ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: White Racial Allyship Among Staff at Traditionally White Institutions

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Interrupting Whiteness at Traditionally White Institutions (TWIs) is first and foremost a White problem. Those who have been unjustly privileged due to their race (i.e., White people) have both the resources and primary responsibility to challenge and interrupt the very systems that unjustly oppress People of Color. This study sought to understand the experiences of White staff members at TWIs who intentionally challenge racism and interrupt Whiteness. This study used a multiple case study design with White staff members as the unit of analysis and data were collected through semi-structured interviews and journals from seven White staff members at working at TWIs across the U.S. White staff member practiced racial at the intrapersonal (i.e., working on themselves), interpersonal (e.g., educating students, serving as a resource Students of Color, and being an amplifier), and organizational and institutional (e.g., via hiring and participating in DEI initiatives) levels. Additionally, their actions revealed multiple forms of Whiteness such as, preference of White centric course content, tokenizing People of Color, shifting the blame from racism to those challenging racism, and unfair reward processes.

WHITE RACIAL ALLYSHIP AMONG STAFF AT TRADITIONALLY WHITE INSTITUTIONS

by

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Chapter 1: Introduction

For many colleges and universities throughout the United States (US), homecoming is a time where school pride is at its peak. Alumni, family members, and friends join current students, faculty, and staff annually for what is often a week of celebration, culminating in cheering on the school's football team against that year's opponent. In 2015, a group of Black students attending the University of Missouri at Columbia also looked forward to that year's homecoming—albeit for different reasons.

On October 10, 2015, ten Black students stood with their arms interlocked as they blocked the path of the University of Missouri's parade processional. They stood directly in front of the convertible vehicle transporting then University System President, Tim Wolfe. Each student wore a black shirt with the image of a black, red, and green clenched fist on the front (reminiscent of the Black Power symbol of the 1960s) and the words "1839 Was Built On My B(l)ack," referencing the role of exploited slave labor in the university's founding. While another student recorded the protest, one student unlocked arms and spoke to the watching crowd through a megaphone: "This is not an indictment on White folk, but this is an indictment on White structures and White supremacy" (Concerned Student, 2015).

As each of the ten students took possession of the megaphone, they shared stories of racism in the university's and the state's histories. The crowd of mostly White people began to grow increasingly impatient with the student protestors; some decided to act. Some attempted to overshadow the students' megaphone by chanting "M-I-Z, Z-O-U" or "move on" while others attempted to create a path for the parade to maneuver around the students' bodies. At one point, a group of White people from the crowd decided to link arms and stand between the student protestors and the parade. The attempt to reveal White structures and White supremacy at the

University of Missouri resulted in the majority of Whites remaining silent, attempting to overshadow the student voices, or protect the very thing that was being critiqued. What happened next represents the focus of this study.

A White person came from the crowd and locked arms with the Black student protestors. Then another and another until there were five White people locking arms with the student protestors. These individuals, unlike the majority of the crowd, did not attempt to silence the critique of White structures and White supremacy, but instead to amplify it. These actions were a clear example of White people engaging in an act of racial allyship, collaborating with and following the leadership of People of Color. This example does raise an important question. What did the student mean when they stated a critique of White structures and White supremacy is not a critique of White folk? One concept that helps us think through the relationships between White people, structures, and supremacy is Whiteness. The current study is focused on White racial allyship and the concept of Whiteness helps to frame the relationship between individual agency and structural positions.

Current literature on both Whiteness and acts of racial allyship in the context of higher education are part of a growing body of literature that is both informative and limited (Cabrera 2012; Cabrera et al., 2016; Patton & Bondi, 2015). Critiques of the devastating impact of Whiteness as well as examples of individual White people engaging in acts of racial allyship are found as far back as the founding of the US. However, few empirical studies have explored these topics within the context of higher education. Even fewer have done so in a way that does not reinforce the oversimplified "Good White/Bad White" dichotomy (Cabrera et al., 2016). This gap in literature led to the development of this study. The study examines the ways White staff engage in acts of racial allyship within Traditionally White Institutions (TWIs). This chapter

begins by providing greater context to the study and by outlining the research purpose and questions. A discussion of the research design, significance of the study, and an overview of key concepts and terms follow. The chapter concludes with an overview of the study's organization.

Persistence of Racism Within the United States of North America

In her text *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*, Ruth Wilson Gilmore defined racism as "the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death" (p. 28, 2007). What is implicit in this definition is that racism also produces group-differentiated *protection from* premature death. This section provides a brief overview of evidence of the persistence of racism within the US.

In 2008, the US elected its first Black president, President Barack Obama. This choice of president caused many to proclaim, or at least consider as a possible reality, that the US had officially become a post-racial society (Dawson & Bobo, 2009). These individuals saw a Black man attaining the position of the highest elected office in the country as sufficient evidence that individual racial discrimination, prejudice, and systemic racism were in the country's past; no longer were there significant barriers to the lives of People of Color – especially Black people.

However, many activists and scholars intimately engaged in issues related to race and racism cautioned that such an assessment was both premature and unfounded (e.g. McKissack, 2008). Though President Obama was elected to a second term, the reality of those cautions became clearer throughout his presidency (Dawson & Bobo, 2009; Lee 2012). As many Communities of Color continued to experience less upward social mobility, poorer health outcomes, and overrepresentation in the criminal justice system, some began to realize that individual progress—no matter how great—could not undo the systemic racial injustice of the

opportunity structures in the US (Teasley & Ikard, 2009). For example, Rodrigues and Reeves' (2015) noted that 51% of Black Americans, compared to 23% of White Americans, who were born poor remained poor; 70% of Black children born to middle class parents were downwardly mobile; and the median wealth of White families was 13 times that of Black families. In terms of health outcomes, persistent disparities in health and healthcare based on race and ethnicity exist, even after controlling for socioeconomic factors:

> Twice as many African-American, American Indian, and Alaskan Native babies die before one year of age compared to Caucasian Americans. . . The death rate from HIV/AIDS among African-Americans is more than seven times that for Caucasian-Americans. . . . Vietnamese-American women have a cervical cancer rate nearly five times the rate for Caucasian-Americans. (American Public Health Association, 2017)

In addition to disparities in social mobility and health outcomes, racial disparities persist throughout the criminal justice system. Black Americans are more likely than their White counterparts to be pulled over and to subsequently have their cars searched or be arrested for drug use. Black Americans are also more likely to serve longer sentences for the same offense (Kahn & Kirk, 2015).

One of the most notable and persistent critiques of US racism has recently come from the Movement for Black Lives (M4BL), a movement created by three Black women (two of whom are queer). Beginning from a tweet in response to the 2013 acquittal of George Zimmerman in his trial for the murder of Trayvon Martin, the M4BL has grown into a national movement with organizing chapters across the country and policy platforms that showed up in the 2016 presidential election (Newkirk II, 2016). These critiques have made their way into multiple

facets of US institutional life, including, as is evidenced in the next section, the context of higher education.

Persistence of Racism at Traditionally White Institutions of Higher Education

Applying Gilmore's (2007) definition of racism to the context of TWIs, institutional racism serves to confer to some and deny to others those benefits directly and indirectly related to higher education within the US (e.g., opportunity to earn higher wages and longer life expectancy). In spite, or perhaps because, of the persistence of racism at TWIs, there are also more visible occurrences of resistance. What happened at the University of Missouri is representative of what has taken place in recent years on the campuses of many TWIs. Whether at Emory University, the University of Maryland, or the University of California, Los Angeles, Students, Staff, and Faculty of Color are using various forms of passive and active protest (e.g., creating social media hashtags, occupying administrative offices, and classroom walk-outs) to critique the harmful relationships that exist between TWIs and their campus' Communities of Color – and to demand better (see Chessman & Wayt, 2016; WeTheProtestors, 2016). These critiques center on a range of individual, interpersonal, and institutional beliefs, behaviors, and practices that benefit primarily White individuals, while simultaneously disadvantaging People of Color. These include, but are not limited to, racial slurs directed at People of Color, racist-themed social parties, a lack of institutional policies and procedures that address racial structural inequities, and an overrepresentation of White people in the student body, tenured professorship, and upper-level administration (Casanova et al., 2018; Dancy et al., 2018; Harper, 2012; Turner, 1994). The exposure of the persistent nature of racism within institutions of higher education led some researchers to call for a deeper examination and understanding of the ideological and structural context that permits racism to exist, namely, the concept of Whiteness.

What is Whiteness?

Whereas there is no universally accepted definition of Whiteness, Applebaum's (2016) description of Whiteness as "the invisible structures that produce and reproduce white supremacy and privilege" (p. 1) is helpful. Similarly, Hikido and Murray (2015) used Whiteness to refer to hegemonic racial power that privileges White groups while subordinating racialized "others." Within US institutions of higher education, many researchers trace the origins of the scholarly study of Whiteness to W.E.B. DuBois' (1920) "The Souls of White Folk" essay. In this text, DuBois made the connection between imperialism in the wake of World War I and race, using as an example the practice of Allied Powers focusing on the suffering of Belgium while ignoring the violence Belgium inflicted on the Congo (DuBois, 1920). Indeed, there is a long tradition of Black people who have framed the problem of racism as a matter of Whiteness. For example, Grellety *et. al.'s* (2016) *I Am Not Your Negro,* a documentary based on an unfinished manuscript by James Baldwin, includes a portion of an interview with this writer and activist:

> What White people have to do is try to find out in their hearts why it was necessary to have a nigger in the first place. 'Cause I am not a nigger. I am a man. But if you think I'm a nigger, means you need him. The question you got to ask yourself, the White population of this country has got to ask itself…if I'm not the nigger here, and you invented him, you the White people invented him, then you got to find out why.

In her germinal work, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination,* Toni Morrison (1992) used the metaphor of a fish swimming in a fishbowl to demonstrate that an understanding of racism requires an understanding of that which allows racism to exist. Even as the fish swims relatively free, it does so only within the transparent structure of the fishbowl.

Similarly, racism moves within the transparent (i.e., invisible) structure of White norms. In the next chapter, I present a more detailed review of the literature related to Whiteness and TWIs.

White People Engaged in Acts of Racial Allyship

In the same way that metaphors are helpful in understanding Whiteness, they are also helpful in understanding racial allyship. Beverly Tatum's (1994) work on allyship among White teachers provides a simple yet powerful metaphor for the multiple relationships that White people can have to systemic racism. Tatum uses the example of the airport walkway. Airport walkways are "essentially the 'people' version of a conveyer belt" used to "move passengers through long airport terminals" (Memon, 2022). For travelers who use the walkways, they can "either stand still, or keep walking on it" (Memon, 2022). In Tatum's (1994) analogy, the airport walkway itself represents the status quo (i.e., People of Color are oppressed while White people access racial power and privilege); and the travelers represent White people's response to the racial status quo. Tatum suggests that White people can have at least one of three relationships to the racial status quo: (1) passively go along with, (2) actively go along with, or (3) actively go against. I appreciate this analogy because it emphasizes that racial allyship is about how you respond to your reality (i.e., there is no option to get off the airport walkway). Whereas there is a tendency in broader culture and scholarship to refer to White people who engage in acts of racial allyship as White allies (see Spanierman & Smith, 2017), it's the behavioral aspects of challenging racism that are at the core of racial allyship. For example, if a White person identifies as an ally, racial allyship is about whether their actions reflect their stated identification. Racial allyship is not about who you *are* or what you *identify as* but what you *do*.

White people have engaged in acts of racial allyship throughout the history of the US. While the majority of White people actively or passively have gone/go along with the racial

status quo from US chattel slavery through the present day, some have purposely and actively resisted the oppression of People of Color. For example, although the overwhelming majority of those involved in the Underground Railroad were formerly enslaved Africans (who were either intentionally freed or escaped), in a time when enslaved Africans were attempting to escape chattel slavery, some White people provided food, shelter, and directions along the Underground Railroad (Snodgrass, 2015). A network of homes that provided refuge to enslaved Africans seeking freedom in the northern US, the Underground Railroad relied, in part, on White US citizens who had the material resources integral to the pursuit of freedom. These White citizens included John Brown, Mary Ann M'Clintock, Thomas Garrett, and Jane Hunt. Similarly, during the Civil Rights Movement, there are examples of White people who supported African Americans in their efforts, including the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the Freedom Riders, and voter registration among others (Arsenault, 2007; Robinson, 1989). For some, their actions of racial allyship resulted in death. Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner, two White men, were murdered along with a Black man, James Chaney, in large part because of their efforts to register Black voters in Mississippi (Cagin & Dray, 2006).

In more recent times, White people have engaged in acts of racial allyship in response to explicit and implicit racial oppression including the anti-American Indian Dakota Access Pipeline (i.e., DAPL), which is strongly opposed by American Indians. As Energy Transfer Partners attempted to build an oil pipeline through North Dakota, South Dakota, and Iowa, the Meskwaki, Standing Rock Sioux, and Cheyenne River Sioux tribes led opposition to the pipeline for numerous reasons, several of which related to the US encroachment on the tribes' sovereignty. As countless American Indians took great risks in their attempt to interrupt a foundational practice of the US – the desecration and eradication of Native lands and people

(Williams, 2012), there were White people engaging in acts of racial allyship. Some sent money and supplies; some even showed up and stayed at the Sacred Stone Camp, established in 2016 by Standing Rock's Historic Preservation Officer LaDonna Brave Bull Allard as a site of cultural and spiritual resistance to DAPL.

These examples highlight a lineage of White people in the US engaging in acts of racial allyship. These examples also allow for a conversation that complicates the ways White people engage in acts of racial allyship. For example, many American Indians criticized the ways some White people who showed up to support DAPL resistance (#NODAPL) attempted to take over and lead the resistance – as opposed to supporting American Indian leadership. Given this reality, this study simultaneously holds two truths: (1) there is value in learning how White people in TWIs engage in acts of racial allyship and (2) the same White people who engage in acts of racial allyship in TWIs might also engage in acts that perpetuate racism in their institutions. The focus on this study is further exploring the first truth, given its relative under examination compared to the second truth.

The literature on White people engaging in acts of racial allyship at traditionally White institutions is a small but growing body of scholarship (e.g., Patton & Bondi, 2015). Much more research is devoted to studying the development of anti-racist attitudes and behaviors, primarily focused on undergraduate students (Broido & Reason, 2005; Chang, 2002; Linder, 2015).

The Study of White Allies in Traditionally White Institutions of Higher Education

As discussed earlier, there is a difference between the study of White allies and the study of White racial allyship. The study of White allies tends to focus on White racial identity and related constructs (e.g., attitudes, beliefs, awareness) whereas the study of White racial allyship focuses more on the behavioral and relational aspects of interrupting racism. Within higher

education, an overwhelming majority of studies falls into the first category. This research has provided significant insight into factors that might contribute to a critical consciousness, particularly among White undergraduate students. By a critical consciousness, I am referring to an awareness of one's racial identity and privilege, learning of and reflection on race-related issues (e.g., systems of oppression), knowledge of other people and cultures, motivation to promote racial inclusion and social justice, and interrogation of personal biases and stereotypes. Factors contributing to these mindsets are living in a racially diverse neighborhood or attending racially diverse secondary schools (Reason et al., 2005); having cross-racial interactions and interracial friendships in college (Page-Gould et al., 2008; Pettigrew & Todd, 2008; Todd et al., 2011); participating in a college course focused on race and racism (Cabrera, 2012; Yeung et al., 2013); and participating in an intergroup dialogue course (Ford, 2012; Ford & Orlandella, 2015). While these studies have contributed significantly to understanding the intrapersonal aspects of White people challenging racism, they are limited in helping us understand how, if at all, these experiences impact their response(s) to interpersonal and institutional racism. These studies also tell us little about how White people relate to People of Color. For example, whereas it is important to know whether White people at TWIs have interrogated their own racist biases and stereotype; in order to build more equitable institutions, it is equally important to know whether they interrupt workplace practices and procedures that are based on, or perpetuate, racist biases and stereotype. Dr. Cornell West often states, "Justice is what [love] looks like in public" (2017). In this study, I am interested in uncovering what White staff commitment to racial allyship looks like at TWIs.

Problem Statement

At TWIs, Whiteness is supported and perpetuated in a variety of ways, including the predominance of White students, the underrepresentation of People of Color in course curriculum, and the lack of racial awareness among White staff and faculty. These realities are often the result of intentional policies, practices, and procedures originally created by White people, primarily White men, to deny People of Color access to higher education within the US. As such, interrupting Whiteness is first and foremost a White problem. Those who have been unjustly privileged due to their race (i.e., White people) have both the resources and primary responsibility to challenge and interrupt the very systems that unjustly oppress People of Color. Additionally, while it is important that White people in TWIs interrogate racist beliefs and attitudes, develop an understanding of racial oppression and privilege, and claim a healthy White racial identity, such intrapersonal measures are critical, but only a part of the process of interrupting racism and Whiteness. In order for racism and Whiteness to be truly challenged, we must have a better understanding of behaviors that move beyond the intrapersonal to the interpersonal (which include the relationships White people have with one another and with People of Color) and the institution.

Due to the deeply rooted nature of racism within the US, White people in the US are socialized to accept the racial status quo as inevitable. Even so, there are White people at TWIs who seek to interrupt and challenge this status quo. These individuals represent an opportunity for expanding knowledge in the field of higher education of what White people can do to begin to confront racist systems. This dissertation explored the ways White people at TWIs engage in acts of racial allyship.

Purpose and Research Question

The purpose of this study was to (1) understand how White people at TWI conceptualize racial allyship, (2) examine the acts of racial allyship they employ, and (3) examine the forms of Whiteness they navigate and seek to interrupt. Literature on this topic offers insight into the ways White people at TWIs engage in behavior that perpetuates Whiteness (Patton, 2015); however, there are much fewer empirical studies examining the ways White people at TWIs interrupt and challenge Whiteness (Cabrera et al., 2016; Patton & Bondi, 2015). This research sought to fill this gap by addressing the following research questions:

1. How do White staff in traditionally White institutions of higher education conceptualize White racial allyship?
2. How do White staff in these institutions challenge racism and Whiteness in their institution?
3. What forms of Whiteness do White staff in these institutions reveal through their efforts to challenge racism?

This study sought to understand the experiences of White staff members who intentionally challenge racism and interrupt Whiteness. To better understand these experiences, I selected as participants White people who were nominated by People of Color as individuals who had demonstrated a commitment to challenging racism and interrupting Whiteness at their institution. The learnings from this study will not only improve higher education scholars' and practitioners' understanding of racial allyship and solidarity within higher education, but it will also provide insight into the strategies White staff use to challenge racism and interrupt Whiteness within TWIs.

Overview of Research Design

This study used a multiple case study design with each White staff member as the unit of analysis. Consistent with Merriam and Tisdell's (2015) description of multiple case study methodology, I collected data via multiple sources from each participant including simple

surveys, participant documents, individual semi-structured interviews, and participant journals. I used purposeful sampling methods beginning with a nomination process to select seven, White staff for this study. The conceptual frameworks for this study included Mills's (1997, 2007) concept of White ignorance and hooks's (1984) and Lorde's (1983) Black Feminist visions of racial solidarity. Mills (1997, 2007) argued that the dominance of White supremacy means White people are socialized to misinterpret racial realities. White ignorance, however, is not simply the passive lack of knowledge; it is positioned, in a White supremacist society, as the correct way to view and understand the world. hooks's (1984) and Lorde's (1983) Black Feminist visions of racial solidarity provide an alternative to White supremacy's ignorance both in terms of perspective and potential path forward. From the context of racial solidarity between Women of Color and White feminists, hooks and Lorde conceptualize solidarity as a matter of self-reflection, relationship, collaboration, and private and public resistance of racial oppression. Taken together these concepts helped me understand the ways White staff at TWIs engaged in acts of racial allyship and how those efforts revealed the everyday forms of Whiteness at their institutions, in particular manifestations of White ignorance. Additionally, the conceptual framework was supplemented by a review of relevant literature on forms of Whiteness and White racial allyship, both within the context of TWIs.

Significance and Contribution

This study provides a deeper understanding into the ways White staff in TWIs understand the need for racial allyship and solidarity. While a significant amount of research has been dedicated to the ways People of Color at TWIs process, navigate, and make meaning of racism (Harper, 2009; Muñoz & Maldonado, 2012), fewer studies focus on the ways White people process, navigate, and make meaning of racism—effectively missing what Cabrera et al. (2016)

called the other half of the equation. It is important to understand how White people conceptualize individual, interpersonal, and institutional barriers to, and facilitators of, engaging in acts of racial allyship, especially for colleges and universities committed to engaging White community members in efforts to foster more racially inclusive campus environments. Given that most TWIs have an overrepresentation of White students, staff, and faculty, particularly in positions of power, any successful institutional effort to promote racial diversity, inclusion, and equity must involve White students, staff, and faculty. Such efforts are strengthened by relying, in part, on higher education research that allows institutional leaders to anticipate and address barriers to White racial allyship, while also putting in place systems to encourage White racial allyship. Institutional leaders will be able to use the findings from this study in these ways.

Furthermore, this research explores the ways White people in TWIs engage in acts of racial allyship within their institutions. In addition to providing a better understanding of the problems of racism, this study will improve our understanding of intentional actions aimed at interrupting racism. This study also helps to expand conversations related to institutional diversity and inclusion beyond individuals whose formal, institutional role is to promote diversity and inclusion to also include the work of everyday antiracism (Pollock, 2008). This expanded conversation provides a fuller, more realistic view of racial allyship that occurs on college campuses. Other scholars have identified the importance that role modeling plays in White allyship efforts (Case, 2012), and this study will provide various models for engaging in racial allyship, again, specifically for those whose roles are not explicitly related to diversity and inclusion. I believe the success of any institutional effort to promote racial diversity, inclusion, and equity relies on the ability to encourage a commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity among those whose formal, institutional role(s) is not explicitly related to these issues (Williams,

2007). The findings from this study provide insight into what those commitments can look like among White staff, insight that is particularly helpful for White staff members searching for models for how they might translate their personal commitments into practice.

Finally, this research seeks to provide a model for higher education researchers studying White people and their relationship to racism that moves away from the idea of a good White person vs. bad White person, which often exclusively centers conversations about anti-racism on White individuals (i.e., determining who is good or bad). Instead, by focusing on acts of racial allyship, as opposed to racial identity development, this study engages the complicated nature of such work and creates room for both/and as opposed to either/or analyses. Specifically, this study does not use racial allyship as a way to determine personal identity but rather to better understand the relationship between resistance and systems of power—in this case, resistance to Whiteness. By seeking to understanding this relationship, I aimed to center the conversation on White individuals, their behaviors to improve conditions for People of Color, and how Whiteness shapes the experiences of White people and People of Color in higher education. Ultimately, I expect the study's findings to be useful to higher education scholars and practitioners whose work is aimed at improving racial diversity, inclusion, and equity, particularly within TWIs.

Key Concepts and Terms

I discussed the concept of Whiteness earlier in this chapter— "the invisible structures that produce and reproduce white supremacy and privilege" (Applebaum, 2016, p.1). In this section, I operationalize other key concepts and terms that are frequently used throughout this dissertation. Like Whiteness, the key concepts and terms in this section are difficult to define. This section is not intended to overly simplify complicated ideas, but rather to provide some insight to readers

into how I, as the researcher, attempted to translate these complicated ideas into words for a research project.

Racial Diversity – The presence of multiple racial and ethnic identities among students, staff, and faculty (Interaction Institute of Social Change, 2018)

Racial Equity – All racial groups having access to the resources and opportunities necessary to eliminate opportunity and resource gaps; differences in outcomes cannot be predicted on the basis of race (Interaction Institute of Social Change, 2018).

Racial Inclusion – Value and practice of ensuring that people of different racial identities feel as if they belong and that their input is valued (Interaction Institute of Social Change, 2018)

Racism – The state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death (Gilmore, 2007).

Whiteness – the invisible structures that produce and reproduce white supremacy and privilege (Applebaum, 2016)

White privilege – unearned benefits and advantages people access as a result of White skin (McIntosh, 1989)

White Racial Allyship – The ways White people work to end racial injustice (Reason, Scales, & Roosa Millar, 2005)

White staff – Term used to represent White people who are employed in various positions and functional areas in higher education. The term is inclusive of administrators and student affairs educators as well as a wide range of titles (e.g. assistant director and coordinator) (McClellan & Stringer, 2011). This term does not include employees whose primary role is faculty, though staff might have some teaching responsibilities.

White supremacy – "a political system, a particular power structure of formal or informal rule, socioeconomic privilege, and norms for differential distribution of material wealth and opportunities, benefits and burdens, rights and duties" (Mills, 1997, p. 3)

Summary

In this chapter, I provided greater context to the study by discussing the persistent nature of racism within the US and TWIs. Next, I provided a brief discussion of the concept of Whiteness, and its relationship to racism. The chapter then moved to an exploration of White racial allyship both within the US and TWIs. Collectively, this chapter established the need for the present study, which was to better understand the ways White staff at TWIs engage in acts of racial allyship.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter is comprised of three sections. The first section reviews the theories and models that form the study's conceptual framework: Charles Mills's (1997; 2007) White ignorance, bell hooks's (1984) and Audre Lorde's (1984) Black Feminist visions of solidarity, and feminist standpoint theories (Bowell, 2018; Collins, 1990; Harding, 1995, 2004; Haraway, 1988; and hooks, 1984). The second section reviews literature on intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional forms of Whiteness at TWIs; and the third and final section reviews literature on the ways White people at TWIs engage in acts of racial allyship.

Conceptual Framework

Black Americans have a saying, "When white people say 'Justice,' they mean 'Just Us'" (Mills, 1997). In just one sentence, this saying reflects the failure of White people's justice for Black Americans' enslaved ancestors, the failure of White people's justice for the Native Americans who first inhabited these lands, and the failure of White people's justice for Latinx

Americans who are overrepresented in U.S. prisons today. Philosopher Charles Mills's (1997) book *The Racial Contract* attempted to explain how the modern world (i.e., European global domination) and modern subjects (i.e., White vs. non-White people) came to be and continue to exist. In other words, Mills describes how White people have come to create and perpetuate a world where justice could be so exclusive and flawed.

White Ignorance

Inspired by Carole Pateman's (1988) *The Sexual Contract,* which interrogated the unspoken sexual (re: gender) contract undergirding the popular philosophical concept the *social contract,* Mills (1997) argued that there is a racial contract that also preceded and shaped the social contract. At its most basic level, the social contract refers to the agreement(s) between naturally free men to collectively form a society or government. The racial contract, like the social contract, is political, moral, and epistemological in nature; each is, among other things, ideologically conditioned. An example of this ideological conditioning is what Mills' (1997) referred to as an epistemology of ignorance and later as White ignorance (Mills, 2007). He described this epistemology as "an agreement to misinterpret the world" (Mills, 1997, p. 18):

> [W]hite will in general be unable to understand the world they themselves have made. Part of what it means to be constructed as "white" . . . part of what it requires to achieve Whiteness, successfully to become a White person . . . is a cognitive model that precludes self-transparency and genuine understanding of social realities. (p. 18)

An example of this agreement of misinterpretation is the US founders saying that all men are created equal while legalizing chattel slavery. White ignorance is not simply a passive, lack of knowledge; instead, it is actively presented as the correct way to understand the world—that is, if you want to achieve Whiteness (Mills, 2007). This means most White people will never question

racial inequity in the US in terms of wealth, poverty, and social mobility—ultimately never questioning their privileged, racial status. Likewise, most White people never question their role in perpetuating an oppressive system. By using Mills's concept of White ignorance, I designed this study to learn from those White people who, by acknowledging that racism exists and primarily privileges White people, strive to resist this way of seeing the world.

This study's focus on White people's resistance to White ignorance in particular, and Whiteness more broadly, is inspired by the example of Abu-Lughod's (1990) ethnographic study of a group of Awlad 'Ali Bedouin women, living in Egypt's western desert. Although Abu-Lughod did not set out to focus on women and gender power, her ethnographic fieldwork provided insight into the context specific ways the Awlad 'Ali Bedouin women resisted the specific forms of power they encountered. For example, elder male relatives had the power to arrange marriages for Bedouin girls and women. Abu-Lughod (1990) told the story of a mother who objected to her daughter entering a marriage the father arranged. The mother suggested that the father tell the family of the would-be groom that the daughter's cousins had claimed her for marriage themselves. In this way, the daughter would not be married and the father could save face. Abu-Lughod shared this story as an example of how Bedouin girls and women regularly resisted arranged marriages. In this study, I will pay attention to the forms of racism and Whiteness White staff seek to resist through their acts of racial allyship (e.g. a specific policy). I will also examine how seemingly passive, race-neutral policies, practices, and ideas might be informed by White ignorance. This focus will allow me to reveal the taken-for-granted ways Whiteness shapes everyday practice at TWIs, specifically forms of Whiteness that inhibit and challenge acts of White racial allyship. In addition to data analysis, I will use the concept of White ignorance to analyze the literature in this chapter.

Because this study is primarily concerned with better understanding these acts of racial allyship, it is important that my conceptual framework also incorporates scholarship on ways White people might engage in these acts. Specifically, I will reference Black feminist scholarship on solidarity to better understand the ways White people at TWIs engage in acts of racial allyship.

As evident by the Combahee River Collective Statement (CRCS), originally published in 1977 (Smith, 1983), Black feminists have long taken part in public discourses about the role of White people in challenging racism. Barbara Christian's (1988) work further reminds us that public discourse and practice, such as the CRCS, are also forms of theorizing; and in particular, a form of theorizing long practiced by People of Color. With this insight in mind, I will employ two Black feminist texts (hooks, 1984; Lorde, 1983) in my conceptual framework to make sense of the ways White people at TWIs engage in acts of racial allyship. Specifically, I will use hooks's (1984) "Sisterhood: Political Solidarity Between Women," a chapter in her book *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*; and Lorde's *(1983) "*An Open Letter to Mary Daly," which was published in the feminist anthology *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*.

hooks's and Lorde's Black Feminist Visions of Racial Solidarity

According to hooks (1984), she wrote her second book, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* as a response to "the absence of feminist theory that addresse[d] margin and center" (preface). For hooks, most feminist theory that was written reflected the experiences of women at the center— "bourgeois white women" (1984, p. 127)—and not those of people who lived in the margin—Women of Color in general and Black women in particular. The White, bourgeois feminist vision of solidarity through the idea(l) of Sisterhood exposed the distance between the

center and the margin of feminist theory and practice. hooks's critique offers a vision for solidarity and a framework for conceptualizing acts of White racial allyship.

It is evident that hooks did not merely see solidarity as a finished product, but as a continual process. One part of the process involves *engaging, and not overlooking, difference*. In her critique of the conceptualization of Sisterhood that was based on the idea of common oppression, hooks (1984) wrote:

> The idea of "common oppression" was a false and corrupt platform disguising and mystifying the true nature of women's varied and complex social reality. Women are divided by sexist attitudes, racism, class privilege, and a host of other prejudices. Sustained women bonding can occur only when these divisions are confronted and the necessary steps are taken to eliminate them. Divisions will not be eliminated by wishful thinking or romantic reverie about common oppression despite the value of highlighting experiences all women share. (p. 127)

Here hooks advocated for a both/and as opposed to an either/or approach to solidarity. While it is important to understand that women of different races and classes share some experiences, it is harmful to focus only on similarities and not name those experiences that are different. Hooks argued that challenging systems of oppression required practicing the admittedly difficult tasks(s) of naming and engaging difference.

hooks' (1984) added that the process of naming and engaging difference could only happen when women were also *doing the difficult, personal work of honest self-reflection*. By seeking solidarity through common oppression, "white women's liberationists were not required to assume responsibility for confronting the complexity of their own experience" (1984, p. 128).

The complexity hooks' referred to included race and class privilege, which when confronted would lead to the "development of a radical political consciousness" (p. 128).

Next, hooks (1984) addressed the issue of *dominant leadership vs. collaboration*. Specifically, she noted, "Time and time again, [bourgeois white women] have shown that they do not want to be part of feminist movement—they want to lead it" (p. 132). A desire for dominant leadership reflected a desire for ownership (i.e., of the movement). True solidarity does not rely on dominant leadership but rather meaningful collaboration with People and Communities of Color.

Finally, hooks' (1984) argued that White people must *go beyond resisting personal racism to resisting societal racism*. Because racism is not simply the result of individual prejudice among White people, it is not enough to challenge only one's own racial prejudice, but also racism in society at large.

Another example of a Black Feminist vision for racial solidarity is Audre Lorde's (1983) *An Open Letter to Mary Daly,* which was written in response to Mary Daly's book (1978) *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*. Lorde first mailed her letter to Daly via private correspondence; however, after not receiving a response within four months, she decided to make the private document public. I highlight the portions of Lorde's letter that inform my study's conceptual framework, particularly those that do not repeat but compliment hooks's (1984).

After acknowledging her appreciation for Daly's book and the difficult nature of writing the letter, Lorde critiqued the ways Daly "distorted and trivialized" (Lorde, 1983) the experiences of African American women. Lorde provided a list of African goddesses who Daly could have cited to inform her work but did not. These African goddesses were not absent

because Daly was interested only in radical feminism for Western European women. Instead, Daly presented Women of Color as victims or preying upon one another (e.g., her chapter on African genital mutilation) and only once directly quoted Black women's words. These observations reflected a broader critique that White feminists could not *imagine People of Color in positions of power* or *with valuable ideas from which White people could learn*.

The final piece of Lorde's letter that I will use to inform my conceptual framework is her commentary on White women's *awareness of and appreciation for Women of Color's labor in interacting with White women*. Early in the letter, Lorde noted that the distortion and trivialization of stories similar to hers was not new to her, having lived under White patriarchy. However, it was more painful coming from "a woman whose knowledge so much [touched her] own" (Lorde, 1983). The closing of the text reflected the care and labor Lorde took in writing her letter. She closed by noting that her writing interrupted a self-imposed silence:

> I had decided never again to speak to white women about racism. I felt it was wasted energy because of destructive guilt and defensiveness, and because whatever I had to say might better be said by white women to one another at far less emotional cost to the speaker, and probably with a better hearing. (Lorde, 1983)

Women of Color often invest significant labor—intellectual, emotional, physical, and otherwise—in their interactions with White women that often are not productive, not understood, and not appreciated. Any vision of solidarity must also take into consideration the cost to People of Color in their interactions with White people.

Collectively, hooks's (1984) and Lorde's (1983) vision for racial solidarity provided a framework in this study to analyze the ways White staff at TWIs engage difference, practice self-reflection, practice collaboration, resist oppression on multiple levels, refer to People of Color as

sources of knowledge and expertise (i.e., beyond their lived experience), and acknowledge the labor People of Color invest in relationships with White people. I used this conceptual framework to analyze the literature reviewed in this chapter and to inform my research design, which I describe in chapter three.

