

Dismantling the White Supremacy Embedded in our Classrooms: White Faculty in Pursuit of More Equitable Educational Outcomes for Racially Minoritized Students

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An investigation of the literature revealed that racial consciousness and the behaviors of White faculty in the classroom appeared linked. A conceptual framework, *Racial Consciousness and Its Influence on the Behaviors of White Faculty in the Classroom*, was subsequently developed and tested in this constructivist grounded theory study. Findings indicate that White faculty with higher levels of racial consciousness employ behaviors in their classroom reflective of an expansive view of equality in their pursuit of social justice, which they consider synonymous with excellence in teaching. Moreover, these findings illustrate what perceptions White faculty hold about higher education's responsibility in the facilitation of social change. This research bears great significance to higher education research and practice, as it is the first of its kind, in the education literature, to utilize critical legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw's (1988) restrictive and expansive views of equality framework to empirically measure and describe excellence in college teaching.

Using a critical race theory (CRT) lens, an analysis of the literature was conducted to explore the relationship between racial consciousness and the behaviors of White faculty in the classroom. Findings from that analysis revealed racial consciousness and faculty behavior appeared linked (see Haynes, 2013). Literature review findings also suggest that white self-interest has some influence on that relationship (see Haynes, 2013), but the extent to which could not be explained. Those findings inspired the researcher to construct the conceptual framework, *Racial Consciousness and Its Influence on the Behaviors of White Faculty in the Classroom*, that was tested in this study (see Appendix A). Racial consciousness, from this perspective, is described as "an in-depth understanding of the racialized nature of our world, requiring critical reflection on how assumptions, privilege, and biases about race contribute to White faculty's worldview", perhaps also informing how they approach their classrooms (Haynes, 2013, pp. 50-51). Faculty behavior characterizes the two most compelling aspects of faculty work inside of the classroom: course design and instruction (Ramsden, 2003). With intent to explore the role White faculty believe they play in the dismantling of the white supremacy embedded in their classrooms in pursuit of equitable educational outcomes among racially minoritized students, this qualitative study utilized a constructivist grounded theory approach to generate a theoretical explanation for racial consciousness influence on the behaviors of White faculty.

An examination of the classroom prioritizes the responsibility, effectiveness, and preparation of faculty in promoting academic achievement for an increasingly diverse student population (Applebaum, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Lowenstein, 2009). Though all faculty should be aware, White faculty are identified as the population of study in this research. White faculty make

up the majority, 79%, of all faculty in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Moreover, White faculty, whether consciously or unconsciously, are also less likely to interrogate how race and racism both privilege them within the academy and influence their faculty behaviors (Gordon, 2005; Shadiow, 2010).

Because faculty can make some students feel insignificant through their selection of educational material and teaching style (James, 1994), the cultural differences between them and their students must be explored. But the majority of faculty report that their faculty preparation has not prepared them to address the emotionally and socially charged issues that emerge in the classroom or shape classroom climate (Bell, Washington, Weinstein, & Love, 1997; Haynes & Joseph, 2016; Wing Sue, Capodilupo, Rivera & Lin, 2009). In cases where these faculty are White, assumptions about race and its influence on their classroom teaching are often left unexplored (Skrla, Scheurich, Garcia, & Nolly, 2004). When White faculty resist confronting such assumptions, they can simultaneously abandon the needs of their racially minoritized students, reinforce white racial knowledge, and dismiss the effects of racism to maintain white innocence (Galman, Pica-Smith, & Rosenberger, 2010; Leonardo, 2008). The result of this cyclical, highly cemented process suggests there is a relationship between racial consciousness and a White faculty member's ability to employ behaviors in their classroom that promote equitable educational outcomes for racially minoritized students.

Study findings indicate that White faculty with higher levels of racial consciousness employ behaviors in their classroom reflective of an expansive view of equality in their pursuit of social justice, which they consider synonymous with excellence in teaching. Moreover, these findings illustrate what perceptions White faculty hold about higher education's

responsibility in the facilitation of social change. This research bears great significance to higher education research and practices, as it is the first of its kind, in the education literature, to utilize critical legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw's (1988) restrictive and expansive views of equality framework to empirically measure and describe excellence in college teaching.

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT) emerged from critical legal studies as a means to problematize and theorize the role that race and racism plays in education, politics, the economy, legal matters, and everyday life (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 2000; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). To understand, examine, and address to the enduring racism in educational policy and practice that protects white supremacy, critical race theorists employ six central tenets (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Harper, Patton, & Wooden, 2009; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000): (a) racism is endemic to American culture; (b) rejection of dominant narratives, processes, or systems that claim race neutrality, colorblindness, and meritocracy; (c) racism has deeply rooted origins that attribute White people with dominant status and non-White people with subordinate status; (d) the voices and lived experiences of people of color are legitimate and used to generate oppositional discourses; (e) recognition of interest convergence, which describes the conditions by which racial justice will be accommodated in a white power structure; and (f) racism's eradication is tied to eliminating all forms of oppression. Though, two in particular were used to frame this analysis.

In congruence with the first tenet of CRT, which argues that racism is endemic to American culture, the classroom therefore, like all racialized structures, cultivates white supremacy (i.e., normalcy, advantage, privilege, and innocence) through the perpetuation of structures, processes, and traditions that reinforce racial subordination (McFarlane, 1999). This idea is further explored by Bonilla-Silva (1997), who argued that the racial group placed in the superior position within a racial structure (i.e., White people) (a) receives primary economic, social, and political positioning; (b) is granted higher social attributes (e.g., smarter or more beautiful); (c) has the privilege to draw physical (segregate) and social (racial etiquette) boundaries between themselves and the other races; and (d) is allotted a "psychological wage" (Du Bois, 1935, 1992), which bestows respect to those who are loyal to oppressive practices that secure the group's racial superiority.

Though the fifth tenet of CRT illuminates the intrinsic connection between the pursuit of more equitable educational outcomes among racially

minoritized students and behaviors of White faculty (or what's in one's own best interests). Interest convergence also illustrates how the interests of racial minoritized populations can be undermined by white interests (or the self-interests of White people) (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Harper et al., 2009; Solórzano et al., 2000). In his analysis of the circumstances and implications surrounding the renowned *Brown v. Board of Education* case, Bell (2004a) posited that the *Brown* decision was an illustration of interest convergence. The interests of Blacks people in achieving racial justice were accommodated only when, and for so long as, those interests converged with the political and economic interests of Whites people (Bell, 2004a, 2004b; Tate, Ladson-Billings, & Grant, 1993). But it was in their evaluation of the failures of *Brown* that Tate and colleagues (1993) employed a framework devised by Crenshaw (1988) that explained two distinct perspectives in antidiscrimination law: the expansive and restrictive views of equality. These two perspectives, Crenshaw (1988) noted, exist alongside one another and illuminate the inherent tension between equality as process and equality as a result.

