various forms of racialization while at the same time being raced by the institution, where their largely black and female bodies have come to represent publicly the university's sense of diversity and its dedication to diversity work. Interviewing and observing these workers and work spaces have allowed me to explore more fully the complex relationships between people, spaces/places and structures and to "discover sub-varieties of what seem on the surface to be one thing" (Ragin & Becker, 1992, p. 210) with the process of diversity formation.

This aspect of the case study also makes it critical to an interdisciplinary approach to the study of diversity at an institution as large and variegated in its overall make-up as Public U. It also facilitates the ability of the study to "emphasize both structure and agents" (Feagin, Orum & Sjoberg, 1991, p. 274), which as I have stated is often missing from work on structural racism. It is an important and difficult relationship to address especially because diversity work at Public U is done in a myriad of ways. There are diversity offices located in human resources that address

employee training and discrimination claims. There are those concerned with student and faculty affairs. There are offices for particular identity groups, such as Black Student Achievement and the Latin American Student Services; but there are also ones that have pan-racial and ethnic monikers and missions, such as both Multicultural Affairs and Intercultural Relations. However, international students and faculty formally speaking fall under none of these categories as their academic *and* social lives are governed by one office specifically for international people and organizations at Public U. International students' and faculty members' exclusion from diversity discourse writ large at the university—outside of demographic information participants often cited, such as, "We have people from over 150 countries here"—shows that not only are both diversity and anti-diversity narratives highly racialized, but they are also very U.S.-centric in their understanding of race, ethnicity, and power in higher education. Furthermore, faculty and student diversity committees are also structured in a variety of ways depending on their participation in university-wide diversity work or localized department-level diversity work. And finally on the administrative level, Public U has written policies such as the *Diversity Strategic Plan*, and both demographic and narrative information about the racial and ethnic make-up of the university that is distributed through Public U's website and publications; these stories and structures become the public face of diversity at Public U, whether or not they have any relevance for people doing diversity work at the university. What is more, aside from co-sponsorship of a few events every academic year, the different diversity work spaces from the top of the university to the ground-level do not seem to communicate or have much knowledge about their shared work, as I demonstrate later in this dissertation.

This overview of the various ways that diversity formation takes place at Public U also illustrates the point that when I refer to diversity workers at Public U, I am often referencing a

large, disconnected network of people who participate in diversity formation within and at times on behalf of the university, but who are not part of an organized or cohesive approach to diversity at Public U. As such, studying the production of diversity within this context guided my decision-making with regard to the data collection and analytical methods I used in the research study, as I discuss in the next two sections.

Grounded theory analysis

The objective of the study is not just to "verify" and contribute to existing sociological and higher education approaches to critical race and ethnic studies; it also argues for and seeks to generate an interdisciplinary approach to the study of diversity formation. As such, I use a Grounded Theory (GT) method of analysis alongside the case study model for data collection. By doing this, I am couching my methodological approach in Glaser and Strauss' (1967) characterization of GT as a generative form:

> "While the verification of theory aims at establishing a relatively few major uniformities and variations on the same conceptual level, we believe the generation of theory should aim at achieving much diversity in emergent categories, synthesized at as many levels of conceptual and hypothetical generalization as possible." (p. 37)

My use of GT to analyze stories and spaces/places of racial and ethnic diversity taps into the second key principle of Blumer's approach, the study of language as a way to create and express meaning through symbols. And finally, I emphasize that diversity structures are a result of variation and ambiguity as much as they are crystallized, mechanized ways of reproducing particular notions of racial and ethnic equality. GT analysis allows me identify the spaces at Public U which affect or are affected by how diversity is formed at the university, and to build theory outward from social and spatial relationships in the field. For instance, multiple

participant interviews brought to the surface what I see as an underlying anxiety about white student disengagement from the social and civic life of the university. One white participant said,

> *Staff Interview 0512*: Being Caucasian sticks out quite a bit here. I mean I have a lot of meetings where I'm the only white person in the room.

The feeling of sticking out and having to "think about [one's] racial identity" has produced a certain level of self-segregation among white students at Public U. But rather than viewing this in the larger context of racial, cultural, and linguistic self-segregation among most of the students at the university, participants talked directly about the need to make white students and more generally white people feel included and safe at Public U. This sentiment spanned a range of spaces, from how one manager made staffing changes for the front desk staff at a university office that was known to be predominantly black in its make-up, to how a multi-racial black campus tour guide presented herself and the school in front of "the white people who come on tour,"

> *Undergraduate Interview 1113*: [They] come because they want to be proven wrong that this school is all black people and that this school is unsafe. So I feel like it's important to put those things forward... to make all those hoity toity Republicans feel comfortable sending their children to the school and pay for it. So you know, if you wanna know about diversity you're going to look around and see it. But I'm not going to harp on it. But I want you to know that this is still a place of education. You can get a good education here.

This description came from a participant who started the story discussing her experience of "diversity training" portion of student orientation. As she discussed the way in which she felt students were "hit over the head" with "diversity statistics" during that event, she transitioned

into this story about her perceptions of being viewed as a potential stereotype of a young black woman in her job as a campus guide, and how she negotiates her own identity in relation to making "white people... feel comfortable" at Public U.

By allowing stories like these to emerge from the stories told about diversity, discovered critical aspects of diversity formation at Public U as well as untapped threads of discourse that were not just relevant to this study, but that lay the groundwork for future work.

Overview of data collected

To address the major questions on which this research study is based, I conducted 40 interviews of staff, faculty and students at Public U involved in diversity- and community-focused offices and committees. They comprised two major types of diversity work that occur at Public U: professional, and voluntary (what in academic settings is defined as "service" work). Some offices I worked with had very explicit diversity-focused goals, such creating diversity-based strategies for Public U or for a smaller unit at the university, providing support to a particular group of students, such as international students and black students, conducting cultural competency trainings, or planning social events or programs to promote cross-racial and –ethnic interaction. Others had more implicit diversity foci such as creating a sense of community life on campus through programs located within larger units such as university housing programs, civic engagement, and new student recruitment.

My process for connecting with these different diversity bodies at Public U and recruiting interview participants became very responsive to the environment within which diversity work was taking place. I used the organizational chart of the university and the website to research the different diversity-focused groups that have a visible presence at Public U. Because most diversity-focused and student-life focused offices have an operational director who reports the

office's work to the respective Vice President, Associate Dean, or Vice Provost, I made contact first with these individuals. Their direct supervision of ground-level work on local and university-wide issues and programs made them great sources of knowledge about the different ways that diversity work is conducted within their offices, and about the people involved in diversity work beyond those with particular diversity leadership positions. Therefore, office directors served as informants both for understanding professional diversity work and for learning about diversity committees or leaders working in academic departments.

Because each office had its own division of labor and reporting structure, I treated each diversity unit as a new potential participant pool. For example, some offices like the Office of Diversity Education and Opportunity Development were comprised of three or four core staff members, with other affiliated staff under the supervision of the same Associate Vice President but not working directly with that office. Other offices, such as University Housing, had several staff members, of which four or five worked on diversity-focused programming as part of their development of a sense of campus life for students living in dorms. Each of these two programs also worked with at least one faculty liaison who acted as a link between diversity work, undergraduate education (most non-employee programs were focused on undergraduate students, not graduate student), and faculty affairs. Starting with the director of the office or the chair of the faculty committee, I asked each interview participant for recommendations of other people in their office or division who may be interested in participating, or who may be participating in diversity-focused activities outside of the official purvey of the office. The graduate student diversity committee I interviewed, for instance, did not have a website or any known official presence at the university. But because the students had organized themselves into a committee in response to diversity-based conflict within their program, and had been successful in their

advocacy on some key issues, they were invited to have a student representative on the department's faculty diversity committee each year. It was within the interview of this student that I learned that she was not just a representative for graduate students generally, but was the representative of an organized diversity group which I did not know existed.

I also conducted participant observations of meetings and events related to three of these groups in order to observe how individual ideas of diversity formation intersect with the social and institutional processes through diversity work gets done. Observing committee meetings, office staff meetings, and professional association conferences allowed me to compare personal and public narratives about diversity, and to identify places of conflict and contradiction, as well as patterns across different groups. Examining this three-layered process—personal narrative, public narrative, and institutional practice—and the variances and conflicts within it were at the center of my observational field research.

My additional focus on place as a key aspect of how diversity formation takes place not just within the university but across its geographical and social borders, further ground the study in an attentiveness toward the local. This meant that I attended and observed as many working meetings and events, both on and off campus. Some groups, like the departmental faculty committee met at very regular intervals: once a month on a Friday. Others, like the University Housing programs varied greatly depending on the time of the academic year. Late summer and early fall was a heavy planning period for these groups, while spring was a time of back-to-back student events on topics ranging from intercultural exchange (celebrating and learning about the significance of Chinese New Year) to local issues (organizing an event to raise money and awareness regarding homelessness in the city). Especially those spaces where I was trying to

observe a small-scale or nascent programming process within an office which had a much wider scope of work, the frequency of interaction with the program varied greatly.

The participant pool for field research was as follows: Of the total interview participants, 19 were staff, 13 were students (8 graduate and 5 undergraduate), and 8 were faculty. This is mainly because the structures built to support diversity formation in the university are heavily weighted toward staffed offices and programs. Also, staff members were much more accessible. Their contact information was readily available on the university website, and their schedules were more dependable than those of faculty and students. In the end, the participant pool of staff and students was relatively balanced, with a smaller amount of faculty participating. Additional work on this study for manuscript publication might involve interviewing more faculty to diversify the group further. I was also able to gain access to only one executive level staff member—an Assistant Vice President of a diversity-focused unit. As I stated earlier, this is one of two Assistant Vice President level positions dedicated to diversity, and both positions are held by administrators who are black. Indeed by studying the ground-level processes of diversity formation, I am automatically constricting the racial and ethnic make-up of the participant pool because so many diversity workers are non-white, with the highest concentration being black women.

In this way, the conduct of diversity work at Public U both populates diversity discourse at the university with non-white bodies and voices and removes white administrators from most diversity work spaces aside from on the level of policy, such as the *Diversity Strategic Plan*. Further study would benefit from including more administrators such as Deans, Provosts, the President, and Chancellor, the vast majority of whom are firstly white men, and secondly white women. However, including this population in the current study for the sake of racial balancing

and representation across the upper tier of university leadership would have skewed the structural and social realities of diversity work and in turn, diversity formation.

Participant demographics

Regarding gender, 60% or 24 of the participants identified as women, and 40% or 16, as men. This again may have to do with the number of women who work in staff positions, and the number of women faculty and students who become involved in work related to diversity. For example, one diversity committee discussed at length the dilemma of women faculty, particularly women of color, showing greater interest in doing diversity-focused work but also got the least rewards from their participation in this work. Later in this dissertation, I will discuss the feminization of diversity work, both as a professional field and as "service," and its possible effects on racial and ethnic diversity formation and implications for future research studies of this kind. That discussion will also include an exploration of diversity work as a field of labor and professionalization for non-whites in post-secondary institutions.

The research study included 13 participants who identified as African American or Americans of African descent; 5 who identified as multi-racial black, including Caribbean, African, Latina/o, indigenous, and white; 6 identified generally as Asian, out of which 4 identified with a specific Asian nationality while 2 identified as Asian American; and 16 identified as white or Caucasian, out of which none identified with any nationality or ethnicity outside of their racial identity. Additionally, 9 of the participants specifically identified Christian as a primary identity for them. And, 6 identified their sexuality as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer, and expressed the salience of their sexualities to their engagement with ideas of diversity. That is not to say other participants may not have experienced links between their work on diversity and their religious lives or sexualities; however, because there was no direct question

regarding either religion or sexuality in the interview protocol, only the participants who self-identified and articulated a connection between those identities and diversity were noted.

I conducted interviews between June 2012 and September 2013. All were in-person interviews of about 1 hour to 1 ½ hour each. Interviews took place both on campus or off campus depending on the participant's preference. Most staff members, for example, had limited time within their daily schedule to participate in an interview. Therefore these interviews most often took place during participants' lunch hour or near the end of the work day, in the participants' office or some other campus location very close to the office. Similarly, interviews with faculty also most often took place in their offices. Those faculty that were interviewed outside of their offices normally chose locations close to their homes rather than on or close to the university campus. Interviews with students took place largely off campus at coffee shops or restaurants based on proximity to the participants' homes or just as often proximity to the university campus. Of all the individuals interviewed, including undergraduate students, only two of them lived on campus in university housing.

The interview protocol (see Appendix A) was designed to learn how people involved in organized activities focused on diversity talked about race and ethnicity, racism, diversity, and then translated those personal narratives into institutional ones that informed their practice of diversity work Because the interview was semi-structured to maximize the space given to participants to elaborate on their stories and counter-stories, I used the questions as a guide for the conversation rather than following them one after another strictly.

The initial questions were based on the participant's personal, history and place-based, and educational experiences, with a focus on how they viewed their racial and ethnic identities and articulated racialized knowledge through narratives. The next group of questions related to

the participant's experience of the space of Public U and the city, including their knowledge of the histories of these places and their perspectives on the racial, economic, and other social dynamics of the university. And the third group of questions focused specifically on their diversity-based work at Public U. The questions here looked at how they characterized diversity in relation to racial and ethnic equality, equity, opportunity, justice, etc. Also, I asked why they do this work, what they view as the major challenges within the university, how they see themselves and their office or committee in relation to the larger institution, and how they view what is and is not possible to accomplish regarding racial and ethnic diversity within Public U.

With each question, I asked for examples of programs or activities that the group had conducted which may reflect the challenges or accomplishments related to diversity formation at the university. These examples, coupled with data from participant observations and my analysis of text and media related to various university policies, initiatives, and racial and ethnic conflicts comprise the breadth of data in the research study. In my analysis I focused on the spaces where narratives of race and place intersected with the structures of diversity at Public U.

Race, place and institutional anonymity

Due to the length of time it would have taken to gain permission to conduct this research without maintaining institutional anonymity, in the interest of the dissertation study I chose to use pseudonyms for Public U and its location, Central City. Beyond the doctoral phase, if this study develops into a monograph, I will seek permission from the university to use its name. In the meantime, using pseudonyms for place names have required me to excise certain details from the historical background of the university and the city, the state of funding and politics at the state university system level. I have also cited archived, web, and media information about

Public U and Central City using pseudonyms for the references, both in text and in the list of references at the end of the dissertation.

Drawing from Stevens' (2007) examination of the institution he called "the College," I have created an analysis that is both place-based and anonymous. This has an impact on the theoretical framing of the study, because it must attend to "the campus as place" without accessing fully the histories of the city. Rather, I focus on the "productive forces" such a diversity ideologies and the "segmented representation of space" as belonging or not belonging to the university, the city, and the people within them (Le Febvre, 1974, p. 91). Rather than creating "an understanding of place as a static location" (Halttunen, 2006, p. 9), I show how the literal expansion on Public U's campus works in cohort with the "cleaner, greener" sustainability narratives that often mark contemporary urban renewal, especially in downtown university spaces.

The descriptive monikers for the university and the city serve both a practical function and also allows me to construct a "character" for the space, which I develop through the narratives used to describe it. I do not wish to use this technique to generalize about urban universities and U.S. cities as a whole, but rather to highlight the ways in which narratives, histories, and memories can influence how local places—in this case, Public U and Central City—become characterized as particular types of spaces. The intermingling of race and place is the point where difference and diversity meet gentrification and revitalization; and where the university meets the city.

The issue of anonymity has also limited the extent to which I can use descriptive data about interview participants within the dissertation. The extent to which diversity works are a discrete and racially and ethnically visible population within the university also makes them

vulnerable to identification. As such, aside from when certain identity characteristics (mainly race, ethnicity, or gender) are very relevant to the interview data being quoted, or if the participant's narrative itself reveals a characteristic of her/his identity that is salient to the story being told, I do not describe the participants or allude consistently to their identities.

I also do not create characters or pseudonyms for participants in the same way that I do for the university and the city for the same reasons of vulnerability and privacy. I have identified the racial, ethnic and gender make-up of the participant pool as a whole because of the highly racialized and gendered conduct of diversity work and its relationship to how people and institutions define, value, or diminish the importance of racial and ethnic diversity. I argue that the demographic make-up of diversity workers and racial and ethnic power relations that comprise diversity work spaces do have an effect on diversity formation. On the research level, they also affect the data that a study of this kind *can* collect.

I have identified participants by their general position within the university and thus the type of space within which they work: staff, faculty, graduate student, undergraduate student. Because as I stated diversity workers are part of one of two main work spaces (staffed offices, voluntary committees), these identifiers intersect heavily with the type of diversity work the participant may become involved in. For instance, the small number of undergraduate students I interviewed for this study are all members of student organizations that do work on some identity-focused or civic issue, or events related to multiculturalism such as international festivals. Their work most often emphasizes diversity as a social, interpersonal exchange of difference and culture. On the other hand, faculty and graduate student participants focused most heavily on diversity as a component of faculty recruitment and promotion, making that a major theme in the findings that emerged from that group of diversity workers.

Each participant also has a discrete number, which helps track the longer narrative that each participant produced across different questions and issues. I seek to reinforce the interconnectedness between the racialized experiences and perspectives of individuals who do diversity work and the collective spaces where this work is performed through both negotiation and conflict. Further I use the data as a thread to uncover the contradictions within the institutional structures that continually imagine and produce particular forms of diversity stories and spaces/places without much connection to or input from ground-level diversity workers.

CHAPTER II: A Review of Literature

This study is both critical and generative; as such, I use an interdisciplinary approach to form an analysis of the social and spatial processes that influence diversity formation at Public U. Understanding the processes I outlined in the previous chapter requires a focus on the nuances of racial and ethnic construction rather than identifying the presence of racism. I have thus developed a hybridized sociological and Critical Race Studies (CRS) framework for studying diversity formation at Public U. It presupposes that racism is continuously present in the structural and social spaces of the university (Bell, 1984), and that institutional racism in the post-civil rights era—including within higher education—has created dominant narratives and spaces/places based on assumptions about the universal appeal of race neutrality and the idea that racism and discrimination affects all people equally. The effects, and I argue intention, of these contemporary anti-civil rights frameworks are the subversion of the impact of white privilege on U.S. society (Crenshaw, 1988; Bobo, Kleugel, & Smith, 1996; Bonilla-Silva, 2004; Forman, 2014). Within this context, diversity work at Public U experiences the push and pull of high symbolic status and monetary investment, and low structural expectations.

Diversity formation as a form of racial formation

The post-civil-rights era is marked by a growth of colorblind ideology and a constriction of non-white racial and ethnic consciousness. For example, it is in the 1970s that white rights movements consistently started using the language of civil rights and anti-racism to push back against busing, affirmative action in public and educational sectors, and the Voting Rights Acts. Within higher education, diversity represents a social and structural culmination of this backlash. Because diversity is the dominant post-civil rights framework for defining the place of race in institutional settings, it has a direct relationship the terms of racial and ethnic group membership.

This includes how people are racialized by others and themselves into groups based on common understandings of racial and ethnic identity. It also defines which groups are *underrepresented*, who is thought to experience *discrimination*, and in turn how diversity should be constructed within the university to mediate these inequities.

This study brings together a study of the "inertia" of structure and dominant institutional narratives at Public U with the ground-level conduct of diversity work in the everyday life of the university. To study structure, I use Bonilla-Silva's (2003) idea of *white habitus*, which is the convergence of identities, social norms, and racial and ethnic power relations that work to maintain racist narratives and structures over time. Bonilla-Silva defined *white habitus*, a "racialized, uninterrupted socialization process that conditions and creates whiteness;" he further stated that *white habitus* "promotes a sense of group belonging (a white culture of solidarity) and negative views about nonwhites" (Bonilla-Silva, 2003, p. 104). Bonilla-Silva argued that colorblind ideology (the idea that being "blind" to racial identity, i.e. being race neutral, is a universal good) has subverted racial justice and social progress in the current era by removing the unwieldy *racist* from any racialized discourse.

A focus on the universality of racism and on cultural explanations for disparate experiences of race, ethnicity, color, and class has created two main issues: first, fear of playing to racial politics has allowed racialized experiences of inequity to remain unaddressed; second, white political mobilizations have been able to challenge successfully civil rights era policies by invoking equal opportunity and discrimination (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Bonilla-Silva, Lewis, Forman & Embrick, 2003). Throughout the study, I show how a core systemic belief in the objective value of whiteness promotes stories and ideas about diversity that, a) focus on the importance of cross-racial interaction not as one part of the long-view of antiracist work but as

an end in itself; b) couch discourse on whiteness within a discourse on merit and achievement; c) become pre-occupied the effects of majority-minority environments on the inclusion and comfort of whites; d) diminish the importance diversity work as a form of administrative and academic labor within the university. These themes were consistent across different interviews, and even within professional network events I observed that included diversity workers from other institutions. However, where I diverge from Bonilla-Silva is in his singular focus on systemized, structural racism and its body of racialized discourse. My attention to narratives brings to a forefront the "ebb and flow" of diversity work and allows me to trace diversity formation at Public U through the "various dimensions of [its] everyday life" (Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg, 1991, p. 12).

The valence of 'racial agency'[16]

Frankenburg (1997) wrote, "The notion of whiteness as unmarked… should not be taken to invoke sequential or fully separable locales, for hegemony is never complete, never uniform" (p. 5). Similarly I differentiate between recognizable power holders and the localized production of race and ethnicity among individuals who do the work of creating diverse environments within the university. The former may include the University President, Provosts, Deans, and Vice Presidents of major university initiatives related to diversity, who have direct access to the structures that define racial and ethnic diversity in post-secondary education, and that create the official history of racial and ethnic relations at the university. For instance, the Board of Regents of Public U tried unsuccessfully to file a restraining order against a large group of primarily black students staging a peaceful sit-in outside the President's office to protest the administration's inaction in cases of anti-black racism on the university's campus. The impact of

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[16] Frankenberg, 1997, p. 15

the protest and ensuing bad publicity for the university both on-campus and off-campus put into motion the resignation, firing and reassigning of multiple administrators including the Dean of Students. It also resulted in the development of some institutional structures to address black student and faculty diversity on campus, such as the "Five-Year Action Plan for the Recruitment of African-American Faculty," an African American Studies department, and an office for African American student affairs (Public U Website, *Office for Underrepresented Faculty*).

Today the 1992 protest and reforms are described within Public U's archives and various student newspaper articles as a moment of progress and institutional learning that helped the leadership of the university "deal with upcoming shifts in student enrollment toward Hispanics, Asians, Indians, and other people of color" (Spence, 2002). But from one of the protestors' perspective the Public U sit-in took place "the year following the Rodney King beating and several months after the L.A. riots resulting from a verdict that acquitted the accused police officers" (Spence, 2002). As such it spoke to wider issues of racial injustice and violence, and the quietude of the university's response to racial conflict and racism on campus. The university now "celebrates" this history every ten years within its own diversity narrative. But there continue to exist counter-narratives to the university's story of racial progress. For example, all three of the structures I named as resulting from the protest have faced funding challenges and institutional barriers against substantive change as the university's focus on diversity moves away from any discourse on racism toward what has been described as a "rainbow" approach. On one hand, the significance of the '92 protest is one of the stories that have allowed me to tease out the "creative and manifold 'tactics' ordinary people use to resist the 'strategies' of the strong—the hegemonic forces of governments… [and] institutions" (Lamphere, 1992, p. 114). It furthers the "systematic critique of how knowledge is constructed" in the university while

recognizing "that knowledge is socially produced, imbued by human interests and implicated in unequal social relations" (Chesler, Lewis and Crowfoot, 2005, p. 21). On the other hand, it also represents one of many instances when a substantive change in the "valence" of racial narratives and structures has become weakened by Public U's focus on building its diversity capital rather than addressing racial inequity and racism within the institution, and in the university's rapidly expanding "sense of place" in the Central City.

Diversity capital in a democratic society

There are two major areas of focus in higher education studies which speak to the role of diversity within systemic constructions of race and ethnicity in post-secondary education. The first turns on a discourse of civic benefit. Bowen and Bok (1998) exemplified this thread of research in *The Shape of the River*:

> …It is not individuals alone who gain. Substantial additional benefits accrue to society at large through the leadership and civic participation of the graduates, and through the broad contributions that the schools themselves make to the goals of a democratic society. (p. 277).

Similarly, Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, and Gurin (2002) drew a direct relationship "between students' experiences with diverse peers in the college or university setting and their educational outcomes" (p. 330). They further "contend[ed] that students educated in diverse institutions will be more motivated and better able to participate in an increasingly heterogeneous and complex society" (p. 339). Neither Bowen and Bok nor Gurin, et. al. hypothesized that "simply attending an ethnically diverse college" will somehow "guarantee that students will have the meaningful intergroup interactions" (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002, p. 333). They did however link racially and ethnically diverse student bodies to the development of the democratic, civic

consciousness of students at those institutions, which in turn linked to academic performance during college, such as grades, graduation rates, and pursuit of graduate and professional degrees. It is important to note that all of these relationships occurred within existing systems of merit and achievement in the post-secondary institutions that these scholars studied.

In this sense, higher education studies as a field has not challenged the existence of "selective institutions" (Bowek & Bok, 2000). Rather, it has argued for racially and ethnically diverse student bodies as contributive to the performance of students attending college and in turn the status of the institutions themselves (Stevens, 2007, p. 32), what is also called "diversity capital."[17] Public U is an exemplar of a university's status among its peers rising as a result of its diversity. As I have stated, Public U has won national awards and gained much media attention for the number and percentage of African American students who earn their degrees from the university every year. Interview participants cited its "majority-minority" and "majority women" demographics, as well as that the school has "students from over 150 countries." That multiple participants were able to state this final piece information almost verbatim to the university website reflects the extent to which Public U's public diversity narrative has become embedded in its diversity work and among its diversity workers. In addition to this demographic story of diversity, Public U also reflects the other narrative aspect of diversity capital: the invisibility of anti-minority racism. In Public U's majority-minority environment, where "different types of

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[17] Tara Yosso (2005) defined "community cultural wealth" as "an array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilized by Communities of Color to survive and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression" (p. 77). Chambers, Boger, & Tobin (2008) similarly described "diversity capital" as an "experientially acquired" "attribute of individuals" that is "analogous to 'human capital' or 'cultural capital.' It denotes the qualities, skills and life experiences that allow a student to communicate, compete, and achieve in a truly inclusive setting" (p. 279). While acknowledging the importance of these individual and group definitions, I also use the term diversity capital to mean the appropriation of the histories, differences, knowledge and skills noted above by institutions. In this sense, diversity capital is represented by the rewards and status given to colleges and universities that have diverse student bodies. The benefit here is not a recognition of the students that bring diversity to the institution, but rather a focus on the ability of the institution to recruit and matriculate diverse students.

people" is something "you can't avoid," the issue of racism becomes reframed, as one participant said, "People don't intermingle" (*Undergraduate Interview 3613*). In a sense, race and ethnicity themselves become 'unspeakable' because they are subsumed under the all-inclusive category of diversity.

Searls Giroux (2010) interrogated "the consequences" of this "new racism" in higher education:

> The institutional 'repression of racial reference' or the rendering of race as 'unspeakable' in public by reducing it to a past problem, now resolved and best forgotten has combined with an unquestioning faith in free market economics, short circuiting not just our understanding of our past and our present, our political institutions, our national identity and our international understanding. (p. 11)

Takagi (1993) showed a similar relationship between free market economics and race neutrality in higher education. In his analysis of the model minority myth as a technique of anti-affirmative action discourse, he referred to the story of "Asian victims and black villains," which uses white race consciousness to dictate the rules of merit, race pride, and colorblindness while allowing whiteness itself to remain largely invisible (p. 109). Such narratives both dictate and operate through diversity formation in university settings, and in the current era they have been marked by a focus on decentering whiteness from anti-diversity-speak. This invisibility often occurs in concert with an emphasis on the rights of academically "qualified" non-whites such as Chinese-, Korean-, and Indian- Americans. The stereotyped bodies and cultural identities of these students become representative of success in an ethnically diverse global marketplace. Subsequent narratives of inter-minority racism, such as black-Asian and black-Latino conflict, solidifies a perception that racism itself has become part of a leveled playing field. Jackson

(2011) developed this idea in her analysis of the new discourse of *horizontal racism* in the American south, which she described as a "that was then, this is now" approach to historiographies of racialization. It "suppresses information" about both anti-black and anti-Latino racism by focusing on racism among Latino and black communities (p. 27).

Therefore, even though higher education studies work on diversity capital extends the boundaries of the free market frameworks used to evaluate learning and achievement in universities, the dominant higher education studies discourse still pairs diversity with merit in a ways that are similar to how anti-diversity discourse links race neutrality to merit. Indeed historically, public service and civic missions have figured prominently in how universities themselves market selectivity as part of a beneficent enterprise that identifies the talented few today who may help others in the future. For example, Public U describes itself playing a "central" role in the "revitalization," "growth," and "future" of the city where it resides. Most importantly, accessing the language of capital, it markets itself as "providing the impetus for private developers to invest in the area." In this way a university's educational and service goals become entwined with its business goals. However, as Fullinwider and Lichtenberg (2004) stated quite succinctly, "The critique of meritocracy… often begins with the observation that we don't in fact live in one" (p. 18). This applies both to the construction of merit *within* the university through admissions and assessment processes, and the construction of the merit *of* the university as an agent of public good that is universal, and colorblind.

Sociological and educational counter-narratives

Further challenging the linkages between diversity and merit, another major area of racial and ethnic discourse in higher education studies has emerged, exemplified by "critical pedagogy" scholarship. While there are multiple discursive paths within critical diversity

studies, my research study is informed by sociology of higher education and critical race studies of education.

Mitchell Stevens cited the following "*amicus curiae* brief on behalf of Columbia University, Harvard University, Stanford University, and University of Pennsylvania" during the 1978 *Bakke* case:

> Up to about a decade ago it was the fact (not designedly, but a fact nonetheless) that the student bodies of the amici institutions were overwhelmingly white, and their faculties almost exclusively so… By not enrolling minority students in significant numbers, the amici were continuing to deny intellectual house room to a broad spectrum of diverse cultural insights… (Stevens, 2007, p. 151)

Stevens asserted that despite the innovation of bringing racial difference into the discourse on post-secondary education, these institutions also sought to "keep their eyes on what *other* organizations [Steven's emphasis]—particularly the large, influential and highly visible ones—are up to… model their practices… and [create] a new language for how Americans conceive of racial difference" in terms of the universities' goals and trends (Stevens, 2007, p. 149). Such moves by universities do not entirely subsume the ability of small groups to mobilize locally, as evidence by the well-chronicled history of extremely active social justice groups on college campuses since the civil rights era. But it does create an enduring, institutional narrative for diversity that links it directly to a positive valuation of the university itself.

Antonio and Muñiz (2007) also argued that traditional higher education studies scholarship has focused too much on "college impact" and student intergroup relations, and has limited its inquiry into institutional change. As a result, diversity-focused research is at times like diversity itself, an additive aspect of student assessment and achievement initiatives produced by

universities to reflect established modes of response to "campus culture" issues—such as the formation of diversity programs and offices, ethnic studies majors and minors, increases in non-white student admissions, and a reduction of racially flagrant incidents on campus. But as Witt, Chang, and Hakuta (2003) have also made clear, "diversifying our college universities and campuses requires expanding current notions of merit," not just creating scaffolding to help non-white students "succeed" and "achieve" within the deeply flawed and aged frameworks of fitness through which post-secondary environments operate.

This impetus toward institutional change has generated new models for characterizing the terrain of people and systems which make up higher education. Here the work of critical race scholars in educational studies has greatly enlivened the field of inquiry. The strength of the critical race approach—aside from its foundational argument about the centrality of both racial identity formation and racism—is its development of theoretical and methodological frameworks for narrative analysis. Particularly narrative as *testimonio*, or a storied expression of racialized experience (Fernandez, 2002). Counter-stories within racialized spaces, such as diversity-focused spaces in a university, is key to understanding both the structural reproduction of diversity and the micro-level strategies individuals and groups may use to resist it (Yosso, 2005).

Solorzano (1998) asked in his seminal essay on racial micro-aggressions, "Does the dominance of a racial group require a rationalizing ideology?" (p. 124). At Public U, diversity often functions as an ideological concept; that is, one which draws power from its symbolic value as part of a belief system, rather than the substance of its argument. In *Making and Selling of an Illusion*, Embrick (2006) aptly argued that "the word diversity, similar to its predecessor, 'multiculturalism,' has become a cultural ideology, one that resonates with the U.S. mainstream view that America is a color-blind and gender-blind country (p. 10). Thus because U.S.

Americans want to believe that in the post-civil rights era we now live in a race neutral system from which racism has been eradicated, ideas like diversity that support this belief rise in status. Through this status, diversity does not just present an alternative to racial and ethnic identity, it can subsume it almost entirely; so that the actual types of difference that diversity connotes remain invisible.

A good example of this is the university's *Diversity Strategic Plan 2011-2016*. This document mentions the words "race," "ethnicity," and "gender," a total of three times each in the six-page document. "Socioeconomic class" is stated once, and "disability" is mentioned seven times. Meanwhile the word "underrepresented" is written seventeen times. And diversity, a total of thirty-one occurrences. Textually, and thus narratively, diversity and underrepresented have become placeholders for the actual identities they reference. In part, this could be interpreted as a wholesale adherence to colorblindness and the marginalization of identity consciousness for the sake of a "merit-based" image. It could also be seen as the university's risk-minimizing approach to dealing with the increasingly constricted legal space available to post-secondary institutions for development of programming and policies related to race and ethnicity. In both cases, diversity works symbiotically with race neutrality rather than posing an alternative to it. As such, it veils racial apathy and in some instances, outright racial conflict and hostility in exchange for a cleaner narrative of racial progress.

Interestingly, four of the study participants also expressed critiques of diversity similar to Embrick's, but from an opposite perspective. They made the argument that diversity's over-emphasis on racial and ethnic identity, and the "sacrosanct" "value" assigned to it made it feel like a "religion" rather than "one value in a set of values." One person argued that being "hit over the head" with it made it less relevant. The fact that a critical race scholar like Embrick who

frames diversity as an extension of a "colorblind and gender-blind" discourse and study

participants for whom the status of diversity creates discomfort because of its emphasis on race

and ethnicity can use similar critiques to describe the problem of diversity shows that the actual

role that diversity and diversity formation play in the U.S. is more complex than either

interpretation. I use Embrick's definition of diversity ideology as a basis for studying diversity

formation at Public U. But I also seek to recognize and address the dissonance between this

focused critique and the often messy and contradictory ways that diversity becomes

characterized a positive or negative value within diversity work spaces.

There is no 'outside' to racial geographies[18]

Studying narratives of racial and ethnic diversity alongside the place of the university

builds even more complexity into the analysis. For instance, Public U's strategies regarding

disability necessarily include a consideration of the accessibility of places on campus. However,

initiatives related to racial and ethnic diversity rarely engage with the campus itself as a

component of students' racialized experiences and the school's diversity formation. But as seen

with the May 2013 arrest of six University of Southern California students when the LAPD and

USC's Department of Public Safety police raid of an end-of-year college party organized and

attended primarily by black students (Meraji, 2013), the literal space of engagement between the

university campus and the highly mobile and intrusive mechanisms of racism—in this case,

racial profiling—is critical to examining and changing racially hostile and apathetic campus

spaces.

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[18] "…There is no 'outside' to racial geographies, [and] the ways in which the racial formation is given spatial expression remain extremely variable and shifting. Spaces may be produced in accordance with ideologies of color-blindness or race consciousness, of integrationism, assimilationism, separatism, or nativism." Delaney (2002) "The Space that Race Makes"

By highlighting the relationship between diversity formation and the places that the university inhabits, I argue that at Public U these places are increasingly becoming part of the university's racialized story of its past, present, and future. Furthermore these spaces and places produce the literal terrain upon which the university practices diversity. This can be seen in how participants articulated the physical and social borders of the university community, and how the university creates an institutional "vision" and practicable norms for using and belonging to that space.