Before going further, I would like to briefly address why I chose to apply the work of Black women addressing racism among White women individually and collectively to a study that is not singularly focused on White women. Directly preceding this section, I referenced the Combahee River Collective (CRC), a group of Black, lesbian feminists, and their highly influential statement, the CRCS (Smith, 1983) as an example of Black feminists' public discourse about the role of White people in challenging racism. The CRC also described the psychological toll and isolation experienced by many Black feminists due to being Black women in a racist and sexist society. Aware of their societal positions, they argued, "If black women were free, it would mean that everyone else would have to be free since our freedom would necessitate the destruction of all the systems of oppression" (Smith, p. 270, 1983). Extending their claim, I would argue that if Black women's freedom would necessitate the destruction of all systems of oppression, then Black women's visions for destroying those systems are applicable to all people. In other words, if society's efforts to free Black women would free all people, then Black women's visions for destroying racism in, and building solidarity with, White women is a vision that has room for all White people.

Lastly, while the focus on acts of racial allyship and behavior makes my study more tangible it does not make it more objective. My perceptions, those of my nominators, and those of my participants all shape and inform the study – in ways that I am aware and likely in many more ways that I am not aware of. Particularly as it relates to our perceptions of truth. Given this

reality, it is important that my conceptual framework includes scholarship on navigating multiple perceptions – namely, feminist standpoint theories.

Feminist Standpoint Theories

Feminist scholarship provides guidance in navigating the complicated nature of conducting research in a way that honors the multiple, dynamic truths that exist in relation to any phenomenon being studied. Specifically, I considered feminist standpoint theories in designing this study (Collins, 1990; Haraway, 1988; and hooks, 1984). The undergirding principle of feminist standpoint theories is that a person's perspective of the world is greatly impacted by their location in the world (Collins, 1990; Harding, 1995, 2004). Feminist standpoint theorists claim that (a) knowledge is influenced by socio-political position, (b) oppressed groups' socio-political positions make it more possible for them to have knowledge of their own positions and the positions of dominant groups, and (c) research concerned with issues of power should begin with the oppressed (Bowell, 2018). Each of these concepts informed my approach to addressing my research questions. First, I assumed that the participants and I had different influences impacting our knowledge and understanding of the world, due to different racial positions.

Also, in line with the claim that oppressed groups' socio-political positions make it more possible for them to have knowledge of their own positions and the positions of dominant groups, I realize the White participants in my study may have been less aware of the experiences and positions of People of Color. This study was not overly concerned with identifying White people's lack of racial awareness, but rather to understand how White people challenge racism in the areas where they are aware racism exists. Lastly, I only included participants in this study who were nominated by People of Color (a process discussed later in this chapter), thus beginning my research with the racially oppressed.

In addition to Mills (1997), hooks (1984), Lorde (1983), and feminist standpoint theories (Bowell, 2018; Collins, 1990; Harding, 1995, 2004; Haraway, 1988; and hooks, 1984) relevant literature on Whiteness and White people engaging in acts of racial allyship. In the next section, I review literature on various forms of Whiteness present within TWIs, including intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional. In discussing each, I cite literature that provides insight into the distinct, yet interconnected ways invisible structures produce and reproduce White supremacy and privilege intrapersonally, interpersonally, and institutionally.

Forms of Whiteness

This study is primarily interested in the ways that White people engage in acts of racial allyship at TWIs. As this research is also focused on the ways acts of racial allyship serve to reveal, challenge, and interrupt Whiteness, it is important to identify how Whiteness shows up at TWIs. Although this research will focus on White staff, it is also important to engage literature that identifies how Whiteness shows up across students, staff, and faculty. Thinking back to Toni Morrison's (1992) metaphor of the fish (i.e., racism) and fishbowl (i.e., Whiteness), merging literature on each group allows for a fuller picture of the fishbowl and clearly demonstrates how Whiteness operates as a unified container at TWIs. Therefore, instead of organizing the literature by campus role, I organize the literature by forms of Whiteness.

Throughout this section, I use Applebaum's (2016) definition of Whiteness: "the invisible structures that produce and reproduce white supremacy and privilege" (p. 1). I use Applebaum's (2016) definition because of its emphasis on the processes—the invisible structures *that produce and reproduce*—that create and sustain racial inequality. I also reference Cabrera et al.'s (2016) distinctions between interpersonal and institutional forms of Whiteness, which references Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. I resonated with the distinctions because they

(mostly) reflected the ways I experienced people navigating issues of racial diversity, inclusion, and equity within TWIs. I found that students, staff, and faculty often spoke of themselves as members of, yet distinct from, their institutions. I chose to add intrapersonal forms of Whiteness to highlight the internal beliefs, perspectives, and values that may never be verbalized but influence an individual's interpersonal interactions. While this study reviews literature on the ways Whiteness shows up among White students, staff, and faculty, I agree with Ahmed (2007) "that whiteness is not reducible to white skin" (p. 152). People of Color can reflect each of these forms of Whiteness. However, because this study does not engage People of Color as participants or address the distinct socialization processes related to People of Color producing and reproducing White supremacy and privilege, I do not cite those studies here.

First, I review literature on intrapersonal forms of Whiteness, which refers to the ways White people at TWIs reflect and reinforce the invisible structures that produce and reproduce White supremacy and privilege through their personal and professional perspectives, values, and beliefs.

Intrapersonal Forms of Whiteness

For many White people who engage in acts of racial allyship, the journey begins with coming to recognize and challenge Whiteness within themselves (Broido, 2000; Case, 2012). Although being White in the US is associated with many positive social and economic outcomes, it is common to find White people who have given little to no thought about what it means to be White and to be White in a country where being so is individually beneficial and systemically protected (Gilmore, 2007; Harris, 1993).

Cabrera and Zimmerman's (2017) study of 62 White, male undergraduates' views on race and their experience with racism found that the majority of participants saw their own racial

identity as meaningless beyond having White skin. When asked by the researchers "What does it mean to be White?" and "What is White culture," the students most often responded to the first question with silence and the second question with uncomfortable laughter (Cabrera & Zimmerman, 2017). Absent from the majority of their discussions was any systemic understanding of race, racism, and racial privilege. Matias et al.'s (2014) study of 15 White, pre-service teachers' *white imagination*—defined as a "fabricated consciousness based on social constructions of whiteness" (p. 301)—found that although the teachers understood they had a White racial identity, they could not articulate the ways having a White racial identity impacted their work as teachers. Ropers-Huilman et al. (2013) defined this form of denial as a *discourse of insignificance.* Their work, which was part of a larger research project, focused on how 25 White, undergraduate women at two Catholic women's colleges understood and were influenced by Whiteness. The women engaged in discourses of insignificance by either claiming an "ignorance of the ways that whiteness might have affected their lives" (p. 40) or acknowledging that Whiteness affected their lives, but in ways that they could not articulate (Ropers-Huilman et al., 2013).

Whereas some White people have not made reflecting on what it means to be White a personal concern, others argue that this type of reflection should also not be an institutional concern. Hikido and Murray (2015) conducted a focus group study with five, White, undergraduate students, three women and two men, on their attitudes about campus diversity at their institution. They found that the students engaged in various discourses to protect their racial privilege. One of the ways the students protected their privilege was stating that the university should avoid discussions about White identity. Assuming that any focus on gathering around a collective White identity (e.g. student group) would be a problem, one student suggested that the

university create groups that "are religion-based or based on things that are common like democracy, justice" (Hikido & Murray, 2015, p. 17). Often an individual's intrapersonal Whiteness is evident in their professional practice (Haynes, 2017).

Bondi (2012) explored experiences with race and racism among eight, White recent graduates from a student affairs master's program. The researcher noted that the mostly White faculty included diverse content in their curriculum in an additive manner, which served to re-center and normalize Whiteness and White culture. This finding is consistent with the way race is most often included in classroom curriculum (Chesler & Crowfoot, 1997; Patton, 2015). The finding is also consistent with evidence that White faculty are less likely to consider race and racism as they relate to their privilege within the academy and their behaviors both inside and outside of the classroom (Haynes, 2013, 2017; Sue et al., 2019). Even when faculty members express interest in implementing multicultural educational practices in their classrooms, they often lack the confidence and skills to actualize these desires (Galman et al., 2010; Johnson & Inoue, 2003; Pope & Mueller, 2005). These feelings of inadequacy can persist even after faculty members attend workshops on inclusive pedagogy (Lee et al., 2004). Similar to faculty members, university presidents demonstrate Whiteness in their practice. Cole and Harper (2017) studied 18 statements made by college presidents in response to racial incidents over a three-year period (2012-2015). The statements broadly addressed the incident and the individual or group responsible; however, they did not address the systemic and institutional nature of racism on their college campus.

While it is true that many TWIs do not prepare future educators to engage issues of race, racism, and Whiteness, many teacher education programs seek to do so—particularly for what is an overwhelmingly White workforce preparing to work in increasingly racially and ethnically

diverse classrooms (Sleeter, 2001). According to a recent Institute of Education Sciences report, 80% of US public school teachers in the 2015-2016 school year were White (Taie & Goldring).

Often in these classroom settings the values, beliefs, and perceptions of pre-service teachers reflect intrapersonal Whiteness. Picower (2009) studied the ways a multicultural education course challenged eight, White, pre-service, early childhood teachers' beliefs and understandings about race and difference. The author found that some of the participants held views such as not seeing color and believing that racial equality had been achieved. Others, who were aware of present-day racial inequality, denied the role of racism in sustaining racial inequality; instead, they believed that Students of Color should be able to pull themselves up by their bootstraps, similar to their own ancestors who immigrated to the United States of North America. Marx's (2004) study of nine White, pre-service teachers engaged in a university-sponsored field experience tutoring Mexican and Mexican American English language learners also revealed Whiteness through perception. Specifically, the pre-service teachers saw People of Color as disadvantaged culturally, linguistically, and/or relationally. Rarely, if ever, did they acknowledge their cultural, linguistic, and/or relational strengths (Marx, 2004). These perceptions make it easier for White pre-service teachers to see issues of racial inequality as a non-White problem (Matias et al., 2014).

White people's perceptions of People of Color do not need to be explicitly negative to reflect intrapersonal Whiteness. For example, a student in Ropers-Huilman et al.'s (2013) study shared that they wanted to live in a racially diverse community after they graduated in order to be "fed with enough difference" (p. 46). Although living in a racially diverse community seems an admirable goal, the student used the one-directional language of feeding off of diversity, as if culture is something to consume. Often White people at TWIs see People of Color as primarily

serving the purpose of enriching the White campus community (Hikido & Murray, 2015). Many White people's worldviews are deeply rooted in Whiteness and are reflected not only in the ways they think (or don't think) about themselves but also how they think about People and Communities of Color.

This section discussed intrapersonal forms of Whiteness, particularly as it shapes White people's personal and professional beliefs and practice. The next section explores interpersonal forms of Whiteness, which refers to the ways White people at TWIs reflect and reinforce the invisible structures that produce and reproduce White supremacy and privilege, both in their interactions with each other as well as interactions with People of Color.

Interpersonal Forms of Whiteness

As I outlined in the study's introduction, many TWIs are experiencing events that are forcing them to have conversations about topics that are directly or indirectly related to Whiteness (see *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*'s online "Campus Racial Incidents" section). The presence of these conversations does not mean that each White person at a TWI who finds themself in this position is able or willing to participate in interrupting the racial status quo. In fact, the ways some White people at TWIs engage these issues are examples of what I refer to as interpersonal forms of Whiteness. One of the most recognizable forms of interpersonal Whiteness occurs when White people remain silent in conversations related to race and racism (Samuels, 2017). What makes White silence particularly noticeable in these contexts is the overrepresentation of White perspectives, views, ideas, and voices within TWIs on many other issues (Cabrera et al., 2016). For example, one of the ways the teachers in a multicultural education course protected their beliefs from being challenged was by not fully engaging in conversations about race, a behavior they learned from growing up in homes where their family

did not explicitly discuss issues of race and racism (Picower, 2009). Case and Hemmings' (2005) study, which involved observing three sections of a course on social inequities and subsequent interviews with 17 White women pre-service teachers who participated in the course, also found that the participants used silence as a way to not engage in classroom conversations. Contrary to growing up in households where families did not discuss issues of race and racism, several of the participants grew up in homes where racism, particularly targeted towards Black people, was embraced and articulated in a variety of ways by their male family and friends. However, the women determined that silence was preferred over a (potentially explosive) confrontation and often made this determination after several failed attempts to challenge their family and friends' perspectives. Older women in the participants' lives also modeled this silence towards male family and friends for similar reasons. Scholars have long ago established that White children have an early awareness of racialized differences (Stevenson & Stewart, 1958). However, they are socialized to not name the differences they notice, and most importantly, not to name themselves as a part of that difference unless that difference relates to one of their marginalized identities (Leonardo, 2009). It is common for White people to emphasize their experiences of social marginalization based on size and appearance, class, religion, ethnicity, and/or sexual orientation while remaining silent about their racial identities (Hytten & Warren, 2003; Picower, 2009).

As alluded to above, White silence is often not a silence about other racial groups. White people talk about other racial groups among themselves (e.g., racist jokes) and often verbally target People of Color with racist statements (Picca and Feagin, 2007). White silence refers to White people not communicating what it means to be White and the role of White people in perpetuating racism. Instead, when confronted with the realities of racial inequality, many White

people deny responsibility for their role in perpetuating racism. By denying responsibility, they are able to disengage from meaningful engagements with the issue. Picower (2009) found that pre-service teachers resisted challenges to their understandings of race by stating that they were not slave owners and that they should not be made to feel guilty for racism in the US. They made statements such as “It’s out of my control” and “I can’t relate” to claim that they were personally unable or unwilling “to work with Students of Color or to take an active anti-racist stance in their classrooms” (Picower, 2009, p. 206).

Another way White people deny responsibility for confronting racism is by comparing themselves to their relatively “more racist” friends and family members. Marx (2004) also found that although pre-service teachers held deficit views of People of Color (e.g. as culturally inferior), they sought to claim a non-racist identity by calling upon and disapproving the more racist behaviors of their family and friends. Some White people attempt to disassociate from being labeled racist by self-identifying as a “good White person” (Case & Hemmings, 2005). Upon learning about the racism in past generations of their own family, others attempt to reclaim this label for their family members as well. Mueller (2017) analyzed 105 papers submitted (for course assignment and study analysis) over a three-year period by White undergraduate students. The papers were part of a larger sample, which included submissions by Students of Color. The students were assigned to collect and analyze family data on intergenerational wealth transmission using the course material that focused on social reproduction of racial inequality and the racial wealth gap. Mueller (2017) found that White students attempted to (re)claim the morality and innocence of racist family members of previous generations by employing the following logic:

> Whites need to know about racism, or we won't know. When we don't know about racism, we accidentally participate in it through no fault of our own. If we can just know about racism, we won't do it anymore because we are good people. (p. 231)

By claiming that their family members were what Dion (2009) referred to as *perfect strangers* to racism, the students participated in a cycle that perpetuates White supremacy and privilege. In part, the cycle continues by arguing that White people are passively ignorant to racism and racial inequality and would never participate in a racist system if they were fully aware of the true nature of that system. Scholarship on the idea of being a "good White person" demonstrates how this form of self-identification is about preserving a good reputation and often keeps White people from doing the difficult self-work of interrogating their own racist ideas and behaviors (Sullivan, 2014; Yancy et al., 2016). If White people are not responsible for racism and issues related to race, the question becomes, "Who is responsible?" For some White people, the answer is People of Color (DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2012).

In the introduction of his highly influential book *The Souls of Black Folk*, W.E.B. DuBois (1903) described how his interactions with White people often involved the implicit question "How does it feel to be a problem?" The experience of being labeled the problem in matters of race and racism is one that remains for People of Color today. The ideas of reverse racism and White victimhood are deeply connected to the idea of People of Color as a problem (Cabrera, 2014a; Case & Hemmings, 2005; Lewis et al., 2000). Instead of acknowledging the need for institutional policies to address racism in admissions practices and policies, some White students resist race-conscious or affirmative action policies as oppressive to White people and unfairly privileging People of Color (Donnor, 2016; Harper et al., 2009; Yosso et al., 2004). When asked to provide examples of racism they were personally familiar with, the students in Picower's

(2009) study told stories where People of Color attacked White people. Not only does the idea of White victimization make White people see People of Color as the primary perpetrators of racial hostility, but the idea also obscures People of Color's painful experiences with racism and Whiteness and motivates White people's racially hostile attitudes and violent behaviors (Lewis et al., 2000). Sometimes it is simply the presence of People of Color that causes a problem for White people.

In defining racial microaggressions and their role in conversations related to race and ethnicity, Sue and Constantine (2007) argued that White people are, in part, afraid to engage in conversations about race and ethnicity because of the fear of appearing racist. This fear is the result of being in "mixed company" (p. 140) and is sometimes articulated as making White people especially careful not to say the wrong thing and not to offend Students of Color out of fear of being attacked (Case & Hemmings, 2005; DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2012; Hikido & Murray, 2015). DiAngelo and Sensoy (2012) defined the fear White people have of being attacked, or feelings that they are attacked, in cross-race discussions as a *discourse of violence*. Analyzing a four-week race dialogue between five Students of Color and eight White students, the authors presented key moments that demonstrated the discourse of violence, which, in part, positioned People of Color as perpetrators of violence (DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2012). For example, one student described the experience of People of Color in the dialogue asking her to examine her Whiteness as "being slammed" and as "be[ing] a punching bag" (p.10). Boatright-Horowitz, Marraccini, and Harps-Logan (2012) studied the emotional and cognitive responses of nearly 700 General Psychology students to participating in the course's antiracism module. Of the 400 White student participants, the researchers found that those who felt personally attacked struggled to understand the concept of White privilege, a concept taught in the antiracism

module. Although engaging in personal reflection is important for White people as it relates to matters of race and racism, overly focusing on one's White self can be a barrier to meaningful cross-racial interactions. Linder's (2015) research on six antiracist, White, feminist undergraduate women revealed how the women felt "being stuck in the cogs of Guilt & Shame [because of their White racial identity], and Fear of Appearing Racist" (Linder, 2015, p. 543) kept them from engaging in anti-racist behavior. Therefore, it becomes easier to frame those who question or challenge Whiteness as the problem, as opposed to those who participate in and perpetuate Whiteness. This framing is evident in the ways many campus administrators look at student activists critiquing campus racism as problems to be solved not as partners in institutional improvement (Chesler & Crowfoot, 1997; Trachtenberg, 2018). The irony of many free speech debates across TWIs is that the free speech most often protected is hateful, racist speech (Cooper, 2017). Yet, when Students, Staff, and Faculty of Color challenge Whiteness they are attacked and at times censored (Cooper, 2017).

This section discussed interpersonal forms of Whiteness such as remaining silent on issues of race and racism, denying responsibility for perpetuating racism, comparing oneself to "more" racist friends and family, assuming passive ignorance for other White people, and framing People of Color as the source of problems related to race and racism. When enough members of a campus community engage in these and other forms of interpersonal Whiteness, they create patterns—patterns that become institutional norms. When perpetuated, these norms are validated as institutional practices that are rarely, if ever, confronted. The next section explores institutional forms of Whiteness, which refers to the ways institutional policies, practices, and norms at TWIs reflect and reinforce the invisible structures that produce and reproduce White supremacy and privilege.

Institutional Forms of Whiteness

Both intra- and interpersonal forms of Whiteness at TWIs are related to, and operate within a context of, institutional forms of Whiteness. However, in both literature and practice, these forms of Whiteness often receive the least amount of attention (Cabrera et al., 2016). In their advice to White collaborators on social justice efforts in teaching education, Boutte and Jackson (2014) argued that many (potential) collaborators fail to understand the ways institutional and structural inequities exist within institutions of higher education. Similarly, Patton and Bondi (2015) found that the 12 White, male faculty in their study, who were informally nominated as social justice allies, often engaged in ally work on the individual level (e.g. building relationships with, and listening to, Students of Color). Working on an individual level often allowed the White, male faculty members to reap the benefits of appearing anti-racist while foregoing the associated risks of challenging organizational culture. The ability to selectively challenge racism is an example of White privilege (Sue & Constantine, 2007). This particular example of White privilege reveals the connections between the three forms of Whiteness outlined here, because White people are in the best positions institutionally to challenge racism. In many situations, positions of power related to important institution- and department-level decision-making are limited to only a few White faculty members and/or administrators with minimal, if any, People of Color involved (Boutte & Jackson, 2014). Sometimes White faculty and administrators defend the inequity in their decision-making processes by arguing that it is the way things have always been done (Boutte & Jackson, 2014). By concentrating institutional power almost exclusively in White men, institutions perpetuate the idea that White men—and not People of Color—are the standard for competence and creativity (Chesler & Crowfoot, 1997).

While Boutte and Jackson (2014) found that White faculty members struggled to understand structural inequities, other research demonstrated that this failure is common yet not universal (Loftin, 2010; Patton & Bondi, 2015). For example, Loftin (2010) explored the conceptualizations of allyship among nine, White faculty members who were nominated for the study by the university's chief diversity officer and/or Students of Color. When critiquing normative Whiteness at their institution, most of the White faculty critiqued the underrepresentation of Students of Color, and overrepresentation of White students, in their classrooms. Despite increasing numbers of Students of Color at TWIs, these institutions remain overwhelmingly White (Gusa, 2010). The faculty members noted that this dynamic helped to maintain Whiteness as the institution's cultural norm and made White students more comfortable verbally expressing their prejudices inside the classroom (Loftin, 2010). Furthermore, two faculty members made a connection between the historical, legalized segregation at their TWI and present-day underrepresentation of People of Color and the persistence of White privilege; these faculty members also linked department course offerings (e.g. limiting access to courses that provide culturally and racially diverse content) and academic engagement among Students of Color (Loftin, 2010). Not only are Students of Color underrepresented at TWIs, but Faculty of Color are even more underrepresented (Zambrana et al., 2015), yet this critique was not offered by the faculty in Loftin's study as a way of interrogating the impact of Whiteness in the academy.

The underrepresentation of Faculty of Color is, in part, the result of the reproduction of Whiteness through the faculty hiring process (e.g. by framing racial diversity expertise as additional, not central competencies; and tokenizing the "racial perspective" in the committee) (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). For those who are hired, some departmental policies and practices

serve to further privilege White faculty members and disadvantage Faculty of Color. For example, the criteria for evaluating faculty within the tenure and promotion process within academic departments often rely on biased standards, such as a preference for publications in highly ranked journals. Privileging highly ranked journals biases the process against some Faculty of Color whose research often challenges the academic status quo in ways that are not valued by highly ranked journals (Boutte & Jackson, 2014). Narrow expressions and criteria for faculty success often reflects a larger institutional culture that normalizes traditional (re: White) and "monocultural norms for success" (Chesler & Crowfoot, 1997, p. 2).

In an earlier study that sought to provide a critical framework for exploring and researching racism in higher education from an institutional level, Chesler and Crowfoot (1997) gave perspective beyond specific departmental policies. First, the authors noted how some university missions lacked explicit language regarding racial justice equity, and even when institutions employed antiracist or inclusive language in their missions, it was rarely tied to action that could be assessed (Chesler & Crowfoot, 1997; Iverson, 2007). Studying the construction of diversity at 20 US land-grant universities, Iverson (2007) found that the dominant discourse regarding People of Color presented them as institutional outsiders who were educationally at risk and wholly dependent upon the institutions for their success. For Iverson (2007), insufficient mission statements and marginalizing discourses were symptoms of a larger discourse of meritocracy that described higher education as providing equal opportunity for achievement to anyone who is willing to work hard enough (Patton, 2015). This discourse of meritocracy relied on racist and classist assumptions (Bonilla-Silva, 2014; Patton, 2015) and served as a barrier to meaningful, supportive, and collaborative relationships between TWIs and Communities of Color. Not only has Whiteness in general, and institutional Whiteness in

particular, become widespread to higher education, racism and White supremacy have come to be thought of as "ordinary, predictable, and taken for granted" (Patton, 2015, p. 317).

This section discussed institutional forms of Whiteness, particularly as it pertains to the concentration of institutional power among White faculty and administrators; overrepresentation of White faculty and students, and the related underrepresentation of Faculty and Students of Color; and definitions of success based on White norms. Turning my attention to the role of White people in interrupting Whiteness, I will next review relevant literature on the ways White people at TWIs engage in acts of racial allyship as a way to challenge the taken-for-granted nature of Whiteness.

White People Engaging in Acts of Racial Allyship

In this section, I review literature that addresses the practice of White people challenging racism. I decided not to organize the literature based on campus role (e.g. staff and faculty), but rather on the various ways White people at TWIs engage in acts of racial allyship. In addition to the benefit of demonstrating the ways acts of racial allyship cut across institutional roles, as a practical matter there is insufficient research on any group to justify organizing the literature by role. The literature on this topic suggests that White people engage in acts of racial allyship and attempt to interrupt and challenge racism and Whiteness at TWIs through one or more of the following ways: self-work, education, challenging interpersonal racism, and challenging organizational or institutional racism.

Self-Work as an Act of Racial Allyship

For many White people who engage in acts of racial allyship, the work of challenging racism often begins with the self (Broido, 2000). As Michael and Conger (2009) stated in their work on the ways White Affinity Groups can help White people understand their racial identity

and develop their commitment to anti-racism, "[R]eflection [is] a form of action" (p. 58). This self-work and reflection involve interrogating one's own beliefs, views, and values. This self-work does not involve just the intellectual but also the affective, and sometimes it requires White people getting beyond responses of anger and resentment when learning about their racial privilege (Linder, 2015; Reason et al., 2005). It also does not necessarily occur in isolation.

Case (2012) examined the experiences of 17 White women (i.e., 11 students, four staff, and two faculty) who took part in "reflecting on white racial identity, confronting white privilege, and taking anti-racist action for social change" (p. 82) through a weekly discussion group—White Women Against Racism (WWAR)—housed in the university's Women's Center. Through field observations and interviews, Case (2012) learned that many of the women shared that identifying as racist was important to the work of interrupting their own racism. By owning their own racism, the women decreased the fear of being labeled as racist by others. The decreased fear allowed them to focus their energies on challenging their own racism as opposed to avoiding being labeled as a racist. Similarly, in a study of 16 White antiracist activists who had experience navigating their Whiteness in multiracial organizing spaces, Eichstedt (2001) found that an overwhelming majority of the participants acknowledged their own racism, racial privilege, and opportunity and responsibility to act against racism. The participants found that taking ownership of their Whiteness in this way made it easier to speak more frequently and more confidently about issues of race and racism, specifically with other White people (Case, 2012; Eichstedt, 2001). For ten White people (five men and five women) engaged in antiracist action, reflecting on their own racism and racial privilege was associated with a more intersectional and nuanced understanding of White racial identity (e.g. as it intersects with gender and class) (Malott, Paone, Schaefle, Cates, & Haizlip, 2015). Groups that bring together

White people for the purpose of learning to interrupt racism provide space for conversations that often do not happen otherwise—conversations addressing what it means to be White, the benefits of White privilege, strategies for interrupting racism, and areas to challenge one another to develop more anti-racist attitudes and behaviors (Case, 2012; Michael & Conger, 2009). This process of critical self-evaluation is a lifelong process.

In their article exploring the personal and professional challenges experienced by White counseling psychology faculty who teach about racism, Smith, Kashubeck-West, Payton, and Adams (2017) advised other White social justice educators to keep learning about their own Whiteness. The authors made the distinction between learning about Whiteness as an academic subject matter and learning about how Whiteness, through their racial identity and privilege, shows up in their personal and professional lives (e.g. their attitudes towards the People of Color they work with as helping professionals). The authors argued that their efforts to cultivate their students' racial awareness would be unsuccessful without critically reflecting on their own Whiteness. The 18 White, anti-racist activists (11 women, 7 men) who participated in Smith and Redington's (2010) study defined antiracism not only as raising awareness of racism, but also as speaking out against, and actively organizing to end, racism. In other words, acts of racial allyship must go beyond the intrapersonal. As Smith et al.'s (2017) work suggests, many White people in higher education challenge racism through their role as educators.

Education as an Act of Racial Allyship

Considering that an important part of the self-work White people must do to challenge their own racism involves becoming informed about issues related to racism and Whiteness (Broido, 2000; Cabrera, 2012; Kendall, 2006; Reason et al., 2005), another prominent act of

racial allyship found in the literature is White people educating other White people around these very issues (Traoré, 2017).

For some White faculty members in Loftin's (2010) study, their allyship involved educating the campus community on the ways race and racism impacted their campus. For example, one professor developed workshops for his academic unit to foster dialogue on issues of diversity. In their role as teachers, faculty demonstrated awareness that race impacts their students' classroom experience and would seek to counteract negative racialized experiences. One professor pre-assigned student groups because she was aware that students sometimes choose to be in groups with classmates who share their racial identity, often isolating Students of Color who are underrepresented. The White faculty members in Patton and Bondi's (2015) study spoke about significantly integrating issues of race and social justice into their course curriculum (i.e., as opposed to an additive approach) and conducting research on social justice issues as ways they attempt to interrupt the status quo. In addition to addressing the importance of learning about their own Whiteness, Smith et al. (2017) discussed the importance for White faculty members who teach about racism to (a) model a learning stance by transparently sharing personal stories from their journeys; (b) be a model of White antiracism for their students as a way of challenging the lack of visibility of White people challenging racism in mainstream discourses; and (c) identify personal supports for the inevitable challenges associated with being a White person seeking to interrupt racism. Their work speaks to the importance of focusing not only on *what* is being taught but also *how* it is being taught. These studies offer insight into how White faculty members engage in acts of racial allyship through their professional practice by teaching the broader campus community about issues of race and racism, integrating issues of

race into their curriculum and research, and attempting to preemptively interrupt racial isolation for Students of Color.

Challenging Interpersonal Racism as an Act of Racial Allyship

Another way that White people engage in acts of racial allyship is by interrupting the racist behaviors of other White people. Considering White people are much more likely to engage in racist behavior when there are only other White people around (Picca & Feagin, 2007), one of the most consistent opportunities for White people to engage in acts of racial allyship occurs when they witness other White people doing or saying something racist. Sometimes these opportunities happen within one's own family. Using a subset of data from a larger study, Cabrera (2012) analyzed the transcripts of 15 White, male college students who understood the systemic nature of racism, critiqued racial bias, and supported race-conscious policies. One of the students received an email from his grandfather saying that First Lady Michelle Obama wrote her graduate thesis on the topic of how to kill White people. Receiving the email did not surprise the student because it reflected his grandfather's racist views about Black people. The student went against his family norms of not challenging his elder grandfather: after fact- checking the story, the student told his grandfather that the story from his email was not true. In disputing his grandfather's decision to forward the email, the student engaged in a direct challenge to his grandfather's decision to participate in spreading racist propaganda against the First Lady.

There are a variety of approaches, which are often context specific, White people use to challenge the racism of other White people. Some White people have found the following approaches to be effective methods of intervention: addressing an individual in private, asking clarifying questions, establishing common ground, and using humor (Case, 2012). In one of the few studies that focused primarily on antiracist practice, Traoré (2017) found that White people

who practiced antiracism did so primarily in one or two ways: everyday antiracist practices and organizational antiracist practices. In everyday antiracist practices, individuals confront and call others out directly, attempt to appeal to the person's rationality by providing a counter claim, and take actions that are intended to be undetected but subversive. Those who engage in organizational antiracist practices attempt to intervene on the organizational level, such as addressing racial inequity in hiring practices, allocation of resources, decision-making processes, and organizational policies and norms.

Challenging Organizational and Institutional Racism as an Act of Racial Allyship

One critique of White people who engage in acts of racial allyship within TWIs is that their actions often occur on the intrapersonal and interpersonal levels, not on the organizational or institutional level (Boutte & Jackson, 2014; Patton & Bondi, 2015). The dearth of scholarship on the ways White people challenge organizational and institutional racism, within TWIs, is in line with this critique.

The faculty members in Loftin's (2010) study believed that their service work of recruiting Faculty and Students of Color to their campus reflected their commitment to racial justice not just on an interpersonal, but on an organizational level as well. One of the ways students in Cabrera's (2012) study worked through their Whiteness was by engaging in racial justice actions such as lobbying in favor of the California DREAM Act, which would allow undocumented students (in the study's context mostly Students of Color) to receive financial aid to attend California public institutions of higher education. Another student noted that his being White likely caused the university's Regents at his institution to listen when he critiqued the record-low Black student enrollment on campus in ways the Regents would not have listened if he were Black. As one participant in Smith and Redington's (2010) study explained, "It's not

letting only Black people stand up for an injustice to Black people" (p. 544). In organizing the rally around this particular issue, the student found it important to work with the Black Student Union in formulating strategies (Cabrera, 2012).

In another study (McCann, 2012) that focused on organizational intervention, albeit not at a TWI, five White, K-12 principals (three women, two men) collectively organized two days of racial equity training for a group of staff members from their schools. This training was designed after the principals attended a five-day equity in education training, which helped them understand better the ways racism and Whiteness is institutionalized within education. The principals hoped that by building the capacity of their teachers and staff to understand and challenge racism within their schools, they were taking measures in creating more racially just schools.

Sometimes acts of racial allyship do not involve direct intervention. For example, in addition to reporting on participants who took part in marches and demonstrations, Smith and Redington (2010) shared the story of an information technology professional who provided free computer and technical support to antiracist organizations. Although it can be more difficult to trace, it is important to understand how acts of racial allyship go beyond the intrapersonal and interpersonal.

Challenges to Engaging in Acts of Racial Allyship

Regardless of the level of intervention, engaging in acts of racial allyship can present challenges for White people at TWIs. Society in general, and TWIs in particular, are organized in ways that discourage White people from challenging racism and engaging in acts of racial allyship (Malott et al., 2015; Michaels & Conger, 2009). As such, it is no surprise that engaging in acts of racial allyship can present several challenges for White students, staff, and faculty. It is

possible to sum up the challenges to engaging in acts of racial allyship in this way: the idea of Whiteness in the US was never intended to lead to White people challenging the racist system from which they directly benefited. Therefore, the challenges and barriers for White people engaging in acts of racial allyship are plentiful. The purpose of this section is not to provide an extensive review of each of these challenges, but instead to provide an overview of the literature that gives some insight into what White people who engage in acts of racial allyship consider barriers to their efforts.

One such challenge is the difficulty of navigating the emotions that arise from directly engaging issues of race and racism. Navigating emotions is often cited as a significant barrier to engaging in acts of racial allyship. As previously stated, Linder (2015) found that White, feminist, antiracist undergraduates described their experiences as "being stuck in the cogs of Guilt & Shame and a Fear of Appearing Racist" (Linder, 2015, p. 544). Once students accepted the realities of racism and White privilege, they experienced guilt and shame about being White, which often led to overanalyzing their interactions with People of Color out of fear of appearing racist. The women attributed not engaging in antiracist behaviors to being stuck in this unending cycle of emotions.

The hyperawareness that leads to being stuck also shows up for White social justice educators (Smith et al., 2017). Smith et al. (2017) used the term *multicultural imposter syndrome* to describe feelings of self-doubt that result from teaching about a topic that is deeply connected to educators' lives and the lives of their students, while they are still learning themselves. Particularly the fear of one's own racism showing up in a classroom setting, revealing that the White professor is not as far along as they want to be or feel they should be, can lead to a sense of paralysis (Smith et al, 2017). The feeling of inadequacy also made some White institutional

leaders feel inadequate to lead efforts to address racial equity in their institutions (McCann, 2012). The authors discussed *multicultural perfectionism* as a common response to feeling like imposters, which, as the name suggests, reflected an obsession with avoiding and/or correcting mistakes.