An *expansive view of equality* in antidiscrimination law emphasizes equality as a result. Its effectiveness is measured by the substantive shift in the social conditions (e.g., educational outcomes) of Black people, requiring that the root causes of racial injustice be eradicated. A *restrictive view of equality* treats equality as a process, minimizing the importance of social conditions (e.g., educational outcomes). A restrictive view of equality in antidiscrimination law, therefore, seeks to prevent future wrongdoings, which tend to be treated like isolated incidents. Moreover, any redress of racism in a restrictive view of equality is balanced against the self-interests (e.g., preservation of white innocence and/or material benefits) of Whites people (Crenshaw, 1988). An overview of the study's methodology and research design follows in the next section.

Methodology and Research Design

Because graduate faculty far more frequently explored how race and racism influenced their classroom teaching in relevant literature, White undergraduate faculty were identified as the population under study to bridge a gap in scholarly discourse. This constructivist grounded theory study was conducted at Frontier Range University (FRU), a private liberal arts institution in the Rocky Mountain region of the United States, with 640 instructional faculty. The study's setting also dictated that this analysis explored race, racism, and educational inequity in U.S. higher education. Though while beyond the scope of this study, the relevance of examining the educational inequity that persists in higher education across racial

and ethnic groups globally are addressed in the implications section.

Constructivist Grounded Theory

Appearing comprehensively for the first time in Glaser and Strauss's *Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967), the grounded theory method (GTM) remains a readily sought after approach to qualitative research and is useful in the construction of inductive theory (Backman & Kyngäs, 1999). Two paradigms exist in grounded theory research: objectivist and constructivist approaches. Where *objectivist grounded theory* assumes that the research process reveals a single reality that an impartial observer discovers through value-free inquiry, *constructivist grounded theory* assumes that the data collection and analysis process are social constructions that illustrate the researchers' and the participants' experience in the research process and with the phenomenon (Charmaz, 2002, 2006). The constructivist approach to grounded theory (CGT) was chosen as the methodology for this study for its alignment with Crenshaw's (1988) restrictive and expansive views of equality framework: both prioritize the exposing of power hierarchies that perpetuate differing experiences between and among people (Bryant, 2002; Charmaz, 2006). Further, CGT, through its complex process of data collection and analysis, enabled the conceptual framework developed using literature review findings to be tested, as means of generating a theoretical explanation for racial consciousness' influences on the behaviors of White faculty in the classroom (a delimited problem) (see Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Each of the key features of grounded theory research—the constant comparative method of data analysis, theoretical saturation, theoretical sampling and theoretical sorting—were employed. The constant comparative method (CCM) is embedded within (and across) the data collection and analysis process. CCM enables the researcher to derive rich meaning from their data (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Lewis & Ritchie, 2003). Additionally, the CCM allows code

categories to be formed, organized, and bound (Boeije, 2002). Theoretical saturation suggests that the researcher has found no new data that informs the construction of their code categories (Charmaz, 2000). However, when there are unexplained or underdeveloped (i.e., lack of saturation) properties within a category, a researcher can engage in theoretical sampling to help fill the gaps (Charmaz, 2000, 2006). Theoretical sampling is imposed to refine ideas, not to increase sample size (Charmaz, 2000). Finally, theoretical sorting of analytic memos generated by the researcher, and their subsequent integration into the analysis, should reflect the researcher's empirical experience in the field (Charmaz, 2006). Theoretical sorting can also result in the researcher diagramming their findings to illustrate and critique the relationship between theoretical constructs (Clarke, 2003, 2005), as done in this study (see Appendix A and D).

Research Design

This study's research design included four modes of data collection. The first was the distribution of a campus-wide survey. This original instrument contained open-ended questions that were tested for construct validity, piloted, and sent via email to all instructional FRU faculty. Inviting all full-time instructional faculty (approximately 640 people) to complete the survey allowed data to be collected from much a larger sample of participants initially.

Purposeful sampling measures were imposed on the survey data to identify a more representative group of faculty who met participant criteria, as means of recruiting for the next round of data collection: interviews and classroom observations. Participants had to self-identify as White (non-Hispanic) and be employed full-time, regardless of faculty status, rank, or program affiliation. Of the 21 faculty who met the participant criteria, 12 indicated that they were interested in continuing with the study through the next phase of data collection (see Appendix B). Table 1 includes demographic information relevant to that sample.

Table 1
Demographic Data from the Survey: Reflective of the Most Respondents in Each Category

Total # of Respondents	Gender:	Years Teaching at College	Faculty Status:	Faculty Rank:	Academic Discipline:
21	Female 12 (57%)	6-10 years 7 (33%)	Tenured 9 (43%)	Associate Professor (including Clinical and Research) 10 (48%)	Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences 12 (57%)

Note. Sixty participants completed the survey in total. Only 21 eligible respondents remained, after filtering the data by the participant criteria.

Each participant completed a 90- to 120- minute initial interview. Theoretical sampling was imposed to narrow the sample even further, after initial interviews, to an n=6. The quality and variance, with regard to faculty rank/status, course type, and pedagogical approaches employed made the original sample rich. Continuing the data collection and analysis process with the narrowed sample of six provided the best opportunity to evaluate the nuances and interconnections emerging as possible patterns within the data set. Two to three classroom observations for each participant were conducted and followed by a 90-minute subsequent follow-up interview. Document analysis was also performed on key documents from participants in the narrowed sample: observed course syllabi and their teaching philosophy statement. These two documents comprised the fourth and final mode of the data collection process.

Composite profile of narrowed sample.

Comprised of three men and three women, all of the observed participants in the sample self-identified as White, with one specifying that they were born outside of the United States. Years teaching at the college level range from 2 -26 years in the US and/or abroad. The participants were also employed full-time as faculty at Frontier Range University (FRU), but there were differences in their faculty rank and status. At FRU, faculty rank can vary. In addition to appointments at the full, associate, and assistant levels, faculty rank can also include clinical, research, adjunct, and lecturer. In the case of this more narrowed sample, 2 participants were associate professors and 1 was a full professor. The remaining 3 participants were lecturers. Similar to institutions like FRU, faculty status is represented in its most common forms: tenure-track and non-tenure track appointments. Different from their tenure-track faculty colleagues, lecturers' primary responsibilities include teaching, advising, and service. Moreover, they were considered contingent faculty because they had annual contracts without the guarantee of renewal.