Furthermore, as I have already argued, the there is also no "outside" to diversity work and diversity workers. People, like spaces and places, carry within their own bodies and through their interactions with others the complexity of their racialized experiences. As I demonstrate through participants' personal narratives about their own racial identities, their experiences of cross-racial interactions and friendships, and the racializing effects of their familial, residential, and educational experiences, the consciousness and characterizations that diversity workers bring to and have about Public U are salient to their construction of diversity at the university. For instance, in Chapter IV, I discuss at length the ways in which participants answered the first question of the interview: *How do you identify, racially or ethnically?* The extent to which most of the participants negotiated this question out loud during the initial few minutes of the interview was an unexpected finding in the study. The tension in their responses, or in some opposite cases the absolute lack of it, illustrates the latent discomfort in claiming one's racial and ethnic identity, and people's strong perceptions that to self-identify racially and ethnically is a political and social act. As such, one's racial and ethnic classification may change depending on the context in which the question is asked. Or it may never change, which I argue is ultimately another form of racial and ethnic consciousness; that is, *not* thinking about one's racial and

ethnic identity reflects a certain way of experiencing it.

The lofty self-image that white men accorded themselves

Describing the ethic of the westward expansion in 19th century America, Tomás Almaguer (1994) wrote,

> Anglo Saxon men became civilized men of republican virtue... The nonwhite in contrast became the foil for the lofty self-image that white men accorded themselves… The questions of who own property, became property, and entered into "free" and "unfree" labor markets were answered in racial terms. (p. 22)

This text illustrates the similarities between white republican ideology of the 1800s and the perceived beneficence of universities today that build their campuses in predominantly non-white or low-income areas.   To develop a framework for studying the place of Public U, I used case studies of racialized, urban and post-secondary spaces as references. For example, Mitchell's (2003) *Right to the City*, in particular the case study on People's Park in Oakland and UC Berkeley has served as the foundational work on race, place and post-secondary education. Building on this knowledge, Bradley's (2009) *Harlem v. Columbia University*, and Inwood and Martin's (2008) "Whitewash: white privilege and racialized landscapes at the University of Georgia" have furthered historical and geographical analysis of university spaces. Finally, Berrey's (2011) work on neighborhood gentrification in "Divided over diversity: Political discourse in a Chicago neighborhood," provided an emphasis on the narrative interpretation of place in relation to race and class which I have used extensively in the development of this study. Berrey's analysis of how different stakeholders in the Rogers Park area produced varying interpretation of the neighborhood's history, value, and future potential showed critical links between individual stories and group stories, which is one of the main focuses of my study.

Mitchell (2003) and Bradley (2009) both focused on specific conflicts between a university campus and its surrounding neighborhood. Mitchell (2003) showed how the designation of space as "blighted" and the declaration of "eminent domain" allowed University of California, Berkeley to assert its "purpose" in relation to the city. This involved the creation of "a rational, technical and efficient future, carefully managed by competent and well-trained bureaucrats working in the interest of society" (pp. 81-85). How Berkeley defined and envisioned each of these characteristics and indeed society itself, "became the focus of revolt and popular rebellion" in the city, turning issue of People's Park into a fight over place, as well as over the meaning of place (Mitchell, 2003, pp. 85, 105-111). Similarly, Bradley's showed how conservative and radical cross purposes came to a head when Columbia University tried to parlay nationwide 'urban renewal' initiatives in the 1950s and 1960s into the acquisition of more campus property in Morningside Heights, New York City. Bradley (2009) wrote, "Officials believed that they had the right to use whatever land the university could afford to buy in order to improve the aesthetics and appeal of the school to current and potential students" (p. 1). The key to both analyses is a sense of right to space articulated by the respective universities in their engagement with residents of the city neighborhood.

Furthermore, the university's status as a non-profit institution puts it on narrative footing with charitable and religious organizations with benevolent missions and the best of intentions. However, according to the Supreme Court, universities engage in the "business of education" (*Bakke*, 1978). Thus they also claim the *right* to eschew equitable processes of community-based development in order to expand and improve the spaces where they conduct business. As I stated earlier, Public U sees itself as an economic and social change agent in its "true urban" context. It seeks to create "synergy between [the university] and [the city]" that "benefits area

residents and visitors" (Public U Website, *About Public U*). This self-image affects not just how the university defines itself, but also how it characterizes the historically black space where it has built its campus. As Public U has grown and its campus expanded to include more of the city, it has also sought to create a more cohesive and uninterrupted "sense of campus as place." In order to accomplish this, Public U has refashioned the city spatially and culturally in its own image. As one participant stated, Public U is "everywhere you see the signs." Thus where the university puts its literal and social insignia becomes part of a new time-geography within which Public U is "the lifeblood" of the city.

Inwood and Martin's (2011) "landscape study" of a rural, southern campus history tour showed that "social meaning and stories derive from context" and most importantly, that they "are not immutable" (p. 375). A university's desire to, for instance, characterize its history of racism in a palatable way for visitors reflects a duality of purpose. First is the literal act of embedding historiographies of place in the campus landscape through landmarks, placards, and monuments. Second, by doing this the university also engages in the production of its own cultural capital. It is able to construct new knowledge that's marketable, evokes feeling, and can eventually create an altered public memory of the place.

Public U similarly displayed banners throughout Central City's downtown and published a special issue of its magazine in celebration of the university's centennial. Titled "Making History," the stories of Public U's "era of progress" and the school's "growth and prosperity" into "a true campus downtown" featured many of the university's firsts: the first woman student, the first wheelchair accessible building on campus, the first black student, and the first black Miss Public U. It also concluded with Public U's expressed focus on "expanding locally and globally." This included both the desire to "achieve distinction in globalizing the university" and

using its urban location to become "a leader in understanding the complex challenges of cities"— or as the university website states, an "urban lab" (Public U Magazine, 2013) The university has formed of its sense of place in ways that are directly connected to how it mitigates its racialized identity as a majority-minority school located in a majority black city. And just as Public U informed the wider public of its diverse identity through histories of racial and ethnic progress, the mechanisms of diversity at Public U have helped shape how those narratives were constructed. Similarly, this interplay of narrative and place when put into conversation with diversity structures and policies at the university reflect the institution's diversity discourse, the social-structural process that I have called diversity formation.

CHAPTER III: HISTORIES OF RACE, SPACE AND HIGHER EDUCATION

This chapter traces three histories from the civil rights period to the present that inform the study and at times intersect with each other, especially in how characterizations of racial and ethnic consciousness and racism have changed in the post-civil rights era. First, there is the emergence of diversity from the 1970s to the present, made up of the legal history of diversity in college admissions and the development of white rights and reverse discrimination narratives in response to civil rights era legislation. I describe this national level diversity formation through its case law as well as through media narratives surrounding U.S. Supreme Court cases from *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978) to *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin* (2013). I also cite conflicts such as the Boston school busing crisis of 1974, which produced well-documented public discourse on white civil rights in the early post-civil rights era. In doing so, I assert that diversity formation as I have studied it at Public U is in conversation with the formation of diversity in higher education nationally. Multiple participants referenced "shift" away from racial and ethnic diversity "over the last twenty years," the likelihood of "affirmative action being struck down," and the lack of "political urgency" in higher education spaces of the current era with regard to racism and socioeconomic inequity.

These narratives echo Searls Giroux's assertion that "'repression'" of racial and ethnic identity and racism "has combined with an unquestioning faith in free market economics, short circuiting not just our understanding of our past and our present, [but] our political institutions, our national identity and our international understanding" (2010, p. 11). And they show that diversity workers, even when locally focused, are also aware of the wider implications and limitations of their work, both in the institution and beyond it.

Next, there is the dual, intersecting history of Public U, a large public university located in the southeastern United States, and Central City its geographical and cultural home. The history of the university and that of the city have been intertwined since Public U began as a night school during WWI. Central City has been a site of major civil rights mobilizations and multiple waves of 'urban renewal' since 1949.[19] Further, Public U's trajectory from its desegregation in early 1960s to its current status as a majority-minority institution has been complex and contested. As the background of these two spaces shows, Central City and Public U did have desegregated in the 1960s without the level of violence that occurred in other parts of the region. However, their histories of race and place are not as simple as the stories of racial progress that are promoted by both city and university leadership.

As I will demonstrate in Chapter V, the narrative and spatial tension between the university and the city are culminating in the present-day with Public U's plans to expand and "brand" its campus exponentially over the next decade. Ever since the university undertook its current "master plan" to create a "traditional campus experience" within Central City, it began to produce and narrate more publicly its relationship to the city. These characterizations of Public U in relation its downtown "neighbors" and "stakeholders" have become increasingly rooted in new, racialized histories of the city space and visions of utility and cleanliness; they also reference more readily a desire to become a global university in a global city in cohort with other "megacities" worldwide (Public U Magazine, 2013, 2014). Here I reference again Almaguer's (1994) description of the "lofty self-image" of white men, and I infer more broadly, *whiteness*. Even though Public U remains a majority-minority university, it has reframed its diversity into

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[19] The National Housing Act of 1949 expanded the role of the federal government in razing slum housing and creating expansive public housing projects and funding both urban and rural community redevelopment (Bayor, 2000, p. 71).

an outward facing and growing global vision that includes people of different races and ethnicities but is not weighed down by burdensome histories of racial and ethnic conflict. It is a space that seeks to produce "solutions" for the problems of *all* cities, but is free from "the unpleasant facts of urban life" in Central City. In this way, Public U's narrative of growth mimics its narrative of diversity: it sets out the terms of racial and ethnic engagement without ever having to reference race and ethnicity.

The long white rights movement [20]

Discourse on race and ethnicity in the United States saw a clear shift during the 1970s. Certainly, various tropes of white victimization have existed since the nineteenth century (Roediger, 1991; Jacobson, 1999; Guglielmo, 2003; Painter, 2010; Roediger, 2010), especially ones that paired socioeconomic, political and spatial victimization of a white laboring class with the victimization of bondage. For example, in *How Race Survived U.S. History* Roediger (2010) wrote,

> The… comparison of white workers to slaves… were likely to seem pejorative, even
> when put forward by radical artisans. When, for example, the great American
> revolutionary and abolitionist Tom Paine described the dangers of white working class
> becoming 'mere Negroes… lazy and careless,' the fact that such apparently racist words
> came from a patriot wanting to build a nation without slaves or a permanent waged
> population hardly kept them from being offensive… (81)
>
> Discourse on the freedom of white workers often became intertwined with the absence of

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[20] Dowd Hall (2005). Here, I call into question the idea that anti-civil rights mobilizations were merely reacting to civil rights policies. It is important to consider these narratives in historical and social context, and recognize their unique relationship to the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s. However, I also argue that this current movement is part of a longer white rights discourse which has narrative roots in much earlier white mobilizations against black rights. For example, the anti-Reconstruction campaigns which organized successfully against federal encroachment into white southern spaces.

black workers. Indeed blackness itself was something that even radical white leaders rhetorically marginalized as "mere Negroes." Abolitionist, pro-labor narratives co-existed simultaneously and symbiotically with anti-black narratives. Painter (2010) called this the "complex story" of whiteness as "multiple enlargements occurring against a backdrop of black/white dichotomy" (p. 201).

The same is also true of anti-diversity discourse in the current era, which claims distance from the supposedly divisive politics of race while adhering to a model of white solidarity. The advent of the civil rights movement helped focus and crystallize what I will throughout this dissertation refer to as "white rights narratives." The diminishment of overt and *de juris* forms of racism as a result of American civil rights and human rights mobilizations from World War I onward stabilized the legal terms of equality and opportunity for non-whites in the USA (Harding, Kelley & Lewis, 1997; Anderson, 2003; Payne, 1995; Gilmore, 2008). In particular, the culmination of black political and social organizing during the civil rights period framed new possibilities for the empowerment of black and other marginalized communities on both national and local levels. The effects of desegregation and affirmative action on the numbers of non-white and women students in post-secondary institutions have been significant. However both policies have been critiqued for their pursuit of equal rather than equitable solutions to the problem of systemic racism, as seen in the stagnation of black and Latino college graduation rates and incomes as early as the 1970s.[21]

What has also been significant is the immediate and organized response to both types of policies in the courts and on the streets by anti-civil rights groups. Furthermore, this long term, self-described "backlash" movement successfully appropriated the language of civil rights and

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[21] Oliver & Shapiro (1997) and Winant (2004) have addressed race, higher education, and economic opportunity in the US from the early civil rights period to the present.

equal protection to make its case against civil rights policies. Popular white rights narratives become embedded into the official legal narratives of the Supreme Court, as seen in briefs and opinions both for and against racial and ethnic diversity in high education. One cannot thus address diversity formation in university settings without attending to this legal history. Additionally, public anti-civil rights mobilizations illustrate the longevity and political effectiveness of white rights narratives in what has now become anti-diversity discourse. In the next section, I examine three such mobilizations: one from 1964 after the passing of the Civil Rights Act, one from the early post-civil rights period in 1974, and the third from 2011. In each instance, anti-civil rights groups used the language and ethos of equal rights to pose challenges to civil rights measures.

'Why are 'Civil Rights' more important than human rights...?'

The parameters of diversity have been much critiqued within sociological and educational scholarship for their ambiguity and lack of mandate regarding policy (Omi and Winant, 1994; Massey, Charles, Lundy & Fisher, 2006; Yosso, et. al. 2004). Other scholars have disavowed diversity as a technique of neoliberalism in the academy that reframes racial justice as a 'positive action' rather than as an essential form of anti-racism (Essed, 1996; Bonilla-Silva, 2003). However, ongoing resistance to non-white race consciousness worked in opposition to both of these critiques by characterizing diversity legally and socially as *equivalent to* discrimination. As such, the tropes used to describe the ill effects of diversity-based policies and programming utilize the language of rights—the right to colorblindness, and housed within it, an unalienable right to whiteness. The three examples that follow illustrate the emergence of these white rights narratives during the civil rights period and in present-day anti-diversity discourse.

Both Kruse (2007) and Bayor (1996) cited southern governor Lester Maddox as a

definitive example of the range and creativity of local segregationist responses to state mandated desegregation. While fighting in the district court for his "rights" as a business owner to decide the terms upon which customers can patronize his restaurant, Maddox stated that 'private' policies and choices were just that: private. He further invoked his "rights of association" as a citizen of the United States not to be forced by the state to interact with blacks. Facing a court order to desegregate, her famously asked in a newspaper editorial, "Why are 'Civil Rights' more important than human rights, human decency, and human respect?" (Kruse, 2007, p. 196) He also installed outside the restaurant a white tower with a black coffin inside, which he called "a shrine to the death of the free enterprise system." The obvious racial symbolism of the white tower and black coffin aside, Maddox's argument turned on a narrative of both human rights *and* capitalism. Kruse (2007) used this to demonstrate that civil rights era segregationists were not wedded only to tropes of anti-black rhetoric. They instead approached desegregation from multiple, nuanced angles, most of which turned on the central theme of white victimization and especially the victimization of white children, as seen in the next example from the 1970s.

The City of Boston has also served as a case study for white resistance to state enforced civil rights legislation in the 1970s. Boston's PBS station, WGBH, provided extensive coverage of the anti-busing campaign of 1973 and 1974, some of which was also later incorporated into the PBS series *Eyes on the Prize* (2006). The Boston anti-busing campaign included a city-wide boycott of public schools by white parents and numerous protests. One broadcast at the beginning of the school year showed footage of a large anti-desegregation rally at the federal building. Speeches and performances by its leaders reflected the dominant narrative of white anti-civil rights rhetoric of the time. A reporter described the protest as "a white protest with white Americans clinging to their patriotism." They "felt their rights had been abridged" and that

the Supreme Court had "sold America down the river." Thus, whites in the civil rights period easily accessed tropes of bondage, such as being "sold down the river," to describe the predicament of whites opposed to desegregation. Within these stories, middle class black civil rights leaders and the elite white politicians perceived as pandering to them became the so-called masters, and whites became enslaved. Drawing parallels between the anti-busing campaign and the civil rights movement helped the campaign further emphasize a narrative of racialized patriotism and victimhood; as did the tactic of carrying teabags at protests to reference the Boston Tea Party, and its organizational moniker, Restore Our Alienated Rights (ROAR). As one ROAR supporter stated, "As Martin Luther King himself did, we will have civil disobedience, [and] we will stop this once and for all... We will go through legal channels, through our voting rights, if they haven't taken that away from us too" (Hampton, et. al., 2006). Another woman who spoke to a large crowd at a protest yelled, "Just because I'm white does not meant the Fourteenth Amendment does not apply to me. I, I am white. And I want my rights" (Hampton, et. al., 2006). Such representations of white race consciousness and civil rights formed a larger discourse about New England as a new geographical and political frontier in federal intrusions upon perceived local rights. Most importantly, they were used to express a sense of white otherness, which later became a major theme in dominant legal narratives on diversity in post-secondary education.

Interlaced with these tropes of white victimization was also the issue of urban space—neighborhoods, school districts, and voting districts—as a site of contestation, both between whites and non-whites, and between lower income whites who lived in city centers like South Boston and higher income whites who lived in new, upwardly mobile suburbs. Thus a sense of shared white consciousness was both heightened and made invisible as whites in the city pitted

their shared race-class consciousness against specter of economically privileged, integrationist suburban whites. Here again, the narratives created put blacks into the role of subservient agitators, who despite the "inconvenience" and "hardship" their organizing efforts had caused remained none the less dependent upon the political will of their white allies in the socioeconomic elite. The issue of racial segregation and violence thus became whitened. The conflict over traditionally white spaces and concentrated white power within cities was no longer described as a black-white issue. Rather, it became a conflict between insiders and outsiders, of "neighborhood schools" versus "the suburban siege mentality" (WGBH Media Library & Archive, Kevin White talks about anti-busing sentiment in South Boston, 1974) and "the boot of federal authority" (Hampton, et. al., 2006). Mayor Kevin H. White called for an end to the boycott, but stated,

> It's a time to put politics to one side. It's a time to consider only the people of Boston. Our friends. Our neighbors. Our children... I don't need or want the voices of those who live outside our city, who view busing as a solution to racial imbalance so long as it stays within the city limits. Those who talk about it being the law, but remain immune from implementing the law... And our efforts for metropolitan solutions have been resisted too consistently for us to trust that judgment or sincerity. (WGBH Media Library & Archive, Kevin White talks about anti-busing sentiment in South Boston, 1974)

White's rhetorical displacement of the violent historical baggage of *de juris* racial segregation in favor or the more abstract, contemporary notion of "racial imbalance" and the seemingly race neutral issue of "busing" further distanced civil rights legislation from the persistence of anti-black racism. As White explained, "Busing... is a challenge created by no one individual, directed against no particular neighborhood, and mounted to the advantage of no

single group" (WGBH Media Library & Archive, Kevin White talks about anti-busing sentiment in South Boston, 1974). This description is very similar to the legal language used to characterize acceptable forms of racial and ethnic diversity. That is, it must either benefit everyone, or no one. Thus with tropes that ranged from white civil rights to federal imperialism, anti-civil rights narratives from 1960s and -70s disengaged from overt race consciousness and racist language, and made use of city space as the new frontier of local rights. The Boston school boycott illustrated both the emergent power of colorblind ideology within that time period and the inextricable relationship between race and place in the early post-civil rights era.

The final example comes from the current post-civil rights period, and is most topical to the discourse on diversity taking place in universities today. In September 2011, UC Berkeley College Republicans student group launched the "Increase Diversity Bake Sale" as a protest against race consciousness in university admissions. This event came in response to the consideration of SB-185 by California Governor Jerry Brown. Passed by both houses of the state legislature, SB-185 proposed the rejection of Proposition 209, which in 1996 had disallowed the consideration of race as a factor in university admissions in the UC system. Had SB-185 been passed, the UC system would have regained the ability to consider race in its admissions processes. The UC Berkeley College Republicans described their purpose as trying "to cause people to think more critically about what [affirmative action] would do in university admissions" (Yan, 2011). They used a provocative approach that was consistent with the language of white victimization put into place during the civil rights movement. The "Increase Diversity Bake Sale" sold cupcakes at different costs to students based on their racial and gender identities: White, $2.00; Asian, $1.50; Latino, 1.00; Black, $0.75; Native Americans, $0.25; $0.25 off for all women.

The Berkeley protest showed that even narratives which often claim to stand in solidarity with the academic merit and civil rights of so-called high achieving minorities such as Asian Americans, still create a racial hierarchy of discrimination which puts whiteness at the top. The UC Berkeley bake sale was demonstrative of this hierarchy by structuring its pricing and thus its scale of victimization in the following way: white men, then white women, Asian men, Asian women, and so on. The protection of whiteness is consequently is a central focus of anti-diversity discourse. As the next section shows, it is these narratives that have also filled the legal space of resistance to diversity in post-secondary education from the 1970s to the present.

A 'logical endpoint' to race and ethnicity

Regents of the University of California v. Bakke (1978) marked the beginning of a legal and narrative shift from affirmative action to diversity in higher education. It legitimized the idea that affirmative action was creating non-white racial preference in post-secondary institutions. This was reflected in an interview with Robert Links, the attorney for Alan Bakke in the *Bakke* case,

> "We knew what was at stake. Back then people said that these programs like the Davis program were great things because they include people and bring them in to the class and I think that the shortcoming of that analysis is they forget that when you bring in one person, you're keeping out another person." (*Eyes on the Prize*, 2006)

> Like Links, others who challenged affirmative action characterized it as discriminating against "someone who happens to be white and happens to be male" (*Eyes on the Prize*, 2006). The success of this narrative is reflected in the result of the *Bakke* case and the subsequent, progressive weakening of non-white race consciousness in university admissions. Then Chair of the EEOC, Eleanor Holmes Norton described *Bakke*'s impact in the following way:

"One of the more unfortunate things about the *Bakke* case is that it became the vehicle of... mis-educating the public about affirmative action. The public learned about affirmative action almost literally for the first time through... ten second sound bites on television, with people polarized against one another. As a result, what is really quite a complicated concept... became digested as an element of unfairness." (*Eyes on the Prize*, 2006)

In *Bakke* the Court created the framework of "diversity" to characterize a legally acceptable form of race consciousness in university admissions. While supporting racial and ethnic diversity in post-secondary institutions as a "compelling interest" of the state, *Bakke* (1978) and later *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003) categorized the goal of reaching a 'critical mass' of student diversity as a "logical end point to [the] use of race" rather than as the ongoing development of critically diverse social spaces (*Fisher*, oral arguments, p. 47). This language served to historicize racism to within the civil rights period, forcing the Court and universities to contemplate fully the endpoint of diversity programs in higher education as a key aspect of developing such programs in the first place. These same narratives have not, however, mandated a 'logical endpoint' for white race consciousness. On the contrary, as demonstrated by the examples of white rights mobilization in the previous section and the legal narratives I outline in this section, whites and aspiring whites in the post-civil rights era have acquired a more crystallized, hyper-raced status through colorblind discourse. It is white race consciousness, not a lack of it that that produces post-racial discourse.

Between the 1970s and the present, the Supreme Court has interpreted the ambiguity of the Equal Protection Clause to argue that protecting white Americans against the 'discrimination' of civil rights policies is as important as addressing anti-minority racism. And as precedence for

white rights builds within the case law, the Court has employed narratives of white victimization with increasing confidence. For example, discrimination language in post-secondary diversity cases has moved from "reverse discrimination" (*Bakke*, 1978) and "reverse racial discrimination" (*Hopwood v. University of Texas*, 1996) to the simplified form, "discrimination" (*Grutter*, 2003; *Gratz v. Bollinger*, 2003; *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin*, 2013). This change marks a shift from recognizing the dominance and majority status of whiteness within American society to characterizing the field of racialization as leveled. It also shows the growth of white rights ideology. Meanwhile non-white race consciousness is constructed in political and legal arenas as dated, combative, and unnecessarily preoccupied with a type of racism that supposedly no longer exists.

In such a categorization of rights, whiteness is both invisible and ever-present. This is especially apparent in the arguments anti-diversity groups make in favor of the civil rights of Asian students. The petitioner's brief in *Fisher* (2013) as well as numerous amicus briefs for the petitioner either mentioned or focused primarily on the idea that Asian Americans are most discriminated against by the use of race in college admissions. While citing data that showed whites as having lower SAT scores and GPAs than their East- and South Asian counterparts, these briefs nonetheless did not classify white applicants as a group that is unfairly advantaged by diversity in admissions or call into question the merit of white students. Only groups designated as under-represented by the government and the university—African American, Latino, and Native American—were characterized as beneficiaries of diversity programs.

Narratives of discrimination are also complemented by the term "racial preference." Such was the case with California's Proposition 209 and Seattle's *Parents Involved* (2006) decision, which respectively ended the consideration of race in public labor, contracts, and

education in California and found in favor of "strict scrutiny" in Seattle public schools busing

program. To consider race at all and to include diversity as an institutional interest were equated

with showing preference, and thus creating a singular benefit. The discourse of anti-affirmative

action places itself squarely within colorblind and post-racial ideologies by seeming to reject

"racial preference." However as I have stated, these ideologies actually promote white race

consciousness and homogenized white solidarity; accepting whiteness as *the* norm is key to

racialized people becoming "just people" (Gilroy, 1987, 57).

Fisher *and the duality of compelling interest*

The Court Opinion in *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin* (2013) primarily referenced

previous decisions in *Bakke* (1978), *Gratz* (2006), and *Grutter* (2006) rather than developing a

new interpretation of the state's interest in diversity in post-secondary education. For example, in

Fisher Justice Kennedy largely used language from *Bakke* to assert that "redressing past

discrimination could not serve as a compelling interest because a university's 'broad mission [of]

education' is incompatible with making the 'judicial, legislative, or administrative findings of

constitutional or statutory violations' necessary to justify remedial racial classification" (*Fisher*,

p. 6). In this way, Kennedy characterized racism in America as its "past" and thus no longer

valid for serious consideration. The mission of the university and "a diverse student body," he

wrote, "[serve] values beyond race alone" (*Fisher*, p. 6).

While the broadness of "diversity" does express intersectional identities which include,

more traditionally, gender, socioeconomic class, sexuality, and ability, the move within Court

narratives on racial diversity in higher education has been to separate general diverseness from

the long history of racism that produced affirmative action policies in the 1960s. The compelling

interest of the post-civil rights state thus becomes rooted in the university's success in the

"business" of education. Here a diverse student body is seen as part of the "atmosphere" "most conducive to experimentation, an "enhance[ment]" that has positive effects on "classroom dialogue" and helps "lessen" experiences of "racial isolation and stereotypes" for *all*, not just for the students of color that are the targets of racial prejudice and detrimental stereotypes (*Fisher*, p. 6). Within this schema, racism must harm all and diversity must benefit all. Furthermore, like other narratives, it invokes the rights of business and free enterprise to promote colorblind ideology as a kind of capitalist freedom.

Anti-diversity discourse has also developed arguments against the use of race in college admissions by simultaneously critiquing the goal of racial representation and using its absence as evidence against diversity. In *Fisher* the petitioner stated that University of Texas' pursuit of racial diversity was inadequate because it was "unable to quantify the increase in 'underrepresented' minority enrollment attributable to consideration of race" (Rein, et. al., 2011, p. 7). The petitioner stated that lack of significant, quantifiable rise in the percentage of black and Latina/o students at UT Austin rendered its diversity efforts ineffective, and thus not necessary. However, using admissions processes that specifically evaluate race as a primary factor in campus diversity is not permitted due to the successful legal challenges brought against affirmative action in the early post-civil rights era. Anti-diversity discourse, then, has challenged the development of effective programs to increase the access of black and Latina/o students to post-secondary education by defining race conscious admissions as discrimination; at the same time it has critiqued diversity programming for not having enough impact on the numbers of underrepresented minorities on college campuses.

During oral arguments in *Fisher* both petitioner and participant were questioned at length about the definition of 'critical mass' in relation to racial representation. How does one know

critical mass of underrepresented minorities has been reached if not for numbers? The petitioner

referred to the need for environment of "understanding," having "a view" toward a positive

campus climate and "an appropriate level of comfort," describing this "range of evaluation" as

being extremely different from a quota system (*Fisher,* oral arguments, 2013, p. 17). Similarly

the participant tried to create a narrative that carefully referenced and sidestepped the

quantifiable representation of minorities at UT Austin. When explaining why the Top 10%

Rule[22] in Texas did not allow the University of Texas system to reach critical mass, Attorney

Garre stated:

> …If you just looked at the numbers—we don't think it's the numbers—but if you looked
>
> at the numbers, after 7 years, racial diversity among these groups at the University of
>
> Texas had remained stagnant or worse. (*Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin*, transcript
>
> of oral arguments, 2013, p. 41)

It is within this narrow space between colorblindness and white race consciousness that

both anti-diversity and some pro-diversity narratives have been developed in the post-civil rights

era.   Here, diversity has a tenuous but legal status, depending on the political time and place. For

example, California Proposition 209 was passed, upheld several times on the district court level,

and was almost extended through Proposition 54 in 2003 forbidding not just race consciousness

in selection processes but also racial classifications as a whole. Voters in the state of Michigan

bypassed the Supreme Court's finding in favor of the University of Michigan using race as one

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[22] Texas Bill HB 588, or the Top 10% Rule, passed in 1997 in response to *Hopwood v.* Texas, guaranteed admission to any public college or university in the state to the top ten percent of students from each high school class. The petitioner's argument against race consciousness in *Fisher* rested in part on the presence of this law as a 'race neutral' framework for increasing racial and ethnic diversity (Rein, et. al., 2012). However, the Texas legislature passed an amendment to the Top 10% Rule in 2009 which curbed the law significantly (Stone, 2009). While citing 'merit-based' policies such as the Top 10% Rule to argue against race consciousness in college admissions, anti-diversity campaigns have also devalued them by claiming that they disadvantage students from "more competitive" school districts.

of many factors in college admissions (*Grutter*, 2003) by passing the referendum, Proposal 2, to end race consciousness in all government business, including the state university system. The constitutionality of Proposal 2 was upheld by the Supreme Court in April 2014 in the case of *Schuette v. The Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action*. Furthermore, *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin*, which the Supreme Court remanded to the district court, may be back in front of the high court in the next few years. If this happens, the issue at hand will no longer be the application of strict scrutiny by the lower court, but rather race consciousness itself. The decision in *Schuette* and the eventual result *Fisher* will together define the entirety of the space available to diversity formation in post-secondary education by setting the margins for both educational and political approaches to racial and ethnic "equality."

A narrative approach to analyzing urban spaces

Throughout the research study, interview participants and the university's materials and media sources described Central City as "urban," "metropolitan," and "global." The descriptions used fell into a pattern that can be best explained using Bonilla-Silva and Glover's (2006) *Latin-Americanization theory*. If one maps these three narrative tropes onto the *Latin-Americanization* framework, then urban would represent a collective black identity, metropolitan would refer to white identity, and to global would describe an aspiring white identity. There are certainly nuances to this three-tier categorization. But on the whole it seems to reflect the bulk of diversity narratives formed at Public U which reference its location in the heart of Central City. Thus as I construct a socio-spatial history for Central City, I often reference these three descriptions— urban, metropolitan, and global—as well as the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic conditions which accompany them.

Lewis (1996) wrote, "...Larger historical processes, although important, are not how most people write their own individual narrative of place. Instead, they remember the... [experiences]... that marked their daily lives" (p. 117). Similarly, the *daily life* of a city space ultimately defines its relationship to the racial and ethnic formations which take place within it. Lewis called for historians to "interrogate those memories with fresh attention to what they say as well as what they do not say" in order to understand "how our memories rewrite the experiences we document" (p. 136). In the case of the official histories that imbibe places with certain political and social attributes, these documentations of time and place eventually rewrite the memories of the place. For example, Central City's story is one of racial and ethnic progress and urban renewal. It emphasizes "regime" and "coalition" politics among the top tier of political actors in cities—who W.E.B. Du Bois (1899) referred to as "the responsible elite" (p. xxviii)— while obscuring the complex and uneven, racial, ethnic and socioeconomic history of the city and its suburbs.

Dominant narratives such as these also work in concert with anti-diversity and traditional forms of diversity. First, by focusing on economic achievement and civic hierarchies, they mask the unrelenting and violent history of systemic racism with stories about the merits of individual leaders and elite groups. Secondly, coalition narratives rely on the promotion of successful interracial cooperation. As a result, these histories also provide a narrative hook for white populist assertions that the civil rights movement was detrimental to poor and working class whites. Furthermore, they suppress the emergence of counter-narratives regarding the racialized and classed construction of space in American cities both during the civil rights period and the current one. In order to develop a more precise analysis of the narratives Public U uses to characterize its social, economic, political, and spatial relationships to Central City I provide an

overview of the intersecting narratives of race, class, and space used in the development of Central City itself. Here, I focus on the period of rapid economic and population growth which boosted Central City's expansion in the after World War II.

Race and class in a 'city of progress' [23]

As a socioeconomically diverse, black urban space, Central City has often come to represent the "bootstraps" spirit of upward mobility that had become popular in the industrialization period of the late 1900s. One interview participant referred to it as "a luxury city," where the visibility of a range of middle class and wealthy black communities makes it both socially appealing and lacking in political urgency. Central City has a well-documented civil rights history, serves as a prominent site of civil rights tourism, and is known for its central role in the development of historically black post-secondary institutions. Its neighborhoods have fostered a robust black middle class, which was economically and politically organized well before the 1950s. On the other hand, Central City was also historically an industrialized urban destination for both poor black and white laborers from throughout the rural southeast for work and other opportunities. As such, white elites wishing to cure the 'urban ills' of crowded housing, disease, development and crime that came with poverty actively pursued the development of public housing as an alternative to privately owned tenement 'slums' in the city. Furthermore, Central City pioneered a range of post-WWII 'urban renewal' projects, most of which involved the appropriation of black residential, public, and business spaces. Given the simultaneous progression of black socioeconomic and political agency and the exploitation of black labor and neighborhoods, I have constructed a historiography of the urban, or *collective black* Central City which attends to the complexity of this narrative.

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[23] Mixon, 2005, p. 15

Central City was seen as a seat of black economic and political mobilization and the heart of black community life in the southeastern United States in the post-WWII era. Even though "whites forgot or simply did not want to accept the simple fact," the lives of blacks and whites in Central City were "too completely bound together" by World War II for the white leadership of the city to continue to neglect the "life and living conditions" of black urban residents (Bayor, 1996, 3-4). The city had already experienced a "brief and violent" anti-black riot in the early part of the century (Mixon, 2005, p. 27). The riot, which was described by whites who participated in it as 'a revolution' of 'the people,' was a part of a racist, populist response among poor and working class whites in the city to black enfranchisement and employment. The riot itself, according to Mixon (2005) "climaxed nearly forty years of adjustments to social change" (p. 27).

It is important to note here that while mass violence against blacks in Central City was performed by white laborers, was couched in a language of populism, and elite whites on the whole publicly critiqued as disruptive and criminal, it was by no means an entirely ground up form of racism. Conservative white politicians and business elites of the time had just as much interest in violence against Central City's black citizens, from which they would gain a further disenfranchised voting population (Mixon, 2005, p. 27). Just as proponents of post-racialism try to distance themselves from the supposedly irrational racial prejudice of rural, poor, and less educated whites (Forman, 2014), City Center's conservative white leadership formulated stories of collective white pride and black dependency to push forward a form of racism based on meritocracy rather than animus. The objective was not to get rid of Central City's black residents, but to use any means necessary to turn them into 'more useful laborer[s]' for the benefit of whites (Mixon, 2005, p. 37).