Challenging the racism of other White people often directly impacts the interpersonal relationships among White people (Malott et al., 2015). For example, many participants in the studies I reviewed reported that their White family members, friends, and colleagues distanced themselves from, or became angry with, the participants because they often brought up the conversation of race (Cabrera, 2012; Hayes, 2017; Smith & Redington, 2010; Traoré, 2017). In some cases, these negative responses caused some of the participants to remain silent in the presence of other White people doing or saying something racist (Case, 2012). Challenging the racism of other White people can be particularly difficult given an individual's other identities and or roles. For example, the women in Case and Hemmings' (2005) study were not only navigating Whiteness but patriarchy as well as they determined how to challenge the racism of the White men in their lives. The student in Cabrera's (2012) study who challenged his grandfather's racist email was interrupting racism as well as his family's norm of a grandson not correcting his grandfather (i.e., a family elder). Systems of power and privilege are always at play, and even within White communities where all individuals share racial power and privilege, there are status, class, gender, and ability power and privilege that not everyone shares.

One of the most significant challenges to White people engaging in acts of racial allyship is also one of the most difficult to explain—Whiteness. White people who engage in acts of racial allyship are not exempt from being impacted by "the invisible structures that produce and reproduce white supremacy and privilege" (Applebaum, 2016, p. 1). Whiteness in the US

produces and reproduces an environment where White people are likely socialized to believe that racial inequality is normal and inevitable (Patton, 2015). For White people who resist Whiteness, their resistance is a matter of practice and process, not completion and arrival. In other words, intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional forms of Whiteness all serve as challenges to engaging in acts of racial allyship. For example, while White people who engage in acts of racial allyship might be fully aware that their racial identity has personal meaning and provides them with certain privileges, fully understanding the implications of their racial identity and privilege to their professional work is a process that involves improvement not completion (Smith et al., 2017). In my own practice, it is not uncommon to find a White person who upon reflection, perhaps years later, can acknowledge how Whiteness impacted their professional anti-racism work, although at the time they were not aware and may have even resisted others naming the impact of Whiteness on their professional work. While it is not necessary to revisit each form of Whiteness at TWIs in detail, it is important to note that Whiteness impacts White people who engage in acts of racial allyship—both in ways that they are aware of and ways that they are not.

Collectively, the lack of organizational or institutional incentives, implicit and explicit punishment for challenging racism, cyclical nature of navigating emotions, sense of inadequacy, perfection seeking, risk of losing and/or changing personal relationships, and various forms of Whiteness are all challenges that exist for White people who engage in acts of racial allyship.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I drew from Mills's (1997, 2007) concept of White ignorance as well as hooks's (1984) and Lorde's (1983) Black feminist visions for solidarity to create this study's conceptual framework. Collectively, I used these frameworks to inform this study's conceptualization of the production and reproduction of Whiteness, and how White people

participate in the process and practice of challenging systems of racial oppression. Mills's (1997, 2007) conceptualization of White ignorance provided a framework for understanding Whiteness as a connected, cohesive container that serves as the backdrop for racism to thrive (i.e., beyond individual bad actors). hooks's (1984) and Lorde's (1983) conceptualizations of solidarity provided a framework for understanding White people's participation in challenging systems of racial oppression that accounts for the intellectual, affective, behavioral, and relational aspects of this practice. These frameworks combined to inform my initial understanding of how Whiteness operates at TWIs and how White people at TWIs engage in acts of racial allyship.

I also reviewed the growing body of literature on various forms of Whiteness at TWIs (i.e., intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional). Most of this literature focuses on intra- and interpersonal forms of Whiteness. This research demonstrates the ways most White people rarely if ever reflect on their own racial identity and its implications for their personal lives (Cabrera & Zimmerman, 2017; Matias et al., 2014; Ropers-Huilman et al., 2013). This absence of reflection is evident in the ways White people view People of Color and, to various degrees, deny issues of race and racism in their professional practice (Bondi, 2012; Cole & Harper, 2017; Haynes, 2017; Marx, 2004). The literature also shows how White silence on issues of race and racism (Case & Hemmings, 2005; Samuels, 2017), denial of responsibility for racism (Leonardo, 2009; Mueller, 2017; Picower, 2009), and blame of People of Color for racial tensions and lack of racial progress (Donnor, 2016; Harper et al., 2009; Yosso et al., 2004) produce and reproduce White supremacy and privilege. Much less research focused on institutional forms of Whiteness. However, current literature emphasizes how the centralization of institutional power among White men (Boutte & Jackson, 2014; Chesler & Crowfoot, 2007), overrepresentation of White students, staff, and faculty at TWIs (Gusa, 2010; Loftin, 2010), emphasis on the myth of

meritocracy (Patton, 2015), and lack of racially inclusive institutional missions (Iverson, 2007) produce and reproduce White supremacy and privilege at TWIs.

Although each of these forms of Whiteness is presented separately in this literature review, they are all deeply interconnected. For example, a White faculty member or staff member who has not critically reflected on their own racial identity and racism is more likely to create learning environments that do not critically interrogate the role of White people in perpetuating racism. A university whose faculty and staff bodies are mostly made up of White people who have not reflected on their own racial identity and racism contributes to an institutional culture where the underrepresentation of People of Color, particularly in roles of power and influence, may be viewed as normal and inevitable.

This literature provides insight into the presence of White ignorance at TWIs (Mills 1997, 2007). The denial of and/or lack of significant reflection on a White racial identity and its impact in one's personal and professional lives are clear examples of a "cognitive model that precludes self-transparency" (Mills, 1997, p. 18). The denial of responsibility for racism and blame of People of Color for racial tensions and lack of racial progress are examples of a "cognitive model that precludes . . . genuine understanding of social realities" (Mills, 1997, p. 18). Although White silence on issues of race and racism is not a misreading of racial realities it helps sustain an environment where communicated White ignorance goes unchallenged. Similarly, the centralization of institutional power among White men, overrepresentation of White students, staff, and faculty at TWIs, and lack of racially inclusive institutional missions contribute to maintaining a norm that positions a correct reading of racial realities as marginal and not necessary for organizational or institutional functioning. Although this literature is insightful, because it is primarily focused on undergraduate students, it is not clear how White ignorance

shows up among White staff at TWIs. In a field that promotes Social Justice and Inclusion as a core competency (ACPA & NASPA, 2015), it is important to know how to identify forms of White ignorance that would work against an educator achieving adequate competency in the area of racial justice and inclusion. Developing this core competency is a matter of learning for the White staff member and the White students their work directly impacts. This study seeks to address that gap in the literature.

Lastly, I reviewed research on the ways White people engage in acts of racial allyship at TWIs. Though this is a growing body of literature in the field of higher education, the current literature is clear that White students, staff, and faculty see the following as ways of practicing racial allyship: challenging their own racist views and behaviors (Broido, 2000; Case, 2012; Michael & Conger, 2009), educating other White people about issues of race and racism (Loftin, 2010; Patton & Bondi, 2015; Traoré, 2017), and challenging individual racist behaviors and racist organizational practices (Cabrera, 2012; Case, 2012; Smith & Redington, 2010; Traoré, 2017). The research is also clear on the fact that there are a number of individual and relational challenges and risks associated with being a White person who seeks to challenge racism, such as navigating complicated emotions (Linder, 2015), the disruption to relationships with friends and family members who disagree or disapprove (Hayes, 2017), and not wanting to make mistakes (Smith et al., 2017).

This literature provides insight into some important aspects related to racial allyship (hooks, 1984; Lorde, 1983) at TWIs. Challenging one's own racist views and behaviors, educating other White people about issues of race and racism, and challenging individual racist behaviors and racist organizational practices represent the practice of self-reflection and resisting oppression on multiple levels. While insightful, this body of literature is limited by the nearly

exclusive use of identity development theories to approach this topic. Specifically, it does not account for the other aspects of racial allyship hooks (1984) and Lorde (1983) speak to such as practicing collaboration, referring to People of Color as sources of knowledge and expertise beyond issues related to their lived experience, and acknowledging the labor People of Color invest in relationships with White people. Instead, I found that most research using racial identity development theoretical frameworks to study White people challenging racism focused almost exclusively on the participants' racial identities and framed the phenomenon as primarily individual and introspective (i.e., intrapersonal). An overrepresentation of such studies serves to re-center White individuals in anti-racism scholarship. Employing Black Feminist scholarship in this study, I attempted to instead center White racial allyship on White individuals and their behaviors to improve conditions for People of Color. This study sought to address this and other gaps in the literature by making distinct contributions to the study of Whiteness and White racial allyship within TWIs.

Specifically, my research will contribute to the study of Whiteness and White racial allyship within TWIs in the following ways: (a) focusing on White staff; (b) treating racial allyship primarily as a set of behaviors and not an identity; and (c) incorporating intergroup dialogue practices into my methodology (details discussed in the next chapter). The majority of scholarship on Whiteness and White racial allyship focuses on faculty or undergraduate students (Cabrera et al., 2016). While understanding how Whiteness and White racial allyship operate among undergraduate students is important, focusing on staff in my study will allow for a fuller, more nuanced understanding of these phenomena within TWIs. First, White staff have to navigate, and they themselves possess, different forms of racial power than undergraduate students within their institutions. In other words, staff at TWIs have to navigate, and also

produce and reproduce, forms of Whiteness that are distinct from undergraduate students. Also, TWI staff design much of undergraduate students' formal experiences outside of the classroom where, similar to the classroom, many racist incidents occur. The relative absence of research on these issues as it pertains to staff implies that they have little to learn or teach us about interrupting racism and Whiteness within higher education.

Another contribution this study makes is its treatment of allyship as a behavior and not identity. Most research on the topic of White people challenging racism, Whiteness, and White people engaging in acts of racial allyship approached White racial allyship primarily through the lens of identity (e.g. social justice ally) and almost exclusively relied on racial identity development theories to inform their work. As stated earlier, I found this approach insightful yet limited because it often led to a focus that was highly introspective and individual (e.g. focusing on personal attitudes and awareness). Instead, I treat White racial allyship primarily as a practice and rely on Black feminist theories on solidarity to inform my work. I made this decision to account for external and relational aspects of White racial allyship, as well as the introspective and individual aspects. This decision is important because most staff work in TWIs in general, and racial allyship work in particular, is deeply rooted in relationships.

Finally, following Bhattacharya's (2018) claim that critical epistemologies should be matched with critical methodologies, I incorporated intergroup dialogue practices into my methodology. From the beginning, a question that I wrestled with was, "What does it mean to be a Black researcher studying issues of race and racism among White people?" Through reflection, conversation, and trial and learning, I decided to directly engage this question with my participants. Specifically, Bhattacharya's (2018) claim prompted me to reflect on the ways that White and Black people participate in knowledge building in TWIs. One way this is done is

through the practice of intergroup dialogue, which I will discuss in more detail in the following chapter. For now, it is important to note that instead of attempting to rely solely on traditional rapport-building methods to create an environment where participants felt comfortable engaging in the research process, I also invited participants to create a list of needs that would help them speak freely and listen fully even when it was difficult, particularly in a conversation between a Black researcher and White participant. This and other methodological choices are discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter is organized into four sections. The first section details the epistemological frameworks that informed my research. I introduce each framework in detail and how they informed this study. In the second section, I detail the methodological approach in this study followed by section three, which details the research design. The final section briefly reviews the findings of a pilot study that I conducted and how the pilot informed my dissertation study. This study is guided by three key research questions:

1. How do White staff in traditionally White institutions of higher education conceptualize White racial allyship?
2. How do White staff in these institutions challenge racism and Whiteness in their institution?
3. What forms of Whiteness do White staff in these institutions reveal through their efforts to challenge racism?

Research Approach

I used a multiple case study approach, combined with select intergroup dialogue approaches, to examine how White staff at TWIs engage in racial allyship. In this section I discuss case study and intergroup dialogue, and how they shaped my research design.

Case Study

Qualitative research methodologies were most appropriate for this study because I was interested in better understanding the complexities and context of a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). My approach was first informed by case study research, a specific type of qualitative research, which is especially suitable for investigating complex units that have multiple variables whose impact and importance cannot be predetermined (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Merriam argued that what defines and distinguishes case study from other forms of research is determining the boundaries of the unit of study—the case. Education researchers often use people and programs as their case(s) (Stake, 1995) and rely on multiple sources of data to provide a detailed description of their case(s) (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

This study used an instrumental, interpretive, multiple case design (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Stake, 1995). An instrumental, multiple case study is a case study that seeks to gain greater understanding into a particular issue by exploring the issue in multiple contexts (Stake, 1995). An interpretive case study provides rich, thick description and also can be used to develop conceptual categories (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I defined the case in this study as individual White staff members who intentionally engage in acts of racial allyship within their institutions. Because this study focuses on acts of racial allyship, individual staff members represent the context for these acts of racial allyship and therefore best constitute a separate case. I used a multiple case design by including multiple White staff members. By employing multiple case study, I was able to provide a detailed, complex description of each unique case and describe shared conceptual categories (or themes) by gathering data from multiple sources (e.g., individual interviews and participant journals). The data collection process will be described in more detail later in this chapter.

Bhattacharya (2018) claimed that critical epistemologies (e.g., White ignorance and Black feminist scholarship) should be matched with critical methodologies. Following this insight, my methodology developed qualitative research methods from certain intergroup dialogue practices. In the next section, I discuss how I came to reference intergroup dialogue practices in the development of my research methods, briefly describe intergroup dialogue, and review its role in shaping my research design.

Intergroup Dialogue

Bhattacharya (2018) also encouraged researchers who use critical epistemologies and frameworks to employ culturally grounded methodologies. For me, identifying a culturally grounded methodology began with the following question: How do White people in TWIs have conversations about race and racism with People of Color in general and Black people in particular? To address this question, I reflected on my experience as a diversity and inclusion trainer at a TWI and the various ways White people discuss issues of race and racism within higher education (e.g., social media conversations, in planning meetings, or private one-on-one conversations). I ultimately identified intergroup dialogue programs (IGD) (Nagda & Gurin, 2007) as the culturally grounded context in which I developed my methodological approach. I draw on IGD for the following reasons: (a) IGD is a higher education-specific method for facilitating cross-difference interaction, learning, and knowledge building; and (b) my personal experience facilitating an IGD course for undergraduate students and training other IGD facilitators.

The IGD program was developed, in part, to address the lack of emphasis within multicultural education on facilitating cross-group interaction. Typically, trained facilitators engage students from different social identity groups in dialogue to critically analyze issues of

difference and dominance using a predesigned curriculum, which incorporates readings, reflective journal writing, and/or a collective action component (Nagda & Gurin, 2007). It is common practice for the group to create a list of community needs (sometimes referred to as group needs) (Schoem & Hurtado, 2001). This practice is intended to, in part, create a shared sense of engagement by addressing the anxiety and uncertainty that often exists when discussing issues of power, privilege, and identity among people with different social identities (Schoem & Hurtado, 2001).

In this study, the participants and I explored our individual needs to address the possible anxiety and uncertainty associated with discussing race and racism in a cross-race setting, specifically White participants and a Black researcher. I invited each participant to reflect on the thoughts and feelings they had about discussing race and racism with a Black person. I reflected on my own feelings and thoughts associated with having a conversation about race and racism with White participants. From these reflections, we both answered the following question at the beginning of the first individual interview: What do I need to be able to speak freely and listen fully? By incorporating the IGD practice of explicitly stating individual needs into my methodological approach, I engaged in a knowledge-building process that is more closely aligned with one way People of Color and White people build knowledge about race and racism within TWIs. Collectively case study and intergroup dialogue informed the study's research approach and design.

Research Design

This section details the specific processes I used to collect and analyze data to answer my research questions. Specifically, I provide an overview of each of the following aspects of the research design: sampling strategy and criteria, participant recruitment, data sources, and data

analysis. I conclude this section with a discussion of data trustworthiness, the study's limitations, and my position as the researcher.

Sampling Strategy and Criteria

Studying White staff who engage in acts of racial allyship at TWIs required purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling is appropriate when a researcher needs to identify information-rich data sources (i.e., individuals and/or groups with knowledge or experience with the phenomenon of interest) to study a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Specifically, I used criterion sampling since it was important that all of the participants in my study had experience with the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2013). This study's sampling procedures were informed by a pilot study I conducted (discussed later in this chapter), my literature review, research questions, and epistemological frameworks.

For this study, each participant met all of the following criteria: (1) was at least 18 years old; (2) was nominated by a Person of Color who is also a current staff member at a TWI; (3) was a current staff member at a TWI; (4) self-identified as White; (5) had at least three examples of engaging in acts of racial allyship at their institution.

I intentionally chose to not restrict participation by geography or institution to ensure sufficient participants for this study. Also, I chose to require all participants to be nominated by a Person of Color, which is in line with feminist standpoint theorists' claim that research concerned with issues of power should begin with the oppressed (Bowell, 2018). I discuss the rationale for the fifth selection criteria at the end of this chapter, in the pilot study subsection, since this criteria is directly informed by my pilot study.

Participant Recruitment

For this study, it was important that my recruitment strategies were aligned with the study's sampling strategy and criteria. Specifically, I selected participants who had reflected on issues of race and racism at TWIs, had thought about the practice of White racial allyship, and purposefully engaged in acts of racial allyship at their TWI.

To recruit White staff, I enlisted the assistance of nominators. I used my personal and professional networks (i.e., as a higher education doctoral student at a TWI and a diversity and inclusion trainer and consultant) to identify and request nominations from twenty-eight People of Color at TWIs whose formal or informal roles on campus were related to racial diversity, inclusion, or equity. Once I identified nominators, I sent them an email explaining the study's purpose and design, emphasizing the critical role of the nomination process, describing in detail the types of participants who fit the study's criteria, and explaining why I chose them to be a potential nominator (see Appendix A). In the email, I provided a Google form link for prospective nominators to provide me with their full name and email address, as well as the full name, email address, phone number, institution, role on campus, and reason for nomination for each nominee (see Appendix B). I invited nominators to contact me to discuss the study in more detail and to ask any questions they had. I also encouraged them to contact the individuals they nominated for the study to share their nomination and to encourage them to participate. I received a total of twenty-four nominations from ten nominators. Seven nominees were not considered potential participants for the following reasons: nominator provided insufficient examples of observed racial allyship (4) and nominees were not staff members at a TWI (3). Each nominator received an electronic "Thank You" card for their support of the study.

I sent individual emails to seventeen potential participants where I introduced myself, explained the study's purpose and design, emphasized the critical role of the nomination process, informed them that they have been nominated, detailed participation requirements, and extended a formal invitation to participate in the study (see Appendix C). In the email, I also invited potential participants to complete a brief survey (see Appendix D) collecting information, including demographic data, which allowed me to determine whether they met the study's criteria. I also provided an invitation to discuss the study in greater detail via email or phone if necessary. Ten potential participants completed the survey. Each person who completed a survey received an electronic "Thank You" card. Once I confirmed the eligibility of each of the ten potential participants, I sent a follow-up email to inform them that they had been selected to participate in the study, asked them to share their availability for the first interview; and asked them to review, ask any questions about, and, if they agreed, sign the consent form (see Appendices E & F). Following this email, one potential participant shared they were not available during the semester of data collection and another potential participant did not respond to two follow-up emails to schedule their first interview. The remaining eight staff members made up the initial group of the study's participants; however, one participant stopped participating in the study due to personal reasons, after taking part in the first interview.

The participants include 4 women and 3 men who shared that, in addition to their race, their gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, familial status, education status, ability, socioeconomic status, and religious beliefs were collectively important to how they saw themselves. The staff members worked in various higher education functions at the time of this study (e.g., academic affairs; institutional diversity, equity, and inclusion; international education; and residence life) and worked at six institutions across the United States.

Data Sources

I collected data from the following sources: nominator and participant surveys, semi-structured interviews, and participant journals.

Nominator and Participant Surveys

The first source of data was nominator and participant surveys. In the selection process each nominator and participant completed a brief survey (Appendix B and Appendix D, respectively). The primary purpose of each survey was to help me determine whether potential participants met the study's criteria and recruit a diverse set of cases. Nominators shared their reason(s) for nominating each individual, and participants described the ways they engage in acts of racial allyship at their institution. The surveys' secondary purpose was to gain basic background information and to begin to understand ways White staff engage in acts of racial allyship, both from their perspective and the perspective of their peers.

In-depth Interviews

The second source of data was the in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Because they are based on the assumption that each of the seven participants understands the world differently, semi-structured interviews rely on an unstructured interview protocol (Creswell, 2013). This type of interview protocol includes semi-structured, open-ended questions. Unlike more structured interviews, the interviewer does not follow a rigid, pre-determined set of questions but instead prepares a broad set of issues they want to explore with participants while also allowing the space for unscripted questions directly related to each participant's perspectives and experiences (Creswell, 2013). This approach was appropriate for this study because it allowed me to understand the ways participants understood their own experiences without being restricted by my (i.e., the researcher's) pre-conceived understandings of the phenomenon.

I conducted two semi-structured interviews with each participant. The first interview ranged from 75-90 minutes and the second interview ranged from 30-45 minutes. All interviews were conducted in person or via the video-conferencing service Zoom and in a secure place where the participant could speak freely and honestly. I emailed the interview questions to each participant before each interview and every effort was made to conduct interviews in person. I began the first interview by restating the purpose of the study and reviewing the consent form, including my request to audio record the interview for future transcription. I also restated each participant's ability to end their participation in the study at any time and for any reason. To account for the possible anxiety and uncertainty associated with discussing race and racism in a cross-race setting, the first interview began with a discussion between me and the participant prompted by the following question: What do I need to be able to speak freely and listen fully. This was followed by an exploration of the participant's perspectives and experiences related to (a) the presence of racism at their institution and (b) and how White people in their institution challenge racism. (See Appendix G for the interview protocol used for the first interview, which was informed by my conceptual framework and literature review.) The second interview served as a follow-up to participants' journaling, described below.

Participant Journals

The third source of data were participant journals, in which they combined their observations and accounts of specific events with their experiences of, personal reflections on, and ideas about those events and experiences (Hedlund, Furst, & Foley, 1989). They are particularly helpful in examining events and experiences within a more natural context (Simmons-Mackie & Damico, 2001) and are a good supplement to interviews because they decrease the time distance between experience and reflection. Journals can be used to confirm,

enrich, and clarify interview data and to provide responses to questions not properly explored during an earlier interview (Hayman, Wilkes, & Jackson, 2012).

Each participant responded to four journal prompts before participating in a second interview. The journal prompts covered the following topics: (a) the role of self-reflection in racial allyship; (b) examples of action and inaction in response to an observed need to engage in racial allyship; (c) the ideal version of a White person practicing racial allyship in the participant's professional role; and (d) the role of collaboration in racial allyship. (See Appendix H for the full journal entry instructions document, which includes journal prompts.) All participants completed their journal entries electronically. Five participants shared their journal entries via Penzu, a free, password-protected online journal that allows users to share specific posts. Two participants shared their journal entries via email with Word documents attached. Although I initially asked participants to complete journal entries one at a time over a four-week period, participants were able to complete their journal entries over a time period and in a manner that worked best for them. I waited to schedule and conduct the second interview with each participant, after I received their journal entries. While the second interview incorporated specific probing questions based on the participant journals and first interview, Appendix I includes discussion topics that I predicted would cut across all participants.

Data Analysis

I used constant comparative method for data analysis, which recommends three phases of analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Below, I describe in detail the data analysis process. For clarity I present the data collection and analysis process separately; however, in line with my constant comparative method, I began analyzing the data during the data collection process and engaged in both processes simultaneously (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). For example, I used a paid

transcription service to transcribe participant interviews; however, it was important that I confirmed each document's accuracy by listening to the audio recordings and reviewing each document. During this process, I wrote observer comments (i.e., my thoughts, feelings, questions, and hunches about specific responses) into the transcripts. These initial comments informed subsequent interview questions and areas of focus. Because this is a multiple case study, data analysis occurred in two stages—within-case analysis and cross-case analysis.

Within-case Analysis

In the first stage of my data analysis, I engaged in within-case analysis. I examined each case separately, which means I treated each participant as its own comprehensive case. The purpose of this stage of analysis was to create individual case profiles for each participant. As such, I engaged in inductive coding which allowed case-specific themes to emerge from the data.

Open coding. As stated previously, data collection and data analysis occurred simultaneously. The first phase of data analysis in this stage involved what Merriam and Tisdell (2015) refers to as open coding. Open coding refers to the inductive process of "making notations next to bits of data that strike [me] as potentially relevant for answering [my] research questions" (p. 204). I read each participant's transcripts and journal entries multiple times while making open codes. I kept the codes that emerged from each case separate.

Axial coding. The next phase of coding was axial coding. Axial coding refers to the process of grouping open codes that seem to go together (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Axial coding also goes beyond simple description to also represent a researcher's interpretation and meaning making (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I began axial coding when I began the open coding process for each case's journal entries. This coding allowed me to further refine and develop each case's codes by combining repeating or similar codes into broader themes and categories.

Participant profiles. In line with Merriam and Tisdell's (2015) description of within-case analysis, I treated each case separately by analyzing contextual data relevant to each participant. From this analysis I developed a profile for each participant. Each participant profile included the participant's professional role/title, years of higher education professional experience, important social identities (as applicable), reason(s) for nomination, and their response to being nominated. The profiles also included key moments in the participant's life that shaped their perspective on race and racism; and ways they conceptualized racial allyship.

Cross-case Analysis

The second stage of multiple case study data analysis is cross-case analysis. After conducting within-case analysis and developing participant profiles, a "multicase study seeks to build abstractions across cases . . . [that] attempts to build a general explanation that fits all the individual cases" (Merriam & Tisdell, p.234, 2015). In this stage, I used deductive coding, where the initial cross-case codebook included codes based on my literature review. Specifically, I included codes aligned with the following literature review sections: forms of Whiteness and White people engaging in acts of racial allyship. This codebook was used to analyze data from each case. For any data that did not fit into the pre-determined codes, I sought to find themes that cut across most of the cases or was particularly relevant to addressing the research questions. The conceptual frameworks were used in my final chapter, particularly in the discussion section. All coding and data analysis was done using Dedoose, a data analysis software program.

Trustworthiness

In order to ensure the trustworthiness of the data quality, I used three strategies: (a) triangulation, (b) member checking, and (c) peer debriefing. Triangulation is the process of collecting data through multiple forms of data collection and multiple data sources to provide a

fuller understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). In this study, I collected data through simple surveys, in-depth interviews, and participant journals. By using multiple forms of data collection from multiple sources, I was able to provide a more nuanced description and more thorough examination of my phenomenon.

I also used member checking to ensure trustworthiness. Member checking can take on various forms in qualitative research (Creswell, 2013). In this study I conducted member checking in two ways. First, I invited participants to review their transcript data and offer any feedback regarding what is presented (e.g. confirm, ask for material to be removed, or provide additional information). Next, I invited participant feedback on themes that emerged from the data analysis process. I emailed a list of the emerging themes with a brief summary for each and gave each participant a week to share their responses. If after communicating about findings there was no agreement between participant and researcher interpretation, I presented both interpretations.

Peer debriefing was the third measure I used in this study to ensure trustworthiness. My peer debriefers included intentionally selected colleagues, professors, and practitioners who are familiar with my research topic. These individuals helped me make sense of the data by asking critical questions, providing feedback, and making space for "thinking out loud" about the data themes. At no point in this process did I reveal confidential information about research participants.

Limitations

Whereas I hope this study will provide insight into the ways White people at TWIs engage in acts of racial allyship, there are limitations. First, the research design relies on a nomination process. The process of nominating a person for this research study will be

significantly subjective. Each nominator's perspectives on what it means to be a White staff member engaging in acts of racial allyship shaped the research in ways that I will be unable to fully account for in my research design. The nominators' perspectives impacted both the participants who took part in the study and the data I had access to as a researcher. I attempted to mitigate this limitation by providing nominators with the same questions to consider when making their nominations (e.g., Who are White staff you have witnessed challenge racism among other White people? Who are White staff whose professional practice challenges racial marginalization?).

Secondly, I sought to create sampling criteria that allowed me to select participants who regularly and intentionally engage in acts of racial allyship at TWIs. Clearly some White people at TWIs who engage in acts of racial allyship do so inconsistently and perhaps unintentionally. While those individuals are not included in this study, their acts of racial allyship are not necessarily less impactful. However, I will not have access to data that would allow me to describe this aspect of the study's phenomenon.

Lastly, I used White staff members' acts of racial allyship as a diagnostic of racial power at their institutions. Put differently, I paid attention to what forms of racism and Whiteness are participants' acts of racial allyship aimed at resisting (e.g., a specific policy or practice). With that said, this study is limited in understanding the contours of racism and Whiteness that would be revealed if I were to also examine resistance among White undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty. It is possible that the forms of Whiteness produced and reproduced by White staff are more evident to undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty, as opposed to the staff members themselves. While this study makes an important contribution by focusing on an understudied population, particularly as it relates to the study's phenomenon,

there is a tradeoff.

Researcher Positionality

Regardless of the question(s) asked or methods used, a researcher(s) impacts the inquiry process at every phase (Smith, 1999). Instead of trying to identify, and control for, every way one can impact the inquiry process, many scholars suggest that researchers practice reflexivity to think deeply about their positionality. Fonow and Cook (1991) described reflexivity in feminist research as "the tendency of feminists to reflect upon, examine critically, and explore analytically the nature of the research process"; reflexivity includes an "exploration of the investigator's reactions to doing the research" (p. 2). This practice of intentional reflection is also an important way for researchers to identify more implicit assumptions they bring to their project. When I proposed my study, a good place for me to start this reflection was at the question: "Why am I pursuing this research topic?" While there are likely many motivations and experiences that have brought me to this topic that I cannot recall, name, or access, there are some that standout and are directly related to my upbringing.

I grew up as a Black boy in Wilmington, North Carolina. This statement can, and does, mean many things for me. It took on a rather specific meaning in light of the 2016 US presidential election. I found myself repeating this statement often when talking to White friends and colleagues who were genuinely surprised by the election results. The fact that the majority of White voters would choose a racist, xenophobic, sexist narcissist for the country's highest elected office shocked many of the White people I know personally.

The fact that I was not similarly shocked was, as I understood it, a direct result of growing up a Black boy in Wilmington, NC. I knew White racism and hatred firsthand. I was maybe seven years old the first time a White child called me a nigger. My grandmother told me

stories of the racist conditions that led her to participate in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. In middle school, I read *The Autobiography of Malcolm X,* which helped me realize that I was not wrong to be angry at racism. I also knew the less obvious ways White people treated People and Communities of Color as if we were less valuable. I knew that White employees followed me (from a distance) around stores while I shopped, and not White customers. I knew that during the one year in middle school I spent on the non-advanced class track, teachers treated me as if I was somehow less smart; and I knew that the non-advanced classes were mostly Black, and my advanced classes were mostly White. I knew that if enrollment in advanced placement classes were solely based on academic performance, there were Black friends who should have been in those classes with me—and White friends who should not have been there. I knew, rather, I know that the weight of Whiteness falls most devastatingly on People of Color; and over time, I developed a sense of responsibility to resist.

I also grew up as a Black, conservative Christian in Wilmington, NC. North Carolina is located in the "Bible Belt", a region of the Southern US where Christian conservatism and evangelicalism shape the region's social structure and politics. From a young age, my religious identity was just as important to me as my racial identity. Some of the people I love most were a part of my religious community growing up. Yet, some of the beliefs I most regret having held I learned from the same community. Specifically, I am often uncomfortable when I reflect on the homophobic and transphobic beliefs I held, words I said, and actions I took in the name of practicing my faith. One example is the strong stance I took against what is commonly referred to as same-sex marriage. Fast-forward to the year 2014: I found myself celebrating a federal judge's decision determining that the North Carolina legislature's attempt to amend the state's constitution to prohibit same-sex marriages was unconstitutional. Even more ironic was that I

celebrated this decision with colleagues as an intern in the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (GLBT) Center at my university. My paths from conservative Christian to GLBT intern are neither linear nor neat, and while the details of those paths are deeply informative, their existence is relevant for this study. The stories reveal to me that it is possible for people to change their mind, hearts, and behavior; even when it goes deeply against their socialization. I do not claim to have arrived in working through my own homophobia and transphobia, or my ableism and sexism for that matter, but I can acknowledge my growth. The awareness to acknowledge my growth and the humility to know I have more growing to do informs my interest in this research topic. I know that there are White people who have not arrived in working through their own racism, but who have also grown in their thoughts and behaviors.

Reflecting on her years living in Accra, Ghana, Maya Angelou (1991) recalled a conversation she had with Malcolm X. Maya Angelou had just finished expressing her anger with Shirley DuBois, W.E.B. DuBois's widow, for various reasons including her disconnection from the Black American struggle. When she finished speaking, Malcolm X's response was both surprising and upsetting to her. One part of the conversation, a quote that I had heard long before I knew its context, deeply informs my worldview. Malcolm X compared American racism to a mountain, equating the multiple stratum, or layers, of a mountain to the various levels of American racism. Arguing that the battle against racism required fighters on each level, he responded, "Don't be in such a hurry to condemn a person because he doesn't do what you do, or think as you think or as fast. There was a time when you didn't know what you know today" (Angelou, 1991, p. 145). In the same way that Malcolm X's words remind me that anger towards racism and the desire to resist racism are humane, they are also a sobering reminder that practicing patience with people along their journey in resisting racism is as well. For me, asking

the question of how do White people engage in acts of racial allyship at TWIs is an act of both resistance and patience.

Pilot Study

In spring 2016, I conducted a qualitative study that served as a pilot study for this research project. The purpose of the (pilot) study was to better understand the experiences of White people who engage in racial diversity and inclusion work, specifically White staff at Traditionally White institutions (TWIs). I employed a narrative inquiry approach and used semi-structured interviews as my data sources. With the assistance of Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) staff at a large, land grant, research one TWI, I used a nomination process to identify White staff as potential participants. Before potential participants were contacted, at least two ODI staff members nominated each person as someone they would describe as engaging in diversity and inclusion work on campus. The final sample for this study included four White staff members—two women and two men.

Following narrative inquiry research design, I conducted one semi-structured interview with each participant, ranging in length from 45 to 90 minutes each. All of the interviews were conducted in a participant's office because each one had their own office space with a door that could be closed for privacy. I used the study's purpose, research questions, and relevant literature to develop the interview protocol, which focused primarily on the participants' understandings of concepts related to race and racism and their experience engaging in racial diversity and inclusion work.

I conducted an inductive coding process that allowed me to analyze the data for themes and to continually combine codes and themes into the most salient and common themes cutting across all four participants. This analysis yielded three major themes: supporting the racially

marginalized and challenging the racially privileged, the difficulty in making change, and the importance of White anti-racist role models.