Despite the variation in faculty rank and status, there was consistency across this narrowed sample with regard to faculty training. All but 1 of the 6 observed participants entered the field of teaching unintentionally. This is quite surprising considering that most of the observed participants (4 of the 6) had a Ph.D. The remaining two participants were lecturers and had a Master's, but in their respective academic disciplines/industry, a Master's degree was considered terminal. Overwhelmingly, participants felt that teaching was important work and a facet of their job that they enjoyed. Research interests and activity were high among the group, regardless of faculty rank or status. Some of the more avid researchers held non-tenure-track appointments. Two of the 6 participants

were Fulbright scholars, although all of the participants engaged in research and scholarly activity that contributed to their academic disciplines/industry in the United States and/or abroad.

Entry points into the discourse on race/racism, or more broadly, power and privilege were also varied. There were a few participants who had experience with feeling "minoritized." For some, this meant having to confront anti-Semitism or gender bias. But even fewer of these considered how they had benefited from systems of power, rooted in race, gender, or citizenship privilege. However, of those who had, their evaluation was critical, as in the case of one participant who acknowledged that being White had allowed them to pass for straight and thus escape the disenfranchisement that often comes with being different. Whether knowingly or unknowingly, these 6 participants have aided higher education in its ability to make college campuses places where racially minoritized students want and are able to learn.

Data Collection and Analysis

Three validation procedures were conducted in the process of data collection and analysis. Validation procedures are representative of qualitative approaches for establishing credibility, like trustworthiness and authenticity (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Constructivist grounded theory (CGT) purports that it is unrealistic to believe that a researcher can enter the field completely free of past experiences, assumptions, or exposure to literature (Charmaz, 2006; Heath & Crowley, 2004). In response, the researcher engaged in reflexive bracketing (or researcher bracketing) to aid in identifying and understanding how each informed the research process. As such, the researcher's positionality was scrutinized through reflexive bracketing to understand what parts of the research process (a) were being taken for granted, (b) reinforced power hierarchies, and (c) failed to situate the researcher within it (Ahern, 1999).

Collaboration and debriefing procedures were also employed to establish validity (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Collaboration enabled the researcher to work with their participants to co-construct the findings. This validation strategy is also consistent with constructivist grounded theory, which allows the participants' construction of reality to inform the researcher(s)' (Charmaz, 2000). While researcher reflexivity and collaboration prioritizes the perspectives of those involved in the study, peer-debriefing incorporates the viewpoints of those external to the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Peer-debriefing with colleagues familiar with the constructs under study and/or the methodology stimulated thought-provoking questions that required the researcher's interpretation of the data be

interrogated (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Though common in qualitative research, member checking (Creswell & Miller, 2000) was not conducted formally due to the nature of this study's research design. However, the research design included an opportunity for participants to review interview transcripts and clarify researcher observations during the subsequent follow-up interview.

Three cycles of coding (i.e., line-by-line, focused, and theoretical) were conducted across the data set. To ensure that the data collection and analysis process did not end prematurely, structural questions were posed of data and noted on analytic memos, then theoretically sorted throughout each phase of data collection and analysis. Once no "truly new" codes emerged, the 350 first-cycle codes eventually evolved into 41 focused code categories, each with its own set of definitions and inclusionary/exclusionary bounds. A series of electronic codebooks were created that allowed the 350 first-cycle codes to be mapped to their corresponding second-cycle, focused and third-cycle, theoretical codes (see Appendix C).

Theoretical codes are used to explain relationships between code categories, as the research hypotheses became more integrated into theory (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1978). Moreover, theoretical coding moves the analysis further from the raw data to interpreting the data in a conceptual way (Lewis & Ritchie, 2003). According to Lewis and Ritchie (2003), this phase of the data analysis allows a researcher to form explanations for why phenomena are occurring based on their analysis of patterns within the data. What follows is a presentation of the study findings.

Findings

Employing the constant comparative method of analysis across the data resulted in the formulation of theoretical explanations (i.e., theoretical codes) explicitly derived from the data through participant accounts. As such, the emergence of these explicit explanations described the presence of three distinct but highly interdependent themes (see Appendix D): white interests, racial consciousness, and faculty behavior, each with its own complex characteristics. Still grounded in data, the findings are presented without use of participant pseudonyms to discourage a reader from dismissing these instances as isolated incidents.

White Interests

Participants characterized white interests as having both psychological and material attributes, which is consistent with critical race theory. Patterns within the data also explain how deeply embedded educational norms and traditions, such as academic freedom, faculty rank/status, and the academy's

reliance on student course evaluations, cultivate white supremacy (i.e., normalcy, advantage, privilege, and innocence), giving white interests an institutional context that is reinforced by the participant through their embodiment of whiteness. Moreover, findings indicate that White faculty are afforded choices with regard to the preservation of white interests, which are ultimately self-serving. Consistent with the work of Bonilla-Silva (1997), their choices seemingly involved navigating risk associated with preserving their primary social, political, or economic positioning as White faculty. The functionality of white interests proved the most compelling aspect of the study's findings. Moreover, saturation of this theoretical code category allowed white interests' institutional context to be deconstructed.

Analysis of the data illustrate why academic freedom appears to have the most significant bearing on participants' understanding and description of white interests' institutional context. Participant accounts describe academic freedom as the *power* imparted to them through their *authority* as faculty. One participant (lecturer) explained, "How I went about it was left up to me. Teaching provides a context for a lot of thinking about how *you* want to do it. So it was kind of a blessing that *nobody cared*." This participant's assertions readily illuminate the luxury of "not being told what to do" portrayed by the majority of participants. But within this larger narrative, there was also a subset of faculty (regardless of rank or status) who argued that academic freedom could be "misappropriated" and ought to be "used responsibly." This notion of academic freedom seemed to be further complicated with regard to faculty status. Faculty with non-tenure status (i.e., contingent faculty on contract, with no guarantee of renewal) seemed to believe that academic freedom provided them with only a "limited amount of protection and leeway" in the classroom. As such, these participant accounts seem to characterize tenured or tenure-track faculty as a *protected class*, with most conveying that they "want that type of academic freedom too."

Participants with non-tenure status also alluded to an underlying tension of feeling "stifled" or "having to stay within the confines" of their identified key role as teacher. In combination, these factors left participants who were without tenure feeling much more "vulnerable," as this participant (lecturer) illustrates:

...[Y]ou've got to be careful when you're on contract. If [you] come across as though you're agitating things, it could mean that somebody's nose could be put out of joint. For example, I like student activism. If I was tenured faculty, I could encourage that outright—and be engaged it in. I could be having gatherings and stuff—and be

safe. I can't do that without possibly putting my contract in jeopardy.