Furthermore, because Central City was indeed a space of black socioeconomic diversity, and a variety of political mobilizations, the more conservative or elite black communities in Central City also characterized black political fitness along lines of religiosity, morality, and a well-maintained class hierarchy (Mixon, 2005, p. 31). The prohibitionist elements of Central City's black community life exemplified such narratives. While conservative blacks spoke out vehemently against the constant violence and threat of violence which loomed over black neighborhoods in Central City, they also formulated modes of empowerment for blacks that were heavily referential to the superiority of educated and wealthy communities, and to whiteness as a comparative identity. For example, a 1956 article in Fortune magazine referred to the central black business district in Central City, which is located a few blocks from Public U's campus, as 'the richest Negro street in the world' (Kuhn, 1990, p. 39). Residents stated that when a person visited the area, they "dressed up" and "had a lot of pride," something they were denied in white spaces. One resident described the place as reinforcing that blacks "were going places," "like white folks" in wealthy white neighborhoods (Kuhn, 1990, p. 39). As Charles, Ruddiman, and Phillips (2000) would write about Central City, scenarios within which the division of neighborhoods based on race and limited residential desegregation could occur with both black and white support has depended heavily on "mixing people of similar socioeconomic status" (p. 119).

Ultimately, this approach resulted in the constriction of spaces that were open to black residents and businesses—both in the city and the suburbs. Even as Central City represented the core of black American wealth and sociopolitical diversity, almost half of Central City's black residents in 1960 lived "at or below the poverty line" and "comprised two-thirds of all... families" in the city "living in poverty" (*Central City Economic Base & Marketability Summary*

Report, 1967, p. 6). While 80 percent of blacks living in the city also worked in the city—thus constituting a large part of the residential landscape—only 3 percent of the employed black male residents of the city "were classified as professional or technical" (*Central City Economic Base & Marketability Summary Report*, 1967, p. 6). Thus the objective to maximize the visibility of black wealth within the city space served to further marginalize the collective residential and political power of the vast majority of blacks actually living in the city. As I explore the racialized and classed formation of place at Public U, these ideas will come to surface again, especially in my analysis of how historically middle class and wealthy black spaces which were sources of race conscious 'pride and joy' in the period of segregation have become appropriated by Public U, both literally through the university's expanding ownership of buildings in the downtown area, and through its narratives about the "diverse cultures and lifestyles" that can be seen when one visits the campus.

From urban to 'urban sophisticate'[24]

Two major periods of urban renewal have taken place in Central City since the passing of the National Housing Act in 1949. The first lasted from the early 1950s through the late 1960s, comprising major civil rights mobilizations for desegregation and subsequent white flight from the city to the surrounding suburbs. The second began in the early 1990s and culminated in the razing of almost all of the city's public housing development in the first decade of the 2000s.[25] Each wave of redevelopment of the city's downtown neighborhoods sought to define and ultimately constrict black life in the city by invoking the rule of eminent domain. As Stone (1989) pointed out, while "urban renewal was legally and financially complicated... the basic

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[24] Leonardo (2007), p. 145.
[25] I will demonstrate in Chapter IV that a third period of urban renewal is also in effect in Central City at present. It began with the building of on campus housing at Public U, which was previously a commuter campus. It has continued through to the present, as Public U. acquires and renovates more properties in the downtown area.

approach was clear: land was taken from one set of owners and given to another to alter its use. Whole neighborhoods could be changed or even eliminated" (p. 38). What is more, the "public facilities" for which the sites were used most significantly involved road and highway construction, the building of a civic center, multiple stadiums, and other spaces for a semi-public interaction. In short, only those residents of Central City who could financially afford to be a part the "public" would benefit from these projects. Those who could not would have to remain on the outskirts of both the official local identity and the city itself. Rutheiser (1996) elaborated on this point when he wrote:

> "While cities may come to stand for and symbolize nations, they are also imagined in a manner quite differently from these larger collectives… Not only are there a surfeit of images about the city, but the landscape itself is composed of an overload of images, most of which are purposely designed to convey a message (although they inevitably carry any more as they are woven into the warp and weft of millions of discreet life trajectories)… The ability to control and shape this public-city constitutes a central line of conflict and struggle…" (p. 10)

Furthermore, even though the *ability* to control Central City's segregated black spaces might have been granted by federal law and the Jim Crow system, the construction of the place itself involved another type of authority—one which was able to create and disperse dominant narratives of development while mitigating the political influence of counter-stories. Stone (1989) referred to this approach as the "quick and dirty" method of urban development, referencing a quote from the head of the Urban Renewal Department of Central City, who called for the department to favor "quick and dirty action" on plans to displace low-income African American residents so as not to get "a large segment of the population exercised and riled up" (p.

64). The mobilizing of 'riled up' black residents and political leaders would become especially

threatening when all-white development commissions proposed plans such as one in 1952 which

counterweighted "the provision [and expansion] of land for needed black housing" on the

outskirts of Central City with "the destruction of black housing in the central [neighborhoods]

through slum clearance," and "suggested that the black business enclave... be eliminated and

relocated to the western areas [of the city]" (Bayor, 1996, p. 71). As Keating (2001) wrote,

"Local government... used outright public condemnation of property to eliminate black

[residential] clusters" (p. 48). The myriad of plans produced within urban renewal which

'suggested' the appropriation of not just low-income but also elite black spaces led some black

leaders in the 1950s to predict that the Central City of the future "would be more of a Jim Crow

city than it is today" (Bayor, 1996, p. 71).

The characterization of Central City in the immediate post-WWII period became

prophetic as the city went through both white flight in the civil rights period and another major

wave of urban redevelopment in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The history of white flight in

relation to the development of 'suburban sprawl' has been well documented (Bullard, Johnson,

and Torres, 2000; Keating, 2001; Bullard, 2007; Kruse, 2007; Lassiter, 2007). This study focuses

on the different periods of redevelopment which have tried to imbue the majority black urban

spaces of Central City with metropolitan and global identities because they are important how I

have interpreted Public U's spatial development.

The relationship between race, class, and the development of spaces both safe *for* blacks

and safe *from* blacks in the city was very apparent in Central City's shift from privately owned

tenement housing to government subsidized public housing in the 1930s and 1940s. An article

announcing the opening of Central City's first black public housing development stated that

about 300 families of "the better class of household servants" would be accepted into the development. It went on to argue in support of the continued development of black public residences in addition to white ones on basis of its public health benefits. The journalist wrote that the cleaner conditions of the new public housing would "reduce and eliminate the carrying of disease into the homes of those employing the servants," and thus would "improve the general health conditions in the city by providing housing for servants and employees, in that nature, within certain salary ranges" (*Central City Newspaper*, 1938, p. 27). And as one advocate of Central City's public housing developments stated, "Cleaning up slums will actually increase the volume of business for private enterprise because blighted areas spread easily, reducing the value of neighboring property" (*Central City Newspaper*, 1938, p. 6). Similar articles that were a mix of visions for the city's future and "worries" about its growing laborer population appeared in the local paper throughout 1937 and 1938 (Bunnelle, 1938). They showed that formation of low-income residential spaces Central City had become linked both to the "civic-minded" objectives of the city's political and religious leadership, and to the business goals of a rapidly industrializing urban economy.

This narrative came into play again during the period of civil rights mobilization as whites moved out of the city's desegregating residential and public education spaces. "White outmigration from the city" occurred throughout the 1960s "in virtually all age brackets, with the heaviest outflow among children and persons in their thirties" (Candeub, Fleisig, and Associates, 1967, p. 19). As Bullard, Johnson and Torres (2000) have described it, "Residential apartheid did not result from some impersonal super-structural process. It is part of the national heritage" (p. 4). Also part of American urban history are the periodic declines and inclines in the populations of cities based on their metropolitan appeal. Top-down urban redevelopment efforts

from the 1950s onward have both constructed the need for such appeal and razed and built the city in that image multiple times over. Statistics such as the decline of whites in the city, the movement of middle class residential and industrial spaces to the suburban areas,[26] led the Central City government and Chamber of Commerce to devise drastic "civic manifesto[s]" on "what the city's redevelopment goals should be" (Keating, 2001, p. 88). These plans largely placed blame for urban decline on the concentration of urban poverty and poor blacks in the heart of the city, a racialized and classed segregation that was created through the concerted efforts of the city government just four decades earlier. And rather than taking seriously the complex sets of community-based needs of Central City's low-income neighborhoods and residents, the city government continued to use 'negro removal' as a substitute for 'urban renewal.'

A key aspect of Central City's post-civil rights development was the increasing privatization of public and community initiatives. The city's predominantly white business leadership pushed for the city's now predominantly black political leadership to support such domestic NGO efforts to revitalize City Center. As one supporter described it, post-civil rights urban renewal sought 'not to create a new bureaucracy but to teach people how to deal with existing agencies and to help channel the volunteer spirit of [the] rich... to reach out to [the] poor' (Keating, 2001, p. 160). This top-down *zeitgeist* bypassed the messiness of community involvement by creating new "autonomous community groups" whose organization "directly contradicted twenty-year-old community-based organizations and newer community development corporations" (p. 162). The result of such organizing paradigms was predictable.

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[26] In the 1990s, the Central City region experienced some of its largest and most rapid population growth. During this same period, only about 1 percent of the total population growth took place within the city limits. Over 69 percent of both residential and economic growth such as job creation took place in the predominantly white northern suburbs. The rest took place in the socioeconomically and racially mixed southern suburbs (Bullard, 2000, pp. 8-9).

The private sector did not "[produce] much decent quality low- and moderate-priced housing in the inner city. Instead it... [tried] to attract upper-income residents" by building a plethora of "very expensive loft apartments" throughout the city's gentrified and gentrifying neighborhoods (Charles, Ruddiman, & Philips, 2000, pp. 134-135).

This process was especially apparent in the razing of the city's public housing, which as I show had been built about 60 years prior using similar narratives of safety, health, and economic improvement. The razing of public housing in Central City is especially important to a discussion of race, class and place at Public U, in part because one of the first public residential sites which were eliminated from the city's geographical and socioeconomic landscape became university dorms for Public U. Another was half a mile from Public U's campus and now its site now includes a large loft complex that many Public U students rent as off-campus housing. Beyond simply serving as residential and social extension of the university campus, these spaces also represent a particular form of "revitalize[d]" city—one with "live-work" "lofts," median-income to high-income retail stores and restaurants, where the word "luxury" is used by developers to describe not only the residences but the "lifestyle" and "fashion" of the new metropolitan.

Using very similar language, Public U has articulated its desire to "transform the area [around the university] into an authentic urban neighborhood with [Public U] at its core" through "private mixed use development" and "adaptive reuse" of historic buildings (Public U Website, *Campus Master Plan*). The words "authentic" and "urban" when juxtaposed with "private" demonstrate a contradiction of objectives for this public university. Indeed, as I show at length in Chapter V, Public U's "vision of a greener, cleaner downtown" relies on "upmarket"

development (Rutheiser, 1996, p. 338) and an influx of new "cadre of city dwellers" to provide the city with socioeconomic diversity.

The narratives which accompany Central City and Public U's re-imagining (and re-imaging) have political clout and longevity. For example, within a publication in support of the de-concentration of public housing, the head of Central City's housing authority recounted a story of when representatives from the housing authority met with a group tenant leaders of public housing slated for destruction. The housing authority wished to communicate its "new vision" of public housing, "hoping [the residents] would embrace [it]." Instead, tenant leaders "literally turned their chairs around and sat with their backs to the table" (Glover, 2009, p. 150). The tenant association contended that the photos presented to them of relocation neighborhoods and apartments were "too nice" looking. The head of the housing authority interpreted their resistance as feelings of inferiority, writing, "They could not believe that tenants who could pay market-rate rents would ever choose to be their neighbors. Their comments were stunning, and they broke my heart. They confirmed the extent of the damage that had been inflicted on the residents' spirit" (Glover, 2009, p. 150).

I argue that the tenant association's protest serves as a counter-story to dominant narratives of the cultural and social disorganization and deterioration in black, low-income communities. But it is a form of resistance that does not fit into the metropolitan image of the city, and thus is ignored as an extension of those communities' feelings of cultural inferiority. Research has shown that about half of the relocated residents of Central City's public housing do prefer to live in suburban areas for several reasons, including availability of space and generally better schools (Oakley, Ward, Reid, and Reul, 2011; Bullard, 2007). However, there was also a high level of organizing that occurred in support of improving rather than destroying public and

low-cost housing in Central City. For example, a British newspaper published an interview with civil and welfare rights activist Ethel May Mathews who at the time was leading a sit-in to protest residential displacement during a stadium build-out:

> "They don't speak for us; they speak for themselves. They're infested with greed and speak with forked-tongue lies... If you poor, then you dumb, ignorant, arrogant and you don't have nothing to say about your own life and your own neighborhood. The big business people get together downtown behind closed doors and they pawn us off" (Usborne, 1993).

Similarly in 1989 after the suspension of mail service, bus service, and phone installation and repair services to a well-known public housing neighborhood in Central City, residents organized vigils to protest the inaction of police and city officials around issues of violence in the community and the denial of public services to the area (Smothers, 1989). And again in 2008, leading up to the destruction of the last of the large public housing developments in Central City, NPR aired an interview with the President of the residents association, who stated, "This is a win-lose for us. I don't want my residents, my people, moving somewhere and six months later they're homeless. This is what's getting ready to happen." (Lohr, 2008).

Urban studies models which assert that poverty creates an inescapable cultural and social deprivation, fail to account for social and political activism within poor communities; what Yosso (2005) has called "community cultural wealth" (p. 174). The residents of Central City's poor, predominantly black neighborhoods have the "meaning of urban... grafted onto [their] bodies... making diversity, urban, and people of color coterminous with each other" (Leonardo, 2009, p.147). At the same time these bodies are not supposed to speak back or embody political agency. In the next section, I focus the discussion of racialized place-making on Public U itself. I

provide an overview of Public U's social and spatial history, again using narratives of race, class, and place to construct to historical background from which to study Public U's diversity formation as a "major urban institution" in the current era (Reed, 2009, p. ix).

The formation of 'two student bodies' [27]

Reed (2009) described how Public U's working class and enterprise-oriented narrative did not keep the university from spearheading an early defense against desegregation. Here it is important to remember the strong thread of discourse regarding the intrusion on the rights and spaces of the white laboring class by the civil rights movement in Central City. The connection between working class white identity and mass resistance to civil rights which I have discussed earlier in this dissertation was reflected in how the students, staff, and leadership of Public U reacted to impending desegregation. Staying true to the narratives of economic and social 'progress' prevalent in Central City, Public U's leadership both "expressed '[a] love for the Negro people" while creating a wall of bureaucratic barriers against the enrollment of black students (Reed, 2009, p. 200). And while the student body of the university responded to the administrations queries about support for integration with responses which "expected no violence" if [black students] 'stayed in their place' and did not 'show off'" and further "predicted on-site segregation [into] 'two student bodies'" (Reed, 2009, p. 201-202) the student newspaper took a firmer stance against desegregation:

> "'We have carefully considered the stand we are about to take,' the editorial continued.
> 'We have listened to statements and sentiments expressed by student body and
> administration alike. … With this in mind, [we give] unqualified support to segregation
> in the long battle ahead. Let us say now: we believe in segregation. We can see nothing in

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[27] Reed (2009), p. 202.

integration but racial strife. We realize no reason for mixing the races in schools and colleges now or in the years ahead.'" (Smith, 2012)

The school tried several different methods to stop or at least delay desegregation of its campus, including changing the maximum age at time of enrollment, freezing enrollment numbers to the detriment of the growth of the college, and putting into place the highest required number of prerequisite credits in the state system (Reed, 2009, pp. 206-211). The governor also threatened to shut down the public colleges in the city were desegregation to reach an inevitable point. The university eventually became the last in the state system to desegregate with the enrollment of the first black student in 1962. And while black enrollment at the university remained low throughout the 1960s, Reed wrote, "the demise of racial segregation liberated public higher education [in the South] to pursue a national framework" by qualifying to participate in federally funded accreditations and scholarships (p. 215).

This last point demonstrates the contentious but also symbiotic relationship between the modes of desegregation engaged in by post-secondary institutions as a result of the civil rights era and the current position of diversity as a colorblind, globalized racial and ethnic framework. The desegregation of urban universities led to their accessing narratives of the emergent field of urban studies, the city as a laboratory space, and academic research as directly relevant to the social problems of society, a great number of which were thought to reside in the poor, black neighborhoods of places like Central City (Reed, 2009, pp. 252-253). The same narratives that led to the inner city segregation of black neighborhoods in general, but low-income black neighborhoods specifically, also called for the study of those spaces by post-secondary institutions. This in turn brought the pursuit and accumulation of greater amounts of money put toward research on 'urban ills,' in which Public U was able to participate. And as seen by the

hierarchical accreditation of universities in the current era, the acquisition of research and accompanying research monies has been a great source of professionalization and prestige both for universities and the faculty who conduct research within them. I argue that the shift from racial isolation to colorblind globalization brought about at Public U and in Central City is connected to how Public U constructs its sense of diversity, and how counter-narratives within the university seek to challenge the university's framing of its racial history.

Racism, resistance, and narrative appropriation

 One important act of organized counter-storytelling came when "almost 200 students staged a two-day [sit-in]" outside the President's office to protest the university administration's "covert" and indifferent handling of a series of racially flagrant actions by one of university's white Greek organizations, including "periodic" black-face performances and defacing another fraternity's on-campus meeting space with racial epithets after it admitted its first black member (Spence, 2012). The critical aspect of this protest for this research study is that it occurred in the 1990s, not during the civil rights period. The political climate of the protest was comprised of the Rodney King assault and the L.A. riots. As such, it does not fit easily into the smooth narratives of sustained racial progress put forth by universities, including those articulated by Public U.

The memorialization of the protest express this dissonance. The university does not publicly commemorate the sit-in in any of its institutional media. For example, Public U's centennial prompted the public display of historiographies throughout the centennial year, through banners and displays across the university's downtown campus, a special issue of the university magazine, university archives exhibits in the library, and other celebratory events. While the sit-in is documented within the Public U archives and separately within its department

of African American Studies, its story was missing from the university's self-characterization as a university that "has diversity in its DNA" (Public U Magazine, 2013). The African American Studies department, which was created as part of the accepted demands of the sit-in, and describes itself as being a "direct result of the persistence, fortitude and commitment of the student-activists who sought social change at [Public U]" separately commemorated the 20th anniversary of the protest with participation from multiple diversity-focused units, such as the Opportunity Development and Diversity Education office and the Office of Black Student Achievement. In this way, one of the most important political moments in the University's 100-year history, which brought about major changes in its leadership and structures, was framed as a diversity event rather than a university-wide celebration.

Public U's articulation of its desegregation in the early 1960s was part of its centennial celebrations and exhibits. However the story included very few historical details and implicated no one, stating instead that black students applying to the university "faced a number of roadblocks" (Public U Magazine, 2012) Within the centennial magazine article on Public U's first black student, these barriers to higher education for blacks are resolved with the court-ordered removal of racist admissions policies. Both photographs from the time period that accompany this story show positive interracial interactions, with black and white students studying together and a white teacher providing one-on-one instruction to a black student. A university article on integration described its first black student as one of the "quiet warriors," "an unassuming school teacher," who lived by the mantra, "you don't have to be loud to be effective" (Public U Magazine, 2009).

Public U's "integration" stories show the ease with which the university appropriated and rearticulated its history of desegregation, characterizing participants in terms of quietude and

respectability rather than political agency. Meanwhile the '92 sit-in, which produced public criticism of the university president in the city newspaper, resulted in the firing and reassigning of multiple administrators in the Dean of Students office, and included the Board of Regents filing unsuccessfully for a restraining order against the protesting students, did not into the institution's narrative of racial progress and thus was excluded from it completely.[28]

A similar silencing occurred during a more recent protest against the formation of a white student union at Public U. When an interracial group of students entered the Student Affairs office to read a statement to the university's administrators, the Vice President of Student Affairs asked, "Just out of curiosity, are any of you students at [Public U]?" Questioning the group's affiliation with Public U attached an outsider status to the protestors, and according to an article in the local paper, brought an end to the discussion (*Public U Student Newspaper*, 2013).

Public U has emphasized the triumph of its "century of enterprise" over the overt racism of the pre-civil rights era while distancing itself from its own contemporary histories of racial and ethnic struggle. Similarly the university celebrates its achievements in graduating large numbers of African American students, but does not acknowledge the role of black students in creating a more equitable environment for non-whites at Public U. As I demonstrate in the next chapter, the inclusion and exclusion of particular stories about Public U's racial climate, both past and present, is a critical part of diversity formation at the university. Office and committees which undertake work on issues racial and ethnic inequity and racism at Public U must contend with the colorblind narratives that define the legal parameters of diversity as well as the university's suppression of its own history. Additionally, the re-emergence of white rights

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[28] The Centennial Edition of the *University Magazine* made no mention of the 1992 protest. It was even excluded from the timeline of "Highlights" from each era that appeared throughout the magazine. The timeline skipped from 1988 when Public U hosted an international badminton competition to 1995 when it achieved research university status.

narratives and the university's focus on becoming a global campus complicate diversity

formation even further. As a result, the narratives that represent the discourse of diversity at

Public U are often self-contradictory, engaging in both race neutral and race conscious

constructions of difference and equity.

CHAPTER IV: THE 'EVERYDAY LIFE' OF DIVERSITY

In this chapter, I examine different social processes that comprise diversity formation at Public U. I use participants' individual and group narratives on race and ethnicity from both interviews and observations to show the intersecting relationship between colorblindness, race consciousness, and the development of diversity at Public U. The racialized diversity story of the institution and the racialized diversity stories if people within the institution are not the same. But, I argue, they are deeply connected through similar ideas of how diversity is defined in relation to race and ethnicity, what comprises a diverse student, faculty, and staff body, and to what extent diversity can be used as a framework for addressing racism and racial and ethnic conflict. I also highlight the latent tensions between institutional images and narratives of diversity and the practice of diversity in a localized space within the diversity.

In Chapter III, I addressed the differences between how Public U narrates its racial history today and key racial conflicts and power relations at Public U since it was established a century ago. This chapter traces a similar path of contradictory definitions and interpretations of racial and ethnic diversity and racial progress. But it does so with a focus on the relationship between the individual (local) and the university (institutional). Rather than draw clear distinctions between these two spaces, I demonstrate how narrative itself—the telling of stories about racialized experiences, structures, and places—can uncover the different dimensions and forms of colorblindness and race consciousness that comprise diversity formation at Public U. Participants' personal narratives illustrate the racialized experiences that occur within both segregated and interracial spaces which influence individual interests in cross-racial interactions and relationships, negotiation of power dynamics, and definitions of diversity.

Next, I juxtapose these varied individual narratives of social diversity against the singular master narrative of Public U as an institution. The university sees itself as having a genealogy and a biography, and expresses this story throughout its website, archives, publications, and other material culture. Further, Public U's institutional history is intertwined with local histories of race, place, and power in Central City. As such, there exist numerous counter-narratives that complicate the university's public story. In particular, I focus on how Public U develops its narrative of racial progress from its desegregation in the 1960s to the present, drawing out stories that reflect the university's tenuous relationship with both its intentionality in remaining a white institution for as long as legally possible and its current status as a 'progressive' and 'urban' majority-minority institution.

Finally, narratives about diversity work show the complex networks of collaboration and conflict involved in implementing particular modes of diversity within an institutional setting. I found consistencies in the diversity stories told by diversity staff. As a result, one thing I highlight is the master narratives that form within what I have called the *diversity economy* at Public U. Entry- and mid-level university staff at the university, including those who do diversity work, are most likely to be black women, black men, and white women, in that order. Thus when a staff member stated during an interview while pointing to themselves that they wished more people who "don't look like this" would lead diversity efforts (*Staff Interview 0313*), it was both a critique of the devaluation of diversity work and the racialized distribution of power in the workplace of the university.

At the same time, staff were more likely to express ideas about diversity at Public U that were consistent with the colorblind narratives to diversity produced by the university leadership. Thus the relationship between institutional narratives and individual or group narratives of

diversity staff was more direct and less contentious. I argue that this reflects what Fraser (2000) described as "complex fields that encompass not only cultural forms of social ordering" such as racial, ethnic, and gender identities, but also "economic forms of social ordering" such as staff members' participation in "labour markets of economically defined ... actors" at the university. This is not to say that faculty and students do not participate in the university's economy, but rather the terms of their participation are structured differently, both with regard to economic position and social status.

Similarly, there were clear narrative threads that extended across most of the faculty and graduate student diversity stories. These narratives were more in conflict with what they perceived to be top-down university leadership and modes of diversity that served as "a bunch of flags we can salute" (*Faculty Interview 1913*). However despite expressing consistently critical viewpoints about how diversity is structured and promoted at the university, graduate students and faculty members were more likely to engage in discourse that pitted diversity against academic and professional merit. Among this group, both proponents of diversity who were willing to "fight" for "diverse [job] candidate[s]" and those who questioned the symbolic "value" placed on diversity largely accepted the terms upon which academic work and the trajectory of academic careers are evaluated at Public U. They did not describe diversity as an alternative framework for academic and scholarly success, they instead contemplated and argued over the value of diversity in relation to merit for each new hire and each tenure review.

With a focus on these patterns within the interview and observational data, I first examine personal narratives about racial and ethnic identity, racism, and diversity. I then transition to the narratives related to participants' diversity work at Public U. I look at the ways in which individual participants articulate and navigate the racialized educational and social

systems within which they live, and how these personal stories overlap with or contradict the work being done in diversity office and committees. I argue that by bringing to a surface these intersections between personal and institutional narratives of race and ethnicity, between social and cultural definitions of diversity and "the concrete arrangements" that produce diversity structures, one can understand more fully the nuances of diversity formation at Public U.

Between racial diversity and race consciousness

Peller (1990) described the rhetorical, narrative and political difference between racial and ethnic consciousness and civil rights 'integrationism' in the following way:

> ...Explicit race consciousness has been considered taboo for at least fifteen years within mainstream American politics and for far longer within the particular conventions of law and legal scholarship. Instead, race has been understood through a set of beliefs-what I call "integrationist" ideology-that locates racial oppression in the social structure of prejudice and stereotype based on skin color, and that identifies progress with the transcendence of a racial consciousness about the world... Along with the suppression of white racism that was the widely celebrated aim of civil rights reform, the dominant conception of racial justice was framed to require that black nationalists be equated with white supremacists, and that race consciousness on the part of either whites or blacks be marginalized as beyond the good sense of enlightened American culture. (pp. 759-60)

Using Peller's framework of "integrationist ideology" and Bonilla-Silva's *white habitus*, I conduct here a similar analysis of narratives of race consciousness and diversity expressed through participants' descriptions of their own racialized experiences.

Firstly racial and ethnic self-identification itself became a salient aspect of how participants negotiated identity within the interview. The question of racial identity was the first

in the interview protocol. While participants' self-identifications could have been collected

through a written survey for expediency, the objective of collecting this data during the interview

was to learn how participants talked about racial and ethnic identity in relation to themselves.

Integrationist ideology is as Peller stated, the conflation of race consciousness and racism as it

pertains to non-white groups[29]. Additionally, one of the primary ways of establishing

demographic or structural diversity in higher education is through the reporting of diversity

numbers, based on federally mandated racial and ethnic categories that are also used in the U.S.

Census. These racial categories form the legal scaffolding for identifying individuals and groups

within the United States. The fact that the federal government collects this data at all is itself a

point of argument; race and ethnicity as state identity categories are not universally employed,

nor have they remained consistent.[30]

Asking participants to identify racially, ethnically or through some other identity category

of their choosing allowed me to collect data on the process of racialization on an individual level.

Of the 40 interview participants, 19 identified racial categories without verbally negotiating the

category within the interview, while the other 21 each made statements that referenced a

discomfort, confusion, or dissonance with the identification. Of these 21, 13 ultimately identified

as white, white American, Caucasian, or Caucasian American. And 8 identified as black, black

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[29] As I argued in Chapter III, white race consciousness is not included in the tabooing of racial and ethnic nationalism. On the contrary, in the current era both subversive and increasingly overt forms of white race consciousness have become part of mainstream discourse through a language of nativism or tradition, working class or "blue collar" identity, and legal and public notions of "reverse discrimination."

[30] Nobles (2000) showed the extent to which racial classification are both structurally deterministic in their racialization of individuals for public purposes, and are reflective of how racial and ethnic identity are being constructed within historical and sociopolitical context. The voting in of "race neutral" public educational and labor systems in California in 1996 and Michigan in 2014 extends state-generated racial classification to include state-mandated colorblindness. This trend has moved the U.S. in the direction of European countries like France that employ colorblind nationalist arguments from the post-WWII era to disallow the collection of ethnic and racial population statistics. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (1996) has cited, "it is difficult to develop and effectively implement policies […] without...data which will assist in assessing and evaluating the situation and experiences of groups which are particularly vulnerable to racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance" (p. 43).

American, multi-racial black or African American. Thus, about 61% of black participants and about 81% of white participants expressed some discomfort with or critique of racial self-identification.[31]

The stated source of participants' discomfort was split into two main issues. All eight of the black participants who expressed discomfort with racial self-identification did so regarding the categories available to them. Six of them stated that how they identify is different when they are speaking to someone who is black versus someone who is not, and asked if I wanted the racial identity that they use "officially," "at work," or when "filling out a form." Some stated a general distrust of racial categories for black people produced by the state, referencing the "one-drop rule," and the history of anti-black racism connected to these categories. Furthermore, all those who made such comments did so specifically regarding the category "African American." A few marked the difference between identifying as black or African American as either generational or political; that is, they described African American as the preferred public identity of older and more politically conservative or "traditional" blacks, while stating that "black" had a more politically leftist, transnational, or Pan-Africanist connotation. However, none expressed a distrust of black as an identity category in itself in the way that they questioned the meaning of African American. Thus the primary concern of black participants was the political and social connotation of the racial categories available to them through categorizations they viewed as "official."

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[31] This study did not use racial matching of participants with interviewer. Therefore, one factor may be that all of the participants were asked to identify if they identify racially or ethnically by an interviewer who did not share their racial or ethnic identity. Furthermore, even though I stated in all the interviews that participants could choose to identify through any identity categories that they feel are salient to them, even if not race or ethnicity, the structure and power relations of the interview space could have created a bias in favor of answering the question asked in some way. For instance, none of the interview participants chose not to identify racially or ethnically at all but rather supplemented these statements with other information.

On the other hand, the primary concerns of the 13 white participants who expressed discomfort were with racial categories as a whole or with their inability to choose an identity other than "just white." Some referenced specific European ancestry, but often stated that these "ethnic" identities held no cultural significance for them. Multiple white participants identified themselves as "a mutt" of unknown European national identities. White participants in this group also all stated that their racial and ethnic identities were something they had not or did not think about. This is consistent with Berinsky (1999) and Forman's (2004) work on how whites' use of seemingly neutral responses such as "don't know" and "no interest" actually expresses a distinct racial ideology. Rather than reflecting a benign lack of interest in racial and ethnic identity, whites' focused disinterest and lack of thought about both their own racialized experiences and those of racial and ethnic minorities, Forman (2004) argued that the increased frequency of such responses among whites shows a trend growing apathy toward racism and hostility toward non-whites, what he called racial apathy, "indifference toward societal racial and ethnic inequality and lack of engagement with race-related social issues" (Forman 2004, p. 44). In this manner, scholars are drawing out the strong connections between "reluctant respondents" and racial attitudes (Forman & Lewis, 2006).

Interestingly, Public U's Office of Institutional Research conducted a survey in 2010 to find out why "Steadily increasing percentage of undergraduate applicants/students... did not report race/ethnicity" on their college application. The number of non-reporting applicants rose from .58% in 2002 to 18.75% in 2009 (Public U Website, *Office of Institutional Research Report*, 2010). Of students re-surveyed who said they did not report their race in their applications, 62% identified as "Non-Hispanic White" or "White, Hispanic not indicated" in the new survey. Furthermore, over 49% of all students re-surveyed affirmed that they did not

indicate their racial and ethnic identity because 'race is irrelevant' and 'it's unnecessary'; and

over 20% thought that the university's reason for collecting data on race and ethnicity was part

of its affirmative action goals (Public U Website, *Office of Institutional Research Report*, 2010).

Additionally, the researchers stated in their findings that they felt changing the questions

regarding race and ethnicity to include more flexibility in categories would help, but it would not

address the majority of non-responses because some non-responders would "resist providing any

data" (Public U Website, *Office of Institutional Research Report*, 2010). The Office of

Institutional Research collected these responses for more practical reasons: to address the rising

non-response rate in order to fulfill its need to provide the federal government with racial and

ethnic data. As such its report used student responses in the re-survey to propose strategies for

obtaining a higher response rate. But its findings are entirely consistent with existing research on

the growing reluctance of whites in particular toward responding to questions about racial and

ethnic identity, and with Forman's (2004) definition of *racial apathy*.

Within the one-on-one interview space, I was able to have more in-depth dialogue with

participants about the extent to which different racial self-identifications or non-identifications

reflected how place themselves socially within larger systems. This finding, while unexpected,

shows a high level of discomfort with and distrust of racial and ethnic classifications, even

among diversity workers. The way that participants expressed, negotiated, and suppressed a

sense of racial and ethnic belonging or race consciousness is part of their broader narratives

about the role of racial and ethnic diversity, inequity, and racism at Public U. That is to say, if

racial categories themselves create narrative tension for individuals doing diversity work, then

that puts racial and ethnic diversity into a possibly contentious and unstable position from its

very inception. For example, during committee meetings and professional networking spaces,

individuals repeatedly expressed that diversity is "not just race" or "more than race." I argue that these assertions are not just a reminder that other identity categories exist and are important, they represent a general discomfort with race as a concept.

What it means to have "a diverse group of friends"

Social interactions with individuals who "don't look like" them through friendship was a primary way that participants discussed diversity in relation to their educational and work experiences. Additionally, 75% of the participants specifically mentioned a proclivity for seeking out cross-racial interaction for a variety of reasons throughout their lives. Most participants connected their desire to have "diverse friends" to social experiences of cultural difference in college, which differed greatly from their primary and secondary school experiences.

Only 5% of the participants said that their primary and secondary schools were spaces that they would describe as racially and ethnically diverse. All other participants indicated that their elementary, middle and high schools were largely racially and ethnically homogeneous. This is consistent with findings from educational studies research. For example, Jayakumar (2008) summarized the breadth of research in this area,

> ...One in every two U.S. residents will be a designated racial/ethnic "minority" by 2050 (U.S. Department of Labor, 2001). Yet as we become an increasingly diverse nation and global society, neighborhoods and schools are paradoxically returning to levels of racial segregation not seen since the 1960s (Kozol, 2005; Orfield & Lee, 2006). What this means for higher education is that most incoming students have primarily been exposed to people of their same race prior to college entry. White students in particular tend to have minimal interaction with people of other racial backgrounds before college (Orfield & Kurlaender, 2001)... In light of these trends, supporters of integration are particularly

alarmed by the mounting effort by skeptics of race-conscious policies to eliminate the

two major practices that originally contributed most to the advancement of racial equity

in education: desegregation efforts (once mandated by the U.S. Supreme Court) and

affirmative action programs. (pp. 650-51)

Jayakumar's perspective on integration represents a significant conflict among studies of

higher education and race. She saw a connection between integration and race consciousness by

differentiating between "supporters of integration" and "skeptics of race conscious policies."