While the findings from this pilot study were informative, reflection on the research design was most helpful in regard to the present study. For example, in the pilot study I used a nomination process. I asked staff in the ODI to identify White staff they considered as engaging in diversity and inclusion work. For my dissertation I went a step further and shared explicit selection criteria with nominators to identify potential participants (criteria described earlier in the chapter). I also found that two participants in the pilot study had done deep, personal reflection on their own White identity and issues of race and racism; however, they had not significantly or explicitly engaged in racial diversity and inclusion efforts. With that possibility in mind, I strengthened the selection process for this study by requiring potential participants to share with me specific ways they engage in acts of racial allyship. Lastly, the pilot study involved only one semi-structured interview whereas the actual study involved nominator and participant surveys, two semi-structured interviews, and participant journal entries responding to four prompts. In my view, these changes improved the current study's design based on lessons learned from my pilot study.

Chapter 4: Case Profiles

This chapter provides insight into the journeys and perspectives of the study's seven participants, through individual case profiles. The profiles begin by offering some demographic and study relevant information on each participant. Specifically, each profile includes the participant's professional role/title, years of higher education professional experience, important social identities (as applicable), reason(s) for nomination, and their response to being nominated. The profiles also included key moments in the participant's life that shaped their perspective on

race and racism; and ways they conceptualized racial allyship. Collectively, these profiles are designed to offer a deeper understanding of each White staff member and thus context for how, and in some cases why, they are committed to the practice of racial allyship at their institutions.

Audrey's Case Profile

Audrey works at a TWI in the Northeast United States and is the highest-level administrator who participated in the study. She holds a PhD in a STEM field and brings almost 35 years of higher education experience to her role overseeing several academic units and initiatives on campus. The administrator who nominated Audrey supports the diversity and inclusion efforts of academic units at their shared institution. The nominator thought Audrey would be a good fit for this study because she was "fighting to hire diverse faculty" and "changing policy that allowed" others to do the same. Similar to other participants, Audrey had mixed feelings about being nominated for the study. At first, she was "proud to be identified as an ally . . . but then became embarrassed that [she] was not reflective or proactive" enough in her practice of racial allyship. She wondered, "Well, what have I really done? Am I fake?" Audrey's reflections also led her to revisit memories of her youth– "for better or worse"–that shaped her worldview on issues of race and racism.

Audrey's youth was a "somewhat unique experience." She grew up as a White minority in a majority African American community and participated in a Girls Scout troop that was "a third White and two-thirds African Americans." Audrey's experience being in community with African Americans at such a young age made her more aware of the realities of racism. She shared, "When you see racism and you see people you know and you respect be mistreated, it's way easier to see the evil of it."

High school was one place Audrey witnessed how racism led to the mistreatment of African Americans. Audrey began high school attending a predominately African American school, where she and her brother were the only two White students. The school system officially desegregated halfway through her first year, which meant Audrey and her brother would be transferred to a predominately White school. Before they changed schools, she observed how the school system "started planting bushes [and] the French books that [her school] didn't have all semester suddenly arrived . . . [and] the school was painted" all in preparation for the White students who would soon arrive. She eventually transferred and on the first day of school received surprised looks and questions from her new classmates and teachers. Each time she entered a new classroom she was greeted by others "thinking [she] was going to be Black" or saying, 'You must be in the wrong room.'" The resistance she and her African American peers experienced in their new school deeply impacted Audrey: "When you live it and you see it, it certainly makes an impression." The experience of transferring schools was pivotal to Audrey's understanding of herself and the world around her.

Audrey's transition to a new high school taught her lessons about race, while her transition to college taught her lessons about class. She attended college "with people with alligators on their shirts and [she] didn't even know what the alligator represented." The shirts with the alligators were Lacoste shirts, a brand known for its relatively high price and association with high socioeconomic status. Audrey, on the other hand, was "a first-generation student . . . from a family who qualified for food stamps." Going to college "was a bit of a culture shock" as she noticed both "the economic [and racial] divide" at her university. It was not lost on her that "most people [who] get [a high-level administrative] role didn't grow up as poor as [she] did." She carried these insights into issues of race and class with her into her role as an administrator.

One insight Audrey gained was that people may judge others harshly based on their own assumptions and stereotypes. She struggled to determine "how much to share of [her] backstory." Her "seat of power" was at a table with people who were more accustomed to such privileges, and she did not want others to "think less of [her] and [her] abilities" by stereotyping her. Even in adulthood, Audrey experienced people responding with surprise or distance when hearing parts of Audrey's story. Towards the end of our first interview, Audrey pointed to the center of the meeting table where we sat and said, "I think something that I've always struggled with was when to put that in my office and when not to." She was pointing to a picture of a prominent Black leader, who many White people consider divisive, that contained a quote about the value of education. She reflected on her internal struggle to put this part of herself and her values on display at work:

> I saw it right after I got the tenure track position . . . [and at first] I kept it at home. It took me a while before I took it to work. And then, I struggled whether I should [display] it in my office when I [first] became [an administrator] . . . It's really interesting seeing people's reaction to that, especially White people's reaction. . . They look and look away. They don't even take time to read it."

Though disheartening, the reactions from her White colleagues were not surprising to Audrey and aligned with previous experiences engaging other White people about issues of race and racism. Audrey "sometimes challenge[d] co-workers, friends, and family members when they behave[d] in racist or racially biased [ways]," and in the past she "would do some calling out" in ways that made some White people uncomfortable. She also "educate[d] others about issues of race and racism . . . [and] advocate[d] for issues to improve racial diversity, inclusion, and equity at [her] institution." Audrey "acknowledge[d] [her] own racial and other privileges . . . [and]

use[d] vacation time to learn and honor work of civil rights leaders." It is possible she learned about the civil rights leaders she honored in a Black history course she took in high school. The story of how she came to take this course provided insight into her personality and values. When Audrey was transferred to her new high school, she was assigned to take Black history. She recalled:

> [M]y guidance counselor looked at my schedule, looked at me, [and said], "I don't know how that ever happened! We'll get you out of that class right away." I said, "No, thank you very much. I would like to stay in that class."

The guidance counselor's surprise and near insistence that a White student shouldn't be in a Black history course did not sit well with Audrey, and after deciding to stay in the class, she found it to be "the only safe place that [she] felt the entire time that year." Audrey "was welcomed in that classroom" even when she "wasn't welcomed anywhere else." Growing up in close community with African American families and children, Audrey saw the evils of racism and how it impacted people she cared about. These experiences would influence her conceptualization of racial allyship.

Audrey's Conceptualization of Racial Allyship

Audrey's conceptualization of racial allyship emphasized the importance of addressing injustice and engaging in intentional reflection. Audrey's emphasis on addressing injustice was grounded in the belief that people should not be treated differently due to some part of their identity:

> I think it's important to make sure that all individuals are given the support that they need to thrive, whether they're a student, staff, or faculty member. And if one sees something

that is unjust, it's important to speak up and do what you can to make sure that people are treated with the respect they deserve and given the opportunities that they deserve.

Audrey realized that achieving a world where everyone was treated justly required others to address and challenge injustices when they witnessed them. Whereas she held these values for most of her life, the language of this study gave her an opportunity to reflect on her values from a different perspective.

Audrey believed engaging in intentional reflection was critical to the practice of racial allyship. She reflected on the language of "racial allyship" while taking part in the study and found it "helpful to have a name for what [she] would have called . . . advocacy and just common good human behavior." Advocacy and engaging in "just common good behavior" meant "being open, being vigilant, and being observant and speaking up." By having a "more specific, granular name," Audrey believed "it may help encourage [her] to do it more frequently" in the future. She "came to appreciate" that foundational to "allyship is reflecting on actions taken and actions not taken to evolve one's allyship and the possibility to use these reflections in conversations with other White allies or potential White allies to enhance and spread the practice."

Audrey's conceptualization evolved to take into greater account reflection, intentionality, and community with White people practicing racial allyship. While reflecting on this new language, Audrey experienced "difficulty sorting out what is allyship and what is part of [her] work role and duties." While this sorting out was a "work in progress," she was able to identify some practices of racial allyship within her professional role.

When I asked Audrey to describe in a journal the ideal person in her professional position practicing White racial allyship and then to reflect on how she felt her current practice aligned with this ideal version, she did so by assigning herself letter grades. For example, she gave

herself a “Grade of C” on the practice of “dedicat[ing] time for self-reflection” because she “need[ed] to look at ways to unload some responsibilities to free up time for” this practice. When it came to “[engaging] in [the] proactive education of others, especially immediate supervisees,” she gave herself a “Grade of C” and planned to make “engaging in self education part of [the] annual performance review for all supervisees” the following year. She read “relevant literature” and “attended [relevant] workshops” and therefore gave herself a “B” for self-education. The table below includes other practices Audrey identified in her journal as forms of racial allyship, her self-assessment notes, and her assigned grade.

Table 1

Audrey’s racial allyship self-assessment

Practice	**Self-assessment note**	**Grade**
Dutiful scanning of social/cultural environment to identify areas for education, change, allyship	for scanning - need to solidify process and action steps	A
Identify and cultivate other allies	while I have identified other allies, I have not formally engaged in conversations or supportive activities beyond those that happen in my normal daily role on committees related to diversity and inclusion work	D
Identify allies/colleagues of “color” to provide direct and honest feedback about allyship performance	Not implemented	F

Audrey’s use of self-grading demonstrated her willingness to engage in honest, self-critique, even when it revealed the need for significant growth. She balanced this deep critique by being patient with herself and others, and “appreciate[ing] [and] not be overly angry or

frustrated with White people who don't get it yet." She understood "that privilege can be poison, and White privilege can make people do things that they wouldn't normally do."

In summary, Audrey's values were clear and her convictions deep. Her "unique" childhood experience and unconventional path to university administration gave her insights that many of her White colleagues did not have. Perhaps it was the culmination of these experiences, values, and convictions that made her instinctually respond to acts of racial bias and injustice and also made her open to further developing an understanding of racial allyship even within the context of this study.

Adam's Case Profile

Adam serves as a student affairs educator at a TWI in the Midwest United States and holds a PhD in Arts Education (Note: Adam uses he/him/his and they/them/theirs pronouns and I use both sets of pronouns to refer to Adam throughout this study). They have nearly 30 years of higher education experience, primarily in the areas of gender and sexuality. In addition to being White, being a gay male is important to Adam's full identity. Adam was nominated by a supervisee with extensive diversity, inclusion, and equity experience. Their nominator believed they were a good fit for the study due to his "history of hiring . . . and supporting [staff members to hire] . . . a racially diverse staff." Their nominator also shared that Adam "facilitated [a] race-based intergroup dialogue course" and emphasized the intersections of gender, sexuality, and race in his work. Even though Adam's nominator knew them as someone who embraced values aligned with racial allyship, those values represented "an evolution" from some values they were taught growing up.

Adam was raised to practice a religion that "did not allow Black people to be [leaders]," a practice implying that Black members were "second class." Even at a young age he wondered,

"Why is that?" His parents' attempts to answer his questions did not make "a whole lot of sense" and created "somewhat of a crisis" of faith. Years later, when his faith community changed course to allow Black members to be leaders, Adam "cried because . . . [a] burden was lifted." Not only did the change impact Adam, but it "changed [other] people's attitudes," including his mother's. He doubted "she ever fully got there," but witnessed his mother make "progress . . . [that] was extraordinary for her." In this instance, "there" meant fully accepting Black people and other People of Color as her equal. The story of Adam's religious upbringing demonstrated how race "was something that had been on [his] mind from a very young age." Race was also on Adam's mind from a young age because of his early schooling experience.

Adam grew up on a military base, lived in "integrated housing," and attended an "integrated [elementary] elementary school." They attended elementary school with "smart Black people" and knew there was no truth to the idea that "Black people [were] . . . not as intelligent [or were] less than" White people. However, the schools off the military base were racially segregated, and Adam eventually attended the White junior high school off base. They attended this school years after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled via Brown v. Board of Education that racial segregation of public schools was unconstitutional. Although the schools were segregated, Adam rode the school bus with Black and White students. They thought having Black and White students share the same bus while going to segregated schools "was a really stupid way to do things" but looking back also recognized it permitted conversations that might not have otherwise been possible. One particular conversation with a Black student stood out. It was about recent renovations made to the Black school "in the run up to Brown v. Board of Education . . . to prove that [the school system was] providing [Black students]" a separate but

equal education. Unaware of this legislative context at the time, Adam simply admired the building's newness:

> I remember saying to one of the Black kids who rode the bus with me, "Well, when I get into high school, I'd rather go to [the Black] high school because it looks new and modern and wonderful." And I remember her comment back, she says, "No, you don't, it's rundown, they let it go, it's falling apart." And, I thought, "That's pretty crummy, why would they do that? They have a new building."

On the one hand, Adam saw nothing wrong with going to a Black high school, but on the other did not understand why the Black students and community would let their new building go to waste. Riding the bus through Black neighborhoods with Black students, they could not deny they were "noticing . . . cultural differences." These differences, however, did not justify "treating people as less than." Adam's faith gave them a sense of "what is moral [and] what is immoral," and the mistreatment of Black people due to their race was "just not a moral thing to do." Taken together, their religious and school experiences taught them that "race matters."

Adam also acknowledged that race mattered in the context of this study due to our different racial identities. He acknowledged the potential "impulse to perform . . . to show [himself] to be the good White guy" when interacting with me, a Black researcher. Yet, because he often had conversations with People of Color about race and racism, he was confident in his ability to identify and address those impulses. Adam acknowledged that "there's not a prescribed list" for interacting across race, though "it's important to name" and "be aware" of racial dynamics. His personal and professional life experiences engaging the issue of race informed how he conceptualized racial allyship.

Adam's Conceptualization of Racial Allyship

Adam's conceptualization of racial allyship emphasized considering the intersections of race with other identities, assessing a White person's relationship to race, and collaborating to create space for People of Color in White-dominant spaces. Adam also believed that each of these emphases must be grounded in the values of cultural awareness, cultural humility, and empathy. They stressed the importance of considering the intersections of gender, sexuality, and race in their work because understanding race was "critical in understanding" other marginalized identities. A White educator Adam met at a regional, professional conference early in their career modeled this intersectional approach. At this conference, they attended a meeting that gathered student affairs educators whose work focused primarily on issues of gender and sexuality to discuss the present and future of their collective work, which was in the early stages of development on many campuses. The lead facilitator for the group discussion was White and challenged the room by saying, "I want you to look around this room. Everyone here is White. What are we going to do about that?" The White educator modeled that gender and sexuality work did not exist alone but were deeply connected to work related to race. In response, Adam resolved to "do [their] best to bring" People of Color into these spaces.

Adam also believed the practice of racial allyship involved assessing a White person's relationship to race. He understood from personal experience that a White person's perspectives on issues of race and racism could evolve, but first it was important to know the person's starting point. Knowing an individual's starting point was influenced by Dr. Dorothy Riddle's Scale of Homophobia (1985):

> [Dr. Riddle] talks about [homophobia] as being on a scale. . . [T]here's this continuum, and you can move back and forth on it. But the scale sort of [goes] from . . . repulsion . . .

> to nurturance. . . I teach and understand how this works around homophobia and issues of sexual orientation. I'm not sure it's the best tool, even, but it's a tool that I have to understand and talk about issues of race.

Adam's experience applying the Riddle Scale (1985) as an educational tool to address homophobia taught him important lessons about how people's perspectives and attitudes can change. He learned a person does not move "from abhorrence to nurturance in one session" and that some people on "the extreme end" may not change at all. As an educator, he understood "if you can get someone to move to the next level [on the continuum], that's progress." Adam acknowledged that defining progress as helping a White person incrementally grow across a continuum was "insufficient, but it's what you can do. And sometimes you kind of have to be content with what you can do." He also learned the importance of using audience specific language, providing this example:

> [H]ow helpful is it to say that White people are racist? I believe that, but I just don't think you win many converts by saying that, especially not the people you need to reach. . . So, saying someone is a racist is something I tend to stay away from. But, rather, to think of racism as a virus that contaminates our culture or contaminates the water that you drink. If you're drinking the water, you're ingesting this virus. The question is what are you gonna do with that virus? Are you gonna fight it off? Are you gonna transmit it to somebody else? What are you gonna do with that? I don't know. For me, that seems to be a more helpful way of talking about it.

Adam used metaphors to help White people understand what racism is and their relationship to it, which demonstrated a need to manage White people's resistance to conversations about racism. Lastly, he learned that relationship matters. He often asked himself,

"how well do I know the person?" and the "better [he knew] the person, the more willing [he was] to engage." Adam believed that helping White people understand, work through, and respond to issues of race and racism was part of what it meant to "take seriously the role of ally" even "when it may appear to be unrelated to [one's] job function." He also expressed the need for White people to collaborate with others to create space for People of Color in White dominant spaces.

Adam described using "positional power" for the "creation of opportunities and spaces for People of Color" as one of the most important aspects of racial allyship. Sometimes creating space involved a White person "sway[ing] . . . other White folks who People of Color may not be able to convince." Other times creating space involved "allowing [P]eople [of Color] to speak for themselves." Regardless of the approach, both should involve "partnering with, not usurping, listening and not dictating" to People of Color. Partnering and listening are important aspects of collaboration and for Adam "collaboration is what it is all about." One of the ways Adam conceptualized collaboration included "supporting . . . and volunteering labor [for] . . . the leadership of People of Color" and "solicit[ing] input on the role of [White] allies from People of Color who are engaged in . . . organized anti-racism work." The practice of collaborating to create space could lead to "hir[ing] People of Color, elevat[ing] their work, [and] provid[ing] growth opportunities." Adam did not "believe there [was] an ideal version" of a White person practicing racial allyship" because "so much depends on the specific context." However, there were "principles that guide[d]" his approach. These principles included the following, which have not yet been shared in this profile: cultural awareness, cultural humility, and empathy.

Practicing cultural awareness and cultural humility meant "being aware that . . . what might have meaning in one culture could mean something completely different in another." Even

if a person “cannot plumb the depths of meaning of something in a culture other than their own, . . . there should be sufficient humility to tread lightly when it comes to someone else's culture.” Cultural awareness and cultural humility led “to the concept of empathy.” Where there are limits to cultural awareness, “one doesn't need to fully understand in order to respond empathetically . . . to recognize that there is pain and to react in ways that are supportive.” Similarly, a person doesn’t “have to experience the same joy [another person] might feel to recognize joy and to react in ways that are supportive.” Ultimately, racial allyship was important to Adam not so much for what it meant to him, but what it meant to others.

In summary, Adam was raised by parents who themselves held racist views, grew up in a pre-Civil Rights movement America, and experienced both integrated and segregated education and faith communities. These experiences taught Adam that race was important from a young age. They also had models of White racial allyship early in their professional career and translated tools and experiences of educating others about homophobia to their conceptualization of racial allyship. These strategies were guided by the values of humility and empathy. Even while acknowledging the challenges and limits of progress, Adam believed that the practice of racial allyship was the right thing to do.

Kelly’s Case Profile

Kelly serves as a student affairs educator at a TWI in the Southeast United States and is pursuing a PhD in Education. She has 20 years of higher education experience, primarily in the areas of gender and international education. Kelly describes herself as a “mid-career, mid-level” staff member and considers her full identity to encompass the following: White, American of European heritage, cisgender woman, heterosexual/straight, and parent. She was nominated by a student affairs colleague who served on a cross-campus committee focused on improving the

Latinx staff and faculty experience. This was the same colleague who nominated Kaitlyn. The nominator believed Kelly would be a good fit for this study because she didn't "shy away from difficult conversations and challenging others" and "through her work . . . advocate[d] and educate[d] others about race." Although Kelly was "not 100% sure that [she was] an effective ally," she compared her feelings towards racial allyship to the way "a religious person feels "this is right [or] this is wrong." She desired to "amplify voices . . . [that had] been ignored" and to create access in places previously denied to individuals based on race.

Kelly's own awareness about issues of race and racism was "a learning process" that began in college. However, she wondered if there were connections between the type of person she was, even as a child, and the reasons she cared about racial allyship as an educator. Kelly shared that as a small child she was "very sensitive to other people's feelings," perhaps even more than other kids her age. She noticed when "something was unfair" or "somebody was hurt." She grew up in a "very [racially] homogenous environment" and, though she is unsure why, found herself drawn to the "very few People of Color in [her] elementary school." Kelly wondered if those early friendships made her "more prime to get involved in things like social justice [and] Intergroup Dialogue" later in life.

Kelly was less clear about the influence of her personality and childhood friendships; however, she knew that her undergraduate education and professional experiences increased her awareness of race and racism. Kelly "first started to learn about racism as something systematic" as an American Studies major, where her professors introduced critical texts and scholarship about race and racism. She also came to better understand the realities her "fellow Students of Colors" faced in undergrad by participating in a program similar to Intergroup Dialogue (IGD). Kelly's exposure to new theoretical perspectives and the lived experiences of her Peers of Color

provided a new lens to understand the world around her. As an educator, she was exposed to research that demonstrated why "racial allyship [made] sense." She learned the "benefits to practicing racial allyship" extended to everyone, not just People of Color. For example, she recognized the benefit of "students [having] faculty and staff that look like them" and that racially diverse teams "[came] up with more creative solutions." Kelly's feelings about racial equity and gender equity were similar. Throughout her career in higher education, most of the "the top leaders [were] usually White males, sometimes White females, and the top VPs [were] usually White." However, further down the organizational chart were "a ton of women who [made] the whole university run." She understood that the overrepresentation of White men in institutional leadership was directly connected to a global history of racist and sexist oppression. She held deep beliefs about the ways the world should be, but sometimes found it difficult to share those beliefs in public.

Kelly had some hesitation about participating in this study. She wondered, "[A]m I going to get in trouble" for speaking "very candid[ly]" about a "sensitive topic" as a staff member? In previous experiences of trying "to educate [her] own supervisors and higher ups about [diversity and inclusion] issues," she found it "challenging due to rankism," where a person's role and status dictated their treatment. In addition to concerns about how others would react, Kelly initially desired "to have more control over [her] narrative" through "self-regulating or self-censoring to make sure [she] was deliberate about what [she] was saying." She did not want to say something wrong and have it recorded and scrutinized. Perhaps what encouraged Kelly to participate in the study, despite her concerns, was her sense of responsibility. She served as an IGD facilitator and reflected on how important being in such spaces was to her own development:

> I was trusted to hear first-hand stories about experiences of racism, microaggressions, and discomfort. I was trusted to listen to the sharing of deep and personal emotions from Individuals of Color who feel literally sick and exhausted from constantly having to code-switch, to "perform," to educate others about race at a PWI and in the U.S. society. It has always felt important to me to honor this trust by being an active listener, by acknowledging and amplifying the experiences shared with me. More recently, I've tried to step it up by going beyond active listening and moving on to being more "activated"—taking action as an ally.

For Kelly, it was not enough to simply be aware of the impacts of racism on People of Color. She had to do more. Kelly's engagement with People of Color in these intentional, educational spaces not only helped her better understand their lived experiences, but also shaped her conceptualization of racial allyship.

Kelly's Conceptualization of Racial Allyship

Kelly's conceptualization of racial allyship emphasized the importance of embracing discomfort, amplifying the voices of People of Color, collaborating with others, and understanding the limitations and possibilities of power. Once, while in a group of only White IGD facilitators, Kelly was asked to "think of a time where your race was brought to your attention." She first thought about her many experiences traveling outside the U.S. However, the lead facilitator challenged Kelly to consider the context of her "day to day life," and she realized she did not "have to think about [her] race" on a daily basis. While being called out by the facilitator was uncomfortable, she learned to not "be so quick to [say], 'Oh, there are times where I have to think about my race as well.'" Another uncomfortable learning moment for Kelly was related to "believing stories." A Student of Color in her dialogue class reported a

negative encounter with a professor, which the student believed was due to her race. Kelly remembered thinking that race might not have been the reason for the professor's response but "maybe it was a miscommunication." Looking back, she noticed her own thoughts immediately invalidated the student's story and "since then [has] learned [she has] to trust . . . and not dismiss . . . people's stories." Even "if the professor didn't intend to be harmful," their "impact [on the Student of Color was] more important than the intention."

Kelly also emphasized amplifying the voices of People of Color. This emphasis was shaped by an experience at a professional conference. A Woman of Color attending the conference shared her thoughts on the word "ally." The conference attendee preferred the term "amplifier" or "an amplification" instead of "ally" because "it was very easy for people to [say], 'I'm an ally.'" She explained further that "amplification [was] really giving agency to the other person. . . You're not taking over their voice . . . but it's actually pushing their voice forward more." Kelly liked this perspective because it involved more than "just standing silently next to [People of Color]" but required action to "help make sure [their] voices [were] heard by everybody." A conversation she had with a Latina IGD co-facilitator further illustrated this perspective. Kelly's co-facilitator started their conversation with an observation:

> "When the White male students say this, and are just missing what I'm saying, it would be so helpful to me if you could speak up as a fellow White person and say this." And I [said], "Oh, okay, that's what you want from me. That's how I can help you." So, I listened to her, and then did what she was requesting.

Kelly's co-facilitator not only helped her understand the racial dynamic that was at play in their classroom space but also explained to her what she as a White person could do in response. She "learned all [about allyship] from People of Color telling [her] what they [were]

looking for in allies" and particularly benefited from reading social justice media posts from Women of Color. She was introduced to ideas such as "Don't speak for the [P]erson [of Color]" or "don't come into the room and make yourself the center of attention."

Collaboration was also important to Kelly's conceptualization of racial allyship. Kelly felt collaboration was "absolutely critical to [her] practice of White racial allyship." She learned "from both the formal and informal networks of [diversity and inclusion]-minded folks." For example, "being in community with Students and Colleagues of Color made [her] much more aware of their day-to-day experiences and the systematic ways that racism infiltrates virtually every corner of U.S. society." Additionally, her "practice of White allyship [had] been informed by and modeled after other White allies." For example, she paraphrased a White ally she admired: "as allies, we are never done learning, we are never done making mistakes, there is always more to learn, there is always room to do more and do better." Therefore, "being an ally was an ongoing process that require[d] ongoing education and self-reflection." Her community of "White allies challenge[d] . . . and educate[d]" one another. In addition to teaching and learning with one another, she found it "critical for White allies to come together and collaborate to call out, educate, and encourage action from White people who [were] not allies." This type of collaboration was important because Kelly worked in a "small [campus] department" and her "sphere of influence on campus as an individual [was] minimal." Although the ways Kelly practiced racial allyship were diverse, she felt they were "small."

These feelings reflected her awareness of the limitations and possibilities of power as it related to racial allyship. Kelly wanted to "think realistically about the limitations and possibilities related to [her] current role," which involved considering the "audiences [she had] access to, and the power" she held. She believed her practice of racial allyship represented

"small ways of trying to be an ally, because [she didn't] feel like [she had] the power to do something profound." She worked at an institution where "rankism [was] a real issue," where staff did not have as "much power or influence as faculty." Kelly experienced rankism at other campuses throughout her 20-year career and was used to not having "the power to access . . . high-level conversations and decisions about policies or issues where [she] could influence major decisions about how Students, Staff, and Faculty of Color [were] treated." On the other hand, being a staff member gave her "a lot of freedom to act independently . . . because she [didn't] have to answer to a traditional, formal department chairperson" and was "not restricted by some of the limitations that seem[ed] to be related to the tenure review system." This freedom and absence of tenure limitations allowed her to "deliberately recruit [and reward] . . . Students of Color and Staff of Color" when serving "on search [and awards] committees." Kelly tried to support her Supervisees of Color as they "navigate[d] working in a campus climate that often [felt] unsafe and unwelcoming." She also used her time at work to "attend campus trainings on diversity and inclusion" and "join[ed] committees/working groups" aimed at "increase[ing] campus diversity and inclusion." She leveraged her freedom to design her IGD and general education courses to "incorporate theories and readings related to social identity, social justice, and privilege into [her] syllabus and [her] course assignments." Though rankism at her institution and the inability to impact "profound" change presented significant limitations, she did not allow them to keep her from doing what she could given her position.

In summary, Kelly had a strong sense of fairness from a very young age but did not develop her understanding of issues of race and racism until becoming an American Studies major in undergrad and even more so as an IGD participant and facilitator. She grew from being in intentional community with People of Color and White people who were also attempting to

grow in their practice of racial allyship. These communities and experiences shaped her conceptualization of racial allyship to emphasize the importance of embracing discomfort, amplifying the voices of People of Color, collaborating with others, and understanding the limitations and possibilities of power. Ultimately, Kelly was committed to racial allyship to "make up for past wrongs against" People of Color.

Kevin's Case Profile

Kevin works at a TWI in the Southwest United States. He is a student affairs educator with seven years of higher education experience, most of which have been in student access and retention programs. In addition to his racial identity, being a "first-generationish" college student is also important to understanding his full identity. Kevin describes himself as first-generationish because he began college at the same time as his mother.

Kevin was a participant in my pilot study, which also used a nomination process. However, he became a participant in my dissertation project through a separate nomination process, where he was nominated by a colleague different from the one who nominated him for the pilot study. Kevin's nominator believed he would be a good fit for the study because of his professional experience working with student success programs for Students of Color. Kevin was very comfortable speaking about matters of race with me, he noted that he "could speak more freely with [me a Black researcher] than a White man" about these topics. He shared that he often feels "like more of a facilitator…[and] imposter" when speaking with other White men who often do not share a similar awareness of issues related to race/ethnicity and/or commitment to challenging racism. Kevin's own awareness and commitment are informed, in part, by personal experiences navigating higher education as a first-generationish college student.

Kevin's experience as a first-generationish college student significantly informed his experience navigating higher education, beginning with the college choice process. Kevin recalled a professor who categorized high school students making decisions about college into two distinct categories: one group of students who asked themselves, "Is college for me?" and the other group of students who asked, "Which college am I going to?"

The college choice process for Kevin was more nuanced. He always knew that he would attend college one day; however, his parents expected him to go to the local, high-access, low-expense college—the same college his older brother attended. The idea of choosing a college based on his interests or future learning, for example, was not a priority for his parents. The college choice process was something he would mostly "have to figure out on [his] own." This self-sufficiency also meant figuring out how to pay for college.

Kevin funded a considerable amount of his post-secondary education on his own and began his college career working multiple jobs to cover tuition and other education expenses. He did not know that he needed to fill out the FAFSA until his second year of college. When he did learn about the FAFSA, he faced another challenge: his parents did not want to share their tax information. He noted that his brother, who completed undergrad before him, never completed a FAFSA and had to pay completely "out of pocket." Kevin was eventually able to convince his parents to share their tax information so he could complete the FAFSA, qualifying Kevin for financial aid and allowing him to apply his part-time job earnings to costly co-curricular experiences he couldn't previously afford.

Some of the money Kevin earned was used to study abroad for a semester—a "revolutionary" experience for him. However, studying abroad became another moment where he realized the disadvantages of having to figure things out alone. It was not until he returned

from studying abroad that Kevin realized he could have applied for a scholarship to cover some of his expenses. This experience motivated him to apply for a student worker position at his institution's study abroad office so that he could better advertise the office's resources to students like himself.

Kevin's undergraduate experience involved not only learning how to navigate new systems, but also how to better appreciate and value differences. Kevin's undergraduate institution was not very diverse, but he had the opportunity to participate in a leadership program where he was the only White male in the room. The program's curriculum was designed to introduce student leaders from multiple colleges to the value of embracing difference to improve innovation. One book included in the curriculum was Frans Johannson's (2004) *The Medici Effect: Breakthrough Insights at the Intersection of Ideas, Concepts, and Cultures* (2004), which introduced the concept of assembling diverse teams of people to facilitate innovation. This leadership program focused less on diversity as it pertains to race/ethnicity but more on the undergraduates' majors/areas of study. Still, exploring diversity and difference where he was the only White male in the room made it easier for Kevin to consider the implications of appreciating and valuing racial/ethnic differences.

Another impactful educational experience came in the form of a graduate course on the history of racial/ethnic minorities in higher education. In particular, Kevin was impressed by how many challenges in present day higher education existed in the past and persist today. He recounted one reading in particular where a number of college presidents in the early 1900s stated they could not find any Black PhD holders to hire. In response, they were provided a list of names that included 200 Black PhDs. Having been a history major in undergrad, Kevin was impacted by "that factual background." Kevin's personal experiences navigating higher

education mostly alone and the learnings he was exposed to as an undergraduate and graduate student informed his conceptualization of racial allyship.

Kevin's Conceptualization of Racial Allyship

Kevin's conceptualization of racial allyship emphasized partnerships with other White People and People of Color, continuous learning, and openness to feedback. Kevin "believe[d] that you cannot practice racial allyship without collaboration." Kevin felt that without partnership it would be unlikely to have "an institutionalized impact." He described the ways he might partner with White colleagues that are distinct from how he might partner with Colleagues of Color. Kevin saw partnering with White colleagues as a way to "provide opportunities to learn to be better allies [and] influence policy changes that amplify the needs of people of color." He stressed that partnerships with People of Color must start with People of Color who "opt-in" lest the partnership cause "an uncompensated tax to people of color in the academy." Further expounding on the idea of an uncompensated tax, Kevin explained, "It is not their responsibility to create equitable structures in the academy, though their knowledge and physical bodies are necessary to create change that supports all students, faculty, and staff." He saw his partnerships with Colleagues of Color as opportunities to "build [a] foundation of trust," listen to and learn from the stories of his Colleagues of Color and hold White allies accountable. Ultimately, Kevin felt that everyone needs to be "at the table"—People of Color and White People—and partnerships with People of Color in particular should aim to be "meaningful" and not "put additional stress" on People of Color.

One such way to not add additional stress is engaging in continuous learning. Kevin felt that an "ideal White person in [his] role" practicing racial allyship "should constantly be seeking opportunities to grow and learn more." Kevin "stress[ed] reading because it is critical for white

staff members to learn as much as they can about" the experiences of Students of Color (e.g., "Black, Latino, Asian, and Native"), particularly pertaining to their experiences with, and potential relation to, educational institutions in the United States. He described the vast number of resources— "hundreds of years of research"—available to him to do his own research. Kevin said that learning about a student's culture through their racial/ethnic identity was key; however, learning should not stop there but should also include learning about other experiences that shaped them (e.g., places they've lived). Kevin felt that learning about students beyond their racial/ethnic identity created opportunities to "better connect" with them. He also liked to learn these things so that he could decorate his office wall "with pictures of STEM professionals from [his students'] cities," both those well-known and those more obscure.

Kevin's conceptualization of racial allyship also emphasized being open to feedback. Kevin acknowledged that developing his practice of racial allyship involved being open to feedback so that he could always improve. He recounted a recent experience where a Black woman undergraduate approached his supervisor, a Black man, to share that another student, a Black man undergraduate, felt that Kevin was racist. Kevin was not present for the conversation, and the woman student did not share with Kevin's supervisor who the person was who felt this way. His supervisor "pushed back and asked for concrete examples of racist actions," but the student did not provide any or in Kevin's perception "may have not felt comfortable" to provide examples (i.e., in the context of the supervising pushing back). Kevin appreciated his supervisor, who felt the comment was made because Kevin is White, supporting him in light of the accusation. He also wondered if the student noticed that race is an issue that he embraces, discusses, and tries to integrate into his approach to working with students. With "little facts to who made the complaint" or why, the experience made him feel "anxious and saddened to hear."