Lastly, as it relates to white interests' institutional context, there was consensus among participants that students' course evaluations significantly contributed to the academy's "system of reward," demonstrating their impact with regard to faculty status. To illustrate, one participant (associate/full professor) offered the following after reflection on their experience with the promotion and tenure process:

The reward system, even at a school like Frontier Range University, for the majority of the disciplines is all around scholarship, not classroom teaching, for tenured and tenure-track faculty. And how many faculty members actually are trying to improve their teaching? I don't know. I could tell you from my annual evaluations that anything I do in teaching is irrelevant.

These remarks are consistent with perceptions of faculty with tenure in that the "expectations for faculty with regard to teaching are different for those with tenure." Faculty whose tenure remained under review were more likely to perceive that "course evaluations were critical in the tenure process." Another participant (associate/full professor) reported that they felt compelled to intervene, when a student from their service-learning based course had difficulty convincing a Muslim refugee to allow their interactions to be filmed, which was required as part of a course assignment. The participant notes:

The student communicated to me how she felt this unfairly would affect her grade. So, I spoke to the Community Partner and said, "You got to help me out here; I can't afford to have my teaching evaluations go in the toilet, because I don't have tenure yet. I need good teaching evaluations. I need this to be successful."

Participants not on the tenure-track (i.e., lecturers) indicated that having exemplary student evaluations extended to them the type of "protections" that their faculty status failed to provide. Participant accounts, similar to the exemplar quote included below (lecturer), illustrate the great pride and effort that faculty with non-tenure status attributed toward teaching:

I score about 96% on my student evaluation; and I score higher than the department...I think the only reason I get to continue to teach this way is because I get these really big evaluations.

Good evaluations allowed these faculty to "feel more secure", despite their perceived undermined faculty status.

Greater pre-occupation with preserving white interests. As noted previously, participants appeared as though they were afforded choices with regard to preserving white interests, which are ultimately self-serving. Moreover, their choices seemingly involved navigating risk associated with preserving their primary social, political, and economic positioning as White faculty. Patterns within the data suggest that participants with greater pre-occupations with white interests tended to avoid the associated risks with preserving their primary social, political, and economic position.

Participants (regardless of faculty rank/status) who opted to avoid risks readily described addressing issues of race/racism, or more broadly, power and privilege, in their classrooms as "risky" and accordingly a threat to their ability to preserve white interests. These faculty were able to avoid the risk involved by making others accountable for their choices, instead of bearing the consequences themselves. For instance, when sharing a classroom experience involving an English language learner (or ELL student) of Asian heritage, whom they believed plagiarized on a paper, one participant (lecturer) said, "I let it go through the Honor Board. I felt good that I was able to kind of take a hands-off approach and say, 'Here is the evidence, you decide'. The student was later found responsible for academic dishonesty."

This participant, and other White faculty with greater pre-occupations with white interests, can reinforce white racial knowledge, when they presume that racially minoritized, English language learners (or ELL students) intend to cheat, before considering how difficulty with understanding English and style guidelines for academic writing in the US may have contributed to the situation. Further, placing the fate of the student involved in the hands of the Honor Board permitted the White faculty member to maintain white innocence because on the surface racial discrimination appears to have played little to no role in the student's present predicament (Galman et al., 2010; Wekker, 2016). Similarly, when asked to explain how students were educated about the lived experiences of refugees in the course that used service-learning as a teaching tool, the participant (associate/full professor) responded, "Someone from the community organization comes in and does a whole class period about refugees. I just reinforce it." In this instance, the participant was aware of the importance of educating students about the significance of race/racism, or more broadly, power and privilege. But rather than them developing a more complex understanding of the issues, the participant placed the onus for that on someone else, an individual who, though knowledgeable, had an extremely limited and peripheral relationship to the students or course.

Lesser pre-occupations with preserving white interests. In contrast, participants who were less preoccupied with white interests seemed more inclined to either negotiate or assume the associated risks to their ability to preserve primary social, political, and economic positioning. A lesser pre-occupation *did not* equate to none at all, nor does it appear to mean that these faculty forfeited their privilege from being born White. But these participants seemed to believe that addressing issues of race/racism, or more broadly, power and privilege, was “relevant and beneficial” to the curriculum and their course outcomes. A participant (associate/full professor), in the following quotation, provides an example as to how they negotiate the risks involved:

I always wear a suit and tie. It’s a way of distinguishing me as the Professor. I know what I am tapping into here. And I know that by doing it, I am doing a male thing, a White thing, and I am doing a straight thing.

This participant’s (associate/full professor) remarks illuminate what several participants describe as factors contributing to their ability to navigate risks associated with maintaining a lesser pre-occupation with white interests: the necessity to enact whiteness by drawing a boundary and/or occupying space traditionally reserved for them as White faculty. The data emphasized one additional factor that warranted navigation of the associated risks with preserving white interests: engaging directly with White students who may not have confronted their own privilege. In the statement below, a different participant (lecturer) shared their strategy for approaching these types of moments in the classroom:

Let’s say you have a conservative right-winger in your class; as soon as you say a few words that they have been trained to pick up on, you will shut them down. You have to be much more subtle.

Participant accounts within the data also explained that despite their lesser pre-occupation with preserving white interests, some White faculty also realized that navigating the associated risks posed a threat to any psychological wage they could receive from White students and/or White colleagues. How Whites people can withhold psychological wage is captured well by one participant (lecturer) who said, “They look at me like I’ve made some kind of mistake.” Just as other participants who maintain lesser pre-occupations, this participant seemed to believe that their White colleagues, and in some cases, White students, thought they were being too much of a “bleeding heart.” White faculty experience a loss in psychological wage, when

they do not treat whiteness like the property (Harris, 1993) that their White colleagues/students believe should be protected. An example is provided below. Here the participant (lecturer) detailed how they responded to White students’ frustrations with having to work with racially and ethnically diverse international students and domestic students on a group project:

My first thought was to tell these White students; you just have to get over yourself. Students who have trouble with that usually self-elect to get out of my class. And I’ll say, “Let me help you. I can make that happen.”