Meanwhile, Peller and other critical race theorists have drawn more distinct lines between race

consciousness and integration, which they see as *integrationist ideology*, and as Bonilla-Silva has

defined, *colorblind ideology*. Thus while there is not necessarily a clear practicable difference

between integration through social interaction and integration through critical race

consciousness, these tensions within the discourse mark the crystallization of late civil rights era

notions of racial and ethnic rights. Narratives and mechanisms of diversity further exacerbate

these issues.

The history of diversity discourse is interwoven with the history of a post-civil rights

"retreat from race" (and in turn, racism) within American legal, legislative and public systems

and cultures (Crenshaw, 1988; Bobo, Kleugel, & Smith, 1997). At the same time, participants

working on issues of race and ethnicity at Public U did not simply subscribe to an integrationist

ideal. Similarly those who critiqued current forms of systemized diversity at the university did

not express solely nationalist theories of racial empowerment and justice. Rather, all the

participant narratives were developed through intersecting notions of cross-racial and –ethnic

social interaction and community-building, and intra-racial and –ethnic group empowerment and

nationalism. This tense balance, or "stable instability" between critical and mainstream forms of

race consciousness and diversity are especially apparent in the stories participants told about their cross-racial and –ethnic relationships.

> *Staff Interview 1413*: You know, I consider myself to be somewhat of a chameleon because I'm, I love culture. Um, I studied international affairs and anthropology. So I'm very familiar with different parts of the world, cultures, histories, whatever, and I like to identify with people. And I find that I can take on qualities of other people quite easily. Which is why I kind of think of myself as a chameleon. And I get along with people from different cultures very easily because I'm able to have that sensitivity.

This participant's perception of herself as a cultural "chameleon" who can "get along with people" from different backgrounds was the only instance of a participant who identified as white, who spoke about a proclivity toward and a complex set of experiences with cross-racial, -ethnic, and –national relationships. For the participant, post-secondary education both set up racialized social barriers, and provided a means to interact with non-whites. For example, the same participant later told a story about being chided by white friends for talking to a black student in a public space on campus because it gave the impression that they might be dating.

> *Staff Interview 1413*: When I was in junior high there was this um, this guy, uh, a fellow student and classmate of mine. [He] was this... uh black student that was a total teddy bear but he was huge. He was an amazing athlete... And anyway I was so horrified when I went to college and... I remember... we ran into each other on the sidewalk... my freshman year and we were standing there talking on the sidewalk catching up and my roommates had seen me later on they asked me "What were you doing talking to him?" I was just so upset that our friendship was construed in a negative way...But there was still

such a strong negative perception of mixed couples, and still is. That's still really taboo where I grew up.

The scrutiny felt here had two components: the participant had an unsanctioned public interaction with a black student; the student was male, which created a deeper sense of "taboo" regarding their perceived relationship. The participant emphasized that such barriers to cross-racial interaction were and still are a norm "where I grew up." At the same time, the participant's home community "were my biggest supporters and fans" when the participant decided to join the Peace Corps and teach in West Africa at the end of college.

> *Staff Interview 1413*: I got letters from everybody in my church, all the local school kids because every woman in my family is a school teacher in the town. So it was quite the community experience... like my whole hometown was invested in me doing this.

The differences between the two experiences of scrutiny and support for cross-racial – ethnic interaction mark an important distinction within most of the diversity narratives in this study. The support for international travel, work, and studying abroad as a way to "open [one's] eyes to the rest of the world," or "getting to know people who are different" from oneself, a form of exposure to "how diverse the world is," "see[ing] things from different perspectives," for whites as much as others represents an opportunity for uncritical cross-racial relationships. Formed along a notion of service and intercultural gaiety, such interactions are viewed within the wider discourse of West-to-East and North-to-South travel, as part of the transmission of Eurocentric systems of development and knowledge production. It also provides opportunities for white participation in spaces that are black but not subject to the racial and ethnic tensions between blacks and whites in the United States: particularly concerning the history of bondage and Jim Crow. Thus while speaking to a black male student on an American college campus had

a "taboo" connotation, the possibilities of interacting with black communities in a space where the power differentials were recognizably different could become a shared experience through which whites could "learn more" and "be something different."

These narratives illustrated an important idea put forth within diversity case law and among traditional diversity proponents: that diversity is a universal benefit. In other words, the presence of social and cultural difference can have an effect on how white students learn and grow as individuals, even if it has no bearing on their community-based experiences of racial segregation and sociocultural isolation. Some critics of diversity have argued that the perspectives formed from such interactions serve as a "rainbow" approach to anti-racism. For example, Darity, Deitrich, and Hamilton (2008) showed how the diverseness of racial identity, as articulated within colorblind diversities, are indeed dependent upon the presence and dominance of whiteness: a white gaze and acknowledgement of difference, and the development of white tolerance toward particular differences, rather than an acceptance of the primacy of difference itself.[32]

On an individual level, experiences of racial and ethnic difference, especially being "the only one" or in a "[white] minority" made most white participants examine their racial identities to some degree. They felt that these experiences also led them to appreciate a space like Public U and to seek out work in areas of diversity and multiculturalism. Of the 16 white participants, two expressed discomfort within the majority-minority environment of Public U, indicating that they spent most of their personal time in predominantly white spaces. However in keeping with post-

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[32] Darity, Deitrich, and Hamilton (2008) described this as "bleach in the rainbow," a white-centric approach to Latino ethnic formation that obscures actual ethnic diversity through an aesthetic and sociopolitical favoring of light skin. This work builds from Bonilla-Silva's (2004) *Latin-Americanization* theory, which argues that with the increasingly majority-minority demographic of the U.S. population, a new form of racial stratification based on color and socioeconomic status will emerge to maintain existing power relations (as exemplified by Latin American countries such as Brazil and Dominican Republic).

civil rights norms for discussing racial segregation as *de facto*, neither of the participants who indicated discomfort or continual surprise at the number and visibility of non-whites at Public U stated that the white social spaces where they spent time were something they sought out deliberately. They described them, rather, as a function of living in a predominantly white neighborhood, going to a church that had a mostly or all white membership, or having made largely white friends through the "extracurricular activities" in which they participated. For example, as one participant stated,

>*Staff Interview 0512*: Being Caucasian sticks out quite a bit here. I mean I have a lot of meetings where I'm the only white person in the room. So I think about my racial identity a lot more here than in other places... I mean, I spend most of my spare time hanging out with people that are more like me. I participate in a lot of extracurricular activities and even when it's like mixed groups, it's still to me not as noticeable as it is here.

A white student participant also expressed discomfort in the majority non-white social spaces in which he spent most of his time, but from the perspective of not wanting "my friend group now" to know about the overtly racist history of the participant's family,

>*Undergraduate Interview 0312*: I had a grandfather that was in a group like the Klan, you know. And probably other people in my family too. And then I consider that my friend group now [is mostly black] and... I don't know it kind of creates a discomfort.

Similarly, 13 of the 16 participants who identified as white or Caucasian expressed an awareness of the racially and ethnically segregated aspects of most social spaces, and found this awareness to be further heightened as they became involved in diversity work. But only four of these participants stated that they made an effort to be in predominantly non-white spaces, or seek out relationships and experiences within which they were a racial or ethnic minority. Most

of the white participants saw cross-racial and –ethnic relationships being formed more passively, as a function of living in the city rather than in the suburbs, working in a diversity profession, or being at an institution that was itself majority-minority.

As a comparative, three of the six participants who identified as Asian, as a specific Asian nationality, or as Asian American stated that they sought out cross-racial or cross-cultural interactions outside of their work at the university, while one expressed a sense of discomfort at the perceived "preference" for African Americans within the social environment of the university. However, it is important also to note that the majority of cross-racial and –ethnic interactions described by Asian participants were with white Americans and other "internationals."

'The only black person at the wedding'

While participants who identified as black told stories about their cross-racial friendships that were in some ways similar to whites who had such relationships, they did not express the same level of external scrutiny from family and friends, or discomfort regarding the level of diversity to which they were exposed. While fewer black participants than white participants stated that they felt having racially and ethnically diverse relationships, experiences or being in diverse environments was a significant aspect of their lives, they were also more likely to talk about actively seeking out interracial interactions. Of the 18 participants who identified as black, African American, or multi-racial black, 13 viewed diverse racial and ethnic environments and interactions as positively contributing to their perspectives on race, space, and diversity. Of these, all thirteen told stories about ways in which they sought out and negotiated such environments in particular aspects of their lives.

Most of the stories had two components: a desire to be exposed to spaces that were racially and ethnically heterogeneous, or racialized as not predominantly black; an awareness that this exposure would involve direct engagement with social and cultural forms of racism and prejudice. Participants also often cited their parents, grandparents, and close family friends of the "civil rights generation" as providing them with tactics for negotiating multi-racial and –ethnic environments. For instance, one participant stated that while they ultimately lived in and were schooled in predominantly black spaces from middle school onward, being enrolled in a "diverse school" in pre-kindergarten was one of their mother's strategies for helping them build healthier a racial identity.

> *Staff Interview 0412*: My first pre-school that my mom enrolled me in was a diverse
> school on purpose because she didn't want me to like, the first time I saw a white person,
> think they were a goddess or something. And I remember I had a friend who was Asian, I
> had a friend she was white, and I had a black friend, so I had this nice little group of
> diverse friends. And so I think my mom put that in me and so now I always look for that.

But even though "diverse friends" was something they "always look for," this did not mean that those spaces and the participant's experience of them were colorblind.

> *Staff Interview 0412*: Sometimes if I go to a wedding or something, then generally the
> majority of people are [white]...I'll be the only black person at the wedding, or one of
> two... I just started getting used to it. Both of my schools were predominantly white
> schools. And a lot of times I was the only black person in the class, because it was an
> advanced class. Or I was in a singing group and everyone there was pretty much white.
> ...But then there were times when things were done differently than I would do them, or I

definitely have felt like I was, you know, in the minority. I guess I am definitely aware of it when that happens.

Narratives of black, Asian, and white interactions were common among the narratives of black participants who had been exposed to interracial and –ethnic environments at early ages. They also captured a consistency in how these participants viewed diverse relationships. For instance, there were no stories about the diverse friendship between an African American, a West African, and a Caribbean person. Rather, even among black participants, diversity was most often rooted in traditional U.S. notions of racial identity (black-Asian-white), with ethnicity and nationality servings as extensions of that core difference.

>*Staff Interview 1012*: My best friends in high school were a Cubana girl, a Filipina girl, and me. So I never thought that mixed groups of people, cultural groupings were weird or alternative. It was a norm for me.

>*Undergraduate Interview 0712*: I have a very diverse group of friends, I have white friends, Asian friends, African American. So if I'm with someone who's not black, it's not weird.

>*Staff Interview 0212*: When I was in graduate school... there was a group of us who hung out. We always called ourselves sisters. We had two African Americans... And then you had this young white woman with long hair down her back. And a Japanese woman born in Japan but raised in Texas.

The idea that friendships across different racial and ethnic groups were a "norm" or "not weird" was still a rare experience for these participants, even if they indicated a desire to seek out these relationships and could point to different periods in their lives when such relationships were central to their social lives. While most of them pointed to the formation of cross-racial

and –ethnic relationships as being key to their interest in diversity as a positive concept in higher education, they also largely found these relationships to be complicated. And in their most negative effects, interracial friendships within predominantly white environments became eventually untenable.

Undergraduate Interview 1613: I grew up in a suburb where, um, I was, I was the only African American female in my entire graduating class. So there wasn't anyone like me. At that time when I was living there and even when I go back, I am very conscious of my race. Like, I feel like everyone recognizes the fact that my skin is brown. Everyone is, whether they want to admit it or not, turned off by that, especially with the recent election [of Barack Obama]. Getting on my Facebook and seeing my friends from home, the things they had to say, it was so evident that it was because this is a black man. I couldn't imagine what they thought about me.

Faculty Interview 0112: I actually go to a mixed church. That has been interesting in terms of how race, um, unfolds... What I find is there's still lines that we don't cross and there are cultural differences we don't really negotiate right now... Like I was mad when they didn't mention Trayvon Martin, and then, when they said his name wrong when they talked about him. And I was mad when they mentioned Pride but didn't mention Black Gay Pride. And those are things that aren't deal breakers... but it's something that I notice about white privilege is that they don't have to be conscious of our cultural ways.

In both of these narratives, spaces that were either "mixed" became racialized as white spaces that "don't have to be conscious of [black] cultural ways" or that could be "turned off by [blackness]" even as black people were present within them. When participant narratives went further to examine more personal relationships—rather than mediated group relationships such

as school and church—the effects on their understanding of interracial relationships were more direct. The longer narrative below very much reflects the unequal power relations upon which racial and ethnic diversity is often built.

> *Staff Interview 0612*: You know I just remember my mom used to always tell me, um, particularly when I was growing up you know I had a lot of white friends at school at the time and she, uh, I wouldn't identify her as um a racist or anything like that but I remember she used to tell me you know, don't be surprised if at one time or you know when you get to a certain age your friendships begin to change, things may happen. And if that happens, um, it's not always about you and I don't want you to internalize these things. I think she was trying to suggest that the whole black white thing was an issue. And I remember I had uh, a black neighbor moved in next to me... [and] we became really good friends. This was probably around junior or senior year in high school. And I tried to introduce him to my friends group. They took to him really slowly and then didn't take to him at all. And as I became closer to him, they became more distant to me. And eventually I kind of fell outside of that circle. And immediately those kinds of things my mom said became salient. I think that's one lesson that I'll never forget. And it's something that I can see even in my adult life.

While this participant continued to believe that spaces which are not racially homogeneous were more interesting and desirable, the most positive experiences of such spaces occurred through cross-racial interactions within predominantly Latina/o and Asian American communities, that included the presence of white neighbors and friends but that were not identified as white spaces. The distinction between interracial spaces that were demographically mixed and those that were socially and culturally mixed depended on the terms of black

participation within them. And the "lesson[s]" learned through cross-racial interaction with whites in particular was something that had resonance in this participant's "adult life."

> *Staff Interview 0612*: I think now... I actually end up spending more time around like black people... My work friends are diverse... So in some ways a lot of my friends are still from different backgrounds. But I guess within my close friends, um, it's not really, well, I'll leave it at that, it's not the same.

The participant spoke about how the racial and ethnic make-up of their "close friends" was "not the same" but hesitated to say whether this change was negative or positive. Rather, it became a fact of their current social existence. They further explained that this was a common aspect of life in the southeast United States. The level of racial and ethnic segregation throughout Central City had shocked the participant at first, but eventually became intertwined with their own social interactions in the city.

This point is especially important because the historiographies of race and place produced at Public U are very much of the opposite perspective. Within both the university and the city's historically white narratives, Central City was and is an exemplar of interracial "enterprise" rather than strife. However, most of the participants saw the spaces of Central City and its suburbs as a barrier to such cross-racial and –ethnic interactions, not as a medium for them. Participant narratives about diversity at the university followed a similar pattern: participants largely supported social interaction as a means to build cross-racial and –ethnic understandings and allied relationships; but as I show below, they often critiqued the power relations that were left unaddressed by systemized diversity formation at Public U.

Narratives, critiques and erasures

Diversity formation in higher education has become institutionalized as a form of labor and a social economy. This economy is based on the exchange of knowledge through diversity discourse, and the development of particular types of diverse spaces. This chapter addresses diversity as a form of knowledge exchange and narrative construction. The development of diversity narratives by individuals doing diversity work, offices and committees implementing diversity programming, and the institution itself, comprise Public U's diversity discourse.

Bell and Hartman (2007) divided the major critiques of diversity discourse into three main categories,

> Critics on the right have suggested that the valorization of group-based rights, identities, and cultural practices under the label of diversity undermines national unity and stands in opposition to core American ideals of individual freedom and equality (Miller 1998; Schlesinger 1991; Wood 2003). Critics on the left argue that attention to cultural diversity obscures deep structural inequalities in the United States and undercuts the broader political unity required for more progressive social movements (Gitlin 1995; Glazer 1997; Michaels 2006; Rorty 1989). An even more radical challenge comes from those who might be called critical multiculturalists (Andersen 2001; Duggan 2003; Fraser 1997; Giroux 1992; Hamilton 1996; McLaren 1997). These scholars agree with the Left about the need for a theoretical frame that situates diversity within the context of contemporary society's systemic inequalities. They also insist, though, that differences of race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, and even religion cannot be relegated to secondary statuses in an analysis of social structure, much less be simply set aside for a politics of equity, economic redistribution, and social restructuring.

While Bell and Hartman provide a critical overview of diversity critiques, their analysis does not address the complexities of not just how people frame racial and ethnic identity in relation to power, but how both diversity *and* critiques of diversity have interweaving tensions and contradictions. These, I argue, reflect an uncertainty within discourse on race and ethnicity that cannot be reconciled through the political bifurcation of diversity critiques. Rather, by analyzing the points of intersection between diversity narratives, structures, and critiques, one can enter the discourse from within the murky space of what Rorty (1989) called "self-creation and politics" (p. 121) where "there is no neutral ground" (p. 196).

As often as not, the same narratives used to critique diversity from the political left and right, are also present within diversity formation in institutions of higher education. For example, theorists such as Walter Benn Michaels (2006) engage in a discourse of "class v. race" (Bonacich, 1972; Fields, 1990) that has described race consciousness as detrimental specifically to socioeconomic class solidarity against the forces of capitalism. This viewpoint is important to understanding what Bell and Hartman referred to as the contradictory aspects of how people characterize diversity in relation to race and equality. On one hand, diversity is critiqued for being divisive of class-based groupings. At the same time, diversity narratives in post-secondary education often subvert any centrality of racial and ethnic identity through terms such as "disadvantaged background" and "first-generation college student" that reference seemingly colorblind socioeconomic struggles rather than the more contentious space of struggle against racism and economic inequity. Certainly the relationship between socioeconomic success and human worth is frequently articulated through narratives of work ethic, morality, social mobility and perceived "cultures" of poverty or achievement (Lewis, 1961; Wilson, 1987; Chua, 2011). At the same time, the ability of groups to historicize racism into a solely pre-civil rights context,

thus erasing its very existence in a post-civil rights era, turns on a different set of narrative stakes.

Furthermore, as participant narratives show, diversity as an all-encompassing legally benign signifier for identity becomes a form of unlearning of the complex issues of social and structural power that accompany all identities. But undercutting the existence of racism and other forms of identity-based oppression and framing racial and ethnic difference as a "positive action" (Essed, 1997) that enhances the experience of education, systems of diversity produce the same conflicts they seek to ameliorate. Diversity also creates a language of good intentions and abstract identity formations that skews what the following participant called "the basics" of defining "cultural difference" and "indifference."

Staff Interview 0812: One time we were in this staff meeting and um one of our staff members said, um, he said, "That's retarded." He goes, "That's just retarded." So another staff member jumps in and goes, "Is that really, 'retarded'?" You know, with air quotes. And he replied, "Yeah, it is." So then another staff member jumped in and said, "Well, you meant that's mentally disabled', right? Is that what you meant to say?" And they just left it with that, that he meant to say, "That was mentally disabled." And I said, "Time out. Is that really what you meant to say? Mentally disabled? Because I don't think that's what you meant to say. That's not what I got contextually from what you were saying? ...But once the other staff members stepped in and it was like, Oh you meant to say mentally disabled. Then it was, oh okay let's go with 'mentally disabled' then as if that solves the issue... It was like, okay, okay, we've got some work to do. Okay let's start from zero and just take it back to the basics of really defining what we want and what our definition of diversity or cultural difference, or indifference, are.

Further, such tensions are not just produced by the categories used to define identity in a professional diversity setting in ways that are detrimental and "indifferen[t]," they also exist in ways that diversity work itself becomes racialized and gendered at the university.

Graduate Student Interview 1213: Just the fact that there is such a thing as a 'diversity person.' That's the problem in the first place, right? I can literally lead the [student diversity committee] for a whole year and my advisor is like, oh you're on that committee? Why did you get a diversity award? Because I lead the committee. Because I'm part of the majority, the faculty don't see me as a diversity person. And that just seems to be a common experience. There are those people who are considered diversity people. And that kind of thinking usually very black and white, very concrete.

Thus a concept that is abstract and ideological is experienced as "very concrete" by those doing diversity work because of the stereotypes embedded within diversity-focused spaces and the social and economic realities of performing diversity labor. The "maldistribution" of resources for diversity work, and the ways in which it becomes marked as something people with minority identities do, was reflected in composition of participants in this study. For instance, professional staff comprise the largest group doing diversity work at Public U and thus represent almost half of the participants in the study. Within the university as a whole in the 2012-2013 academic year, 50% of all staff identified as African American, 38% as White, 5% as Asian, 2.4% as Hispanic, and all other ethnicities and those who chose not to identify comprised 4.6% of the total.[33] Further, of the total black or African American staff, over 57% worked within the "Service" labor category or in "Office Admin & Support" while less than 9% worked in "Management." And finally, of the total number of black staff, almost 66% identified as women,

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[33] These were the specific racial and ethnic categories used by the university within its demographic reports.

with the biggest disproportionality occurring within the "Office Admin & Support" category in which black women were not only represented six times more than black men, but also made up over 58% of the total number of individuals working in this area. Meanwhile almost 65% of "Management" staff were white (29.5% women, 35.3% men).

Because most diversity staff jobs fall into the Office Admin & Support category, the demography of diversity itself is highly gendered and racialized. Thus when the white graduate student participant stated that their work on a diversity committee went unacknowledged due to the assumption that a person is "in the majority" would not lead a diversity group, it reflected both a racialized social perception and a structural fact at Public U. Similarly, when a black staff participant stated that they were worried that white and Asian students would not attend an upcoming diversity event if the office couldn't get someone other than "people who look like this" (while pointing to their own face) as speakers and emcees, it further reinforced this commonality within diversity work.

There is little coherence, however, between the structural and social racialization and feminization of diversity labor and the ways in which the university depicts its diverseness. Contemporary legal narratives have focused on the universal good of "opportunity" rather than the history of racial oppression and violence that produced civil rights policies. The next section of this chapter thus focuses on Public U's future-oriented representation of itself as "urban," "enterprising" and "global," which is part of the university's self-identification as an inherently "diverse" space. I demonstrate that the university's public narrative not only contradicts the stories told by participants, it also disallows a real engagement with the definitions and values that are reflected within Public U's complex demography.

Dilemma of a majority-minority institution

There are two narratives that circulate most consistently about the racial and ethnic make-up of Public U's student body. The first is that Public U graduates a higher number of African American students than any other university or college in its state (Rehagen, 2012). As a university blog stated (2013),

There are no disparities in graduation rates here. Graduation rates for African-American students have climbed 30 points in the last 10 years – one of the largest increases at any college or university in our nation. An African-American freshman enrolling at [Public U] is just as likely to graduate as a white freshman.

Of its student population, 59% identify as women, 41% as men (US News and World Report) while 60% identify as non-white (*Public U Student Newspaper*, 2013). It has remained in the top fifteen of the US News and World Report's ranking of "the country's most diverse institutions" for the last few years (Public U Website, *Campus News*, 2013). However, finding demographic information about Public U on the university's website required some navigation. On the main page called "About [Public U]," there is this brief statement: "[Public U], an enterprising urban public research university, is a national leader in graduating students from widely diverse backgrounds. The *Points of Distinction* and *Quick Facts* sections of the website do not include any diversity information or statements, but the downloadable *Quick Facts Flyer* contains a short section with racial and ethnic demographics divided by percentage: "Asian =13%; Black=37%; Hispanic=8%*; Multiracial=4%; Other/Not Reported=6%; White=40%" Reflecting the federal shift in racial and ethnic categories, the university stated that it reports the "ethnic" category of "Hispanic Origin" separately from race, thus making its demographic percentages exceed one hundred.

In order to find more detailed information on the racial and ethnic make-up of the university, one must navigate through four pages to the university's *Fact Book*, which among other things contains annual data collected on the racial, ethnic and gender make-up up of students, staff and faculty at the university. It provided the following,

Approximately 32,000 undergraduate and graduate students were enrolled as of fall 2012... Out of the total students enrolled, 18,887 were female and 13,205 were male. Students who identified as American Indian totaled 66, as Asian totaled 3,223, as Black/African-American totaled 11,015, as Hawaiian/Pacific Islander totaled 38, as Hispanic totaled 2,344, as Multiracial totaled 1,101, as White totaled 12,148, as Non-resident alien totaled 1,378, and students who chose not to report their race totaled 779.

It is important to note here that despite various programs and funded staff positions for the recruitment and support of individuals with disabilities or veteran status at the university, neither of these identities is mentioned in the *Fact Book* or elsewhere in the main pages of Public U's website. While the exclusion of disability-based demographics would fall within health privacy laws, there were no facts related to accommodations and services for either of these groups.

Public U's diversity status has also been portrayed through articles in the university magazine and the student newspaper, Central City's local news sources, and on occasion a national headline. The stories have ranged from pieces on the "thorny issues surrounding diversity at traditionally white institutions like [Public U]" that have become minority-majority institutions (*Public U Student Newspaper*, 2013) to when Public U won a national diversity award in 2012 which evaluated the university on "inclusion initiatives related to gender, race, ethnicity, veterans, people with disabilities and members of the LGBT community" (Seupersad,

2012). The award committee stated that Public U's "programs for minority students... exemplify the outstanding efforts that make [Public U] a leader in opportunity to students who otherwise would not be able to receive a quality education or be able to study in another country" (Seupersad, 2012).

As these descriptions show, Public U's racial and ethnic demography is both visible and invisible within the university's public diversity narratives. Public U has a reputation for enrolling and graduating large numbers of students of color and women. The university's strategic plan for diversity quotes an address by the university President stating that Public U strives to "become a national model for diversity in higher education, where all combinations of gender, race, and ethnicity succeed at high rates" (Public U, *Diversity Strategic Plan*). At the same time, the university has not articulated the salience of race, ethnicity, and gender as political and social identities on its campus other than in the strategic plan for diversity. Instead, the university's website and recruitment materials use terms that allude to a definition of diversity that is largely cosmopolitan.[34] The result is a constructed image of Public U that depends on the visibility of racial and ethnic difference to make good on its promise of a diverse student body, but also cloaks this difference in a language of business and research. For example, "enterprising," "urban," and "global" appear multiple times in university materials, more than diversity, race, or ethnicity. These terms are complemented by images of laboratories and skylines, and the assertion that this "downtown" educational space serving as an "urban lab" for social research:

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[34] I use Appiah's (2005) definition of an "unmodified" and "ruthless" cosmopolitanism that deals in "a sort of rigorous abjuration of partiality" (p. 221).

The university's strategic plan also calls for leveraging the research and outcomes

achieved from faculty in their..."urban lab" setting to help address opportunities and

issues facing cities around the globe. (Public U Website, *About Public U*)

Difference thus becomes part of the project of university research, and an urban location

brings both commerce to help the university connect its education to the creation of future

professionals and opportunities to study the highly racialized and classed social phenomena of an

urban American space for the greater good of a global civil society. Tropes that "re-imagine

cities in a bourgeois image" (Rotenberg, 2001) have helped the university reframe its own image

from a lower income, majority-minority space to a social laboratory with a global student body.

In this way, both representation *and* embodiment are grafted onto students of color, whose

presence at the university does a kind of sociopolitical double duty: their demography is vaunted

as a statistical triumph; their literal bodies become the *colored* [35] images of university culture.

The fact of Public U's demography produces concrete narratives about non-white student

enrollment and graduation rates as well as abstract narratives that use universal ideas of

difference to explain Public U's diverseness.

Diversity, history and racial progress

Stories about Public U's diversity obscure contradictions within its history of diversity

formation. In Chapter III, I provided the longer history of civil rights and race relations at Public

U. Here, I highlight the push and pull between the university's narrative of inherent and

continuously progressive diversity, and the counter-narratives which emerge through an analysis

of Public U's social and structural landscape.

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[35] This use of *colored* is meant to reference both the phenotypic differences that are used to show visually a "colorful student body" (*Staff Interview 0812*) through which race can be "represented as a mysterious and self-evident force," and also the Jim Crow and colonial connotations of *colored*, which used "racial and ethnic common sense" to "create political technologies to manage segregated populations" (Gilroy, 2004, pp. 8, 39).

Public U has for the most of its history been a white, predominantly white, or majority white institution. Other histories of Public U (Reed, 2008; Elston, 2011) showed how the university held out in "a lone battle [against] the enrollment of... Negro students" from 1956 until 1962, a year and a half after the state's other post-secondary institutions had already conceded to ending segregation (Reed, p. 201). As I show in this section, these aspects of Public U's history demonstrate the social and political contradictions which come into play when addressing the racial and ethnic history of a traditionally white, currently multi-ethnic educational space. One participant described it the following way:

> *Staff Interview 0812*: Even though it may have a different feel to it, sometimes I think it's really a traditionally white campus in its history, leadership, you know, if you go to the cafeteria now you can see 100 years of all the different [Public U] leaders and it's all of these white men. That's who was at the table when values for this place from its inception were set. Although some of those values were I think applicable for everyone, but certainly I do believe that who they had in mind originally were people like themselves, by skin color and by gender. People have tried to use the educational process as a way to be keepers of the kingdom, you know?

Public U's gatekeepers were not concerned with protecting an established educational prestige. The university's status as a night school for working, lower income whites did not have the same social or spatial landscape as a traditional university. But what it did have was a sense of its own progress as a metropolitan school for whites in the local labor force. This status required that the city space and within it the educational place of Public U remain white even as it neighbored prominent black neighborhoods, churches, and colleges. In response to the continued efforts of black students to enroll, Public U's white students and leadership anticipated

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social segregation of blacks and whites, 'two student bodies' and the attrition of white students and faculty. A rhetoric of impending "racial strife" and outright violence was at the forefront of white students' views on desegregation, as seen in the university's student newspaper between 1956 and 1962.

However, the institution also wanted to be part of the post-World War II investment in 'urban renewal,' and to serve as a space for politically moderate whites in the southeast. The university's leadership and students expressed the importance of using "all legal means first" (Elston, p. 40) to fight against what the *New York Times* referred to in 1953 as the 'judicial revolution' (Popham, 1953, p. E12) of desegregation. Public U's student newspaper referred to black students petitioning for enrollment as "pawns of the [NAACP]" who "seek to equate socially across a color barrier not created by, but observed by the white race" (Public U, *University Archives*). White students "object[ed] violently" to attempts by blacks "to excite, perturb" the status quo, "agitating" "questions of social equality" that "a distinguished, scholarly member of [their] own race, Booker T. Washington" thought "unwise" (Public U, *University Archives*). Such objections teetered between goading and civility, and almost always used an argument of respectable black self-empowerment against the imposition of the civil rights movement.

The advent of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and the subsequent doubling of the enrollment of African Americans in post-secondary institutions changed the terms of discourse on equality and opportunity through higher education between 1965 and 1980 (Chesler, Lewis & Crowfoot, 2005, p. 35). During those years, Public U's student newspaper, which had been a source of many editorials against desegregation went from having the subtitle of "beacon light of student affairs" throughout the 1950s to "light of the South's progressive urban college" in

February of 1964. This period of significant change forced Public U to make the most of its image as a "progressive" and "urban" space, but in doing so it also subverted the realities of anti-black violence throughout the city's history. Racial desegregation was declared a success, and language of racial strife was replaced by city-wide *de facto* segregation that has continued into the post-civil rights era.

Furthermore, while the objective of diversity work at Public U was most often described by participants as bridging these social and spatial differences at the university and in the city, they often questioned the ability of the institution to navigate the true complexity diverse people and systems. In the final section of this chapter, I highlight the four main themes that comprised participant narratives about diversity work at Public U: social relations among different racial and ethnic identity groups; conflicts between racial and ethnic diversity and merit; and distrust of administrative prescriptions for diversity formation. Through these themes, I weave together the personal with the institutional. I argue that the work of diversity represents an amalgamation of these two forms of experience, and of the racialized narratives and structures of diversity that emerge from them.

From demography to 'cross-racial interaction'[36]

Chang, Denson, Saenz and Misa (2006) pointed out an absence of "consensus regarding what exactly institutions must do to achieve [a 'nonracist' cultural climate]" (p.4). They found, "each college or university faces a set of unique circumstances that cannot be easily addressed by ready-made...strategies," and that "a superficial account" of the university's social culture will not build understanding about "the complex dynamics and qualities of a college or university that sustain positive race relations among students." A superficial account of Public U's social

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[36] Chang, Denson, Saenz and Misa (2006) described *cross-racial interaction* as "the understanding of and willingness to interact and exchange ideas with others who are racially different" (p. 3).

environment might begin and end with the racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and gender make-up of its student body. Certainly As I have shown, the university's description of its diversity relies heavily on demographic heterogeneity among undergraduate and graduate students.

Participants initially had similar viewpoints about the visibility of racial and ethnic difference on Public U's campus. They largely discussed Public U's demography as a permanent, defining aspect of the university's landscape. Across racial and ethnic identities, staff, student, and faculty participants engaged consistently with the university's top-down diversity discourse even when they later questioned or critiqued its substance and value.

> *Undergraduate Interview 0112:* [Public U] is probably one of the most diverse environments you can ever put yourself in because um we have people of all different races and uh, ethnicities. We have people from over 150 countries here and then we have a lot of other identity groups too.
>
> *Staff Interview 1513:* I'm sure you've heard it said, heard me say it during [recruitment events] that we have students that come from every county, and every state, and more than 150 countries, and all of these different things. Just making sure we have different people representing different areas and making sure we can relate to them is important. So really from an admissions standpoint we aim to get people that are not just from one spot.
>
> *Staff Interview 0212:* Demographically diverse, yes. We have people here from, I think we have a hundred, um, more than 150 different countries.

These were two of nine participants who talked about Public U's demography using the "more than 150 countries" description. This same phrase is in the university's *Quick Facts* flier, on multiple pages of the *Public U Admissions* website, and cited by academic departments as well

as external websites that reference Public U as a place or as an institution. The power of short descriptive narratives like this one is in the consistency with which they are used across different people and mediums. For diversity workers, abstract diversity factoids become automatic. As ones of these participants indicated, "I'm sure you've heard it said..." This participant also in a way negated the importance of the fact by stating, "We have students that come from every county, and every state, and more than 150 countries, and all of these different things." In this way, the statistics about counties, states, and countries represented at Public U become removed from the significance of having an educational space that comprises many potentially different experiences and perspectives. They are "different things" rather than different contexts. The narration of such data also puts regional differences, like counties and states, on equal footing with "150 countries"—which in itself serves as a vague, racially and ethnically neutral reference to nationality, culture, language, and religion among other important and contentious identity differences. Also, the university's reputation as a diverse space is something that reaches well beyond the school and the city. One out of state graduate student said,

> *Graduate Interview 2213:* I've never seen anything like it. I heard, you know, that it is like one the most diverse universities in America, in the US. And it's really true. I mean, you know, when I teach I mean I see so many different shades and um it's a really nice thing to see.

The combination of hearing about the diversity at Public U and "see[ing]" further emphasizes the role of diversity as an empirical fact of life at Public U. For instance, another participant talked about diversity at the university by naming the different racial and ethnic categories of people that were visible to the participant at Public U,

Staff Interview 0313: I see a lot of different ethnic groups here. Especially like, Indian Americans or uh Southeast Asian and Southeast Asian Americans. And I know there's a large group of Ethiopian and Ethiopian American students. Same with Koreans and Korean Americans. So the diversity is, it's there for sure.