He wondered “how [he] may inadvertently make a student feel uncomfortable” (e.g., by naming matters of race with Black students as a White person). Kevin considered his feelings about the ambiguity of the situation and the potential harm he may have caused alongside his general feelings about the need to be open to feedback when practicing racial allyship—even if that feedback is critical. He did not completely shut off reflecting on this situation or considered the comments a failure in his practice of racial allyship. Instead, he viewed it as a success:

> The failure would be if I say, well now I don't want to work with any black men. That's the failure. Cause now you're shutting it off. The success is bringing that in to saying, okay, how can we address this and how can we try to ensure that people are having a good experience? Not everyone's going to love you, but how can we make sure that we're all still getting to the outcomes?

For Kevin, the success is being open to feedback and the opportunity to improve while not allowing such an experience to keep him from engaging with issues of race. He noted that since that incident he experienced “the biggest influx of Black males who’ve come to [him] and sought advice.” There were no easy answers or a single right answer except to remain committed to the issues he cares about.

In summary, Kevin’s identity as a first-generationish college student meant that he had to navigate much of the college choice process, and his overall undergraduate experience, without the benefit of much outside guidance. This lack of guidance was part of the reason that necessitated his funding much of his undergraduate education himself by working multiple part-time jobs. While it was challenging to navigate post-secondary education often on his own, his pursuit of higher education gave him access to experiences that shaped his understanding of difference and the value of diversity. Ultimately, Kevin felt that “we should all be treating each

other human and trying to support each other as a community," noting that practicing racial allyship is, in part, a way for him to participate in a "broader sense of community."

Alexa's Case Profile

Alexa works at a TWI in the Northwest United States and is a student affairs educator with seven years of higher education experience, primarily in residence life. In addition to her White racial identity, being a queer woman is also important to understanding her full identity. Alexa gained experience facilitating student dialogues about and across identity differences when working at previous institutions of higher education. In her current role, she has developed a "reputation for caring a lot about topics of inclusion and diversity." Alexa's nominator believed she would be a good fit for the study because of her advocacy for "improved racial diversity" and for "ensuring that her students from marginalized communities feel welcomed [and supported] on campus." Though honored by the nomination, Alexa had mixed feelings while completing the participant submission form. Specifically, she wondered if her past actions were "good enough" examples of allyship, or if providing those examples were a way of bragging or playing into a White savior complex. Alexa wanted her work to be a reflection of her values and continual growth rather than an attempt to gain accolades or external recognition. She finds more value in seeking out spaces where she can learn, be challenged, and grow; her journey of understanding issues of race and racism demonstrates her willingness to embrace learning, even when learning experiences made her uncomfortable.

Alexa was an undergraduate student working on a group project when she made what "felt like a very epic mistake, very publicly." As a first-year student, Alexa and her classmates were assigned to groups and given the task to create a completely new religion. Alexa and her group decided to create a religion with a single deity that was based on an actual, famous Black

man. They reasoned that this individual's actual popularity and fervent following translated well for the assignment. After their group's presentation to the class, Alexa's professor commented that an image included in their presentation could be construed as racist. She took this feedback especially personal because she was the one who added the image to the PowerPoint. But instead of using this moment to become defensive, Alexa used it as a way to increase her awareness and registered for more advanced classes on topics related to race and ethnicity. The classroom experience taught her that having good intentions did not eliminate the possibility of causing harm. In fact, she learned the importance of gracefully responding to challenges to, and acknowledgement of, her own racism. Following this extremely vulnerable experience, Alexa determined that her practice of allyship would involve continuous, intentional learning.

Alexa shared two specific ways that she was able to engage in continuous, intentional learning when she was just beginning to learn about issues of race and racism. One was by following current events via media and another was through her relationships with People of Color. For example, the murder of Trayvon Martin and subsequent media coverage was a particularly impactful example of racism that increased Alexa's awareness as an undergraduate student. In response to Martin's murder, Alexa participated in several processing spaces and working groups held on her campus. She described the experience of "sitting in those spaces and letting other people process" as "awe-inspiring" moments that made her aware of the "potential good work and advocacy" she could do.

Alexa also gained insight into the lived experiences of People of Color through both personal and professional relationships. Her friends and colleagues shared with her the pain they experienced as a result of racism. This exposure motivated Alexa, who identified service to others as a core value, to ask herself, "What can I do to help ease some of that [pain]?" As she

explored this and similar questions, Alexa was able to make connections between what she was learning about racism and what she knew, from personal experience, about ableism and classism. Alexa grew up in close community with individuals with developmental disabilities and was also a first-generation college student who worked to finance part of her college education. Her experiences with ableism and classism gave her insight into systems of power and marginalization, particularly the harm caused to those with less power attempting to navigate such systems. Reflecting on these personal experiences while also learning about race and racism informed her conceptualizations of racial allyship.

Alexa's Conceptualization of Racial Allyship

Alexa's conceptualization of racial allyship emphasized the importance of committing to constant learning, leveraging her own racial privilege, and educating other White people. Alexa acknowledged "there is a lot more that [she] can continue to learn" pertaining to her practice of racial allyship and advocacy. As mentioned above, she committed herself to intentional learning, which she accomplished in part by engaging in personal research, reading, and attending speaking events. Attending speaking events on the topic of race and racism created a space where Alexa could "learn through others who are emotionally ready and willing to engage" and therefore not simply "learning at the expense of others." During the study, Alexa was reading Layla Saad's "*me and white supremacy workbook*" (2018) and Robin DiAngelo's *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism* (2018). Saad's (2018) free workbook, which began as a 28-day Instagram challenge and later became a *New York Times* bestseller, was designed as a tool to help individuals with White privilege understand how racism works and how they can engage in actions to challenge racism and White supremacy. DiAngelo's (2018) book explores the idea of White Fragility, a concept DiAngelo (2011)

introduced in a previous article, and the associated defensiveness White people exhibit when engaging in conversations about racism.

Alexa's commitment to reading and research allowed her to remain current on conversations regarding racial allyship. For example, Alexa was aware of the critique of the terms *ally* and *allyship* and an alternative term, *accomplice*. Specifically, she understood that terms like "ally" and "allyship" do not always mean an individual is engaging in "informed advocacy" or in any action at all. Alexa related this critique to similar ones of the term ally as it relates to queer allyship or feminism. She noted that someone saying, "I'm an ally," can often be a superficial statement that lacks depth, action, or any public display of one's values and commitments.

Another lesson Alexa learned that she applied to her conceptualization of racial allyship was the importance of leveraging her own privilege. Alexa shared that "understanding and leveraging your own privilege" was key to her conceptualization of racial allyship. She acknowledged that racism allowed White people access to power denied to People of Color. In addition to understanding the marginalization of others, Alexa also wanted to "be comfortable in understanding and grappling with [her own] Whiteness." This comfort and understanding would enable her to articulate her experiences through the lens of her racial identity. Additionally, she needed to discern opportunities where she could "speak up in different spaces" without the likelihood of receiving "punitive action" that People of Color might otherwise receive. Alexa noted that "interrupting patterns of oppression or racism" should not be confined to her work with students. Over her career as a student affairs educator, she came to appreciate how she can practice racial allyship in relation to her Colleagues of Color to help ensure they have a "healthy, safe, and robust workplace," which ultimately contributes to improving the student experience.

One way Alexa sought to leverage her privilege was to first notice "the spaces where People of Color aren't . . . or where they could have a seat at the table" and then focus on how she could help them gain access to those spaces. She realized that leveraging her own racial privilege through public actions (small or large) provided a model to other students and staff, especially White students and staff, of how a White staff member might engage in the practice of racial allyship.

Alexa's conceptualization of racial allyship emphasized the importance of educating other White people and supporting their journeys. Her passion for educating other White people led her to her current career field. She chose to go into the field of "higher education with the hopes of practicing racial allyship" and the opportunity to "plant the seeds" for learning that her students would then take into their "future workplaces." Alexa designed co-curricular learning experiences for her students that addressed topics related to race, identity, power, and privilege. She shared with her students how making mistakes was a part of the process and gave examples from her own experience. She also connected this concept to her experience playing sports where her motto is "if you're not failing, you're not trying." She described the process of developing skills in racial allyship as stretching one's own knowledge and comfort zones regularly in order to produce growth.

In summary, Alexa's journey in practicing racial allyship began with what she described as a very public mistake, which she took as an opportunity to learn more about issues of race and racism. Her own exposure to ableism and classism gave her a foundation for understanding systems of oppression and the harm they caused to people with less power in such systems. Alexa's personal reading and research, along with her relationships with People of Color, were key contributors to her personal development and conceptualization of racial allyship. Although

she found parts of her journey uncomfortable, her journey also allowed her to deepen her core value of service to others.

Kaitlyn's Case Profile

Kaitlyn works at a TWI in the Midwest United States and is a student affairs educator in a STEM honors program, where her primary role is teaching first-year students. She has 13 years of experience in higher education. In addition to her racial identity, being a woman and mother are also important to understanding her full identity. Kaitlyn's nominator believed Kaitlyn would be a good fit for the study because she "challenge[s] more traditional perspectives of privilege" and "advocate[s] for students of color." Kaitlyn was the most skeptical participant regarding her suitability for the study because she was not "fighting the system" and did not "encounter racism every day." Her hesitation was also connected to her personality, specifically being an introvert. Kaitlyn felt that an ideal version of a person practicing racial allyship was someone who was "more assertive" and "better at speaking up." Kaitlyn admitted that she is not "fast at coming up with something to say in the moment" and instead is better when she has time to "think about it and come up with a response or a plan." Kaitlyn shared this skepticism with her nominator who pointed out that when Kaitlyn speaks up, it matters because she is "not a person of color—people hear [her concerns]." The response from her nominator was affirming though not fully reassuring; however, the study's focus on practice instead of personal journey and identity development was reassuring. A focus on the latter would have put Kaitlyn in a more vulnerable and uncomfortable position as a White person speaking with a Researcher of Color (e.g., sharing things from her past of which she isn't the proudest). Whereas she did not want to go in depth regarding her personal journey and identity development, Kaitlyn shared insights into her process of better understanding her racial identity and issues of race and racism.

Kaitlyn had very little exposure to People of Color growing up and throughout her educational experiences. She "came from a tiny, tiny rural town" where her high school had only three People of Color, which meant she "didn't even think [White culture]" existed. Kaitlyn attended a TWI for undergrad that was also not incredibly diverse, and her peers and close friends were almost all White. Kaitlyn studied in a STEM field that enrolled mostly White students and where classroom conversations about race were uncommon. Her graduate school was the most racially/ethnically diverse educational institution she attended and was also the place where she began to consider her role in making educational spaces more inclusive for People of Color. It was also the place where she realized that her ability to make educational spaces more inclusive for People of Color was connected to her own racial identity development. Kaitlyn recognized that she had to first become "solidified [in her] own identity" if she wanted to help improve the educational experiences and outcomes for her Students of Color. She had to acknowledge her imperfections and own her mistakes, steps that made it easier for Kaitlyn to have conversations about race and racism with others. But it was not merely the racial/ethnic diversity of her graduate school that was key to Kaitlyn's development. She was also impacted through her participation in a workshop for teachers led by her institution's chief diversity officer (CDO).

After Kaitlyn "fell in love with teaching," and eventually attended a workshop for teachers led by her graduate institution's CDO. Kaitlyn was unaware of many concepts and ideas the CDO presented but was struck by how the CDO made the idea of incorporating inclusive practices in the classroom seem achievable, "even for STEM people." The CDO provided concrete examples that teachers could incorporate almost immediately. After attending this session, Kaitlyn signed up for more workshops related to inclusion and diversity in the

classroom. These workshops gave her access to a variety of experts and perspectives that expanded her awareness and improved her skillset.

In addition to the workshop series, Kaitlyn also expanded her awareness through several key readings. Kaitlyn shared several readings that helped to expand her awareness and shape her perspective. Annie Murphy Paul's (2015) *New York Times* op-ed, "Are College Lectures Unfair?", introduced Kaitlyn to the idea that instruction in college lecture courses is typically structured to favor White male students. Kaitlyn also read excerpts from Beverly Tatum's "Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?" (1997) which prompted her to reflect on her own friendships and social circles in undergrad. She considered how racial socialization influenced the relationships she formed, while McIntosh's (1989) "White Privilege, Unpacking the Knapsack" helped her understand specific ways that society advantages people with White skin. Ambrose's (2010) *How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching* includes a case study on addressing racism in the classroom, which allows teachers to consider how they might respond to instances of racism in their classroom. These readings along with her participation in the workshop series informed Kaitlyn's conceptualization of racial allyship.

Kaitlyn's Conceptualization of Racial Allyship

Kaitlyn's conceptualization of racial allyship emphasized the responsibility of helping to ensure that people are treated fairly, acting within her spheres of influence, and assuming that most people have good intentions. Kaitlyn "never thought of [herself] as an ally"; instead, her actions were motivated by a sense of responsibility to ensure that people are treated fairly. Her responsibility as a teacher was to "make [her] own classroom, workshop or other teaching . . . as inclusive as [she] can" and to help "teachers in training recognize their own privilege and . . .

what that may mean for their students." College faculty are a key part of their students' identity development and have the opportunity to structure learning opportunities to help students "understand the complexities of power, privilege and race." The "obligation" to raise these issues as an instructor and the responsibility to "making [her] room more inclusive means that more people are going to want to be scientists and that's better for everyone." She noted that she could help her first-year students recognize that "Whiteness has a culture and it's everywhere . . . and that impacts how we interact with one another." This sense of responsibility extends beyond the students in her classroom to also include her peers and colleagues. Kaitlyn felt a responsibility "to make [her] own workplace one where everyone feels like he/she/they have a voice," which means being "open to feedback when [she does] something" that causes harm. This sense of responsibility also means "call[ing] out language and behaviors that make others feel they don't have a voice."

Kaitlyn's experiences with sexism in the workplace helped her sympathize with People of Color's experience of racism. As a woman on a staff of mostly men, Kaitlyn has been made to "feel less than" about her contributions. She characterized her experiences as a "tiny part of the things" her Colleagues of Color experienced; however, the feeling "was horrible" enough to know it was something she didn't want others to feel. She knew that seemingly harmless actions could make people "feel uncomfortable or less qualified" and therefore less included. So Kaitlyn focused her efforts on helping "people be more respectful of each other" in that hopes that at least "one or two more people [would] feel included."

Kaitlyn's conceptualization of racial allyship also emphasized acting within her spheres of influence. Kaitlyn was aware of the legitimate limits to her ability to influence her institution and chose to act within her spheres of influence. She understood that her institution could do

better at enrolling students from local, under-resourced secondary schools or identifying faculty evaluation processes that are not biased against women and People of Color. But those were things outside of her control. She equated her inability to change her TWI, which was built to educate wealthy White men, to her inability to change the racial/ethnic inequities in primary and secondary education funding. On the other hand, as a teacher, Kaitlyn noted that the power dynamic in her classroom was in her favor where she could, for example, "choose a curriculum." This dynamic made it easier for her to practice racial allyship with her own undergraduate students and teaching assistants, as well with the graduate students and faculty she trained. She noted that the classroom is the "one place [she] feel[s] most comfortable calling people out or at least getting them to re-examine their . . . assumptions about things like systemic racism." Kaitlyn captured her perspective on how to respond to the limitations of her influence: "I'm a non-tenure/tenure-track White woman, so I don't have a lot of power, but I have more than many, and I need to use what I've got when I can."

Kaitlyn's conceptualization of racial allyship also emphasized the importance of assuming that most people have good intentions. Kaitlyn believed that the majority of people have good intentions when interacting with others. She believed that "most people don't want to be jerks" and tend to "see themselves as the protagonist" and not "as being racist even if they say racist things." She noted that she has "seen more harm done by not taking the time to be thoughtful or reflect on how something might look to someone other than yourself, than by any other means." The harm done by not being thoughtful illuminates the "need for others to help us see the impact of our words or actions" and to "hold each other accountable in a way that allows us to be humans and try to fix those mistakes." She realizes that this approach "doesn't always work" and may be seen as having "rose-colored glasses," but having hope in others' humanity

keeps her motivated while not getting "horribly depressed at some of the realities on [her] campus." This approach also keeps people from getting defensive and "doesn't violate how they see themselves" when the impact of their actions is pointed out.

In summary, Kaitlyn grew up in a small town where her high school had only three people of color in total. It was not until she began graduate studies that she fully engaged ideas related to race, racism, and racial allyship. First, Kaitlyn fell in love with teaching and attended a teacher's training workshop led by her campus' CDO. Her experiences with sexism gave her insight into what it felt like to be treated "less than." After the aforementioned training workshop, Kaitlyn continued to attend more training and read on her own to expand her awareness, but it is her relationships with others that sustains her and "keeps encouraging [her] to find new ways to improve the things [she] can change, and not give up even if I don't see dramatic personal growth in every student I teach." Because, as she noted, "it's always possible you're making an impact when you don't realize you are."

Ken's Case Profile

Ken has worked as a mental health provider and instructor at a TWI university in the Western United States for 14 years. In addition to his racial identity, being straight, able-bodied, upper-middle-class, cis-male, and American atheist are important to understanding his full identity. Ken's nominator believed he would be a good fit for the study because of what they've witnessed in his approach to providing mental health support. Specifically, the nominator has observed Ken implement "multicultural competency into his counseling of students in marginalized groups," while also encouraging those he trains to understand their own social identities and how they may impact interactions with students. The nominator also felt that Ken "acknowledges his privilege and . . . does a good job of using it for good efforts." For example,

the nominator shared how Ken helped to start a campus group that was designed to provide a space for "white people to get together and work through white identity development and white fragility as an advocate for people of color." Starting this group was in line with Ken's desire to talk more with other White people about their shared racial identities. Ken's current conversations about race mirrored experiences he had growing up as a child, where conversations about race were normal.

Ken shared that he was exposed to conversations about race growing up, which made him think about what it meant to be White from an early age. For example, he shared that when he was "in grade school, [he] learned about slavery, and Japanese internments, and genocide of American Indians." He was in fourth grade when the television series *Roots (1977)*, which was based on Alex Haley's (1976) novel that tells the story of an enslaved African and seven generations of his descendants. Learning about these racist tragedies in American history made Ken not only consider the people who suffered such violence but also the people largely responsible for perpetuating such violence. At various times he would think to himself, "Whoa, are White people bad?" and "Whoa, these are sort of evil people doing evil things." He described these moments of pause as "brief" and "fleeting" because "of course, [he'd] immediately return to the world that just constantly reflected [White people] as normal and ideal." As a child, Ken was not able to critique a world where White people were considered normal and ideal and would be able to make these connections only much later in life.

Ken recounted another educational experience that reflected his own wrestling with what it meant to be White. During the first semester of his master's program, Ken was enrolled in a professional development seminar where each student was required to present on a topic of their choice. Ken recalled walking to the front of the class and saying, "We need to accept that we're

all racist." One of his classmates, a White woman, "totally blew up" and responded that she was not racist. Ken described his perspective at the time as "naive" in that he figured, "Come on, why don't we get honest about this, because this is in us." While Ken described himself at the time as naive, he also noted that it reflected a part of him that showed up in his professional work—the desire to "want to get to what's really going on, just what is . . . real."

What Ken took from his classmates' response, and other similar responses from White people to acknowledging their own racism, was the way "denial" and "distortion" served as barriers to White people being able to address racism within themselves, others, and with society at large. These and other experiences gave Ken insight into "the shit that's going on in White people." He considered this insight to be a "powerful tool as a trainer" because it allowed him to demonstrate to his White trainees that he understood their experiences—not from a general or theoretical perspective but in a nuanced and practical way, a way that it was clear that "[he's] lived it." For example, he understands how White people avoid thinking about and reflecting on their racial privilege and the emotions of anger and fear that come along with "contemplating being decentralized" if society becomes more equitable. Ken's contemplations about his own Whiteness and conversations about race with other White people informed his professional work and his conceptualization of racial allyship.

Ken's Conceptualization of Racial Allyship

Ken's conceptualization of racial allyship emphasized engaging in personal work, centering People of Color, and disrupting systems that support racism. Ken spoke of the personal work he does to address racism in himself as foundational to the practice of racial allyship. Part of what he meant by personal work was not turning away from his own "feelings of hatred, disgust, [or] racism." Ken described these as feelings that many White people, himself included,

would prefer to deny. However, he found that sitting with those feelings and "unflinchingly being able to engage with . . . the true nature of what's going on in the world in terms of race" as "a step towards confidence." This confidence comes from the control he gains from not only feeling his racism but also his reactions to it. In this case Kevin uses "control" to refer to the control he has over his reactions. For example, he has learned that when feedback makes him feel defensive, that is usually a good sign for him to listen, even against his own immediate instincts. This example alludes to the ways Ken conceptualizes racial allyship as about not solely centering himself, particularly when doing so leads to harming others. One group Ken felt should be centered is People of Color.

Ken's conceptualization of racial allyship also emphasized centering People of Color. Ken shared that he has had the opportunity to present on the topic of allyship in the past. In these presentations, Ken posed these core questions to those wanting to develop their allyship skills: "What's your goal?" "What's your purpose?" and "Who is served?" He realizes that there are benefits that might come to White people who practice racial allyship; however, receiving those benefits should not be the motivation for practicing racial allyship. Ken was aware that acting from those motivations could lead to "misguided actions" due, potentially, to a desire to "feel better or wanting to assuage guilt." Instead, the focus should be on centering People of Color and the ways allyship can serve them.

Ken acknowledged that he might unintentionally cause harm to People of Color and will receive feedback about his actions. When he receives feedback that he has caused harm, he finds it important to keep the focus primarily on those impacted by the harm he has caused (as opposed to his own intentions and feelings). This focus does not mean he dismisses his intentions and feelings but instead that he does not center them in a way that avoids grappling with the

harm he's caused. As opposed to perceiving feedback as an attack, he sees it as a "gift." The idea that "someone's being honest with [him], when it's hard to be" is a rare learning opportunity for growth that Ken doesn't want to pass on. Ken acknowledges that his instincts are often to not "want to listen… [to] think they're full of shit, that they don't get it." But he has grown to understand that these initial instincts and feelings are actual signs that he should "shut up and listen."

Ken's conceptualization of racial allyship also emphasized the importance of disrupting systems that support racism. Ken's emphasis on disrupting systems that support racism was something he felt was important to the practice of racial allyship even though he didn't feel as if he was great at it. In fact, when asked about the ideal person in his position practicing racial allyship, Ken shared that the ideal person "would be more actively disrupting the racial structures (personal, interpersonal, and institutional) that support racism." When reflecting on why he isn't more actively engaging in this aspect of practicing racial allyship, Ken noted that this type of racial allyship "comes at a cost," and he needed "to continue to explore [his] thoughts, reactions, and feelings about these costs." At another point in the study, Ken questioned "How much am I an ally, given my own definition?" The definition he was referring to is the idea that allies are "supposed to [effect] change." For him, true change doesn't come without systemic work. He acknowledged that those who do disrupt systems that support racism still need to do their own personal work in order to not cause harm to others. He pondered whether his hesitation to embodying his own definition was "that [such action] would lead to the diminishing of [his] power and privilege." These were open questions that Ken regularly returns to as he considers his own actions and the root causes of them.

In summary, Ken grew up with conversations about race being normalized, particularly in his primary school experience. He learned about racist injustices perpetuated by White people against People of Color, realities that caused him to think about his own racial identity at an early age. While it would be many years before he was able to fully reflect on what it meant for him to be White, he found that accepting the truth of racism and his subsequent privilege helped him in his professional career in supporting White trainees processing similar reflections. These experiences informed Ken's conceptualization of racial allyship, which emphasized engaging in personal work, centering People of Color, and disrupting systems that support racism. Ultimately, Ken found that practicing racial allyship allowed him to form "deeper connections with people [by] building intimacy," connections he found "immensely gratifying."

This chapter presented individual case profiles from the study's seven participants. Each profile provided information related to the participant's professional role/title, years of higher education professional experience, important social identities, reason for nomination, and response to being nominated. The profiles also included key moments in the participant's journey and concluded with a description of their conceptualizations of racial allyship. The next chapter presents a cross-case analysis of all study participants, particularly focusing on the ways they practice racial allyship and what forms of Whiteness at TWIs are revealed by their practice of racial allyship.

Chapter 5: Cross Case Analysis

The chapter represents the cross-case analysis of themes emerging from the study of seven participants practicing racial allyship at TWIs and is organized by the study's three research questions. The participants include 4 women and 3 men who shared that, in addition to their race, their gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, familial status, education status, ability,

socioeconomic status, and religious beliefs were collectively important to how they saw themselves. The staff members worked in various higher education functions at the time of this study (e.g., academic affairs; institutional diversity, equity, and inclusion; international education; and residence life) and worked at six institutions across the United States. This chapter is presented in three primary sections: (1) conceptualizing racial allyship, (2) practicing racial allyship, and (3) revealing Whiteness.

Before presenting these findings, I want to share how a conversation with my mom reaffirmed a desire to write as accessibly as possible and ultimately informed my language choices in this section. One day while on a call with my mom she stated, "sometimes I listen to you and your brother and ask myself, "Did those boys come from me?"" She was talking about me and my twin brother who has a doctorate and is a college professor, and how our conversations, I imagine sound very academic at times. Her comment reminded me of the distance I felt, and still sometimes feel, when reading academic scholarship. But I thought to myself, "Topics like race, racism, and how White people act are things that people like my mom live and know very well." Our conversation reaffirmed my desire to write as accessibly as possible, which in this case meant writing in a way that did not make the things that people like my mom live and know very well feel completely distance from them. My attempt to write more accessibly in this chapter is mostly done through the themes I present.

Conceptualizing Racial Allyship

The previous chapter detailed individual conceptualizations of racial allyship for each participant. This section considers these conceptualizations together to present the following collective conceptualization elements: embracing power, acknowledging limitations; making sure people are treated fairly; knowing better and doing better; working with others; identifying

the root of the problem; and using race to predict, not decide. Due to the detailed nature of the cases in the previous chapter, the following elements are presented in a more summative fashion.

Embracing Power, Acknowledging Limitations

Perhaps fundamental to all conceptual elements is embracing power and acknowledging limitations. Although these elements are not presented in any particular order, this first element is the exception. All staff members who participated in this study acknowledged the role of power in their practice of racial allyship. Adam described this element as "positional power"—the power each staff member's position grants them to act without the need to request prior approval or permission. This means that positional power increases as a staff members' position increases in institutional rank and authority.

Adam found it was "not really that hard to" act within the boundaries of his positional power; however, "talking up can be hard" - where "up" represents others at the institution with more rank and/or authority. Similarly, Kelly attributed her inability, at times, to have a conversation with her supervisor about something problematic (e.g., a microaggression towards a Team Member of Color) to "the slight fear that [she] might be reprimanded from [her] supervisor."

Generally speaking, students have less power than faculty and instructors, supervisees have less power than their supervisors, and staff have less power than higher level administrators. This hierarchy of power and the associated limitations meant that staff members primarily engaged in practices of racial allyship among individuals and groups with similar or less positional power than themselves (discussed in more detail in practicing racial allyship section).

Making Sure People are Treated Fairly

White staff members at TWIs conceptualized racial allyship, in part, as taking responsibility for making sure people are treated fairly. This theme was reflected in Audrey's comments, who shared:

> I think it's important to make sure that all individuals are given the support they need to thrive…And if one sees something that that is unjust, it's important to speak up and do what you can to make sure that people are treated with the respect they deserve.

Collectively, this commitment was grounded in a shared belief that individuals should not face differential treatment based on their identity and an acknowledgment, in the words of Alexa, that "understanding and leveraging [one's] own privilege" was a means to address unfair treatment and challenge systemic racism. For some White staff members practicing racial allyship is simply the right thing to do.

Knowing Better and Doing Better

Another way staff members in the study conceptualized racial allyship was by knowing better and doing better. This phrasing comes from Maya Angelou's advice to Oprah Winfrey to not judge herself for previous mistakes, and rather to focus on the person she was trying to become (Oprah.com, 2011). Central to this conceptual element is the idea that having a belief that the world should be equitable is insufficient. A person's belief does not necessarily lead to desired behavior or action. For the study's participants this self-improvement element was characterized by behaviors such as engaging in intentional reflection; studying and reading on topics of racism and racial justice; embracing the discomfort that can sometimes accompany growth; and being open to feedback without becoming defensive or disengaging. The final behavior is exemplified, in part, by Kevin's experience of learning from his supervisor that a

Black woman undergraduate felt that Kevin was racist. Though the supervisor considered the judgement incorrect, Kevin admitted it made him feel “anxious and saddened to hear.” Kevin also admitted he viewed the feedback as a success:

> The failure would be if I say, well now I don't want to work with any Black men. That's the failure. Cause now you're shutting it off. The success is bringing that in to saying, okay, how can we address this and how can we try to ensure that people are having a good experience? Not everyone's going to love you, but how can we make sure that we're all still getting to the outcomes?

As previously stated, for Kevin, the success was being open to feedback and the opportunity to improve while not allowing such an experience to keep him from engaging with issues of race.

Working with Others

White staff members also conceptualized racial allyship as working with others, which included other White people and People of Color. Specifically, they spoke to the need to work with others to ensure effectiveness; learn from others; and pursue institutional impact.

One advantage of working with others was ensuring racial allyship was effective. For example, Alexa shared that she has struggled the most “when [she has] attempted to make a program, lecture, or initiative surround diversity and inclusion but have done so without the input of communities that are the area of discussion.” Collaborating with People of Color in cases of advocacy meant that White staff members were aligned with the known, rather than assumed, needs of People of Color.

Working with other White people allowed the study’s participants to learn from and educate other White people practicing racial allyship. Finally, without collaboration and partnerships participants felt it would be unlikely to have an institutionalized impact. As Kelly

noted, working with others on larger initiatives allowed her to have an impact beyond her "small [campus] department" that she otherwise could not have.

Identifying the Root of the Problem

Another conceptual element revealed in this study is identifying the root of the problem. Staff members recognized that most situations that required racial allyship were connected to larger systemic issues. For example, Alexa acknowledged in a story that is detailed later in this chapter how her Black student staff member's concerns about working with a White colleague was interpersonal (i.e., between the two students). Alexa also considered the reason the students were working together was a result of departmental practices that tokenized Students of Color for their visible diversity.

Even though they themselves did not report many examples of disrupting larger systems that support racism, study participants considered doing so an important element of racial allyship. For example, Kaitlyn questioned her suitability for the study because she was not "fighting the system." Similarly, Ken shared in a journal entry the ideal person practicing racial allyship in his role "would be more actively disrupting the racial structures (personal, interpersonal, and institutional) that support racism." Participants were keenly aware that racism is a systemic issue, which required systemic interventions; and that any conceptualization of allyship that was only limited to intra- or interpersonal contexts was incomplete.

Using Race to Predict, Not Decide

The final conceptual element this study revealed involves participants using race to predict, not decide. This means that race is a critical and foundational factor to consider in the practice of racial allyship and that race can be used to predict the need for racial allyship. For example, as stated in the opening of this paragraph, participants shared their gender, sexual

orientation, ethnicity, familial status, education status, ability, socioeconomic status, and religious beliefs were collectively important to how they saw themselves, in addition to their racial identity. Similar to their individual identities, however, more factors need to be considered when determining how to engage in the actual practice of racial allyship. For example, later in this chapter I discuss how participants practiced racial allyship by educating White students about issues of race and racism. While using White students' racial identity to predict they are likely to be less knowledgeable about such issues, determining how to effectively practice racial allyship by educating White students requires more information.

This element is evident in the importance Adam placed on considering the following in their racial allyship practice: intersections of gender, sexuality, and race; assessing a White person's relationship to race; and the relationship between Adam and the White person they're attempting to educate. For the participants, it would be a mistake to assume what someone needs to learn about race, racism, and/or allyship based only on their race.

Similarly, it would be a mistake to assume the type of allyship a Person of Color might benefit from simply based on their racial/ethnic identity. Later in this chapter I describe Kelly's experience of learning the balance of using her awareness of racial dynamics to predict the potential need to support her Supervisees of Color in certain situations, but not assuming the supervisee would expect or want Kelly to support her in a particular way. This example will highlight the importance of asking questions instead of making assumptions.

Another mistake would be assuming that any Person of Color would always be more knowledgeable, than the White staff members about issues of race and racism. This assumption is explored later in this chapter when discussing Ken and Kevin's challenge of responding to

what they perceived to be internalized racism and respectability politics among Colleagues of Color.

This section presented six elements of a collective conceptualization of racial allyship, which included: embracing power, acknowledging limitations; making sure people are treated fairly; knowing better and doing better; working with others; identifying the root of the problem; and using race to predict, not decide. The next section presents findings related to the different ways participants practiced racial allyship at their institution.

Practicing Racial Allyship

Participants provided insight into their individual and collaborative practices of racial allyship at their TWIs. I have organized these findings by level of engagement (i.e., intrapersonal; interpersonal; and organizational and institutional). Staff members' intrapersonal practice of racial allyship included working on themself. Their interpersonal practice of racial allyship involved educating students; serving as a resource to Students of Color; being an amplifier; speaking up; and coaching and mentoring People of Color. Finally, organizational and institutional acts of racial allyship included hiring practices and participation in DEI initiatives.

Intrapersonal Act of Racial Allyship

Working on Themself as Racial Allyship

White staff members engaged in multiple forms of racial allyship at their respective TWIs, the foundational of which was working on themselves. Specifically, this involved resisting what Charles Mills (1997) described as White ignorance. In their own way, each staff member practiced rejecting this ignorance, while embracing a racial awareness that involved questioning racial inequities and acknowledging their privileged, racial status. In place of a

"cognitive model that precludes self-transparency" (Mills, 1997, p. 18), staff members embraced self-reflection as a means for self-work. For Kevin:

> self-reflection [was] critical to White racial allyship, if it is to lead towards actions…because white supremacy, patriarchy, and the cycle of socialization are so strong that without self-reflection, it is very easy and pretty much automatic to fall back into actions that serve historical structures of power.

Kevin described his process of self-reflection as a mental pause and skill that he continually develops through practice.

White staff members reflected on topics such as their participation in upholding unspoken workplace rules that uphold Whiteness; the difference between their practice of allyship at work versus outside of work; how to "support underrepresented students in achieving their goals"; and how to best teach White students about issues of race and equity. What was interesting about their reflections was that they almost always involved thinking through questions or issues that did not have straightforward answers. For example, Alexa reflected on how to respond to the ever-evolving language of social justice while Kevin reflected on what it meant to be a White person primarily working with Students of Color.

The need to continually develop this skill also meant that staff members' resistance of White ignorance was assisted by learning - particularly learning from other White people who themselves had resisted White ignorance. At the time of the study, Ken was reading *Waking Up White* (2014) by Debbie Irving. Reading Irving's (2014) book helped Ken "reflect more deeply on the entitlement [he had] been bathed in his entire life." This entitlement involved being socialized to believe that virtually all institutions would "serve [him] in a beneficial way." On one hand this socialization contributed to his "confidence, self-assuredness", on the other it

contributed to his “arrogance and entitlement.” In a rejection of White ignorance, Ken acknowledged the “immense opportunities, wealth, [and] status” his White racial identity afforded him and considered how he could contribute to a world where the benefits he received also extended to People of Color. White staff members' reflections were also prompted by social media posts by a Person of Color detailing a racist experience; in-person interactions with students, colleagues, and friends; and long work commutes or quiet time in general.