Additionally, patterns within the data suggest that White faculty who assume the associated risk appear not to be concerned with being accused of “pushing an agenda.” Their exploration of race/racism, or more broadly power and privilege, was transparent in their course outcomes and curriculum. At the same time, these faculty, as the participant (associate/full professor) account below reveals, know that their embodiment of whiteness allows them to be seen as raceless (Cooks, 2003; Lawrence, 1997; Mitchell & Rosiek, 2006; Nast, 1999; Rebollo-Gill & Moras, 2006), presumably this is not the case for their faculty of Color counterparts. As a result, this subset of participants felt that they had the option of choosing whether and how race/racism would be introduced into curriculum content and classroom discourse without recourse:

There’s a way of skirting the race issue and a way of saying, well, in our discipline, early scholars were kind of colonials—so let’s just move on. But, I have chosen to make it a much larger part of the class; it’s going to be out there for our consideration and evaluation.

Racial Consciousness

Patterns within the data indicate that racial consciousness and race identity formation are not mutually exclusive. More specifically, considering the impact of race/racism appears contingent on the participant’s ability, or in some cases willingness, to see one’s self as White. Racial consciousness appears a fluid process that occurs at both higher and lower levels, each with its own set of attributes. Helms’ (1984, 1995) White racial identity development model also refers to identity formation as a fluid process. But, before delving more deeply into the varying levels and attributes of racial consciousness, it is of significance to note how race is understood and described across the data set.

Race, for the majority of participants, was not identified as the most salient (or central) aspect of their social identity. Instead participants readily identified “gender” or “being an academic” as the facet of their social identity that bore the greatest influence on their self-concept. Furthermore, race or “being White” became “real,” “normal,” or “of value” as participants had more frequent encounters with the *Other*. White, in this regard, became what *Others were not*, with a majority of participants reporting some of the following examples: “Everyone was White where I grew up, so I suppose I didn’t think about it”; “race...it does exist. I mean that we are even recognizing that Latinos exist”; and “being allowed to swim with Black children wasn’t okay, because I would get dirty too.” At times, race was conflated with socioeconomic status, underscoring the performative nature of whiteness (Rodriguez, 1998), as this participant (associate/full professor) reveals:

There was the kind of poor White trash White people and then there was our kind of White people. I also went to school with Black people. I went to school with * and his father was a Minister who marched with Dr. King. And I went to school with * and her mother was a dean at a university. They were Black, but they were whiter than these poor White trash people who were on the bus with me.

To be White, as this participant account makes clear, was no longer associated with actual skin color. *Being White* had value. Whiteness, therefore, has characteristics that are both material, such as socioeconomic status, and psychological, as in the belief that one is superior. Despite the variations in understanding about what *being White* meant, participants—rather consistently—contended that they were *not as White as they looked*. Patterns within the data further suggest that participants desired to “shed their whiteness” as a means of disassociating from what they had come to believe “being White” means: “elitist,” “conservative,” or “racist.” Similarly, some participants, in their evaluation of the impact of “being White” on their own lives, characterized it as “the culture” or “a White context” that “needs to be overcome,” as this participant (associate/full professor) describes: “I grew up in a White context. But, I have also attempted to overcome that, because I don’t think that is the way the world is.” “Shedding whiteness,” in some ways, resembled a process of enlightenment. Some participants, coincidentally those exhibiting lower levels of racial consciousness, described themselves as “liberal,” an “idealist,” or “progressive” as a result of *shedding their whiteness*; whereas other participants, coincidentally those exhibiting higher levels of racial consciousness, reported that they were frequently being labeled a “traitor” or “communist,” namely by other

Whites who presumably no longer saw these participants as one of them.

Lower levels of racial consciousness. Participants with lower levels of racial consciousness seemed to evaluate race through a moral dualism frame that for them drew attention to the conflict between good and evil. Further, race among these participants was more narrowly defined, at times being characterized as “biological,” as contextualized here by a participant (lecturer) who said, “I do prefer to talk about ethnicity more than race, because I feel that race is a construct, where ethnicity is something that is traceable to a country of origin.” And as a result of its narrow scope, patterns within the data suggest that at this level, race is seen as “insignificant” and “not reliable”—a social construction. To further illustrate, one participant (associate/full professor) shared their reflections on a dialogue they had with a colleague who asked them “Do you notice that I am Black?”:

I was like, oh my god, what’s the right answer. Then I thought, well yeah duh. “Well, of course I see you are Black. Just like I see that you have brown eyes or that I see you have short hair.” That’s what I hope it would mean for me.

Arguably for this participant, characterizing race (e.g., “biological,” “insignificant,” or “not reliable”) in this way, was rooted in a belief that race is harmful.

Evaluating race through a moral dualism frame seemingly allowed participants at this level to characterize the effects of race, including but not limited to racism, as problematic. Participant accounts also imply that the effects of race are filtered through a post-racial lens and believed to be “continually evolving” and “not as they once were.” Problematizing race and its effects was not only relegated to circumstances external to the academy. This also applied to the institution of higher education and mostly associated with perspectives on increasing compositional diversity on college campuses, as this participant (lecturer) pointed out: “You are not going to redistribute the money based on wealth to try to equalize things; you have to wait for these things to slowly change.”

Higher levels of racial consciousness. Disparate from those at lower levels, patterns within the data suggest that participants with higher levels of racial consciousness readily interrogated whiteness—their own and that placed upon them by others. Participant accounts also illuminate that this interrogation of whiteness was “critical” and “essential” in one’s ability to develop an advanced racial consciousness. Additionally, this “willingness” and “priority” to interrogate whiteness appeared to stem from a belief that being born White has “inherent privilege,” which

some participants even alluded to as a “birth right.” For this set of participants, “being White” meant “never having to consider how race” has shaped their experiences, with one participant (associate/full professor) explaining it this way: “I know that when I walk into a room, I walk with the benefit of assumptions that people bring to me—who don’t even know me. I have that power. It’s a privilege that other people don’t enjoy.”

Moreover, patterns within the data also suggest that interrogation of whiteness increased these participants’ sensitivity to race and aided in their ability to identify its effects both internal and external of the academy. Specifically, participant accounts seemed to indicate that at this level, there is not only a “concern” but also “recognition” by participants of the ways in which whiteness is re-centered, privileging White people and marginalizing others—at times by their own hand. One participant (associate/full professor) comments upon reflection on their ability to meet the needs of an English language learner (or ELL student) of African heritage in their classroom:

Having her in the class made me think [about how] the American educational system favors extroverts...and yet as teachers—we cultivate that. I thought—I’ve fallen into this trap.