The presence of large numbers of non-whites, whether "colorful," "different shades," from different "ethnic groups," or representing "more than 150 countries," structurally is the first way that all forty participants defined Public U's diversity. They saw it as a foundational aspect of attending and working at the university. But within these narratives exists a continuous tension regarding what Chang, Denson, Saenz and Misa (2006) called *cross-racial interaction*. Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin (2002) also describe the problem of structural diversity,

> Although structural diversity increases the probability that students will encounter others of diverse backgrounds, given the U.S. history of race relations, simply attending an ethnically diverse college does not guarantee that students will have the meaningful intergroup interactions. (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002, p. 333)

After discussing the existence of demographic diversity at Public U, participants critiqued this form of diversity by using two primary counter-narratives. First was the need for cross-racial social interaction. The transition within participants' narratives from demographic to social diversity were in all cases, immediate. While asserting that Public U's demographic diversity provided a "unique" atmosphere, participants who expressed the need for cross-racial social interaction did so with an emphasis on progressing from as a passive sense of diversity to an intentional, institutionally supported one.

> *Faculty Interview 1913*: It's kind of a cynical statement but um my impression is that the university finds itself in a position of being diverse and says well, that's cool. Okay,

that's a strength and build on it, and well that's too cynical to say, make a name for our self for being diverse. They certainly like to advertise their accomplishments in diversity but, but they have sort of stumbled into the fact that they're, we're a diverse institution. It wasn't something that was built.

Aside from this perspective that diversity at Public U is statistical occurrence the university exploits without its leadership having to invest in building capacity for it, there was also the notion that the university's demography has become a rote representation of "all the different people" who make up the university,

> *Undergraduate Interview 1613*: At orientation they had this [performance] or something where they would play a song and hold up these cue cards that like represented different demographics on our campus, so it'd be like, I'm a lesbian, I am a Jew, I am a whatever, like that. And it was like 30 different cards the students were holding up to show you all of the diversity. And after I while I guess I just kept feeling, I don't care. I'm not going to get it by you holding up cue cards, just spitting out facts about all the different people who like happen to go here.

This was affirmed by participants who saw diversity as form of consciousness or a "mentality."

> *Staff Interview 0912*: Many people have told me [Public U] is a very diverse campus. That's what you hear, "It's very diverse." And their definition of that is, there are more black students on campus. So I think that's a huge part of the issues we're trying to address. Of course the diversity of people here is really noticeable when you're coming from an institution where uh, the percentage of non-whites was small. But I think a lot of people are tagging that as the diversity of the school instead of looking at diversity as the mentality of people.

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Here the role of cross-racial interaction becomes especially important. These participants wanted to see the presence of different people to translate into something; people becoming more open to other cultures and perspectives were the ideas that participants mentioned almost immediately.

The majority of participants formed an operational relationship between demography, social interaction, and the implementation of diversity at the university. They cited the need to bring both individuals and groups together in cross-racial, cross-cultural settings.

Undergraduate Interview 3613: The problem with diversity is people don't intermingle. You get to like pass it in the hallway. But I think it's also important that all those cultures get to know each other.

Faculty Interview 2013: If you don't know any gay people, you should just probably pause and get to know a couple, right? If you don't know any black people, any Latino people. If you don't know the difference between a Mexican and someone who's Portuguese and somebody who's Dominican, and somebody who, like if you don't know the differences then the diversity being touted is just data.

Staff Interview 1513: I've been a student here and now I work here, so I've experienced different sides of it. Something I have noticed about the university after being a student and now in this office, we have a lot of different cultures represented here, and this is just from my perspective, we are still so much divided. You see your Asian, you know, friends that are together. You see your African American groups that are together. There's still a separation that takes place at the university.

Staff Interview 0212: We have so many different nationalities and other groups here but you wouldn't know it because everyone is still, pretty much set up a little, whatever the

name of the country is, here, another one there. So um, no cross dialogue. There's a lot of work to be done.

Graduate Interview 1713: [But] when I ask my undergrads you know if they integrated and hung out together, that was another story. They were together in the same place but they still weren't interacting

Faculty Interview 3413: We need to engage in dialogue so that we could you know collaborate and we could look like what is it really look like to be a community with one another. And be ourselves, like not in a community where I got to act like you and you got to act like me, but just be a community with each other and each other's identities. People don't have to identify with just their ethnicity but also don't have to subvert their culture to white identity.

This list of excerpts shows the frequency with which participants discussed the issue of diversity through social interaction. While participants' views ranged from basic knowledge of different people ("If you don't know any gay people, you should probably… get to know a couple, right?") to a desire for ongoing "dialogue" among cultural groups. Of the 19 staff and five undergraduate students interviewed, 17 of the staff and all five undergraduates referred to social interaction across racial and cultural groups as a primary form of diversity beyond demographics. Asked how they thought could be done on a practicable level, staff and undergraduate participants largely spoke to the need for a permanent or recurring "space" or "event" to "bring people together" and allow them to "gather." Their descriptions constructed an ideal, imaginary social space that was organized and supported by the upper-level leadership of Public U, but also embodied egalitarianism and a freedom from institutional hierarchy.

Staff Interview 0212: I would have some kind of event for staff that would have some draw. So we wouldn't be in silos all the time. You need something where people want to go. And it doesn't matter who you are. You would want to be there. Things to get people outside of their comfort zone but not culture specific. I don't really like forums and things like that. But it would be, I don't know, something like a party. But you have everyone there. The president [of the university] is there and other upper level administration. We do that kind of thing for students but not for faculty and staff.

Staff Interview 0412: So there was a historically black fraternity that and a Latino club and they did this salsa night together. You know so I'm like, black people like salsa so that was an easy one. But I think we need more people to do stuff like that. For them to be like, oh you are doing something, like maybe the Filipino student organization is doing something, let's go to their program. If people see student leaders doing that kind of thing, then maybe they'll say oh okay. I think some people have an interest but they're afraid to because of how maybe their peers will treat them. So we could encourage students to get out of their comfort zone a little bit more. I want people from different places to feel comfortable sharing but I also want us to know what different people have to offer.

Mitchell (2003) wrote in *The Right to the City*, *"Public space... is always a negotiation"* (p. 190). Similarly, the idea of common space at Public U was a negotiation between a desire for cross-racial and –ethnic interactions, and the reality that such an ideal relied heavily on the impetus of university leaders who participants saw as disengaged from the social and civic life of the university. Thus through their characterization of ideals diverse spaces, the participants above indirectly elaborated on the barriers against cross-racial and ethnic interactions: professional and

social "silos;" the absence and silences of the upper-level administration of Public U from diversity programs and events; and a cultural fragmentation of groups on campus coupled with scrutiny of individuals who "have an interest" in identities different than their own. These issues were articulated across all the interviews in the study, but participants struggled to connect the symbolic, democratic spaces of their ideal narratives to the work they were doing at the university.

Meanwhile, graduate students and faculty focused on a different set of issues related to social diversity. None of them mentioned spaces or events to promote cross-racial interaction. Instead they focused largely on the relationship between more equitable representation of racial and ethnic minorities throughout the faculty and staff and resulting social and professional support for people of color at Public U. This splitting of demographic diversity narratives into stories about community-building and stories about hiring and promotion was not absolute, but rather consisted of overlapping priorities and narrative themes. For example, one faculty member discussed the relationship between the recruitment of women and faculty of color with the mentorship of graduate students in the department.

> *Faculty Interview 2513:* I think we should have some kind of policies or goals for hiring. I mean, our last, um, last... four hires, if we just look at the last four, were me and three white men. And, if you look at who's graduating from um PhD programs in [this discipline], that's not the representation of who's graduating. When all four of us were asked to give a panel to our graduate students about the job market the people in the room who were our graduate student, out of say 20 people, there was one man in the whole room. So, it's nineteen women, nine or ten of whom were women of color and one white man who is gay, you know, so it's like – then there's three straight white guys and me up

there [representing the faculty]. Faculty don't have to exactly reflect [the student population] but I mean, it makes a difference in the perspective people bring. Like when we started to answer questions about the job market. The other three started talking about these networks they had to get their post-docs and I'm just like, my jaw is wide open, I'm like, "What, did you just say that you talked to someone and got a post-doc? I had to apply, you know, and compete against everyone else for these kinds of things." Finally one of the students asked, "[Dr. --] can you tell us about your experience as a person of color on the job market?" Because some of those things, they couldn't identify with these guys.

In graduate student interviews a similar story was told from the perspective of academic and social segregation of graduate students. Particularly, participants spoke about the tense linkages between graduates of color and faculty of color. These faculty were given the largest responsibility for training and mentoring non-white students; and as one student participant said, graduate students "interested in issues of race, gender, culture, empowerment, things like that... gravitate toward" faculty members doing similar work or who have "the same values" (*Graduate Student Interview 2213*). But this mode of academic, professional *and* diversity labor was not incentivized nor even professionally savvy for faculty of color seeking tenure.

> *Graduate Interview 2113*: Graduate students are segregated by race and ethnicity because there's not that many faculty who are racial, ethnic minorities in graduate programs. In [our program] there are three Latinas, and they all have the same Latina advisor. And African American, I won't count the ones that left, so, eight African American students between [the two biggest programs in the department]. And six of us have the same two advisors.

Faculty and graduate student participants found both a lack of shared common knowledge perpetuated by the race, ethnicity and other identity differentials between faculty and graduate students, and a *de facto* segregation of non-white graduate students when their identities and identity-related areas of research put them all under the mentorship of a few non-white faculty, especially as fewer and fewer faculty of color are recruited and promoted.

Diversity, merit and the 'soft spot' of faculty representation

The recruitment of non-white faculty and subsequent retention through tenure, promotion, and the cultivation of accessible professional environments takes diversity narratives from a focus on the general social space of the university—whether or not people of different backgrounds "intermingle"—to ones of structure and strategy. The tension created when ideas of social diversity bump up against the mechanisms through which faculty are hired and promoted often appeared in participant narratives about diversity in relation to merit in the academic labor market.

First is the issue of the teaching and mentorship done by faculty members, which include academic labor and a level of social care. I showed in the previous section that student-faculty relationships, especially faculty with non-white identities and doing research related to non-white populations, is an important aspect of how graduate students expressed the need for diversity in higher education.

> *Graduate Interview 2113*: A very important faculty member didn't get tenure but remains here on the... faculty, who is Latina. And the students really rallied around it you know, at the time. We made it known that this person was an important part of the department for a lot of us. Eventually the university found a way to keep her. But the fact that

someone like here doesn't get tenured and the amount of time and dedication she has to students and the community is I think, really telling. It's a real soft spot for [students].

In this way, the formation of close-knit academic communities allowed graduate students to organize around issues like faculty tenure and student recruitment. And the number of graduate and faculty participant stories that included moments of organizing and petitioning for faculty of color show that this is a critical aspect of diversity work. They also demonstrate that this type of diversity labor, which involves political advocacy and a certain amount of professional risk, is currently being done largely in "unofficial" ways by interested individuals. There are no sustained mechanisms for it.

Graduate Interview 2213: There's been some unofficial stuff for sure [in the department] like the black students in [the department] have like been, organizing stuff, but it's super unofficial and sporadic. We'll like secretly get together and say okay, who is coming in [during recruitment], make sure you talk to them. The same thing happened when I applied here. And you know, it's part of what made me want to come here. I found out the students who interviewed me on interview day had a clandestine plan to interview me and other applicants of color. And there are other people of color in the program who tried to be supportive but it is all on their own. It's nothing that's official.

This according to graduate student and faculty participants is part of the "huge problem" of diversity within academic departments. Despite there being "some real concrete things around recruitment and retention of diverse faculty and diverse students that could be done" the efforts to make change become dependent on "sporadic" organizing. As one faculty member stated,

Faculty Interview 2513: I think there should be a plan, period. But there's zero as far as I can tell.

The perception that the structures of academic recruitment disallow a sustained emphasis on racial and ethnic diversity as a factor in academic hiring and promotion also alludes to a direct relationship between minority faculty and research on minority communities. Of all the non-white faculty and graduate students I interviewed, the graduate students doing research on non-white groups or cultures all had non-white graduate advisers doing similar research. For faculty participants, the racial and ethnic identities of their advisees was more varied depending on discipline. But consistently, those with "community-based" or ethnic studies area of research had majority non-white and majority women advisees.

The recognition of conflict regarding "diverse candidates" for faculty positions remained intact across all faculty and graduate student interviews and observations. For example, a few faculty discussed the relationship between diversity and merit, and how it affects the theorization and practice of diversity in their academic department. They questioned the symbolic status of diversity, and saw it as one priority among many. Or, they recognized its importance but felt that dialogue about diversity in hiring and tenure was a "touchy subject."

> *Faculty Interview 1913*: I was thinking about this, uh, I worry about diversity moving
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> from a value to a religion. So you it would be, right now, it would be sacrilegious to say,
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> I don't value diversity. And yet, people should be able to say that. That is their diverse
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> opinion. I don't mean it makes it right. We don't have to agree with them. But the value
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> we have for diversity, you know, sits in a system of values where sometimes different
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> values come into conflict with each other. And I think it's more helpful to be able to
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> acknowledge those conflicts. But I feel like we've come to the point where one couldn't
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> challenge that diversity is something that we should be pursuing. So you know I just hope
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> we don't start to treat it a, as a religion, you know something to be worshipped over and

above everything else. But I also feel like, I am not in a position as a white male middle class, uh, person to you know state that challenge because it challenges, it, is promoting the status quo and I am the status quo.

Faculty Interview 1813: Diversity within the faculty is a very touchy subject to tell you the truth. So even if we have goals for [diversity] we can, cannot just simply say we should get more people of color, or those who have particular [research] subjects. I think that doesn't fly well with people. So we, you know we have to have some kind of angle, that should, I don't know exactly but a lot of times when I'm talking to folks I say we have to focus on getting the kind of people we want that would be best for this department, fitting our needs, not just one color fits all. We cannot [assign] an ethnicity or particular cultural background as a way of defining the future.

Faculty in particular also pointed to the localized intensity of hiring processes, during which the increasing divide between discourse on underrepresentation and discourse on professional merit have made for heavy contestation. Because hiring committees, department leadership, and even diversity committees feel pressure from "the university" to promote traditional modes of merit defined by publications and monies, they often work against the needs of their departments to hire individuals who would be "able to be tenured... a few years later." And those who ultimately hire non-white and women candidates have had to wage departmental fights for it.

Faculty 1913: We had a recruitment a few years ago where we were really fortunate for a rare occasion to have a couple of candidates we interviewed that were from underrepresented groups. They did not interview well. There were reasons why did not feel they weren't going to come in and be able to be tenured you know, a few years later.

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So we had that value and then we have diversity as a value, and we spent three hours

arguing in a faculty meeting... Ultimately the decision was made not to make offers to

those candidates and it was the right decision but a lot of people were really upset about it

because we say that we value diversity but when we had the chance to build on it we

didn't.

Faculty 2513: This last hire we actually got a queer Latina, but it was an interesting fight

and we won by one vote. And it was like, rallying people around to get that. We don't

have any Latina or Latino faculty. And you know we have students who are Latino and

Latina. And so instead of having departments like ours having to fight for that internally,

I want institutionally that to be a goal, something that was, highly encouraged. I know

there's the threat of uh, affirmative action being struck down most likely that some

universities don't want the hassle of having written something written in the books. But

it's extremely important for a place like this.

Hiring "for diversity," however that may be defined, is a struggle. As with the graduate

student who described students garnering support for an untenured professor and making

"clandestine" plans to interview candidates of color, faculty also express the need to "fight" and

"rally" allies when determining the place of diversity within faculty recruitment. In these stories,

hiring and promoting non-white faculty and recruiting non-white graduate students comes down

to organizing individual support on the department level and even more locally, within the

recruitment committee.

The conflict between diversity and merit was thus articulated by most faculty participants

as a struggle between the value of diversity and the value of a candidate's ability to show that

they can achieve tenure. The former was described as a social or political value, while the latter

as an economic or academic value. Whether they agreed with it or not, all but one of the faculty participants made a distinction between the two. Also, one faculty participant expressed a tension between group diversity and individual achievement. Given the ongoing contestation over the value of people of color—which I argue continually seeks to place a pre-established value on race and ethnicity that can be easily defined and universally accepted—the environment that faculty of color face when coming into a department itself can contribute to a sense of racial and ethnic segregation and hostility. It is also important to recognize that having been trained in and working within the larger merit structures of the university, faculty of color feel burdened by the "diversity" moniker placed on them by the very institutional mechanisms that undervalue racial and ethnic representation. One Asian faculty participant expressed this view,

> *Faculty Interview 1813*: I'll be happy when a time comes when we don't have to purposely look at the color of a person to make them fit in one spot. I'm grateful for affirmative action but it is a kind of subtle racism, isn't it? A subtle way of undermining [people] in it I think. So it would be nice. Not that we ignore it but that it's not such a factor that contributes to things like academic performance at [Public U].

The ambivalence within this participant's statement illustrates the broader issue of racial and ethnic identity being framed as a detriment to acceptance and recognition in academic settings. The same anti-civil rights narratives and structures that created and then constricted diversity, are the ones that produce a shaming of faculty of color for being simply non-white. Because within this "subtle racism," being a person of color in the academy is often equated as being a person who was hired to improve the diversity of the department. This same participant spoke about how diversity was "a touchy subject" in the department that "doesn't fly well with people." Thus it is not just departments' ability to use racial and ethnic diversity as a factor in

hiring and promotion decisions that has been diminished by the offense it brings to the predominantly white tenured faculty at Public U; the professional climate within which faculty of color work has also been affected negatively.

These faculty or graduate student narratives consistently show that there currently no established department-level priorities for hiring "underrepresented" faculty at Public U, for defining the terms of tenure to include historically under-tenured groups, or for recruiting graduate students whose identities and research reflect objectives for the future of the discipline. In the next section, I compare these experiences of localized conflict regarding faculty diversity with the university's "strategic" narratives about the importance of a diverse teaching faculty. In doing so, it becomes apparent that institutional narratives about the hiring and retention of non-white faculty and administrative leadership have little in common with the realities of how diversity work is conducted on the department and office level.

A strategic plan for "different perspectives"

Public U's *Diversity Strategic Plan* stated the following about faculty diversity.

> Our interest in preserving and increasing our numbers of diverse faculty is linked to the intellectual mission of the University... Faculty diversity is educationally relevant because it motivates students to incorporate different considerations, sensibilities, and lines of reasoning, which augment their analytical abilities. A diverse faculty supports the research culture of the institution and enhances the University's relevance to the local and global community. Diverse faculty and administrators contribute different perspectives to the University administration and assist in the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty, strengthen the professional lives of those faculty here through greater

opportunities for mentoring, and reinforce student perceptions of diversity. (Public U,

Diversity Strategic Plan)

Within Public U's larger narrative, faculty diversity is linked to the "intellectual mission" of the whole university, from hiring faculty that are "educationally relevant" for the sake of teaching, mentoring and professionalizing students, to setting the "research culture" of the university and conduct work that has "relevance to the local and global community" of which Public U is a part. But as participant narratives illustrate, exceling at teaching and conducting community-based research on relevant topics do not necessarily get faculty hired nor make them competitive for tenure. Furthermore participants' understandings of the "research culture" of Public U and their knowledge that publishing and grants are a primary focus of merit narratives within the academy, have greater influence than the *Diversity Strategic Plan* on how they interpret the role of diversity within the recruitment process. Faculty and graduate student participants generally viewed administrative level prescriptions for diversity as being too abstract to serve as a policy or institutional guide for academic departments.

> *Faculty 1913*: So now there is a Diversity Strategic Plan, and there may well be people that are you know, doing work on lots of stuff I don't know about. But to the best of my knowledge the Diversity Strategic Plan is a bunch of flags that we can salute.
>
> *Faculty 3413*: They say diversity is important and then they talk as vaguely as it could be, as supportive as they want to look to be.

More than that, the diversity-based values stated in the *Diversity Strategic Plan* are ones that can become hindrances to non-white faculty when it comes to being hired and promoted at Public U. The emphasis on the 'relevance" of Public U's "research culture" is a primary example of the contradiction between narrative diversity formation and its counterpart in the day-to-day

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conduct of work and life at the university. Public U emphasizes its role as an "urban lab" for "local and global" "urban" research. However, for non-white faculty conducting research on non-white populations, the relationship between their identities and their research are often interpreted in ways that marginalize their work as professional scholars. Reyes, de la Luz & Halćon (1991) found,

> The greatest obstacle to tenure for minority faculty is the taboo on "brown-on-brown" research. This taboo refers to the practice of devaluing research on minorities when it is undertaken by minority researchers. Efforts on the part of Chicanos and other minorities to conduct research on minority-related topics... often meet with disapproval by white colleagues who sit as judges on the quality of their research and publications... From the point-of-view of mainstream academics, brown-on-brown research is perceived to be narrow in scope and to lack objectivity. This paternalistic attitude is no more than a double standard which lends credibility to ['white on white'] research... but discredits minority academics who undertake research on minorities. In fact, whites who conduct research on minorities are infinitely more likely to be admired and rewarded for the focus of their scholarship than minorities who study the same populations. (p. 176)

While increases in the numbers of non-white faculty have a positive relationship with "the probability that new problems will be addressed in the sciences" and that "the range of subjects considered worthy of study expands in proportion to the diversity of the faculty pursuing research questions that interest them" (Turner, 2003, pp.117-18), the academic terms upon which faculty are currently recruited and promoted do not follow suit in large part because how the university values and attaches funding to notions of "merit" are very different from how it values and promotes diversity.

As research has shown, higher education, ideas of academic "merit" and "rigor" act both as admissions criteria for students (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Massey, Charles, Lundy, & Fisher, 2006; Stevens, 2009) and terms upon which universities hire faculty (Padilla & Chavez, 1995; Allen, et. al., 2002; Chesler, Lewis & Crowfoot, 2005). How these terms come to be defined is subjective and often contradictory. Bowen and Bok (1998) wrote,

> One reason why we care so much about who gets admitted ''on the merits'' is because... admission to... selective schools... pays off handsomely for individuals of all races, from all backgrounds. But it is not individuals alone who gain. Substantial additional benefits accrue to society at large through the leadership and civic participation of the graduates and through the broad contributions that the schools themselves make to the goals of a democratic society. These societal benefits are a major justification for the favored tax treatment that colleges and universities enjoy and for the subsidies provided by public and private donors. (p. 276)

The criteria for selection that make universities more or less selective are interwoven with narratives about the worth of Public U's faculty and students, and in turn the value of getting an education at the university, be it professional, intellectual, or social. There are multiple relationships of perceived mutual benefit and responsibility that emerge from such structures of selectivity, as reflected in the narratives of the participants. Faculty contribute to the university their professional credentials, which include publications and the institutions from which they earned their degrees, and money in the form of grants and fellowships awarded to the university through each faculty member. The financial stability of academic departments rests on the university's assessment of that department's success in hiring and keeping faculty with such credentials. The professional stability of each individual academic in turn rested on their hiring

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institution or home department's evaluation of what they have contributed to the exchange of knowledge and capital at Public U. As individual departments construct or chose not to construct strategies for hiring and retaining non-white faculty, participants' awareness of the larger organizational pressures of the university and the academy constrict the definitions of diversity that can develop in those spaces.

Public U is in a particular position within the larger prestige economy of universities and colleges. It is a public, historically commuter and night-school institution that largely served students within its state and region for most of its history. It has slowly grown in size and selectivity over the last 20 years, and has intentionally taken on the social and spatial scaffolding of a traditional university—such as on-campus housing, larger sports programs, and more aggressive international student recruitment initiatives. This shift toward a more mainstream institutional profile and Public U's expansion of campus spaces in the city have coincided with consistently diminishing state and federal funding for the institution and increasing pursuit of non-profit, corporate, and tuition monies. It is within this context of growth and constriction that Public U has formed much of its official mechanisms to define and operationalize what diversity means for the university.

> *Staff Interview 0313*: There had been some initiatives put in place to assist recruitment and retention of quote-unquote minority faculty and women. But that has lost footing in the last ten or fifteen years. When you look at faculty today you see less minority faculty, particularly faculty of color here than let's say ten years ago.

As a long-term staff member, this participant talked at length during the interview about a cultural shift taking place at Public U as the university has risen in status. The impetus for "recruitment and retention of... minority faculty and women" has become stunted at a time when

the university is getting increasingly positive attention for the diversity of its student body. The

pressures of faculty life with regard to research and publishing have also followed suite.

Faculty Interview 2513: It's like any other place. If you're an assistant professor, it's

head down and publish, publish, publish. They really don't like us assistant professors

bothering with anything else.

This participant researches race, gender and inequity as a profession, but has found little

support for political activism or diversity work through "service" committees within academic

departments. The participant has gotten advice to become more involved *after* getting tenure. For

some academic spaces at Public U, changes in the professional culture have meant that "faculty

are leaving" and those left behind are "focusing more heavily on research." Among other things,

this has had an effect on graduate education,

Graduate Interview 2413: Our department is the same as what's happening with all of

[Public U]. You know, [the Chair] is guided by the turn of the university and you know,

focusing much more heavily on research. That has created a huge shift in the department.

The focus on being a Research I institution has done a lot in terms of diversity. And

promotion and non-promotion of faculty into tenure. Faculty are leaving this university,

diverse faculty are leaving this department. It's different from when I first got here.

While some participants like the one above were considering whether this new "Research

I"-focused climate is one that can accommodate a concurring focus on diversity, others felt

certain that the "goals and... agenda" of "institutions that are this big and fully invested in...

becoming bigger" are fundamentally at odds with "the civic and liberation aspects of education".

Faculty Interview 2013: I don't think I really look to or trust the university to maintain

[diversity] because it's pretty clear their goals and their agenda, and their responsibilities,

are different than um you know the goals of most politically and socially conscious models. I just don't think that institutions that are this big and fully invested in, you know, becoming even bigger, can ever maintain the civic and liberation aspects of education.

When one moves from these individual experience of diversity and diversity work to the systemized articulation of diversity priorities by the university through initiatives like Public U's *Diversity Strategic Plan*, it becomes clear that diversity is indeed a 'floating signifier' for a number of contradictory ideas about the role of race and ethnicity in higher education. It is a social concept that heavily invokes demography, cross-racial and –ethnic interaction, and in academic departments the issue of racial and ethnic representation within the faculty population. The most concrete of these roles is the third. Within all the participant interviews and observations, the moments of tension or conflict all took place in spaces of recruitment and promotion of people of color at Public U. And while staff participants referenced the fact that the presidents of the university have been "all white men" and the level of diversity observed at the university does not extend to the upper administrative level, staff did not discuss the social processes and practices of recruitment that could improve this racial and ethnic inequity. I attribute that the fact that the human resources processes through which staff members are hired are more mechanized and controlled at the administrative level. Faculty and graduate student recruitment and promotion, on the other hand is a highly social process that takes place within each department. As a result, these local committee spaces seem to be where the most overt forms of social and political struggle over diversity currently takes place at the university.

However, as I have demonstrated, despite the personal, institutional, and work narratives that assign symbolic, social, and educational values to diversity, it still functions as a supplement

to 'race neutral' ideologies such as merit. The fight *for* racially and ethnically equitable spaces within the academy has turned into a fight *between* racial and ethnic diversity and academic merit. Thus even though diversity holds rhetorical power at Public U—as evidenced by the extent and variety of individual and institutional stories dedicated to its definition and implementation—it is always a narrative way station between Public U's unacknowledged racist past and visions of a race neutral future. Rather than serving as its own theory of equitable relations, it becomes a simulacrum of racial and ethnic progress. Through diversity, the actual continuation of racial progress is not necessary for the simulacrum to remain in place as "a bunch of flags we can salute."

CHAPTER V: THE PLACE OF DIVERSITY

The 'racial geographies' of the college campus reflect two key aspects of diversity formation. First, they determine the spaces that are designated as racially and ethnically diverse in and of themselves, and those spaces developed for the purpose of implementing diversity, i.e. the professional and organizational spaces of diversity work. Offices and committees doing diversity work help construct characterizations of race and ethnicity in relation to space and place which become markers through which diversity gains structure and becomes institutional discourse, or conversely the means through which its dominant forms are challenged. Inwood and Martin (2009) showed this interaction between diversity and spatiality to be one that not only seeks to develop current space, but also uses places of racial and ethnic struggle to create colorblind institutional histories.

Second, the urban university space is an interactional one that expands outward *against* the city. This expansion is necessarily political because the context of urban space has long been racialized as black and socioeconomically disadvantaged (Wilson, 1987; Massey & Denton, 1998; Keating, 2001; Bullard, 2007; Kruse, 2007). Meanwhile urbanity, that is the culture of metropolitanism and in the current era global metropolitanism, are racialized as white, aspiring white, and upwardly mobile (Bonilla-Silva & Glover, 2006; Jung, 2009). Higher education is critical to narratives of urban sophistication and the formation of "well-educated" class identities both in the US and globally (Du Bois, 1899; Winant, 2004; Leonardo, 2009). I use Cardoso and Faletto's (1971/1979) integration of *dependency theory* with an analysis of economic development and political oppression in Latin America as a model to critique the "internal" and "external" "force[s]" (p. xvi) within and among nations that perpetuate systems of inequity, including higher education.

As I discussed in the previous chapter, narratives that define higher education as form of meritocracy, as an accessible path for social mobility, or as a racially and politically neutral space need support not just from the top-down leadership and elitist structures of "selective" universities and colleges. They need the buy-in of people and institutions that may never attain that status, such as Public U. Despite being a public, majority-minority institution that historically has served lower income and non-traditional students, Public U constructs its sense of place in Central City and its place in an "urban" "global" imaginary of "megacities" as "enterprising" and "upmarket" (Rutheiser, 1996, p. 338). As such the university is an important participant in the project of making and maintaining race relations in the urban space where it resides (Bradley, 2009; Mitchell, 2003).

Post-secondary institutions emboss their own cultural identities onto urban landscapes, whether through branding, capital projects, or rearticulating the histories of a place. Furthermore, the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic characteristics of a university help dictate its image within that larger spatial context. For example, Public U is a majority-minority university in a majority-minority city, and thus produces a particular set of relationships between itself and Central City. Also, the university's reification of "global" education and "great global cities" become complicated by localized issues of racial inequity and racism. Thus far, I have examined diversity at Public U as being produced at the intersections of racialized storytelling (both personal and public) and the wider discourse on the institution's relationship to education and economic development. In this section, I show the relationship between narratives of diversity and spaces of diversity, and highlight the patterns I found within what Tuan Yi-Fu (2001) called "group experiential space" through the expansion and calcification of Public U's "campus

identity" and its production of 'white-washed' urban culture and history (Inwood & Martin, 2009).

The processes of personal, public, and spatial 'intersubjectivity' are different but deeply connected. Tuan (2001) wrote that group experiential space is one that has enough "share[d]... essential elements to have an impact on the physical setting. The sharing is made possible... by the presence of other people" (p. 403). In an urban space, the experience of space sharing is also marked by "the feeling of 'crowdedness'." This was especially apparent in how participants described the inescapability of diversity at Public U. They used terms such as, "It's everywhere," "It's obvious," "You can't get away from it," and "You don't come [here] if you don't want to be around different people." There was also a sense of porousness between the university and the city. Participants talked about the university's access to jobs and people in "the downtown business district." Conversely, participants were equally likely to discuss the visibility of individuals who were homeless or "asking for change" in the city. One participant commented that at Public U, you sometimes couldn't tell, "Who's a student, who's homeless, who's just someone walking through" (*Staff Interview 0512*). How these connections and borders became embedded into a larger diversity discourse varied from space to space, and were produced through "ideologies of color-blindness or race consciousness, of integrationism, assimilationism, separatism, [and] nativism." (Delaney, 2002, p. 7)

As I tracked participants' sense of space in relation to racial and ethnic identity and diversity across personal and institutional spaces, I was able to identify patterns of racialized knowledge regarding race and place. In the previous chapter, stories about diversity and diversity work formed a narrative structure through which I examined the nuances and conflicting perspectives about diversity at Public U. Here, I highlight the places and spaces of diversity

formation. Using a similar three-part analysis, I trace the role of space and place from the individual level to the institutional level; from the personal and work experiences of participants, to professional diversity networks that include multiple institutions, to Public U's growing "sense of campus as place" within Central City (Public U, *Campus Master Plan*). By mapping place onto diversity formation, I seek to ground diversity's abstract, affective narratives into their respective social and political contexts. By doing so, I also argue for an integrated approach to critical diversity analysis that takes into account the layers of meaning and knowledge that make up diversity discourse and structures, and that recognizes the role of both narrative and place in the formation of diversity.

Separation and safety in black residential and educational experiences

I identified two clear patterns of racialized experience among black participants' stories about where they lived and where they attended school: experiences of predominantly black spaces that were both enforced and sheltering; experiences of being "the only one" or one of a few blacks in predominantly white or racially and ethnically mixed spaces. The former produced narratives of both restriction and safety; the latter, an early understanding of cultural difference and a sustained exposure to both structural and overt forms of racism. Of the 18 participants who identified as black, African American, or multi-racial black, 14 of them indicated that their primary and secondary schools and corresponding neighborhoods were racially and ethnically homogeneous. These same-race and –ethnicity segregated experiences produced a range of social constrictions and environments. For example, most black participants who grew up in the post-civil rights era had a sense of their forced participation in *de facto* racial segregation, and of being separated from whites by both social and geographical barriers.

Staff Interview 0212: When I was growing up I realize now there were different, just things

as a child you wouldn't think about... but, the fact that we always packed food when we traveled. And it was because we couldn't stop at different places to eat along the way. So we would leave with like a whole meal, you know. And I just thought we were being frugal. And then it's later that I find out it was because we couldn't necessarily stop to go in a restaurant and sit down because we weren't welcome.

Staff Interview 2913: The town where we lived, I felt, there was more institutional racism, you know, than one-on-one racism. The train tracks completely divided the city so you didn't see any white people unless you were going out of the neighborhood.

Graduate Student 2613: The city had a lot of things to do for a certain class and group of people, but you know not, um African Americans or you know, working class Chicanos. All of us lived on the other side of the highway. Um like literally you cross you know that uh highway and you're in the Mexican neighborhood, then a black neighborhood.

Spatial barriers such as a "black part of town," "Mexican neighborhood," and a "white part" created clear geographical and social divisions. Transgression of established boundaries such as the other side of the train tracks or "places... along the way" between one black space another presented issues of safety for black participants. In these ways being socially segregated created similar effects to those of being legally segregated. For example, one participant's story about how in her grandparents' time "[they] had to take them um to the back way into the theatre" did not differ in content from the participant who described her own experience of packing food for family road trips to avoid having to stop at places where they "weren't welcome."

Conversely, eight participants who identified as black or African American, when discussing their experience of racial and ethnic identity in the spaces they thought of as "home,"

spoke to the ways in which common racial or ethnic identity also became a form of *shelter* from day-to-day aspects of racism. For example, the staff member who stated that their town was racially "divided" by "train tracks" went on to say:

Staff Interview 0212: In a way I was pretty much sheltered from a lot of it. I grew up with pretty much all black people. It wasn't until I moved from [my hometown] that I experienced individualized racism.

Others made similar statements that described the relationship between being black in predominantly black spaces and being able to connect to one's "culture and identity."

Faculty Interview 0112: I'm somebody who has a particular affinity for my cultural and racial community... I was always able to cultivate more, I guess, intimate and warm personal interactions in those settings. I chose to attend [an HBCU]. I chose to teach in... public schools, which are informally segregated. Then coming here, I chose an urban, state school. And even though there's a cost you pay with it, I chose not to get my degree in a traditional discipline like education because I wanted to be in spaces that were predominantly black and where I could candidly and critically talk about culture and identity.

Staff Interview 3113: The city [where I grew up]... is like 85% black people. There were smaller neighborhoods near us that were Hispanic and African but mostly black Americans. So for me, coming from a city where it's like everybody looks like you, going out into the rest of the world and you're like, oh it's not like this everywhere. I was kind of sheltered in that sense, you know? Growing up in your community where people look like you was in some ways a positive. It's later that I thought, well that's not always the case.