White staff members found that having others to process their thoughts and feelings made working on themselves easier. Kaitlyn found that processing with trusted friends helped her “see things from the outside” and helped her see things “without all the emotion of the moment.” Beyond providing a different perspective, these processing conversations helped her “come up with a plan of action” and to forgive herself by making room for her imperfections. Ken shared how his participation in a campus anti-racism group with other White people was a space where he could talk with “other white people…honestly about [their] racial experience.” Initially Ken worried that he “would feel competitive” with his fellow group members and feel compelled to “demonstrate that he was further along developmentally than the others.” Instead, Ken found that he built a connection with and gratitude for the other group members and an appreciation for the space to explore in depth his own racism - a practice that he acknowledged was a risk. Engaging in the foundational practice of working on themselves simultaneously supported participants’ ability to engage in acts of interpersonal acts of racial allyship.

Interpersonal Acts of Racial Allyship

Interpersonal acts of racial allyship are practices of racial allyship that involve study participants and one or more other individuals. White staff members in the study engaged in interpersonal acts of racial allyship by educating their students, through curricular and co-

curricular experiences; serving as a resource to Students of Color; being an amplifier; speaking up; and coaching and mentoring People of Color. Through these practices White staff members encouraged broader racial awareness and inclusion within their institutions.

Educating Students as Racial Allyship

The majority of the White staff members taught an undergraduate course, at the time of the study or in the past. The classroom offered a venue where White staff members had a relatively high level of positional power, particularly through their influence over their classes' curriculum. As Kaitlyn stated, "I control the curriculum [and] the more I can incorporate examples of scientists and researchers that reflect the diversity of our students, the better." In a required course for first year students, she described the "baby steps" of introducing concepts that people have visible and non-visible identities that influence "how we treat people and how people treat us" and that "there is a white culture."

Kelly also taught an introductory level course for first year students that was designed, in part, to introduce students to the broader campus and its resources. One of Kelly's previous supervisors pointed out that while the course traditionally focused on introducing students to campus resources, they did not have to design the course in that way. She recalled her previous supervisor saying, "You know what? We have control of this class. We can teach what we want. We don't have to just teach how to find the library." Instead, Kelly and her former supervisor designed their course to address issues such as social identity, race and racism, privilege, and citizenship. The course incorporated foundational readings such as Beverly Tatum's *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria* (1997), as well as current events. Kelly also relied heavily on resources she was introduced to as an intergroup dialogue instructor in redesigning the course. By designing the course to address the aforementioned issues, students

were being prepared for their roles as members of a diverse, global society and workforce. Another practice of racial allyship within the classroom included acknowledging in real time specific, highly visible racist incidents on campus as a way to discuss the larger issue of racism on campus.

White staff members also shared how some of their practice of racial allyship focused specifically on educating White students about issues of race and racism. Ken's role training mental health providers involves working with students who have the goal of "becom[ing] more multiculturally competent." When working with his White trainees, who represent a slight majority, to achieve this goal Ken helps them to understand their socialization and how it can lead to what he termed as "privilege maneuvers." Ken uses the term privilege maneuvers to refer to how White people's interactions with People of Color can be inauthentic. For example, "being ingratiating to a Black person, [making] sure they think you're good." Ken sees these maneuvers as just the top layer or manifestation of deeper feelings that must be encountered such as "fear of judgment" from People of Color or even deeper feelings of "hatred, disgust, and racism." However, starting at the top layer provides Ken an in because at the most basic level Ken's trainees, regardless of their race, are being trained to have a "real encounter with somebody" (i.e., their future clients" and the inauthenticity of privilege maneuvers is counter to that primary goal).

Ken also educated White students through the aforementioned campus group he helped to start, which was designed as a space for "white people to get together and work through white identity development and white fragility as an advocate for people of color." One of Ken's students shared that his discomfort and fear of Black teens "had more to do with the fact that he doesn't have much contact with Black people, than with their skin color." The student also shared

that he desired to be in racially diverse environments and how he socialized and lived in a historically Black neighborhood. Ken, after giving other group members the space to respond, responded by sharing that his own encounters with Black teens are informed by a lack of knowledge but that he notices "that the lack of knowledge…creates a vacuum that racism fills." Ken also asked his student whether the historically Black neighborhoods felt safer to live in now because there were more White residents currently living there. The student shared that Ken's "feedback was probably true and [Ken's] experience was probably the same as his."

White staff members not only discussed what they taught but also the importance of how they taught. Alexa found it effective to create "opportunities for folks to engage in a way that is accessible, so it's not always like we're going to carve this time as a diversity hour." For example, at the time of our interview Alexa was leading a book circle based on her institution's first year novel and through the book was able to engage students in a myriad of conversations, some of which were about racial identity. Her hope was for her students to see these kinds of conversations as "just natural to have" and not always having to come through the medium of a workshop.

Like Alexa, Adam's focus in the classroom extended beyond the course's content. Adam developed and, for over a decade, taught an undergraduate course that prepared peer educators to give talks about the lives, experiences, identities, and representations of LGBTQ+ people. A major focus of the course was intersectionality, which allowed Adam to bring in conversations of race and racism. They also made it a point to recruit a diverse group of students to serve as peer educators. Adam found that many "people's brains automatically go to gay white guy" when mentioning LGBTQ people and infusing intersectionality into the course and having a diverse team of peer educators was one way to disrupt this narrow and incomplete view. White staff

members also discussed how it was important to not present themselves as experts, be open and vulnerable when speaking about their own experiences and introduce topics regarding race so that their Students of Color did not feel like they had to shoulder that burden.

White staff members also shared how their education efforts went outside of the classroom. Kelly shared that sometimes she practiced allyship in "small ways" such as the signage she chooses to hang on her office doors and the stickers to put up in her office. The act of placing specific signs and stickers in her office that communicate her values makes it clear to her students that regardless of their identities she strives to create a safe space for them, free of judgment. Although these were "small thing[s]" Kelly likes to "think that when [she] do[es] these small things, maybe they sort of add up, and make a difference in some way" and contribute to a critical mass of other actions alongside others practicing racial allyship. She mentioned making similar considerations when providing input on brochure materials, website content, and other public facing material.

This section discussed the ways staff members practiced racial allyship by educating their students. This practice involved embracing the power they had in their classrooms and included behaviors such as incorporating topics of social identity, race, and racism, and privilege into course curriculum; focusing on educating White students about issues of race and racism; attempting to normalize the discussion of race; and displaying values-based signs in office spaces. The next section discusses how staff members engaged in racial allyship by serving as a resource to Students of Color.

Serving as a Resource to Students of Color as Racial Allyship

White staff members also shared how their practice of racial allyship with students involved serving as a resource to Students of Color, for example by helping students build

community on campus. Adam shared an experience of connecting a Black woman student on campus experiencing isolation with a community that shared some of her more salient identities. A colleague informed Adam that one of his students revealed through a course assignment that being Black, a woman, and lesbian meant she had "three strikes against her." Due to Adam's work, the colleague felt that he could be of assistance to the student; however, the student was uncertain of Adam's value and much later shared with Adam that she initially thought to herself "What does that White guy know about me?" When they finally had a conversation, the student shared with Adam her lack of connection to other students on campus and Adam introduced her to an informal group of Black, lesbian women, which almost immediately improved the student's experience on campus.

Adam shared another story of their attempt to serve as a resource to Students of Color in building community. Adam was invited to join a LGB student group's executive board meeting as an observer. The student group sponsored a weekly program, which was a peer facilitated discussion group that gave students space to explore topics that were relevant to their college experience. During the executive board meeting that Adam observed, the topic of discussion was an idea presented by a subset of the LGB group, consisting only of Students of Color, who shared their desire "to create a safe space that's specific for our members [who are] Students of Color." The White group members expressed concern that creating a separate group would divide the larger group and emphasizing that they learn so much from the Students of Color, even though the Students of Color stated they would still attend both meetings though they "need[ed] their own space…specifically for the intersection of race and sexual orientation." During the meeting, Adam didn't say anything however after the meeting they:

> pulled one of the White leaders aside and said, "If somebody tells you they need something, believe them. Just support them." [Adam then] pulled one of the Students of Color aside afterwards, and said, "You don't need the White people's permission. If you want to do this, I will support you. If you need a sponsor, whatever, I will do that."

Although the separate group was not formed until years later, Adam's act of allyship demonstrated an intention to encourage Students of Color to pursue their interests, even if it was not in the perceived best interest of their White groupmates.

Kevin noted that he found being intentional about serving as a resource to Students of Color involved learning "the importance of relationship building and trust before providing support to underrepresented college students." Specifically, he's found that the extent that students receive his advice is influenced by "whether or not they trust that [Kevin] truly care[s] for their well-being." Kevin used well-being holistically, which is to say he cares about their success beyond academic or professional development achievements.

This section discussed the ways staff members practiced racial allyship by serving as a resource to their Students of Color. This practice emphasized the importance of relationship and trust building and included behaviors such as helping students build community on campus and affirming students' interest, even if they were critiqued by White students. The next section discusses how staff members engaged in racial allyship by being an amplifier.

Being an Amplifier as Racial Allyship

As illustrated in Kelly's profile, White staff members also practiced racial allyship by amplifying the voices, desires, and needs of People of Color. Alexa's experience addressing staff award distribution in her department demonstrates how being an amplifier involved using her voice to elevate a concern that was first expressed to her by a Colleague of Color. Alexa's

colleague pointed out a nearly two-year pattern of "White people within [their] department getting more consistent recognition than other Counterparts of Color for doing similar tasks." Alexa had also noticed before that a different Colleague of Color was not "given the credit for [her] ideas" and only when "somebody else in power" presented the same idea was the idea seen as valuable. Then the person in power was given credit for the idea. Alexa recognized the need to "hold space for…and listen to [her colleague's] frustration" and the need to "step in and advocate." She chose to email the department's supervisors asking, "how can [the department] recognize the good work that other people have done?" Alexa left the department before the award season directly following her inquiry but heard from her colleague who first pointed out the pattern that nothing changed.

White staff members also used their voice to amplify calls for inclusive practices. Kaitlyn's nominator reminded her of a time when Kaitlyn used her voice to advocate for more inclusive practices alongside other Colleagues of Color. Kaitlyn, her nominator, and other colleagues were in a meeting to discuss pedagogy and Kaitlyn "was pushing for not just doing [traditional] multicultural course" pedagogy. Instead, she added her voice to others pushing for "embrac[ing] anti-racist pedagogies." Kaitlyn explained that her experience in the classroom showed that students would not just "osmotically" pick up values without instructor intentionality and scaffolding. Though Kaitlyn did not see this as anything noteworthy, her nominator pointed out that by adding her voice to the conversation "it wasn't just the People of Color speaking up in the room, and that made a difference."

This section discussed the ways staff members practiced racial allyship by being an amplifier. This practice included behaviors such as elevating the concerns of Colleagues of Color

and calling for more inclusive practices, alongside Colleagues of Color. The next section discusses how staff members engaged in racial allyship by speaking up.

Speaking Up as Racial Allyship

White staff members' stories of racial allyship involved speaking up. As the following examples from Alexa and Kelly demonstrate, the individual whose words they spoke up against often did not see anything wrong with their language or behavior. Alexa recounted an experience she had while "sitting in a committee [meeting] geared towards professional development and interaction around multicultural issues." During the meeting, another committee member who was White and in a "position of much greater authority" stated that the committee "spoke too much about race." Alexa spoke up "in that moment to challenge their [colleague's] discomfort around the topic and also remind them that many of the items [the committee] reviewed needed to have an intersectional lens in order to fully discuss them." Two other White colleagues "immediately reinforced" Alexa's challenge and the committee member who made the original comment "looked uncomfortable and did not want to spend more time addressing the content."

White staff members also challenged language that centered White actors over the harm said actors may have caused a Person of Color. Kelly described an exchange during a staff meeting where she challenged a comment made by one of her supervisors. Kelly's supervisor was discussing an incident on campus where a campus faculty member mistakenly shared an email with their students that contained private correspondence between the faculty member and another faculty colleague. The email exchange discussed the performance of the faculty member's Latine students, one of whom published the faculty members' email exchange to twitter characterizing the private correspondence as racist and unsurprising. Kelly was angered by the fact that the faculty member assessed the students' performance in direct relation to their

ethnicity. When the incident was discussed in the department's staff meeting, Kelly's supervisor "mentioned that one of the instructors involved was a colleague she was friendly with" without mentioning any concern for the students. Kelly interpreted this as her supervisor sympathizing with her colleague and demonstrating a lack of concern for the impact on the students. She responded by stating, "I'm glad that our division leader sent the email and condemned [the instructor's] behavior. I'm glad [the instructor] resigned." Kelly's supervisor "changed the subject quickly and [they] never spoke of it again," which Kelly sees as a pattern of her supervisor's fear of having "deep conversations about things like this" and general avoidance of "diversity and inclusion issues."

Some staff members acknowledged that they found it difficult to challenge racially/ethnically problematic language when the language was coming from a Colleague of Color. Ken was in a staff meeting when a fellow Black female staff member shared that she woke up the morning of the meeting to find that "her hair had become locked after taking out a style the night before." The state of her hair made her feel "embarrassed" and "unprofessional." Other colleagues inquired as to whether her feelings were impacted by race, which she resisted and instead stated that "her feelings had to do with professionalism, rather than race." Ken did see his colleagues' experience as influenced by race, in particular "that some internalized racism might be involved in her reaction." However, he did not speak thinking to himself "maybe I'm not the best person to give her this feedback." Ken referred to his decision to not share his honest thoughts with his colleague as "de-authoritizing" himself in "interactions with People of Color discussing their experience."

Similarly, Kevin discussed how at times he feels his Colleagues of Color have more conservative views than he does, on matters where race/ethnicity plays a role. For example, he's heard Colleagues of Color telling Students of Color:

> you have to dress a certain way or you have to wear your hair a certain way. And I'm like, F that. But they're like, "Well no, you've gotta remember that's how they're going to be judged." But to me, it's like yes educate them on that, inform them on that, and then say it's your choice. I'm not going to grade you on that, but you know what your opportunities are and your choices and you go decide because you are your own human.

Kevin noted that his colleagues' success in their own professional careers or their success in helping other students achieve professional goals lend credibility to their advice about students' choice of how to style their hair and clothes. For Kevin, he's often "wrestling with, how do I inform students about getting to success when I also want it to be equitable."

This section discussed the ways staff members practiced racial allyship by speaking up. This practice included speaking up against the silencing of conversations about race and conversations that centered White people's intentions and disregarded the impact of their actions on a Person, or People of Color. This section addressed how it could be difficult for White staff members to speak up against People of Color. The next section discusses how staff members engaged in racial allyship by coaching and mentoring People of Color.

Coaching and Mentoring People of Color as Racial Allyship

White staff members also practiced racial allyship by coaching and mentoring People of Color. Audrey shared how she mentors a faculty member in her former academic department, which involved "looking for and identifying opportunities…to get out of the department, meet other people, and meet her [professional] goals." Acknowledging that the best institutional fit

might be different than their current institution, Audrey shared that her commitment to her current institution doesn't keep her from sharing with her mentee, "If you don't want to be chair here, what sort of roles do you have somewhere else?" Her commitment is first and foremost to her mentee and her overall wellbeing, which could mean leaving a current, unhealthy department.

Much of White staff members' coaching came through their roles as supervisors to People of Color. Adam hired four associate directors during his professional tenure and each associate was a Person of Color. As the director, Adam's approach was to "empower [associate directors] ...to do the kinds of work that they want to do that in some ways fits in the realm of what it is" the office does. In other words, Adam's approach was to offer autonomy to each associate rather than assuming that he should or even could prescribe how they do their work or training them like his personal assistant.

Kelly and Audrey's experiences supervising Women of Color show how they practiced racial allyship by attempting to guard or protect their supervisees from both potential and real negative consequences. Audrey shared that her supervisee at the time was being criticized for her communication style, which initially made Audrey feel "protective of the individual" and motivated to take on the role of advocate and coach. Audrey along with two other senior administrators who were both People of Color also provided coaching and feedback for nearly a year before a negative interaction with the university president resulted in the staff member losing her role at the institution. Specifically, the university president took offense at the tone Audrey's supervisee used when she spoke to him. Audrey felt "fatigue" and that she was unsuccessful because her supervisee ultimately lost her job and did not adapt her communication style.

Kelly had a similar perspective of coaching her supervisee, a Black woman, with the goal of protecting or guarding her from the consequences of a negative encounter with a more senior department employee. Kelly and her supervisee were attending a department meeting, during the supervisee's first week on the job. Kelly's supervisee shared a personal concern with the group that was directly related to her racial identity. A more senior White woman in the room responded by "trying to compare [her own experience] …to be like she's in solidarity" with Kelly's supervisee. However, it was clear that the senior staff member missed the racial implications of the supervisee's concern. Kelly "just felt frozen" because she didn't want her new employee getting into it with this more senior, more powerful staff member.

During her first interview, she described her freezing as a "miss[ed]…opportunity to engage in racial allyship." When she revisited this moment in a journal response and during our second interview, she saw the experience differently. When asked what she learned from this experience, Kelly shared that she would ask questions of a future supervisee, instead of assuming to know what a future supervisee would want or need from her in a moment of potential conflict with a more senior employee. Kelly acknowledged:

> even if I'm mid-career now or see myself as…older in career experience than the people I manage…I can't assume that they need me to be protecting them or guiding them in this way, which in retrospect I think I had a very, maybe maternal sense or something that…I hate to say it but in a way, kind of patronizing, like I didn't give them enough credit for being able to stick to their belief system and be able to own that and not care what the ramifications are.

Kelly acknowledged that she projected her own values of prioritizing keeping her job onto her supervisee, which for Kelly often meant being mindful not to upset people in power.

Finally, Audrey also noted how she practices "unconscious allyship…by supporting white faculty who identify as allies or who show the characteristics of being an ally… by attending events or lectures that they organize or present…and acknowledging their efforts." Audrey's presence and position as an institution administrator provides visible affirmation of the value of the work of the White faculty practicing racial allyship.

This section discussed the ways staff members practiced racial allyship by coaching and mentoring People of Color. This practice included behaviors such as helping People of Color find job opportunities for professional growth; facilitating supervisees' autonomy; attempting to guard supervisees from negative consequences; and supporting White faculty who identify as allies.

Organizational and Institutional Acts of Racial Allyship

Organizational and institutional acts of racial allyship are those that directly impact a larger group of people (e.g., a department, unit, or institutional policies and practices). Although these acts of racial allyship represented a minority among study participants, White staff members provided insight into the ways they practiced organizational and institutional acts of racial allyship. Specifically, White staff members practiced racial allyship at this level in two distinct ways, (1) hiring inclusively and (2) participating in DEI initiatives.

Hiring Inclusively as Racial Allyship

White staff members recognized that one of the ways racism and Whiteness showed up in institutional practice was through hiring inclusively. It was not lost on study participants that traditional hiring practices and decisions at TWIs served - explicitly and implicitly - to exclude many qualified Candidates of Color. The understanding of this imbalance combined with their commitment to practice racial allyship led some White staff members to intentionally look for

ways to advocate for qualified Applicants of Color. Kelly, acknowledging the lack of racial/ethnic diversity in her department, shared that while serving on search committees she starts from a place of, "we should look to hire a person of color for this position…to the point where a White person would really have to sell themselves as a candidate to me." Kelly shared that she takes a similar approach nominating and selecting students for awards or special opportunities. This approach involves "try[ing] to go out [her] way to amplify…or give extra support to [people] of color." Kelly's explicit approach to value Applicants of Color, illuminates the implicit approaches to most hiring processes that are often described as race-neutral, but in actuality are designed and implemented to benefit White applicants.

Adam and Audrey's approach to hiring demonstrated how addressing racism in the hiring process can be achieved, in part, by focusing on the community needs over personal preferences of hiring managers or search committee members. As was presented in his profile, Adam was challenged early in his career to consider the intersections between sexuality and race, and his role in creating a more racially diverse workplace. Once getting into a position to do so, Adam resolved to write staff position descriptions that were not centered on his personal comfort but rather on the needs of the students he served. Specifically, he knew that his center served a racially/ethnically diverse student population and therefore would write in the position descriptions the requirement for applicants to have "experience and knowledge working in communities of color." At the time, the reality meant that it was more likely for a Person of Color applying for the job, would have more such experience and knowledge than a White applicant would. A senior African American administrator at Adam's institution remarked, "Wow, most people don't do that. Most people want to hire someone who's just like them." To this Adam responded, "Why would I do that? I got the White guys covered." I need help."

Audrey also focused on the needs of the community when participating on a search committee for a high-level administrator. When asked by the ultimate decision-maker for her opinion on the final two candidates - one African American and one White, Audrey was "adamant that the African American candidate was the best person to meet the needs of the institution." Audrey noted that it was her role to "act in the best interest of the institution; although the [White] candidate may have been a more comfortable "fit" with the future immediate supervisor." The best interest of the institution meant accounting for the institution's "growing diverse student body" and the African American candidate would "have the greatest positive impact." Although the decision maker "felt uncomfortable" with the conversation and Audrey's advocacy, the African American candidate was hired. Reflecting on the nature of the conversations, Audrey noted it is possible the African American candidate would not have even been considered as a finalist without Audrey's advocacy.

This section discussed the ways staff members practiced racial allyship by hiring inclusively. This practice included behaviors such as understanding the racial exclusion implicit in traditional hiring practices and decisions; valuing Applicants of Color; writing position descriptions that reflect community needs; and generally focusing on community needs over hiring managers' personal preferences or ambiguous concepts such as fit. The next section discusses how staff members engaged in racial allyship by participating in DEI initiatives at their institution.

Participating in DEI initiatives as Racial Allyship

White staff members not only practiced racial allyship through their official job responsibilities, but also by participating in DEI initiatives at their institution. By participating in broader DEI initiatives, White staff members were able to infuse their perspective on race and

racism into their campus' institutional activities and subsequent products, in most instances to amplify the efforts of similar minded, multiracial/ethnic groups of individuals. Adam, serving as a lead author on an institutional report documenting the university's history and motivated in part by the anticipated, unspoken expectations of their Colleagues or Color:

> …was very intentional about talking about the history of slavery on [their] campus. About how this campus was started with a board of people, half of whom were slave owners. And I was very intentional about bringing that. I don't think you deal with your current situation by ignoring or whitewashing your history, and you need to acknowledge [it] and figure out a way to go forward.

Adam documented this aspect of the university's history with some hope that it would raise awareness and consciousness about the ways racism informed the institution's founding among the broader campus communities.

Alexa and Audrey's experience participating in DEI initiatives demonstrated how the impact of White staff members' racial allyship can be expanded through such initiatives' broader scope and embedded collaboration. Alexa took part in a working group responsible for launching a Multicultural Advocate (MA) program that was eventually implemented throughout her department. The MA program involved hiring undergraduate students dedicated to educating their peers about multicultural issues through creating dialogue engagement opportunities, conducting active education (e.g., implicit bias workshops), conducting passive education (e.g., bulletin boards and newsletters), and supporting training of other student staff.

Audrey took part in two working groups, one focused on building community among faculty and supporting their novel approaches to increase inclusivity on campus; and the other focused on embedding dialogue into course curriculum across the institution. Audrey described

the collaboration in these groups as “rich” and the meetings as “productive and a safe place to contribute to the work in addition to at times to grow as individuals.” Before participating in the study, she would not have considered her participation in these working groups as allyship; however, shared that her role in these multiracial/ethnic working groups, where White members were the minority, was to be “supportive and advocate for the work in terms of accessing financial and administrative support and recognition.”

This section discussed the ways staff members practiced racial allyship by participating in DEI initiatives at their institution. This practice included behaviors such as publicly documenting an institution’s history of slavery; launching a department wide multicultural program; and joining working groups aimed at increasing inclusivity through faculty practice.

The cross-case analysis of the practice of racial allyship revealed three key themes and eight subthemes. Below is a summary table of these key findings.

Table 2

Practices of Racial Allyship

Theme	**Subtheme**
Intrapersonal Act of Racial Allyship	• Working on themselves
Interpersonal Acts of Racial Allyship	• Educating students • Serving as a resource to Students of Color • Being an amplifier • Speaking up • Coaching and mentoring People of Color
Organizational and Institutional Acts of Racial Allyship	• Hiring inclusively • Participating in DEI initiatives

Whiteness Revealed

This study also aimed to make visible the taken for granted ways Whiteness shapes everyday practice at TWIs, specifically forms of Whiteness that inhibit and challenge acts of White racial allyship. This section is organized around three forms of whiteness (1) intrapersonal, (2) interpersonal, and (3) institutional forms of Whiteness. First, I present findings on intrapersonal forms of Whiteness, which refers to the ways White people at TWIs reflect and reinforce the invisible structures that produce and reproduce White supremacy and privilege through their personal and professional perspectives, values, and beliefs. Next, I move into a discussion of interpersonal form of Whiteness, which refers to the ways White people at TWIs reflect and reinforce the invisible structures that produce and reproduce White supremacy and privilege; both in their interactions with each other as well as interactions with People of Color. The final section examines institutional forms of Whiteness, which refers to the ways institutional policies, practices, and norms at TWIs reflect and reinforce the invisible structures that produce and reproduce White supremacy and privilege.

Intrapersonal Forms of Whiteness

The findings revealed three forms of intrapersonal Whiteness: (1) White people not thinking about what it means to be White, (2) preference for White-centric course content, and (3) tokenizing People of Color.

The lack of reflection by White students, staff, and faculty on what it means to be White - specifically questioning racial inequities and acknowledging their privileged, racial status - was evident throughout the examples shared by study participants. Kaitlyn described a meeting where it was clear the full professor had not critically reflected on what it means to be White. Kaitlyn, the full professor, one graduate TA, and one undergraduate TA, were meeting to plan for a

course they were co-teaching in the upcoming semester. The full professor was discussing "grading, [when] he made a side comment, and did so in a whispered voice about how long a previous TA took to grade and implied he wasn't making sufficient progress to degree."

The previous graduate TA being whispered about was the only Black graduate student in the department. The full professor had previously shared with Kaitlyn that he had taken the Stanford's Implicit Bias test and "somewhat proudly stated that he didn't test positive for an implicit bias based on race." Kaitlyn knew from this statement and other interactions that "he didn't see himself as biased and didn't want to see himself as biased." Still, the professor's behavior clearly lacked any self-reflection on what it meant for him to whisper critiques and expose private information about the only Black student in the department, in a room of only White people.

The lack of reflection is often evident in professional practices and preferences, such as the preference for White centric course curriculum. Kelly shared how her director's preference for White centric curriculum negatively impacted the course's students. A group of students expressed concerns that their "class was very Western centric [and] came from a colonial lens…and it was very detrimental to their experience." The director did not respond to the students' concerns and, in Kelly's perception, was not interested in Kelly's insights on the matter, given Kelly did not have a PhD and thus was not valued as an actual instructor.

Kaitlyn's struggle to incorporate issues of racial diversity, equity, and inclusion into a STEM classroom reflects a challenge that is consistent within her broader field of study. Kaitlyn noted that scientists in her field "tend to treat race as a genetic phenomenon, rather than necessarily the much more complicated issue of society it is…[that] traditionally we don't deal with very well."

The final example of intrapersonal Whiteness revealed by this study is the tokenizing of People of Color. Alexa shared how her department's process of pairing student staff members led to sustained discomfort for a Black female student staff member. The Black female student staff member, who was paired with a White male student staff member, expressed to Alexa her discomfort working with her White male colleague. In fact, according to Alexa, she had been paired with "problematic White men the majority of her career." Alexa affirmed for the student that the expectation of her role was not to work collaboratively but admitted that the workplace culture was one where "a lot of the students work[ed] collaboratively on everything together." Alexa pointed out how this particular student staff issue was:

> …a poignant example of thinking about a system that might need more interrogation, in terms of how do we think about pairing people together and how they might work [together], and were they paired together because it was just a visual representation of diversity.

Alexa's sense that the students were paired together for the purpose of the department's desire to present a diverse body and face, without thinking about what the Black student's experience would be, or if the pairing made the most sense for further facilitating a culture of collaboration among student staff members, was confirmed when the student shared her experience working with her new paired colleague. Alexa gave her Black student the option to have input on who she would be paired with in the next year - an option she provides to all student staff - which ultimately led to her being paired with a different White male on the staff who was a friend of hers. The student shared with Alexa that "this has been the best co-relationship I've had."

This section presented intrapersonal forms of Whiteness revealed through White staff members' practice of racial allyship, specifically White people not thinking about what it means to be White, preference for White centric course content, and tokenization of People of Color. The next section presents findings on interpersonal forms of Whiteness, which refers to the ways White people at TWIs reflect and reinforce the invisible structures that produce and reproduce White supremacy and privilege; both in their interactions with each other as well as interactions with People of Color.

Interpersonal Forms of Whiteness

The study revealed the following forms of interpersonal Whiteness: (1) discouraging and/or avoiding conversations about race and racism; and (2) shifting the blame from racism to those challenging racism.

Discouraging and/or avoiding conversations about race and racism are closely related to the concepts of White silencing and White silence, respectively. Discouraging conversations about race and racism occurred when White people contributed their voices and perspectives in conversations related to race and racism but did so in a way that sought to shut down - or discourage - other voices, particularly critical voices and perspectives. Earlier in this chapter, I recounted Alexa's experience in a committee meeting where a person in a "position of much greater authority" stated that the committee "spoke too much about race." This comment was particularly ironic given the committee was "geared towards professional development and interaction around multicultural issues." Instead of remaining silent during the conversation, this committee member chose to speak and to use their voice as a way to silence others. Other examples of discouraging conversations about race and racism included centering White voices in conversations about race and racism at the expense of making room for People of Color to

share their own stories; and a White staff member comparing their individual experience to the racialized experience of Staff of Color, diminishing the racialized and thus very different nature of their perceived shared experiences.

Alexa's experience in this committee also provided an example of avoiding conversations about race or racism. The committee "created a training for supervisors so that they understood the [multicultural] model" in order to help "facilitate some conversations and build trust in their smaller team units." When Alexa suggested the all-White senior leadership participate in the training as well, they were "shocked" that they would participate in a training that they were creating. Alexa noted that such training opportunities, though repetitive, "always [offers] something to be learned from engaging in them and in trying to bring your best self to it" and offered an opportunity for "role modeling the way engaging in these topics, having this conversation is very important." While the senior leadership ultimately participated in the training, "they self-selected into their own smaller group and didn't really participate" instead "postulating about how they thought everything was going along as it went." These actions of not contributing their voice to the conversation represented what Alexa referred to as "writing [themselves] a permission slip" out of the training because they created it and made Alex feel like she "was banging [her] head against a wall."

The final form of interpersonal Whiteness revealed by this study was shifting the blame from racism to challenging racism. Adam's story earlier in this chapter about their attempt to support Students of Color on an LGB student group's executive board is an example of this form of Whiteness. The executive board's Student of Color expressed a desire to create their own "safe space." And even though they made it clear they planned to still attend the full group meetings; the White executive board members described the idea of creating a safe space as

dividing the student group. It was not racism and the differential experiences it creates for People of Color that was the problem, but instead the students who wanted to explore what these differential experiences were like among others with a shared experience who were characterized as the problem.

White staff members shared how it was not only People of Color who were framed as the problem when calling attention to race or racism, but White people as well. Ken shared how "at various times" he's had the reputation among White friends as, "Oh there goes Ken about race again." Kevin's experience calling attention to the racial implications of a hiring decision at his job had professional consequences for him. Kevin's institution staffed the leadership of a new center through internal promotion, instead of a national search. The concern, particularly among Kevin's Colleagues of Color, was that two White women were chosen to lead the new center, which was created to "focus its efforts on serving Students of Color." And the assumption was that these women would most likely "hire [staff] that reflect that many identities" of the campus' students and this process reinforced the "sense of a glass ceiling for [Kevin's] colleagues of color."

Kevin, "with good intention in mind reached out to one of the women who [would] lead the center" to discuss how he could support the center's future work and before leaving he shared how there were "concerns about how the two promotions came about" and to encourage his colleague to take the information into consideration as they reach out to colleagues on campus to collaborate. Kevin's colleague responded, "defensively listing off her accomplishments" and eventually received a message that Kevin described as a reminder to "get in line" from the Dean who made the appointment. This message was passed on to Kevin through his boss' boss, which caused Kevin' anxiety because, while his "intention was to support his colleagues of color" he

was concerned that his actions might cause his boss' boss, who was a Black woman, to be reprimanded.

This section presented interpersonal forms of Whiteness revealed through White staff members' practice of racial allyship, specifically discouraging and/or avoiding conversations about race and racism; and shifting the blame from racism to those challenging racism. The next section presents findings on institutional forms of Whiteness, which refers to the ways institutional policies, practices, and norms at TWIs reflect and reinforce the invisible structures that produce and reproduce White supremacy and privilege.

Institutional Forms of Whiteness

The study revealed two forms of institutional Whiteness: (1) overrepresentation of White faculty and students and (2) unfair reward processes.

I chose the label Traditionally White Institutions (TWIs) instead of Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) because the word predominantly feels ahistorical in ways that traditionally clearly is not. It is not only that White students account for 50% or more of some colleges and universities, which is how PWIs are defined; but also, that these institutions have a history of explicitly denying enrollment to People of Color. The study participants' practice of racial allyship revealed how the norms, practices, and culture within TWIs maintain the overrepresentation of White faculty, staff, and students even in the absence of institutional policies denying People of Color access to education and employment. Kevin shared another story about a staffing decision at his institution that resulted in a White candidate being hired over a Black candidate. Kevin shared how an office of all White women, hired another White woman to join their team. He expressed his concerns to a few colleagues who responded, "sounds right, that is what they do here." Kevin inquired further into the hiring decision and

learned that the White woman who was hired had previously worked for the hiring supervisor. He also learned that the committee's initial decision was to hire the Black candidate who they felt "was the better candidate." However, at the very last minute the committee decided to recommend the White candidate instead, due to "sentimental" reasons.

Unlike the staffing decision recounted in the previous section, Kevin was able to confirm, beyond speculation, that the Black candidate was more qualified than the White candidate. Kevin also explained how this was a new experience for him, in that some of the people involved in the hiring decision were White staff and administrators who participated in DEI and anti-racist initiatives on campus. Kevin reflected on one individual involved in particular:

> But it's like…if you are the direct like you are the head of this and you still can't push things and you are part of this anti-racist group and you had an opportunity to bring in someone who's not only a diverse candidate…but is obviously skilled in the position that you're trying to get. Why are we here?

One result of the overrepresentation of White faculty and staff at TWIs is the concentration of power among White faculty and staff. Many of the stories recounted in this chapter demonstrate how this concentration of power can result in the impediment to DEI efforts, inequitable hiring practices, and restricted curriculum. Alexa's reflection on why this concentration of institutional power persists is illumination:

> And then I think understanding that for folks in power that giving other people power doesn't necessarily mean that they're losing it. What's the quote? …when people's privilege is being attacked it feels like marginalization to them. And we have to create that understanding that it's not.