This increased sensitivity to race that is brought on by an interrogation of whiteness led participants at this level to describe race and its effects as endemic. Moreover, patterns within the data suggest that addressing matters of race required both nuanced and immediate responses. The endemic nature of race and its effects, including but not limited to racism, was accentuated by this participant (lecturer) who said: “We are not beyond race. And we won’t be until we sincerely acknowledge its power. Either that or we’d all have to become dumb, deaf, and blind.” Accordingly, these participants, in response to the perceived endemic nature of race and its effects, tended to “use their influence” and the “power embedded within the faculty position” to “alter processes” and/or “challenge assumptions about race” that they presumed perpetuated racialized structures that persist not only inside of the classroom, but also in other faculty restricted spaces, like department meetings and discussions on faculty hiring.

Faculty Behavior

Patterns within the data suggest that the behaviors of White faculty in the classroom are linked to their level of racial consciousness. Findings also reveal that a participant’s pre-occupation with white interests also made their faculty behavior susceptible to white

interests, influencing student learning in the process. Consistent with literature review findings, participants with lower levels of racial consciousness tended to employ behaviors in their classroom reflective of a more restrictive view of equality. Behaviors reflective of a restrictive view of equality focused more on creating equal access to learning by promoting inclusion of the *Other*, which safeguards white supremacy and fuels the reproduction of racial hierarchies in the classroom. Conversely, participants with higher levels of racial consciousness tended to employ behaviors in the classroom reflective of a more expansive view. Behaviors reflective of an expansive view of equality seek to disrupt and dismantle classroom norms and traditions that reinforce racial subordination in pursuit of equitable educational outcomes for racially minoritized students. This section begins with a discussion of the behaviors that reflect a more restrictive view of equality.

Behaviors reflective of a restrictive view of equality. Indicative of a lower level of racial consciousness, participants employed behaviors in their classrooms reflective of a more restrictive view of equality, which largely emphasized examinations of the self on an individual level as a means of “altering attitudes” among students. Findings also suggest that “altering attitudes” was believed to be a function of “exposing their students to difference,” as illustrated by one participant, who said, “I’m hoping that’s an eye opener for them or at least makes them receptive to things. So they’re at least being exposed to some differences.” These sentiments were echoed by another participant, who stated, “My hope is that if we get more students seeing a broader world... if we could get more globally connected, my hope is that some of the ignorance will go away.” It is also of significance to note that the “students” to which these participants were referring were the White students in their classrooms. Faculty behaviors that focus on shifting individual attitudes, therefore, can leave the racially minoritized students in the class with a very specific role to play, not only in their own learning, but also that of others.

Patterns within the data also suggest that behaviors that reflected a more restrictive view of equality can shape the student learning experience in distinct ways. First, learning appeared one-dimensional. Participant accounts describe learning as “belonging to the students,” with faculty being “in charge” of its facilitation. Students were seen as “responsible for themselves,” as this participant’s comments reflected: “My attitude towards teaching is ultimately, it’s the students’ responsibility for themselves as long as the faculty member is not so incredibly boring or incompetent that they are making it difficult for people to learn.”

Next, participants who employed these behaviors relied heavily on the racially minoritized students in addressing issues of race/racism, or more broadly speaking power and privilege, in the classroom. Broaching the subject of race/racism in the classroom, for some of these participants, felt “somewhat taboo” and even “dangerous” at times. Centering race into the discourse seemed to be more of a challenge for these participants when there were mostly White students in the classroom. One participant (associate/full professor) recounts the following:

I was flabbergasted [when] this White student pushed back on me in front of the class, which never happened at my old school. The few White guys would have been too scared to say anything like that in that environment.

Patterns within the data further illuminate why some of these faculty also felt they were “not legit.” These beliefs appear to stem from a perception among these faculty that the experience of students of color “are not theirs,” with one participant (associate/full professor) stating, “Latino and African American students are likely thinking, what the f*ck do you know”. These beliefs seemed to negatively affect participants’ confidence about broaching issues race/racism in the classroom.

Finally, these participants readily believed that exploring issues of race/racism—or more broadly, power and privilege—was discipline specific. Participant accounts reveal that with regard to their role, these faculty saw themselves as “not responsible,” describing their role in exploring issues of race/racism as “difficult” given the parameters of their course and disciplines/industries. For example, one participant (associate/full professor) explains, “Well, you know, it’s challenging, given the subject matter I am assigned. But if I were teaching a philosophy course, this would be more overtly a part of my teaching.” Given the patterns within the data, the institution of higher education, and by extension its faculty, were held to a much lesser degree (or in some cases, absolved) of accountability for the facilitation of social change. Reactions were consistent among participants with regard to social change being a matter of “happenstance,” as this participant’s (associate/full professor) comment demonstrates: “My objective is not to teach my students about social justice. It is more of a by-product.”

Behaviors reflective of an expansive view of equality. Indicative of a higher level of racial consciousness, participants employed behaviors in their classrooms reflective of a more expansive view of equality in that their focus was on the systemic, with regard to how explorations of race and racism, or power and privilege more broadly, contribute to both

classroom conditions and professional competence among students. Patterns within the data suggest that these participants were more concerned with “their impact and not simply their intent” and “challenging the status quo” with their faculty behaviors. The participant (lecturer) account below illustrated this focus:

...[O]ne of my White male students said to me after class one day, “Have you ever noticed that all the places that have the trouble are the poorest and have the Black people?” I used that opportunity to say, “Let’s explore other things and see if we can still use race as the explaining variable.”

This participant, as with others participants whose behaviors reflect an expansive view of equality, utilized their course aims and content to critique and evaluate widely accepted cultural norms that reinforced racialized structures not only in the classroom, but also in their industry. To illustrate, this same participant used the global economy as a means of exploring how poverty and capitalism are used to maintain hierarchies of power along the lines of race, ethnicity, and class.

Patterns within the data also suggest that these participants believed it was the “responsibility of faculty to connect the subject matter to its society’s social implications.” For instance, one participant (lecturer) shared their experience teaching in the Business School about ethical business practices, which they assert should extend beyond workplace interest and illuminate a corporation’s relationship with the community:

But some students resist and say, “No, it is about wealth creation.” I challenge these assumptions by emphasizing corporate social responsibility throughout the curriculum. And one student, a senior, said he’d never heard that term before. And I said, “You give me the names of the faculty,” and I went to them.

These participants maintained that as faculty, “they see themselves and their students as part of a society” and thus “responsible for taking care of its infrastructure.” Patterns within the data also suggest that the aim of these participants in the classroom was not limited to “altering attitudes through the celebration of difference,” as those who employed behaviors reflective of a restrictive view of equality. Instead, findings indicate that these participants used their faculty behaviors to expose students to how they could be complicit in the perpetuation of racism and other forms of oppression. Furthermore, these participants were also able to demonstrate for their students how developing racial consciousness contributes to a mastery of professional competence in their respective disciplines/industries.