Secondly, four black participants had an opposite experience of race and ethnicity,

specifically in relation to schooling. While their extended families and friends largely lived in predominantly same-race neighborhoods or cities, these individuals had the experience of cross-racial migration for the purposes of accessing a "better" or more "well off" school district.

> *Staff Interview 1513*: The school I went to, it looked pretty even with the numbers. Uh and I also think that, that impacted the level of – I don't want to say the level of education but the type of – how – um I guess kind of in way how, how great your education is because of the, the location where some people like certain neighborhoods, if they have more of an African American background, it probably, they aren't doing as well. Um ours was more mixed so we were one of the better high schools... If you have a whole lot of white people, um, they'll do better.

This participant described the link between the presence of white students and a school "doing well" or "better." They were at once aware of the problematic nature of this racial division, and expressed that the residential neighborhood they lived in was still "almost all black" even though they attended a school that "looked pretty even in numbers." The diversity of the school—this time indicated by white students—was connected to the social and educational value ascribed to that space. In this way, the families of these participants engaged in a form of "race-associated reasoning" (Krysan, 2002; Swaroop & Krysan, 2011) that led them to live in the inequitable racial landscape of majority white or predominantly white spaces in order to have access to schools with more resources and higher achievement results. For other participants, attending a diverse school was a way to learn how to negotiate majority spaces early in life; to become acculturated in whiteness as a context.

> *Staff Interview 0412*: In preschool my mom enrolled me in a diverse school on purpose because she didn't want me to like, the first time I saw a white person think they were a

goddess or something. After that though, we moved into pretty much predominately black neighborhoods.... But I was in classes where... only [white] people were in the classes.

Staff Interview 0612: When I was in [the Midwest] as I was uh being brought up, I was definitely in a majority white community. My experience growing up um as being one or maybe two of, you know uh the only black people um in class uh that was pervasive all the way through high school. Um when I went to college... I was in a predominately white institution... and I had a few black friends um within my social group and, and most of my friends at that time probably were, were white identified.

The notion of having one's "white friends" and "being the only [person of color]" at a white school, birthday party or wedding did not seem to intersect with also having friend groups that shared participants' racial or ethnic identity. The two social contexts existed separately from each other and the individual person had to learn how to negotiate these racially and ethnically segregated social spaces and places rather than those spaces resulting in more substantive cross-racial interactions between groups. The staff member who remembered "growing up...being one of maybe two... black people...in class... all the way through high school" was the same staff member who said,

Staff Interview 0612: My mom used to always tell me... Don't be surprised if at one time or you know when you get to a certain age your friendships begin to change, things may happen.... I think she was trying to suggest that the whole black-white thing was an issue.

For other participants of color whose education was linked to predominantly white context, the result was sense of isolation from both that place and the racialized meanings produced within it. This was compounded by socioeconomic circumstances. For example,

Graduate Interview 2613: I went to school with people whose parents were actively afraid

of the city, like my drama class, we were going to go a musical [downtown] and a bunch of the parents were concerned about their kids going into the city. Even at a young age, like 14, 15, I began to be really critical of the things that I saw happening.

In Chapter IV, I showed how cross-racial friendships were at the center of black participants' narratives about their personal experiences of diversity, and their motivations for entering into diversity-based work. And while these participants placed a great amount of emphasis on social interaction as a means to fostering diversity institutionally, the majority of them described their own cross-racial relationships as dependent on the dominance of whiteness. Examining these cross-racial dynamics through space and place adds a stronger time-place context to the definitions of diversity produced by black participants. It showed that people of color participating in Public U's diversity discourse both reproduced and questioned the ways in which race and ethnicity were employed within "diverse" settings and structures. Their narratives about diversity as a social phenomenon engaged with images of idealized cross-cultural interactions, and a view of diversity as a "rainbow" of people of "different colors and shades."

But experiences of both overt and structural racism complicated these understandings. As a result, these participants were more likely to see social diversity as an aspect of a larger objective that included workplace and educational equity. For example, one black participant spoke to the need for diversity-based initiatives at the university to get back to "the basics of really defining what we want and what our definition of diversity or cultural difference, or indifference, are" (*Staff Interview 0812*). And three-fourths of black participants spoke specifically about underrepresentation of people of color and particularly women of color in leadership roles at the university among tenured faculty and upper-level administration. This was not mirrored by white

and Asian participants.

At the same time, half of black participants, primarily staff members, also echoed dominant ideas of self-uplift and merit, diversity as social interaction, and the need to create an atmosphere that is comfortable for white students given the demographic make-up of the university and the perceptions of Public U as a *de facto* "black" and "urban" school. The contradiction was most apparent when participants discussed tangible ways that diversity programming could be implemented at Public U. When black, Asian or white participants imagined the university itself as a diverse space through the work of their offices or committees, they emphasized the social rather than political and structural aspects of diversity. They spoke about people "getting together" and sponsoring events that allowed different groups to "interact" or learn about other cultures in more casual, social settings, the construction of more welcoming common places such as a multicultural center. When they discussed underrepresented groups and advocacy for racially and ethnically equitable working and learning spaces, they only spoke about what "the university," i.e. the upper level leadership, should do. Those ideas were not connected to the work of diversity that was already going on at the university or that they could see themselves doing in the future. It required top-down intervention. Participants saw themselves as removed from the processes of structural change, and I argue even significant social change, at the university. The level of disempowerment was exacerbated by their sense that the work being done at the upper levels, such as the *Diversity Strategic Plan*, was not something one could "trust," but rather existed to imbue diversity with symbolic rather than social or economic value.

Ultimately, black participants engaged in diversity work using interpretations of social relationships and spaces similar to those they used to describe cross-racial and –ethnic friendships, educational, and residential experiences. That is, they indicated a desire for sustained

cross-racial interaction and place-based multiculturalism, but expressed that desire against a counteractive understanding of the social and political terms upon which diversity and colorblindness are built. Thus while all participants across racial and ethnic identities and positions described a clear tension between diversity goals and institutional goals at Public U, staff members as a whole, and black staff members in particular showed the most consistent dual perspective. They theorized racially-conscious forms of diversity that referenced the larger societal context of racism *and* used colorblind tropes, dominant institutional descriptions of the university's demographic make-up, and cross-cultural interaction focused approaches to addressing racial and ethnic segregation at Public U. As I demonstrate in the next section, this was a significantly different social-institutional dynamic than how most white and Asian participants expressed their experiences of cross-racial interaction, ideas about contemporary racism, and the work of diversity at Public U.

The role of overt racism in predominantly white social spaces

White participants largely expressed that being in predominantly white spaces meant being exposed to social norms related to white supremacy, which they had either to accept as part of that space or resist in discursive ways. Of the 13 participants who identified as white or Caucasian, nine told stories about observing overt racism in the predominantly white spaces that they called "home," both in childhood and the present-day. In all cases, speaking out against racist "taboo[s]," language, and prejudices was a complicated struggle for the participants due to the social proximity of racism to their more intimate spaces: among family, neighbors, and school friends.

> *Undergraduate Interview 0312*: I grew up in a predominantly white area. And it's like, fairly racist in that... even my dad just told me one day out of nowhere, you know we were

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talking about racism and he said, Oh you know, Martin Luther King was a racist. And I was like, what? No he wasn't. How did you think that? So it's, I don't know, I didn't get much exposure or like education about race or civil rights or anything.

Faculty Interview 2313: The school [in England] was mostly white kids, but there were a few East Asians. But for the most part it was just white kids. There was one girl her name was Elizabeth and she was Asian, but American, not British. So at school the other kids just saw her as one of the Americans, and they treated her like that. But one day I brought her over to play with me and my neighbor, this girl across the street who, uh, they went to private school. And you could tell immediately the way she was looking at her, even as kids we could notice it was kind of tense. So after Elizabeth's sister came to pick her up I asked Frances, "What did you think Elizabeth? She's my friend from... blah blah blah, you know?" And she replied, "Elizabeth is not our kind." So I ran home and told my parents and they explained that some people are not very tolerant of different types of people like we are. So, it was just like that sometimes, especially when you got class differences mixed in with race and ethnicity.

Graduate Interview 1213: I grew up in the suburbs in a primarily white community. Um, really conservative parents. I don't know, I can relate to – um, I don't think anyone deserves a cookie for like doing the work that they need to do especially as a person of majority but I can relate to how incredibly difficult it is to, to um create awareness among people who are in the majority. It's really, really difficult.

These white participants, especially those who grew up in the southeast United States or in rural areas, described their family home, their home town, or secondary schools as spatial contexts that stood apart from their lives at the university and the city. They worked, went to

school, and sometimes lived in "diverse" spaces, but had families who described Martin Luther King, Jr as "a racist" or childhood friends who thought Asian people were "not our kind." As such, their descriptions showed a tension between the overt racism they observed in these spaces and their desire not to create conflict within the social contexts they viewed as their origins. Participants spoke about going "back home" to their families and hearing "racial jokes" and "the N-word," or learning about family members' participation in a racist group "like the Klan." One participant described a family dinner when a grandmother that she would not attend her wedding if she married someone who was black.

I argue that identifying these overtly racist spaces as home and returning to them periodically is what causes these white diversity workers to "choose [their] battles" within predominantly white social contexts even when what they experience "brings up negative emotions." Disrupting their social relationships by expressing counter-narratives based on their own viewpoints or out of loyalty to their non-white co-workers and diverse "friends group" at the university has to be negotiated with a desire to maintain a sense of belonging and community with their white or "conservative" families and friends at home. The situations and people that most of these white participants defined as "racist" showed overt racial and ethnic prejudice; structural racism was absent from their narratives. They talked about their struggle to balance their viewpoints on anti-racism with a desire not to be continually in conflict with their family and friends over issues of race and ethnicity. They negotiated which "battles" they would "choose" based on the social context and the intimacy of the relationship. Within this social process, more subtle forms of racism were not acknowledged or addressed. They were subsumed by the immediacy and overtness of "the N-word," the "Klan," and views on interracial marriage or desegregation. They saw Public U as the opposite of such viewpoints, both demographically

and culturally.

Subtle or structural racism was missing not just from white participants' stories about racism in predominantly white spaces, it was also absent from their definitions of diversity. 10 of the 13 white participants, and 3 of the 6 Asian participants said that the role of diversity programming and structures was to foster cross-racial social interactions and a sense of equality among different groups on campus. They either stated directly that diversity should not include policy or structural changes that may benefit particular groups or did not mention structural change or racism at all. In these narratives, participants did talk about inequity; but, it was the inequity of "preferential" or "targeted" resources for "a particular group." Their concern was the perception that the student life of Public U was "catering to" only black or African American students, and that diversity-focused hiring created an "us v. them" environment that "does not fly well" among faculty. Embedded within these statements, though it was never said, were assumptions about the social and professional merit of whites at Public U and a discomfort in environments that were not majority white in their demography and or at least in their power relations. Thus even though whites at Public U represent the single largest racial group, the fact that white students are not at the forefront of student leadership and social activity at the university produced an anxiety among non-black about whether or not whites are welcome at Public U. Thus white participants' stories about feeling unwelcome in spaces focused on the university and the types of social opportunities they saw existing on campus, which they viewed as "black" and thus exclusive of whites (Elston, 2011).[37]

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[37] Elston (2011) demonstrated patterns of racialized, social self-segregation from the university environment based on a heightened race consciousness as a result of being on a majority-minority college campus, discomfort and perceptions of security of the urban location of the campus, and racial, ethnic and class differences between the university and white students' primarily suburban high school experiences. Elston showed that despite a lack of dialogue at the upper administrative level about the racialized climate created by white students' feelings of dis-engagement from the culture of the university, there was indeed a social "tipping point" for white students as they considered becoming involved or pursuing positions of leadership in a racially and ethnically diverse student body.

The social negotiations involved in whites' reactions to the overt racism and prejudice they observed in predominantly white spaces, coupled with their perceptions that Public U's diversity serves as a form of disempowerment for white students and faculty, provides insight into how they theorize diversity and diverse places. I argue that continual and intimate exposure to overt forms of racism through "home" community relationships, and an overall expectation that "fair" social and academic environments would be either demographically or culturally white, had an effect on how these participants characterized diversity and diversity work. Like the choices that had to occur when participants wished to express anti-racist and anti-prejudice perspectives in predominantly white spaces, diversity was also something one had to accomplish while treading lightly against the norms of white dominance—which at Public U was often conflated with environments that were "open to whites," and hiring and promoting based on "merit" and "skills." Such spaces are at once highly race conscious with regard to white racial identity, but also apathetic toward structural forms of racism. In this way the desire to create spaces for "everyone" acts as a signifier for granting a larger proportion of space and power to whiteness.

Most relevant to this discourse is Forman's (2004) *racial apathy*, "indifference toward societal racial and ethnic inequality and lack of engagement with race-related social issues" (p. 44). Forman and Lewis (2006) further argued,

> In the current historical moment, racial apathy may be more important to the reproduction of racial inequality than are traditional forms of Jim Crow prejudice... Racial apathy is a particular kind of racial antipathy that enables those who deploy it to not only explain away what racial inequality they know of, but largely avoid knowing much about it in the first place. (p. 177)

Diversity formation must necessarily produce racialized definitions of equality and

community. And the people who do diversity work have to engage with some form of racialized place-making in order to create definitions of diversity, and implement programmatic or procedural mechanisms to promote those definitions. If discourse on racism is focused on overt prejudice and place-specific structural inequities—such as spaces that are rural and/or majoritarian in there social organization—then the place of a majority-minority, downtown university and the presence of non-white bodies within it become marked as racially and ethnically diverse and anti-racist, despite the persistence of racial and ethnic inequity in that environment. Work on *colorblind ideology*, *laissez faire racism*, and *racial apathy* focuses on the ways that racial micro-aggressions, coded language, and *de facto* institutional barriers operate within a post-civil rights context that has already established norms against overtly racist language and policies. My findings here support a similar argument, but also show that within predominantly white spaces, overt racial narratives and intentional social segregation from non-whites both persist and help foster an ignorance about more subtle forms of racism. The visibility of overt racism in predominantly white spaces actually works in symbiosis with the invisibility of racial and ethnic inequity and prejudice within diversity discourse at Public U.

In the next few sections I focus in more depth on diversity and diversity work as an institutional experience rather than a personal one. The spatial context of the university and participants' perceptions of how "the university" interacts with their work has had an effect on the theorization and implementation of diversity at Public U. I address this process through an examination of each of the four interviewed and observed university groups: staff, faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students. I show how each type of diversity labor and space produce a different set of issues based on how that group is situated in the larger structure and hierarchy of the institution.

Diversity formation in professionally staffed offices

Diversity work is at its most fundamental level conducted through the formation of diversity-based offices and hiring of diversity staff to address issues of discrimination and create various modes of diversity-focused programming on campus. As such, the professionalization of diversity work in post-secondary education has resulted in the production of a variety of diversity spaces, both intra-institutional and multi-institutional. Three aspects of these official diversity mechanisms stood out in the interview and observation data. First, the ways that diversity discourse unfolded depended on the localized group within which it was occurring. Second, how entry-level and mid-level staff theorized diverse spaces and diversity practice within the university employed both race conscious and colorblind narratives. And third, the most common way that staff viewed diversity forming was top-down—that is, from executive level administration to the rest of the university. This is particularly important because it links findings in the first two areas—professionalization and practice—to the organizational structures of the university itself. In particular, they show that while the majority of staff narratives about diversity at Public U in Part III of this dissertation focused on the visibility of cross-racial social interactions and relationships as a primary indicator of diversity formation, staff participants' perception of what was possible to accomplish through existing diversity programming and policies pointed to the need for "leadership." There is a narrative thread that links these three aspects of professionalized diversity formation at Public U, which shows the contradictory nature of the diversity economies in which diversity professionals necessarily participate.

In the opening of a large "Diversity Summit" I participated in with Public U staff members, the president of one attending university stated that the purpose of post-secondary education is to "give directions" to larger society about social problems and solutions, such as racial and ethnic

diversity. Post-secondary institutions use research to lend "accuracy" to social problems in order to "be heard" and inform public discourse. The space of the university is where "the issues of diversity" are articulated and where individuals and groups dedicated to diversity create frameworks for implementing it. Similarly a presentation by Public U framed diversity as "the key to all possibilities" and a way to "universal success." The participating speakers, most of whom were chief diversity officers and vice presidents of diversity or multicultural affairs reinforced this two-fold theme: universities are societal guides; diversity is a universally beneficial "outlook" that post-secondary education should promote.

Thus the same tropes of diversity that the institution uses to market itself as a diverse space are integrated into the professional discourse and practice of diversity offices. Also, not only is the notion of universal diversity present within diversity staff networks, I found it extends out into all the structural relationships that these network have with institutions that employ diversity workers and fund diversity programs. As I saw in a workshop on diversity-focused funding, diversity professionals were encouraged to stay abreast of how grant agencies were defining diversity and to position their work accordingly. The funding organizations with missions toward promoting diversity, such as the National Institute for the Humanities (NIH) include not only racial and ethnic minorities and socioeconomically underprivileged groups, but also "women, LGBTQ communities, and non-traditional students, such as those with veteran or refugee status." Foundations, especially corporate ones, were said to look for universities that "have a global mindset," which was defined as "seeing ethnic and cultural diversity as value added" within a global marketplace of "potential customers," "an increasingly diverse work force," and expansive "online social networks." As one Public U staff member stated in an address at a regional conference, "This is what the global population wants. This is what employers want."

Based on this top-down narrative, constructed largely by university leadership and granting agencies, diversity comprised a space where social identity connected with public good and private gain alike, thus creating a universal benefit. This definition of diversity was racially and ethnically referential, but not race conscious. And it was intentionally developed as "not affirmative action," which one professional speaker stated "is a dirty word, now."

I saw an important contradiction within this narrative. On one hand, the material cultures of the university, its diversity offices, and the wider diversity professional organizations were highly identity inclusive. They used diversity as a catch-all term for multiple historically discriminated and underrepresented identities, interpersonal colorblindness, and a globalist approach to multiculturalism that invoked both civic and market ideologies (Steger, 2002). On the other hand, speeches, presentations, and conversations about diversity within cross-institutional settings focused almost entirely on racial and ethnic diversity. Certainly, gender, socioeconomic status, and language often intersected with racial and ethnic discourse. For example, there were discussions on how to create "attainment gap" and "retention" programs for black men, and how to address a lack of Spanish language integration into recruitment and diversity spaces or knowledge about how to deal with the undocumented status of potential students. Similarly, while discourse on "first generation college students" seemed to engage fully in colorblind ideology when staff members stated these groups are "not just black," and are often "non-traditional" or "older" students, more detailed conversations about programming, often directly or indirectly referred to black and Latina/o identities as a primary focus for diversity work with first generation students. For instance, I observed a panel on achieving "critical mass" of "diverse" students. One panelist expressed the need for universities to reflect the "make-up" of their local spaces. While stating that institutionally and societally this goal may seem like "a

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bit much to be desired," in an increasingly diverse society, "we have to make sure that higher education looks like and sounds like that society." Thus in this case, phenotype and language were the representations of diversity.

The understanding that top-down institutional perspectives tend to focus on universal or race-neutral solutions and that staffed offices must work within those frameworks was accompanied by a level of buy-in for colorblind policies. This was evidenced by the ways in which staff members presented the "impact" of diversity work already being done at the university. For example, Public U staff cited the same statistical and narrative information as the university's website and promotional material: "most diverse university in the state," "the number one granting institution of undergraduate degrees to students of color." And every attending institution, including Public U brought its own "glossy brochures" about the make-up of their student bodies, represented by a multitude of skin colors, photos of cross-racial interactions, and prototypical diversity language such as "dynamic community," "inclusion," "engagement," and "global society" (Public U Materials, *Diversity*)

During more informal social interactions that took place during workshops and discussions, there emerged counter-narratives that demonstrated more critical viewpoints on "diversity issues." However, these conversations seemed largely disconnected from diversity formation at the Public U or the staff members' practice of professional diversity work. I observed the level of variance in race consciousness and colorblindness expressed by staff members based on the time, place and social group present. The more informal the setting, especially when it was off-campus, the more critical and variable the views that were expressed. In this way, diversity discourse among staff existed on two simultaneous and seemingly oppositional levels related to the space where it was taking place and the social relationships within that space. I also found a

high level of entrenchment of colorblindness and racial apathy within post-secondary diversity discourse. Despite the existence of both informal narratives and some formal discourse on race and ethnicity consciousness, socioeconomic inequity, and the sociopolitical aspects of place, actual institutional structures such as diversity work, funding, programs, and material culture all retained their colorblind, market-driven tropes; they spoke to the need to create systems to support socioeconomically "disadvantaged" students and those "unprepared" for the rigors of academic life. But publically, they also continued to minimize the role of racism in the processes that produced a need for diversity-focused projects in the first place.

Staff members especially struggled to develop and write grants for viable diversity programming for the campus. While "in the past, mentioning diversity a lot" was enough to get funded, grant institutions now gauged diversity on "a diversity continuum." They wanted to know, "Are we already serious about diversity? Are we really engaging diversity beyond the basics? Are we auditing diversity?" They argued that "funders can see through the B.S." But because "affirmative action is a dirty word now," they felt the space left for them to engage racial and ethnic identity was very limited. The need to show tangible effort and results was counteracted by a growing quietude around race and ethnicity over "the last ten years" of the university's development. In this sense, the wider public and legal discourse on diversity in higher education greatly constricted diversity work. For one, it limited the ways in which staff members articulated the objectives of their diversity programming and the findings of their research on the campus climate, both for university leadership and for external agencies. As one faculty participant stated, "I know there's the threat of uh, affirmative action being struck down most likely that some universities don't want the hassle of having written something written in the books." Staff members also discussed the marginalization of diversity priorities at Public U,

and the need to "push hard to get diversity" on the university leadership's "agenda," for example through the *Diversity Strategic Plan*.

While engaging in diversity discourse was a norm within diversity office settings, diversity-based action was a constant struggle that required "some big disagreements." There is thus a clear contradiction between the amount of resources that Public U has invested in diversity formation through funding, labor, policies and strategies, and the level of conflict that is required for diversity work to be conducted at the university. And I argue, the explanation for this discrepancy lies in the historical, political context from which diversity emerged. Because diversity formed as part of the white backlash against civil rights policies in the 1970s, its generative capacity has been greatly limited by a move toward 'race neutral' policies and narratives of post-racialism. In the current era, building diversity and building capacity for anti-racism, racial and ethnic equity and cultural competency are not necessarily synonymous. On the contrary, spaces within which diversity staff work are highly regulated by the hierarchical and bureaucratic structures of the university; as such staff themselves absolve diversity offices of the power or responsibility for *making* diversity. Instead, they focus on *promoting* diversity, both the demographic diversity that already exists, and idealized forms of social diversity that come out of a wider multicultural imagination that has been cultivated within diversity discourse since its inception.

The local and the institutional of faculty diversity labor

Hiring, retention, and promotion of black faculty, was one of the key demands of the mass student protest against Public U's racial climate in the early 1990s (Elston, 2011). Today, the impetus for this work has greatly diminished, as evidenced by the dearth of faculty-focused and faculty-led groups to develop faculty diversity on the departmental and university levels. The

university does still have an Office for Underrepresented Faculty in name. Originally the Five Year Plan for the Recruitment and Retention of African-American Faculty developed in direct response to the student protest, this entity then became the Taskforce for the Recruitment and Retention of Underrepresented Faculty, and later an official "office" (Public U Website, *Office for Underrepresented Faculty*).

The shift from "African American Faculty" to "Underrepresented Faculty" shows how the language of diversity immediately moves groups away from identifiable racial and ethnic categories and toward more general, universal ones. Much like staff members explaining that they had to expand definitions of diversity to "not just race" in order to accommodate the preferences of granting agencies, re-naming priorities related to faculty recruitment and retention reflects a move to flatten the identity-based issues that faculty of color face at the university.

The Five Year Plan for the Recruitment and Retention of African-American Faculty emerged from direct action by black students in response to anti-black racism at Public U (Public U Website, *Office for Underrepresented Faculty*). However, because diversity is legally and socially averse to recognizing racism as a whole, and anti-black and anti-Latina/o more specifically, structures created to support diversity tend to follow suit. In this way diversity becomes "suffused with the language of positive thinking" and eschews the baggage of racial and ethnic complexity and conflict (Giroux, 1988, p. 96). Diversity discourse at Public U has similarly disallowed a deeper level of engagement with the university's historical racism and present-day racial and ethnic inequities. Because while diversity at Public U seeks to include everyone, it also seeks help no one group. For in the current era, the charge of "preferential treatment for" or "catering to" black students has become as common and entrenched in Public U's structures as diversity itself. Today, The Office for Underrepresented Faculty has become

largely inactive, with only one faculty representative working "a quarter time" on its activities.

Its last event on mentoring faculty of color, according to the website, was in 2004 (Public U

Website, *Office for Underrepresented Faculty*). The office's website serves mainly as an online

resource hub for basic information on recruiting faculty of color.

I found two other organized faculty groups working on diversity at Public U. These

diversity committees represented the primary way that faculty perform diversity labor: as

appointed or elected volunteers. The first is a multiple department "Committee on Cultural

Diversity," which committee members abbreviated as CDC (Public U Website, *University*

Senate). It is part of the governance structure of the university. It consists of largely faculty, but

also staff and students. The second group is a departmental diversity committee in an academic

unit in the College of Arts and Sciences. I participated in five meetings of the departmental

committee over the course of three semesters, observing the ways in which this particular space

developed and implemented diversity for one academic department. I examined meeting minutes

from the university-wide CDC during the same time period[38]. Interestingly, both committees

were working on similar issues independent of each other. Two of these were the development of

an undergraduate-to-Ph.D. pipeline and addressing the lack of faculty of color who were tenured

or tenure-track.

I initially thought that localized diversity formation for one space, what committee

members described as "fit[ting] the needs of this department at this time," would produce

different and faster results than the university-wide committee. Certainly the level of

participation on the department committee was much higher. Of the six to seven members of the

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[38] I was not able to gain access to the CDC meetings. Analyzing the group's meeting minutes alongside the departmental committee meeting observations allowed me to create a comparative data set to study the similarities and differences between the two groups.

committee, at least five attended all the meetings I observed. The range of faculty present

included both tenured and untenured professors, one of whom used to be the Chair of the

department. There was also a spoken awareness of the need for all levels of leadership,

especially white faculty and male faculty to participate in "service" activities such as the

diversity committee. Multiple committee members made statements to this effect, at times

explicitly, at other times in coded language that referenced minority identities without addressing

specific identities directly. They mentioned the overburdening of "women and faculty of color."

They also often referenced "particular faculty" or "the same faculty" as being called upon

disproportionately represent "a diversity perspective." The group struggled both with defining

diversity and creating a diverse space within the diversity committee. Also all faculty interviews

within the study at some point revealed, the idea of faculty members as political and social

change agents was continually at odds with the professional and cultural demands of academic

work. As one untenured faculty participant from a different department said,

> *Faculty Interview 2513*: If you're an assistant professor, it's head down, and publish,
>
> publish, publish. They really don't like us assistant professors bothering with anything
>
> else.

The opposite but equally problematic scenario was expressed by a professor on the

diversity committee:

> *Faculty Interview 1913*: The people in our department who were appointed [to the
>
> diversity committee] were always from [one program]...there was this service they were
>
> always having to do... others you know kind of dodged that. And so I felt like someone
>
> from the [my program] should serve on this committee. So I appointed myself.

Some early career faculty or faculty with minority identities are either encouraged to disengage from the structural, political processes of the university in order to work in ways that would make them more competitive for tenure. Others become the faces of diversity for their departments, performing diversity labor that could ultimately diminish their ability to be viewed as competitive in the academic marketplace. The diversity committee in the study is unique in its level of organization and participation; its work serves as a representation of what was possible in a local setting where diversity and making space for diversity work are both viewed as a complex and shared priority. For instance, committee members often said that the "upper administration [of the university] should be made to feel obligated to support [diversity] work" with grants and other incentives for faculty performing this labor.

A parallel observation of the senate committee would have allowed me to draw direct similarities and differences between the social spaces of the two groups. But, from the meeting minutes I was able to examine the level of participation of the group, how it generally organizes itself, the objectives it sees as central to its work, and the activities members conduct to reach those objectives. For example, meeting minutes showed that at most meetings, less than half of the members were present. And based on six convened meetings between 2012 and 2013, at four of those meetings, all those attending were women. Additionally all the positions of leadership within the committee, such as the chair of the committee and the chairs of sub-committees were also held by women. Thus initially, one could see a stark difference between how these two diversity groups operated. At the local level, these dissimilarities may reflect how invested committee members are in the work being done, and may affect the decisions they make to prioritize certain activities over others. However my findings show that the institutional resources and mechanisms available to both groups for the development of diversity actually

have the most effect on the possibilities for diversity formation. That is, however relevant the departmental committee's discourse on racial and ethnic identity, its progress as an organizing group is constricted by top-down, colorblind, and meritocratic ideas about research and education in ways that are very similar to the barriers that the CDC faced at the university-wide level.

The first issue the departmental committee faced was defining diversity through the representation of diverse people, i.e. the presence of difference within the department as evidenced by the individual identities of students and faculty. This goal often ended up at odds with another definition of diversity that committee found salient: the representation of "diverse research," or "research on diverse populations or groups." In the latter definition, the minority or majority identities of faculty or students doing the work would come second to the content of the research.

Two areas of focus brought about the diverse researcher versus diverse research argument. First, a call for nominations was in effect for the Diversity Award for students in the department; a similar award is also given to a faculty member each year. The committee discussed the fact that 80% of the students who applied for the award did so with the understanding that diversity could be an aspect of the project. A smaller number applied because of their own identity, not the subject of project. But there was little intersection between these two, nor many projects that made diversity an "integrated part of the project" in their "theory, methods, and implications." Furthermore, the committee wished to "define what 'diversity' means" more fully for the purposes of award. This idea came up when during the course of meetings about half of the committee members said that diversity as an identity category should mean "not just race." But as I have shown throughout this study, the idea of diversity meaning

something "more than" or "other than" racial and ethnic identity becomes abstruse as soon as people begin talking about diversity or representing diversity through images. Most ideas about how to create an inclusive academic space still focus on "underrepresented" and "minority" faculty and students. The committee members referenced programs such as McNair Scholars and Targets of Opportunity, both of which are scholarship and academic pipeline programs have been used by universities to increase the number of black and Latina/o students and faculty at those institutions. Thus even within the micro-social environment of the department diversity committee, the need to make diversity mean something other than race and ethnicity was at odds with the continuous engagement with the concept as a racialized mechanism for defining and promoting difference. The issue of definition, coupled with an environment where one's ability to "bring in grants" and "publish, publish, publish" in order to "get tenured" is always central to the discourse contributed to a lack of clarity among committee members regarding how they should create guidelines for diversity; it's an issue that persisted throughout my observations of the group.

If one pulls back from the committee space and examines the wider narrative of diversity at Public U, the abstractness and resulting confusion inherent within both macro- and micro-level diversity work at Public U become apparent. For example, Public U's University Strategic Plan did not mention faculty diversity or underrepresented identities. It did make the following statements about its goals for "enhanc[ing]" the "research culture" by "developing and supporting productive scholars across all ranks and disciplines":

Given the prospects for growth and society's projected needs, [Public U] representatives will initiate discussions with the Board of Regents and major stakeholders concerning a new avenue of contribution by which [Public U] would add a new school or college in the

field of medical/health research and education... giv[ing] priority to problem-focused projects that demonstrate successful interdisciplinary collaboration and address challenges facing our rapidly changing society. (Public U, *University Strategic Plan*)

There is a clear emphasis on the notion of *social contract* intertwined with the "prospects for growth" in the research marketplace. The plan further illustrated this focus and its relationship to the work spaces of faculty by stating, "Prestigious, peer-reviewed, international, national and disciplinary fellowships and awards are a metric for scholarly excellence." It then stated the university's vision of creating awards for underrepresented faculty which would grant them smaller teaching loads so that they could "develop proposals or complete the activity for which they received the award or fellowship." In this way, an enhanced "research culture" at Public U is linked more to the production of funding than to research, teaching, and community engagement as comparable, foundational aspects of the university culture.

Meanwhile, as I showed earlier, the Diversity Strategic Plan created a very different set of goals for the university's culture:

Our interest in preserving and increasing our numbers of diverse faculty is linked to the intellectual mission of the University to provide the best possible education for all students. Faculty diversity is educationally relevant because it motivates students to incorporate different considerations, sensibilities, and lines of reasoning, which augment their analytical abilities. A diverse faculty supports the research culture of the institution and enhances the University's relevance to the local and global community.... Special consideration should be given to those groups that are identified as historically underrepresented faculty. (Public U, *Diversity Strategic Plan*)

Here again, "diverse faculty" and "historically underrepresented" faculty were not divided into specific social identities. Earlier in the document, it was written that "diversity" "for the purpose of this Diversity Strategic Plan" had been changed from "the definition of diversity historically used by the University" to one that included not just those identities "that are federally protected"—"race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, veteran status"—but also "sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, and socioeconomic class." One could argue that this language should serve as a reference for how the department diversity committee also defines diverse identities for its own purposes. However, the next section of the diversity strategic plan, which provided detailed demographic data about the university, was focused entirely on the gender, racial, and ethnic make-up of the university.

Similarly, while the *University Strategic Plan* did not mention any specific identities, instead seeking to provide a space where "students from all backgrounds can achieve academic and career success," the photo accompanying this section was of the university's President speaking to two young black men outdoors on the university's campus. The photo depicts the President's face only, facing the camera. The young men are represented by the backs of their heads and the colors of their skins. Photos within this section in the print version of the document use similar representations. They depict black women, black men, and white women working and interacting in classroom and laboratory spaces. Thus even though on paper there seems to be a clear guideline for how to define diversity beyond race within the *Diversity Strategic Plan*, the department diversity committee's continuous dialogue about the issue reflects what one committee member called a "fairly vague" depiction of diversity within university materials and policies.

The CDC Meeting Minutes also showed that while this group was actually the most explicit referencing specific identities in its "charge to monitor the state of diversity throughout the university," its dependence on the administrative structures of the university seemed to affect the pace and viability of its work. On one hand, it created momentum around issues such as "in-rank inequity for women faculty," "the matter of minority faculty retention as the university seems to continue to struggle with retaining minority faculty," and "race and gender bias in student evaluations" (Public U, *University Senate*). It also tried to conduct a new racial and ethnic climate survey of the university to follow up on the previous survey almost a decade earlier. However, it ultimately ended the push for a new survey because there was no information available on how the university had responded to the previous survey recommendations. No one university's administration had recorded possible attempts to implement the recommendations, and the CDC committee that conducted the original survey had not followed up on the administration's progress. Thus the data from the previous survey existed both literally and figuratively "on paper" without any known concrete actions attached to it. The CDC stated:

> Given that no account of the university's actions and results to the [previous] survey recommendations are readily available...members in attendance agreed that a vote should go before the body to table the follow up...survey. This matter has been under consideration for at least two years with no significant progress. (Public U, *University Senate*)

I thus found that the pervasiveness of colorblind language regarding diversity at Public U throughout the university's policies and public narratives, and the structural barriers that come up when groups like the CDC and the department diversity committee attempt to take action on identity-based diversity issues, have had two main results: those initiatives are abandoned, like

the CDC was forced to do with its climate survey; or the group decides to bypass administrative structures and resources and focus instead on creating very localized, discrete diversity definitions and programming. The department diversity committee saw the work they were doing as potentially linked to other parts of the university, but could find no substantive mechanisms to draw those connections or engage with others except in superficial ways, such as reading and trying to interpret the *Diversity Strategic Plan*.