White faculty and staff recognize that efforts to advance DEI could have implications for the way power is distributed, and relatedly how resources are distributed, within their institutions.

Alexa's amplification of her colleague's concern's regarding their department's award distribution to staff, revealed institutional Whiteness in the form of unfair reward processes. Alexa's colleague, who was a Person of Color, alerted Alexa to a pattern of "White people within [their] department getting more consistent recognition than other counterparts of color for doing similar tasks." Alexa also learned from listening to her Colleagues of Color that their collective lack of recognition, via awards, was a result of "being punished for the politics of navigating a political environment" and having to consider what it means "to be authentic and at what cost." Alexa's colleagues were denied equitable recognition and reward for their work, despite performing the same tasks as their White colleagues and despite being denied the ability to be their authentic selves. As Audrey stated, when sharing her experience advocating for a particular Full Professor of Color, "she had some different abilities in terms of vision, but she was smart and she was a gifted teacher in her way, which was different than their way." Their way being the White norm.

This section presented institutional forms of Whiteness revealed through White staff members' practice of racial allyship, specifically the overrepresentation of White faculty and students and inequitable reward structures.

The cross-case analysis revealed three key themes and seven subthemes. Below is a summary table of these key findings.

Table 3

Forms of Whiteness revealed

Theme	Subtheme
Intrapersonal forms of Whiteness	• White people not thinking about what it means to be White • Preference for White centric course content • Tokenizing People of Color
Interpersonal forms of Whiteness	• Discouraging and/or avoiding conversations about race and racism • Shifting the blame from racism to those challenging racism
Institutional forms of Whiteness	• Overrepresentation of White faculty and students • Unfair reward processes

Chapter 6: Summary and Conclusions

My interest in conducting this study was motivated, in part, by my observation of the persistence of racism within the US and TWIs, understanding of the ideological and structural context that permits racism to exist (i.e., Whiteness), and belief that White people have the resources and primary responsibility to challenge racially oppressive systems. I was particularly interested in understanding the perspectives, behaviors, and experiences of White people at TWIs who rejected the racial status quo and challenge racially oppressive systems within their professional practice. I believed that findings from my study would improve higher education scholars' and practitioner's understanding of White racial allyship within higher education; and provide insight into the strategies White staff use to challenge racism and interrupt Whiteness within TWIs. The remainder of this chapter provides (1) a brief overview of the study's design; (2) a summary and discussion of findings; and (3) research and practice implications.

Overview of Study Design

The purpose of this study was to (1) understand how White people at TWI conceptualize racial allyship, (2) examine the acts of racial allyship they employ, and (3) examine the forms of

Whiteness they navigate and seek to interrupt. Literature on this topic offers insight into the ways White people at TWIs engage in behavior that perpetuates Whiteness (Cabrera & Zimmerman, 2017; Hikido & Murray, 2015; Matias et al., 2014; Patton, 2015; Ropers-Huilman et al, 2013); however, there is much fewer empirical studies examining the ways White people at TWIs interrupt and challenge Whiteness (Cabrera et al., 2016; Patton & Bondi, 2015). This study sought to fill this gap by addressing the following research questions:

1. How do White staff in traditionally White institutions of higher education conceptualize White racial allyship?
2. How do White staff in these institutions challenge racism and Whiteness in their institution?
   What forms of Whiteness do White staff in these institutions reveal through their efforts to challenge racism?

A total of seven White staff members participated in this study. The participants included 4 women and 3 men who shared that, in addition to their race, their gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, familial status, education status, ability, socioeconomic status, and religious beliefs were collectively important to how they saw themselves. The staff members worked in various higher education functions at the time of this study (e.g., academic affairs; institutional diversity, equity, and inclusion; international education; and residence life) and worked at six institutions across the United States.

The integrated framework that informed my research approach drew from Whiteness studies and Black feminism. Mills (1997, 2007) concept of White ignorance was important for anchoring the study's approach to understanding Whiteness. Mills (1997, 2007) argued that the dominance of White supremacy means White people are socialized to misinterpret racial realities. White ignorance, however, is not simply the passive lack of knowledge; it is positioned, in a White supremacist society, as the correct way to view and understand the world. I designed

this study to learn from those White people who, by acknowledging that racism exists and primarily privileges White people, strive to resist this way of seeing the world.

Black feminists have long taken part in public discourses about the role of White people in challenging racism. Barbara Christian's (1988) work further reminds us that public discourse and practice are also forms of theorizing; and in particular, a form of theorizing long practiced by People of Color. hooks's (1984) and Lorde's (1983) Black Feminist visions of racial solidarity between women provided an alternative to White supremacy's ignorance both in terms of perspective and potential paths forward. hooks's (1984) and Lorde's (1983) work provided a framework to analyze the ways White staff at TWIs practice racial allyship, particularly as it related to self-reflection; genuine relationship and collaboration; and private and public resistance of racial oppression.

Additionally, the conceptual framework was supplemented by a review of relevant literature on forms of Whiteness and White racial allyship, both within the context of TWIs (Broido, 2000, 2012; Cabrera et al.'s, 2016; Case, 2012; Chesler & Crowfoot, 1997; Eichstedt, 2001; Malott et al., 2015; Michael & Conger, 2009; Picower, 2009). These supplemental literatures will be discussed in more detail when summarizing the study's findings below.

This study used a multiple case study design (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015) with each of the seven White staff members as the unit of analysis. I used purposeful sampling methods beginning with a nomination process to recruit and select participants. To qualify for this study, staff members met all of the following criteria: (1) was at least 18 years old; (2) was a current staff member at a TWI; (3) was nominated by a Person of Color who was also a current staff member at a TWI; (4) self-identified as White; and (5) was able to provide at least three examples of engaging in acts of racial allyship at their institution. To recruit White staff

members, I enlisted the assistance of nominators, who were People of Color at TWIs with formal or informal roles on campus related to racial diversity, inclusion, or equity. Nominators and participants completed surveys, which were used to determine participant eligibility. The remainder of this section summarizes the data collection and analysis processes.

Data Collection

Consistent with Merriam and Tisdell's (2015) description of multiple case study methodology, I collected data via multiple sources from each participant including nominator and participant surveys, two individual semi-structured interviews, and participant journal responses to four reflective prompts. In the recruitment and selection process, each nominator and participant completed a brief survey. Nominators shared their reason(s) for nominating each individual, and participants gave examples of how they engage in acts of racial allyship at their institution.

Each participant also took part in two semi-structured interviews (Creswell, 2013) and received interview questions before their interview. Each of the first interviews were approximately 75-90 minutes and were conducted in person. Each first interview began with asking participants what topics participants wanted to discuss during the interview and exploring their needs to feel comfortable to speak freely and listen fully. The remaining questions addressed topics such as participants' conceptualizations of racial allyship; motivations for practicing racial allyship; examples of successful and unsuccessful attempts at practicing racial allyship; and reasons for action and inaction. The second interviews were approximately 30-45 minutes and were conducted via the video-conferencing service Zoom. The second interviews focused on discussing the journaling process and probing participant's responses provided in

their first interview and subsequent. All interviews took place in a secure place where the participants could speak freely and honestly.

Finally, each participant provided written journal responses to four separate prompts. The journal prompts covered the following topics: (a) the role of self-reflection in racial allyship; (b) examples of action and inaction in response to an observed need to engage in racial allyship; (c) the ideal version of a White person practicing racial allyship in the participant's professional role; and (d) the role of collaboration in racial allyship. Participants were encouraged to complete the responses over a four-week period, which began the first Monday following their first interview; however, participants were given the latitude to complete the journals at times that best fit their needs.

Data Analysis

In this multiple case study, the data analysis unfolded in two distinct stages—within-case analysis and cross-case analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The initial stage, within-case analysis, involved treating each participant as its own comprehensive case. This phase led to the construction of participant profiles which included the participant's professional role/title, years of higher education professional experience, important social identities (as applicable), reason(s) for nomination, and their response to being nominated. The profiles also included key moments in the participant's life that shaped their perspective on race and racism; and ways they conceptualized racial allyship.

In the second stage, cross-case analysis, I aimed to derive overarching themes applicable across multiple cases. Employing a deductive approach, I developed a new cross-case codebook, utilizing Dedoose software for comprehensive coding and analysis.

To enhance the trustworthiness of the data, three strategies were employed: triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing. Triangulation involved utilizing diverse data collection methods such as surveys, in-depth interviews, and journals to offer a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Member checking was conducted through two avenues: participants reviewing their transcript data and soliciting their feedback on themes that emerged from data analysis. In instances of disagreement between participant and researcher interpretations, both perspectives were presented. Peer debriefing enlisted colleagues, professors, and practitioners familiar with the research topic to critically question and provide feedback on data themes, ensuring a robust analysis without compromising participant confidentiality.

Summary and Discussion of Findings

The findings from this study provide key insights to the practice of racial allyship by White staff members at TWIs. Specifically, the conceptualization of racial allyship, practice of racial allyship, and the forms of Whiteness staff members navigate and seek to interrupt. A significant amount of research has been dedicated to the ways People of Color at TWIs process, navigate, and make meaning of racism (Casanova et al., 2018; Harper, 2009; Muñoz & Maldonado, 2012; Museus & Park, 2015; Yosso, Ceja, Smith, & Solórzano, 2009); and the ways White people at TWIs engage in behavior that perpetuates Whiteness (Cabrera & Zimmerman, 2017; Hikido & Murray, 2015; Matias et al., 2014; Patton, 2015; Ropers-Huilman et al, 2013). However, there are much fewer empirical studies examining the ways White people at TWIs interrupt and challenge Whiteness (Cabrera et al., 2016; Patton & Bondi, 2015)—effectively missing what Cabrera et al. (2016) called the other half of the equation. In the remainder of this section, I present a review and discussion of the study's key findings, organized by the study's research question.

Conceptualizing White Racial Allyship

The study's first research question was, how do White staff at traditionally White institutions conceptualize White racial allyship? Each participant's case profile in chapter four included a section detailing how they conceptualized racial allyship. Taken together and within the context of this study, the participants' conceptualization of racial allyship include the following elements: embracing power, acknowledging limitations; making sure people are treated fairly; knowing better and doing better; working with others; identifying the root of the problem; and using race to predict, not decide.

Embracing Power, Acknowledging Limitations

Perhaps fundamental to all conceptual elements is embracing power and acknowledging limitations. Although these elements are not presented in any particular order, this first element is the exception. All staff members who participated in this study acknowledged the role of power in shaping the opportunities and limitations of their practice of racial allyship. Adam described this element as "positional power"— the power each staff member's position grants them to act without the need to request prior approval or permission. This means that positional power increases as a staff members' position increases in institutional rank and authority. Similarly, Kelly attributed her inability, at times, to have a conversation with her supervisor about something problematic (e.g., a microaggression towards a Team Member of Color) to "the slight fear that [she] might be reprimanded from [her] supervisor."

Generally speaking, students have less power than faculty and instructors, supervisees have less power than their supervisors, and staff have less power than higher level administrators. This hierarchy of power and the associated limitations meant that staff members

primarily engaged in practices of racial allyship among individuals and groups with similar or less positional power than themselves.

Making Sure People are Treated Fairly

White staff members at TWIs conceptualized racial allyship, in part, as taking responsibility for making sure people are treated fairly. This theme was reflected in Audrey's comments, who shared:

> I think it's important to make sure that all individuals are given the support they need to thrive…And if one sees something that that is unjust, it's important to speak up and do what you can to make sure that people are treated with the respect they deserve.

Collectively, this commitment was grounded in a shared belief that individuals should not face differential treatment based on their identity and an acknowledgment, in the words of Alexa, that understanding and leveraging [one's] own privilege" was a means to address unfair treatment and challenge systemic racism. For some White staff members practicing racial allyship is simply the right thing to do.

Knowing Better and Doing Better

Another way staff members in the study conceptualized racial allyship was by knowing better and doing better. This phrasing comes from Maya Angelou's advice to Oprah Winfrey to not judge herself for previous mistakes, and rather to focus on the person she was trying to become (Oprah.com, 2011). Central to this conceptual element is the idea that having a belief that the world should be equitable is insufficient. A person's belief does not necessarily lead to desired behavior or action. For the study's participants this self-improvement element was characterized by behaviors such as engaging in intentional reflection; studying and reading on topics of racism and racial justice; embracing the discomfort that can sometimes accompany

growth; and being open to feedback without becoming defensive or disengaging. The final behavior is exemplified, in part, by Kevin's description of critical feedback from a student as a "success"— "The success is bringing that in to saying, okay, how can we address this and how can we try to ensure that people hare having a good experience."

Working with Others

White staff members also conceptualized racial allyship as working with others, which including other White people and People of Color. One advantage of working with others was ensuring racial allyship was effective. For example, Alexa shared that she has struggled the most "when [she has] attempted to make a program, lecture, or initiative surround diversity and inclusion but have done so without the input of communities that are the area of discussion." Collaborating with People of Color in cases of advocacy meant that White staff members were aligned with the known, rather than assumed, needs of People of Color.

An advantage of working with other White people in particular was that it allowed the study's participants learn from and educate each other. Finally, without collaboration and partnerships participants felt it would be unlikely to have an institutionalized impact. As Kelly noted, working with others on larger initiatives allowed her to have an impact beyond her "small [campus] department" that she otherwise could not have.

Identifying the Root of the Problem

Another conceptual element revealed in this study is identifying the root of the problem. Staff members recognized that most situations that required racial allyship were connected to larger systemic issues of racism. For example, Alexa's story of her Black student staff member's concerns about working with a White colleague was interpersonal (i.e., between the two

students). Alexa also considered the reason the students were working together in the first place was a result of departmental practices that tokenized Students of Color for their visible diversity.

Study participants considered disrupting larger systems that support racism an important element of racial allyship. For example, Kaitlyn questioned her suitability for the study because she was not "fighting the system." Similarly, Ken shared in a journal entry the ideal person practicing racial allyship in his role "would be more actively disrupting the racial structures (personal, interpersonal, and institutional) that support racism."

Using Race to Predict, Not Decide

White staff members also conceptualized racial allyship as using race to predict, not decide. This means that race is a critical and foundational factor to consider in the practice of racial allyship and that race can be used to predict the need for racial allyship. However, more factors need to be considered when determining how to engage in the actual practice of racial allyship. This element is evident in the importance Adam placed on considering the following in their racial allyship practice: intersections of gender, sexuality, and race; assessing a White person's relationship to race; and the relationship between Adam and the White person they're attempting to educate. For the participants, it would be a mistake to assume what someone needs to learn about race, racism, and/or allyship based only on their race.

Similarly, it would be a mistake to assume the type of allyship a Person of Color might benefit from simply based on their racial/ethnic identity. This mistaken assumption is exhibited by Kelly's experience of learning the balance of using her awareness of racial dynamics to predict the potential need to support her Supervisees of Color in certain situations, but not assuming the supervisee would expect or want Kelly to support her in a particular way.

Another mistake would be assuming that any Person of Color would always be more knowledgeable, than the White staff members about issues of race and racism. This assumption is demonstrated by Ken and Kevin's challenge of responding to what they perceived to be internalized racism and respectability politics among Colleagues of Color.

This section presented six elements of a collective conceptualization of racial allyship, which included: embracing power, acknowledging limitations; making sure people are treated fairly; knowing better and doing better; working with others; identifying the root of the problem; and using race to predict, not decide. I believe these elements both align with and add to current literature on the topic of allies and allyship.

First, *embracing power and acknowledging limitations* is an element that adds to the literature. Specifically, I believe the foundational role power plays in conceptualizing racial allyship could explain the critique some scholars have made that White people who engage in acts of racial allyship within TWIs often do so on the intrapersonal and interpersonal levels, not on the organizational or institutional level (i.e., where they have less power and encounter more limitations) (Boutte & Jackson, 2014; Patton & Bondi, 2015). This is to say that White staff members' practice of racial allyship is influenced by their knowledge, skills, awareness, and commitment often times after the opportunities and limitations of power are considered. Their knowledge, skills, and awareness serve as a risk assessment. This is not to say that staff members' practice of racial allyship does not involve risk. As Williams, et al. (2023), pointed out in the article introducing cognitive-behavioral exercises to help people become more engaged in racial justice allyship, allyship requires courage. However, the conceptual element of *identifying*, rather than addressing, *the root of the problem* might point to the limits of staff members' racial allyship to bring about organizational or institutional change.

Also, *making sure people are treated fairly* aligns with Broido's (2000) study of six undergraduates who developed into social justice allies during college, where the author found the students entered college with egalitarian views— "believing all people were fundamentally equal" (p.7). Similarly, Loftin's (2010) study of nine White faculty racial justices allies at a PWI found that all participants "demonstrate[d] an interest in and commitment to working toward a more equitable and just campus climate for students and faculty of color" (p.75).

The concept of *knowing better and doing better* and *working with others* are both aligned with literature that speak to the importance of self-work and collaboration, respectively. The former set of literature describes self-work as doing the difficult, personal work of honest self-reflection; interrogating of one's own beliefs, views, and values; and becoming informed about issues related to race and racism (Broido, 2000; Cabrera, 2012; hooks, 1984; Kendall, 2006; Michael and Bartoli, 2022; Michael & Conger, 2009; and Reason et al., 2005).

Working with others speaks to what hooks (1984) addressed as the issue of *dominant leadership vs. collaboration*, where she observed a desire for dominant leadership among White women who wanted to lead instead of engaging in true collaboration. Furthermore, it aligns with literature that acknowledge the need to ensure People of Color don't have to challenge injustice alone (Smith & Redington, 2010); and the importance of White role models for White people learning to practice racial allyship to have other models (Case, 2012; Smith et al., 2017).

Finally, *using race to predict, not decide* adds to current literature on the topic of allyship. As previously stated, many empirical studies on the topic of allyship reinforce the oversimplified "Good White/Bad White" dichotomy (Cabrera et al., 2016). This finding complicates this approach given that White staff members saw their race as critical but only a part of their full identity. They considered factors other than a person's race when engaging in

interpersonal acts of allyship (e.g., a person's relationship with their race). Similarly, it was not always accurate to assume that any Person of Color would be more knowledgeable, than the White staff members about issues of race and racism.

Practicing Racial Allyship

The study's second research question was, how do White staff at traditionally White institutions challenge racism and Whiteness in their institution? The question reflects my initial framing of racial allyship as direct responses to racism and Whiteness. However, the study revealed that participants practiced racial allyship in other ways that went beyond, simply challenging racism and Whiteness within their professional practice. Specifically, I found that participants practiced racial allyship in three distinct ways. First through the intrapersonal act of working on themselves. Secondly, through the interpersonal acts of educating students; serving as a resource to Students of Color; being an amplifier; speaking up; and coaching and mentoring People of Color. Finally, organizational and institutional acts of racial allyship involved hiring inclusively and participating in DEI initiatives). Next, I provide a examples of each of these themes and how they align with or add to current research.

Working on Themselves as Racial Allyship

Foundational to the practice of racial allyship among White staff members was *working on themselves*, primarily through self-reflection and continuous learning. Rejecting what Charles Mills (1997, 2007) termed as White ignorance, each staff member demonstrated a commitment to questioning racial inequities and acknowledging their privileged racial status. Staff reflections encompassed complex issues, such as upholding workplace norms reinforcing Whiteness, supporting underrepresented students, and navigating the evolving language of social justice.

Continuous learning played a pivotal role, with staff members seeking insights from a variety of resources including, books, articles, events, in-person and online communities, friends, and colleagues. Social media posts, personal interactions, and group discussions served as catalysts for reflection, enriching their understanding of racial dynamics. Collective processing with trusted friends and participation in anti-racism groups provided valuable external perspectives, fostering a supportive environment for navigating complexities, acknowledging imperfections, and deepening their understanding of racism within their individual contexts.

This finding aligns with literature demonstrating that White racial allyship most often begins with challenging one's own racist thoughts and behaviors (Broido, 2000) and is characterized by consistent, self-reflection (Linder, 2015; Michael & Conger, 2009; Reason et al., 2005). Engaging in collective spaces, such as affinity groups, provide a space to openly acknowledge their racism and confront their racial privilege (Case, 2012). The foundational role of this practice is reflected in findings that self-work facilitates more confident and competent engagement in conversations about race and racism, in personal and professional contexts (Eichstedt, 2001; Malott et al., 2015; Smith et al., 2017).

Interpersonal Acts of Racial Allyship

The White staff members engaged in racial allyship by *educating students*, embracing their power within the classroom to incorporate diverse perspectives and address issues of race and racism in course curricula; shape course learning objectives; and make space for real-time discussions about visible racist incidents on campus. The participants also spoke about how certain education efforts were particularly focused on helping White students not only learn about issues of race and racism, but to explore their own racial identity and associated privilege. They spoke to the importance of making learning opportunities accessible, normalized, and

tailored to the individual and/or group's needs. Finally, they shared how their education extended beyond the classroom to include passive education efforts (e.g., office signage and residential life programming).

White staff members actively *served as resources to Students of Color* through intentional efforts in relation and trust building. Some of the ways the staff served as resources to students included assisting them in building community on campus, validating their perspectives, trouble-shooting challenges, and connecting them to campus resources. As amplifiers, White staff members used their voices to elevate concerns and promote inclusive practices for their colleagues and students.

Interpersonal acts of racial allyship also involved *speaking up*. This form of allyship included speaking up against language and behaviors from colleagues that tried to silence or discourage conversations about race and racism; overlooked or dismissed harm done to People of Color; or promoted assimilation. The staff members spoke about the difficulty of being White and directly challenging such language and behaviors when the people being challenged were their professional superiors and/or People of Color.

Finally, White staff members practiced allyship through *coaching and mentoring People of Color*, particularly in their roles as supervisors. This included behaviors such as offering autonomy and avoiding a prescriptive approach to supervision; identifying opportunities for professional development; and being committed to overall well-being. However, challenges arose, such as protecting supervisees from negative consequences, highlighting the complexities and evolving nature of racial allyship in supervisory roles.

The study's findings align with research literature that suggests one specific act of racial allyship is educating others through actions such as teaching other White people about issues

related to racism and Whiteness; developing workshops to foster dialogue on diversity issues; and integrating racial justice topics into course curriculum (Loftin, 2010; Patton & Bondi, 2015; Traoré, 2017). Furthermore, speaking up is similar to what Traoré (2017) referred to as everyday antiracist practices where individuals confront and call others out directly, attempt to appeal to the person's rationality by providing a counter claim, and take actions that are intended to be undetected but subversive.

The study findings are also aligned with literature that address the importance of cross-race mentorship and supervision in supporting the advancement of Students, Staff, and Faculty of Color (Stanley & Lincoln, 2005; Zambrana et al., 2015). For example, LeMaire et al.'s, (2020) paper that offers a practical guide and inspirational source for engaging in allied behaviors in higher education. In their paper they, identified the following allied behaviors in mentorship: "offering sustained mentorship to individuals of marginalized backgrounds; elevating the work of people from marginalized groups; and encouraging creativity and flexibility to move away from the status quo" (p. 17).

Additionally, the practice of serving as a resource to Students of Color aligns with other definitions of allyship found in the literature. For example, Stone-Sabil et. al (2023) interviewed 12 Black graduate STEM students who reported aspiring faculty allies should practice active allyship by "creating equity for minoritized students" (p.8). Additionally, Hinger et al.'s (2023) study that aimed to prove a "model of white allyship from the perspective" (p. 640) of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) found that participants in the study described white allyship in part as "building trust with BIPOC" (pp. 640-641). The importance of building trust when seeking to was also emphasized a key to serving as a resource to Students of Color. Finally, Hinger et al. (2023) also found that BIPOC participants believed "White allies [should]

use the safety and power that come with their racial privilege to amplify BIPOC voices and narratives" (p. 638).

Organizational and Institutional Acts of Racial Allyship

Organizational and institutional acts of racial allyship are those that directly impact a larger group of people (e.g., a department, unit, or institutional policies and practices). These acts of racial allyship were less prevalent, with only two themes emerging: hiring inclusively and participating in DEI initiatives.

White staff members recognized the pervasive influence of racism and Whiteness in personnel choices at TWIs. They identified that conventional hiring methods often excluded qualified Candidates of Color and were characterized by implicit bias in supposedly race-neutral hiring processes that inherently favored White applicants. These standard processes prompted some staff members approach hiring by intentionally advocating for diverse candidates; prioritizing the needs of racially/ethnically diverse student populations over "comfortable fit"; and constructing position descriptions to value equity experience.

The other way White staff members engaged in organizational and institutional acts of racial allyship was through an active participation in DEI initiatives at their institutions. They infused their perspectives on race and racism into institutional activities and products such as institution publications; departmental multicultural advocate program; community of practice for faculty implementing inclusive pedagogical efforts; and working group to embed dialogue into course curriculum. Their experiences underscored the value of collaborative efforts in DEI initiatives and demonstrated the potential for racial allyship to extend beyond individual efforts to influence institutional practices.

These findings are aligned with the literature reviewed in this study. For example, the faculty members in Loftin's (2010) study believed that their service work of recruiting Faculty and Students of Color to their campus, participating in service to increase faculty diversity, and "contributing to a more equitable campus climate" (p. 105) reflected a commitment to racial justice on an organizational level. Additionally, LeMaire et al. (2020) identified "advocat[ing] for hiring and putting in place efforts to retain people who are minorities", "creat[ing] opportunities for learning about multicultural issues" (p. 18) and "incentiviz[ing] others to engage in allied behaviors and engage in diversity-related initiatives" (p. 19) as allied behavior at the institutional level.

Revealing Whiteness

The study's third research question was, what forms of Whiteness do White staff at traditionally White institutions reveal by their efforts to challenge racism? Similar to the study's second research question, the third question reflects my initial framing of racial allyship as direct responses to racism and Whiteness. However, the study revealed that participants' practice of racial allyship included, but went beyond, simply challenging racism and Whiteness within their professional practice. Therefore, this section presents findings on forms of Whiteness that were revealed by White staff members' practice of racial allyship. Specifically, I found that participants' practice of racial allyship revealed a number of intrapersonal (i.e., White people not thinking about what it means to be White; preference for White centric course content; tokenizing People of Color); interpersonal (i.e., discouraging and/or avoiding conversations about race and racism; and shifting the blame from racism to those challenging racism); and institutional forms of Whiteness (i.e., overrepresentation of White faculty and students; and unfair reward processes).

Intrapersonal forms of Whiteness refer to the ways White people at TWIs reflect and reinforce the invisible structures that produce and reproduce White supremacy and privilege through their personal and professional perspectives, values, and beliefs. The findings revealed three forms of intrapersonal Whiteness: (1) White people not thinking about what it means to be White, (2) preference for White-centric course content, and (3) tokenizing People of Color.

Firstly, in many instances it was evident that White people perpetuating intrapersonal Whiteness had not given much thought, if any, to what it means to be White. This was exemplified, in part, by the full professor in Kaitlyn's example who openly criticized the academic progress of the only Black graduate student in his department. This lack of introspection extended to professional practices. For example, some faculty demonstrated a preference for White-centric course content and disregarded incorporating diverse perspectives, which some students shared negatively impacted their learning experience. Finally, the study revealed instances of tokenization of People of Color, where they were seemingly valued primarily for their ability to present the image of diversity.

These findings align with research literature on intrapersonal forms of Whiteness. First, studies have shown that White undergraduate students see their racial identity as meaningless, beyond having White skin (Cabrera & Zimmerman, 2017; Ropers-Huilman et al., 2013); that White pre-service teachers could not articulate how their racial identity impacted their work as teachers (Matias et al., 2014). Additionally, multiple studies noted how the ways race is most often included in the classroom curriculum serves to center Whiteness and White culture (Bondi, 2012; Chesler & Crowfoot, 1997; Patton, 2015).

Finally, in terms of tokenizing Students of Color for their visible diversity, Pippert et al. (2020) analyzed over 10,000 photographs from 165 four-year US institutions to examine how

accurately colleges' 2011 marketing materials reflected the college's actual student body. The authors found that "African American, Asian, and white categories of students were significantly over-represented while Hispanic and nonwhite others were significantly under-represented" (Pippert et al., p. 270, 2020). This led the authors to conclude that the "majority of institutions provided images of diversity to prospective students in 2011 that were significantly different than the actual student body" (Pippert et al., p. 258, 2020).

Interpersonal forms of Whiteness

Interpersonal forms of Whiteness refer to the ways White people at TWIs reflect and reinforce the invisible structures that produce and reproduce White supremacy and privilege; both in their interactions with each other as well as interactions with People of Color. The study revealed the following forms of interpersonal Whiteness: (1) discouraging and/or avoiding conversations about race and racism; and (2) shifting the blame from racism to those challenging racism.

Discouraging conversations about race and racism occurred when White people contributed their voices and perspectives in conversations related to race and racism but did so in a way that sought to shut down - or discourage - other voices, particularly critical voices and perspectives. On the other hand, avoiding conversations about race and racism occurred when White people chose attempted to remain silent and not engage in such conversations at all. These two forms of Whiteness are evident in Alexa's experiences as a member of a multicultural professional development committee. In one meeting, a committee member shared that the group "spoke too much about race" and when the professional development workshop was held the all-White senior leadership team "self-selected into their own smaller group and didn't really participate."

Finally, the study revealed situations where race and racism were blamed as the problem, instead of blaming racism or not considering race, when necessary, as the problem. This form of Whiteness was evident in Adam's story about the Students of Color in the LGB student group who wanted to create their own "safe space" and subgroup. When they shared this desire with their White group members, the White members responded that the Students of Color were dividing the student group (i.e., instead of realizing how racism produced different experiences for People of Color).

These findings aligned with research literature on interpersonal forms of Whiteness. Discouraging and/or avoiding conversations about race and racism are closely related to the concepts of White silencing and White silence, respectively. One of the most recognizable forms of interpersonal Whiteness occurs when White people remain silent in conversations related to race and racism (Case & Hemmings, 2005; Samuels, 2017). What makes White silence particularly noticeable in these contexts is the overrepresentation of White perspectives, views, ideas, and voices within TWIs on many other issues (Cabrera et al., 2016). Relatedly, Kinouani's (2020) article aimed at illustrating how racism related silencing operates in group settings, using as data her experiences as a Black therapist and the experiences told to her. The author points out how silencing serves, in part, "as a tool to prevent verbal expression in groups and to smother unpalatable voices to" (Kinouani, p. 149, 2020).

Additionally, the idea of shifting blame from racism to those challenging racism is deeply connected to the ideas of reverse racism and White victimhood (Cabrera, 2014a; Case & Hemmings, 2005; Lewis et al., 2000). Instead of acknowledging the need for institutional policies to address racism in admissions practices and policies, some White students resist race-

conscious or affirmative action policies as oppressive to White people and unfairly privileging People of Color (Donnor, 2016; Harper et al., 2009; Yosso, Parker, Solorzano, & Lynn, 2004).

Institutional forms of Whiteness

Institutional forms of Whiteness refer to the ways institutional policies, practices, and norms at TWIs reflect and reinforce the invisible structures that produce and reproduce White supremacy and privilege. The study revealed two forms of institutional Whiteness: (1) overrepresentation of White faculty and students and (2) inequitable reward structures. This study employs the term Traditionally White Institutions (TWIs) instead of Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) to emphasize the historical context that institutions of higher education (IHE) exist within. TWIs, as revealed by the participants' experiences, maintain a historical and persistent overrepresentation of White faculty, staff, and students, in part through the perpetuation of norms, practices, and culture within these institutions. For example, reversing an initial decision to hire a more qualified Black candidate and instead hiring of a less qualified White candidate, because the committee had worked with the White candidate before. Finally, the study demonstrated how reward structures can be inequitably implemented and can result in People of Color being overlooked and therefore under rewarded for doing the same work as their White colleagues. The study underscores the recognition among White faculty and staff that advancing DEI could reshape power dynamics and resource distribution within TWIs. In other words, some rightfully see the White racial allyship leading to White faculty and staff no longer receiving unquestioned disproportionate access to institutional benefits and resources.

These findings aligned with research literature on institutional forms of Whiteness. For example, the faculty in Loftin's (2010) study critiqued the underrepresentation of Students of Color, and overrepresentation of White students, as a dynamic that helped to maintain Whiteness

as the institution's cultural norm. Similarly, Faculty of Color are underrepresented in TWIs (Zambrana et al., 2015) where, in many situations, positions of power related to important institution- and department-level decision-making are limited to only a few White faculty members and/or administrators with minimal, if any, People of Color involved (Boutte & Jackson, 2014).

Regarding unfair reward processes, Chesler and Crowfoot (1997) noted that by concentrating institutional power almost exclusively in White men, institutions perpetuate the idea that White men—and not People of Color—are the standard by which others are to be judged. Considering employment can be characterized as a particular type of reward, underrepresentation of Faculty of Color is, in part, the result of the reproduction of Whiteness through the faculty hiring process (e.g. by framing racial diversity expertise as additional, not central competencies; and tokenizing the "racial perspective" in the committee) (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). For those who are hired, some departmental policies and practices serve to further privilege White faculty members and disadvantage Faculty of Color. For example, the criteria for evaluating faculty within the tenure and promotion process within academic departments often rely on biased standards, such as a preference for publications in highly ranked journals. Privileging highly ranked journals biases the process against some Faculty of Color whose research often challenges the academic status quo in ways that are not valued by highly ranked journals (Boutte & Jackson, 2014). Narrow expressions and criteria for faculty success often reflects a larger institutional culture that normalizes traditional (re: White) and "monocultural norms for success" (Chesler & Crowfoot, 1997, p. 2).

Discussion of Findings

Research and Practice Implications

Learnings from this study revealed that White racial allyship is best understood as a set of skills that staff members can use to challenge or interrupt Whiteness at their institution (e.g., coaching and mentoring People of Color or hiring inclusively). In my assessment, these set of tools are best suited for addressing intra- and interpersonal forms of Whiteness but are not well-suited for addressing organizational and institutional forms of Whiteness. These latter forms of Whiteness show up in institutional culture, which is by hiring and promoting individuals who fit the already established culture, instead of disrupting the established culture.

Also, White racial allyship does not exist in a vacuum and instead is necessary because of Whiteness (or racism) and any research or practice dealing with White racial allyship that does not also address Whiteness (or racism) is incomplete. The following research and practice implications are informed by my view that White racial allyship is a set of skills best suited for addressing intra- and interpersonal forms of Whiteness; and a set of skills that must always be considered in relation to the forms of Whiteness they seek to address.

First, I propose the following studies and lines of inquiry that could be researched in the future: studying the role of gender (or other social identities) in the conceptualization and practice of White racial allyship; conducting a case study on a TWI that has achieved some sustained success in institutional equity to understand what conditions; conducting paired interviews with nominators (e.g., Students and Colleagues of Color) and nominees (e.g., White staff or faculty who regularly practice racial allyship).

Research Implications

First, future research should take into account the ways White staff members' nonracial social identities inform their conceptualization and practice of racial allyship. Each of the study's

participants identified at least one other social identity that was important to understanding their full selves. Adam noted their gender and sexuality as key to understanding their full self, while Kaitlyn noted her gender and status as a parent as important to her full identity.