Behaviors that reflect an expansive view of equality likewise shape learner experiences in the classroom. Patterns within the data suggest that the learning process, under these conditions, is two-dimensional, with the majority of participants describing it as a “two-way street.” Participant accounts also revealed that these faculty believed their students not only contributed to their learning, but also were imperative to knowledge construction in their classroom. “Generativity,” or the “collective scaffolding of ideas that aid in their critical examination,” is how one participant (lecturer) described the mode of knowledge construction in their classroom. Another (associate/full professor) noted that “Faculty must create the pedagogical presence that requires them to also be present to people, meet students where they are, and draw upon what students bring to the classroom—it is also a part of my experience.”

Participant accounts also convey that these faculty were comfortable with addressing issues of race that emerged in their classrooms. Participants appeared to exercise a variety of strategies in this regard. But the centrality of race/racism, or more broadly power and privilege, that was explored through their curriculum, combined with a commitment to involve students in knowledge construction, resulted in these faculty reporting that they were “prepared for the unexpected,” believing it necessary to be “amendable” in the classroom. One participant (associate/full professor) recollects the following:

Once you introduce issues of race/ethnicity, it’s not far beneath that you also encounter stereotypes and ignorance. Sometimes you just have to say, “That’s ill considered. That stereotype is one that you may be cultivated over many years, but I am here to tell you that that’s an incorrect characterization that you have to give up.”

Strategies continued to emerge in participants’ accounts, with some choosing to disrupt the grand narrative by “presenting an alternative explanation” to students. Participants accounts also indicate that “preventing one voice from dominating the conversation” being had in their classrooms was key to their success in this endeavor.

Lastly, faculty whose behaviors reflected an expansive view of equality believe that all disciplines had race implications. One participant (associate/full professor) characterized it as follows, “Studying issues of power/privilege is important to every course; unless you are studying cacti.” Patterns within the data suggest that this belief was tied to shared values among these participants in that the institution of higher education was presumed responsible for the facilitation of social change, and thus, they saw themselves as a conduit, assuming that role in their classrooms. These

participants described education as “a liberating mechanism” and “something that everyone deserves,” where students were “free to learn and free to think.” Their role then became much more closely aligned to what they believed the function of education to be: an instrument of social change. One participant (associate/full professor) synthesized the presumed function of education: “You can’t be in education and not feel a responsibility to promoting social change. Otherwise you would be accepting a situation that to me is unacceptable. We have a responsibility.”

Conclusion

An investigation of the literature revealed that racial consciousness and the behaviors of White faculty in the classroom appeared linked. With those findings, a conceptual framework was developed and tested in this constructivist grounded theory study. Three complex and highly interdependent themes emerged: white interests, racial consciousness, and faculty behavior illuminating a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon understudy than the conceptual framework developed originally proposed. Findings suggest white interests have both psychological and material attributes. Patterns within the data also explain how deeply embedded educational norms and traditions, such as academic freedom, faculty rank/status, and the academy’s reliance on student course evaluations, cultivate white supremacy (i.e., normalcy, advantage, privilege, and innocence), giving white interests an institutional context that is reinforced by the participant through the embodiment of whiteness. Moreover, findings indicate that White faculty are afforded choices with regard to the preservation of white interests, which are ultimately self-serving.

Analysis of the data also support preliminary findings from the literature that suggest that white interests represents a lynchpin in conceptual framework tested, thus critical in constructing a theoretical interpretation of the delimited problem under study (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). However, study findings indicate that it is not the existence of white interests, but White faculty pre-occupation with preserving white interests that presumably influences their development of racial consciousness. White faculty with greater pre-occupations with preserving white interests seemed to have lower levels of racial consciousness. Participants with lower levels of racial consciousness appeared to evaluate race through a moral dualism frame, which for them drew their attention to a conflict between good and evil. Likewise, race and racism were more readily described by these participants as problematic, which resulted in the belief that “these things” will continue to evolve over time. By comparison, White faculty with lesser pre-occupations with preserving white

interests appeared to have higher levels of racial consciousness. Participants with higher levels of racial consciousness also regularly interrogated whiteness—their own and that placed upon them by others—resulting in an increased sensitivity toward race that aided in their ability to identify its effects. These participants described race and racism as endemic, and as such, believed any response needed to be immediate and nuanced. Regardless of the participants' level of racial consciousness, their perception of race and racism (i.e., problematic or endemic) was uniformly applied to their lives, both internal and external of the academy.

With this information, the influence that racial consciousness has on the behaviors of White faculty in their classroom can be theoretically explained. Characteristic of a lower level of racial consciousness, White faculty employed behaviors in their classrooms reflective of a restrictive view of equality. These type of faculty behaviors emphasized examinations of the self as a means of “altering attitudes” by exposing students to difference, which safeguards white supremacy (i.e., normalcy, advantage, privilege, and innocence), when White faculty fail to make explicit how explorations of race/racism are relevant in their discipline and industry. Further, White faculty whose behaviors reflect a restrictive view of equality seemed to believe that exploring issues of race/racism were discipline specific. The institution, and by extension its faculty, were thereby held to a much lesser degree (or absolved) of accountability for the facilitation of social change.

This is in contrast to White faculty who employed behaviors in their classrooms reflective of a more expansive view of equality. Consistent of a higher level of racial consciousness, these faculty employed behaviors focused on the systemic. More concerned with “impact over intent,” these White faculty members used their course aims and content to critique widely accepted cultural norms that reinforced racialized structures both in their classrooms and industry. Lastly, White faculty who employed behaviors in their classroom reflective of an expansive views of equality believed that all disciplines had race implications, with most arguing that education should be “liberating” and an exploration of “freedom.” These faculty believed there was close alignment between what they presumed their role in the classroom and their perception that the institution of higher education was responsible for the facilitation of social change. Findings also revealed that the inextricably link between racial consciousness and the behaviors of White faculty in the classroom conceivably makes faculty behaviors susceptible to white interests. It can also be argued that advancing racial consciousness, particularly among Whites people

preoccupied with preserving white interests is needed to dismantle the white supremacy that is not only internal, but also external to the academy.