Furthermore, the most effective diversity initiatives the committee produced were ones that are explicitly relevant to the departmental space and that at times defy the university's diversity mechanisms altogether. One example of this is the diversity committee's work on improving the spatial accessibility of the department for students and faculty with disabilities. After three meetings, during which committee members discussed going through official channels to have office supplies in their storage room moved to lower shelves to make the space more wheelchair accessible and meet "the needs of at least one current student that were going unaddressed," they eventually chose to move the supplies themselves to fix the issue in the short term. The committee contacted multiple units related to disability and facilities with no consistent information about an effective way to implement this practical change to the space in a permanent way. Eventually the committee invited a liaison for disability services to the monthly meeting to get direct consultation about multiple space accessibility issues in the department's offices and classrooms. While providing information, the faculty liaison indicated that the level of infrastructural work that had to be done on campus to bring Public U's up to code with ADA requirements was so substantial that local space issues, even if they affected current students, would likely not be addressed in the immediate future. The sentiment as

described by the consultant was, "If a Chevy is workable, you don't need to give them a Cadillac."

A similar sentiment was expressed in the university's cultural climate survey almost a decade earlier—students stated that the institution was "doing the best they could" and that "improvements in campus climate are the responsibility of students and faculty." They did not feel that Public U as an institution was accountable for such efforts. Such views about diminished institutional responsibility and expectations have reinforced Public U's focus on cross-racial social interactions as the primary objective and mode of diversity formation. As such, structural forms of inequity cannot be addressed because the impetus behind diversity work is continually being diverted toward "individual and/or group-level shortcomings rather than structural ones" (Forman & Lewis, 2006, p. 177).

Also embedded in these ideas is the expectation that diversity work should be done with limited resources and extreme pragmatism—i.e. accepting a "workable" "Chevy" rather than organizing for "a Cadillac." In this way existing diversity mechanisms suppress the emergence of more effective, localized solutions. They create scenarios within which those groups who lack equity, such as individuals with disabilities, have to negotiate how much accommodation is too much or to what extent their needs might be viewed as "preferential treatment." These narratives dominate discourse on institutional change before any substantive, structural action has ever been taken to address existing inequities or make changes toward accommodation. This was apparent in the barriers faced by both the department diversity committee and the CDC when they attempted to take action on specific identity-based issues through the official diversity structures developed for this purpose. Unless the work they were doing was to promote current diversity demographics or accomplishments—through the development of diversity-focused

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multimedia, non-core curriculum diversity courses, self-funded, departmental faculty and student awards, or soliciting very general information from one of the other diversity units—the support they received was minimal, while the amount of labor put into garnering that support was substantially larger.

Faculty labor and departments' social spaces are necessarily intertwined with this viewpoint because the evaluation of faculty research, publishing, teaching, and service (such as diversity work) occurs very much from within an ideologically colorblind and meritocratic space. When I studied the department diversity committee alongside a graduate student diversity committee in the same department, the power dynamics of localized diversity formation became even more visible. As I show in the next section, graduate students working on diversity in the department generally distrusted faculty efforts. They pursued more direct or "covert" actions in even smaller, organized spaces than the department diversity committee as the way to "move the needle" of diversity work without confronting the larger structures of the university.

A graduate-faculty divide on diversity issues

The first finding from graduate student diversity committee is the belief by all of its members that their diversity work is either going to diminish their marketability in an academic professional space, or is the result of their own sociopolitical distancing from the university and the academy. This negotiation of their status within the university's merit structures further demonstrates that the much promoted discourse of diversity at Public U has not gained institutional buy-in after over twenty years of institutional diversity formation. Graduate student participants discussed what it means that "there is such a thing as a 'diversity' person" and weighed the effects of being perceived as "pushy" or "demanding" in their pursuit of diversity training. They felt that they had become known for "criticizing" their supervisors and professors,

which they "people don't like" in an established, hierarchical professional and academic environment. The fact that there are all women has created both more motivation for their work and an isolation from the social space of the department.

This further demonstrates that the marginalized position of diversity at the university has not only affected the level of theorization and action around social issues, it also marginalizes the individuals and groups who work in this area. Graduate students are early in their careers as academic professionals; as such they perhaps have a wider breadth of space to discuss their views on social identity and equity in ways that "call out" established norms. Student committee members were highly conscious of having very little power in department level decision-making, and none at all on the institutional level. As such the graduate student diversity committee is housed within a smaller program in the department and restricts its activities to that program only. Committee members view the group as improving "[their] own graduate training" and the sociopolitical interactions that take place in the university-community settings in which they work. While they petitioned for and got student representation on the faculty diversity committee, they still did not "know what the purpose is" of that committee or if such a structure could "do much" to address current issues in the department. Furthermore, a white committee member talked about how the separation of diversity work from the healthy functioning of the department is an unproductive separation that both creates an image of diversity labor as an add-on and racializes the individuals who perform that labor as non-white:

Graduate Interview 1213: Just the fact that there is such a thing as a 'diversity' person. That's the problem in the first place, right? I can literally lead the committee for a whole year and my advisor is like, oh you're on that? Why did you get a diversity award? The

faculty don't see me as a diversity person... That kind of thinking is usually very black and white, very concrete. And they don't really think outside of that.

This coupled with the visibility of white men within the department's leadership and the gendered recruitment of faculty and students in different programs, has created a sense that minority graduate students, despite being a predominant majority in some programs, are absent from spaces of power within the department. Another student committee member expressed:

Graduate Interview 2213: When you look at it in an administrative standpoint it's still very white, very male. And there is more and more of a corporate attitude over education than... any other time. You can see that still in this [department]... Like the other day the fire alarm in this building went off and all the students had to come out while the fire department investigated. I was in the front of the building... I looked around. It was all white men. Maybe a white woman here, a black man there, a black woman, but most of the people were white men.

This observation about the representation of white men in the participant's academic department is particularly important because the dominant narrative about Public U was that it was a majority-minority space where the presence of diversity is highly visible, something one "can't avoid," and "part of the DNA" of the institution. Public U's narrative argues that the actual "problem with diversity is that [people] don't intermingle" or "really get to know" others from different backgrounds in order "to be exposed to different ideas." But counter-narratives like this one provide an alternate view of Public U's campus rooted in the distribution of power at the university. It is also here that Public U's predominantly white past becomes linked to its pursuit of "a particular type of student" in the future. For instance a staff member stated the

following about Public U's history of all white, male leadership in relation to the "colorful" racial and ethnic make-up it has today:

> *Staff Interview 0812*: Even though it may have a different feel to it, sometimes I think it's really a traditionally white campus in its history, leadership, you know, if you go to the cafeteria now you can see 100 years of all the different...leaders and it's all of these white men. You think, okay, wow. How did this happen? You obviously have a very black, you know, colorful student population, and then you have a very colorful staff as well on the entry level and the mid management level, but the senior leadership is still white.

Within this landscape the student diversity committee have formed an approach that members characterized as both very direct, and at other times "covert" and "behind-the-scenes." Students described organizing to "address gaps in our education" and going beyond "trying to maintain" a diversity status quo. When advocating for cultural competency in the program's workplace and training, especially in how to conduct social interactions within community-based research, the students approached the issues directly with their supervisors and department leadership. They conducted a cultural competency evaluation of their learning space, surveyed other graduate students in the program regarding training experiences, and then went to the Chair with recommendations. This included a request for formal training for program supervisors and faculty who work with the students in community-based settings. The goal was "to address diversity issues" that had emerged from faculty "not talking about diversity when [they] really should be" "as if our identities weren't a part of what was happening." It also involved seeking out "more diverse experiences" in the field. For instance, students experienced overt race matching between themselves and the community members with whom they were assigned to work. Because a majority of students in the program are black women, their training became

linked to the knowledge they already had based on their own identities, rather than the program

providing them with skills to work effectively in a variety of settings. One student explained,

Graduate Student Interview 2213: I know for at least um a couple us, sexual minority and

other minority colleagues... it's kind of like we feel people of certain race ethnicities and

or minority statuses get those [community members] to [interview] more so than other

people do. It's like, you can't tell me that the only people who are asking [coming in here

for assistance] are black women. You can't tell me that. Um so can I get a non-black

woman? I mean not to say I don't enjoy it but I'd like to round out the [training]

experience.

When it came to recruitment of graduate students of color into the department, the

committee worked in a very different way. Current students spoke of how the students that

recruited them into the program had come together "unofficially" or in "sporadic" ways to help

advocate for students of color entering the program.

Graduate Interview 2213: We'll like secretly get together and say okay, who is coming in

[during recruitment], make sure you talk to them. The same thing happened when I

applied here. And you know, it's part of what made me want to come here. I found out

the students who interviewed me on interview day had a clandestine plan to interview me

and other applicants of color. And there are other people of color in the program and they

try to be supportive but it is all on their own. It's nothing that's official.

The range of organized and "clandestine" actions taken by graduate students to become

active in the formation of the department's space simultaneously counteract and have become

part of the larger mechanisms of diversity in the department and at Public U. When juxtaposed

with the faculty diversity committee and the CDC, the student diversity committee has created

very specific definitions regarding the racial, ethnic, gendered, and classed meanings of diversity and equity in their program. It has had a more substantive effect on its educational space than either of the faculty groups. However, while the direct nature of the student committee's work on training and professional development within their program could serve as a model for micro-social and –spatial diversity formation, their "unofficial" actions are more complex in their contribution to the department and the university. The passing on of this mode of organizing from graduate cohort to graduate cohort lends it consistency and begins to create a programmatic history for diversity and community-based education. But the ephemeral aspects of the student committee's involvement in recruitment are similar to faculty descriptions of "spen[ding] three hours arguing in a faculty meeting" about making an offer to the "diverse" candidate of two potential hires, or staging "an interesting fight" for a minority candidate that was "won by one vote" as a result of "rallying people...around here." Because these actions took place in discrete spaces within which diversity was not a foundational priority for the whole group, and because these processes did not interact in cohort with any institutional mechanisms for diversity formation, they ultimately became reactive toward the inefficacy of existing diversity structures rather than responsive to a need to address identity-based inequities on an institutional level. For instance, when students from the student diversity committee led an effort in the department to retain a professor of color who had been denied tenure, "the university found a way to keep" that faculty member. But while the professor was able to remain in the department, neither her/his position as an untenured faculty member who now has greatly diminished job security nor the department or university's tenure policies have changed.

Given the established definitions of "diversity hires" and "diverse students," the false binary between diversity and merit remains even as individuals within departments debate these

issues in very personal and confrontational ways. One example of this was the faculty diversity committee's creation of job ads to recruit faculty members who could bring more diversity to the department. The committee discussed the extensive guidelines the university provides hiring committees in order to meet federal anti-discrimination requirements for job postings and applications. Because they cannot ask job candidates to identify their racial and ethnic identity directly, committees seeking to hire "for diversity" use candidates' letters, information on CVs (such as membership in identity-based associations), research interests, teaching statements, and responses to where they found the posting to try to interpret a range of social identities for each candidate, including race and ethnicity. Committee members referred to this as "working backwards" and "like [they] are trying to solve a mystery" about candidates' identities. Such processes force the department diversity committee to find a "diversity person" in a rather crude way; they need a candidate who can embody a particular racial or ethnic identity, but who must also fit into a very particular type of faculty labor space so that they will "get tenure... in a few years."

The examples of diversity-based conflict illustrated here speak to what john a. powell (citing Winant, 2002) called "a disjuncture between the 'apparent intent' of usually colorblind initiatives and their 'practical implementation' in an already racially stratified and hierarchical culture" (powell, 2007, p. 41). Spaces that "ostensibly seek egalitarianism" are overcome by "subtle and insidious forms of racism." The failure of diversity narratives, structures, and spaces to address or even bypass the artificial distinction between racial and ethnic diversity and merit demonstrates the extensive limitations of diversity formation at Public U. Furthermore, the racial dynamics of these spaces have been heightened by the direct, spatial relationship between Public U, its sense of institutional diversity, and its location in a majority black Central City. Just as the

university creates hypervisibilities and invisibilities of race and ethnicity through its focus on demographic and social diversity, it also references *and* elides the race-class intersections of Central City's urban landscape. The diversity economy which I have highlighted in this section is complemented by the larger 'ethnic economy' that the university engages through the place of Central City (Kaplan & Li, 2006).

From the city university to the university city

Public U has described itself officially as "engaged in the study of, and the development and implementation of, solutions to complex challenges faced by cities and their regions today and as they transition to the megacities of the future." It also wishes to "provide an interdisciplinary structure for the historical, anthropological and archaeological study of [its] home city," such as Central City's "unique standing as a historical anchor of the Civil Rights movement" (Public U Website, *University Strategic Plan*). Here we see a contradiction of objectives. The university alludes to the inevitability of "mega" urbanization and wants to act as the source of "economic and cultural development" for Central City through this process. But it states an interest in the foundational relationship between American civil rights, Central City, and more widely applicable "best practices" for meeting "the identified needs of urban areas" globally. Public U invokes both economic and social "global forces" (Bullard, 2007) and local *color* within its discourse of development without mentioning race, ethnicity, or any other identity or social condition that affects people living in "megacities." In this way it creates a "potential" and "future" for Central City that can only function through a colorblind definition of diversity that *sees* difference, but does not acknowledge its relationship to the inequitable distribution of power.

An important aspect of the relationship between Public U's rapid spatial development and

its expanding sociopolitical role in the downtown area is its acquisition of a number of properties

in Central City. Because Public U's growing campus sits adjacent to a historically black

residential and business district in the city, the expansion of the campus has included an

appropriation of this space as well. In large part because of this, the National Trust for Historic

Preservation designated the neighborhood one of its "Most Endangered Places" in 2012.[39] The

university officially stated in a 2013 article about its real estate acquisitions: "We recognize the

historic nature of the district and look forward to being good neighbors...housing our...highest

achieving students [in the building], honors the neighborhood as well." And, "This will breathe a

lot of life back into the area" (Public U, *University Magazine*). Meanwhile a local paper

responded in a different tone, reporting that Public U's "diabolical plan to own every single

square inch of downtown continues" (*Central City Weekly*). Leaders from the neighborhood and

city expressed a variety of perspectives about the university's interests in the neighborhood,

which both needed structural historic preservation and had already seen the flattening and

whitening of urban cultures that occurs when preservation is conflated with "adaptive reuse."

Throughout Central City's expansion as a socially, culturally and economically viable

place there has been an over-emphasis on reforming this "urban non-place realm" (Rutheiser,

1996) into a city befitting the metropolitan imaginary; an ideological desire that has led the city's

business and political leaders to envision Central City a 'user-friendly' space. While not

expressly against black neighborhoods, this discourse of cultural ease is wholly structured

around a colorblind notion of intercultural relations. Developers and the leadership that support

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[39] The neighborhood was previously on the Register's endangered list in 1992, at a time when disinvestment in the city following suburban flight of first whites then middle and upper class blacks had left many buildings in the area largely boarded up and abandoned. A wave of gentrification in the late 1990s and early 2000s accompanied the Central City residential development bubble and the move of young professionals and families back into certain historic neighborhoods in the city. Historically black neighborhoods that had been redlined throughout the 1980s (Dedman, 1989) near the university bore the brunt of this in-city migration.

them use paternalistic tropes of "making place" and "seed[ing] 'Culture'" with a literal and figurative capital C. In short, they have "gone completely upmarket" in their definitions of "adaptive reuse" of existing spaces (Rutheiser, 1996, p. 338). In the context of 'urban renewal,' which the city's black residents historically referred to as 'negro removal,' the university has had a precarious role that was both mediated and aggravated by its image as an "enterprising" and "urban" educational space. Certainly, Public U is a majority-minority institution known to matriculate a high number of black students; but it did so under the leadership of a persistently white executive administration, and while minimizing the racial and ethnic conflicts occurring on its campus.[40] As one member of the city's political leadership stated, the black neighborhoods of the city didn't "need another master plan" but rather "a Marshall Plan" that involved an influx of sustained resources to support both preservation and repurposing of historic spaces.

This statement referenced Public U's *Main Street Master Plan*. The project was made public in 2012 on the university website and through a cover story in its magazine in 2013. It was described as an expanded vision of the downtown area emerging from its *Campus Master Plan* to improve on-campus spaces 15 years earlier. The *Master Plan* described the university as "the lifeblood of the historic downtown core." It also hypothesized that "the continued opportunity for private mixed use development in and around the district will transform the area into an authentic urban neighborhood with [the university] at its core" " (Public U Website, *Main Street Master Plan*). Within these characterizations one can see the narrative and structural tension produced when the language of civics and culture meets the force of "capital projects." Inscribing of the university's space and historiography onto the city's historiography—and more

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[40] Public U has had two widely publicized occurrences of on-campus blackface within the university's predominantly white Greek organizations, and more recently a controversy involving a proposed "white student union" at the university. The result has been inter-student group conflicts, sustained protests and rallies, media coverage, and in some cases, high level administrative action.

specifically onto the historiographies of the historically black districts of a majority black city—did not just assuage a racially complex and tense landscape with "a vision of a greener, cleaner downtown;" it also changed the remembered and imagined "paths" of the space. As Pred (1984) wrote:

> The biography of a person can be conceptualized as a continuous path through time-space, subject to various types of constraint. The "biographies" of living creatures, natural phenomena, and humanly made objects can also be conceptualized in the same manner. (p. 281)

When one puts Pred's idea of the biography of space—what Public U's *Master Plan* referred to as "lifeblood" —into conversation with Inwood and Martin's (2008) analysis of "how identity is constructed and made visible on a university landscape," the socio-spatial role of Public U in the erasure of black life in the city becomes apparent (Inwood & Martin, p. 374). The "cues" Public U provided about the landscape of Central City "simplify or ignore race as a social mediator, thereby obfuscating deeply embedded racialized identities and tensions" both on and off campus (Inwood & Martin, p. 374). The university also inserted itself into the center of the city's "culture" while describing the historically black city space within which it resides as one of its "neighbors." In this way, the actively resistant role the university played during the desegregation period throughout the 1950s and the level of racial apathy that continued at the university until direct action by black students in the early 1990s become invisible, replaced by a new, "positive thinking" historiography (Giroux, 1988).

Simultaneously, the university's first black student in the early 1960s and its first black "Ms. Public U" several years later became two of the stories of "making history," represented through banners on light poles throughout the downtown area in celebration of Public U's centennial.

Similarly, the first goal listed for the campus expansion was to "integrate the university into the City... a part of the city not apart from the city." But when studied against the fifth goal—to "create a sense of place and identity"—the objectives of the university's geographic and cultural expansion became reversed (Public U Website, *Campus Master Plan*). Campus-centric narratives and plans for development indicated a desire to integrate *the city* into *the university*—not the other way around. For instance, an article about the expansion plan in the university magazine stated that new campus spaces "will increase interaction between the University and a small – but growing – cadre of non-student downtown dwellers." These "dwellers" comprised a very different group than the one referenced by the description of the university as an "urban laboratory." Neighbors who inhabit the laboratory, and the "residents and visitors" who are meant to "enjoy" the campus and the "rich creative environment, diversity of cultures and lifestyles, and wide variety of indoor and outdoor activities" of the city are racially and socioeconomically different groups. This was also evidenced by the design memorandum for the campus expansion. The "primary objective" of the plan was "to support the university's Strategic Plan," which included the goal of being "a leader in understanding the complex challenges of cities and developing effective solutions." It also sought to create spaces that "ultimately reinforce the campus's sense of place;" specifically, what this meant was: "safe," "attractive," "green," "communal study and social spaces" (Public U, *University Magazine*, 2013).

Further, the historically black buildings and streets that were within the scope of "the campus" were referenced not as distinct spaces but as part of the "core" and complementary "districts" produced and named by the university (Public U Website, *Campus Master Plan*) . There was no mention of the existing neighborhoods, nor any of the civic aspects of the strategic

plan. Rather the focus was on developing "memorable places that positively contribute to the campus identity." The university was not just forming new narratives and historiographies of place, it was shaping the memories of the city and the university. Racial and ethnic identity represented part of the "diversity of cultures and lifestyles" visible within the city, but any cultural difference was ultimately subsumed by the university's sense of its own social, economic, and *symbolic* supremacy. As Bourdieu (1989) argued in his articulation of symbolic capital,

> The struggle over classifications is a fundamental dimension of class struggle. The power…
> to make visible and explicit social divisions that are implicit, *is* political power" (my
> emphasis) (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 23).

The practice of social and spatial diversity at Public U has made historiographical gestures toward the black communities that used to live among the spaces where the campus now resides, and at the same time have created a very clear separation between insiders and outsiders, "core" and "neighbors." Interview participants created similar categories inscribed with meanings about the race of the places they lived and worked.

> *Faculty Interview 1813*: If you live in my area, you might think that uh most of the uh
> [people in this state] are African American. But if you go to another [neighborhood], that's
> not the case. You would think there are all white folks here.

This participant emphasized the neighborhood to neighborhood racial segregation that exists throughout Central City. However, a white staff member who said, "I think I spend most of my spare time hanging out with people that are more like me" described the city itself as "intermixed."

> *Staff Interview 0512*: To me it's kind of like intermixed in the city. I mean I think even

the places that are more homogenous, comparing them to other places I've lived are not as homogenous... I guess with the traditional definition of diversity, probably the downtown area is going to fit that the most. To me personally I see kind of the whole city though as being pretty diverse.

Here the "traditional definition of diversity" referenced the presence of blacks in the city center, while the alternative "whole city" sense of diversity included old and new immigrant groups that were dispersed throughout the suburbs just north and east of the city. Bringing in a larger area geographically allowed the participant's definition of diversity to expand beyond black-white identity formations their accompanying power relations. For this participant, the larger cultural space of "the city" was important to recognize in order for them to feel part of City Center and its diversity.

Meanwhile, another staff member who identified as multi-racial black attempted to navigate a different set of divisions and connections with the city and its residents.

Staff Interview 3713: I think no matter where you go, you cannot escape the cultural diversity of [the state]. It is here. It is a beautiful thing. So I still have a chance to see it but it's not the same. You know um part of the reason I moved to [the suburbs] is because I also – you know I don't necessarily want to displace myself from certain racial groups at all, or socioeconomic groups at all, but I do believe that it's important to have a certain mentality to kind of help yourself come up. And so I, I didn't want to necessarily be around the bottom rung, or live in the bottom rung if I knew myself that I could advance past that.

This story was especially relevant to the discourse of "opportunity" and descriptions of "neighbors" engaged by the university in its expansion plans. The groups in this participant's

"bottom rung" were the ones left out of Public U's narrative of collective improvement, which promised to fulfill the expectations of the city's "key stakeholders," or as one participant stated, people who are already "upwardly mobile" (*Staff Interview 3013*).

Making citizens and strangers[41]

Using Cresswell's (1996) ideas about social transgression, Mitchell (2003) argued that this kind of "regulating of people is often a project defined by the attempt to 'purify' space." In the case of Public U, its sense of campus was intertwined with a historiography that made the university into "the lifeblood" of the city and into the primary actor that could "breathe a lot of life back into the area." As Mitchell has shown, such images of regeneration are contingent upon a social and cultural purifying of that urban "lifeblood." Furthermore, research on the social production of place has shown that it is a process made and remade continuously; it produces norms of behavior that "become taken for granted"; it creates a mutually productive and reproductive relationship between individuals and society; it occurs in conjunction with "material continuity and… dialectics of practice"; and it is expressed through "everyday practices" which in turn influence the structure itself (Pred, 1984, pp. 280-281). Thus in order to analyze qualitatively how individuals and groups interact in and with particular places, one must consider the historiographies attached to those places, both personal and collective, unifying and divisive, as well as how places function in the present, and how they will imagine and construct particular futures.

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[41] Liam Kennedy (2000) titled the closing chapter of his book *Race and Urban Space in Contemporary American Culture* "Citizens and Strangers." Kennedy noted, "The city remains both a primal and strategic scene for representations of blackness in the white imagination and representations of whiteness in the black imagination. It is a palimpsest... of different histories of urban passage and association, and of entitlements and belonging." This chapter of the dissertation examines these spatial interactions through the lens of the university as producer of places and power relations in the city.

Public U's socio-spatial envisioning of an ideal campus space occurred within the context of a post-civil rights time, place, and racial politics. As I have demonstrated here, at most times the two were in concert due in large part to the ineradicable nature of diversity structures and discourse at the university, and a larger master narrative of racial progress that has become legally and social imprinted onto the post-civil rights era. What Kennedy (2000) called "the discourses of decline but also the discourses of regeneration" brought into play both the "pathological separateness" of residential and educational spaces along racial and ethnic lines and a "revalorization of urban cultural capital" (p. 5). These negotiations of space at Public U took place not just within top-down diversity discourse, but also emerged through the narratives of race, residence, education, and social and spatial belonging expressed by interview participants. In this way the university, and in particular the diversity discourse of the university, produced a racially and ethnically abstract, but highly racialized, sense of what it means to be a diverse space.

Furthermore, in the spaces of diversity work, I discovered a related process that is ongoing. People doing the work of diversity are simultaneously trying to figure out how to create a *diversity* space; that is, a space formed for the purpose of defining and producing diversity at Public U. Diversity spaces at the university are most often part of a larger bureaucratic structure of the institution, but also exist within discreet localities. And at times they are formed in response to immediate issues that need to be addressed. While how these spaces function locally differs, I found that ultimately the ephemeral diversity space of the graduate student committee and the local-institutional hybrid of the faculty diversity committee were just as subject to constricted meanings of equality, opportunity, merit, and so forth, as the highly structured spaces of the CDC and staffed diversity offices. In the social economy created by diversity strategies,

policies, and work, organizing groups of people to address or even define the scope of racial and ethnic difference, inequitable educational and work experiences, and the institutional effects of structural and social racism is very difficult and often contentious. Failures of momentum, and alternately the act of fighting it out, all point to the limitations of making a diverse space through the mechanisms of a diversity space. As such, it is even more important to integrate a study of these processes with an analysis of how Public U sees and feels the place of its campus. For as this final section has shown, Public U's vision of a "cleaner, greener campus" is significantly interwoven with its articulation of diversity, and in turn its categorization of the people in and around its campus. How the university plans and builds its literal place of belonging further reflects how it defines and values difference.

CHAPTER VI: FINDINGS & CONCLUSION

In this study, I set out to address gaps in knowledge about the narrative and spatial aspects of racial and ethnic diversity in post-secondary education. I argued from the onset that the social processes through which the work of diversity is done, in staffed offices and professional networks, and in both faculty and student committees, together with the more commonly studies top-down structures of diversity to make a process that I refer to as *diversity formation*. Diversity formation is both socially produced in place-based contexts and systemic in its ability to generate its own set of categories and values, analogous to what Bourdieu (1989) described as "the power… to make visible and explicit social divisions that are implicit" (p. 29). I sought to illustrate through the study this "struggle over classifications" as a "fundamental dimension" of how institutions socially reproduce particular types of diversity. And further, they do this in part to re-legitimize their participation in racialized power relations and the various forms of "elevated/distant" *and* "common sense" knowledge about racial and ethnic difference and racism constructed within and through post-secondary spaces. Diversity (like colorblindness and whiteness) becomes the university's "symbolic capital" and helps mandate how the different groups within the institution can maintain "a sense of [their] place" (p. 17). Analyzing these dimensions of diversity tells a fuller and more nuanced story about the construction of diversity discourse and structural responses to racial and ethnic conflict and racism in the university.

What also distinguishes this case study is that Public U is a majority-minority university. Sixty percent of its student population identify as non-white (*Public U Student Newspaper*, 2013), and 59% identify as women (US News and World Report, 2013). It has been designated one of the country's top fifteen "most diverse institutions" (Public U Website, "Campus News," 2013). Over 89.6% of its students were "in state" in the 2012-2013 academic year. Furthermore

according to institutional data, of the 17,693 full-time undergraduates enrolled at the university

in 2011-2012, 73.3% were "were determined to have financial need" and 71.4% were actually

awarded financial aid.[42] As such, the space of Public U presented a different landscape of racial

and ethnic formation and relations than, for instance, the "selective colleges and professional

schools" studied in Bok and Bowen's (1998) work on diversity or Stevens' (2007) "School in a

Garden" in *Creating a Class*.

At the same time, Public U's historical space is marked by an active resistance to

desegregation, a tepid response to the Board of Regents disallowing undocumented students

from enrolling in the university system, and an almost all white executive leadership (including

an entirely white and male succession of presidents). By examining diversity formation in this

complex space that has both demographic diversity *and* sustained racial tensions, I sought to

develop a nuanced interdisciplinary approach to studying diversity in majority-minority settings.

There is already substantial research on predominantly white institutions and studies that

examine racial and ethnic diversity and institutional racism through national data sets (Bowen &

Bok, 1998; Chesler, Lewis, & Crowfoot, 2005; Massey, Charles, Lundy & Fisher, 2006). To this

literature, I am contributing an examination of the localized social and institutional processes that

comprise diversity formation. At the same time, I also wish to extend the boundaries of diversity

research and to question the very concept of diversity itself

The study produced a set of findings which I highlight in this section. I do this by first

returning to the three major questions that drove the research study:

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[42] The financial aid cited here includes "need-based scholarship or grant aid" as well as "aid that was non-need based but that was used to meet need."

- How do personal and public narratives about racial and ethnic diversity formed within diversity-focused spaces in the university illustrate colorblind and race conscious approaches to racial and ethnic formation?

- What are key patterns in the relationship between public narratives about race and ethnicity and the institutional implementation of diversity-based programs, policies, and spaces?

- What role does the place of the university—its campus and the city where it is located—play in diversity formation?

As I discuss my findings in each of these three intersecting inquiries, I create my own counter-narrative about the role of diversity in higher education spaces and the future of non-white people in American universities and colleges. I also address the additional gaps in knowledge created by my approach to this study and how they may be mitigated in subsequent work.

Seeing race, saying diversity

In his 1997 film, *Race: The Floating Signifier*, Stuart Hall described racial identity in the following way:

> To put it crudely, race is one of those major concepts, which organize the great classificatory systems of difference, which operate in human society. And to say that race is a discursive category recognizes that all attempts to ground this concept scientifically, to locate differences between the races, on what one might call scientific, biological, or genetic grounds, have been largely shown to be untenable. We must therefore, it is said, substitute a socio-historical or cultural definition of race, for the biological one.

Just as Appiah (1994) and Gilroy (2000) developed and furthered socio-political understandings of race and ethnicity, Hall also called into question both biologically and culturally deterministic definitions of group identity. However as seen through "Crit" literature, social identity consciousness is also interwoven into narratives and structures that are resistant to both overt and subtle forms of racism, especially in educational contexts (Bell, 1980; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lawrence, 2002; Yosso, 2005). Grounded theoretically in *both* these bodies of work, I argue that diversity: 1) acts as a direct signifier for race and ethnicity; 2) often functions as a comprehensive category for social and cultural difference; 3) is a proto-language, producing offshoots such as multicultural, intercultural, and opportunity development, among others. As such, the narratives and structures developed to explain and practice diversity also take on all three of these characteristics, and racial and ethnic identity as conceptualized through diversity are made hyper-visible and invisible within the same discourse.

Public U's demographic and narrative image is that of a university that enrolls and graduates large numbers of students of color and women. The university has claimed both diversity in "its DNA" and articulated publicly its desire to "become a national model for diversity in higher education, where all combinations of gender, race, and ethnicity succeed at high rates" (Public U, *Diversity Strategic Plan*). But at the same time, the narratives used to describe the social space of the university consistently shift the focus away from race and ethnicity. This is because of the very fact of Public U's demographic make-up. In addition to the university website and recruitment materials' focusing on diversity as part of the "enterprising campus personality" and a "culture based on [the] ambition, hard work, dedication, and perseverance" of "students from all walks of life" there is also an exclusion of the black student population and its influence within the space. For example, black student leadership in clubs,

advocacy organizations, and the student government is neither celebrated nor indicated as an

aspect of the diversity at Public U. It did, however emerge as a topic of concern for participants,

who spoke about 'white student disengagement' from campus life. Elston's (2011) study related

the perceived 'crisis' of white undergraduate students' lack of participation from the major

student organizations on campus to these students' experience of being a majority in both

numbers and power within most of their other social interactions.

> Minority retention and graduation rates are touted locally and applauded nationally;
>
> however, there is a zero-sum game when it comes to students of color engagement in
>
> campus life. Administrators clumsily maneuver through a process of determining which
>
> racial groups are dominant and marginalized in student organizations. Recognition that
>
> student of color engagement...has tipped beyond Whites' threshold of comfort...and has
>
> reinforced the rhetoric of crisis. (p. 160)

As the personal narratives in the study demonstrate, most participants experienced

racially and ethnically segregated residential communities and primary and secondary

educational spaces. However white candidates had narratives that included long-term

experiences of familial racism, prejudice, and enforced racial and ethnic segregation in the

spaces they referred to as "home" or "back home." I found that individuals who had more

experience with overt forms of racism also often indicated a desire for more colorblind spaces,

and viewed Public U as a progressive and unavoidably diverse place. They expressed a kind of

racial relativism, wherein their first-hand knowledge of overt racism made them less observant

of more subtle forms of racism and to distrust separateness or race consciousness. However, as

Forman & Lewis (2006) have already shown, what I call here *racial relativism* is an aspect of the

larger issue of *racial apathy* among whites. While minimizing structural forms of racism, it also

requires all racial and ethnic identity groups to participate in colorblindness, conflating non-white race consciousness with separatism and racism.

Thus, based on the retention and graduation of black students, the university tells a story of "achievement" and "success" but still maintains a silence about the "gains and successes" of black social, cultural and political engagement both publicly and within narratives of diversity work and structural development. In these narratives, white race consciousness works symbiotically with colorblind ideology. The "diverse" university is the primary actor and the source of successful black graduates, not black students themselves. Simultaneously, as I discussed in Chapter V, Public U has inscribed its own historiography onto the historiography of the landmarked black neighborhood adjacent to its downtown campus. The university refers to itself as "the lifeblood of the historic downtown district" and as an agent of development that will "breathe a lot of life back into" the city. Within the framework of 'renewal,' non-university actors are "neighbors" and "stakeholders," but never truly central to Public U's diversity discourse. In both of these instances, groups racialized as "diverse" actually become less important to the university's socio-political environment, their primary function being to represent diversity rather than to be active in creating a diverse space. The definition of diversity in this case signifies racial and ethnic identity specifically but also prescribes a passive role for race and ethnicity; it is a fact of demography and rote difference in "cultures," not as Appiah (1994) wrote, a "political identity."

The second way that diversity functions is as an umbrella term for all federally protected social identities (race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, ability, veteran status) and additional ones stated in Public U's *Diversity Strategic Plan* (sexuality, gender expression, socioeconomic class). The more expansive definition has created momentum around issues such

as "in-rank [salary] inequity" among faculty based on gender. There is also a Disabilities Initiatives sub-committee within the University Senate and a faculty liaison position for Disabilities Initiatives. But rather than being active in their advocacy, these initiatives seem to exist primarily as stores of available information "on the status of women" and on "disability support services."

The language used to describe these initiatives, emphasizes communication and planning, rather than cultural or structural change. And even that work is accomplished through narratives of low expectations due to the existence of significant structural barriers to these groups accomplishing their work. For instance, the University Senate's Committee on Cultural Diversity ("CDC") has worked for multiple years on the issue of inequitable pay and advancement for women faculty. But even in the committee's most recent meetings, the notes showed committee members continuing to navigate the organizational landscape of the university, which involved meeting with upper level administrators each time another set of information was needed. Though the University Senate works on the university-wide level, the members of the CDC had no more information or access to information than the departmental committees I observed. The path to policy change is thus extremely long and circuitous. As a result, committees sometimes give up on certain initiatives, such as when the CDC discontinued its attempts to conduct a new Racial Climate Survey at the university. Or, they bypass diversity structures by creating their own solutions, such as the department diversity committee making its space more physically accessible or the graduate student committee organizing support for a professor who was denied tenure.