In designing this study, I assumed the ways participant's nonracial social identities informed their conceptualizations and practice of racial allyship would come through without any probing. However, that was not fully the case. While there moments where a participant's nonracial identity did seem to be connected to their conceptualizations and/or practice of racial allyship, I did not sufficiently probe these connections to and did not have enough data to develop themes. For example, Kaitlyn referenced her experience navigating sexism multiple times, Adam discussed the importance of considering the intersections of race gender and sexuality in their work, and Kevin spoke of the way being a first-generatoinish student shaped his undergraduate and graduate experiences significantly. Additionally, I noticed that only the men in the study explicitly spoke to experiences where their practice of racial allyship involved them challenging an idea, behavior, or language from a Person of Color.

Revisiting the data, particularly the interview transcripts, I recognize I was focused on understanding what racial allyship looked like in practice. This produced rich data to address the study's research questions; however, if I were to conduct another study in this line of research, I would focus only on the role of gender in the conceptualization and practice of racial allyship.

Next, this study revealed only two themes of organizational and institutional acts of racial allyship (i.e., compared to six themes of interpersonal acts of racial allyship). Given the relatively low theme count and my hypothesis that White racial allyship is not best suited to address institutional Whiteness, future research could explore what leads to the disruption of institutional forms of Whiteness. While it is possible that this type of disruption is not possible,

or is unlikely, within TWIs a single case exploring a TWI that has had some sustained success in this area could provide valuable insight what conditions and factors could contribute to institutional change to be more equitable.

Finally, given the prevalence of interpersonal forms of racial allyship in this study, future research can explore the impact of these actions on People of Color – assumed and actual. Specifically, People of Color could nominate White staff members who engaged in an act of racial allyship that personally benefited them (i.e., the Person of Color). Interviews could be conducted with both the nominators and the White staff members to better understand the acts of racial allyship, the White staff members' motivations and intended impact, as well as the actual impact the act of racial allyship had on the Person of Color. The study could also explore how, if at all, the People of Color feel the act of racial allyship could have been enhanced for their specific needs. This line of inquiry is in line with Hinger et al.'s (2023) study that addressed the lack of BIPOC perspectives in models of White allyship.

Next, I review the following practice implications: specifying required or preferred racial allyship skills in job descriptions; White staff members intentionally defining and exploring the possibilities and limitations of their power to engage in racial allyship without the need for prior approval; and cultivating multi-racial spaces to collectively advance the goals of racial allyship.

Practice Implications

First, practitioners who are in the position to hire new staff members should be intentional about how they craft the roles and responsibilities associated with each job description and posting. When developing job descriptions, it is crucial to embed language that lists specific racial allyship skills required or preferred for the role. It is important to note that the exact language may not include the terms racial allyship, but instead include "familiarity or

experience working with the wide range of students who use our office's services." By specifying expectations of inclusive practice, organizations signal a commitment to diversity and equity, attracting candidates who align with these values and have the skills to serve a broader set of students. This approach sets an expectation among staff for fostering an inclusive environment and contributes to a workplace culture (e.g., within a specific department or office) that actively promotes and recognizes the importance of racial allyship at TWIs.

Also, White staff members interested in practicing racial allyship should intentionally define and explore the possibilities and limitations of their power to act without the need for approval. This involves a reflective process where individuals assess the level of autonomy they have in their roles to practice racial allyship and the implications for their ability to individually or collaboratively to advance equity within their sphere of influence (e.g., within their classrooms or within working groups and committees). By engaging in this intentional reflection, staff members can proactively leverage their power to contribute to more inclusive environments and serve as models for other White staff members. Institutional leaders can support staff members in this effort by first identifying which racial allyship skills are aligned with institutional missions and values and then offering reading or visual materials, opt-in trainings, professional development opportunities, or communities of practice to help staff members develop relevant skillsets. In the absence of institutional action, staff members can create and share these opportunities among themselves.

Lastly, findings from this study suggests that working with others is key to racial allyship. Therefore, White practitioners and Practitioners of Color interested in collaborating should look to actively cultivate collaborative spaces to collectively advance the goals of racial allyship. This can take the form of formal working groups and/or affinity spaces to foster shared

learning and mutual support. To ensure productive collaboration it would help to consider and account for the following: different identity-based experiences and perspectives; power dynamics; and potential conflict. These spaces should also be based upon an understanding of race as predictive, not definitive if a truly mutually beneficial community is going to be formed.

Conclusion

In this section, I offer several concluding thoughts related to my study. First, I offer reflections on tensions that arose from my study design before reflecting on both the possibilities and limitations of acts of allyship. Three tensions are prominent in my study design: (1) allyship vs. allies; (2) limit to institutional analysis; and (3) the use of critical methodologies to engage my participants.

Allyship vs. Allies

In my introduction I shared my desire to resist what I perceived as a false and unhelpful dichotomy of good vs bad White person. I do not believe it reflects reality in that no one White person is all good or all bad as it pertains to their perpetuation of or resistance to Whiteness and racism. In the context of White racial allyship, the same White staff members who engage in acts of racial allyship may also passively perpetuate, observe without intervening, or actively participate in acts of racial exclusion, racism, and/or Whiteness - whether intentional or unintentional. Still, to better understand acts of racial allyship among White staff members at TWIs, I found it most useful to study the individual White staff members who, according to their Colleagues of Color, consistently and visibly engage in acts of racial allyship. My interest was in the acts of racial allyship (i.e., the behavior) not them as racial allies (i.e., the identity).

On the one hand this emphasis was an effort to move People of Color towards the center of my study, by focusing on actions that People of Color found valuable (i.e., as evidenced in the

nomination process) and that they would hopefully benefit from. Relatedly, I did not want the study to unnecessarily get bogged down in participants' identity or identity development and instead focus on behaviors. As I have stated previously, allyship is not who you are but what you do. Studies that approach allyship through the lens of identity development struggle with the reality that identity is often in flux and context dependent, yet such an approach reinforces a good vs bad dichotomy given that often the final stage development is one where a White person takes on more racially inclusive beliefs, values, and attitudes. The truth is the same White person can have more racially inclusive beliefs, values, and attitudes about some matters and racially exclusive beliefs, values, and attitudes about others. Therefore, I made the decision to focus primarily on actions and behaviors among White staff members.

I recognize, however, that my decision to use White staff members as individual cases makes it more difficult for the reader to make this distinction between identity and behavior and consequently the distinction between allies and allyship. It is not surprising to me that some readers might consider my research questions, my dissertation topic, the nomination process, and the individual case profiles and see each White staff member in the study as a White ally. In fact, some participants themselves used this language.

While this distinction is important, I also realize that my preference for focusing on behaviors/allyship over identity/allies is likely rooted in my social and practitioner identity. Whether an individual White staff member identifies as an ally or not is not of great importance to me. I am almost exclusively interested in the ways an individual White staff responds to moments that call for racial allyship. In part, I remain suspicious of all the ways these forms of identification, particularly in the case of self-identification, can often represent the end, rather than beginning, of significant action.

Institutional vs Individual Analysis

The use of individual White staff members as my cases caused another tension in my study particularly limiting my ability to fully uncover data related to institutional dimensions of acts of allyship and Whiteness. I interviewed and collected journal entries from seven White staff members. This provided rich data and insights into individual and interpersonal acts of racial allyship and forms of Whiteness. However, because these cases are individual units of analysis, my approach is limited in providing insights into institutional acts of racial allyship and forms of Whiteness. For example, while participating in DEI initiatives and hiring inclusively are critical and beneficial forms of racial allyship, stronger forms of institutional allyship would be institution-wide initiatives to ensure that all hiring processes were racially inclusive and held hiring managers and committees accountable when that was not the case. Similarly, thick, rich descriptions about specific DEI initiatives would represent a stronger form of organizational and institutional acts of racial allyship. As it stands, this study represents ways individual White staff members at TWIs might identify, initiate, and/or support efforts of racial allyship.

Still, this is an important note to call out, insights into institutional forms of Whiteness would provide important context for individual acts of racial allyship. Institutions are more than just the people that are a part of them. They are also made up of processes, policies, procedures, cultural norms, practices, and so much more. For example, as the study illustrated, many White staff members in my study first considered their positional power before engaging in acts of racial allyship. The positional power represented some level of certainty and perhaps security that engaging in acts of racial allyship within the boundaries of one's positional power involved less risk and lowered the likelihood of receiving any negative consequences for one's actions. My belief is that White staff members' inclination to act within their own positional power is an

understandable and perhaps predictable form of self-preservation. And I do not mean this in the abstract. I mean that White staff members, perhaps more than their Colleagues of Color, know what those in power feel, say, think, and most importantly do – both publicly and secretly – to those who speak and act out against racism at TWIs.

Given my focus on behaviors/allyship over identity/allies, I am less concerned with the ways that individual White staff members can engage in acts of racial allyship outside of their positional power. Rather I am interested in the ways White staff members can learn new ways to engage in acts of racial allyship within their positional power and/or ways that they can more consistently or more effectively engage in current practices. Again, this distinction is important because I do believe a significant amount of DEI efforts at TWIs overemphasize the potential impact on individual action on institutional culture – for example a lot of DEI offices and staff provide individual learning opportunities such as implicit bias workshops and trainings. However, rarely are DEI offices and staff engaged with conducting a department wide analysis of the ways Whiteness and racism are embedded within the department's culture, practices, and norms and recommendations for change. The latter, I believe, would have a much greater impact on advancing goals traditionally associated with DEI offices – but also requires a shift in emphasis from the individual to the institution. Again, this is something my current study provided less insight into.

Critical Methodology and IGD

The final prominent tension that arose from my research design is the incorporation of IGD as a critical methodology. As stated in Chapter 3, I incorporated IGD as a way to engage in a knowledge-building process that is more closely aligned with one way People of Color and White people build knowledge about race and racism within TWIs. The intent of doing this was

to align critical epistemologies (i.e., White ignorance and Black feminist scholarship) with critical methodologies, as suggested by Bhattacharya (2018). This approach is also informed by a certain humility and grace extended to human beings that is more rooted in my own experiences in being human and what I have witnessed from others. Taking such an approach in this project does challenge traditional notions of the ways some researchers engage participants; as sources of data to be extracted

In practice, this meant that I shared with my participants that the focus of my study was not on their personal stories and identities, unless it was relevant to their practice of racial allyship, and instead my focus was on understanding how White staff members engage in acts of racial allyship. Though I did not have questions about personal stories, all participants in one way or another discussed how their personal stories informed their conceptualizations and/or practice of racial allyship. However, when these stories came up, I intentionally did not probe these areas as it was important for me to remain as focused as possible on behaviors. Some of these stories revealed forms of Whiteness among my participants. This did not surprise me as I assumed going into the study that for each example of racial allyship participants shared, they could share a story about the ways they perpetuated racism or Whiteness. Given that the focus of my study was to understand the practice of White racial allyship and what forms of Whiteness their acts of racial allyship revealed, I had to decide which areas to probe. I determined that probing the forms of Whiteness was not as valuable to addressing my research questions.

Furthermore, in addition to the member checking process it is likely that my participants will eventually read my dissertation or at least parts of it, and it is important to me that they do not feel betrayed by me as a researcher. I am aware that taking such approach might appear to some as a participation in Whiteness by not revealing forms of Whiteness among my

participants. However, for me this is rooted in the humility and grace I attempt to extend to human beings informed by my experiences and observations, which is not only extended to White people. For example, in my experience in TWIs, People of Color often occupy positions of marginalization due to their race; however, the racial marginalization of a tenured professor or senior administrator is very different from that of an adjunct faculty, custodial workers, and other contingent laborers. In many cases the tenured professor or senior administrator can very easily explain what White people should do to address racism, but when they must consider how their own class and/or status position privileges them vis-à-vis an adjust faculty member, custodial worker, or other contingent employees, they lack an awareness and/or commitment to holding themselves accountable to the same standards of solidarity and allyship. This is evident in the countless number of diversity committees and initiatives across TWIs that rarely are inclusive of People of Color with lower institutional power and status. In such moments, I do not find it valuable to highlight how in fact this exclusion is often the result of uninterrogated classist beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors by People of Color with higher institutional power and status – such as valuing individuals based on their ability to more fluently participate in and/or replicate traditional forms of professionalism (e.g., in how someone speaks, dresses, presents their ideas, or have control over their schedules), which is deeply informed by Whiteness. I do not offer these examples to be critical, but to demonstrate further my approach to research that is again grounded in a certain form of humility and grace that I think is important to extend to all individuals, regardless of the context.

Acts of Racial Allyship - Possibilities and Limitations

This study explored the ways White staff members at TWIs engage in acts of racial allyship. However, this study did not exist in a vacuum. The need for racial allyship arises out of

the persistence or racism and Whiteness at TWIs. Reflecting on the ways White staff members at TWIs engage in acts of racial allyship, I offer the following observations related to the possibilities and limitations of racial allyship at TWIs: defining and determining the sufficiency of acts of racial allyship depends greatly on context; White staff members' can practice racial allyship without experiencing any negative consequences – personal or professional; acts of racial allyship can momentarily challenge and/or disrupt racism and Whiteness but offer no permanent solutions for these systemic issues.

First, a central question to the topic of White racial allyship is who gets to define what is racial allyship and whether particular acts of racial allyship are sufficient. This was evident in my nomination process where some participants did not always consider their actions as racial allyship – even though their Colleagues of Color did. Given that racial allyship is highly contextualized, this creates a significant opportunity for White staff members committed to practicing racial allyship to talk to one another and to their Colleagues of Color about what it means to engage in racial allyship. Specifically, White staff members might explore the following questions in conversations with others: How do you see me engaging in acts of racial allyship? What impact has my acts of racial allyship had on you or others? When are you looking for a White staff member to engage in acts of racial allyship? Have there been times when you feel my practice of racial allyship has fallen short? These conversations should be multi-directional and White staff members might also share their own observations, reflections, learnings, intentions, and questions.

White racial allyship exists primarily at the individual and interpersonal levels, and not the organizational and institutional level. This means that White staff members can practice racial allyship without experiencing any negative consequences – personal or professional. In

some cases, White staff members might even receive personal or professional benefits for practicing racial allyship. This does not diminish the value or impact of these actions. However, this is something White staff members should be aware of particularly considering People of Color are often punished and penalized for disrupting and challenging racism and Whiteness. These disproportionate distributions of benefits and punishments are outside of the control of any individual staff member regardless of their race – it is the privilege that comes from racist system. Still, White staff members engaging in acts of racial allyship might think about how they engage in honest conversations with each other and with their Colleagues of Color of how to respond to such realities.

Finally, while acts of racial allyship are critical to disrupting and challenging racism and Whiteness, it is my belief that they only offer momentary reprieve, not permeant solutions for these systemic issues. A true limit of White racial allyship is that it addresses a systemic issue primarily on individual and interpersonal levels. Therefore, it is a mistake to develop a strategy for addressing racism and Whiteness through a primarily individual and interpersonal intervention. Yet, in my observations and experience, TWIs will say they want to advance diversity, equity, or inclusion – organizational and institutional issues – but overemphasize efforts such as trainings, workshops, and education campaigns - individual and interpersonal interventions. Instead, TWIs should overemphasize organizational and institutional interventions such as reviewing institutional policies and procedures for refinement, removal, or updating. For example, institutional leaders can explore ways that staff review, promotion, and review processes account for a staff member's ability to demonstrate a commitment to advancing the institution's DEI values.

I am not sure there are any permanent solutions to racism and Whiteness at TWIs. I am sure that White racial allyship can offer reprieve, even if only momentarily, if we are honest about allyship's possibilities and limitations.

Appendix A: Nominator Recruitment Email and Information

Hello _____,

I hope this email finds you well. My name is Donté McGuire and I am a fourth year doctoral student at the University of Maryland, researching the experiences of White staff at Traditionally White Institutions of higher education (TWIs) who are committed to the practice of racial allyship. People of Color have long called attention to the need for racial diversity, inclusion, and equity at TWIs, specifically for White community members to be personally invested in these issues. I designed this study to better understand the ways White staff in TWIs challenge racism and engage in the practice of racial allyship and at their institutions. I hope you will help me identify potential participants for my study.

You are receiving this email because you are a Person of Color whose work on campus (formally or informally) is related to racial diversity, inclusion, or equity and I trust your insight and opinion on this topic. In serving as a nominator, you will help me include participants who are considered by a Person of Color to be committed to racial allyship at their institution. Individuals must meet the following criteria to participate in this study: (1) be at least 18 years old; (2) be nominated by a Person of Color who is also a current staff at a traditionally White institution; (3) be a current staff member at a traditionally White institution; (4) self-identify as White; and (5) be able to provide at least three, examples of engaging in acts of racial allyship at their institution.

For the purpose of this study White staff is used to describe White people who are employed in various positions and functional areas. The term is inclusive of administrators and student affairs educators as well as a wide range of titles (e.g. assistant director and coordinator).

Also, while I realize what it means to "engage in racial allyship" is subjective you might consider the following when thinking of people to nominate for participation: Who is someone you would consider a White ally? Who are White staff that you have witnessed challenge racism among other White people? Who are White staff whose professional practice challenges racial marginalization? Who are White staff who understand and practice interrupting White privilege?

If there are people who come to mind, I would greatly appreciate you completing this Google Form to share potential participant's contact information and to provide some insight into your choice.

This research project will require participation in two recorded interviews and some journaling. When I reach out to the individual(s) you nominate I will explain the research design and participation requirements in more detail. I believe the study's risks to be minimal, as the interview will provide a space for individuals to reflect upon their past and current experiences, and is also completely voluntary – meaning they can stop at any time for any reason.

Thank you in advance for considering individuals for this study. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Take care and talk soon,

Donté McGuire
donte@umd.edu
336-671-7366
Pronouns he | him | his

Appendix B: Nomination Google Form

White Racial Allyship - Nomination Form

Please complete this form to nominate White staff members who work at a Traditionally White Institution (TWI) (aka Predominately White Institutions or PWIs) and are committed to racial allyship at their institution, and is at least 18 years of age.

You might consider the following when thinking of people to nominate for participation: Who is someone you would consider a White ally? Who are White staff that you have witnessed challenge racism among other White people? Who are White staff whose professional practice challenges racial marginalization? Who are White staff who understand and practice interrupting White privilege?

* Required

Personal information

Please share with me some basic, personal information about yourself

1. **First Name** *

2. **Last Name** *

3. **Email Address** *

Nominated Participant (1) Information

For the purpose of this study White staff is used to describe White people who are employed in various positions and functional areas. The term is inclusive of administrators and student affairs educators as well as a wide range of titles (e.g. assistant director and coordinator)

4. **First Name** *

5. **Last Name** *

6. **Email Address** *

7. **What is the name of the college or university where this individual is employed?** *

8. **Why are you nominating this individual?** *

Nominated Participant (2) Information

9. **First Name**

10. **Last Name**

11. **Email Address**

12. **What is the name of the college or university where this individual is employed?**

13. **Why are you nominating this individual?**

Nominated Participant (3) Information

14. **First Name**

15. **Last Name**

16. **Email Address**

17. **What is the name of the college or university where this individual is employed?**

18. **Why are you nominating this individual?**

Nominated Participant (4) Information

19. **First Name**

20. **Last Name**

21. **Email Address**

22. **What is the name of the college or university where this individual is employed?**

23. **Why are you nominating this individual?**

Appendix C: Participant Recruitment Email

Hello _____,

I hope this email finds you well. My name is Donté McGuire and you are receiving this email because one of your colleagues nominated you as someone who is committed to the practice of racial allyship at your institution. I am a fourth year doctoral student at the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP) researching the experiences of White staff at Traditionally White Institutions of higher education (TWIs) who are committed to the practice of racial allyship.. To participate in the study you must (1) be at least 18 years old (2) be a current staff member at a traditionally White institution and (3) self-identify as White.

As you know from your commitment to these issues, People of Color have long called attention to the need for racial diversity, inclusion, and equity at TWIs, with some specifically for White community members to be personally invested in these issues. I designed this study to better understand the ways White people in TWIs are involved in creating more racially diverse, inclusive and equitable campuses. I hope you will consider participating in this study.

Participation involves two separate 60-90 minute individual interviews and four journal reflections. All conversations will be recorded and will be focused on your thoughts and experiences of being a White person engaging in acts of racial allyship at your institution. I believe the study's risks to be minimal, as the interview will provide a space for you to reflect upon your past and current experiences, and is also completely voluntary – meaning you can stop participating at any time for any reason. For your participation, I will donate $25 to a racial justice organization of your choice.

If you are interested in participating in the study, I would greatly appreciate you completing this Google Form to share your contact information and to provide some initial insight into your experiences. Once you have completed the form, I will follow-up with you to confirm receipt, provide a consent form, and share next steps. I am also happy to answer any questions you may have about the study.

Thank you in advance for giving consideration to this work. Your insights and experiences would be extremely beneficial to understanding the practice of racial allyship.

Sincerely,

Donté McGuire
donte@umd.edu
336-671-7366
Pronouns he | him | his

Appendix D: Participant Information Google Form

White Racial Allyship - Participant Information

Please complete this form if you are interested in participating in Donté McGuire's study on current White staff at Traditionally White Institutions (TWI) engaged in racial allyship at their institution, and is at least 18 years of age.

* Required

Personal Information

1. **First Name** *
2. **Last Name** *
3. **Email Address** *
4. **What is the name of the college or university where you are currently employed?** *
5. **How many years of higher education working experience do you have?** *
6. **Racial Identity** *
7. **Other social identities (e.g. gender) that are important to you and that you are comfortable sharing**

Racial Allyship Practice

The idea of racial allyship can be very subjective. In responding to the below question, you might consider the following: What does your commitment to improving racial diversity, inclusion, and equity at your institution look like? What specific examples can you provide that demonstrate your commitment? Why do you think your colleague nominated you for this study? How do you interrupt racism and White privilege at your institution?

8. **Please describe ways you engage in acts of racial allyship (be as specific as possible)** *

Powered by Google Forms

Appendix E: Participant Selection Email and Information

Hello _____,

Thank you for completing the Google form and for your willingness to participate in my study on White racial allyship. As a reminder participation in this study involves two separate 60-90 minute individual interviews and the submission of four journal reflections. All conversations will be recorded and will be focused on your thoughts and experiences of being a White person engaging in acts of racial allyship. I am writing now to schedule your first interview and to share the study's consent form.

First, please use the following When2meet link to share your availability over the next two weeks for your first interview.

Next attached, is the study's consent form. Please review and let me know if you have any questions.

Finally, I want to share a note about the study's design. It is important to me that we discuss topics that you believe are important. So I invite you to think of topics that are relevant to White people engaging in acts of racial allyship at TWIs that you would like for us to discuss during the interview.

Thanks again and talk to you soon,

Donté McGuire
donte@umd.edu
336-671-7366
Pronouns he | him | his

Appendix F: Participant Consent Form

Project Title	**White Racial Allyship at Traditionally White Institutions**
Purpose of the Study	This research is being conducted by Donté McGuire, a fourth year doctoral student at the University of Maryland, College Park. I am inviting you to participate in this research project because one of your colleagues nominated you as someone who is committed to the practice of racial allyship at your institution. The purpose of this study is to better understand the ways White staff in TWIs challenge racism and engage in the practice of racial allyship and at their institutions
Procedures	If you agree to take part in the study, participation involves two separate 60-90 minute individual interviews and the submission of four journal reflections. The first individual interview between us will be semi-structured around some pre-determined topics such as your perceptions of issues related to race and racism on your campus and the role of White people in challenging racism in higher education. The journal reflections will provide an opportunity for you to reflect on racism you witness in your institution and how you respond. In the second, individual interview we will discuss your journal reflections and clarify any lingering questions from the first interview. It is my wish to record each interview for the purpose of accuracy – which is required in order to participate in the study. Your participation is voluntary and you will be reminded that you are free to withdraw from the study at any time for any reason. You will also be asked to give written consent to participate in the study.
Potential Risks and Discomforts	There may be some risks from participating in this research study. It is possible that you may feel uncomfortable or anxious discussing issues regarding your personal and professional experiences or personal background. I will not record or disclose your actual name, position title, or any other identifying information during the interview. There is also the risk of a data breach. In order to ensure that confidentiality is tightly secured, I will take appropriate steps to maintain and secure, and then destroy the data collected during the research process.
Potential Benefits	For your participation, I will donate $25 to a racial justice organization of your choice. Also the outcomes of the project may provide some insight to help improve TWIs' ability to engage White staff in racial diversity, inclusion, and equity efforts. Also, you may benefit from the opportunity to reflect and elaborate on your experiences.
Confidentiality	In order to ensure and protect privacy, your identity will remain confidential. You will choose a pseudonym to be used throughout the study, unless you prefer me to choose one for you. Actual names and other forms of identifiable information (i.e., email

	addresses, title) will not appear on interview data. The key linking you to your pseudonyms will be kept in a separate document on the principal investigator's hard drive in a separate folder away from the folder with the interview data. Audio-taping with a digital voice recorder will be used to record the interviews. These interviews will be transcribed by a paid transcription service and will be stored on the principal investigator's hard drive. The principal investigator will be the only person with access to the recordings and the recordings will be destroyed when their use is no longer needed but not before a minimum of five years after data collection.
Right to Withdraw and Questions	Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify. Your university employment will not be affected by your participation or non-participation in this study. If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the principal investigator: Donté McGuire 3214 Benjamin Building College Park, MD 20742 donte@umd.edu 336-671-7366
Participant Rights	If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: **University of Maryland College Park** **Institutional Review Board Office** **1204 Marie Mount Hall** **College Park, Maryland, 20742** **E-mail: irb@umd.edu** **Telephone: +13014050678** This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.
Statement of Consent	Your signature indicates that you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this signed consent form.

	If you agree to participate, please sign your name below.	
Signature and Date	**NAME OF PARTICIPANT [Please Print]**	
	SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT	
	DATE	

Appendix G: First Interview Protocol

Thank you again for agreeing to meet with me today. Before we get started I wanted to give you an opportunity to review the consent form and ask any questions you may have about the consent form or the study in general.

If you are still willing to participate, please sign the consent form.

As a reminder, your participation is completely voluntary and you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time and for any reason.

If you do not have any more questions or concerns, I would like to begin recording our interview. Is that OK with you?

While I realize we are here today because of a research study, I would like to make our discussion as conversational as possible. With that, I'd like to start by doing two things. One I want to give you an opportunity to share what topics you believe are important for us to discuss as it relates to the topic of White racial allyship in traditionally White institutions. The second thing I'd like to do is have a conversation about what it means for us to have this conversation as individuals with different racial identities. Specifically, what does it mean for me as a Black person and you as a White person to have a conversation about race? And what do we need from each other to feel that we can speak freely and listen fully, even when it's difficult?

I have written both of the questions down [provide sheet to participant] so that you can have an opportunity to read them if that helps. How about we start with the first question:

1. What topics do you believe are important for us to discuss as it relates to *the topic of White racial allyship in traditionally White institutions?*

-

Let's discuss what it means to have this conversation as people with different racial identities. I'll start by sharing some information about myself and some of my thoughts and feelings of having this conversation about race with a White person. Once I'm done I want to invite you to ask me any questions you may have.

2. What experiences have you had having a conversation about race and racism with People of Color?

3. What are some of your thoughts and feelings about having this conversation about race with me, a Black researcher?

With what we have just discussed…

4. What do you need from me in order to feel that you can speak freely and listen fully?

I would like to share some of my needs with you. . . . Now that we have discussed these needs, I want us to hold these as we have today's conversation and throughout the research process, and return to them as needed.

As I shared earlier, you were nominated by a colleague as someone who practices racial allyship at your institution

5. Why do you, as a White staff member, care about practicing racial allyship at your institution?
    a. Have you always felt this way?
        i. If yes, what influenced you (experiences/readings/people/etc.)?
        i. If no, what changed and why (experiences/readings/people/etc.)?

6. In your own words, how would you describe what it means to practice racial allyship?
    a. How did you come to this understanding?
    b. What other experiences/readings/people have been influential in shaping your understanding?
    c. **only if provided answer in google form** In the Google form, you shared that your _____ identities are important to you.

       Would you please share how these identities inform your understanding or what it means to practice racial allyship?

7. In your own words how would you define the word *racism?*
    b. From your perspective, what are examples of racism within your institution?
    c. How does racism impact your campus?

8. Please provide an example of a time when you successfully engaged in an act of racial allyship at your institution?
    a. Why do you believe the act was successful?
    b. What did you do?
    c. Who were the main actors?
    d. How did you feel?
    e. What were you thinking?
    f. What were the outcomes of your actions?
    g. How do you feel about the outcomes?
    h. What did you do well?
    i. What would you do differently?

9. Please provide an example of a time when you engaged in an act of racial allyship at your institution, but were unsuccessful?
    a. Why do you believe the act was unsuccessful?
    b. What did you do?
    c. Who were the main actors?
    d. How did you feel?
    e. What were you thinking?

f. What were the outcomes of your actions?
g. How do you feel about the outcomes?
h. What did you do well?
i. What would you do differently?

I realize that not every White staff member who wants to engage in acts of racial allyship actually does so. With that in mind:

10. Would you share with me a time where you could have engaged in an act of racial allyship at your institution, but did not?
    a. Who were the main actors?
    b. What kept you from acting?
    c. How did you feel?
    d. Why do you believe you should have done something?
    e. What were the outcomes of the situation?
    f. How do you feel about the outcomes?
    g. What would you have done differently?

11. Would you share with me a different time where you could have engaged in an act of racial allyship at your institution, but did not?
    a. Who were the main actors?
    b. How did you feel?
    c. Why do you believe you should have done something?
    d. What kept you from acting?
    e. What were the outcomes of the situation?
    f. How do you feel about the outcomes?
    g. What would you have done differently?

- 12. ***if needed***In general, what are some of the major differences between the times you engage in acts of racial allyship and the times when you do not engage in acts of racial allyship at your institution?

13. If you had to assess yourself, what would you consider your most effective strategies in terms of practicing racial allyship at your institution?
    a. In what areas could you improve?

14. What negative consequences have you experienced as a result of your practice of racial allyship at your institution?
    a. What other negative consequences have you experienced?
    b. What professional risks have you taken in your practice of racial allyship?
    c. How do you benefit from your practice of racial allyship at your institution?
    d. What professional & personal? benefits do you receive?

Some of the research on this topic suggests that practicing racial allyship can impact relationships. With that said:

15. Would you describe a specific relationship that your practice of racial allyship has affected?
    a. What is the racial/ethnic identity of the other person?
    b. Why do you believe it was your practice of racial allyship that affected your relationship?
    c. What was the nature of your relationship before it was affected by your racial allyship?
    d. What is the nature of your relationship now?
    e. How do you feel about the nature of your relationship now?

16. ***based on answer to 10a ask about relationship with White person or person of color*** Would you describe another relationship that your practice of racial allyship has affected?
    a. What is the racial/ethnic identity of the other person?
    b. Why do you believe it was your practice of racial allyship that affected your relationship?
    c. What was the nature of your relationship before it was affected by your racial allyship?
    d. What is the nature of your relationship now?
    e. How do you feel about the nature of your relationship now?

17. I've asked all the questions that I have, are there any other questions that I did not include that you would have asked?

Appendix H: Journal Reflections Instructions

The purpose of your reflections is to give you an opportunity to reflect more on your experiences with White racial allyship at your institution. You have chosen to do a written reflection. If you choose to write your reflections by hand, you can scan and email your document to me via email - donte@umd.edu. If you choose to type your reflection, please use Penzu (www.penzu.com). You will need to create an account, which is free to do, before creating your reflections. I chose Penzu because it is a free, password protected online resource that will allow you to share your diaries with me directly and securely.

Journal reflections are very personal and for that reason there is no one way to approach each entry. All I ask is that you reflect deeply and respond to the prompts as fully and detailed as possible. How you do that is up to you. Also, I anticipate each diary taking no more than 15 minutes.

As a reminder, over the time period that begins _____ and ends on _____, I ask that you create 4 journal reflections in response to the below prompts. You can decide when during the five-week period (the expectation is you would not journal during your Spring Break) you want to create each reflection as long as they total four entries. I also ask that you follow the order of the prompts.

First Prompt

Research on the topic of White racial allyship suggests that **self-reflection** is important to the practice of White racial allyship.

With this in mind please share:

1. What is the role of self-reflection in your practice of White racial allyship? (e.g. what topics have you reflected on, what topics are you currently reflecting on, when has self-reflection been helpful for you, what has prompted this reflection)

Second Prompt:

1. Please provide a detailed description of when you noticed the need to engage in an act of racial allyship at your institution, and you did so:
    a. What did you observe?
    b. Who were the main actors?
    c. How did you feel?
    d. What were you thinking?
    e. How did others respond?
    f. How did you respond?
    g. Why did you respond the way you did?
    h. What were the outcomes of your response?

2. Please provide a detailed description of when you noticed the need to engage in an act of racial allyship at your institution, and you ***did not*** do so.

a. What did you observe?
b. Who were the main actors?
c. How did you feel?
d. What were you thinking?
e. How did others respond?
f. How did you respond?
g. Why did you not challenge what you noticed?
h. What were the outcomes of your response?

Third Prompt

Think about your ideal version of a White person practicing racial allyship in your current professional role:

1. What would they be doing in your role (e.g. awareness, skills, and behaviors)?
2. How does your current practice of racial allyship in your role align with your ideal version?

Fourth Prompt

Research on the topic of White racial allyship suggests that **collaboration** is important to the practice of White racial allyship.

With this in mind please share:

1. What is the role of collaboration in your practice of racial allyship?

Appendix I: Second Interview Protocol

Thank you so much for your time and for agreeing to this final discussion. I realize that giving up this much time is not easy. Your initial interview and journal entries have been very informative.

First, I want to revisit some information from our first discussion. All information you have shared will remain confidential and I have recorded your data using your pseudonym and removing all identifying data (e.g. city, institution).

Also, your participation is completely voluntary and you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time and for any reason.

Do you have any questions at this point?

If you do not have any more questions, I would like to begin recording our interview. Is that OK with you?

You may recall in our first interview we each shared our own list of needs that we thought would help us speak freely and listen fully. Let's start by revisiting those. This sheet has both of our needs listed. I want to give you a few moments to review the compiled list. Please let me know once you have had time to review.

1. Are there any changes that you would like to make to your own list?
    1. Would you like to emphasize any needs from you list?

-
2. Do you have any questions, comments, or concerns about my list?

I would like to begin by revisiting your first interview discussing your interview transcript

3. What else has come up for you since our first interview that did not make it into a journal entry?
4. What else do you want to discuss after reviewing your transcript from the first interview?

Next, I would like to discuss your journal entries.

5. What was the process of completing the journal entries like for you?
    a. Please share any parts that were particularly difficult?
    b. Were there any benefits from writing the journals?
    c. You knew we would discuss your entries in the future – how did that impact what you wrote about?

In your entry on [insert date] you mentioned _____(topic/statement).

6. Would you tell me a bit more about that?

In your entry on [insert date] you mentioned _____(topic/statement).

7. Would you tell me a bit more about that?

8. In what ways has participating in these interviews and completing the journal entries given you insight into your practice of racial allyship?

9. What, if anything, could leadership or colleagues at your institution, department, office, do to encourage racial allyship among White staff?

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