Implications, Recommendations, and Future Research

When asked about their faculty preparation, the majority of participants responded that their “route to teaching was unintended” and that they were “not taught how to teach,” because their faculty preparation (e.g., doctoral studies) emphasized a mastery of content knowledge or skill. Irrespective of academic discipline, participants across the data set overwhelming reported they felt underprepared for the classroom, with one participant (lecturer) going so far as to contemplate whether this was “by design.” The presumption that such faculty experiences are more likely *by design* is certainly well supported within these research findings, along with its resulting implication: faculty behavior (i.e., course design and instruction) is susceptible to white interests. This is an important implication for all members of the academy, but arguably, this may be most important to those that serve as University Provosts or Chief Academic Officers. Faculty need the type of continuing education that promotes advancements in racial consciousness beyond that they received in their faculty training, if at all.

Further, white supremacy's embedded nature gives way to white interests' institutional context, which has several potential repercussions. These findings suggest the overall value of classroom teaching is left open to interpretation, particularly among White faculty, with greater pre-occupations with white interests. The impact of this is made much clearer when juxtaposed with the experiences of a participant from this study whose behaviors were reflective of an expansive view of equality. This participant made a conscientious choice to remain a lecturer to avoid what they called the “constrictions of tenure.” As a lecturer, they felt permitted to focus on teaching and take what they described as “more risks” in the classroom, enabling them to present the best course of study for which the education was to be offered (Danowitz & Tuitt, 2011). This participant, and perhaps others like them, [may] decide not to pursue a tenured faculty position, despite possessing the teaching capacity to promote more equitable educational outcomes among racially minoritized students. This example underscores a flaw in the academy's existing system of reward.

To fully understand the impact white supremacy has on the academy, as it relates to pursuit of more equitable educational outcomes for racially minoritized students, the functionality of interest convergence must be revisited. Study findings suggests that interests of equitable educational outcomes among racially minoritized students will only be accommodated when, and for so long as,

those interests converge with those of White faculty, in particular those with greater pre-occupations with preserving white interests. Further, so long as the academy rewards White faculty who maintain a greater pre-occupation with preserving white interests, racial consciousness among them will likely remain low. This is not said to insinuate that higher education is solely responsible for dismantling white supremacy, but to illustrate its potential culpability in its cultivation.

Such investments in inequality are not exclusive to US higher education. Race extends beyond the black/white binary to also encompass racial phenotype, ethnicity, citizenship, the racialization of language and religion, as well as their intersections. Further, while social inequality varies from country to country, power, privilege and difference are universally understood phenomena (Vincent-Lancrin, 2008). Racism is not bound by time, space or place. White supremacy, Nativism, colorism, colonialism, Apartheid, Anti-Semitism, and the like contribute to the racial divides, racial disparities, and racial conflicts that persist worldwide, permeating our institutions and the communities in which they reside. Therefore, exploring the racial implications of teaching and learning globally remains a research priority, as our campuses continue to become more and more racially and ethnically diverse. Future research, in this regard, should begin as this study did, with a critique of how race and racism are understood in the country of origin.

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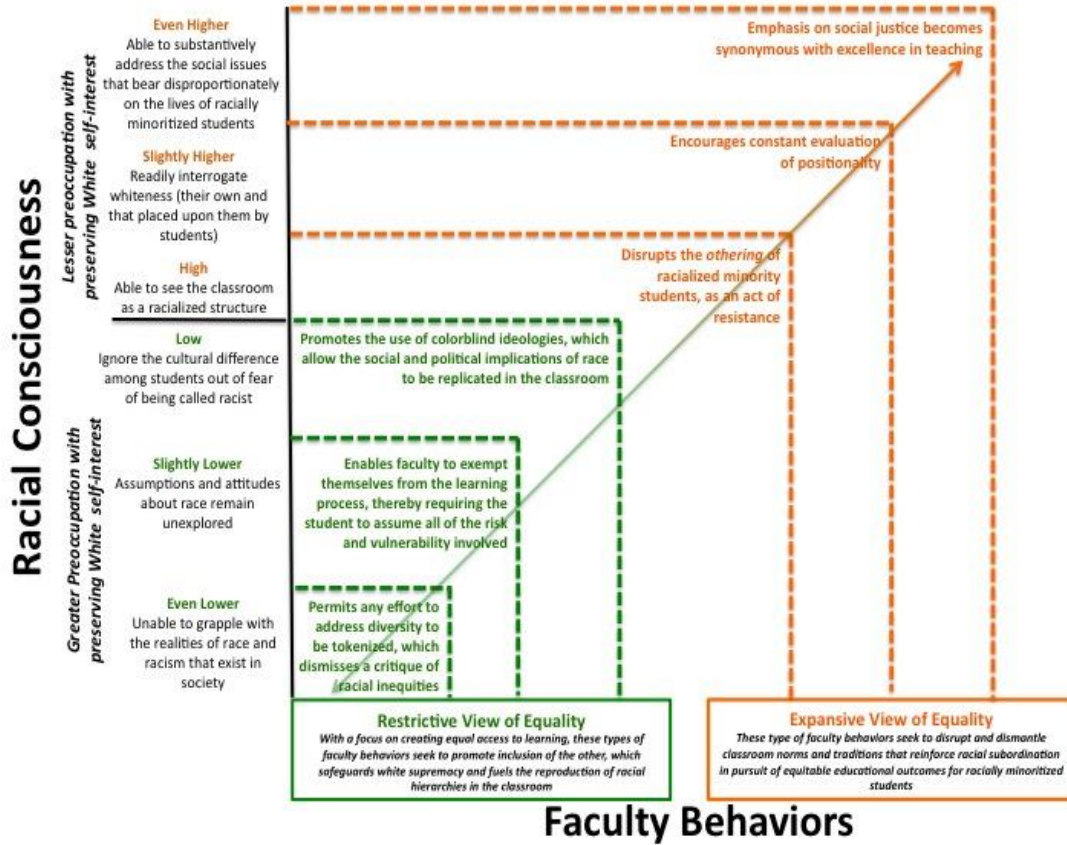
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Appendix A
 Racial Consciousness and Its Influence on the Behaviors of White Faculty in the Classroom:
 A Conceptual Framework (Tested)



Note. Conceptual framework developed by Author, 2013.

Appendix B
Demographics of the Sample

Sample Characteristics	12 total
Faculty Rank	6 Asst./Assoc. 6 Lecturer
Faculty Status	7 Non-Tenure Track 5 Tenured/Track
Gender	8 Female 4 Males
Highest Degree Earned	10 PhD 2 Masters
Teaching Area	7 Sciences (Natural & Applied) 5 Arts & Humanities
Total Years Teaching at the College Level	Participant responses range between 2-26 years.

Appendix D
Emergent Themes and Their Interdependence