One could argue that more "inclusive" constructions of diversity could ideally influence how the university conducts social and political advocacy as a whole. However, I found that all

detailed demographic data about the university has focused almost entirely on "female" and "male," and statistical information about the racial, ethnic, and national identity make-up of the university. Even when, for instance, the department diversity committee in the study discussed how to make standards for diversity awards and hiring committees that would be "not just [about]," "more than," or "other than" race, ethnicity, and color, their narrative focus continuously remained on "underrepresented" and "minority" faculty and students; they also discussed specific funding sources that were designed to increase black and Latina/o advancement in higher education. Whether trying to achieve a "critical mass" of "diverse" students or expressing the need for universities to reflect the "make-up" of their localities so that "higher education looks like and sounds like" the United States today, race, ethnicity and sometimes nationality were the primary referents of diversity.

Finally as a proto-language, diversity at Public U has produced a post-secondary discourse on multiculturalism, intercultural relations, underrepresentation, opportunity development, international initiatives, and civic engagement. But this language while connected through common definitions of identity and demography has created a social economy of diversity work that is segregated in its processes and objectives. For instance, the office formed to assist international students expressed a sense of isolation from multicultural affairs settings which seemed to focus on domestic students entirely. Meanwhile, the Office for Underrepresented Faculty, which began as a "Five Year Action Plan for the Recruitment and Retention of African-American Faculty" in 1992, and was changed to "underrepresented faculty" in 1999, is closely linked by representation and work to the Cultural Diversity Committee of the University Senate, but largely disconnected structurally from the Office of Opportunity Development and Diversity Education. Thus the work to hire and retain "ethnic minority" faculty

is separated in process and power from diversity education and the structural process for addressing "discriminative" practices.[43] In this way "enhanc[ing] the quality of its intellectual life and foster[ing] a hospitable campus climate for all its members" becomes an ideological rather than practicable goal because its relationship to discriminatory interactions is marginalized. Discrimination connotes racism. Missions for an "enhance[d]" and "hospitable" "intellectual life" at the university advance notions of diversity as a positive rather than fully integrated part of the educational and workplace environment of the university (Chesler, Lewis & Crowfoot, 2005).

The groups that do the work of diversity are aware of the discontinuities between narrative and practice. A staff member described how "initiatives put in place to assist recruitment and retention of quote-unquote minority faculty and women" have "lost footing in the last ten or fifteen years" (*Staff Interview 0313*). Similarly a member of the department diversity committee said, "We say that we value diversity but when we had the chance to build on it we didn't" (*Faculty Interview 1913*); and another faculty member confirmed, "We tend to recruit faculty if we think they can bring in money, grants... it is a different, I would say, priority than diversity" (*Faculty Interview 1813*). Participants saw "a huge shift" in the sociopolitical role of diversity as Public U has grown in size, and seeks to grow in stature.

> *Faculty Interview 0112*: I just don't think that institutions that are this big and fully invested in, you know, becoming even bigger, can ever maintain the civic and liberation aspects of education.

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[43] Crenshaw (1988) argued that anti-discrimination law could neither inherently nor in practice within a "hostile" legal environment motivated to turn back the tide on civil rights era gains protect non-whites in the post-civil rights era. She wrote, "Antidiscrimination law represents an ongoing ideological struggle in which the occasional winners harness the moral, coercive, consensual power of law. Nonetheless, the victories it offers can be ephemeral and the risks of engagement substantial."

They also connected that shift to the current legal context of national level anti-affirmative and anti-diversity discourse.

Faculty Interview 2513: I know there's the threat of uh, affirmative action being struck down most likely that some universities don't want the hassle of having written something written in the books. But it's extremely important for a place like this.

As the university grows, so do the language and structures of diversity. They express racial and ethnic difference. They reference a larger cohort of social identities that sometimes become salient (gender, disability)—though like the status of *aspiring whites*, these positions are unstable. Other times they remain unidentified except in name (gender expression, sexuality, socioeconomic class). And they come to represent a wider breadth of meanings that the university can use to build a civic discourse around its "enterprising" ambitions. This also includes the duality of images Public U has created for Central City, which is said to provide both an "urban laboratory" for researching social problems and a "greener, cleaner campus" for use by the "small but growing cadre" of groups the university considers its downtown "neighbors."

It became apparent through the study that this discourse not only elides the existing struggle "for diversity," it forces the work of diversity to take on "clandestine" approaches as those who perform diversity labor in voluntary roles "don't trust the university" to produce effective solutions to existing identity-related inequities. For the university the proto-language of diversity may serve as a shield against both legal and sociopolitical scrutiny. But without recognition of the persistent forms of racism, heterosexism, and other identity-based issues that are currently having an effect on the social space of the campus and the city, and without

integrated impetus for changing these effects, the only thing diversity can produce is more symbolic language to refer to itself.

Sharma (2004) argued that "a discourse of liberal multicultural education" in Great Britain was used as a way to flatten class consciousness and produce "social cohesion by recognising a shared investment in a national culture" and "reifying culture and ethnic group identity at the expense of examining power relations (p. 110). I argue that in practice diversity at Public U has become a way not to address the racialized ways that non-white scholars and women are kept at the professional margins of the university. Just as colorblindness obscures racism, the argument over diversity versus merit blurs the inequitable conditions of intellectual, professional, and social life of the university as experienced by the minority groups participating in its complex social economy.

Furthermore, this investment in the notion of diversity as different from merit is an ideology produced through direct and indirect consent. For even participants who expressed very critical viewpoints regarding the way diversity work is currently conducted, often engaged in the same discourse as those who supported more colorblind ideas of diversity, especially when it came to the qualifications of faculty. This finding led me to assert that the meritocratic discourse of Public U's academic environment acts as a superstructure for diversity formation. That is, diversity must work within and through this discourse, not the other way around. As a result, creating sustainable plans and progressive actions toward the recruitment and retention of faculty and upper-level administrators of color becomes even more difficult. Diversity-focused hiring and promotion remains "unofficial and sporadic" because the terms upon which all individuals are being assessed are constricted by a continuous and sanctioned merit-speak.

Interviews with staff pointed to an understanding that among the lower- and mid-level administration of the university, the people were very "colorful." Meanwhile the leadership of the university, both historically and currently was "very white, very male." Thus the same individuals who have helped create Public U's diversity image through narratives of individual and collective uplift—"for hardworking students who aspire to improve themselves, their opportunities for professional growth and their communities"—also maintain a racialized structure of leadership and power at the university.

Because upper-level administrative positions are often filled by former faculty, it is important to trace this racialized and gendered tracking of leadership through faculty ranks. As seen in my interviews and observations with faculty and graduate students on the two departmental diversity committees, the discursive processes through which the committees advocated for hiring and promoting minority faculty revealed a lot about the tension between diversity and merit. For example, three early-career faculty members who expressed critical views on racial and ethnic power relations at the university, and who were also people color, constructed more pragmatic narratives of their own vetting within their departments or fields of study. They expressed a need to "publish, publish, publish" in order to "get tenure," and thus found their ability to be socially and politically active at the university diminished (*Faculty Interview 2513*). One participant felt he had "paid a price" professionally by choosing to pursue an ethnic studies doctoral degree rather than a traditional discipline, like education (*Faculty Interview 0112*). Another struggled to provide scholarly and personal support to graduate students of color, knowing that department leadership was "looking down at" activities "outside of ... research and grants" (*Faculty Interview 3413*). Similarly, tenured faculty involved in diversity work stated their ambivalence when asking faculty of color and women to join

diversity-focused groups or initiatives. As one stated, they felt work on equity within the institution that was directly related to social identity "benefited" from the participation of individuals with those identities; they could "bring a perspective" of experience and a level of motivation to change "the status quo" in ways that individuals who "[are] the status quo" may not. At the same time, this faculty member felt that certain groups "were always having to do" a disproportionate amount of "service" based on this very idea (*Faculty Interview 1913*).

These statements suggest that the service done benefited the department, but did not benefit the individual. Diversity work was not valued or compensated in ways that allowed it to be both politically and professionally beneficial for faculty in minority groups. An example of is when graduate student diversity committee members gathered as an organized body to support a professor of color who was denied tenure despite her extensive community-based research and experience advising and teaching students. The department helped create an alternate position for that faculty member so that the university could "keep her." But this was the result of political mobilizing in a moment of crisis. It was neither assisted by the mechanisms of diversity nor changed how the university and the department continued to evaluate faculty labor.

Meanwhile faculty members on the department diversity committee stated that their most recent hiring cycle forced them to become highly cognizant of whether the candidate would be able to achieve tenure within the allotted time. They felt it would be detrimental to hire someone person "in the first place" who would struggle in the long term. I argue that such crises are created by the lack of value the university places on community-based research, teaching, and advocacy work, despite the preponderance of language within the university's *Diversity Strategic Plan* that supports these characteristics. But the occurrence of department-level conflict regarding faculty hires and the tenure track have not resulted in Public U examining its terms of

recruitment and promotion. Rather, the instability caused by them leads hiring committees to become more risk averse despite seeing this as a "missed opportunity" for increasing "underrepresented faculty" in the department. Departments that do succeed in hiring minority candidates, do so by a margin of "one vote," accomplished through "rallying people around" here," and continuously making race conscious arguments such as, "We have students who are Latina, Latino. Who study and work with those communities. We have no Latina or Latino faculty." A faculty member in that department stated, "Instead of having departments have to fight for that, I would want institutionally that to be a goal, something that was highly encouraged" (*Faculty Interview 2513*). Another faculty participant, from the department diversity committee, described a sense of tension when discourse shifts from "money, grants" to "hav[ing] goals for...finding persons based on color or because they do work on a [diversity-focused subject]":

> Diversity within the faculty, this is a very touchy subject to tell you the truth. We tend to recruit faculty if we think they can bring in money, grants... If we have goals for [diversity] we can, cannot just simply say we should get more ethnically, more people of color, particular [research] subjects. I think that doesn't fly well with people. So we, you know we have to have some kind of angle, that should, I don't know exactly but a lot of times when I'm talking to folks I say we have to focus on getting the kind of people we want that would be best for this department, fitting our needs, not just one color fits all. This contradictory landscape of diversity hiring is no clearer on the institutional level. (*Faculty Interview 1813*)

This participant's characterization of diversity begins with a sense of discomfort: "this is a very touchy subject" and "it doesn't fly well with people." And from that point of tenuousness,

the dilemma of hiring more diverse candidates because that's what's "best for the department" becomes overrun by a need to make the argument without mentioning race, ethnicity, or any other identity. Rather than the issue of having to "rally people" around a candidate's identity and its salience for the department described by the other faculty member, this scenario requires finding "some kind of angle" that tethers candidates who are "people of color" to a universal, race neutral sense of department "needs" and how to fulfill them. Thus the idea that "one color fits all" would actually be an uncontroversial rubric for hiring, if the "color" by which the candidate is identified is white. Because based on a colorblind framing of merit, the presence and dominance of whiteness is critical to the erasure of identity consciousness—what Gilroy (1987) referred to as the terms upon which people of color can become "just people" (p. 57).

On the other hand, Public U's policy language for the recruitment and retention of "ethnic minority faculty" states:

> Ethnic minority faculty may themselves attract greater numbers of students from diverse backgrounds and will enrich the experience of all students... In addition, such faculty enrich the professional lives of the other ethnic minority faculty here, offering greater opportunities for peer mentoring and strengthening morale... Tenure-track faculty are the heart of the academic community. They are expected to keep abreast of their fields through research and publishing; and they provide foundation for the University's national reputation. It is therefore especially important that ethnic minority faculty who are tenure track join the University community. Full involvement in departmental and college governing structures by such faculty helps to assure that faculty diversity is maintained and that the University is indeed an engaged urban institution. (Policy on Underrepresented Faculty, Public U, *University Website*)

The university recognizes the importance of the long-term investment in faculty of color who are part of "the University community." But there is no guidance as to how service labor, which is as time consuming as meeting expectations in "research and publishing" but not valued on the track to tenure, can be conducted without paying the price of diminished professional opportunities. The advice from department leadership I interviewed was that tenure-track minority faculty focus on publishing and grants, *not* "full involvement in departmental and college governing structures." This shows the dissonance between the narrative formation of diversity and the practical aspects of diversity work.

This also speaks to fears that the idea of diversity has become or will become too sacred or "righteous." As one faculty member said, "I worry about diversity moving from a value to a religion" (*Faculty Interview 1913*). However, I argue that the devaluation of diversity as a whole, and racial and ethnic diversity specifically, has made it into a set of symbols that serves as an abstract, racialized referent for other abstract, racialized concepts such as multiculturalism and inclusion, among others. When one examines the "everyday life" of diversity, it becomes clear that it is a "touchy subject" because of this *lack* of value, not an overvaluation. Twenty years following the legislative and legal structures that produced affirmative action, diversity emerged as a deterioration of those structures. And in the almost forty years since white backlash against civil rights policies first made diversity and in doing so also made affirmative action "a dirty word," it has been devalued even further. For even as gender equity and implementation of universal design, for example, struggle and often fail in becoming practiced mandates rather than distant, hopeful goals, no other federally protected identity has been the focus of both scrutiny and sustained legal attack within post-secondary education in the same way as race and ethnicity. From *Bakke* (1978), *Hopwood* (1996), *Grutter* (2003), *Gratz* (2003), *Fisher* (2013), and now

Schuette (2014), the terms of racial and ethnic diversity have been challenged again and again.

Each time, the threat of the abolition of race and ethnicity as permissible factors in college

admissions seems more imminent; and the continued narrowing of non-white race consciousness

in post-secondary settings as an alternative to the specter of abolition makes diversity more

diluted, less effective.

As this process occurs, the language of diversity grows even more as it tries to

encapsulate various forms of difference without actually addressing racial and ethnic inequity,

conflict, or racism. As a result, diversity has become a universal straw man for racial and ethnic

difference: it was critiqued by participants for being "vague," "sporadic" and "innocuous;" it was

described as "a bunch of flags we can salute" and something people talk about when they "want

to look to be...politically correct;" and finally as something that turns individuals of color into

"tokens" of identity rather than being valued as "skilled people." It is at once structurally and

socially marginalized, but rhetorically sacrosanct.

Furthermore, as seen throughout the diversity narratives about work and navigating

Public U's institutional structures, the instability of diversity as a structural and symbolic concept

also produces a lack of movement around redefining merit through a more civically, socially

active lens. Merit goes beyond diversity in that it holds a more stable sacred position within post-

secondary discourse. And if as Witt, Chang, and Hakuta (2003) stated, "Diversifying our college

universities and campuses requires expanding current notions of merit," then a destabilizing of

meritocratic "righteous[ness]" would need to precede any real movement within diversity.

The possibilities for change in how merit and diversity are defined are in actuality

embedded within all the language that Public U uses to self-identity as a "national leader" in both

local "city" and "global" contexts. While one could argue that the narrative gestures made by

Public U and most other universities to link its "enterprising urban research" workings with a civic and social objective are entirely performative, I found that the level of organization and structural investment that Public U has put into its image as a civic leader solicits accountability, even if it does not intend to do so. The university currently refers to itself in the following ways:

"A unique institution... with its student population of many cultures and ethnic backgrounds," that has "a commitment to diversity" and as "a leader in creating innovative approaches" to education. Further it is "central to the revitalization of downtown," and will "help address opportunities and issues facing cities around the globe." The university's "students and faculty are part of a living laboratory," that continuously "reaches into the community" to effect community-level change. (Public U Website, *About Public U*)

The elevated and abstract narratives that make up Public U's civic discourse may be viewed as "a ruthless appropriation of the vision and language of multiculturalism" and "intellectual passivity in the name of 'hopefulness'" and a localized form of "nation-building" (Giroux, 2010, p. 52-57, 206). But they also have embedded within them a level of social responsibility and accountability, and can be leveraged as such: by dismantling at the department level buy-in for existing systems of "qualification" that are both colorblind and anti-civic, and by engaging fully the existing language of public purpose at the university, which *is* referent of social identities and does claim to desire concrete outcomes. For example, if "ethnic minority faculty do attract students from different backgrounds" and if it is important for "minority faculty" on the tenure track to "join the University community" and have "full participation in the governance" of Public U, then there would need to be effective mechanisms in place to bring about these community-based and scholarly ideals.

University leaders may wield the language of diversity for a variety of purposes, but they do not own these ideas. Nor are they the sole producers of knowledge and meaning with regard to social identity, social inequity, and the university's role in these dynamics. In order to "move the needle" of efforts toward professional and social fairness within the university and in cross-organizational, community-based settings, diversity must be stripped of its meager symbolic capital, and used instead as a technique for both reform of those systems that are ineffective at addressing racism, heterosexism, and socioeconomic oppression, and for refusal of those systems that are hostile to difference and equity.

The most successful counter-narratives and counter-actions at Public U that I found through this study are the 1992 student protest and the current work of the departmental graduate student diversity committee. Both entities used a combination of direct action (protest, organizing, relationship building), a clear vision for concrete changes that needed to be made to the university (policies, structures, funding) and long term follow up on the implementation of those prescribed changes. The University has erased the '92 protest from its official histories. But its organizers, supporters, and those who continue to study its relevance to Public U's current status as lauded "diverse" institution, continue to combat that erasure. The twenty-year celebration of the protest, for example, referred to the event as "fanning the flames" of community-based organizing among students, faculty, and staff. While this metaphor cannot alone accomplish the task, an active investment in retaining and building on the public memory of actions that changed the university in concrete ways *in* the post-civil rights time period is important as a counter-narrative to racial and political apathy.

Also the graduate student committee in particular works under the auspices of "diversity." They have demonstrated through localized action, that diversity work can be

transformative when it is part of a larger organizing framework for addressing 'mis-education'

regarding social identity and power. The student committee has been able to link their work

directly to their training as graduate scholars, and the professional development of their

instructors and supervisors. As a result, their efforts toward change are not entirely dependent on

the comfort level or beneficence of department leadership on issues of race, ethnicity, gender,

sexuality and class. Diversity formation in this case is not a benevolent act, but part of the *merits*

on which the department trains and professionalizes current students and recruits new students

who come to the program in part because of the strength of graduate training and a high level

graduate student leadership.

'Everywhere you see the signs'

The points of intersection between diversity formation at Public U and the spatial

formation of the campus are both numerous and remain relatively unaddressed within the

university's institutional and local narratives of diversity. This in part has to do with the high

level social distance from the campus that interview participants expressed. Most do not live in

the downtown area, and do not spend time in the city center outside of the university. And those

who do live in Central City, while they had more nuanced understandings of its sociopolitical

space, racial and ethnic history, and current experience of gentrification, still saw the university

campus as outside of their purvey of diversity work and influence. As one participant stated, "I

tell people, everywhere you see the signs is the campus. Everything else is the city"

(*Undergraduate Student Interview 0312*). But neither is home for most of the individuals I

interviewed and observed.

In contrast to the image of a "true urban" university, integrated "into the city" that created

by top-down narratives of space and place at Public U, most participants did not discuss the

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university in that way. Instead, their observations of diversity and a lack of it centered on interior places such classrooms, offices, and hallways where they saw people interacting. By far the most salient image of campus diversity that came up both during interviews and observations was the large courtyard that connects five of the classroom buildings on what is described as the "main campus." This is the space where one "can't avoid" observing both racial and ethnic diversity *and* racial and ethnic social segregation. Interview participants described this space as "one of the most diverse environments you can put yourself in" and "really unique" because it represents "so many different shades" and "a lot of other identity groups too." The "courtyard" is also highly representative of Public U's urban location. It is concrete node at the center of five tall buildings which house most of Public U's academic departments, classroom spaces, and two libraries. The courtyard does not have grass or benches in the traditional sense. Students who spend time there sit along the edges of long, rectangular large planters, along the edges of an old fountain that is not in use, and on stairs and railings. There is a wooden stage permanently installed in one area of the courtyard. It serves as both seating and a performance or practice space. At almost all times of the day, the courtyard is full of students. Often student clubs spend time there each day handing out promotional materials or event fliers to people walking by. Some students study there. But mostly, it is a place for gathering—the only such place on campus that is used by the largest density of students. As one student said,

> When I walk through the courtyard to class... I literally hear three different languages... It happens every day [to me]. You just have to experience it you know. (*Undergraduate Student Interview 0312*)

But everyone who specifically referenced the visibility of racial and ethnic difference at Public U, whether in the courtyard or as you "pass [by] in the hallway," or by citing that the

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school has "people from over 150 countries," also made a statement soon after about the lack of cross-racial, -ethnic, -cultural interactions in those spaces.

Undergraduate Student Interview 1113: You can't lie that the groups of people you look at, they're all the same people in them... You're going to see maybe four girls with headscarves talking just to each other, then some kids with torn up clothes smoking cigarettes together, then like a group of black girls talking and texting on their cell phones.

Faculty Interview 0112: If you don't know any gay people, you should just probably pause and get to know a couple, right? If you don't know any black people, any Latino people. If you don't know the difference between a Mexican and someone who's Portuguese and somebody who's Dominican, and somebody who, like if you don't know the differences then the diversity being touted is just data.

The idea that "we are still so much divided," both literally and culturally resonated for all the participants. But as I have stated, their sense of the "separation that takes place" among different groups focused almost entirely on spaces "at the university." Five of the participants, all of whom live in Central City, addressed directly the social space of city in relation to the university without being prompted. Poverty, gentrification, and the ongoing tension between the two on and off campus were the main subjects brought up by those participants. One staff participant stated, that Public U is unique because one "can't tell who's a student, who's homeless, who's a business person just walking through" (*Staff Interview 0512*). A staff member also spoke to the need for students living in university housing to recognize individuals who were homeless as "their neighbors, as "part of this place." For this participant the space of the campus presented an opportunity to "challenge people's realities":

Staff Interview 0812: A lot of times individuals will come here with a certain mindset or a certain goal or like a structure in which they form all their perceptions of what's happening or what needs to happen. I think it's just very difficult for anyone to understand and know something that you don't already...know. But that point of consciousness where even though this is the reality I know, I am, at least going to be open to other realities... that's the kind of self-checking that I'm hopefully trying to, encourage in them.

This participant works directly with student residents and campus life group leaders on projects that are meant to enhance students' knowledge about the campus and the city. Public U's first full dorm facility, made to house almost 2000 students, did not open until 2007. Prior that that, the university had a smaller apartment-style building. While the school has seen a major influx on resident undergraduate students, living in the city's downtown district is still uncommon for most of the Public U's students, staff, and faculty. Thus the idea of opening one's "consciousness" to certain "realities," and being both separated from but aware of the things one doesn't know becomes a way to negotiate identity and place in the city. Individual students "self-checking" their racialized and classed assumptions about the city where they now live, or the people they might meet, is at the center of campus life programming.

But even as staff members mentor students on issues of identity and try to create spaces for critical thinking or cultural exchange, the actual realities of the campus are that Public U is moving in the direction of traditional campus place-making. It's plan for "paths" from one university building to another seeks to fill out the small vestiges of "city" that intersect the campus with "safe" and "clean" park and courtyard spaces that will literally create a "green" border between the university and the city. In the future, students may not *have* to re-examine

their views of urban life and spaces, because those place-based reality checks may become entirely invisible to them. Another staff member reinforced this point when describing a walk through a neighborhood near campus that used to be public housing but was now condominiums. The participant at first thought that the area "looks so nice," and felt excited about being able to "have a cafe" so nearby, and feeling "safe" in the space. However the participant's godmother who grew up in the area led her to think more about "who's not included" in the improvement, and "who's not here anymore" because of it (*Staff Interview 0412*).

The strongest link between all the narratives about campus space was that they were primarily of singular, personal experiences. Staff who work in university housing or other aspects of campus life spoke about organizing learning and service experiences for students in residence halls to teach them about the history of the city or issues such as homelessness. But these stories of convergence between campus life and city life were juxtaposed against stories of "safety" and "security," of talking to parents about the number of 24-hour police officers available patrolling the campus, and highlighting all the "major corporate headquarters" that choose to reside in Central City. It was about putting forward the "cleaner, greener" metropolitan rather than the "urban lab." For example, as one campus guide said, the goal of the campus tour is to "make all those hoity toity Republicans feel comfortable sending their children to the school":

> *Undergraduate Interview 1113*: The white people who come on tour come because they want to be proven wrong that this school is all black people and that this school is unsafe... do you know what I mean? So I feel like it's important to put those things forward... to make all those hoity toity Republicans feel comfortable sending their children to the school and pay for it. So you know, if you wanna know about diversity

you're going to look around and see it. But I'm not going to harp on it. But I want you to know that this is still a place of education. You can get a good education here.

As I described in Chapter V, the institutional discourse on Central City constructs it as a "user-friendly" space with an emphasis on its revitalization and the cultural capital of its "diverse... lifestyles." Much like the post-World War II focus on 'urban renewal,' the post-millennium image of the city is one of an "enterprising" *and* civically engaged space fashioned from the imaginary of a "master plan." The university is "making history" and creating a new "sense of place and identity" for the city, and in turn forming colorblind spaces that define more clearly who are the pioneering "cadre of city dwellers," and who are the residents of the "urban lab" within which the university conducts its research. This "safe," "attractive," "green," "communal" space for "social" interaction and "study" puts the campus at "the core" of Central City. And while individual narratives at times questioned this ethos, there was no perceptible effort from within the university to organize a critical spatial diversity for Public U.

Research limitations and possibilities for future work

This study addresses the formation of racial and ethnic diversity at Public U and seeks to bring to a forefront the social processes through which diversity formation happens in time-place contexts. I argue that understanding the nuances of perception and action that have brought about particular racialized narratives, institutional structures, and spaces at Public U allows the unstable role of diversity within the university to become clearer. My objective is to create an informed context from which to address the shortcomings of diversity discourse and the structures created to support it. However, this interdisciplinary focus on the "everyday life" or "life path" of diversity is limited in its scope and thus its results. For one, it creates a depth of information based on a small sample of 40 participants and 3 long-term observations. My

examination of the data favors a detailed analysis of social spaces and processes rather than a breadth of information about the structures that affect how diversity works institutionally. For example, I did not gain access to nor examine the level of institutional investment (funding, labor) involved in the various diversity spaces I studied, or the effect of continued education funding cuts on the state level on Public U's financial and structural make up. Such data could have added another dimension of structural analysis, which would ultimately be needed if one were to propose concrete changes to diversity work at Public U. I thus did not find out to what extent each diversity initiative is valued in the form of economic capital, and how this might relate to its social and symbolic capital. Davis-Faulkner (2012) demonstrated what I would call a *political economy* analysis in her examination of the highly corporatized and consolidated funding structures that have influenced media programming and media law. She showed that tracking the confluence of financial investment involved in the sociopolitical processes of racialization can add much needed depth to the often gestured but ultimately neglected relationship between capitalism and racism.

Another limitation emerged when I was not able to gain access to Public U's upper level administration: the president, deans, provosts, and vice presidents. Aside from one Assistant Vice President, the rest of the 39 interviews comprised mid-to-lower level staff, faculty, and students. Because most of the interview participants often mentioned "the leadership" and "the administration" of the university, sometimes referring to this group as "the university"—e.g., "I really don't look to or trust the university to maintain diversity because their goals and agendas are different..." (*Faculty Interview 2013*)—my comparative analysis of local narratives and institutional narratives would have benefitted from also attending to the social processes of top-down diversity formation. As the study stands, the voices that comprise "the university" remain a

monolithic bloc of discourse examine through administrators' public speeches, websites, blogs, memoranda, archived university publications and external media articles, filmed interviews, and publically accessible meeting minutes. While this material culture creates its own stories of the development of diversity through racialized narratives and spaces, it does not illustrate the time-place context of diversity formation across the university's whole organizational structure. One could thus argue that the study is limited in the extent to which it can create a dialogic relationship among the different narratives and spaces of diversity (Tate, 2007).

Finally, while conducting interviews, I discovered a depth of information regarding the relationship between constructions of racial and ethnic diversity at Public U and the growth of international student communities on campus—especially Chinese, Korean, and Indian undergraduate students. Four of the staff members interviewed work within international education[44] contexts, and three of the students self-identified as international students—that is, students whose immigration status within the United States is directly linked to their post-secondary education. In the current study, these interviews have become part of the diversity narratives and spaces which I examine as a whole. But I also recognize that the extent of research possible in this area, while beyond the scope of the dissertation, is crucial to the future of discourse on racial and ethnic identity in higher education. For one, the space of international education represents Eurocentric and neoliberal modes of constructing academic merit and economic fitness that are then marketed internationally to attract students. Socially, it also fosters unique ethnic and cultural formations and racialized experiences which can greatly inform a more nuanced discourse on race, ethnicity, and racism both in the United States and in

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[44] My use of "international" education rather than "global" references the targeting of specific nationalities within international student recruitment. The marketplace of post-secondary education is subject to niched globalization, focused on individual nation states.

the transnational marketplaces where dominant global powers broker the exchange of knowledge and culture.

Educational migration is in a period of substantial growth and profit. The advent of Public U's intensive globalization strategies through the recent formation of an International Initiatives office and a publicized relationship with the Confucius Institute[45] will eventually bring into play a whole new set of challenges for analyzing the racialized experiences of non-white students on Public U's campus, and an opportunity for the development of new frameworks for race and ethnic studies. It is already something that came up as a factor in a few interviews. For instance, one faculty member critiqued Public U's "global" outlook in the following way:

> *Faculty Interview 0112*: There's a lot of continental Africans who want to come be your
>
> black student on campus and Caribbean African Americans who want to come be your
>
> black student on campus. It's just a different dynamic and politic. So I think that's what
>
> happens in terms of diversity. You don't need African American studies, ethnic studies,
>
> area studies like Asia studies, Latino studies because you can bring you know a range of
>
> students to your MBA program, your science and technology programs.

Within this statement, international education embodies what Takagi (1993) called the story of "Asian victims and black villains" (p. 109), where the rules of merit used the medium of international diversity to promote colorblindness. One staff member addressed this more directly in relation to diversity formation at the university:

> *Staff Interview* 0912: I don't know how this is going to go, but I think [Public U] is trying
>
> to capitalize on morphing into this international hub. I think we're trying to catch that

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[45] The Confucius Institute at Public U described itself as "committed to promoting Chinese language and culture in the U.S., especially... the southeast U.S.... [It] seeks to... provide comprehensive services in Chinese language and culture to the business community as well as the general public... and promote educational, cultural, and trade and business relations between China and the U.S." (Public U Website, *Confucius Institute*)

bandwagon pretty quickly. So we're going out and we're trying to do these partnerships...
and pursuing like, they're almost, um, this is probably not the best way to say it, but
basically placement firms for uh Chinese students to be, placed into the university. I just
don't know if doing that is the best way to make yourself global or diverse. I think you
really have to have a big push for diversity in these programs to draw a bridge you know
connecting the international, global mission with what we mean by diversity, and a push
to make that growth more of a partnership instead of just placing people [in the
university].

Interestingly, while eight of the participants specifically referenced the demographic data
that Public U's student body represents "150 countries" or "over 150 countries" globally, the
university's international initiatives office has identified only five of them as "emerging
markets" due to the presence of "mega-cities or cities that have hosted international events" in
those countries. These are Brazil, China, Korea, South Africa, and Turkey. The university has
characterized these spaces as having a mutual understanding of "critical issues challenging
cities" and it trying to "establish strategic partnerships" that will both achieve the stated goal of
"globalizing the university" and a civic concern with the issues that affect urban places globally
(Public U Website, *University Strategic Plan*). Here again, the objectives of the university as an
enterprise have become intertwined with narratives of civic and social responsibility, but this
time as a global urban renewal rather than a local one. I argue that the resulting marketplace
where business and education meet will affect how international students experience nationality,
ethnicity, race, and class within spaces of international education and later in their careers, in
spaces of international labor.

This is not a new discourse. The globalizing aspects of the university and the intersectional space of nationality, race, ethnicity, and class occupied by international students have been explored at length in post studies in studies of post-secondary education in the U.K., East and South Asia, South Africa, and Australia (Meyer & Brown, 1999; Nayyar, 2008; Kim, 2009; Xiaozhou & Shan, 2012; Marginson, Nyland, Sawir, & Forbes-Newett, 2010). Additionally, the sociological and higher education studies literature which informed the doctoral study has theorized the liminal spaces in which Asian Americans form their ethnic and racial identities (Chang, et. al. 2007; Omi & Takagi, 1998; Kim 1999) and advanced the study of Chicana/o identity formation (Anzaldúa, 1987; Solórzano & Yosso, 2000). But there is a dearth of comprehensive race and ethnic studies scholarship on international students and international education in the United States. It is a research focus that if time had permitted would have added an important layer of racial analysis to the study. And more widely this area of work warrants more attention from the field of race and ethnic studies.

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APPENDIX

Interview Questions (5/2012)

1) How would you say you identify racially?

2) And do you identify with any particular ethnicity, culture, or nationality? Do you see that as different from your race?

3) If your racial identity something you think about often? (Ask for examples of situations when it comes up]

    a. What about the identities of those around you, at work, where you live?

4) If you think about the civil rights movement in the United States, what stories and ideas come to mind?

    a. Do you have any memories in your life from that time, yourself or through family stories?

        i. (if no) Did you learn about the civil rights movement in school?

    b. What do you think were the most significant things that happened during that time?

    c. If you think about America today, how would you compare it to that time?

    d. What would you say racial and ethnic equality looks like, or should look like?

    e. Do you think we've achieved that, come close, are still far away from it? (Ask for explanation/examples)

5) Where are you from, originally?

    a. Is that the place that you most identify with?

    b. What years did you live there?

    c. Do you feel that the neighborhood you grew up in was from your perspective, diverse?

    d. [Ask for examples of why/why not]

6) [If not from Central City] What year did you move to Central City?

    a. What brought you here?

7) Where in the city (or outside of it) do you live?

    a. In your own words, how would you describe your neighborhood?

8) How would you describe the city?

a. Have you spent much time in the area surrounding the university, during work hours or after work? Where do you usually spend time in this area?

b. Do you feel like the city is a diverse place? [Ask for examples that reflect his/her view]

9) Do you feel like the university is a diverse environment?

a. Can you give examples of things you've observed here that reflect diversity/lack of diversity?

10) Have you been a part of/worked for diversity organizations or offices for a long time?

a. [If yes, ask for examples and] How did you first become introduced to diversity work/groups?

b. [If no] What brought you to this activity/line of work now?

c. How long have you been a part of [name of organization]?

d. As a [respondent's position], what do you think your role is in what [organization] does?

e. On a practical level, what work does your role entail?

11) What do you think a place would look like if it were fully diverse?

a. Can you think of a place that has achieved that? [if yes, ask to describe]

12) If you were in charge of creating diversity at Public U, and you could do anything you wanted, what are some things that you would think should be done?

a. If out of those you had to pick one thing that should be done right now, what would it be? [Ask them to elaborate why and how]

13) What would you say is the most important thing your organization does?

a. [Ask for example(s) of specific activities, events that respondent has participated in – Ask to describe experience]

b. Do you feel like your organization is generally successful in this goal?

i. [Ask for examples of proud moments or important activities/results]

c. Are there things you think could be done differently?

i. What are some things that you have observed that show that things could/could not be done differently?

14) Who do you think the audience is for the work you do in the organization? Who are you trying to influence?

a. Do you feel like you are reaching the population you want to reach?

    i. [Ask for examples]

    ii. Are there others you would add to that audience if you could? Others you would like to influence?